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doi: <https://doi.org/10.57709/1059640>

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A SMALL PLACE IN GEORGIA: YEOMAN CULTURAL PRESISTANCE

by

TERRENCE LEE KERSEY

Under the Direction of Glenn Eskew

ABSTRACT

In antebellum Upcountry Georgia, the Southern yeomanry developed a society independent of the planter class. Many of the studies of the pre-Civil War Southern yeomanry describe a class that is living within the cracks of a planter-dominated society, using, and subject to those institutions that served the planter class. Yet in Forsyth County, a yeomanry-dominated society created and nurtured institutions that met their class needs, not parasitically using those developed by the planter class for their own needs.

INDEX WORDS: Yeomanry, Antebellum, South, Upcountry, Georgia, Slavery, Country store, Methodist, Baptist

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TERRENCE LEE KERSEY

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts

in the College of Arts and Sciences

Georgia State University

2009

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2009

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August 2009

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The Methodist Conference, held in Franklin, Tennessee in 1817, appointed Peter Cartwright to ride the Red River Circuit in Tennessee for the next year. This circuit had especially difficult circumstances with a prosperous membership that evidently dressed fashionable, danced, drank, and traded in slaves. Initially Cartwright resisted the appointment because of the potential troubles he foresaw. Nevertheless, Bishop M'Kendree persuaded Cartwright to assume responsibility for the circuit. At one particular stop on one particular Sunday, the membership approached Cartwright concerning one of the local preachers and they expressed their concern about his habit of drinking what they considered too much at every marriage that he attended.

During the class meeting that day, Cartwright inquired of the preacher whether or not he drank and if so how much he drank. The preacher replied that he was not one for keeping track of how much he imbibed. After considering the preacher's retort, Cartwright ordered that the preacher on "the Saturday before my next appointment here you must meet a committee of local preachers at ten o'clock to investigate this matter." Cartwright confessed that finding a jury of local preachers that did not drink required an effort, but when he did, "the committee found him guilty of immoral conduct and suspended him until the next quarterly meeting." Based on their findings, Cartwright read not only the preacher out of the congregation, but also his wife, his children, and the friends who persisted in defending him. In addition, Cartwright refused to give any of them a letter of dismissal, the ultimate *coup de grace*.¹ While this may sound harsh,

¹ Peter Cartwright, *Autobiography of Peter Cartwright, the Backwoods Preacher*, ed. W. P. Strickland (London: Arthur Hall, Virtue, and Co., 1862), 76-77.

Methodist and Baptist congregations expelled their members for a wide range of offenses from marrying an unbeliever, slave trading, drunkenness, gambling, fighting, dancing, adultery, nonattendance, violating the Sabbath, and disputes with other members to list just a few. It was not an uncommon event and easily found in virtually any Methodist or Baptist church minutes during the antebellum period. While the expulsion of such a large number of church members is curious, the pertinent question is why an antebellum Southern Upcountry yeomanry, known for their republican streak of individualism and independence, would knowingly seek membership in an organization that exercised rigorous discipline, public humiliation, and social ostracism?

The answer is not that Methodist or Baptist churches had some distinctively attractive doctrine or members had some idiosyncratic psychological affliction. The answer lies in the fact that a church is a social institution and as such is reflective of the needs of the society of which it serves. It is not the beliefs of a church but the rituals that attract and hold members to it. Therefore, it is logical to conclude that the Methodist and Baptist churches must have fulfilled a specific need of the antebellum Southern yeomanry. This concept of institutions is critical in any attempt to explore the historical Southern yeomanry because of the basic nature of the individuals under examination: uneducated, often illiterate, physically isolated, politically unimportant, and socially marginalized. The point being, beyond their institutions the antebellum Southern yeomanry left little to examine and in those locales where planters dominated. Despite their superior numbers, the yeomen were marginal contributors to the agricultural economy.² Some of the institutions, such as the Methodist Church, it can be argued, were the direct product of the yeomanry, while other institutions, such as the country store, serviced the need of several constituencies. Institutions are like Plato's shadows on the cave wall, they are not the yeoman

² Stephanie McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Households, Gender Relations, and the Political Culture of the Antebellum South Carolina Low Country* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 95.

himself but a reflection of his needs. Evaluating and understanding the needs of the yeomanry offers the historian a clear outline of this social class. The argument posited here is that most studies of the Southern yeomanry examine an individual who lived within the cracks of a planter society. Within these cracks, the yeomen used to those institutions that the planter had created to serve his own needs. In counterpoint, the Southern yeomanry, where they were demographically dominant, developed and controlled their own society that fulfilled their needs, beyond the social jurisdiction of the planter elite.

One of the initial questions regarding the antebellum Southern yeomanry was whether they existed or not. Despite the reality of Ulrich Bonnell Phillips being a victim of his own prejudices, he was clear about one thing, the factuality of a complex social structure in the South that included a large middle class yeomanry. While Phillips recognized their presence on the landscape, he still treated them much as Stephanie McCurry argued, invisible. Frank Lawrence Owsley, often considered the discoverer of the Southern yeomanry, argued that they were far from invisible. Owsley's premise was not so much that a yeomanry existed as much, as contrary to a widely accepted belief among his contemporaries, the yeomanry left clear evidence of their passing. While the yeomanry was often illiterate and bequeathed posterity few diaries and other personal papers, public records give the historian a snap shot of the conditions of the yeomanry life. Owsley points to "church records, wills, administration of estates, county-court minutes, marriage licenses, inventory of estates, trial records, mortgage books, deed books, county tax books, and the manuscript returns of the Federal census."³ These are all shadows of the yeomanry institutions.

³ Frank Lawrence Owsley, *Plain Folk of the Old South* ([Baton Rouge]: Louisiana State University Press, 1949), 6.

Owsley's statistical analysis covered five states, breaking each state into its traditional geographic regions and drawing a sample from a selection of representative counties. It was obviously a large pool from which to draw samples and Owsley stumbled a little in the actual analysis department. The presentation of the census material at the conclusion of the text was confusing at best and limited his analytical conclusions. In the final consideration, Owsley's focus was on developing percentages for an analysis of land ownership, categorized by slave ownership, and acreage. Owsley argued that to view the yeomanry as only a formless mass that filled the space between the planters leads a historian to incorrect conclusions. The counties that he examined ranged from Plantation Belt to Upcountry counties and he commingled the two yeoman populations found there. In some ways Owsley, while giving the yeomanry creditability, continued like many historians before and after him and chose not to give yeomanry their own space.

Owsley published his work in 1949 and interestingly never mentioned in his book the work of Blanche Henry Clark and her text *The Tennessee Yeoman, 1840-1860*, published in 1942. Clark tackled the question of the Southern social structure and like Owsley used the Federal census as an important primary source. *The Tennessee Yeoman* constituted a *tour de force* survey of the 1850 and 1860 census and posited the fact that there was evidence of "middle-class and yeoman farmers who did not own any slaves."⁴ Because of the scale of the problem of conducting a meaningful analysis over a large geographic area, Clark performed a sampling of the data, and selected ten counties in Tennessee that represented the geographic regions. Clark directly addressed the myth of the Southern three-tier society, that is the masters, the slave, and the poor white, and the existence of the yeomanry was the primary premise of her

⁴ Blanche Henry Clark, *The Tennessee Yeomen, 1840-1860* (Nashville, Tenn.: Vanderbilt university press, 1942), xvii.

study. Clark divided Tennessee into three regions and studied ten counties through a sampling of the census. The analysis of the census data by Clark covered a wider geographic area than Owsley and answered a wider range of questions including livestock and agricultural production. The method of sampling, selecting a slaveholder and nonslaveholders on each page, was of questionable reliability and her conclusions subject to challenge. The analysis was superficial, consisting more of a comparison between counties than an actual analysis of the data. Nonetheless, the work was of significant relevance to the study of Southern yeomanry.

The analysis of the yeomanry remains problematic, not because of his social invisibility or lack of private papers, but the context in which historians have tended to study him or her. Owsley clearly stated that his purpose in *Plain Folk* was to study the yeomanry; however, the reality was that Owsley focused a great deal of the analysis on the slaveholder. Without a doubt, he had identified a specimen of the yeomanry in Upcountry Georgia, but defined the yeomanry in terms related to the slaveholder. In the end, he denied their class-consciousness, primarily because he required oppression for the formation of class, once again placing the fate of the yeomanry in the planter's hands. In Owsley's view, the "plain folk" remained socially invisible, more specifically socially unconscious, until reconstruction. Clark, on the other hand, freely used the term class, particularly in regards to slaveholders and nonslaveholders. Her conclusion was that economic conditions were the determining factor and dismissed the issue of class as something found in any community. The key point made by Clark was that planters and yeoman lived side by side. Clark was obviously more concerned with the mathematics of the situation than ideology.

Any investigation into the nature of the Southern yeomanry starts with a clear statement of the social structure of the South. The travel books that were so popular during the antebellum

period contributed to the traditional view of the Southern three-tier class structure, made up of masters, slaves, and poor whites. The quintessential example of an author of what Stephanie McCurry called bourgeois travel literature was Frederick Law Olmsted.⁵ Interestingly enough Olmsted, like Owsley and Clark, used the 1850 Census for his initial sociological conclusions concerning the South, and he engaged in a “back of the napkin” type of analysis of cotton production for plantations and slaves. He made it quite clear, early in his travelogue, that there were only two types of white men in the South, planters and poor farmers. In Olmsted’s experience and opinion, almost any sign of prosperity placed an individual into the planter class and that “for every rich man’s house [he] passed a dozen shabby and half-finished cottages, and at least a hundred cabins – mere hovels, such as none but a poor farmer would house his cattle in at [sic] the North.”⁶ McCurry argued that the invisibility of the yeomanry was the product of an ideological agenda that precluded the possibility of such a class existing in an aristocratic slaveocracy. She pointed to Edward Said’s *Orientalism* as relevant to explaining the invisibility of the yeomanry. Said effectively argued that pure knowledge, when produced by an imperialist power or a power with an interest in a specific geographic region, became political power. The logical extension of this premise was that these travelogues represented an attempt to “control, manipulate, even incorporate, what is a manifestly different world.”⁷

James C. Cobb discussed the origin of the Southern Cavalier myth in *Away Down South* and added weight behind McCurry’s argument. While not specifically referring to Said, Cobb expounded on an argument that echoed the premise of *Orientalism*, which was the ability

⁵ McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Households, Gender Relations, and the Political Culture of the Antebellum South Carolina Low Country*, 39.

⁶ Frederick Law Olmsted, *The Cotton Kingdom; a Traveller's Observations on Cotton and Slavery in the American Slave States. Based Upon Three Former Volumes of Journeys and Investigations by the Same Author*, ed. Arthur M. Schlesinger (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1962), 11-17.

⁷ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, 1st ed. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 9-15.

of one culture to seize the political high ground by defining the nature of another. In Cobb's argument, the North, through its ascendant print technology, laid claim to the American identity and labeled the South as an aberrant society with an extreme class structure that effectively pushed the poor whites to the bottom of the economic ladder, unlike the Northern worker who embodied the "country's character and virtue."⁸ This, in Said's reasoning, was a political act and exercise of domination. This logic lent credence to what was a mounting Southern anxiety over Northern abolitionist propaganda. While on the surface the South's reaction to Northern politically hostility to its way of life may have been interpreted as paranoid, the truth was closer to it being a perfectly rational response.

The evidence had always been present that there was more to the Southern class structure than masters, slaves, and poor whites. Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, in *Life and Labor in the Old South*, systematically established the existence of something other than the traditional three-tier class structure and pointed out the fact that there were four million whites in the South with no relationship to slavery.⁹ W. J. Cash, in his *The Mind of the South*, spoke of the man in the middle, clearly stated, "ten thousands – possibly the majority- of the non-slaveholders were really yeoman farmers."¹⁰ Owsley presented the argument that the simplification of Southern social life resulted from the reports of Frederick Law Olmsted and other travelogue writers. Interesting enough he too posited a theory similar to Said's *Orientalism*, and suggested that individuals like the British economist J. E. Cairnes "appears to have rested his generalization about the social structure of the South largely upon those of Olmsted, Weston, and Hinton

⁸ James C. Cobb, *Away Down South: A History of Southern Identity* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 16.

⁹ Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, *Life and Labor in the Old South* (Boston,: Little, Brown, and company, 1929).

¹⁰ W. J. Cash, *The Mind of the South* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1941), 22.

Rowen Helper.”¹¹ As Said contended that Orientalism is an “asset of structures inherited from the past,” Owsley contended that students of the South drew on a similar historic warehouse of authoritative knowledge to construct their view of antebellum Southern society.¹²

The idea that there was a conscious effort to differentiate the North and the South carried a hint of conspiracy. However, the truth operated at a much lower level of consciousness. The process of objectifying the South supplied a moral justification for the exercise of power and authority over the South. The best example of this was the abolitionist movement. Defining the South as an aristocracy where an individual was either master, slave, or poor white allowed the abolitionist to project power from a moral high ground. The objectification of the South was not a conscious act but a positive reinforcing cycle, nonetheless. As is so often the case in society, success encouraged repetition. As this assignment process took hold and produced a reassuring aftereffect, the abolitionist gained influence and, encouraged yet another sequence of objectifying. The disambiguation was that Northern centers of power feed on differentiation. The South had to be an alien landscape for the North to be superior and exercise moral and therefore political authority.

Lewis Cecil Gray, in his monumental text the *History of Agriculture in Southern United States to 1860*, considering the scale and scope of the two volumes, was compelled to address the social structure of the South. Gray’s primary focus was the working of the Southern farm lending itself to a very systematic approach. He tended to state the fact and move on. Gary decisively came down on the side of class-consciousness for the yeoman and placed them into a category called “commercial farmer.” He argued that the economic success of some of the yeomanry placed them in a similar categorical relationship to small planters; however, the diversity of their

¹¹ Owsley, *Plain Folk of the Old South*.

¹² Said, 122; Owsley, 4.

crops allowed them “a more comfortable type of existence.”¹³ He described them as a “rabble who owned less than ten slaves,” “characterized by sturdy independence and self-respect,” and “densely ignorant, pursuing a careless and thriftless agriculture.”¹⁴ His dismissal of the yeomanry was in agreement with his contemporaries. The real importance of Gray was his insight into the farming methods that the yeoman used and estimates of their crop yields.

Lacy K. Ford, Stephanie McCurry, and Stephan Hahn all approached the yeoman from disparate themes and temporal terminuses. Ford sought satisfaction to the age-old query, why did the “plain folk” support the planter elite in their “fratricidal carnage?” His schema for doing this was to examine Upcountry South Carolina. McCurry selected the other end of South Carolina, the Low Country, and argued that the yeomanry and planter elite shared a common interest in determining the conditions of power: dependencies and private property. Hahn traveled to Upcountry Georgia to interpret the factors that made that geographic area the incubator and hotbed of nineteenth century populism. All three authors discussed similar points: republicanism, individualism, self-sufficiency, kinship, fear of dependency, and household economic units. Hahn was the only one to examine the yeoman in an environment in which he exercised cultural hegemony. Ford scrutinizes a region that was progressively losing its white population. McCurry inspected a world in which the top ten percent controlled 70% of the wealth and the great planters were increasingly more dominant. The data does not describe these regions as anything other than environments where the yeoman managed to survive.

¹³ Lewis Cecil Gray and Esther Katherine Thompson, *History of Agriculture in the Southern United States to 1860*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Gloucester, P. Smith, 1958), 488-92.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 500.

Hahn does differentiate the yeomanry of the Plantation Belt versus the Upcountry yeoman and finds “divergent interest and experience.”¹⁵ The differential is critical to Hahn’s argument, because in the late nineteenth century Upcountry yeomanry would be the individual that aggressively supported the populist movement in Georgia. The picture that emerged from these scholars is a class of independent farmers, isolated from the markets, and whose primary farming rationale was “safety first,” or one that balanced his nutritional needs against any potential money earned from a cash crop, specifically cotton.¹⁶ In the context of this study, what Hahn has to say about the yeoman is more relevant than what Ford and McCurry had to say. His differentiation of the yeomanry was significant and cast a shadow over all previous works.

Hahn used a sampling of the 1850 through 1880 census for two Upcountry Georgia counties and he conducted a much more far reaching and in-depth analysis than Owsley or Ford. Hahn analyzed occupations, slave and land distribution, acreage improvement, farm size, crop production, and tenant production. He perfected Owsley’s definition of the yeoman in terms of improved acreage, the cutoff being less than 200 acres, and having few or no slaves.¹⁷ Lacy K. Ford, in his *Origins of Southern Radicalism*, produced a sampling of six South Carolina counties for 1850 and 1860. Ford clearly placed his Upcountry yeoman in the cotton belt, much like Owsley’s evaluation, and looked at a yeomanry that dwelt in the narrow spaces between the planter elites. While the primary analysis was of the 1850 and 1860 census, Ford statistically demonstrated the transition of the South Carolina Upcountry into a plantation demographic. Unlike Hahn’s analysis, Ford posited a question and called on the data for the answer, but still he

¹⁵ Steven Hahn, *The Roots of Southern Populism: Yeoman Farmers and the Transformation of the Georgia Upcountry, 1850-1890*, Updated ed. (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 27.

¹⁶ J. William Harris, "The Organization of Work on a Yeoman Slaveholder's Farm," *Agricultural History* 64, no. 1 (1990): , 40.

¹⁷ Hahn, *The Roots of Southern Populism: Yeoman Farmers and the Transformation of the Georgia Upcountry, 1850-1890*, 27.

covered many of the same issues of acreage improvement, occupation, and farm size. Of particular interest to Ford was the issue of dual economy and self-sufficiency. He also argued that the South Carolina yeomanry balanced the issue of food production against the need for a cash crop. Ford, in his search for the origin of Southern radicalism, characterized the yeomanry as holding fewer than six slaves.¹⁸ McCurry, in her study of small worlds, added the need for the yeomanry to work his land alongside whatever slaves he may have held. The definition added a dimension that struck a chord of critical importance in the examination of the yeomanry. McCurry effectively suggested that the economic status acted as the differentiator between the planter and the yeoman.¹⁹

Contemporary historians have successfully discredited the myth of the three-tier Southern society. The actual class structure is still very much under discussion. There clearly existed a master class, slave class, a yeomanry, and a poor white class. Jonathan Daniel Wells argued in *The Origins of the Southern Middle Class, 1800-1861* for the existence of a Southern middle class. While some historians have used the nomenclature of middle-class in conjunction with the yeomanry, in the strictest sense they are in error. The term middle class carries a decidedly industrial connotation. To ascribe middle class characteristics to the yeomanry ignores the Marxist basis of class distinction and its critical importance in the rise of a consumer society. Wells argued for a bourgeoisie or urban class, more in line with the idea of a middle class. Wells pointed to the urban and manufacturing areas to add additional complexity to the Southern class structure. He drew a picture of a rapidly growing urban environment populated by a class of storekeepers, bankers, clerks, teachers, doctors, editors, and ministers that shared a common

¹⁸, Lacy K. Ford, *Origins of Southern Radicalism: The South Carolina Upcountry, 1800-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 71-74.

¹⁹ McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Households, Gender Relations, and the Political Culture of the Antebellum South Carolina Low Country*, 47-48.

intellectual culture with their counterparts in the North. Wells posited that this group developed a class interest separate from that of the planter and yeomanry. The main thrust of Wells' argument was that the intellectual provenience into which this Southern middle class tapped was Northern in origin. Critical to this evaluation of the yeoman class was Wells' contention that a separate class was able to develop outside the domination of the planter elite. This would lend credence to the proposition that planter society was not dominate everywhere and that alternatives were able to thrive.²⁰

Eugene Genovese, in his examination of why the yeomanry supported the planter elite in the succession movement, positioned as an apodictic truth the existence of an independent yeomanry, which might "profitably be understood as a distinct social class."²¹ Genovese also distinguishes between the yeomanry of the low country and the Upcountry pointing to the Upcountry's geographic isolation, which allowed them to control the local politics and shape "a culture of their own."²² The argument continued with the premise that the Upcountry yeomanry viewed the aristocratic planter elite as a negative counterpoint to his own existence. While Genovese recognized the existence, independence, and cultural uniqueness of the Upcountry yeomanry, he inevitably returned to the Low country cousin for his discussion of the secession movement.

The South, dominated by the planter elite, was a land of honor. A Southerner determined his worth by the opinion of others. The concept of honor had no place for God to judge man but his reputation was bestowed by his peers, based on his outward projection, which revolved

²⁰ Jonathan Daniel Wells, *The Origins of the Southern Middle Class, 1800-1861* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

²¹ Eugene D. Genovese, "Yeomen Farmers in a Slaveholders' Democracy," *Agricultural History* 49, no. 2 (1975): , 333.

²² *Ibid*, 333.

around temperament, speech, looks, and actions.²³ The concept of honor was a social order or framework around which society constructed its institutions. It permeated all aspects of Southern life, controlled how individuals thought, acted, interacted, and gave value and meaning to life. The inconsistencies between the code and reality created an air of violence just below the surface, ready to spring forth and compel reality into alignment with honor.

The reality of a yeomanry social class suggested a group of individuals with a set of common interests. Those interests were projections of the circumstances of their situation; geographically isolated, uneducated, detached from the market, politically weak, and agrarian in comparison to the well educated, river and railroad accessible, global market dependent, and politically powerful planter. This difference in material base generated a physically divergent set of needs. These divergent needs procreated alternative institutions. Institutions represent the pattern of life of a society, the process of interfacing with the material world. The individual establishes a routine and paradigm of action that successfully coerces from the material world the essentials that fulfill their physiological or psychological requirements. The difference between the material world of the planter and the Upcountry yeomanry supports the contention each class would give rise to divergent set of institutions. Those institutions under consideration with the Upcountry yeomanry of Georgia are the church, the country store, and the legal system. The rationale behind the selection of these institutions is the availability of evidence of the yeomanry existence.

Georgia offers an excellent opportunity to identify a yeomanry society with five distinct geographical regions: Sea Islands, Pine Barrens, Plantation Belt, Upcountry, and Mountains.²⁴ This regional structure, shown in Figure 1.1, is critical and deterministic to the social, political,

²³ Bertram Wyatt-Brown and Bertrand Wyatt-Brown, *Honor and Violence in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 30-31.

²⁴ Hahn, 7.

and material development of Georgia. As an individual traveled from the coast inland, the changing basic economic condition of the inhabitants acquaints him with a transition to a new geographic region.

The Sea Islands were the heart of the black seed cotton and the original Georgia plantations. The Pine Barrens was a lightly populated physical barrier of sandy soil inhospitable to the advancement of the cotton culture. The Plantation Belt, also identified as the eastern cotton belt, was home to the “green seed” cotton that allowed for the explosive growth of Georgia after 1800. The farm value and investment of the Plantation Belt averaged approximately \$6.90 per acre. Diversified farming populated the Upcountry because the late and early frost made growing cotton a risky business. The farm value and investment for the Upcountry still managed average approximately \$5.68 per acre. The Mountains was home of the poor whites who scratched out a subsistence in the valleys. Here the typical farm value and investment averaged \$3.90 per acre, 30% less than Forsyth, and 45% less than the Plantation Belt.

A datum line drawn from Savannah, Georgia to Chattanooga, Tennessee, reveals an interesting pattern in regards to the 1850 census slave to free inhabitants’ ratio, as shown in Table 1.1. The ratio quickly identifies the transition between the five geographic regions. The correlation between shifts in the ratio and the regions clearly reflects a change in the farming environment and economic basis of the community. Interestingly, the Chatham County ratio was low in comparison to other Sea Island ratios, such as Liberty County with a 2.95 ratio. This was because of the urban buildup around Savannah. This fact makes the ratio drop in Bulloch and Emanuel counties much more dramatic than it was in actuality. The Pine Barren region was inhospitable to not only slavery, but also farming period. The transition into the Plantation Belt was every bit as pronounced as the transition between the Sea Islands and the Pine Barrens. The

passage into the Upcountry reflected not only a decrease in the slave population but was accompanied with an increase in white population, a significant difference in what occurred in other geographic transitions where slave population was the primary factor. As a confirmation that this pattern was not an isolated event, DeKalb County, located south of the Chattahoochee, turns out to have a .26 ratio in comparison to Cobb County, located north of the Chattahoochee, with a .20. The rapid drop in the ratio appeared to level off with the crossing over of the Chattahoochee River. The argument presented here is that when the ratio dropped below .20, the datum line has entered yeoman country and that Forsyth is the first county on that datum line that is effectively a yeomanry society.

The difference between a region in which the slave ratio was 1.74 versus .13 plays to the very issue of labor. In Hancock County, labor was clearly a commodity bought and sold as needed. In Forsyth County, labor was a way of life for most of the whites, projected the essence of who they were, and constituted a dissimilar social relationship to that of Hancock County. This would suggest that the institutions of these two fundamentally disparate counties should be divergent; one a hierarchical, honor bound, market-oriented society, the other an egalitarian, ethically driven, independent, and subsistent based society. These dissimilar economic conditions should give rise to a set of divergent supporting institutions that responded to the needs of the dominant social class as they squeezed from their material existence the necessities of life.

The hegemonic position of the planter elite defined the shape of the social institutions in the Plantation Belt and clouded the yeomanry identity. McCurry's worked on yeomanry in South Carolina and found her yeoman living within a planter society. The study defined the yeomanry in the context of their relationship to the planter elite and their degree of independence. McCurry

Table 1.1. 1850 Slave Ratios across Datum Line from Savannah to Chattanooga.

| County | Whites | Slaves | Slave Ratio | Region |
|------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| Chatham | 9,152 | 14,018 | 1.53 | Sea Islands |
| Liberty | 2,002 | 5,908 | 2.95 | Sea Island |
| Bulloch | 2,840 | 1,460 | .51 | Pine Barrens |
| Emanuel | 3,591 | 962 | .27 | Pine Barrens |
| Jefferson | 3,717 | 5,367 | 1.44 | Plantation Belt |
| Warren | 6,458 | 6,108 | .99 | Plantation Belt |
| Hancock | 4,210 | 7,306 | 1.74 | Plantation Belt |
| Greene | 4,744 | 8,266 | 1.74 | Plantation Belt |
| Morgan | 3,634 | 7,094 | 1.95 | Plantation Belt |
| Walton | 6,895 | 3,909 | .57 | Upcounty |
| Dekalb | 11,382 | 2,924 | .26 | Upcountry |
| Gwinnett | 8,952 | 2,294 | .26 | Upcounty |
| Cobb | 11,568 | 2,272 | .20 | Upcountry |
| Forsyth | 7,812 | 1,027 | .13 | Upcounty |
| Cherokee | 11,630 | 1,157 | .10 | Upcounty |
| Gilmer | 8,236 | 200 | .02 | Mountain |
| Murray | 12,492 | 930 | .15 | Mountain |
| Walker | 11,408 | 1,664 | .15 | Mountain |

Source: U.S 1850 Federal Census Free Inhabitant Schedule I.²⁵

²⁵ United States Census Office and J. D. B. De Bow, *The Seventh Census of the United States, 1850: Embracing a Statistical View of Each of the States and Territories* (New York, N.Y.: N. Ross Pub., 1990), 364-65.

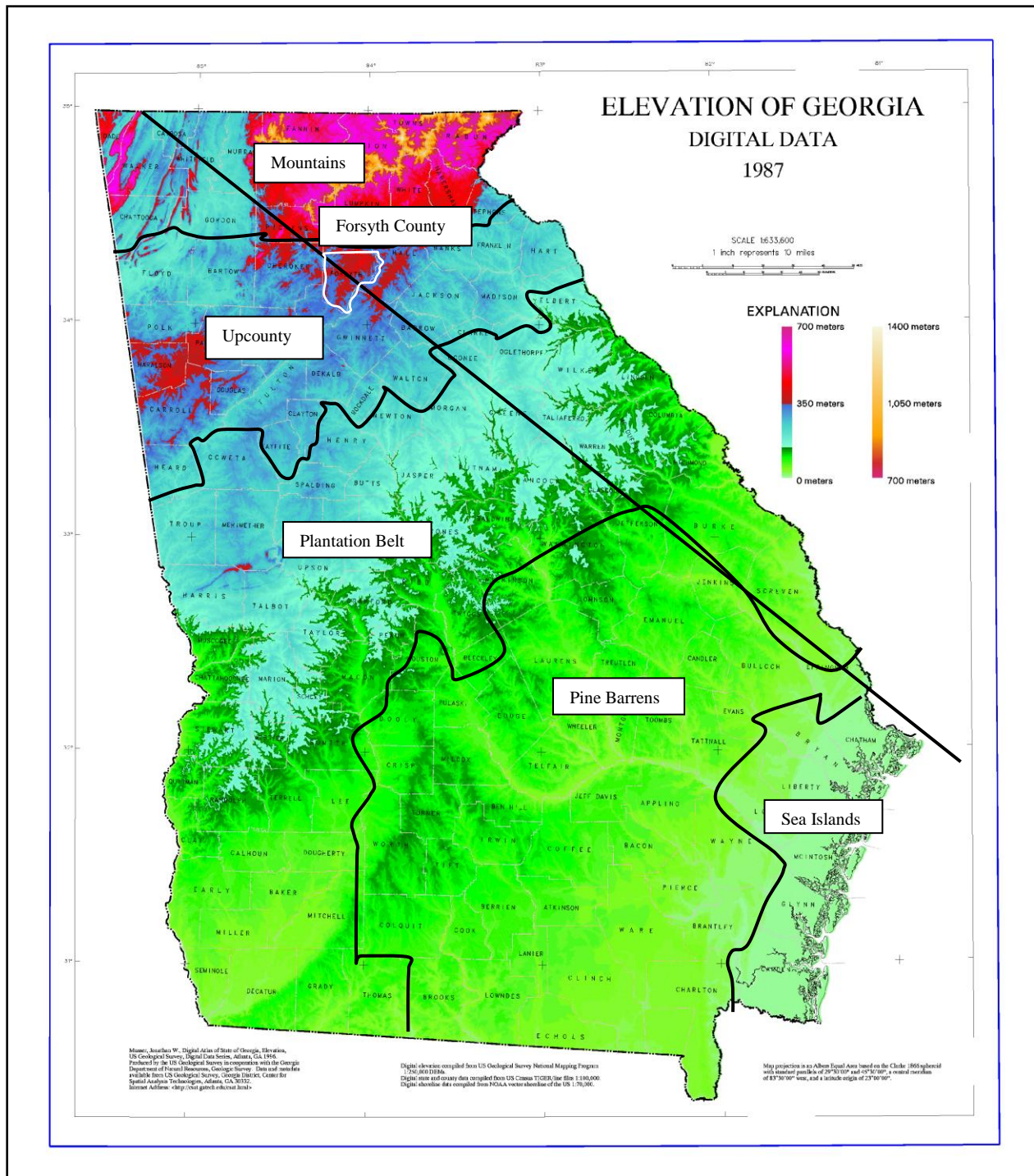


Figure 1.1. Georgia Geographic Regions and Forsyth County. *Source:* U.S. Geological Survey and Steven Hahn, *The Roots of Southern Populism: Yeoman Farmers and the Transformation of the Georgia Upcountry, 1850-1890*, Updated ed. (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).

characterized the issue of independence in terms of power and the argument that “the control of property and dependents conferred the rights of freemen on the yeomanry.”²⁶ While this was a self-fulfilling prophesy, the point is that the definition was generated from the institutions that support the planter elite. Yeomanry and the planter elite were competing on the same platform using the same institutional definitions. The contention here is that to ascertain and analyze the yeomanry the historian must find his natural habitat where yeomanry created his institutions and thrived.

In the Plantation Belt, the yeomanry was an aspiring planter. In the Upcountry of Georgia, he was a self-sufficiency seeking farmer. In the Plantation Belt, the yeomanry competed with the planter for space and power. In the Upcountry, he competed with nature and characterized himself by his ability to be independent. The examination of the institutions in Upcountry Georgia, assuming that was the ingenuous haunt of the yeomanry, should allow the analyst to define the yeoman through his needs.

These was a clear transition line between the between plantation and yeoman country. That line was the Chattahoochee River. South of the river cotton and plantations dominated. North of the river was corn and the yeoman country. Table 1.2 contains a series of ratios for 12 counties that bordered the Chattahoochee. Five counties were south of the Chattahoochee and seven were north of the Chattahoochee. These ratios specifically address the material or economic makeup of the counties under analysis. South of the Chattahoochee there were more slaves, less illiteracy, more improved land, less corn grown, more cotton grown, and more money invested in the farming operations. North of the river, all of these parameters shifted in the opposite direction and suggested that these counties represented a particular economic model

²⁶ McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Households, Gender Relations, and the Political Culture of the Antebellum South Carolina Low Country*, 92.

in comparison to those counties south of the river. One aspect of this study is to analyze the census data in depth and in total. Most census analyses by historians for this period, because of technological reasons, have used samplings. Based on the information available some of those samplings have been small. This is not to imply that small samples are not accurate, but that larger samples increase the confidence interval. Forsyth County indices fell into the middle range for most of parameters analyzed and were typical for counties on the north riverside of the Chattahoochee River. The key to the selection of Forsyth for this study, besides the readily availability of primary sources, was the unremarkability of the county itself in comparison to those of counties north of the Chattahoochee in total. If there were any profound about Forsyth during this period, it would defeat the purpose of the study.

Table 1.2. Analysis of Transitional Counties on the Chattahoochee River.

| | Slave/ Free Ratio | Illiteracy Percent | Improved/ Unimproved | Corn Bushel/ Acre | Bushels/ Cotton Bale | Investment per Capita |
|---|-------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| South of the Chattahoochee River | | | | | | |
| Cowetta | 0.66 | 10% | 0.55 | 6 | 50 | \$ 238 |
| Campbell | 0.26 | 2% | 0.38 | 7 | 89 | \$ 159 |
| Dekalb | 0.26 | 6% | 0.44 | 6 | 180 | \$ 104 |
| Gwinnett | 0.26 | 10% | 0.44 | 5 | 172 | \$ 115 |
| Jackson | 0.43 | 8% | 0.55 | 4 | 257 | \$ 115 |
| North of the Chattahoochee River | | | | | | |
| Carroll | 0.13 | 14% | 0.22 | 8 | 255 | \$ 88 |
| Cobb | 0.20 | 3% | 0.34 | 6 | 133 | \$ 70 |
| Cherokee | 0.10 | 16% | 0.39 | 9 | 1,636 | \$ 84 |
| Forsyth | 0.13 | 19% | 0.40 | 8 | 720 | \$ 97 |
| Lumpkin | 0.12 | 13% | 0.34 | 8 | 1,7337 | \$ 81 |
| Hall | 0.18 | 20% | 0.19 | 8 | 1,443 | \$ 86 |
| Habersham | 0.16 | 6% | 0.16 | 6 | 7,464 | \$ 65 |

Source: U.S 1850 Federal Census Free Inhabitant Schedule IV.²⁷

²⁷ United States Census Office and De Bow, *The Seventh Census of the United States, 1850: Embracing a Statistical View of Each of the States and Territories*, 364-65.

The territory north of the Chattahoochee River, was the last frontier for Georgia. If one had to choose a date that the Cherokee Nation ceased to be it might as well have been October 3, 1831 when Wilson Lumpkin won election to the governorship of Georgia based on his promise to auction off the Cherokee lands in a lottery, the traditional Georgia method for distributing Native American land to state residents. The state held the seventh Georgia lottery on October 22, 1832 with “85,000 people competing for 18,309” lots of 160 acres. A total of 133,000 individuals participated in the Gold Lottery, held on the same day, for 35,000 forty acre lots believed to hold gold.²⁸ Out of this appropriated territory, the state of Georgia created ten counties, one of which was Forsyth. The state set most of Forsyth County aside as gold lots. On 75 of the Forsyth lots, state surveyors found Cherokees living.²⁹ The Treaty of New Echota, signed three years after the land lottery, stipulated the appointment of “suitable agents who shall make a just and fair valuation of all such improvements now in the possession of the Cherokees.”³⁰ A review of the certificates testifying to the valuation of these improvements gave a surprising testimony to the status of the Cherokee Nation. It was not unusual for these certificates to list two story houses, detached kitchens, smoke houses, corncribs, peach and apple orchards, and barns. John Rogers received \$3,400 for his house alone and a total of \$21,014. In addition to the improvements, the Cherokees received a spoliation allowance for lost revenue. The typical value of these certificates was between \$2,000 and \$3,000.³¹

By exploring the institutions that met the needs of the yeomanry in an environment where he held cultural hegemony, beyond the influence of the planter elite, a historian should gain an

²⁸ David Williams, *The Georgia Gold Rush: Twenty-Niners, Cherokees, and Gold Fever* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1995), 51-52., GALILEO Digital Initiative Database, "Acts of the General Assembly of the State of Georgia," in *Georgia Legislative Documents* (1831)., September, 28, 2008.

²⁹ Garland C. Bagley, *History of Forsyth County, Georgia, 1832-1932*, 2 vols., vol. 1 (Easley, S.C.: Southern Historical Press, Inc., 1985), 75-76..

³⁰ Oklahoma State University Library, "Treaty with the Cherokee, 1835," in *Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties*, ed. Charles J. Kappler (1835).

³¹ Bagley, *History of Forsyth County, Georgia, 1832-1932*, 154-84.

accurate view of the yeomanry. These well-documented institutions selected for the analysis were the direct product, or were required to adjust to the needs of the antebellum yeomanry of Upcountry Georgia. While historians have argued that the yeoman existed, few have examined him out of the shadow of the planter. Granted, Stephen Hahn's work was an attempt to isolate the yeomanry, but his objective was to lay the groundwork for explaining why the Upcountry Georgia yeomanry turned to populism in the late nineteenth century. The reality of the postbellum Upcountry Georgia yeomanry reflected an individual rapidly losing his independence and sinking into a state of tenancy. Hahn clearly argued for the differentiation between the yeomanry of the Plantation Belt and the yeoman of the Upcountry. His geographic focus is on Carroll and Jackson counties. The slave ratios for these two counties were .18 percent and .46 percent respectively in 1860. While Carroll County clearly fell into the category of yeoman country, it was apparent that Jackson County, with farms almost three times the size of Forsyth's, fell into planter country. This coupled with the amount of cotton both of these counties produced in 1860, 3,982 bales for Carroll, and 1,594 bales for Jackson, suggested that subsistence farming was not dominant. Hahn based his examination of these two counties on a desire to explain the Upcountry's support of populism. While this did not negate what Hahn had to say about yeomanry, it limited what he was searching for in the historical evidence.

The question a historian asks often determines the answer a historian gets. In this case, the question is what were the institutions like that supported and fulfilled the needs of the yeoman in those counties of Georgia where he was culturally and socially dominant? The objective is to gain a clear view of the yeoman without the contamination of the overshadowing planter class. In order to accomplish this it is best to identify a location that was beyond the reach of the planter class. There were such places in the antebellum South that the planter class chose

not to move and essentially left to the yeomanry for a wide range of geographical, economical, or meteorological reasons. Forsyth Country was one such place.

CHAPTER TWO: FORSYTH COUNTY POPULATIONS, 1850 AND 1860 FEDERAL CENSUS

An investigation, study, and analysis of the social setting of a group of people best starts with a study of the demographic numbers that are available. In the case of any study of antebellum America, a historian is fortunate to find this period at the dawn of applied statistics and the collection of demographic data. Mandated by the 1787 Constitution, a national census and democratic representative government go hand-in-hand. The early decennial census embodied a series of learning cycles as the government attempted to eliminate errors and ameliorate the accuracy in identifying its constituency. The 1850 and 1860 census captured Mary Lincoln in Springfield, Illinois and graphically demonstrated a slip that became part of the statistical database of antebellum America. In 1850, the Census documented that Mrs. Lincoln was the 28-years-old wife of Abraham Lincoln. Ten years later, the 1860 census diagnosed Mrs. Lincoln as capable of defying time and space by assigning her the age of 35-years-old.³² While this type of miscue is disconcerting, the fact that Mrs. Lincoln even appeared in the record was the significant issue. It does not take long to realize that a historian must approach this type of data with some discretion. With this issue in mind, a historian is able to ask a wide range of questions and develop a statistical image of the individuals under study. Often the data points to the need for further study. Either way, 1850 and 1860 census data gives a historian the first clear demographic portrait of antebellum American and in this case Forsyth County, Georgia.

³² Loretto Dennis Szucs, Matthew Wright, *Finding Answers in U.S. Census Records* (Orem, Utah: Ancestry Publishing, 2001), 6. Mary Todd Lincoln was born in December 13, 1818. In 1850 Mrs. Lincoln was actually 31-years-old. She evidently increased the size of the numeric deception in 1860 when she was 41-years-old.

The primary contribution of the work of Frank Lawrence Owsley and Blanche Henry Clark was their use of the Federal Census of 1850 and 1860. The 1850 Census, seventh census of the United States, represented a radical break in methodology for the decennial census required by the Constitution. This transformation of the 1850 Census was the result of several undercurrents flowing through the Congress. The 1840 statistics revealed the source of several problems, shifting centers of powers and errors in the collection of data.

These undercurrents resulted in individuals such as John C. Calhoun, becoming concerned over the erosion of the Southern power base, opposing the new 1850 Census as invasive and an attempt at concentration of power in the Federal government. Other individuals opposed it because it did not go far enough in correcting the problems of the 1840 Census or supply the detail needed for a more complete understanding of the increasingly dynamic economy. To fully appreciate the political environment within which the preparation for the 1850 Census started out, one must realize that this was also the year of the Compromise of 1850. It was a particularly contentious period brought on by the disruptive consequences of the acquisition of a large portion of Mexico and the Southern need to preserve the slave/free-state balance. Expansion of the Republic and the ideology of Manifest Destiny was a dual edged sword, creating new opportunities but also disrupting a delicate political equilibrium. This made the realization, evident in the 1840 Census, that the census data could be wrong even more disturbing to the politicians.

Their solution was the creation of a Census Board and the appointment of a superintendent to oversee the process. The need and desire for finer detail resulted in a shift of the unit of analysis from the head of family to the individual. This meant that for the first time in United States history individuals would become more than a stroke in a column but actually a

name. That by itself carried significant philosophical implications. The new Census Office in Washington assumed responsibility for tabulation, transferring it from the field. The 1850 Census was broken into six schedules in order to simplify the data collection process and reduce some of the errors evident in the 1840 Census. The Census Board initially designed these tables. The problem was they were more interested in collecting meaningful data than resolving political issues. These political issues quickly surfaced with Schedule II, the Slave Inhabitant Schedule and immediately came under debate by Congress. The Board had naively intended to gather information at the individual level with the slaves also, allowing for the analysis of a wide range of demographic data concerning the very subject that Congress had worked for decades to avoid. Opposition from the Southern states, particularly South Carolina, resulted in the elimination of the collection of any information for the slaves other than collecting the owner's name and the slave's, sex, age, and color. The Southerners were concerned with the humanizing process that collecting slave names might have resulted in and preferred that they remain a black mass. Amazingly, the Census Board had not foreseen any problems with the tabulation of the Schedules in Washington and viewed the process as a solution. The magnitude of the task surprised the Census Board and overwhelmed the Census Office. The 1840 Census required only 20 clerks in Washington. However, the 1850 Census needed 170 clerks for tabulation.³³

While the analysis of an individual census effectively gives a historian a snapshot of the statistical situation, it is a static image. Only spatial and temporal comparisons bring forth the shifts in demographic and therefore political importance. A contrasting of the 1850 Census to the 1860 Census is critical for this evaluation. The preparation of the 1860 Census was very similar

³³ Margo J. Anderson, *The American Census: A Social History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 32-57, United States Census Office and De Bow, *The Seventh Census of the United States, 1850: Embracing a Statistical View of Each of the States and Territories*, 354-93.

to that used in the 1850 Census. The 1860 Census is mainly known for the paradoxical publishing and selling of a slave population density map of the South, of which the proceeds went to the benefit of the wounded veterans of the U.S. Army.³⁴ The temporal analysis of these two censuses highlights what were not unique problems in Georgia.

The rapidly increasing population drove the state government of Georgia to continuously redraw and create new counties. While Georgia formed Forsyth County in 1832, just south of Forsyth, the legislature formed Milton County in 1857 by combining parts of Forsyth, Cherokee, and Cobb. The relevance of this minor point surfaces only when an analyst starts comparing the Forsyth census records of 1850 to 1860. While aggregate numbers are affected, an analysis of the available data suggests had that statistical comparison of 1850 to 1860 statistics demographic ratios should not be impacted by the loss of Forsyth's First Militia District to Milton.³⁵ See Appendix A for an analysis of the impact of the transfer of land and population to Milton County on the demographics of Forsyth County. Shifting boundaries between counties was a constant affair in antebellum Georgia, often driven for personal reasons and involving only a few lots. A classic example of this was the attempt of Benjamin H. Wright to transfer his residence to Carroll County in order to avoid lawsuits in Heard County. Georgia finally put an end to this type of politically motivated boundary manipulation in 1879 when the legislature assigned

³⁴ Anderson, *The American Census: A Social History*, 58-77, United States Census Office, J. C. G. Kennedy, and Norman Ross Publishing, "Population of the United States in 1860: Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census, under the Direction of the Secretary of the Interior," (New York, N.Y.: N. Ross Pub., 1990), 58-72.

³⁵ Total 1850 white population for Cherokee, Cobb, and Forsyth counties was 31,010. The total 1860 white population for Cherokee, Cobb, Forsyth, and the new Milton counties was 31,272 or less than 1% increase. The slave ratios for Cherokee County increased from .10 to .12 and Forsyth County remained at .13. Cobb County slave population increased dramatically from a .20 to a .37 slave ratio. The Milton County ratio was .15 in 1860. This would suggest that the land transferred from Forsyth to Milton had a typical Forsyth slave density. This is supported by the fact that Forsyth 1860 white population was 87% of 1850 and the 1850 slave population was 87% of the 1860 population. The conclusion is that the slave population's social relationship remained the same for Forsyth and Cherokee counties. Obviously something else was going on in Cobb County.

jurisdiction for boundaries changes to a complex process requiring approval of all county authorities involved in any reconfiguration of county lines.³⁶

Beneath the tabulated data published by the Census Office for the 1850 and 1860 Census are the six schedules themselves. Of particular interest in this study are Schedule I – Free Inhabitants, Schedule II – Slave Inhabitants, and Schedule IV – Agricultural.³⁷ Each schedule itself contains significant information on the social and economic structure of yeomanry environment. An analysis adds dimension when information is cross-tabulated. For example, the relationship between the agricultural production and the slave schedules or between the improved land and type of farm production allows for the correlation of the decision making process of the yeomanry. The objective of this type of analysis is to try and reveal the relationship between elements of the social structure and highlight the lines of influence on the decision making process of the yeoman. In other words, why did he decide to grow swine, cotton, or corn?

Free Inhabitants of Forsyth County

The free inhabitant demographic structure of Forsyth was unremarkable without a comparison, in this case to that of Hancock County, the quintessential Plantation Belt County. A comparison of the percentage breakdown by age, shown in Figure 2.1, for both counties indicated that Forsyth had 60 percent of its population below the age of 20, compared to Hancock's 53 percent. While not an overwhelmingly significant piece of information, it does suggest a younger population. This disparity appeared to occur in the five to fifteen year-old age

³⁶ James Calvin Bonner, *Georgia's Last Frontier; the Development of Carroll County* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1971), 63-64.

³⁷ United States Census Office, 7th census 1850, and J. D. B. De Bow, *The Seventh Census of the United States: 1850. Embracing a Statistical View of Each of the States and Territories, Arranged by Counties, Towns Etc. ... And an Appendix Embracing Notes Upon the Tales of Each of the States, Etc* (Washington: R. Armstrong, 1853), xii.

group. That would be reflective of starter families being the initial immigrants into the county. Forsyth had a 19 percent illiteracy rate in comparison to Hancock's three percent and the state's average of eight percent. While an analysis of illiteracy of the state as a whole did not indicate that this was solely an Upcountry problem, some of the highest rates did occur there. Hall County reflected a 20 percent rate, Cherokee at 16 percent Gilmer an 18 percent and Carroll with 14 percent all well above the state average. This illiteracy was not organic to the Upcountry but suggested that a filtering process was on going in the peopling of the Upcountry.

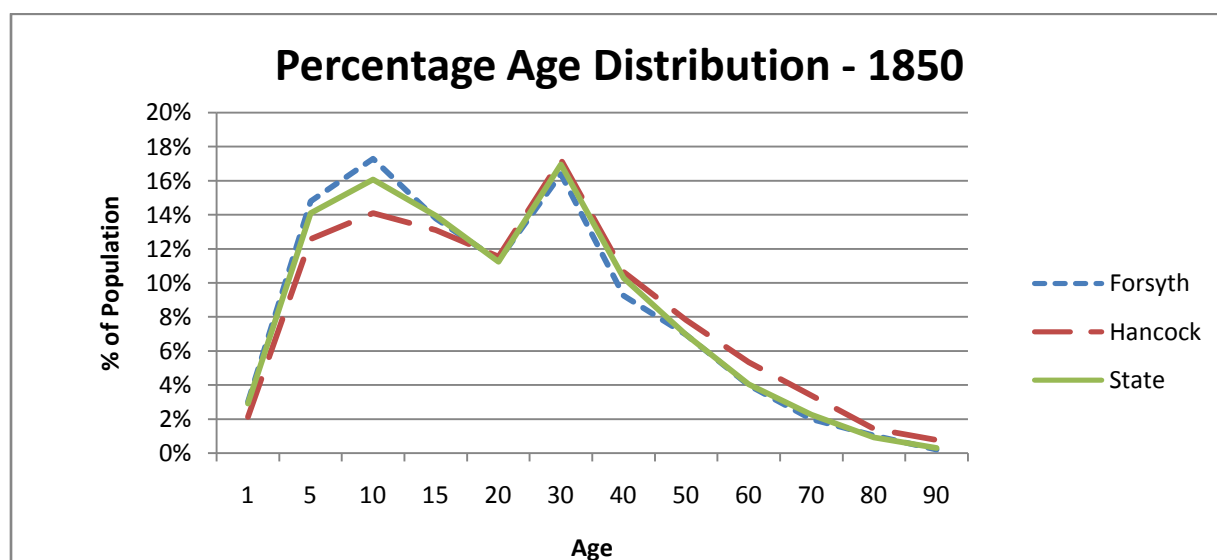


Figure 2.1. Percentage Age Distribution for 1850. *Source:* U.S 1850 Federal Census Schedule I.

The 1832 Land Lottery in which only state residents could participate had been the intended population source from which to draw the first wave of settlers for Forsyth County. That restriction would suggest that an analysis should reflect a high percentage of Georgia born residents. State officials enforced this policy and encouraged informants to report those participating illegally by rewarding the informants with half the lot drawn by the illegal

participant.³⁸ However, eighteen years later the 1850 Census documented that 34 percent of the residents of Forsyth were not native to the state, compared to 24 percent statewide. Considering that only Georgia residents got the land initially, this indicated that there had been a large influx of new out-of-state settlers. The source of this influx of new settlers was primarily South Carolina and North Carolina, 18 percent and 10 percent respectively.

These numbers implied that the famous Georgia lottery system was more about speculation than distributing the land fairly. Those Georgia residents who won a lot did not always move to their newly acquired land but sold their winning lottery ticket for a windfall profit. The Gold Lots were particularly subject to speculation with Georgia newspapers littered with advertisements of land speculators. One lot had changed hands twelve times by 1835.³⁹ With 28 percent of the over 20 born outside the state by 1850, this implies that the many of initial winners of the 1832 lotteries quickly sold their lots to immigrants from outside the state for a profit.

By 1830, Upcounty South Carolina had transitioned to a cotton economy dominated by planters where the population had been 80 percent white in 1800 and was almost 50 percent slave by 1850. Soil exhaustion and the expanding cotton economy pushed the South Carolina marginal farmer deeper into the southwest.⁴⁰ The disproportionate levels of illiteracy presence in Forsyth County, 19 percent versus 8 percent statewide, were not the result of a lack of schools as much as an uneducated population moving in from South Carolina. The large presences of a South Carolina population was part of a massive outmigration that had occurred and was

³⁸ Williams, *The Georgia Gold Rush: Twenty-Niners, Cherokees, and Gold Fever*, 55-56.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 78.

⁴⁰ Ford, *Origins of Southern Radicalism: The South Carolina Upcountry, 1800-1860*, 38-39, 44-50.

reflected by the fact that the South Carolina Upcountry population had actually declined by 1 percent between 1830 and 1850, the very period of the 6th and 7th Georgia Land Lottery.

Most scholars consider the family during this period as the basic economic unit or more specifically, the family was the site of production in the rural South. The family structure was criteria to the prosperity of a rural family, as opposed to a burden in an urban industrial setting. The total number of families in Forsyth County in 1850 was 1,334 compared to 1,223 in 1860. The creation of Milton County in 1857 confuses the data. The only way to work around the slicing off the southern portion of Forsyth is to attempt to reconstruct the data. In this case, the analyst needs to look at Cherokee, Cobb, Forsyth, and Milton in aggregate. The increase in free inhabitants in these four counties, from 1850 to 1860, was only 1 percent. Forsyth County gave up approximately 13 percent of its land area. Its 1860 population, in comparison to the 1850 census, dropped approximately 13 percent. This parallel loss of land and drop in population

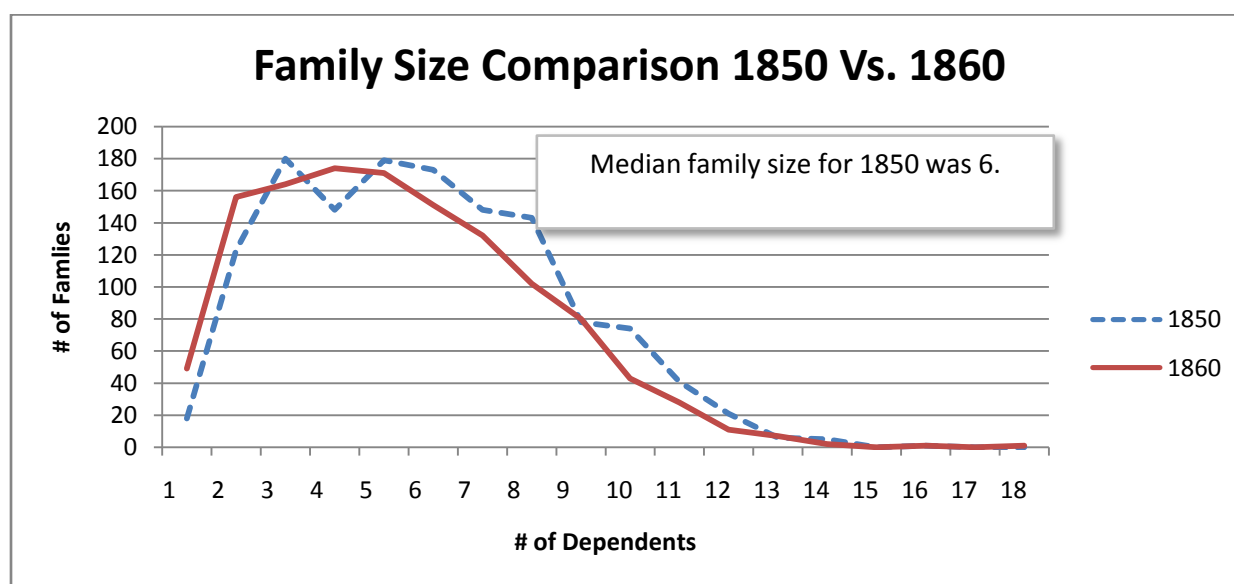


Figure 2.2. Family Size Comparison between 1850 and 1860. Source: U.S 1850 and 1860 Federal Census Free Inhabitant Schedule I.

supports the argument that ratios and comparisons between 1850 and 1860 data should be accurate and reflect actual demographic patterns external to the transfer of land and people. Refer to Appendix A further discussion of the impact of the creation of Milton County.

The relevant data point, shown in Figure 2.2 by an oh-so-subtle shift to the left, was the decline of the family size from a median of six in 1850 to five in 1860, small but significant. This is reflective of the maturing of the population, slowing of the immigration into Forsyth, and spinning off of new families. While the median age of the population remained fifteen, distribution of their age increased or as statisticians say, the distribution curve flattened, effectively increasing the number of working age individuals.

The instructions for the census enumerators directed them to assign each male over fifteen-years-old an occupation. The enumerators were a miserable failure in following their instructions. It was not even safe to conclude that what they gathered was a random sample because the logic they used is unknown. While it is safe to say that a 15-year-old male living on a farm was, in all probability, a farmer, the enumerators often assigned him no occupation. This obvious omission suggests that in all likelihood the enumerators in the case of Forsyth understated the farmer count. Forsyth County was a rural farming community and the 1850 Census indicated that 88 percent of those occupations recorded by the enumerators were farmers. The dominant occupation of farmer should not generate a surprise, whereas the complete job list, detailed in Appendix C, revealed a more textured the county. Farmer remained the dominant occupation. Supervening the farmers, in descending order of frequency, the enumerator found the following occupations in Forsyth County in 1850; blacksmith, carpenter, merchant, clergyman, physician, teacher, and miner. This list supplied insight only when compared to the same information from the 1860 Census.

The instructions for 1860 were even more extensive. It is clear that the Census Bureau was aware of the issues contained in the 1850 Census and made an effort to gather more complete occupation information. Still the enumerators did no better in 1860 with following directions. The farmers dropped to 78 percent in 1860. The loss of 10 percent of the farmers indicated a maturing community. However, the real story lies in those new jobs that were listed: mechanic, blacksmith, teacher, seamstress, washer, merchant, weaver, and physician. The presences of mechanics, seamstresses, and washers indicated an increasing affluency and disposable income in Forsyth. The mechanic hinted at an increase in machinery, either industrial or farm. The best description of these new jobs was a type of service industry that supported and offered functionality unavailable specialties to the primary economic producers, farmers. The appearance of these new occupation indicated the developing of a new specialized sector of the Forsyth economy that only an increasingly prosperous and diversified community could supported.

The comparison of the 1850 to the 1860 Schedule I indicated that Forsyth had passed from the initial stages of settlement and was becoming a mature farming community. Family size and age were beginning to reflect settled family structure with children maturing and starting 3new families in the community as opposed to immigrating families arriving on the frontier to settle unexploited land.

Slave Inhabitants of Forsyth County

The inhabitants of Forsyth County did not depend on slavery. In the 1850 census, of the 1,334 families a total of 198 or 15% were slaveholders, the same percent in 1860. Not surprising, in Clark County, a typical Plantation Belt county (slave ratio of 1.01), of the 1,024 families a

total of 561 or 55 percent held 5,593 slaves. The average slave unit in 1850 was 5.18 in Forsyth compared to 10.0 in Clark County. The slave/master relationship was radically different in Forsyth where 57 percent of the slaveholders owned only one slave while in Clark only 17 percent held one slave. Figure 2.3 compares the slave unit distribution of Forsyth County with that of Hancock County, a quintessential and highly studied Plantation Belt county. The median slave unit in both of Forsyth's 1850 and 1860 census was less than three. Hancock median for 1860 was 10. Not to overstate the obvious, but slavery in Forsyth was not an important source of labor for the county as a whole. Approximately 12 percent of the slaveholding families owned more than ten slaves equaling 45 percent of all the slaves in the county and approximately the same numbers for 1860. Without a doubt, a few select Forsyth families relied on slaves; nonetheless, it would be in error to characterize Forsyth County as depending on slavery.

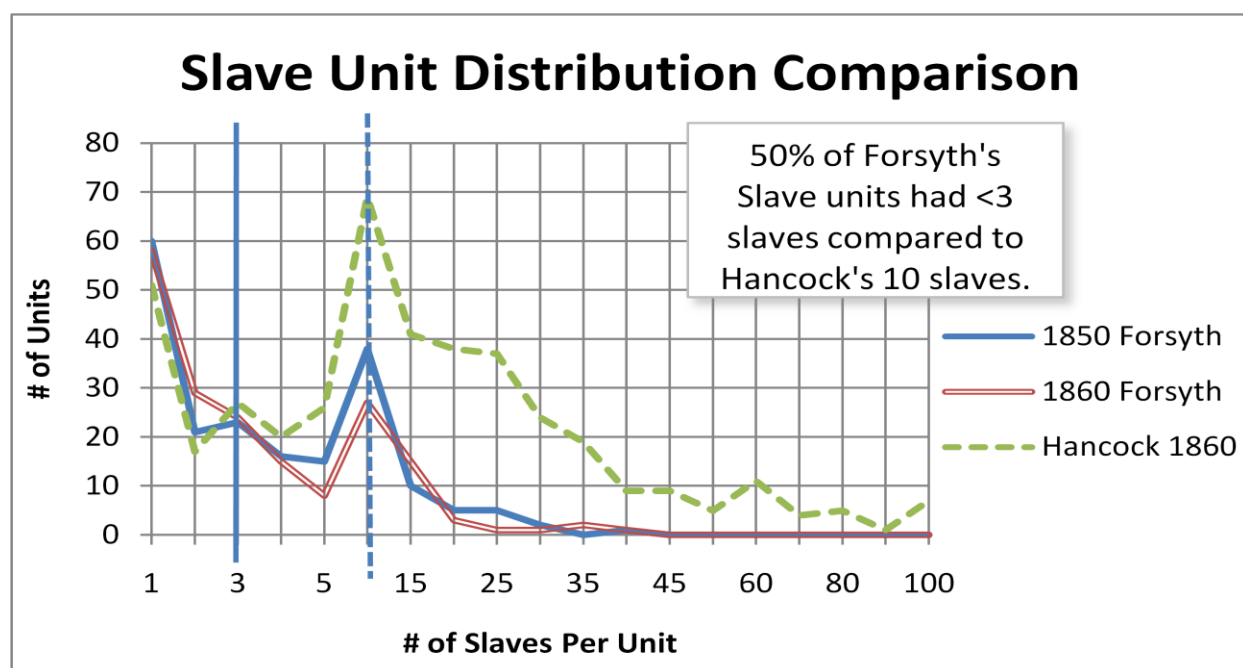


Figure 2.3. Comparison of Size of Slave Units between Forsyth and Hancock Counties.
Source: U.S 1850 and 1860 Federal Census Slave Inhabitant Schedule II.

The comparison, shown in Figure 2.3, indicated that Hancock's slave units were three times the size of Forsyth's. Stephanie McCurry, in her analysis of the sex and age composition of the yeoman slaveholdings in Beaufort District, South Carolina, found that the small slaveholding households consisted of approximately 50 percent children. The median age for the slave population in Forsyth County as a whole was 14 years old. With half the slaves that young, the slave population was of limited productive use. A comparison of Clark, Hancock, and Forsyth counties age distribution, shown in Figure 2.4, for their slave populations suggested that Clark and Hancock were mature and established slave populations with organic growth. The younger slave population in Forsyth suggested that its growth pattern was not organic but the result of introduction of slaves from the outside. In other words as the slaveholders in Forsyth became more prosperous, they purchased new slaves from outside the county. Of the population above the age 14, 56 percent were female. Slaveholders traditionally did not deploy slaves to the fields

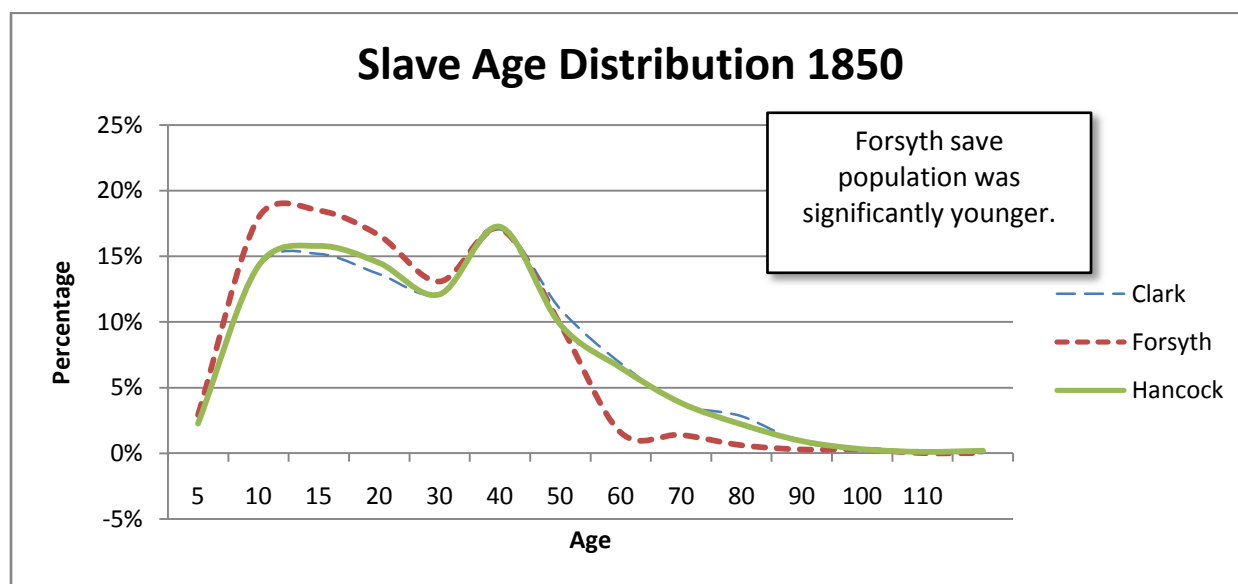


Figure 2.4. Analysis of Age of Slaves between Clark, Forsyth, and Hancock Counties.

Source: U.S 1850 Federal Census Slave Inhabitant Schedule II.

until 10-years-old at which point they carried only one-quarter equivalency of a field hand. Progressively the children assumed greater labor responsibilities until they attained the age of 18 when the slaveholder expected them to carry a full load.

Slavery and cotton are two institutions that historians traditionally associate together. Lacy Ford alludes to the fact that “90 per cent of middling slaveholders grew cotton.”⁴¹ This relationship is often pointed to as contributing to the economic spiral that the South found itself in.⁴² The population distribution of slaves appears to support that premise that the Plantation Belt usually had a majority slave population. Slave ownership in the Upcountry was not so clear-cut. The Forsyth 1850 slave census found 198 slaveholders versus the 1860 census dropped to 184. The median and average unit sizes remain relatively constant. However, a subtle shift occurred during the 1850’s. While the cotton production increased 38 per cent, those yeomen owning slaves and working cotton increased 27 per cent, from 32 per cent to 43 per cent of the slaveholders. These numbers drive to several conclusions: cotton was increasing in importance, yeomanry progressively used slavery to support that increase, but the correlation between cotton and slavery in the Upcountry was not as direct as in the Plantation Belt. In other words, even as late as 1860 less than half of the slaveholders had acquired slaves to grow cotton. Obviously, the Forsyth slaveholder used slaves for other purposes than growing cotton. The large number of single ownerships suggests a domestic orientation.

To understand how these numbers worked out, it would be a useful exercise to look at an average five-unit slaveholding farmer. The Census data identified fifteen-slave units of this size in Forsyth County in 1850. The data suggested that Beverly Allen, one of these slaveholders, was

⁴¹ Ibid., 70.

⁴² Eugene D. Genovese, *The Political Economy of Slavery; Studies in the Economy & Society of the Slave South*, Vintage Books ed. (New York,: Vintage Books, 1967), 85.

an average farmer, except for his first name. He was 52 years old, married to Sarah who was also 52 years old. They had moved from Jackson County, Georgia in 1834, after winning a lot. Beverly appeared in the 1834 State Census with 11 dependents. They had six children, three boys and three girls still living with them in 1850. The age of the children tells what life was like for Sarah. They had John 20, Leroy 18, Sarah 17, Leven 14, Martha 12, and Cynthia 8. Over a 12-year period, Sarah was almost continuously pregnant having her last child at 44. The Census identified Beverly, John, and Leroy as farmers and who evidently worked a farm with 130 of improved and 130 of unimproved acres. It is not unreasonable to assume that the 17-year-old Sarah and 14-year-old Leven also worked the farm. The census data valued the farm at \$1,200 with \$100 worth of farming equipment. In some ways, Beverly was well off in that the average improved acreage per farmer was 54 acres. The unimproved acreage averaged 133 for the county. On the unimproved land, Allen ran four milk cows, 20 heads of sheep and 40 heads of swine. The cows produced 200 pounds of butter. The sheep produced 40 pounds of wool. On the 130 acres of improved land, the Allen's grew 800 bushels of corn, 300 bushels of oats, 300 bushels of sweet potatoes, and two bales of cotton. The 1860 census indicated that Allen's overall production dropped slightly and that he reduced cotton production to one bale.

The Beverly Allen owned five slaves. The slave schedule shows that this slave family consisted of a 50-year-old male and a 35-year-old female. They had three children, a 15-year-old female, a 9-year-old male, and a three-month-old female. The three-month-old would suggest that over the last year the 35-year-old female had been pregnant. The odds are very good that she continued to work. However, some work efficiency was bound to have been lost and the presences of an infant would have detracted from the overall labor pool. The 15-year-old female might have been some help with the beeswax, butter, and a little fieldwork. Despite his age, the

Beverly would have assigned the younger boy work such as looking after the sheep, and cattle. Children would have been assigned work as young as 6-years-old and could be expected to fully support their cost by nine years old.⁴³ The reality was that out of a slave family of five Beverly gained less than two fulltime hands. Table 2.1 reflects this calculation based on estimates developed by Raymond Battalio and John Kagel in their analysis of the food production on South Carolina farms. Ten years later, with the 1860 census, the situation had not improved much. The Allen family was still there, now numbered five, but the total slave count had increased by three. The Allens had purchased an 18-year-old male and a 10-year-old female and someone had given birth to a nine-month-old female. From additional information collected with the 1860 Slave Schedule, this group of seven slaves lived in one house.⁴⁴

By 1860, the Allen's core family had dispersed, as Beverly's three sons did not appear in the census. Beverly's three daughters were still on the farm, now reduced to 80 acres of improved and 140 unimproved, a new white male had appeared on the farm, but the census listed him as a schoolteacher. Despite this, he could have been available for some labor on the farm. Beverly continued to run sheep and swine. His corn production had declined to 500 bushels, wool production had dropped down slightly to 30 pounds, and he no longer produced sweet potatoes or butter. Beverly had gone against the trend and reduced his cotton production to one bale. The overall productivity of the farm had declined slightly.

By 1860, Beverly had replaced the loss of his sons' labor by the purchase of two new slaves and had enhanced the ability to bring into productivity younger slaves as illustrated in

⁴³ Raymond C. Battalio and John Kagel, "The Structure of Antebellum Southern Agriculture: South Carolina, a Case Study," *Agricultural History* 44, no. 1 (1970): , 35.

⁴⁴ United States Census Office, Kennedy, and Publishing, "Population of the United States in 1860: Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census, under the Direction of the Secretary of the Interior," 58-77.

Table 2.1. While there might be some disagreement about the exact percentage of labor assigned to each individual, the fact remains that Beverly was closely managing his labor pool. While his

Table 2.1. Labor Availability on the Beverly Allen Farm from 1850 to 1860.

| 1850 | | | | 1860 | | |
|-------------|------|-----|-----------------|------|-----|-----------------|
| Individuals | Age | Sex | Labor Component | Age | Sex | Labor Component |
| Beverly | 52 | m | 1.00 | 62 | m | 0.25 |
| Sarah | 52 | f | 0.50 | 62 | f | 0.125 |
| John | 20 | m | 1.00 | | | |
| Leroy | 18 | m | .75 | | | |
| Sarah M. | 17 | f | 0.375 | 26 | f | 0.50 |
| Leven | 14 | m | 0..25 | | | |
| Martha | 12 | f | 0.125 | 22 | f | 0.50 |
| Cynthia | 8 | f | 0.00 | 17 | f | 0.375 |
| Frederick | | | | 24 | m | 1.00 |
| No. 1 | 50 | m | 1.00 | 62 | m | 0.25 |
| No. 2 | 35 | f | 0.50 | 50 | f | 0.50 |
| No. 3 | 15 | f | 0.375 | 25 | f | 0.25 |
| No. 4 | 9 | m | | 18 | m | .75 |
| No. 5 | 0.25 | f | | 13 | m | 0.25 |
| No. 6 | | m | | 10 | f | 0.125 |
| No. 7 | | f | | .75 | f | 0.00 |
| Total Labor | | | 4.75 | | | 4.875 |

Source: Federal Manuscript 1850 Population and Slave Schedules and the 1860 Population and Slave Schedules and Raymond C. Battalio and John Kagel, "The Structure of Antebellum Southern Agriculture: South Carolina, a Case Study," *Agricultural History* 44, no. 1 (1970), 27.

total land and production was down, he had successfully made sure that the work force available to him remained level. It is apparent also that with his two oldest slaves advancing in age, there was the need for him to establish a reproductive family, therefore the purchase of an 18-year-old male and 10 year old female. The age of these new purchases by Beverly supports the contention that the Forsyth slave age curve was the result of new slaves introduced into the county from outside. In some respects, Beverly was unfortunate in that out of seven slaves he gained only 2.125 full hands compared to the six whites contributing 2.75. Over a ten-year period, he had increased his full hand slave calculation by .25 and overall production had dropped slightly. The

point is that even within this family, obviously committed to slavery, the majority population of slaves still did not contribute a proportional labor component. Nevertheless, the analysis shows that Beverly obviously laid down long-term labor plans. He was not running a small farm and while slaves were a critical part of his labor pool, they did not represent a majority of his labor.

Battalio and Kagel constructed their estimates of the productive capacity of individuals based solely on age. Robert William Fogel and Staley L. Engerman argued that the life expectancy of the typical field slave was approximately 36 years.⁴⁵ Ulrich B. Phillips argued that a prime field hand was between the ages of 18 and 30 and could do the work of a full hand up to the age of 50.⁴⁶ Lewis C. Gray contended that slaveholders assigned fractional duties to children between the ages of six and twelve were. Thomas Jefferson indicated that the children up to the age of ten were assigned nursery duty.⁴⁷ The point is that a number of individuals have evaluated slave labor capacity solely on age. Battalio and Kagel's process for developing a fractional number to labor capacity was, literally straight forward and constructed around four data points. They assumed that the slave started fieldwork at age 10 and attained full capacity at the age 18. Therefore, it was logical to draw a straight line between these two points reflecting a progressively increasing capacity. The slave's labor capacity would start to decline at age 50 and continue declining in a straight line to age 65 where it equaled zero. This was an elegant, logical, and mathematically solid solution to the lack of real data.

Historians can only guess at the personal interrelationships between the Allen family and the their slave family; but the stability of both suggested that this was more than just a master and slave farm. The older slaves were obviously not just old family retainers but were there to

⁴⁵ Robert William Fogel, *Time on the Cross; the Economics of American Negro Slavery*, [1st ed. (Boston,: Little, 1974), 125.

⁴⁶ Phillips, *Life and Labor in the Old South*, 174.

⁴⁷ Gray and Thompson, *History of Agriculture in the Southern United States to 1860*, 549.

work the land. In 1860, the Allen's farm family consisted of six whites and seven slaves. Allen's farm was a diverse community with a small number of individuals that worked together. With the arrival of Frederick, there was the indication that the farm would continue to function after Beverly's passing. This type of farming operation where white owners and their slaves worked together side by side in the same fields for a long number years gave the slaveholding yeoman a unique experience in comparison to the plantation culture.

This small study, documented in Table 2.1, carried some serious implications for the Forsyth slave population as a whole. These full hand ratings, when applied to the slave population in total, estimated the contribution of slaves to the productive labor force. The effectiveness rating reduced the real slave population of 1,027 to only 336 effective field hands or 32% effectiveness.⁴⁸ The slave age curve in Figure 2.4 suggested that the level of effectiveness might have been lower than that experienced in the Plantation Belt where there was an older slave population. While such numbers are probably characteristic of any farming population, be it free or slave, it suggested slavery had a high overhead cost, especially in regards to what many historians have called a subsistence farming community.

It is critical to point out that slave ownership was not only restricted to farmers in Forsyth and therefore an analysis based solely on field hand labor capacity understates the effectiveness of many of the individual slaves. Rebecca Cunningham was an excellent case in point. Rebecca was a 40-year-old mistress with three free white females living with her. While their last names were Cunningham, it is questionable whether they were her children. If they her daughters, then she would have had the first one when she was 13-years-old, extremely young in the Upcountry

⁴⁸ Battalio and Kagel, "The Structure of Antebellum Southern Agriculture: South Carolina, a Case Study," 27. Battalio and Kagel based much of their analysis on the work of Alfred H. Conrad and John R. Meyer in *The Economics of Slavery: And Other Studies in Econometric History*.

where marriage appeared to have occurred in the early twenty's. These women are listed in the 1860 Census as seamstresses. Rebecca obviously ran a small business and owned a 36-year-old female slave. The nature of the work that Rebecca's slave did is open to discussion but it surely was not field hand labor and it would be reasonable to assume her effectiveness was 100%. Another example was Elizabeth Wood, a 60-year-old weaver, who lived with her 20-year-old daughter and owned a 60-year-old slave who lived in a separate house. The odds were every good that despite the slave's age she continued to either work around the house or weave.

The 1860 Census afforded an opportunity to count the slave dwellings. While there were 234 dwellings for 184 slave units, averaging 4.38 slaves per dwelling, a little over ten percent of the slaveholders did not have dwellings for their slaves. This implies that these slaves resided in the same dwelling as the slaveholder. However, a review of the data suggested that there might be some issue with this data because, while the majority of the slave units in this category were one, there were several with units larger than five slaves. The probability of the two families with such large slave units living in the same dwelling was low. Nevertheless, there was a strong indication that quite a few slaves lived in the same dwelling with their masters. These one-person slave units lived in the same house as their master and created an environment of close personal relationship. These dwellings were not large houses with a large number of rooms. Many were single room log cabins with dirt floors, which added a different dimension to the idea of the slave living with the master.

The familiarity that was common in the field found corollaries in churches, trading, drinking, and gambling. The smallness of the slave units, 50 percent less than 3 individuals, in Forsyth County would often preclude the ability to form a slave family unit and drive the need for formation of relations between farms, much more so than was necessary in comparison to the

Plantation Belt.⁴⁹ Despite the fact that Beverly owned and relied on slaves, the focus was on the family. The contentious here is that the free inhabitants and slave unit form a single-family unit, and the health and care of both the free and slaves was critical in regards to labor. It is hard to image those individuals that worked and lived together, for such an extended time would not form strong personal relationships. This was a different experience for both the Upcountry slave and the slaveholder, making slavery in the Upcountry a different institution in comparison to the Plantation Belt experience.

While single slave units existed in the Plantation Belts, 33 percent of the slaveholders owned only one slave in Forsyth, the single slaveholder was the dominant master/slave model at work in Forsyth. Even Daniel R. Hundley, in his sociological defense of South, argued for an uncommon yeoman/slave relation, contended that the yeoman was too close to his slaves, and failed to exercise his ownership rights in a proper master/slave relationship manner. While arguing for the institution of slavery, Hundley drew a picture of the “sturdy yeoman and his sons working in company of their negroes.”⁵⁰ Hundley gave a view of the yeomanry that lived in close relationship with the slave, competitively working, drinking, eating, singing, sleeping, and freely socializing. A radical departure from what occurred in the Plantation Belt, where Hundley described a “patriarchal servitude.” Naturally, Hundley did not present an unbiased view; nevertheless, there must have been something to his disapproving interpretation of yeoman/slave relations. Nonetheless, the conclusion is that slavery in the Upcountry resulted in a much closer physical and personal relationship than it did in the Plantation Belt.

⁴⁹ Hahn, *The Roots of Southern Populism: Yeoman Farmers and the Transformation of the Georgia Upcountry, 1850-1890*, 31.

⁵⁰ Daniel R. Hundley, *Social Relations in Our Southern States*, vi, [7]-367 p. 20 cm. vols. (New York,: H.B. Price,, 1860), 193-98.

Agricultural Foundations of Forsyth County

To speak of agriculture in the antebellum South was to speak of the dominant economic structure. Steve Hahn argued for a dual economy and contended that it gave rise to a dual social and cultural structure.⁵¹ Dual in this context referred to a juxtaposed “market-oriented sector associated with the ports, plantations [...] and a traditional sector in the hinterlands given over to subsistence agriculture.”⁵² Agriculture was very different in Upcountry Georgia from that of the Plantation Belt region. The basis of agriculture in the Plantation Belt was cotton, which required 200 frost free days. Forsyth County lay on the 200 frost-free day boundary, making it a marginal cotton-growing region. This is probably the best explanation for the prevalence of alternative farming and the development of a yeoman culture.

The enumerators were instructed by the Federal Government to identify the occupation or write “none” for each male 15 years or older.⁵³ An excellent example of the type of problem encountered in attempting to reconcile the Schedules I (Free Inhabitants) and IV (Agriculture) was Willis Staggs. The 1850 Schedule I identified Staggs as a 56-year-old married blacksmith with four daughters. The Slave Schedules indicate he never owned slaves. According to the 1850 Agricultural Schedule, Staggs owned no land. Nonetheless, in 1850 he had a milk cow, five pigs, grew peas, Irish and sweet potatoes, and made 100 pounds of butter. Ten years later the 1860 Schedule I once again listed Staggs as a blacksmith and the Agricultural Schedule listed him having a horse, a cow, a swine, 75 bushels of corns, 50 bushels of sweet potatoes, and 100

⁵¹ Hahn, *The Roots of Southern Populism: Yeoman Farmers and the Transformation of the Georgia Upcountry, 1850-1890*, 51.

⁵² Steven Hahn and Jonathan Prude, *The Countryside in the Age of Capitalist Transformation: Essays in the Social History of Rural America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 11-12.

⁵³ United States Census Office, 1850, and De Bow, *The Seventh Census of the United States: 1850. Embracing a Statistical View of Each of the States and Territories, Arranged by Counties, Towns Etc. ... And an Appendix Embracing Notes Upon the Tales of Each of the States, Etc*, xxi-xxv.

pounds of butter. This is a good example of the conundrum created when a historian ask a question of the census data that was not part of the intended purpose. Was Willis Staggs a farmer, a blacksmith, or a tenant? The truth was that he was all three.

The 1850 Schedule IV documented that Forsyth had 43,140 acres of improved land and 107,379 of unimproved. At first glance, the unimproved acreage might seem unproductive but the raising of livestock in the antebellum South was not a fenced affair. Cattle and swine spent most of the year grazing in the unimproved acreage and turned loose in the fields after harvesting. The value of Southern livestock in 1860 was estimated at half a billion dollars or twice the value of the cotton crop.⁵⁴ The Georgia's share of the Southern livestock value was \$38 million with Forsyth collecting \$211,490 worth. The actual revenue generated by slaughtered Forsyth livestock was \$38,424. This compares to the 1860 cotton revenue on 656 bales weighing approximately 400 pounds and selling at \$.10/lbs. equaling approximately \$26,240. Livestock was clearly an important source of food in Forsyth and much more dependable than cotton which was subject to the weather. There was some question as to its profitability. Owsley argued that the writers of the travelogues often missed the cattle and swine grazing in the pine forest.⁵⁵ The domination of livestock as a revenue in Upcounty Georgia would seem to have cast the yeoman as much a herdsman as a farmer, in radical contrast to the planter elite.

While cotton was the economic king of the South, Sam Bower Hilliard argued that swine was queen.⁵⁶ The presence of corn on 96 percent of the yeoman farms in Forsyth brings one to pause. This was too close to the 95 percent that raised swine not to be a pertinent point. A

⁵⁴ Forrest McDonald and Grady McWhiney, "The Antebellum Southern Herdsman: A Reinterpretation," *The Journal of Southern History* 41, no. 2 (1975): , 147.

⁵⁵ Owsley, *Plain Folk of the Old South*, 36.

⁵⁶ Sam Bowers Hilliard, *Hog Meat and Hoecake; Food Supply in the Old South, 1840-1860* (Carbondale,: Southern Illinois University Press, 1972), 92.

correlation analysis between the size of the corn crop and the size of the swineherds for the state of Georgia was a positive .83. The correlation between the population and the corn crop was .64. The 1860 data suggested that growing corn had more to do with raising swine than feeding people. Forsyth had 10,955 swine in 1860 and grew 231,778 bushels of corn. This compared with Hancock that had 24,122 swine and grew 354,859 bushels of corn. While they both produced an equivalent number of bushels of corn relative to population, Hancock had 2.0 swine per person compared to Forsyth's 1.4 or 43% higher swine density. It is not reasonable to assume that Forsyth was supplying anyone other than themselves with a significant number of swine. This does not mean there were not major swine producers in Forsyth. The census data reflected that three yeomen who had more than 100 swine in 1860, nonetheless the median was 14.

Sam Bower Hilliard estimated that the average annual consumption of pork in the South was 138 pounds adult consumption unit and half that for children under 15. An analysis of the 1860 population indicated that based on this assumption the annual swine demand for Forsyth would have been 5,015 head. A farmer needed at least a reproductive pair and second and third generations in order to allow the swine to grow to sufficient size to butcher. Based on that figure, Forsyth needed at least 11,205 swine to feed itself. Interestingly, as indicated above, the actual 1860 number was 10,955. The 1850 swine population was 19,848, far in excess of the self-sufficient level and suggested that Forsyth marketed swine to the Plantation Belt. The 1860 Forsyth farmers had clearly decided to reduce the number of swine raised to a self-sufficient level.

The median number of swine held by Forsyth yeoman was fourteen. Swine population data from the census clearly illustrated an uneven distributed across Georgia.⁵⁷ Figure 2.5 is a sampling of the Upcounty, Piedmont, and Pine Barren counties for their head of swine per capita ratio. Hilliard referred to this as the swine per consuming unit ratio. He argued that anything below 2.2 was a swine deficit region. However, the census data coupled with Hilliard's 138 pounds of pork consumption per capita per annum suggested that his 2.2 might be too high. There is a wide consensus among historians that the 138 pounds is correct, so the estimation of the number of swine Forsyth needed is accurate, suggesting that the self-sufficient number is something less than 2.0. The data appeared to support the contention that the Pine Barrens of

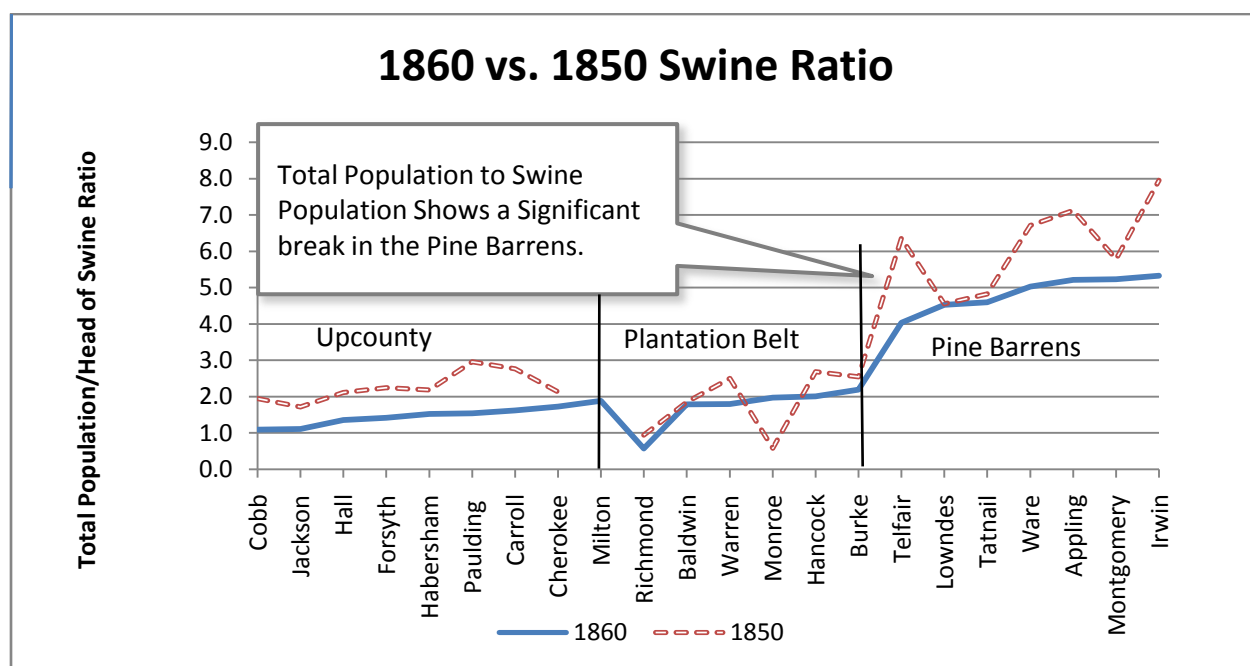


Figure 2.5. Analysis of Population to Swine Production across Regions. *Source:* U.S 1850 and 1860 Federal Census Agricultural Schedule VI.

Georgia was the only part of the state that had a surplus swine population, which logic would suggest they exported to the deficit regions. Production between 1850 and 1860 appeared to remain stable in the Plantation Belt. Richmond County was an anomaly because of the large

⁵⁷ Ibid., 107-09.

urban population of Augusta. The comparison of the Forsyth 1850 and 1860 swine population suggested that Forsyth farmers had turned away from producing an excess population of swine and had embraced self-sufficiency. One can only conclude that the Forsyth farmer new exactly what he needed to support a self-sufficient farming plan.

The Southern swine has come under considerable criticism for its lightweight and low quality. Eugene Genovese pointed out their low weight, averaging 140 pounds compared to hogs in Cincinnati and Chicago averaging 200 and 288 pounds respectively.⁵⁸ He conceded the point that this was the result of letting the Southern swine graze in the woods and argues that the weight might have been even lower because the inclusion of swine purchased from drovers. The Southern swine was the product of natural selection. A 200-pound swine was not going to survive in the woods eating nuts and roots. Genovese's observations suggested an overall indifference among Southern farmers in improving the quality of swine. The reality of Southern swineherds was that little effort was required in raising them. The Southerner's approach to swine precluded any effort to improve the quality. Any attempt by the yeoman to increase the weight of his swine would have increased their cost. The truth was that it was a key source of protein, which the yeoman had to put little effort into raising.

An evaluation of improved acreage vs. unimproved acreage revealed that Forsyth was still very much in the process of development. The ratio of improved to unimproved was 40% in 1850 and increased to 56% in 1860. This was a significant departure from the statewide experience where the average improved acreage increased from 39% to 43%. Forsyth was bringing acreage into agricultural production at a faster pace than most of the state.

⁵⁸Genovese, *The Political Economy of Slavery; Studies in the Economy & Society of the Slave South*, 115.

However, this was not the only change occurring in Forsyth. As shown in Figure 2.6, tobacco production, a key cash crop after cotton, dropped off significantly between 1850 and 1860. In 1850, Forsyth ranked as the second largest tobacco-producing county in the state, just behind Decatur. By 1860, production had dropped by 82%. Approximately 12% of the population had migrated from Virginia and North Carolina, key tobacco producing states. The conclusion was that these immigrants brought tobacco to the Georgia Upcountry and found it not to be as productive as cotton. The displacement of tobacco by more productive cotton was a common occurrence in Southern frontier development according to Gray.⁵⁹

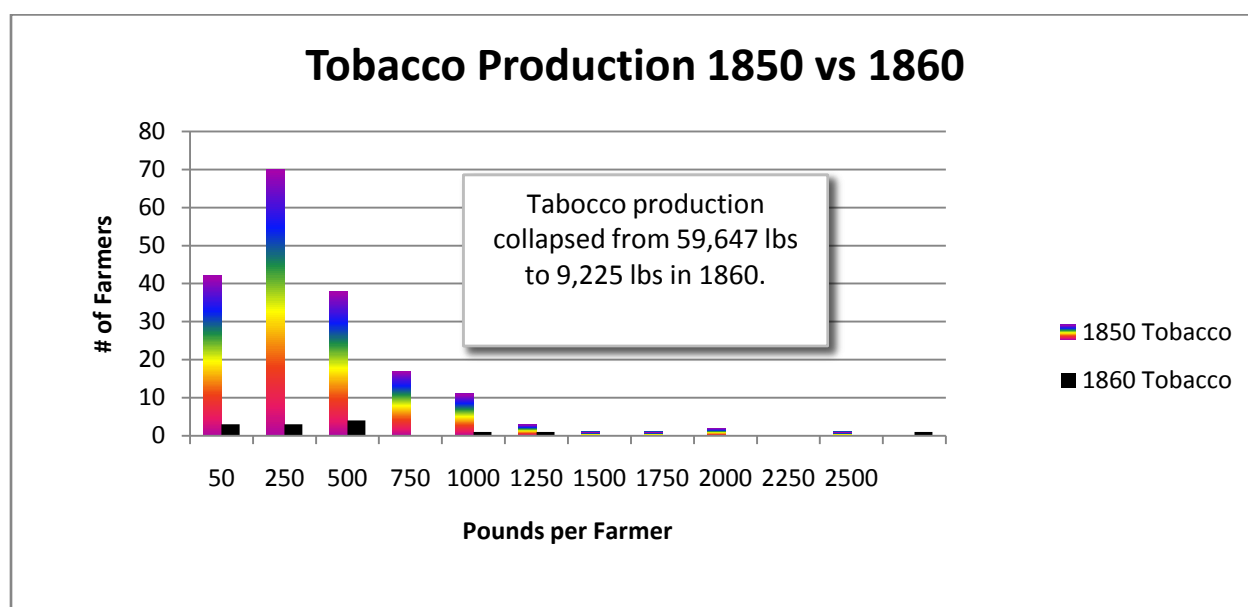


Figure. 2.6. Comparison of Tobacco Production 1850 vs. 1860. *Source:* U.S 1850 and 1860 Federal Census Agricultural Schedule VI.

The Forsyth farmer had made a significant decision to drop tobacco as a cash crop and replace it with cotton. Cotton production in Forsyth increased from 472 bales in 1850 to 656. This was an increase of 39%. As shown in Figure 2.7, the significant aspect of the increased cotton production was that it became more prominent among small farm operations with a large

⁵⁹ Lewis Cecil Gray, *History of Agriculture in the Southern United States to 1860*, 2 vols., vol. 2 (Gloucester: Peter Smith, 1958), 685.

increase in the number of farmers producing only one bale. Coupled with the drop in tobacco production, this suggested that there was a transition between tobacco and cotton as the preferred cash crop. The total number of farmers who grew cotton increased from 198 in 1850 to 299 in 1860, a 51% increase. The number of farmer engaged in cotton production increased from 18 percent to 45 percent. The conclusion was that the farmers were meeting their nutritional needs and had turned to generating a disposable income. From a financial point of view, this was a significant issue and suggested that there was significant economic progress for the Upcountry yeomanry during the 1850's.

Cotton drove most of the internal development projects in Georgia, both canals and railroads. The lack of railroad development in the Upcountry reduced the attractiveness of cotton. The only railroad to penetrate the Upcountry region was the Western and Atlantic Railroad, a state funded project aimed to connect Savannah to the western markets. Rail construction started in 1836 and not completed and connected to Chattanooga, Tennessee until 1851. The Georgia Railroad, chartered in 1833 by a group of Athens citizens approached the Upcountry from the east. The original objective of the Georgia Railroad was to connect Augusta with Athens. This railroad became Augusta's main connection to Atlanta when it was completed in 1845. The Athens branch, completed in 1841 remained a horse drawn line until 1847. Figure 2.8 demonstrates the transportation black hole character of the central and eastern portions of the Upcountry of Georgia in regards to railroad access.

Wool production effectively fell off a cliff when total production dropped by 57 percent between 1850 and 1860. While the actual production became more evenly distributed across the farm operations, the large producers virtually disappeared as indicated in Figure 2.9. The conclusion was that like tobacco, the Forsyth farmers displaced wool in favor of cotton.

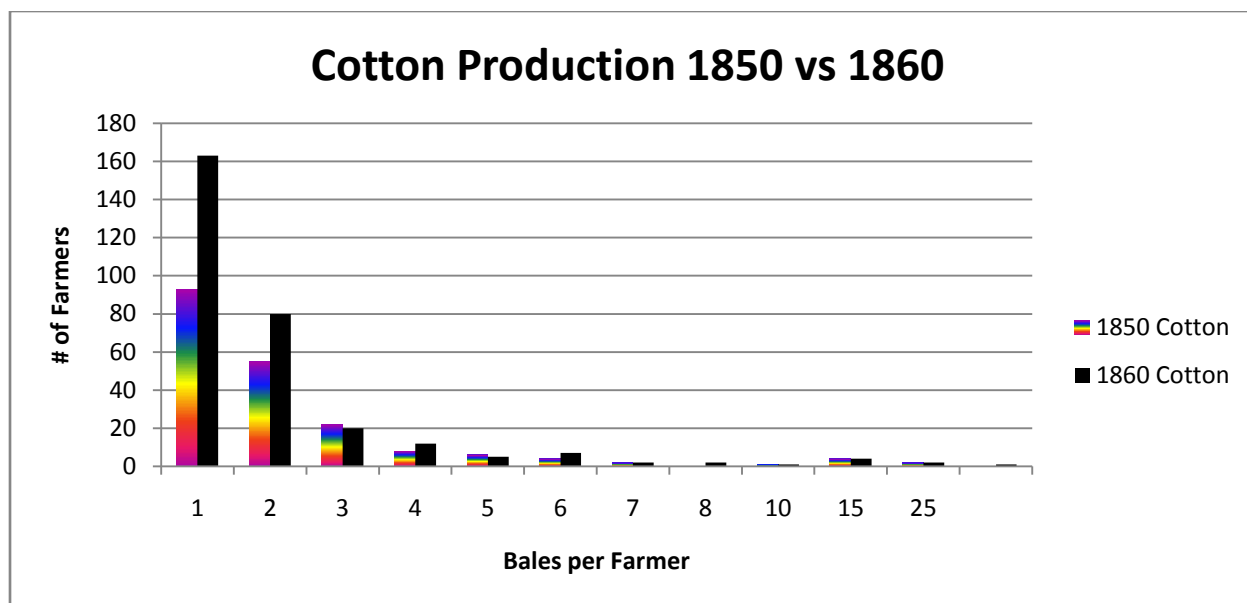


Figure. 2.7. Comparison of Cotton Production 1850 vs. 1860. *Source:* U.S 1850 and 1860 Federal Census Agricultural Schedule VI.

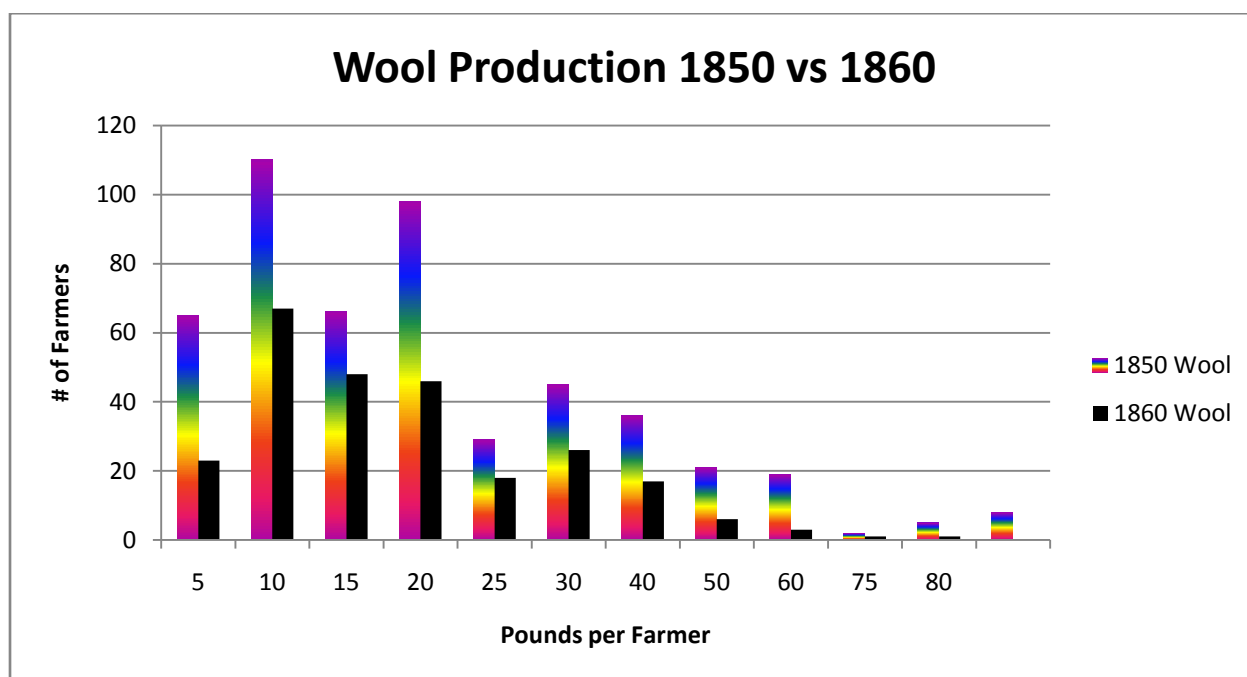


Figure 2.8. Comparison of Wool Production 1850 vs. 1860. *Source:* U.S 1850 and 1860 Federal Census Agricultural Schedule VI.

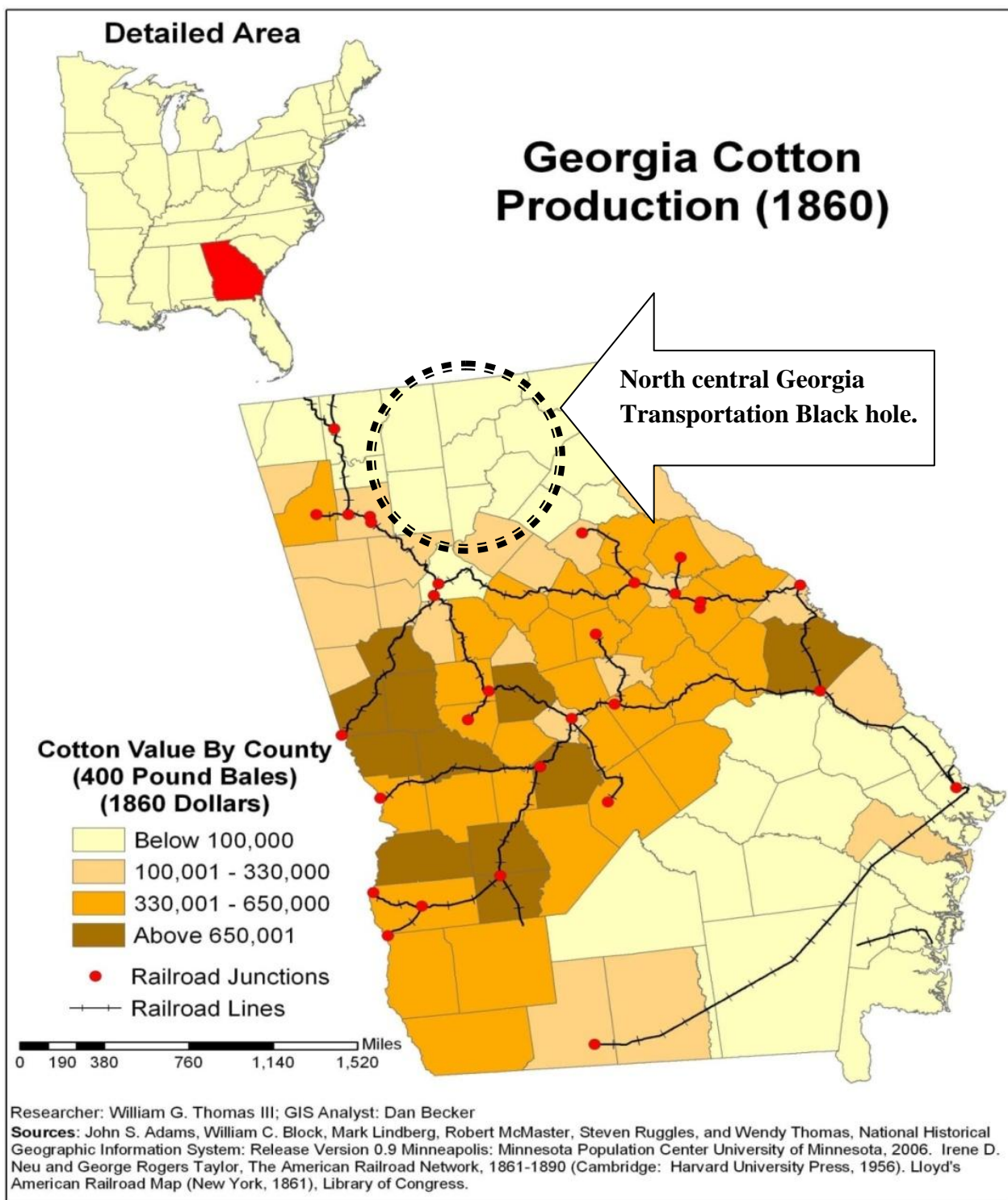


Figure. 2.9 Railroad and Cotton Production in Georgia.

Corn and cotton competed in the South for total agricultural acreage.⁶⁰ For the Upcountry, corn constituted the primary foodstuff. Corn production averaged approximately 363 bushels per farm with 96 per cent of the farms growing it in Forsyth County. An analysis using Sam Hilliard's self-sufficiency formula, allocating 13 bushels per adult human, 4 per swine, and 7.5 for horses and mules indicated that Forsyth produced an excess of corn.⁶¹ Forsyth's food requirement for corn came to 157, 664 bushels. In 1860, Forsyth produced 231,778 bushels which suggested that it produced a marketable crop of 74,113 bushels. The typical farmer with a family of six individuals, four horses and mules, and 17 swine needed a little less than 200 hundred bushels of corn. Approximately 60 percent of the Forsyth farmers produced more than 200 bushels. The evidence indicates that corn was an important cash crop for the Forsyth farmer.

While Schedule IV gave a detailed view of the yeoman's agricultural production, the records of the Court of the Ordinary gives the historian the opportunity to see an individual in much finer detail than the census offers. The Court of the Ordinary was formed and assumed probate responsibilities from the Inferior Court in 1851. The actual records of the orders of the court appeared to be a continuous list of unrelated entries. The index was actually a chronological order of the court appearances that occurred in regards to particular class. The death of Jesse C. Holbrook in January 1853 offers an opportunity to unravel these documents. A typical index entry:

Mary Holbrook, David R. Weems and William B. Holbrook admrs. of the Estate of Jesse C. Holbrook died, Bond in Book(D) page 46, order of Letters on pag 47, Letter page 48 order to sale personal property page 57 Warrant for appraisement P. 64 Bill of appraisement P 65 Sale Bill of Personal property P. 77 Order to sale

⁶⁰ Hilliard, *Hog Meat and Hoecake; Food Supply in the Old South, 1840-1860*, 151.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 158.

Real Estate P 145 order o sale wheat p 215 sale of land and wheat p 240 Petition for citation for letter of dismifm.[sic] p425 order for citation to discharge p246⁶²

Each page listed in this index represented a step by the family of Jesse C. Holbrook to dispose of the accumulated wealth of a lifetime. Jesse had been one of the original settlers of Forsyth County, listed in the 1834 state census. His main claim to fame was the donation of 40 acres to the Methodist Church for use as a campground. The Holbrook Camp Ground still holds meetings today. Otherwise, Jesse left his children a mess. He died with his estate in intestate. This was not unusual for someone on the frontier. As Jesse's children disposed of the personal and real property, the court would required them to deliver a "perfect inventory." In cases such as these, the court required that the three administrators post a \$1,500 bond. Contained in the records was what amounted to a signed affidavit affirming that Jesse Holbrook had no will. Three administrators signed this affidavit. Ten pages after the affidavit the administrators return to the court for a warrant authorizing them to appraise and sell Jesse's personal property. At this point, they had the "perfect inventory" that the court had ordered them to gather.

This inventory gave an excellent historical perspective of what life was like for a farmer on Georgia's last frontier in 1852. Holbrook owned 310 acres, two horses, a yoke of oxen, nine cows, twenty-four head of hogs, three sheep, furniture valued at \$2,262, five beds, a clock, eleven chairs, guns, one loom, and books, plus 300 pounds of bacon, 50 barrels of corn mash, and 600 bundles of fodder. The executors mentioned the presences of cotton but did not appraise it. The executors estimated the total estate to be valued at \$2,452.45. It turned out that Holbrook was involved in a wide range of businesses. The administrators reported on December 4, 1853 that they had sold all of Jesse's personal property to wide number of people. The executors finely reported selling 260 pounds of cotton. Here it became evident that Jesse also grew wheat. We

⁶² "Ordinary Minutes," in *Forsyth County* (Morrow, Georgia: Georgia Department of Archives and History, 1850).

now know that life on Jesse's farm was complex. He grew corn and produced corn liquor, quite a large amount from what the inventory shows. That would suggest that he sold it for cash. He evidently produced his own cloth as indicated by the presences of a loom. Jesse had twenty-four hogs, so the three hundred pounds of bacon was out of proportion for personal use. It would indicate that he sold the hogs for cash. He grew grass to support and feed his cows from which he produced butter. The 1850 Schedule IV revealed he produced two hundred pounds of butter that year. In order for the administrators to sell the real estate, it was necessary for them to post in a public gazette of the state, in this case the *Marietta Advocate*, their intent to sell the real estate of Jesse Holbrook. This would allow anyone holding credit against Holbrook to come forth. The executors sold the real estate in August for \$828. The final document in the records in regards to Jesse Holbrook was a certificate discharging the executors from their responsibilities in March 1854.

A review of the Court of Ordinary's records on the Jesse Holbrook's probate provides historical information on several levels. The first and most obvious was the condition of Holbrook's life. The term frontier carries cultural connotations that cloud the historical reality. The phrase usually alludes to a border of some type. Historians traditionally perceive these borders or frontiers as transitions between developed and unsettled regions. Forsyth was not a transition zone between regions. The reality of Forsyth was that a region in transition, especially one that was transitioning into a condition of commercial exploitation. Jesse Holbrook's farm operation certainly offers that image. Holbrook had created an operation that supplied him with several revenue streams. A modern word for that would be diversification. He fully understood the risk associated with farming and answered the problem with a broadly based commercial

operation. Jesse Holbrook, while by the standards of his time, was most likely uneducated, he demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of his frontier situation.

The second level of understanding that these records offer was of a group of individuals that systematically engaged in a complex legal process stretching over a one-year period. There was no indication of a lawyer became involved with Mary Holbrook, David Weems, and William Holbrook. However, they effectively engaged a legal system and maneuvered through the issues so has to dispose of Jesse's property. Even more significant was the presences of Mary Holbrook among the administrators. Hahn reviews a Southern world where women are subordinate to men. He is correct in his contention that the auditing of a deceased's property was often an inside deal and sold to relatives for well below market value.⁶³ The administrators appraised Holbrook's personal property at \$2,452.45, but auctioned it off at \$502.87. The 1850 census listed Mary as head of a household of nine people, two of which were her twenty-two and nineteen-year-old sons, both listed as farmers. The Agriculture Schedule listed Mary, not her two sons, as the owner of a 350 acres farm. This review of the Agriculture Schedule quickly brings to surface that Mahala and Hannah Holbrook were listed directly above Mary as farmers. Hannah controlled 420 acres with her eighteen-year-old son, in addition to owning six slaves. Besides Mahala who owned one slave, they are the only Holbrook's that used slave labor. An analysis of the 1850 Agriculture Schedule suggests that three percent of the farmers are female. Analyses of the 1850 Slave Schedule revealed just short of seven percent of the slave owners were female and increased to ten per cent by 1860. While a small proportion of the population, women farmers were clearly visible in the Upcountry, and they held positions of power and authority as

⁶³ Hahn, *The Roots of Southern Populism: Yeoman Farmers and the Transformation of the Georgia Upcountry, 1850-1890*, 81.

proved by the ownership of land and slaves, the quintessential scepters of jurisdiction in the antebellum South.

McCurry compared women to slaves, the reproducers of the labor force, field hands, and subject to male dominance.⁶⁴ Hahn, while not so focused on the family, still portrayed women as having few rights⁶⁵. Ford left one with the idea that there were no females in Upcountry South Carolina. The Forsyth data indicated that women in Forsyth County clearly assumed a public persona. The 1860 census listed 129 or ten per cent of heads of household as women. Of these women, the census listed 66 or 51% as farmers. Granted, they only controlled four per cent of the real estate and personal property, but they were not invisible.

The Forsyth County reflected in the 1850 and 1860 census was a county in transition. One surprising fact was the increasing importance of cotton in what should have been a marginal cotton region. With a shift from 18% to 45% of the farmers deciding to grow 648 bales cotton, it can be argued that the farmers had made a commitment to engage a in a market beyond Forsyth. While the statistics are clear, a historian must put the actual resources committed to cotton in prospective. It takes approximately one acre, depending on the quality of the soil, to grow one bale of cotton. Granted, it may have required more in Forsyth, but it was apparent that even with this dramatic increase in participants in the cotton market the risk was small. In 1860 Forsyth farmer committed approximately 700 acres of the 45,811 improved acres to cotton, less than 2% of their land. The Forsyth produced a surplus of corn and sufficient swine to indicate that cotton production represented excess capacity. Most of the farmers did not commit more than an acre or two to cotton. Corn, wheat, and swine production remained the mainstay of Forsyth farming.

⁶⁴ McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Households, Gender Relations, and the Political Culture of the Antebellum South Carolina Low Country*, 79.

⁶⁵ Hahn, *The Roots of Southern Populism: Yeoman Farmers and the Transformation of the Georgia Upcountry, 1850-1890*, 30.

Tenancy in 1850 vs. 1860

Any historian who wishes to discuss tenancy rates before 1880 encounters and is obligated to resolve the inconsistency of methods employed by the census enumerators. Southern historians ordinarily are concerned with postbellum landless farming, an incongruous phrase at best, therefore benefit from improved gathering of finer detail by the 1880 census. The recording of actual tenancy did not start to appear in the census until 1880. Nevertheless, there did appear in the 1850 and 1860 Schedule IV a curious class of farmer. One who had grown crops or raised livestock and the census identified in the Schedule I as a farmer; however, the enumerator either did not list or allocate acreage to him or her in the Schedule IV. This was as close as the census got to identifying the tenant farmer of the antebellum South. Woodman argued that tenancy was a logical outgrowth of the commercialization of Southern farming after the war. The 1880 census reflected a 25% rate of tenancy.⁶⁶ Steven Hahn argued that landless farmers became more common after the Civil War.⁶⁷ Lewis C. Gray, in his foundational work *History of Agriculture in Southern United States to 1860*, comments, "Tenancy was probably causal, incidental, and transitory."⁶⁸ Postbellum tenancy grew on such a large scale, primarily as an alternative labor system to slavery, that it tended to cloud its importance during the Antebellum Period.⁶⁹ Lack of detail or more accurately, inconsistent census procedures, in 1850 and 1860 added to the obscurity of antebellum tenancy.

⁶⁶ Harold D. Woodman, "Class, Race, Politics, and the Modernization of the Postbellum South," *The Journal of Southern History* Vol. 63, no. 1 (Feb., 1997): , 5.

⁶⁷ Hahn, *The Roots of Southern Populism: Yeoman Farmers and the Transformation of the Georgia Upcountry, 1850-1890*, 156.

⁶⁸ Gray, *History of Agriculture in the Southern United States to 1860*, 646.

⁶⁹ J. William Harris, *Plain Folk and Gentry in a Slave Society: White Liberty and Black Slavery in Augusta's Hinterlands*, 1st ed. (Middletown, Conn.Scranton, Pa.: Wesleyan University Press; Distributed by Harper & Row, 1985), 78-80.

Nonetheless, the fact remained that the Upcountry yeomen of the antebellum period found themselves surrounded by tenants. In the 1850 and 1860 Census there were two ways to identify a farmer, by occupation on Schedule I and by listing on Schedule IV or a combination there of. However, the enumerator did not always use the title tenant, and in Forsyth's case never used it. There was no definitive manner to identify him as a tenant, only a supposition, in the Forsyth census. Either the census enumerator listed the tenant on Schedule I as a farmer without property or Schedule IV with no improved or unimproved acreage. Hahn handled the issue in a footnote and preferences any estimation of tenancy with a qualification, clearly indicating to the reader that there is an issue yet to be resolved.⁷⁰ Harris declared in a footnote within an endnote that tenants were farmers listed in both Schedules I and IV having no real property. This would have tended to reduce the overall percentage of tenants found. The Forsyth census represented a combination of problems of which the most significant was that the analysis deals with different assistant marshals in each census.

The Census Bureau instructed the enumerators to document on Schedule IV all farm operators producing crops valued at over \$100. The problem Fredrick A. Bode and Donald E. Ginter in *Farm Tenancy and the Census in Antebellum Georgia* found was inconsistency, ambiguities, and errors across enumerators, which becomes apparent to anyone dealing with the records. Any attempt to reconcile Schedules I and IV would produce, like Bode and Ginter found, a number of categories of farmers. Failure to find an individual indentified as a farmer on Schedule IV and classified as such on Schedule I carries no definitive conclusion, as in the case

⁷⁰ Hahn, *The Roots of Southern Populism: Yeoman Farmers and the Transformation of the Georgia Upcountry, 1850-1890*, 22. The problem Hahn has to deal with is a variation in interpretations of the Census Bureau's instruction between the Carroll and Jackson County enumerators. The Carroll County enumerator listed on Schedule IV farmers with no acreage or real property. The Jackson County enumerator did not list the "landless" farmers on the Schedule IV. In an attempt to back into the number of tenants in Jackson County, Hahn applies a percentage for tenancy developed for Carroll County to Jackson. This is a rather large leap of faith, especially in light of the fact that Jackson slavery ratio was .43 compared to Carroll's .13.

of Forsyth County. Traumatized by this inconsistency, Bode and Ginter expended a great deal of energy attempting to resolve it. While the instructions given to the enumerators were clear, the enumerators failed to understand the implication of misinterpretation and misapplication would have for future historians. Bode and Ginter identified this as an important issue, primarily because they were comparing across sixteen counties, therefore across different enumerators. They argued, “tenancy rates displayed fairly coherent regional patterns within Georgia.” They concluded that tenancy followed the frontier and fresh land, effectively abandoning the exhausted soil.⁷¹ The best way to understand tenancy was to consider it as a cheap alternative to capital-intensive slavery. Gray fails to appreciate the significance of tenancy in the antebellum South and argued that it was casual, incidental, and transitory.”⁷² The truth revealed a much more complex social issue.

The Forsyth 1850 and 1860 Schedules IV are problematic in themselves. The span of time leaves the analyst with multiple interpretations and applications of the instructions. The best an analyst can do is to determine what interpretation of the Census Bureau’s instructions the Forsyth enumerators settled on. The Forsyth 1850 Census clearly listed individuals on the Schedule IV that were landless and had crop production assigned. Obviously, the Forsyth enumerator decided that the instructions directing the listing of farmers that produced \$100 or more encompassed tenants also. The total number of farmers listed on the 1850 Schedule IV was 1,115. Schedule I listed 1,589 farmers, identifying 1,058 as head of household. Of the head of household farmers listed on the Schedule I, 363 or thirty-four percent have no real estate value. There are 70 individuals listed as farmers on Schedule I who did not show up on Schedule IV.

⁷¹ Frederick A. Bode and Donald E. Ginter, *Farm Tenancy and the Census in Antebellum Georgia* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986), 8, 117.

⁷² Gray and Thompson, *History of Agriculture in the Southern United States to 1860*, 646.

They might have been nothing more than farm labors. Of the farmers listed on the Schedule IV, 293 or 26 percent are landless. There were 57 individuals identified on the Schedule IV as farmers but were not identified as farmers on Schedule I. These were either women or individuals identified on the Schedule I as having a different occupation, such as a blacksmith or seamstress. Some were landless and some were not. The conclusion reached and used in this analysis is that the enumerator identified tenants on the 1850 Schedule IV as “landless” farmers. The only intellectual issue to resolve is whether a blacksmith farming as a “landless” farmer is a tenant and the answer is that tenancy is a legal identity. Tenancy is a lawful agreement between a landowner and another individual either to rent the land or share of the crops grown. This share varied based on the quality of the land and the type of crops grown. For the best land the share might have been as high as 50 percent, but typically the share was one third.⁷³ Whether the individual had another occupation is irrelevant to the classification. If an individual farmer did not owe the land he farmed, he was a tenant farmer and the conclusion was that 26 percent of the 1850 farmers in Forsyth County were tenants.

An interesting point was that it appeared that tenancy effectively disappeared between 1850 and 1860 in Forsyth County according to 1860 Schedule IV. While the 1860 Schedule IV counted 666 farmers and listed thirty “landless” farmers, an analysis of these thirty farmers reveals a curious mix of individuals ranging from holding no real estate to individuals with considerable real estate. The only conclusion that was the enumerator had some quaint criteria for including these individuals on Schedule IV. In other words, it appeared that the 1860 enumerator took a decidedly different approach from that of the 1850 enumerator in identifying tenants, effectively excluding them from Schedule IV. The 1860 Schedule I counted 1,014

⁷³ Gray, *History of Agriculture in the Southern United States to 1860*, 646-47.

farmers and detailed 616 having real estate suggesting that 398 may have been tenant farmers or farm labors. Of the 398 with no real estate, 155 reported no personal property. This lack of personal property delineates a class of farmer. In this case the line between farm labor and tenant farmer. This study argues that the 243 farmers or twenty-four percent with personal property were tenants. This compares very favorably to the 1850 analysis. The level of tenancy was consistent with that found by Bode and Ginter. They concluded that tenants followed the “fresh” land and abandoned the exhausted land of older counties.⁷⁴ This would be consistent with the Forsyth County findings, the conclusion that tenant farming remained an important avenue for individuals to support themselves during the 1850’s, and more importantly, tenant farming was a major characteristic of Upcountry Georgia and yeoman country.

An individual without land ownership in a yeoman society is economically invisible and socially dead. A rather severe statement, but the point is that land was the key to the Jeffersonian dream and republican independence. Without the land, a farmer assumed an inferior social position and fell outside the yeomanry class by the mere fact of his lack of independence. This drove many of the tenants towards land as an end objective. A good example of a non-slaveholding tenant farmer with such long-term objectives, registered in the 1850 Census as a farmer, was 34-year-old Harmon Bagley from Georgia who farmed an unknown amount of improved acres with his 31-year-old wife and his 11-year-old son. Additional help was on the way with nine, seven, and one-year-old sons plus a 4-year-old daughter appearing in the 1860 Census. Production for 1850 compared to 1860, shown in Table 2.2, reflects Harmon’s progress. In 1850, he had the productive labor equivalent of 2.0 people. Ten years later, Harmon’s had purchased a 32-year-old male slave, acquired 70 acres, and increased productive labor to 6.5. By

⁷⁴ Bode and Ginter, *Farm Tenancy and the Census in Antebellum Georgia*, 117.

1860, with the additional help Harmon had managed to increase his income significantly since 1850, plus he had made the transition from tenant to landowner. This transition into the yeomanry class was illustrative of the opportunity that Forsyth offered. Harmon appeared to have been a very aggressive and high-risk farmer when he decided to grow six bales of cotton in 1860. While the production of cotton represented excess capacity, Bagley clearly invested much more of his resources in an effort to improve his lot. This placed him well above the median production of one-bale for the county. He was not a typical tenant or farmer. Of the 667 farmers in Forsyth recorded in the 1860 Schedules IV, 299 or 45% chose to grow cotton. The average was 2.2 bales with only half of the farmers growing one bale. There was a significant increase in the number of farmers growing cotton, up 51% from 1850. This indicated an increased excess capacity beyond mere self-sufficiency.

Table 2.2 Comparison of 1850 vs. 1860 Farm Production for Harmon Bagley.

| | Improved | Unimproved | Cattle | Sheep | Swine | Wheat |
|------|----------|------------|--------------|-------|--------|-------|
| 1850 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 14 | 1 |
| 1860 | 70 | 15 | 6 | 0 | 31 | 106 |
| | | | | | | |
| | Corn | Oats | Cotton Bales | Pot. | Butter | Wool |
| 1850 | 0 | 12 | 0 | 15 | 25 | 5 |
| 1860 | 500 | 20 | 6 | 7 | 175 | 0 |

Source: U.S 1850 and 1860 Federal Census Agricultural Schedule VI.

The conclusion of a comparison of the 1850 and 1860 tenant rates for Forsyth Count is that tenancy was a common and persistent method for poor whites to access income producing assets and for the more aggressive high-risk tenants like Harmon Bagley, a door into the yeomanry class. Bode and Ginter argued that tenancy followed the frontier and the fresh soil. The work completed by Bode and Ginter suggested that tenancy, while not a condition of the

yeomanry, was closely correlated with the yeomanry. The evidence found in Forsyth County supports this conclusion. It is evident that when new land opened up for settlement, the migrants viewed it as an opportunity to fulfill the Jeffersonian dream and attain republican independence through land ownership.

The Yeoman Defined

So what did the typical farmer of Forsyth County look like in 1850? The odds were very good that he was a farmer who owned his land. Half the farms had 40 improved acres and 60 acres or less of unimproved acres. An analysis of what he produced or had on his farm is contained in Table 2.3. The most obvious omission was cotton. Only 18% of these farmers produced cotton in 1850 and of those, half produced one bale or less. The 1860 census found that cotton production had increased and spread among the yeomanry to include 45% of the farmers, but still half produced one bale or less. Cotton was an increasingly important commodity and suggested that the welling being of these self-sufficient farmers were becoming subject to external market influence. On average, the typical yeoman farmer in Forsyth in 1860 would have had horses, milch cows, swine, corn, butter, peas, and sweet potatoes. His primary foodstuff was corn of which he produced enough to feed himself and to sell the excess. Following the corn, swine and by 1860 cattle feed his family, which arguably made him a herdsman as well.

Table 2.3 Analysis of 1860 Yeomanry Production.

| | Horses | Milch Cows | Other Cattle | Sheep | Swine | Wheat, Bushels of | Indian Corn, Bushels of | Oats, Bushels of | Peas and Beans, bushels of | Irish Potatoes, bushels of | Sweet Potatoes, Butter, lbs. of | |
|------|--------|------------|--------------|-------|-------|-------------------|-------------------------|------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|-----|
| 1850 | 81% | 90% | 71% | 50% | 93% | 63% | 91% | 67% | 65% | 58% | 83% | 81% |

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1860 % of Farmers produce/ have | 85% | 39% | 95% | 53% | 80% | 52% | 95% | 0 | 85% | 6% | 96% | 8% |
| 1860 Average of those Farmers Producing or having | 2 | 2 | 3 | 11 | 19 | 33 | 335 | 97 | 13 | 16 | 81 | 78 |
| 1860 50% of Farmers produce/ have equal to or less than | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 14 | 10 | 200 | 30 | 4 | 3 | 50 | 50 |
| 1860 Max Produced | 9 | 13 | 29 | 120 | 200 | 350 | 3000 | 1500 | 200 | 600 | 700 | 500 |

Source: Schedule IV Federal Census 1850 and 1860.

The typical family had six individuals with the head of household a 40 years old male with a 34-year-old wife. Half of the head of households were younger than 37, half the wives were younger than 31, and half the population was younger than 15 years old. The families were complex extended structures that often included in-laws, grandparents, uncles, aunts, nephews, nieces, and/or cousins. The odds were very good that yeomen had a church affiliation. Forsyth had 28 churches, of which 12 were Methodist and 18 Baptist, for total accommodations for 8,300 individuals.⁷⁵ The total Forsyth population both free and slave was 8,850. While obviously this does not mean that everyone was member of the church, it does indicate a large capacity and potential for membership. The chances that the yeoman could not read were approximately 1 in 5. Of that 1 in 5 that could not read, the odds were 56% that the illiterate one was his wife.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ United States Census Office, 1850, and De Bow, *The Seventh Census of the United States: 1850. Embracing a Statistical View of Each of the States and Territories, Arranged by Counties, Towns Etc. ... And an Appendix Embracing Notes Upon the Tales of Each of the States, Etc*, 365, 86-92.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 375-76.

The critical point about this yeomanry in the Upcountry Georgia was that he was not in the minority but the dominant class. He sat on the bench of the courts, ran the stores, and ministered to his friends. This statistical description was not of a socially isolated class living in the shadow and defined by the planter elite. The Forsyth farmer was an economically progressing individual. He was self-sufficient and independent. Unlike places like Hancock County, a walk down a dusty red clay road in Forsyth would frequently find this individual working in his fields with his family.

CHAPTER THREE: COMMERCE, CREDIT, AND JURISPRUDENCE

The country store and the merchants who ran them were financial intermediaries and a basic economic institution for the South. They stood between the subsistence farmers and those items that he could not produce himself. In much of the Georgia Upcountry, the merchant was the most important financial institution with which the yeoman did business. It was through this merchant class that the yeomanry connected with a world beyond Forsyth. The merchant not only sold merchandise imported from the North but he himself would have been considered a worldly individual if he purchased the goods directly from the Northern wholesalers on annual visits. The essential nature of the country store in the life of the yeomen requires that any study of the Georgia Upcountry include them. Some of these stores were small and had brief life spans, while others had a customer base that included most of the county and a life a span of decades. The primary purpose of these Upcountry stores was merchandising. They offered a mix of imported products and locally grown commodities. There was little evidence that they engaged in anything other than merchandising, in marked contrast to many of the country stores of the Plantation Belt. There the merchants were often heavily involved in the cotton trade and the stores either functioned as a magnet for the bartering or financing of cotton. There was little indication that the merchants of Forsyth became involved in the cotton trade, at best a risky business.

The yeoman's struggle for independence through subsistence farming inevitably led him to the country store. Here he found those things he did not produce and became subject to the North's primary tool for controlling the South, debt. Amazing as it was, the credit offered the yeomanry came directly from New York and other large Northern wholesale centers. Even the

physical isolation of the Upcountry Georgia yeomanry could not stop the long arm of the northern credit system. In addition to the southern cotton factor and large planter, the southern country store was a key conduit for the offering of credit in the South and especially for the yeomanry in Upcountry Georgia.

Yeomen cotton production in Upcountry Georgia was so small and the distances for marketing so far, relative to its value, as to preclude the services of the cotton factor, the planter's principal financier.⁷⁷ Hiram P. Bell's autobiography gives some insight into the difficulty yeomen had in marketing cotton. His father planted a crop of cotton in 1846, which he had to transport to Madison, Georgia, where the head of the Georgia Railroad gave his father access to the global market. There he sold the cotton for 2 ½ cents a pound.⁷⁸ The price of cotton was subject to its condition, whether it was ginned, baled, and how much trash was mixed in. Much of the 1840's cotton sold for export for less than 8 cents a pound, almost half of the price the decade before. The farmers found the cotton prices depressed for much of the 1840s.⁷⁹ This fluctuation in price coupled with the weather made cotton a risky proposition for the yeomanry. Nevertheless, the yeomen had to evaluate this riskiness on the criteria of return on investment, not in the context of inability to feed his family. The Upcountry yeomen clearly were able to feed themselves. The yeoman's need for crop diversity led the local merchant to fulfill the credit needs by purchasing not only cotton but also other crops or accept it for payment of a debt.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Harold D. Woodman, *King Cotton & His Retainers; Financing & Marketing the Cotton Crop of the South, 1800-1925* (Lexington,: University of Kentucky Press, 1968), 154-55.

⁷⁸ Hiram Parks Bell, *Men and Things* (Atlanta,: Press of the Foote & Davies company, 1907), 11.

⁷⁹ Joseph Addison Turner, *The Cotton Planter's Manual: Being a Compilation of Facts from the Best Authorities on the Culture of Cotton; Its Natural History, Chemical Analysis, Trade, and Consumption; and Embracing a History of Cotton and the Cotton Gin* (New York: Orange Judd, Publisher, 1865), 245.

⁸⁰ Lewis E. Atherton, *The Southern Country Store, 1800-1860* (Baton Rouge,: Louisiana State University Press, 1949), 87.

What money the yeoman had usually went for the purchase of land.⁸¹ The Southern banks' primary focus was the planter. In the case of Upcountry Georgia, there were no banks north of the Plantation Belt. The yeoman's "limited involvement in the export market" obviated a process for obtaining currency.⁸² It was into this gap that the country store merchant stepped, offering credit to yeoman society where money was hard to come by.

Any consideration of Southern country stores starts with Lewis E. Atherton's *The Southern Country Store, 1800-1860*. The footnotes and bibliography of his book testify to the essential nature of primary sources as outweighing secondary sources. It would be hard to suggest that this work was anything but foundational. Atherton specifically targets the country storekeeper who serviced the yeoman farmer, arguing that while the planter "employed the plantation as the basic unit of production and the factors his economic agent, the small-unit farmer turned to the farm and the country village store as parallel instrumentalities."⁸³ Atherton assigned the storekeeper the task of supplying luxuries, marketing farm crops, and credit agent. In the yeoman countryside, the storekeeper was the largest financial institution. The ability to issue credit represented power. That said, the nature of credit was fundamental to any examination of Upcountry Georgia. The storekeeper dealt directly with his debtors. They were effectively his neighborhoods, so he was very familiar with their credit worthiness, though that does not seem to have prevented him from offering them credit.

The nature of the antebellum money limited its circulation. The United States issued hard currency through the mints. Banks, chartered by the individual states, issued fiat money or

⁸¹Charles S. Syndor, *The Development of Southern Sectionalism, 1819-1848*, ed. Wendell Holmes Stephenson and E. Merton Coulter, XI vols., vol. V, *A History of the South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1948), 108-09.

⁸²Ford, *Origins of Southern Radicalism: The South Carolina Upcountry, 1800-1860*, 104.

⁸³Atherton, *The Southern Country Store, 1800-1860*, 14.

banknotes with a promise to pay the face value in specie. This resulted in the discounting of banknotes, which limited their reliability and usefulness the further the notes circulated from their bank of origin. While this may sound simple, the truth was that currency in the South was a hodgepodge of domestic and foreign currency with the Spanish silver dollar, familiarly known as the piece-of-eight or *real de a ocho*, being the most favored. The United States government accepted this coin as legal tender until 1857. The state prejudice against small currency, critical to yeoman transactions, made money even less available in the Upcountry. Small notes of less than a dollar were often unprofitable to accumulate and redeem because of their low value. To fill this small change gap merchants often offered “change bill” of a small denomination.⁸⁴ Credit effectively became the money supply of the early nineteenth century, expanding and contracting as needed.

Bankers administered the flexible money supply by the real-bill theory of banking and drove antebellum financial institutions. Real-bill banking required security in a commodity, that when sold, would assure the payment of the debt. The desirability of securing the debt with a commodity dictated that the note be of short term, usually three months. In the case of the antebellum South, cotton represented the only widely accepted security. Southern banks were often closely associated with internal improvements, targeting commercial development for merchants, access to western markets, and access to plantations. The banks’ unwillingness to issue credit on anything but secured debt and short terms effectively cut off any industrial growth.

⁸⁴ Lynn Willoughby, *Fair to Middlin’: The Antebellum Cotton Trade of the Apalachicola/Chattahoochee River Valley* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1993), 55.

The South was an agricultural economic system. As such, the twelve-month cultivation, growing, and harvesting cycle set the pattern for finances. The South was a giant futures market, with everything hinging on the harvest. The harvest would set in motion a series of “payments in full,” that is if the harvest covered the credit, otherwise it rolled over to the next year. If there was a crop failure or the global market price dropped and planter was unable to redeem his credit the credit would roll over to the next year. While the planter used this credit system to buy land, slaves, and luxury items, the yeoman used it to augment his subsistence life style.⁸⁵ The merchant often rolled credit over for several years.

Ultimately, Southern lenders based the issuance of credit or advancement of money on some tangible asset and in the case of the Southern planter; cotton and tobacco were the primary items. In contrast, when a merchant issued credit, it took the form of delayed payment for a commodity. The farmer received cloth, seed, needles, sugar, or shoes. Usually once a year, in the late fall or first of the new year, the merchant would settle accounts with the farmer paying in a wide range of possible tangible assets such as eggs, tobacco, cotton, labor, personal notes and sometimes money.

In much of the South, especially in the Plantation Belt, the country store was often in direct competition with the cotton factor. John Read ran a general store in Huntsville, Alabama in 1835. That year he accumulated and shipped \$25,000 worth of cotton.⁸⁶ Frequently these types of merchants ran multiple stores bringing in cotton from several counties. Nevertheless, the general stores that became involved in the cotton market recognized that it was a speculative business subject to large profits or losses. Morris and Mercer was such a business in Quitman

⁸⁵ Woodman, *King Cotton & His Retainers; Financing & Marketing the Cotton Crop of the South, 1800-1925*, 36-41.

⁸⁶ Atherton, *The Southern Country Store, 1800-1860*, 87.

County. They had been in business for 10 to 12 years when they became involved in cotton speculation. Eventually they had lost so much that they settled their debts \$.40 and \$.50 on the dollar.⁸⁷ Edgar C. Ellington had been running a store for several years in Quitman County when he too sustained heavy losses in cotton speculation.⁸⁸ The merchants of the Plantation Belt were often large land and slaveholders. W. Young ran a dry goods store in Putman County where he also owned 20 slaves, 974 acres, and whose partner the Mercantile Agency reported as very wealthy in land and slaves. The Mercantile Agency described Benjamin F. Adams, also a merchant in Putman County, as a large planter and a man of wealth.⁸⁹ The conclusion is that the typical merchant of the Plantation Belt was often a large planter with considerable holdings in land and slaves. His whose primary purpose for involvement in running a country store was to engage in cotton speculation, contrary to the merchants of Forsyth County.

Daybooks and Ledgers of Forsyth County

The 1850 Schedule I listed twenty merchants in Forsyth County. Statewide the 1850 Census found 2,424 merchants, the third largest profession after farmers and, interestingly enough, farm laborers. The prevalence of the storekeeper in the Census data highlighted the central position of the merchant in the antebellum economy. Daybooks and ledgers, best characterized as sporadic and incomplete both geographically and temporally for a wide range of reasons, do exist. Storekeepers had a mobile skill as evidenced by the R.G. Dun papers. It was not uncommon to see them pickup and move to a better location, another county or even migrate to another state. Going out of business was a common occurrence, which would put any paperwork in jeopardy. Fortunately, there are several daybooks and journals in a private

⁸⁷ Georgia, Vol. 26, 241, "R. G. Dun Papers," in *R.G. Dun & Co. Collection* (Boston: Baker Library Historical Collections).

⁸⁸ Georgia, Vol. 26, 242, Ibid.

⁸⁹ Georgia, Vol. 26, 180,182, Ibid.

collection for Forsyth County stores. These include a Sheltonville store daybook covering 1845 to 46, Thomas S. Williams' daybook for 1846, David Walker's daybook and ledger for 1853-58, William H. Harvey's Daybook for 1849-52, and Williamson J. Carter's tavern book for 1857-58.⁹⁰ All are in excellent condition, representative of the methods of bookkeeping for the time, and give excellent insight to the frequency of visits, the items purchased, and the method of purchase and settling debts.

David Walker, a prosperous merchant that did business in Cumming, moved to Forsyth in 1845 from South Carolina. In 1846, the 34-year-old merchant married Theodocia Wellborn and by 1850 had two children. Walker left behind a daybook covering 1855 to 1858 transactions and a ledger covering 1853 to 1854. Walker opened his daybook with the following statement:

All mankind ought to do as they would be done by always telling the truth, live right, & die right & when God's ledger is opened our account will not be too dark, though there will be many charges against all but none can pay the debt himself, but if he has refused at Jesus' feet, the credit has been given by those dear hands out which blood ran down the cross to save poor insolvent debtors – Oh! What would poor sinners do if Jesus would not pay their debt for them. God save the world I humbly pray for Jesus sake. Amen.⁹¹

The concept of credit and debt obviously permeated Walker's life to such that it became intermingled with the other big influence in his life, the church.

Daybooks such as David Walker's give a view into the lives of those with whom he did business because what they purchased was something they needed but could not supply themselves. In the case of Walker's store, at the front was an index listing everyone with which he did business. Those listed were primarily heads of household, with a few exceptions. There

⁹⁰ Sheltonville Store Daybook, 1845-46, Private Collection of Don L. Shadburn, Forsyth County Georgia, Thomas S. William's Daybook, 1846, Private Collection of Don L. Shadburn, Forsyth County Georgia, David Walker's Daybook and Ledger, Private Collection of Don L. Shadburn, Forsyth County Georgia, Harvey's Daybook, 1849-52, Private Collection of Don L. Shadburn, Forsyth County Georgia, Williamson J. Carter's Tavern Daybook, 1857-58, Private Collection of Don L. Shadburn, Forsyth County Georgia.

⁹¹ Private collection of Don L. Shadburn. David Walker's Ledger.

are 563 names listed. The 1850 census counted 1,334 families and the 1860 census counted 1,231 families in Forsyth. This would suggest that Walker's store was a very important establishment that did business with close to half the families in the county. His cliental reached as far as Hall County and included not only farmers but also carpenters, lawyers, and other stores.

A list of the products that Walker sold gives you insight to the type of help that the subsistence farmer needed:

Opadeldoc – a liniment made from alcohol, soap, herbs, and water

Spelling books

Mirror

Cinnamon

Mint

Shovels

Pad lock

Satin vest

Nails

A shirt for burying⁹²

There are several ways to look at a country store daybook like Walker's. An analysis of the products sold by the store and to who gives an analyst insight into the buyers and what was important to them both as a group and an individual. An analysis of the payment methods gives the historian insight into the form that financial transactions take, whether money was available, how was barter handled, how the merchant administered credit, and how the merchant addressed

⁹² "David Walker's Day Book and Ledger," in *Don L. Shadburn* (Cumming, Ga.: Private Collection, 1849-1852).

collection. A frequency analysis of the individuals that patronized Walker's store should give the historian some idea of the level of business transactions going on.

An untypical customer of Walker's was Perrimon Holbrook. He visited Walker's store once in January 1855 spending \$7.85 and settled "by cash in full" in January of 1856. A more dependable customer was G. W. Hallman who was a regular visitor to the store on almost a monthly basis and usually spent \$3.00 to \$4.00. By November 1855, he had run-up an account for \$18.75. He had made several payments on the account during the year, "by work on wagon" for \$.75 in July, "by framing 1 wagon" for \$18.00 in September. In November Hallman paid a cash amount of \$8.04 in settlement, presented a promissory note drawn on a Mr. Brannon, hired out a horse to Walker, and in December presented his own note for payment in full for the year. The interesting aspect of Hallman's account was the various ways in which he met his financial obligations. Mr. Bannon originally created the promissory note as a form of debt. However, it was not uncommon for the local economy to transform debt instruments into currency. Of course, Mr. Bannon's note could only circulate locally as a form of currency. This type of currency was dependent on Mr. Bannon honoring his obligation. It turns out that a Wilson R. Brannon was a customer of Walker and therefore his character was familiar to Walker. Hallman made purchases at Walker's store totaling about \$48 for the year, but paid cash only once. This was surprising because the interesting thing about George Hallman was that the 1860 Schedule I listed him as a "hotel keeper," Hallman had two boarders in his hotel at the time of the census, a doctor and lawyer. In all probability, he rented out rooms in his house. Schedule IV listed him as a farmer with 50 acres of improved land on which he grew mainly corn, but also some wheat. On the 100 acres of unimproved land, he ran fifteen swine. Schedule II identified him as a

slaveholder and married to a 36-year-old female with two female babies.⁹³ Hallman illustrates the complex financial lives led by individuals in Forsyth and while farming was the most prevalent occupation, Forsyth citizens often wore tow hats.

The type of commodities purchased at Walker's reflected a wide range of cliental and the size of his operation. A review the purchases of some of the individuals quickly made clear their occupation. In 1853, John F. Harrison did a large amount of business with Walker. Over a period of six months, he purchased files, iron, drawing knives, nails, screws, castings, lead, varnish, turpentine, carriage bolts, locks, and brushes. This was in addition to home goods such as calico, tobacco, oil, bacon, salt, buttons, gloves, and shoes. It quickly becomes apparent that Harrison is building something. It turns out that the Schedule I identified him as a cabinetmaker.

Harrison had two accounts with Walker, one for himself and another for a business where he was a partner with an individual named Moor. Fred A. Moor was one of the wealthiest merchants in Forsyth with personal property valued at \$22,000, being a farmer and a slave owner. Moor was in and out of business several times with various individuals including his son-in-law, an individual named Strong, and another man named G. W. McGuire, a merchant, farmer, and slave owner.⁹⁴ The conclusion one comes to is that rarely was a merchant only a merchant but also a farmer and that those individuals that held slaves tended to associate together.

Elizabeth Woods was a 60-year-old weaver from South Carolina. She lived with her 20-year-old daughter and they were regular customers of Walker. Her transactions give detail into the manner Walker conducted his business. Woods not only purchased supplies necessary for her

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Georgia, Vol. 12, 210-222, "R. G. Dun Papers."

weaving business but also purchased chickens and eggs from Walker. This illustrates how Walker obviously took items such as chickens and eggs as payment and in turn sold them.

Cyrus James, one month in 1855, sold Walker 7,000 cigars at \$2.00/1000 or \$.002/cigar. James did not take money but used the cigars as barter. Later that month Walker loaned A. C. Hatford \$2.70 and on that day, Hatford purchased a cigar for \$.05. These two transactions indicated that Walker sold the \$14.00 worth of cigars that he purchased from James for approximately \$350.00, a very lucrative transaction for Walker. Walker's daybook, littered with loans to individuals, illustrates his activity as a private banker.

To say the yeoman society lacked cash and worked on the barter system carried significant implication. It fell to the merchant to manage, document, and allocate the barter process. Walker was a good example of how the transportation system worked in an isolated community like Forsyth. In return for goods sold Walker had wagons built, repaired, and painted for him. He often allowed individuals to redeem their debt by performing hauling for him. Others paid with eggs, chickens, beef, flour, plugs and boxes of tobacco, cigars, potatoes, work, foregoing wages, wood, renting of horses and oxen, tubs of lard, maked boots, letting Walker hire them out to other individuals, and notes drawn on neighbors or themselves. Walker frequently carried someone's debt for two or three years. Children were an important source for paying off credit. It was not exceptional to see a creditor's son appear as a laborer in the ledgers as payment. One widow paid off Walker's credit advances for two years by using her son's labor. A. J. Mullins, listed in the 1850 Census as a tailor with a wife and family, obviously died before the 1860 Census, used his son's labor as a normal practice in paying Walker off. A. W. Johnston sold 41 pounds of beef to Walker on Oct 4, 1855. Cooking was another unusual item that Walker took in exchange. The absence of banks allowed Walker to function as a private

banker by issuing notes for work performed and making cash loans. Walker appears to be a very successful merchant and had an extensive range of business interest.⁹⁵

Forsyth Legal System

William Harvey's operation was more typical of the country store than Walker's store and his Cumming based operation. William H. Harvey's Daybook covered a period of 1849 to 1852. Harvey's domicile was Sheltonville, later to be part of Milton County. Primary characteristics of Harvey's account management were lawsuits. Of the 120 accounts, reviewed Harvey settled 16 or an average of 13.3% of his business transactions by lawsuits or threat of summons. This suggested that the use of courts was an important component of doing business in Upcountry Georgia.

While initiating this number of suits might appear to have been a burden on a small country store merchant, Georgia designed its legal system to be responsive to local needs. Each county in Georgia organized itself around militia districts. Within each district, the local voters elected two justices of the peace for four years. This allowed the justices to function as representatives of the local population. Usually these local justices had no legal training. Warren Grice considered this characteristic the central strength of Georgia's justice system. The primary purpose of the justices was to preside over civil matters of less than thirty dollars. Harvey's use of the justice of the peace to resolve credit issues graphically illustrates the need for a locally responsive legal system. It was clear that Harvey understood how the courts worked and how to use them effectively. This supported Grice's idea that the justice courts were effective and accomplished what they were intended to do. All cases that the justice of the peace handled

⁹⁵ "Thomas S. William's Day Book," in *Don L. Shadburn* (Cumming, Ga.: Private Collection, 1846), "Williamson J. Carter's Tavern Day Book," in *Don L. Shadburn* (Cumming, Ga.: Private Collection, 1857-1858).

could be appealed to a jury of five whose verdict was “final and conclusive.”⁹⁶ The view was that the justice of the peace courts brought the government to the people with the jury settling the disputes of their neighbors.⁹⁷

The Georgia legislature had uniquely designed its legal system to adapt to and meet the needs of the local community. It was a three-tiered system consisting of the justice of the peace, Inferior Court, and Superior Court. Of the thirteen colonies, Georgia was the only one not to incorporate into its judiciary a court of errors or Supreme Court. The resistance to the creation of a court of errors was reflective of Georgia’s interpretation of republicanism, based on their concept of individual independence freedom from outside meddling. The commitment to their own concept of republicanism was an effective button to push to rally support against interference by the Federal government in state business and key to understanding the underlying motivations of the Upcountry yeomanry. The Georgia assembly did not rectify the lack of a Supreme Court until 1835, but even with its initial creation, the assembly did not allocate any original jurisdiction. The opponents to the idea of a Supreme Court managed to resist funding of the court until 1845. Up until then the Superior Court was effectively an independent judiciary accountable to no authority outside of its circuit. While Georgia started out with assigning counties to three circuits, each successive pilfering of land from the Creeks and Cherokees created new counties and brought the need for additional circuits such that by 1851 Georgia had thirteen circuits. Forsyth started out in the Cherokee Circuit and moved to Blue Ridge Circuit with its creation in 1851. The Superior Court had jurisdiction over all criminal cases, land title disputes, and appellate jurisdiction over the other courts in the county. The assembly elected the

⁹⁶ Ralph A. Wooster, *The People in Power; Courthouse and Statehouse in the Lower South, 1850-1860*, [1st ed. (Knoxville,: Univ. of Tennessee Press, 1969), 65-66.

⁹⁷ Warren Grice, *The Georgia Bench and Bar* (Macon, Ga.,: J.W. Burke Co., 1931), 89-91, "William Harvey Day Book," in *Don L. Shadburn* (Cumming, Ga.: Private Collection, 1849-1850).

Superior Court judges to three-year terms. Their control over this court made it the primary face of state authority and vehicle for monitoring the local affairs of the county.⁹⁸

The primary jurisdiction of the Superior Court was over criminal issues; however, civil issues greater than thirty dollars also ended up there. The Superior Court was in session twice a year, according to where the county fell on the circuit's schedule. Forsyth County held Superior Court in April and October. During the April Term of 1852, the Superior Court of Forsyth County conducted its business in one day, April 16. The Superior Court heard 50 cases that day of which eight, or 16 percent involved debt or *fieri facias* actions (*fieri facias* - an order by a judge to a court official to seize the property of a defendant). Despite the fact that the primary purpose of the lower justice of the peace court was to handle these types of issues, they still managed to represent a significant number of Superior Court cases.

The Inferior Court, while responsible for probate issues, acted more like a five man county commission, accountable for the county administration. The legislature transferred probate responsibilities in the early 1850s from the Inferior Court to the newly established Court of Ordinary. In 1812, they made the Inferior Court judges, previously appointed by the legislature, locally elected officials. Analysis of Inferior Court membership indicates that 26 percent had served before and often served in the assembly at the same time. Surprisingly, only two per cent of the Inferior Court judges were lawyers, with the dominant occupation, three out of four, being farmers and with 67 percent forty years or older. The Inferior Court handled the construction of roads, supervising elections, erecting bridges, administering slave patrols, licensing taverns, building public offices, and levying county taxes. A wide range of officials

⁹⁸ Wooster, *The People in Power; Courthouse and Statehouse in the Lower South, 1850-1860*, 70-72.

such as sheriff, coroner, and tax collectors supported the Inferior Court.⁹⁹ The fact that in Georgia the Inferior Court was a locally elected office is in marked contrast with South Carolina where the assembly continued to appointed local officials. It reinforces the premise that in Upcounty Georgia, the yeomanry was able to construct those institutions reflective of their needs.

Below the Inferior Court, justice was a local affair with the primary authority falling to the justice of the peace for cases involving thirty dollars or less. They also decided the initial disposition of cases that eventually went to the Superior Court. Forsyth had three militia districts after ceding the southernmost district for the creation of Milton County.¹⁰⁰ By allowing for the local election of these justices, the state had efficaciously pushed the administration of civil justice down to the people. These justices usually had no legal education, so they operated more like a gathering of neighbors whose purpose was to resolve some local disputes. While the Superior Court had appellate jurisdiction, another alternative for individuals unsatisfied with the justice of the peace was to ask for a five-man jury trial.

Riding the circuit as a Superior Court judge in the developed portions of Georgia was a solitary affair, but in the new Upcounty counties where the yeomanry made their home, the low population density turned the judge's ride into a caravan. Not all counties had towns of sufficient size to justify or financially support attorneys so the Bar often rode the circuit with the judge. Admission to the Bar or certification to practice law was accomplished by appearing before the Superior Court and answering a series of questions from the sitting judge. Hiram Parks Bell, a member of the Bar in Forsyth County and member of both the United States Congress and the

⁹⁹ Ibid., 64, 82-84, 94, 97, 121.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 65-66.

Confederate Congress, recounted an interesting anecdote that offered an excellent insight into the character of the Bar in the Upcountry. Bell described an applicant for admission to the Bar, a certain C.W., as having:

Passed middle life by at least a decade. He had failed to realize his ambitious hopes which he sought. He had taught singing-school without discovering a bonanza in melody, but was not without power in politics, in his militia district, which was remote from the county courthouse. In stature, he was a little below medium size, in intellect, below mediocrity: and in culture, still lower. His two upper front teeth were missing, and the color of his hair was of the claybank variety.

The Superior Court Judge quizzed C.W. on a number of legal topics. Illustrative of his grasp of the law, the judge asked C.W. about the number of kinds of people that the law recognized, to which he had no reply. After noticing that C.W. had no answer, the bench informed him that there were two kinds of people recognized by the law, natural and artificial, and followed by asking C.W. to give an example of artificial person. After some thought and strain, C.W. decidedly answered “A woman.”¹⁰¹ The point of this story is that the individuals who rode the circuit were a product and representatives of the yeoman farms.

Born in Jackson County, Bell was raised and educated in Forsyth County. He started plowing the fields of his father’s farm at the age of seven and “from 1840 to 1847 – and between thirteen and twenty years of age, from sunrise until sunset, in winter and summer, [he] was engaged, without intermission, in work on the farm.”¹⁰² At the age of twenty, he attended a local Forsyth academy for a year. The academy represented Bell’s only formal training. He did attend what he termed an old-field school “only six or eight months in snatches of two or three weeks at a time.” He described his teachers as men of “advanced age, too lazy to work and too poor to live without it,” with a teaching theory that the best method of instruction was through the application

¹⁰¹ Bell, *Men and Things*, 74.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 6.

of force. Bell stated that these field schools were the product of the pioneer and would serve families for a range of three miles. He described the students as having a “common experience in labor and poverty.”¹⁰³ After one year of instruction at the Cumming Academy Bell moved on to Elijah where he became a teacher at another academy and studied law. With less than a year’s study, Bell stood before a panel of five Superior Court judges and answered questions for four hours. Bell did not comment on whether he answered the questions any more accurately than C.W., nonetheless his inquisitors admitted Bell to the Bar. Bell was a very successful attorney and politician, so the quality and level of his education was very informative as to the quality of the typical bar member in Upcountry Georgia. While Bell excelled in his profession, his underlying yeoman derivation exemplified the backup of the Upcountry judicial bar.

The Mercantile Agency and the Character of Credit

William Harvey’s propensity to file suit pointed to the pivotal nature of credit in the economic functioning of the antebellum South. The data indicated that credit was the basis for two-thirds to three-fourths of all the purchases made by farmers during the antebellum period.¹⁰⁴ Credit took various forms. For the planter, it was credit advanced by his cotton factor on a future cotton crop. Against this line of credit, the planter wrote notes. These notes circulated almost like money between individuals until ultimately presented to the bank against which they were drawn. The Panic of 1837 was a credit collapse.¹⁰⁵ The cause of the collapse was not the credit advanced to the planter and to country stores, but the refusal of banks to redeem their own notes in specie in response to Andrew Jackson’s call for hard currency for land purchases from the

¹⁰³ Ibid., 12-17

¹⁰⁴ Lewis E. Atherton, "The Problem of Credit Rating in the Ante-Bellum South," *The Journal of Southern History* 12, no. 4 (1946): , 534.

¹⁰⁵ Bernard Bailyn et al., *The Great Republic: A History of the American People* (Boston, Toronto: Little, Brown and Company, 1977), 481.

Federal government. Instructively the Panic highlighted the gaping information hole in the credit system.

An antebellum financial institution based its ability to make a loan or issue credit on information available to it concerning the character of the individuals or companies to which they were making the advances. Information acted as a rationing mechanism. Banks limited their lending primarily to factors or the mercantile trade. Planters and farmers had little interaction with banks. This client restriction reduced the asymmetrical information problem and allowed the banks to efficiently gather information in regards to a limited number of concerns as opposed to the ultimately wider range of consumers of the debt, that is, the planter and farmer.¹⁰⁶ The factor, in turn, fulfilled the financial needs of the planter, likewise they economized on information gathering by limiting the number of their clients. The planter would perform similar responsibilities for the small farmers in the Plantation Belt. Unbeknownst to them, they were addressing the issue of information asymmetry or attempting to control the natural lack of information by one side of a financial transaction that caused pecuniary decisions to go bad. Nonetheless, the fulcrum of the credit system for the planter was the factor.¹⁰⁷ However, the yeoman did not have a factor to ration credit out to him. The focus for credit to the yeoman was the storekeeper who got his credit advances from the Northern wholesale centers.

Credit initially was a local process where a merchant offered credit to neighboring farmers or businessmen based on their experience and local knowledge. If an individual moved into a new locale and wished to start up a business offering credit, the best method by which to

¹⁰⁶ Asymmetrical information addresses the issue of decision-making and the balance of power. When one side of a financial decision has greater information in regards to the information pertaining to the business deal, the power lies with the side with the best information. The antebellum bank faced a server case of lack of information and by restricting those to whom they offered credit, they reduced their risk.

¹⁰⁷ Howard Bodenhorn, *State Banking in Early America: A New Economic History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 222-27.

gain that local knowledge was to talk to lawyers, clergy, and other merchants in the immediate area. As the industrial revolution worked its magic and merchants started to conduct business over greater and greater distances, friends, family, business associates, and other customers could give intelligence regarding potential new cliental, their character, and credit worthiness. Northern wholesalers also asked visiting storekeepers about the credit worthiness of distant storekeepers. Eventually, letters of introduction from attorneys, merchants, clergy, and bank cashiers would augment this network. Lawyers in particular were involved in affirming the reliability of local merchants. Their involvement in the collection process put the lawyers in an advantageous position for gathering personal information. On routine collections on defaults, the local lawyer would get a five per cent commission.¹⁰⁸

The Panic of 1837 emphasized the need to replace this eighteenth-century network with a new modern nineteenth-century system. This became the new credit reporting business.¹⁰⁹ For the yeomanry, the storekeeper fulfilled a similar function as the planter; acting as a conduit for credit from the wholesale centers in the North into the South. The Southern storekeepers purchased approximately \$131,000,000 worth of merchandise in 1859, much of it based on six-month credit terms.¹¹⁰ The credit offered by the wholesaler in the Northeast had a direct relationship to crop production in the South. Loose credit would encourage overproduction and tight credit would discourage planting. The Northeast wholesalers regulated their ability and willingness to offer secure credit on the accuracy of information available to them. This required a flow of information concerning the character of the storekeeper to the wholesalers in the North. The twentieth-century concept of debt to asset ratio did not exist. Credit worthiness issued

¹⁰⁸ Atherton, "The Problem of Credit Rating in the Ante-Bellum South," 536-37.

¹⁰⁹ James D. Norris, *R. G. Dun & Co., 1841-1900: The Development of Credit-Reporting in the Nineteenth Century* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1978), 3-10.

¹¹⁰ Atherton, "The Problem of Credit Rating in the Ante-Bellum South," 534.

directly from an individual's perceived reputation. Credit worthiness, despite the new modern credit reporting, still relied on an individual's reputation. Only now, that information regarding character had become a business.

Lewis Tappan, a New York businessman, who had been a victim of the 1837 credit crunch, stepped into this gap in 1841. Tappan was not the first to attempt to fill this need and he effectively duplicated the efforts of Griffen, Cleveland, and Campbell, an earlier credit reporting company. Sheldon Church also started an informal process of credit reporting in 1841 when his clients formed "The Merchants Vigilance Association" and employed Church to tour the South, gathering credit information.¹¹¹ The key differentiating component in Tappan's plan was the use of local lawyers for reporting. In return for reporting twice a year, May and November, on those individuals requested, Tappan guaranteed exclusivity on any debt collection claims worked in their county by those subscribing to Tappan's service, The Mercantile Agency. Southern merchants reacted with hostility towards those individuals that represented credit agencies and their identity was often a well keep secret.¹¹² The journals never mentioned the names of correspondents but referred to them by number. Confidentiality in regards to their identity was critical for their own personal safety. Tappan built the subscription rates on the annual sales of the client. The initial business focused on New York wholesalers and merchants in the North and West. Where Tappan was unable to sign a lawyer as a correspondent, the Agency used traveling reporters. Tappan focused on merchants who came to New York in person and gradually expanded his business to include Boston, Philadelphia, and Baltimore. The Agency did not send reports to subscribers but informed them when new information came in on individuals they had shown interest. When the subscriber wanted to review this information, they had to appear in

¹¹¹ Ibid.: , 539.

¹¹² Ibid.: , 551.

person at the Mercantile Agency where a confidential clerk would read the information to them and they could take notes. This elaborate attempt at disconnect reflected the Agency's concern for libel suits, the bane of the credit reporting business.¹¹³

Today Tappan is mainly remembered for the starting of a reliable credit reporting business; however, in the 1840's his name was even better associated with the abolitionist movement. One of the weaknesses in Tappan's business plan revolved around reporting on merchants from the South. While there was considerable demand for this information, Tappan's name was a flash point down South, and the Agency was beginning to lose business to other competitors because of their lack of Southern reports. Initial efforts to expand into the South meet with local resistance. When the Mercantile Agency eventually did expand into the South, there was an effort to use a name other than Tappan's, his partner Edward Dunbar, for insistence. Ultimately Tappan's name proved such a barrier to the expansion that there was an unsuccessful attempt to sell his interest out to Dunbar. By 1846, Tappan had covered all states with 670 correspondents. In 1849, Tappan sold out to Benjamin Douglass. Douglass eventually sold out to R. G. Dun in 1859. With Dun, the story of the Mercantile Agency continues on to its merger with John Bradstreet of the Dun and Bradstreet fame. Nevertheless, the critical part of the story was what Tappan had accomplished in the South during the later 1840s and 1850s with his early credit reporting. A mass of credit reports that covered the nation from the early 1840s until approximately 1880 in over 2,580 volumes, in the course of time, ended up in the archives of the Baker Library at Harvard University.¹¹⁴ This collection is the most extensive view of American business concerns during the antebellum and postbellum period.

¹¹³ Norris, *R. G. Dun & Co., 1841-1900: The Development of Credit-Reporting in the Nineteenth Century*, 19-26.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 29-35.

When the credit reports sent in May and November of each year arrived, the Agency sorted them by state and county and then transcribed them into one of the 2,580 volumes. It took many volumes to cover one state with each volume accumulating the reports for four or five counties. The Agency required 36 volumes to cover the state of Georgia. Each county had an index that listed all individuals and firms for which the Mercantile Agency received reports. Forsyth County's index contained 255 names and covered a period from 1850 to 1871. Many of the reports were short because of the brevity of many of the business ventures. In large commercial centers similar to Augusta, Georgia, the detail for a single firm would cover several pages. In reviewing the reports, it quickly becomes apparent that Tappan was investigating and receiving reports on more than just the merchants who traveled to the wholesale centers of the Northeast. The Agency asked correspondents to track down individuals of whom there was some question. Tappan became very involved in directing the efforts of his correspondents. Tappan often inquired as to the status of particular partnerships.¹¹⁵ A not uncommon reply from the correspondents and entry in the journals was "no such man in county." The types of businesses investigated covered a wide range. The most common business dealt with were dry goods stores, but also included liquor, groceries, tobacco dealers, clock peddlers, tailors, tanners, physicians, druggist, lawyers, confectioners, carriage makers, and ministers.¹¹⁶

Through the analysis of the accumulated credit reports of the Mercantile Agency, a historian can trace the evolution of a partnership, tracking the creation of a business, the taking on of partners, and dissolving of those partnerships. The interchangeability of partners was a key characteristic of these country stores. The partnership of Boyle and Reese was a good example. The correspondent that the Mercantile Agency employed in Forsyth, #3156, reported February

¹¹⁵ Atherton, "The Problem of Credit Rating in the Ante-Bellum South," 544.

¹¹⁶ Georgia, Vol.. 12, 210-222, "R. G. Dun Papers."

1853 that two young men by the names of Jason Boyle and William Reese were going into the mercantile business and were perfectly solvent at present. By November of that year, the correspondent was reporting that Boyle and Reese were good for \$8,000 but lacked experience and would probably fail in the end. By December of 1854, the correspondent reported some disturbing information. The senior partner was in considerable debt and the junior partner was “addicted to drinking corn spirits.” Nonetheless, the correspondent related that there was considerable money owed to the business and the “firm [was] in gd hands.” In January 1855, as the correspondent had predicted, the partnership dissolved and he reported that the business would continue under a “Jas A. Boyle,” a physician from North Carolina. The next report followed in April of 1855:

Wm. B. owns about 3000\$ wor of RE and negros had this outside of his mercantile bus. He is said to be vastly in debt which no doubt true. His is perfy hon & honble in his mercantile dealings. Upon the whole I think he is now perfy gd. You should keep up yr. inquiries about his solvt. He has a train of relations who in my opinion wd not see him suffer.¹¹⁷

A year and half later, February 1856, Boyle formed a partnership with a Mr. Martin who brought about \$2,000 worth of cash to the business. The next month a third partner joined the firm, H. P. Grinnell who brought an additional \$2,000 into the firm. The correspondent did not report on this business again until July of 1857 when he forwarded the information that the concern of Boyle, Martin & Grinnell was “closing their bus., will be abt able to payout.” Interestingly neither Martin nor Grinnell appeared in the 1850 or 1860 census as merchants but only as farmers. This would suggest that the census actually undercounted the number of merchants and that there was a steady flow of individuals into and out of the merchant business.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., Georgia, Vol. 12, p. 214.

The chronicle of Jason Boyle's business adventure appeared to be a combination of local gossip and inside information. It was apparent that credit reporting had not advanced much beyond the opinion of the local clergy. The Mercantile Agency's correspondent obviously called it correct early on in the initial report that Boyle would eventually go under. Nonetheless, when he recounted that one partner was an alcoholic but that their credit was still good, gives one pause about consumption of whiskey in the 1850s and its relationship to character. Liquor consumption did not appear to be a credit issue. A fundamental point on this process was that the correspondent did not necessarily know the target of his investigation that well. Most of this information was gathered by the correspondent riding around the county and talking with people. The quality of information that came back often depended on the ability of the correspondent to make acquaintances, his gift of gab, and aptitude at drawing information out of people.

Individuals such as Boyle & Reese would go to wholesale centers in the Northeast once a year to purchase goods. The Mercantile Agency listed Boyle & Reese as doing business in Cumming in dry goods and groceries. Wholesalers advanced the cost of dry goods, acquired in a city like New York, Philadelphia, or Baltimore on six-month credit. Usually the merchants would return the next year and pay interest on the additional six months of credit. Ultimately, the merchant needed to pay for the goods and that could come in the form of cash or notes gathered during the year. In order for the merchants to do business up North, they usually had to redeem their Southern bank notes for Northern bank note. The wholesalers would consolidate the notes and sell them to banknote brokers at a discount. The brokers acted as a clearinghouse, accumulating and redeeming notes for distant banks. The circle of credit that went down South came back North and could well go back South again, all of it depending on the character of the individuals involved.

The antebellum South had an agricultural economy but the country store fulfilled a critical niche and effectively made the Southern agricultural economy whole. Despite the industriousness of the yeoman farmer and his commitment to independence, he remained reliant on the country store for a wide range of products. The yeomanry may have pursued self-sufficiency, but it was a conditional self-sufficiency. The Upcountry business model for the country store often contrasted with its counterpart found in the Plantation Belt. The Upcountry merchant was either a professional businessman or a farmer seeking an augmentation to his agricultural pursuits. The Plantation Belt merchant also sought augmentation but often it was a speculative venture. His objective was to draw the smaller cotton growers to his store and advance credit on future cotton production. The merchant often ran the Plantation Belt country store not for the farmers but for the cotton. The Plantation Belt merchant business model called for him to accumulate cotton from farmers with insufficient commodity to attract a cotton factor. Much as the Upcountry storekeeper, the Plantation Belt storekeeper acted as an intermediary but this time between the small farmers and the cotton factors. This did not appear to have occurred in Forsyth County. The merchants investigated in Forsyth settled their accounts with cash or bartering of labor, tobacco, or bacon. The Upcountry storekeeper, often a yeoman farmer himself, received compensation for service he provided, and adhered to a different business model than that used by the Plantation Belt storekeeper.

CHAPTER FOUR: FORSYTH COUNTY AND THE FRONTIER RELIGION

The moral laxity prevalent on the American frontier, while appearing to need some religious influence, would at first glance seem not to be the locale to start an evangelical revival. The backcountries of the antebellum South were not favorable to or the desired recruiting grounds of the aristocratically oriented established churches of the colonial era. Max Weber strongly argues that class is a critical component in the determination of the nature of a religion. While historians have written much on why the Baptist and Methodist succeeded on the frontier, the reality was that any church that found success would have inevitably had to be significantly different in comparison to the colonial mainline churches. The rural setting, sparse population, and uneducated inhabitants suggested that any religion that catered to and found success on the frontier would be different to the religion that had formed an alliance with the ruling aristocracy of the colonial period. Both the Baptist and the Methodist had a unique organizational solution in response the scattered population. Each responded to the need for a message that gave hope to people that risked the dangers of the frontier. The two postcolonial denominations embraced the republican ideology of equality by drawing from the ordinary people for its clergy. Moreover, in the end each offered a social alternative to the violent and undisciplined frontier.

The yeoman did not find within the colonial mainline churches, the Congregational, Presbyterian, and Episcopalian, an institution that met his needs, but instead joined a popular wave of egalitarian, evangelical, and republican inspired protestant denominations. The decline of the traditional mainline churches and rise of the Methodist and Baptist churches during the early national period shared more than a coincidence with the Revolution. These mainline churches were ill prepared to address the needs of the frontier. Their adherence to doctrinal

ethics did not address the anxiety of frontier settlers who were cut off from family and community. Nathan O. Hatch argued that the “transitional period between 1780 and 1830 left an indelible imprint upon the structures of American Christianity as it did upon those of American political life.”¹¹⁸

His argument was that the ramifications of the American Revolution materialized not only as a revolt against the dominant elite power structure but also the dominant mainline churches as well, and that the Methodists and Baptists represented that revolution in the religious institutions. Adding to the strain was the migration of large numbers of farmers, effectively escaping the old authoritative structures and creating new ones. Cynthia Lynn Lyerly concurred, but looked more closely at the Southern Methodist movement and argued, “marginalized southerners advanced an ethic vastly at odds with southern secular mores.”¹¹⁹ Interestingly enough Bertram Wyatt-Brown added credence to this argument with his premise that the difference between the South and the North was an honor code or external based value system versus an ethics or internal based value system created from their protestant doctrine.¹²⁰ The mainline churches of the South fit in well with the honor based society of the planter elite. The yeomen’s embracement of the new denominations represented their shift to that Protestant based ethical value system of which Wyatt-Brown spoke.

In order to understand the success of the two dominant denominations in the South during the first half of the 19th century, historians must examine their achievement within the spatial and temporal context they functioned, the frontier. Frederick Jackson Turner argued that the frontier

¹¹⁸ Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 6, 59-66.

¹¹⁹ Cynthia Lynn Lyerly, *Methodism and the Southern Mind, 1770-1810* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), vii.

¹²⁰ Wyatt-Brown and Wyatt-Brown, *Honor and Violence in the Old South*, 19, 26-27.

was where civilization met savagery, where American society continually begins again. Turner argued that those European institutions that America had started with were adapted to, and changed by the conditions of the frontier.¹²¹ This coupled with new democracy, created an individual with an adaptive mental twist. Avery Craven contented that that Turner emphasized the process of the frontier and implied that this process was active in Southern history, particularly with the broadening of religious freedom.¹²² The frontier represented a new environment that demanded new approaches, new solutions, and new institutions to resolve new problems.

Upcountry Georgia of the 1830 to 1850s surely qualified as a frontier. Granted, the Cherokees who the state had pushed the out in 1837, had attempted to assimilate and should not be considered savage, a questionable characterization on any American frontier. Craven asserted that a population on the move, multiple transitional stages, exploitive pioneer agriculture, and commercialized farming were characteristics present on a frontier and all were part of Southern history during the first half of the nineteenth century.¹²³ Methodist and Baptist denominations represented new solutions and it was on the Southern frontier that they found particular success.

One characteristic of religion in the South from 1800 to 1860 was change. What started out as an egalitarian, emotion-based conversion, anti-slavery, and anti-elite religion eventually came to accommodations with powers beyond the frontier. Christopher H. Owen chronicled that evolution in his text *The Sacred Flame of Love*. To appreciate the change in the early Methodist Church, a student cannot over emphasize the Churches original abolitionist position. Owen concurred with Hatch that there was a parallel set of revolutions. While Hatch spoke of a

¹²¹ Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (New York,: H. Holt and company, 1921), 2-3.

¹²² Avery Craven, "The "Turner Theories" And the South," *The Journal of Southern History* Vol. 5, no. No. 3 (Aug., 1939): , 293-98.

¹²³ *Ibid.*: , 304-05.

republican revolution, Owen was more concerned with the Jeffersonian liberalism of the early nineteenth century. Georgian mistrust of the mainline churches made them predisposed to support Jefferson, despite his deist thoughts. Methodists foundational beliefs encouraged them to "ignore distinctions of race, gender, and to a lesser extent, class, only at great peril."¹²⁴ Owen argued that by the 1830s Georgia Methodists had moved beyond the yeoman roots. The Methodists saw planters and slaves join their church in increasing numbers. The advancement of "civilization" changed the original environment in which Methodism initially conquered Georgia. Meetings in homes and log cabins gave way to framed churches. The Church started to expand into urban commercial centers and attracted affluent families. The evangelical tenets remained constant, but the Methodists became more interested in the education of its clergy as it moved toward respectability. The strict behavioral codes started to relax in some areas of Georgia. This alteration in the discipline did not go without disruption as evidenced by the formation of a dissenting splinter church as the Methodist Protestant Church. Owen contended that the removal of Thomas Cooper from the presidency of the South Carolina College represented the intellectual shift from Jeffersonian liberalism to evangelical principles that were more accommodating to slavery.

Owen connected the dots of Southern Methodist accommodation to slavery through the rise of the educated circuit riders and their increased level of expectations. The Methodist Conference began to allow circuit riders to service circuits near their homes and extended their tenure on a circuit from two to three years. This allowed them to become more like the Baptist "farmer-preachers," and presented them with the opportunity to fuse with slavery. This process injected into the Methodist hierarchy a proslavery or at least reduced the number of strident

¹²⁴ Christopher H. Owen, *The Sacred Flame of Love: Methodism and Society in Nineteenth-Century Georgia* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1998), 27-27.

abolitionists in that leadership. Tension within the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church started to appear as early as 1824 when it became necessary for the Conference to declare, “no slaveholder hereafter should be eligible to any official station in the Church, where the laws of the state will admit of emancipation.”¹²⁵ This was a curious decision and obviously indicated the need to reinforce a long standing abolitionist position; however, the need for the statement recognized an increased strain. The Methodists plainly struggled with slavery for a long period. Probably the most graphic example of the Methodists final accommodation of slavery was the Fourteenth General Conference of 1844 where the Rev. Harding appealed a suspension from the Baltimore Conference for owning slaves. After the Conference decision was sustained, “a complaint was then presented against Bishop [James Osgood] Andrew [of Oxford, Georgia] for holding slaves.”¹²⁶ With the failure to resolve the differences between the Northern and Southern delegates, slavery became the rock upon which the Methodist Conference broke. The Methodists calculated Church membership at 1,176,255 at the time of the schism, 1843. Approximately 45 percent of the Church went with the South.¹²⁷ Considering that the Southern states represented an estimated 36 percent of the total United States population, it suggested that the South was a Methodist strong hold. While the Southern Methodist would continue to say slavery was a “moral evil,” philosophically it never condemned the slaveholders as immoral.

Methodism had its roots in early eighteenth century England and the Church of England. Methodist was essentially a revivalist sect within the Church of England and did not break with the Church of England until after the death of John Wesley. For our discussion 1784 and Francis

¹²⁵ Charles Chaucer Goss, *Statistical History of the First Century of American Methodism: With a Summary of the Origin and Present Operations of Other Denominations* (New York: Carlton & Porter, 1866), 79.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 88-90.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 110.

Ashbury, the first Methodist Bishop in the American colonies, is a convenient starting point. John Wesley selected Ashbury and Thomas Coke as co-superintendents of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America. Coke went on to assume a global responsibility for Methodism while Ashbury settled in America and became the Church's first circuit rider, traveling for forty years. In 1770, there were an estimated 1,000 Methodists. By 1830, Methodists numbered more than 500,000 and 34 per cent of the mainstream church membership of all denominations in the United States by 1850.¹²⁸ Methodism rode the wave of republican egalitarianism that transformed a set of "monarchical, hierarchy-ridden" colonies into the "most liberal, the most democratic" nation in the world."¹²⁹ The transition from a tradition bound society to a society committed to meritocracy had implications that worked themselves out in the post-revolutionary period. The nullification of social restraints and the disestablishment of the colonial monopoly of the state sponsored churches efficaciously moved religion in the United States into what amounts to a free market. This coupled with the republican ideology allowed the Methodists to identify a market niche and create a product that was "outside of the control of the new nation's, social, political, and religious elite."¹³⁰ This was a bottom-up Christian movement. The collision of the frontier environment with republican ideology released previous constraints and created a dynamic that allowed denominations like the Methodists and the Baptists to score a high level of success unforeseeable before the revolution.

Any consideration of a religion requires some statement in regards to its doctrine. The Methodists believed in free will, falling from divine grace, and obtainment of perfection. Their rejection of predestination opened the church doors to everyone and falling from grace allowed

¹²⁸ John H. Wigger, *Taking Heaven by Storm: Methodism and the Rise of Popular Christianity in America*, 1st Illinois paperback. ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), 3-4.

¹²⁹ Ibid, Gordon S. Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*, 1st ed. (New York: A.A. Knopf, 1992), 6-7.

¹³⁰ Wigger, *Taking Heaven by Storm: Methodism and the Rise of Popular Christianity in America*, 5-7.

for redemption of the fallen sinner. Both of these doctrines were extremely effective on the frontier where moral laxity was the watchword. The primary characteristics of Methodism were emotionalism, mysticism, enthusiasm, spiritual self-discipline, and evangelism. Methodists did not consider rational thinking as the pathway to salvation. The saved had to feel their conversion in an intense and emotional manner. Mysticism, a proper representation of Methodism, is the belief that God speaks directly to the believer thereby reducing the importance of clerical interpretation. Their enthusiasm manifested itself in “loud shouting, clapping, falling, and weeping,” and Methodist considered it proof of direct communications with God. Methodist asceticism or self-discipline involved conquering a long list of prohibitions in regards to worldly habits. Methodism was an aggressive evangelizing denomination.¹³¹

Nevertheless, these characteristics and theology was not the only thing that made Methodism successful. The Methodists had an organizational structure that played directly to the environment in which it chose to evangelize. There was the itinerant system or the circuit rider, their system of local preachers, local class organization, camp meetings, and hierarchical church structure. The frontier, with its moral laxity, presented an evangelizing church with fertile ground, however, the low population density and its poverty presented difficult circumstances for establishing a church. What better solution than no church building at all. Meetings were usually held in a local members house or barn and the circuit rider often found accommodation at the same place. These structural elements of the Methodist Church “answered some very real problems for the frontier families.”¹³²

¹³¹ Lyerly, *Methodism and the Southern Mind, 1770-1810*, 34-39.

¹³² Dickson D. Bruce, *And They All Sang Hallelujah: Plain-Folk Camp-Meeting Religion, 1800-1845* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1974), 14.

It is insufficient to say merely that there was a frontier in the South. The critical issue was what did that mean in the South? The Southern frontier represented a series of contradictions, individualism versus the need for cooperation, expectations vs. reality, settlement vs. migration, honor versus ethics, and plantations versus subsistence, all contributing to an atmosphere of inconsistency and tension that found release and resolution in drinking and violence. The Methodist and Baptist denominations offered an alternative worldview in which there was discipline, community, and social relationships that resolved these contradictions.¹³³

The Baptists, while not as successful as the Methodists during the antebellum period, offered evangelically strong competition on the frontier. Though they did not have the same tools by which to conduct their evangelical activity, they showed enough flexibility to the conditions of the frontier to prosper. The Baptists had their origin with the Anabaptist and the rejection of infant baptism. The primary characteristic of Baptist was the lack of a central governing authority. This made for inconsistency in beliefs from one Baptist church to another. Nonetheless, the common principle of the Baptist was freedom of the soul, freedom of the local church from outside interference, and freedom of the individual to interpret the Bible. The Baptists were not so much a denomination as a loosely organized religious movement. The key historical events for the Baptists were the initial arrival and eventual merger of the Particular, General, and Separatist Baptists in the South, their involvement in the first camp meetings, their eventual rejection of that form of evangelizing, and the 1845 schism with the Northern Convention. The Baptists faith accompanied the adherents as they migrated to the frontier. The Baptist did not require educated preachers and pulled them from the ranks of the believers. The lack of a strict dogma made the entry into the Baptist movement porous as exemplified by the

¹³³ Ibid., 34.

defection of a large number of Kentucky Presbyterians in 1813 to the Baptist fold.¹³⁴ Deficit the Methodist organization, what emerged in the South during the early 19th century was a Baptist faith that was actively evangelistic, democratically controlled, and voluntarily associated with the General Convention.

The abandoned and disestablished Church of England carried too much pre-Revolutionary baggage to be an effective competitor against the Methodists or Baptists. The Presbyterian Church, tied to an educated clergy, prestigious schools, close association with the planters, and their lack of ministers on the frontier, did not find a receptive audience among the republican and egalitarian-minded Upcountry yeomanry.¹³⁵ This litany of Presbyterian deficiencies highlights the class distinction of the old mainstream churches and the new frontier churches. The process of disestablishment involved more than the mere withdrawing of state support. Virginia seized Episcopalian Church property and financially weakening the church.¹³⁶ Lack of membership and the decline of the recruitment of new clergy weakened all the colonial mainstream churches. The Methodists and the Baptists, while not completely unchallenged in the backcountry, did not find another denomination that could efficaciously dispute the field.

Discipline was a common theme across the Methodist and Baptist churches. Offenses covered everything from horseracing, the theater, gambling, drinking, fighting, swearing, superfluous dress, and slavery. This litany of misdeeds could also constitute a list of favored activities of the planter class. Even more critical than this idea of class-consciousness was the destabilizing effect that activities like this had on a community. They contributed to

¹³⁴ Ibid., 42-43.

¹³⁵ John B. Boles, *The Great Revival: Beginnings of the Bible Belt*, Pbk. ed., *Religion in the South* (Lexington, Ky.: University Press of Kentucky, 1996), 2-4, Bruce, *And They All Sang Hallelujah: Plain-Folk Camp-Meeting Religion, 1800-1845*, 44.

¹³⁶ Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity*, 60.

competitiveness, social differentiation, and violence, all antisocial and disruptive elements. The church functioned essentially as a court of morality.¹³⁷ While not intending to overstate the influence of these two denominations, they did represent active agents and points of cohesion around any type of class-consciousness that might have formed for the Upcounty yeomanry adhered. Class-consciousness requires differentiation and the Methodists and Baptists were catalyst for a sense of belonging to a particular group.

The Baptist and Methodist in Forsyth County

The Methodist and Baptist churches arrived quickly in Forsyth County. By 1840, nine churches had been established in Forsyth of which seven were Baptist and two were Methodist. The first church was the Cumming First Baptist Church in 1832. The Cumming Methodist Church, formed in 1836, started out as a mission and later placed in what became known as the Cumming Circuit in the Cherokee District of the North Georgia Conference. This naming convention graphically illustrates the hierarchical nature of Methodism, a key strength.

In order to gain some appreciation of the moral landscape of Forsyth, the Superior Court records supply an excellent view of the environment that the Forsyth churches had to work in. The Forsyth Superior Court, part of the Blue Ridge Circuit, met twice a year in August and April. The court was usually to conduct its business in one or two days and in the 1840's and 1850s processed and passed verdict on approximately fifty cases a term. The spring session of 1852, held in April, can be considered a representative term. It tried fifty-four cases of which thirteen were civil issues. An analyst would categorize the remainder as moral issues and crimes, involving stabbing, assault and battery, adultery, divorce, riots, larceny, playing cards, and illegal

¹³⁷ Bruce, *And They All Sang Hallelujah: Plain-Folk Camp-Meeting Religion, 1800-1845*, 46.

selling of liquor.¹³⁸ As an analyst examines term after court term, the story is the same. While this was a criminal court and these were crimes, one does come away with the impression that Forsyth had more than its share of vice. Despite the fact that the Superior Court handled these cases, this type of social unrest was grist for the local church disciplinary mill. This was a rural farming community with a low population density but there was obviously a lot of drinking, fighting, and sex going on, fertile ground for Methodist and Baptist preaching.

The conference minutes of the Baptist and Quarterly Methodist Meetings gave insight into how these denominations applied their theory of discipline to these issues. Mount Tabor, a Forsyth County Baptist church founded in 1833, retained minutes since 1842. At the founding of a new church, the founding members usual wrote out rules of decorum and Mount Tabor was no exception. The church elders wrote a twelve-paragraph outline of a model for the governance of their Church. The twelfth paragraph is of importance to this paper:

In cases of offence, reference should be had to the 18th chapter of Matthew, and whereas we believe it to be the duty of the members of the Church to come together often to look into the affairs of the House of God. It shall be the duty of the Church to labor with those who do not obey the requirements of the gospel, unless they have some just ground for their absence, especially male members.¹³⁹

This was a typical statement included in the Rules of Decorum, commonly found at the front of a Baptist church conference minutes. The church would meet once a month in conference to discuss church business. These are the most prolific of the Baptist records. The conference followed a formalized structure:

1. The conference opened with a sermon.
2. Visiting members invited to be seated.

¹³⁸ "Superior Court Minutes," in *Forsyth County* (Morrow, Georgia: Georgia Department of Archives and History, 1850).

¹³⁹ Minutes of the Mount Tabor Baptist Church.

3. The door of the church opened.
4. Inquiry for fellowship.
5. Call for reference.
6. Call for general church business.

The call for reference, for historians, is the exciting part of the Baptist conference for it was at this time that the conference conducted disciplinary inquiry and enforcement. The minutes document the Baptist conference calling to account church members for their actions. On September 10, 1858 the Antioch Baptist Church in Forsyth was informed that Obediah Brownlow and his wife (her name was not mentioned) “were not living together as man and wife as God commanded.” The church decided to appoint a committee to investigate and report at the next conference. At the next conference, the membership decided to exclude Brother Obediah Brownlow from the church because he refused to live with his wife. Obediah’s wife, still unnamed, “was retained in the church as ther [sic] was nothing proved against her.” The next February the membership expelled Milly Peridly for base and immoral conduct. The Church files similar charges against Larken Peridly and he too was suspended. A review of the Antioch Church minutes for an eight year period found the church expelling and excommunicating its members for drunkenness, gossip, adultery, gambling, going to another church, marrying a second wife, keeping a disorderly house, swearing, and stealing.¹⁴⁰ It was apparent that these types of charges covered basic moral issues plus some criminal activity. It is this type of discipline offered by the Baptist and Methodist church effectively constituted an alternative social structure and moral court. There was no action taken against the membership over issues of doctrinal beliefs. The discipline involved moral issues. And therein lies the defining issue.

¹⁴⁰ "Antioch Baptist Church Minutes Forsyth County," in *Georgia Department of Archives and History* (Morrow, Georgia: 1849-1865).

They were concerned about instilling ethics. Dickson Bruce argued that this type of discipline fulfilled both a practical and symbolic function. The practical function was combating the immoral trinity that Peter Cartwright spoke of: superfluous dress, whisky, and slavery. This immoral trinity reinforced the lack of social cohesion and stability present on the frontier. The symbolic function represented the rejection of the secular world, which was the very “heart of frontier conversion.”¹⁴¹ This was not about honor but about developing within its membership a set of moral guidelines by which to conduct its daily lives.

At Mount Tabor, attendance appeared to be a major problem. On March 22, 1843, the “clerk inquired of the Church if they knew any reason why Brother J. W. Kemp don’t attend to his Church Meetings better.” The congregation agreed that censuring Brother J. W. Kemp was the best approach and directed Brother A. J. Kemp, a 28-year-old member of the Church to go and ask Brother J. W. Kemp to attend the next meeting. That same day the congregation sent Brothers Wilkins and Julian to talk to Brother Hendricks on the same issue. At the next meeting, a Brother Julian stated that he had heard a rumor that Brother Carroll was not willing to submit to the laws of his country, a curious charge. The Church eventually decided to excommunicate Brother Carroll. At the next meeting, Brother Julian stated that Rose, a slave of Brother Samuel Julian had “gotten into disorder and the Church agreed and turned her out.” The minutes suggested an interesting and important twist to the discipline process that went directly to the objective of this punitive action. In June of 1842 a Brother Hendricks, spoken to earlier in regards to attendance, stood up at the meeting and admitted to having had a confrontation with and fight with another man, another criminal act. The Church decided that they would “bare with Br. Hendricks.” In January of 1844, seven months later, Brother Hendricks again stood up and

¹⁴¹ Bruce, *And They All Sang Hallelujah: Plain-Folk Camp-Meeting Religion, 1800-1845*, 47, 126.

confessed to fighting. Once again, the Church chose to “bare with him.”¹⁴² Brother Hendricks appeared to have found the key to staying out of trouble with his brethren, that was attend the meetings, and confess before your fellow Baptist catch you. The charge was a potential crime, an issue for the Superior Court, but church authorities handled the issue.

The obvious conclusion was that the primary objective was submission. The confrontations and accusations against other members of the Church was not about forcing people to conform but about forcing them to support and strengthen the bonds of the fellowship. The social principal that Asbury spoke of was difficult to achieve without guaranteeing attendance. One could confess to a wide number of minor infractions repeatedly as long as in the end they returned to the fold and yielded to the authority of the Church. This was not about honor but about building a system of personal ethics, about self-control, and about internalizing a process of social control. It was about sharing an experience around which the church could build a cohesive and stable society. The antislavery position threatened that cohesion and stability. When faced with the issue of slavery and the potential destabilization created by the early antislavery beliefs, the Southern churches broke with the Northern abolitionist elements.

However, there was another layer to this social cohesiveness. While historians enjoy the disciplinary detail in the minutes of the church, it is easy to overlook a tie that binds. A review of the Salem Baptist Church for the year of 1843 found a continuous thread of notes in the conference minutes that concerned the receiving of individuals into the church by letter. On October 18, the Salem congregation admitted to their fellowship Brother Starling Jones and his wife Elizabeth by a letter. The next month saw Satoria Powel received into the fellowship by

¹⁴² Mitchell A. Collins and Wanda C. Collins, *Stepping out on Faith: History of Mt. Tabor Baptist Church 1833-1999* (Fernandina Beach, FL: Wolfe Publishing, 1999), 19-28.

letter. In December, they received William Gazaway into their fellowship by letter. The next spring, at the same conference they gave Riziata Harris a letter of dismissal, a letter of recommendation or spiritual credit. The fellowship later received Nancy Owen by letter into the fellowship.¹⁴³ What is occurring is a coming and going of Baptist members as they migrate in and out of Forsyth. Once an analyst recognizes this traffic, they find that the Baptist conference minutes are loaded with this type of notation. This type of activity actually exceeded the disciplinary actions. While historical texts abound with evidence of migration of whole families or communities, the church records show the coming and going of a large number of individual families. Moreover, when these individuals arrived at their new home they found there a Baptist Fellowship ready to receive them. This type of social support facilitated the migration that occurred in the South during the antebellum period. They did not necessarily need a family or community to accompany them because they knew that once they arrived a Baptist Fellowship would be waiting.

The objective of Baptist and Methodist churches was to instill in their members an ethical standard that extended out beyond the church. While the church might call a member to account for the selling of spirits near the church on conference day or speaking contemptuously of another member, their reach often extended much further. The concept of morality allowed the church to become involved in the resolution of business matters, even going as far as to examine business records for dishonest practices.

While the church documents available for Forsyth County do not reflect an atypical religious population, it does give insight into the personal lives of the inhabitants of Forsyth

¹⁴³ "Salem Baptist Church Minutes Forsyth County," in *Georgia Department of Archives and History* (Morrow, Georgia: 1843-1911).

County. Those individuals that chose to join a Baptist or Methodist Church in Forsyth County clearly were looking for a framework around which to build their society. It was an ethically driven religious society in sharp contrast to the honor driven society of the planter.

Camp Meetings

The camp meeting of the first half of the nineteenth century epitomized the Methodist character of that time. It was at these well-organized and orchestrated gatherings that the Methodists gave witness to their emotional conversion. Hatch asked the question, why did the American Methodist embrace this festival while their fellow Methodists in England went to great lengths to stomp it out? In England Methodists viewed camp meetings as openly defying “ecclesiastical standards of time, space, authority, and liturgical form.” It represented a loss of control by the hierarchy. Hatch’s answer was that here in America they were “a phenomenally successful instrument for popular recruitment.”¹⁴⁴ Charles A. Johnson interpreted the camp meeting as a functional response for the need to spread spiritual salvation to a sparsely populated region.¹⁴⁵ Dickson D. Bruce described it as a welcomed social occasion for the inhabitants of a sparsely populated region.¹⁴⁶ While some arguments traced parts of the camp meetings to earlier traditions, its application on the frontier was organic. Opponents described it as psychopathic, bizarre, absurd, irreligious, and orgasmic. Both Johnson and Bruce contended that an investigator better understands the institutions of the yeomanry when analyzed within the context of the frontier. Interestingly enough, Johnson argued that the Methodists gained ground only as rationalism seized the popular culture, which would appear to be a contradiction considering that emotion was a distinguishing trait of both the Baptists and Methodists.

¹⁴⁴ Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity*, 50-55.

¹⁴⁵ Charles A. Johnson, *The Frontier Camp Meeting; Religion's Harvest Time* (Dallas,: Southern Methodist University Press, 1955), 4.

¹⁴⁶ Bruce, *And They All Sang Hallelujah: Plain-Folk Camp-Meeting Religion, 1800-1845*, 5-6.

The early camp meetings of Cane Ridge, Kentucky in 1800 were part of the Great Revival, a precursor to the Second Great Awakening, and initially a product of the Presbyterians. The outdoor camp meetings were a response to the conditions of the frontier, low population density, and lack of capital to construct churches. They offered an alternative social gathering with an intensity that rivaled the traditional frontier entertainment of drinking, gambling, and fighting.¹⁴⁷ The Presbyterians elected to discard the camp meetings as too emotional, counter to Calvinist doctrine, and uncontrollable.¹⁴⁸ The Baptists never fully embraced the arbor churches. However, the Methodists, while not institutionalizing the camp meeting within the church, adopted the practice. Francis Asbury commented in 1808, “I rejoice to think there will be perhaps four or five hundred camp meetings this year.”¹⁴⁹ For church leaders like Asbury, the only purpose for the camp meeting was to convert people and any other social benefit was incidental. The measure of success for a camp meeting was the number of converts.¹⁵⁰ Nevertheless, observers of a camp meeting drew conclusions of alternative social purposes for these gatherings.

While an argument could be made that the camp meeting originated in England and was a natural development, that ignores the fact that outdoor meetings in England were eventually suppressed. The sociological argument explaining the success of the camp meeting phenomenon in the United States was that it stripped the participants of all social identification and created an egalitarian arena of where personal ethics could displace the code of honor of the Old South. The seating arrangements of the camp meeting supported the argument that the camp meeting was about displacing what the Methodists considered artificial class distinctions. While the church

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 130.

¹⁴⁸ Johnson, *The Frontier Camp Meeting; Religion's Harvest Time*, 69.

¹⁴⁹ Francis Asbury and Ezra Squier Tipple, *The Heart of Asbury's Journal* (New York, Cincinnati, : Eaton & Mains; Jennings & Graham, 1904), 603, Johnson, *The Frontier Camp Meeting; Religion's Harvest Time*, 60.

¹⁵⁰ Bruce, *And They All Sang Hallelujah: Plain-Folk Camp-Meeting Religion, 1800-1845*, 61.

elders indorsed segregated seating by gender and race, camp meeting seating was otherwise open, and not stratified by income or status similar to the mainline churches. This should come as no surprise since the tip of the Methodist spear was essentially uneducated and poverty-stricken circuit riders.

Under the encouragement of Francis Asbury, the Methodist camp meeting quickly started to assume a specific form. Usually they held the third quarterly conference of a circuit in conjunction with a camp meeting. However, these love festivals lost some of their primitive image when placed in the context of the drunken militia musters, corn shucking, and cabin raisings. There was one clear point about the camp meetings, as an institution it progressively materialized as an evolutionary entity. The boisterous, unstructured, disorderly, passionate, and sometimes immoral meetings gave way to a formalized, managed, permanent, and documented meeting.¹⁵¹ The meeting, advertised weeks in advance, would start on a Friday midday and go through to Tuesday morning. The Methodist assigned duties, camp layout was enforced, and sermons precisely scheduled. The elders prescribed a regimented daily routine with the day starting with a horn blast at 6 A.M., followed with scheduled preaching, with the last sermon at 8 P.M. There were clear leaders, including an organized watch to keep and if necessary physically enforce order.¹⁵²

Other denominational comments on and the ever present travel-writer portrayal of camp meetings often contained the word orgy. The descriptions sounded an anti-revival tone, painting caricatures of uneducated backwoodsmen. Camp ground meetings did not go unopposed. The

¹⁵¹ Charles A. Johnson, "The Frontier Camp Meeting: Contemporary and Historical Appraisals," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 37, no. 1 (1950): , 93-98.

¹⁵² Johnson, *The Frontier Camp Meeting; Religion's Harvest Time*, 90-92.

meetings were sometimes the scene of fights between the attendees and hard-drinking frontiersmen.

A key consideration posited by Bruce was that attendance to camp meetings was not the product of heritage or coercion. Johnson argued that the camp meeting was the social event of the season for frontier farmers and they organized their activities to assure they could attend. Because of the social nature of the camp meeting it functioned as a magnet for others including members of non-Methodist churches. Some travelers have estimated that a quarter of those in attendance were there for something other than to hear the word. Politicians, merchants, horse thieves, liquor salesmen, dentists, doctors, barbers, and bootblacks found camp meetings attractive gatherings to ply their trades. The extracurricular activities often called for the itinerant preachers to step in and physically enforce the rules with fists.¹⁵³ The conclusion is that camp meetings were an uniquely American event that fulfilled a particularly American frontier needs.

The observer portrayed the frontier as unhealthy, morally lax, hard drinking, violent, and a superstitious community. Johnson pointed out several advantages the Methodists had on the frontier. With very little historical tradition of doing so, the Methodists embraced innovation freely. Methodist employment of itinerant preachers illustrated their creative approach to problem solving. Their evangel doctrine allowed them to regard everyone as potential converts. The use of local preachers and small class organization reduced the cost of operating. Like the Methodists themselves, the camp meetings evolved from a spontaneous origin to a regimented and systematic program where “each camp-meeting day appears to have been rigorously planned to include several kinds of services at regular interval,” and whose primary objective was to

¹⁵³ Ibid., 208-28.

recurrent converts.¹⁵⁴ Of the new denominations that were the product of individual freedom generated by the Revolution, only the Methodists fully embraced the camp meeting.

The Methodist defined the nature of the camp meeting by its purpose, conversion. The lives of the Methodist leadership reliably prescribed the pattern of conversion for the new converts by their own life examples documented in church biographies. The Methodists had an inerrant idea of what conversion involved, the direct intervention of the divine into the life of an individual and the structure of the camp meeting led an individual through that process. Participates in a camp meeting were either sinners, mourners, or converts, clearly defining their position in the conversion process. Sinners were the targets of the meeting. Mourners were those who had become convicted and recognized their doom. The converts also included the backsliders.¹⁵⁵ Outside observers might see chaos but the membership saw an organized process where everyone had their place and purpose.

Basis of Methodist Frontier Success

One of the key benefits offered by the Baptist and Methodist Churches was advancement. Both churches relied on a local farmer-preacher who worked the field but also led the local congregation. In much of the South, the yeomen lived on the margins of the planter elite. While the yeomanry was not poor and often shared kinship with the planters, in the Plantation Belt the planters socially hemmed him in. The frontier religions offered an alternative to this by advancing or increasing ones social prominence through the church. A gifted Methodist might start out as a class leader and progress up the church ladder to circuit rider, elder, and bishop.

¹⁵⁴ Bruce, *And They All Sang Hallelujah: Plain-Folk Camp-Meeting Religion, 1800-1845*, 9.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 77-78.

This localism made the overhead cost of church maintenance low.¹⁵⁶ Circuit riders were assigned to a circuit for two years, lived essentially an outdoor existence, traveled as much as five hundred miles on a circuit, taking six weeks to complete the circuit, and meagerly paid. In 1834, the standard compensation for a circuit rider was \$100 a year and if he had got married, a practice that was discouraged, an allowance for wives and children included. Even this amount was up for negotiation. The circuit rider could not depend on his congregation for support either. One Methodist itinerant preacher overheard two church stewards discussing how much financial support they should give him. Their conclusion was that he was worth at least a field hand and decided to pay him \$15 per month.¹⁵⁷ To appreciate the relatively low income, the mainline churches such as Presbyterians and Congregationalists would pay their in resident minister \$400 to \$1,000 annually for a small church.¹⁵⁸ The Methodists truly tested the faith and commitment of their circuit riders. The upside of localism was the ability to form a church almost anywhere a few faithful might gather, be it a barn, someone's log cabin, or a field.

The lack of education of local preachers and itinerant circuit riders, when compared to the mainline churches, had a significant impact on the message that they delivered and the lack of theological discussion. There is a major theological break between Baptist Calvinism and Methodist Arminianism. Nonetheless, there were fundamental agreements in regards to the spiritual conversion experience and the individual's personal relationship with God.¹⁵⁹ The message of the educated Presbyterians and Congregationalists whose preaching was subject to a complex theological discussions and arguments had little bearing on the yeoman's situation. The

¹⁵⁶ Roger Finke and Rodney Stark, *The Churching of America, 1776-2005: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy*, 2nd ed. (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2005), 62.

¹⁵⁷ George G. Smith, *The History of Georgia Methodism from 1786 to 1866* (Atlanta: A. B. Caldwell, 1913), 208-09.

¹⁵⁸ Bruce, *And They All Sang Hallelujah: Plain-Folk Camp-Meeting Religion, 1800-1845*, 62, Finke and Stark, *The Churching of America, 1776-2005: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy*, 83.

¹⁵⁹ Finke and Stark, *The Churching of America, 1776-2005: Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy*, 86-87.

frontier religious message was more about the day-to-day issues of incorporating an ethically based approach to life, thereby a worldly or secular message about salvation. As Finke and Stark argued, the Methodists and Baptists had a product to meet the needs of the market.

One of those products that the Methodists managed was the “Book Concern,” started in 1789 in Philadelphia and moved to New York in 1833. This was a major effort of the Methodist Church; it generated \$182,758 in sales for 1852 and had expanded to \$539,469 by 1860. While the primary objective was to produce literature to support the evangelical efforts of the church, the profits also supported the bishops, retired preachers, widows, and orphans. The “Book Concern” published 637 volumes of general religious character and 1,574 pamphlets to support Sunday schools, hymnbooks, bibles, and commentaries on the Scriptures. The “Book Concern” represented the largest denominational publishing house in the world. In addition to New York, the Methodist ran a branch “Western Book Concern” in Cincinnati. This large book publishing operation augmented the nine official weekly periodicals with a circulation of 147,500.¹⁶⁰ The large-scale embracing of the new mass print technology by the Methodists Church during the antebellum period positioned it as a high tech religious organization using the most advanced communications available. The sheer size of the operation made it a major part of the Methodist evangelical effort.

The establishment of Sunday Schools, from a twenty-first century perspective, may not appear an extraordinary event, but the General Conference of 1790 called for their establishment in order to teach “poor children, white and black to read.”¹⁶¹ The classes were free and scheduled from six in the morning until ten and reconvened at two until six. Without a doubt the ultimate

¹⁶⁰ Goss, *Statistical History of the First Century of American Methodism: With a Summary of the Origin and Present Operations of Other Denominations*, 133-38.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 61.

objective was religious instruction, nevertheless the school represented for a large percentage of Methodists the only opportunity to learn to read at all. In 1817, the Methodists formed the Tract Society. Its declared purpose was to provide the poorer class with religious reading material. The social impact of this type of instruction had to have far-reaching consequences. The ability to read lifts expectations and opens up a wider view of the world, one that might have lead the Southern Methodist to look the other way when they passed a slave. An interesting parallel, as the educational level increased and Methodism crept up the social ladder the Southern Methodist packed their initial abolitionist beliefs away, choosing instead to explain the moral issue of slavery away as a nature process supported by the bible.

The frontier of antebellum Upcountry Georgia did not reflect the social integration that is traditionally associated with a rural community. Social integration implies agreement among the society's members on basic values, centers of authority, and institutions through which to act. The best list of adjectives describing the Upcountry yeomanry is individualist, egalitarian, agrarian, and republican. However, a fifth term helps explain the prominence of the new denominations among the Upcountry yeomanry: mobility. Granted mobility, as an adjective, applies to the South as a whole. However, a mobile planter class transported his dominate planter culture and his capital assets. He transplanted his community and knew how he fit into the new community. The yeoman arrived in his new community with little social standing. Mobility disrupted the equilibrium of the social structure, menaced its inherited values, and upset the balance of power. This weakens the social ties of the community. One would expect this in an industrializing society, not a rural community. The Southern frontier was a contradiction with its sense of community disrupted, values shifting, and power relations were not clearly marked. The frontier functioned effectively as a filter, populating itself with a class of individuals that had not

felt at home in the established mainline churches. The republican based denominations offered social structure, well-defined values, and a clear avenue of authority. The socializing process inherent in many institutions encourages social integration through self-control. Self-control and delayed gratification were the focal point of the frontier Baptist and Methodist church.

One of the primary causes of violence on the frontier was the dominant social theme of individual freedom. Individualism works diametrically against the idea of social integration and increased tension resulting from a disparity between goals and the ability to achieve those goals. The Baptists and Methodists worked directly on the issue of individuality and effectively demanded submission from its participant. The submission started with the initial requirement for the individual to testify to his or her own religious experience to the congregation. This experience went beyond the mere confession to their belief but an admission to their guilt, failings, and a physical manifestation of their connection with God. Equally effective was the shared experience of the conversion.

The frontline of the struggle over a yeoman's soul, for the Methodist, was the weekly class meeting. The class leader was a local layman or woman and therefore close to the yeomanry's tensions and issues. Selected by the circuit rider, the class leader also attended quarterly meetings, managed exhorters, and local preachers. The typical class meeting consisted, ideally, of twelve members and involved singing, prayer, and disciplined examination of each other. While the class meeting's functional purpose was religion instruction, pious support, and pursuit of a spiritual life, Asbury and Coke both assigned it a social responsibility. In the *Discipline of 1798* the concept of the social principle was clearly stated. Their conviction argued

that Methodism improved, spiritualized, and strengthened the social bonds.¹⁶² The class meeting, a shared experience, formed a physiological covenant among its participations. The yeomanry went to class meetings in order to share their spiritual experiences with their fellow members and gain psychological support through that sharing.

The Methodists were particularly committed to documenting the “experience” of some of their more important adherents in the form of biographical sketches. The purpose of these sketches was to “quicken the zeal of those who have entered into the labors of evangelizing.”¹⁶³ Thomas Summers’ *Biographical Sketches of Eminent Itinerant Ministers* made sure it covered all of the geographic regions of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South: South Carolina, Tennessee, Alabama, North Carolina, Mississippi, Louisiana, Florida, Western Virginia, Georgia, and Missouri Conferences. Methodists used these biographies to illustrate the conversion process to its followers and define biographical patterns for its converts: a worldly and sinful pre-conversion life followed by conviction and concluding with conversion. Bruce argued that the pre-conviction life arranged a dichotomy between the worldly and sinful life versus the religious life where a tension between the two creates a sense of guilt. When the individual could no longer tolerate the guilt, the tortured soul assumed a convicted status, the superiority of the religious life became obvious, and the individual physically and emotionally separated himself from the sinful life. Conversion came only when the individual came to realize that only the intervention of the divine could save him. It was this well-defined intervention of God, shown in the biographies of

¹⁶² Wigger, *Taking Heaven by Storm: Methodism and the Rise of Popular Christianity in America*, 82-85.

¹⁶³ Thomas O. Summers, *Biographical Sketches of Eminent Itinerant Ministers Distinguished, for the Most Part, as Pioneers of Methodism within the Bounds of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South* (Nashville,: E. Stevenson & F. A. Owen, 1858), viii.

the itinerant preachers, that was the purpose of the camp meetings. The Methodist developed the camp meetings to assure the pattern continued.¹⁶⁴

The Methodist organizational structure, while at first appearing to be antithetical to the frontier nature, suited the yeomanry. The very fact that the Upcountry yeomanry lived on the frontier margin of Southern society allowed the Methodists to offer them an opportunity not available elsewhere. The geographically transferrable fellowship gave the yeomanry guaranteed social status and a sense of community. The conversion process was a rite of passage that bound them together. The lack of physical infrastructure did not place a financial burden on an element of society that had little money to offer. From a marketing point of view, the Southern yeomanry and the Methodist Church fit hand in glove.

Life on the frontier did not resemble the life the settlers often left behind. Pushed by the lack of opportunity or pulled by the offer of opportunity acted as a catalyst for the migrants move to the Southern frontier. However, in either case, they migrated from relatively settled areas normally dominated by the planter class. The contradictions inherent in the Southern frontier breed an environment of instability and stress that found release and resolution in drinking and violence. The Methodist and Baptist churches, minor denominations prior to the Revolution, found an ignition point in the republican ideology of Post-Revolutionary America. The Revolution released the restraints on the individual's right to use their powers of conception, judgment, or inference on a wide range of social issues. This fostered the weathering away of common respect for authority, tradition, station, and education. It instilled an evangelical, egalitarian, and independent element in the new denominations. The insurgent denominations

¹⁶⁴ Bruce, *And They All Sang Hallelujah: Plain-Folk Camp-Meeting Religion, 1800-1845*, 63-70.

incorporated the new popular republican culture.¹⁶⁵ The new denominations entered the competitive religious market with a stronger organizational structure, cheaper and less educated clergy, and selling a message of salvation. They offered a sense of community missing on the frontier. This community was open to all especially those coming from other congregations. The yeomanry staffed these were denominations, initially targeted the yeomanry, and that were responsive to yeomanry's needs.

¹⁶⁵ Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity*, 6-9.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

The story of Forsyth County suggests that between 1850 and 1860 the yeomanry of Upcountry Georgia lived beyond the institutions of the planter class. To insinuate that the presences of a yeomen dominated Forsyth was a sentient decision on the part of the yeomanry assigns a degree of agency not evident in the antebellum yeomanry. However, the yeomanry claimed the Upcountry in the late 1830s and they persisted in controlling the institutions of this region up until the Civil War. While historians traditionally argue that the cotton/slave model pushed the yeomanry off the best land, it could also be argued that there were enclaves into which he was naturally drawn and the planter class chose not reach. There is sufficient evidence to argue that the slave/cotton culture could have made inroads into portions of the Upcountry if they so desired. Postbellum Upcountry Georgia would see cotton production explode by a magnitude of ten in Forsyth County. While still low by the Plantation Belt standards, the rapid increase in cotton production after the War, graphically illustrated that the low levels of cotton production in the antebellum Upcountry could have been much higher if the yeomanry had chosen. The population that inhabited Forsyth emigrated from the planter-dominated regions of Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina and developed into a distillation of the yeomanry culture that lived on the periphery of the great plantations of the Piedmont.

The peopling of new territory like Forsyth County occurred rapidly after the deportation of the Cherokees. While state officials initially intended the land distribution for Georgia residents only, many of the winners chose to stay where they were, taking advantage of a windfall profit that the lottery presented. A combination of Georgia Plantation Belt, Pine Barrens, and Sea Island lottery winners and South Carolina Upcountry immigrants populated the

Upcounty. It is safe to say that the vast majority of those who moved into Forsyth County came from yeoman stock. The 1850 census shows that 99 percent of the heads of households in Forsyth had real estate valued at less than \$5,000 compared to Hancock County's forty-five percent. Forsyth's thirty different occupations inventoried in the 1860 Census reveals that 88 percent of the heads of households listed as farmers. Hancock, with 61 different occupations, had only 67 percent of the inhabitants catalogued as farmers. The significance of these numbers revolves around the conclusion that the Forsyth population represented a homogenous grouping with similar social and economic conditions as opposed to Hancock's socially diversified and economically stratified society. While this filtering process is not surprising, it carries important historical meaning. The traditional historical interpretation is that the slave/cotton economic model pushed these individuals out of the Plantation Belt. However, the migration out of the Plantation Belt also included sons of the planter elite. What was occurring in Forsyth was an accumulation of a specific social and economic element, the yeomanry.

The decision to migrate was a two-part decision process in regards to the yeomanry. First, the individual decided to migrate, and then he chose a location. Two unrelated questions drove the motivations to migrate and the ultimate destination. The decision to migrate could be economic, social, or cultural. There is little doubt that the Southern population of the antebellum period was predisposed to migrate by their wasteful farming practices. In the Plantation Belt, the yeomanry found them economically hemmed in by the plantations and their soil depleting cotton. The development of unimproved land had slowed down significantly in the Plantation Belt so hemmed in was a physical reality. Socially they were invisible, despite their kinship with many of the planters. The Plantation Belt yeomanry had a menu of reasons to select from to justify their migration.

The process of choosing a new location was the telling issue. If their choice was to reproduce the slave/cotton model there were locations in the Upcountry that were favorable. Floyd County is an excellent example. Here cotton was more than something to give the farmer a little cash. In 1860 when Forsyth produced 656 bales of cotton, Floyd produced 7,864 bales. The best explanation of Floyd's commitment to cotton was based on its ready access to the Western and Atlantic Railroad.¹⁶⁶ Most of the Georgia railroad development followed the cotton and slaves, as soon in Figure 12. The Western and Atlantic Railroad was constructed to bring western markets into the reach of Savannah. The development in counties such as Floyd of cotton production was a response to that market access. A key issue for the lack of major cotton production in the Upcountry was its isolation. Farmers in Forsyth had sufficient farm size and time to have engaged in the cotton market if they had access to the market. However, the closest railhead was Madison, Georgia, eighty miles away. The decision to relocate to Forsyth inevitably reduced the profitability of yeomanry adopting either the tobacco or the slave/cotton model.

Yeomanry were an uneducated class of people, at least by modern standards. While there were public field schools, the Methodist Church offered a more focused, long term, and reliable education system through its Sunday school and book concern. The Sunday school was in direct support of an isolated, uneducated, and poor population. In some cases, it represented the only education that the yeomanry received and had to have had a significant impact on the Methodist population as a whole.

The Methodist and Baptist denominations, while both having roots in England, flourished on the American frontier. These denominations took a revolutionary stance in relation to the

¹⁶⁶ David F. Weiman, "Farmers and the Market in Antebellum America: A View from the Georgia Upcountry," *The Journal of Economic History* Vol. 47, no. 3 (Sep., 1987): , 645.

mainstream government supported denominations of the colonial period. The pivotal point of their success revolved around their ability to fulfill the needs of a physically isolated, mobile, uneducated, and poor frontier yeomanry. Granted, in the late antebellum period, they did come to an accommodation and found success among the more powerful elements of Southern society, but it was their initial success among the yeomanry that brought them to that transitional point and this relation continued up to the Civil War.

If one examines the Methodists of the early national and the antebellum period, history reveals a church organization structured to meet the unique conditions of the frontier yeomanry. Whether the Methodist designed the church structure in response to the frontier or just found success on the frontier is irrelevant. The fact is that the yeomanry embraced Methodism and made it their own. It offered its membership opportunity that the initially uneducated membership could not find elsewhere. The itinerant preacher model, favored by the Methodists, supplied a focused and coherent message in places that could not support financially or demographically a permanent resident preacher. Class leaders and the weekly class meetings of an optimal size of twelve held at members homes created an atmosphere of shared experience that meet the sense of community so difficult to find on a frontier. The membership reinforced their shared experience at the annual camp meetings where they stood witness to the conversion process of their brethren.

The Baptist structure was effectively at the opposite end of the spectrum, more an association of churches than a denomination with a hard-core evangelical message. Their success revolved around the fellowship and community that it offered. While not embracing itinerant preachers, it did create the “preacher-farmer,” also an uneducated and unpaid local leader. Their success centered on two elements, discipline, and dismissal. The purpose of discipline was to

create the environment of shared experience. The profound impact of shared experience cannot be underestimated. The frontier environment was a place of violence, moral laxity, and uncertainty that logically would generate a high level of anxiety. Shared experience occurs only among equals; it brought down barriers of resistance, and created an environment of trust. In other words, shared experience lowers anxiety. Letters of dismission were critical to a highly mobile population. Upon arrival at their new location, their letters guaranteed acceptance into a community of fellowship. This type of community facilitated the migration process that marked the antebellum South.

The state had distributed the land to the yeomanry through the lottery in one hundred sixty and forty acre lots, so it is not surprising to find that the average land ownership in 1850 was about one hundred eighty acres. With the average breakdown between improved and unimproved acreage running about 30 percent and 70 percent respectively, raising swine on the unimproved acreage appears to be a critical element for subsistence farming in Upcountry Georgia. The swine deficiency of Upcountry Georgia clearly indicates that the yeomanry did not engage in the process of selling swine to the Plantation Belt. While both the planter elite and the yeomanry engaged farming as a living, the yeomanry did so to feed family, not purchase more land and slaves. In essence, the Upcountry yeomanry worked a different economic model. While this is no surprise, it remains a significant point. They did not need banks or cotton factors during the antebellum period.

The yeomanry engaged the wider world through the country store and then it was to supplement his subsistence farming, not to sell his crop. He led not only a physically isolated existence but an economic one as well. His involvement in the North/South circle of credit was a rather simple one. The yeoman purchased goods on credit and paid off their debt by bartering the

only thing he had, his own labor or the fruits of his labor. In contrast, the Plantation Belt economy witnessed the discounting of cash advances by cotton factors in what was essentially a complex antebellum futures market with the Northern and International cotton clique. Country stores in the Plantation Belt were often there to facilitate the accumulation of cotton from small producers. Upcountry stores were there to supply the yeomanry with goods they could not produce. While bartering was the model used to satisfy debt, the pivotal point was that the unit of exchange was significantly different for the two regions. The Plantation Belt used cotton and the Upcountry used their labor.

The evidence suggests that the yeomanry of the Upcountry created his own social setting separate and apart from the planter elite who dominated the political, social, and economic components of the antebellum South state. The isolation of parts of Upcountry Georgia were well suited to his needs, supplying him with an enclave that was sheltered from the hegemony of the planter class. The Upcountry yeomanry adopted and tailored its institutions to their specific needs and they became a reflection their character.

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Appendix A: MILTON COUNTY CREATION

County boundaries in Georgia are a point of consideration when working with the 1850 and 1860 Census. Georgia as a whole was a restless state, consistently shuffling the boundaries between counties. The changes were usually minor involving only several lots. However, between 1850 and 1860 the state created twenty-seven new counties. December 18, 1857 the Georgia Legislature created eight new counties, one of which they named Milton County formed by portion of Cherokee, Cobb, and Forsyth. The Legislature went to great detail in laying out the new boundaries:

Be it enacted, That from and after the first day of February next, a new county shall be, and the same is hereby laid out from the counties of Cherokee, Cobb and Forsyth, to be included within the following limits, to-wit: To commence at Grogan's Ferry on the Chattahoochee river, run a straight line to the northeast corner of the incorporation of the city of Roswell, leaving the incorporation in Cobb county, thence along the line of said incorporation west to the Marietta road, thence making said Marietta road the line to the bridge on the Big Willow Creek, in Cobb county, thence up said creek to its head waters, to lot No. 34 on the west line of the first district and second section, thence due north along said district line to where the line strikes Little river, thence up said river to the fork of said Little river, thence up the west fork along its meandering to the north line of lot No. 196 in the second district and second section, thence in a straight line to lot No. 181 in the second district and second section, Forsyth and Cherokee county line, thence due south along the county line between Forsyth and Cherokee counties to the north-west corner of the first district of the first section of Forsyth county, thence due east along the north line of said district to where it crosses the McGinis Ferry road, thence making said McGinis Ferry road the line to McGinis Ferry on Chattahoochee river, by leaving the residence of Joel Strickland in the county of Forsyth, thence making the Chattahoochee river the boundary line to the starting point at Grogan's Ferry on Chattahoochee river.

The First Militia District of Forsyth, First Militia District of Cherokee, and the Second Militia District of Cobb counties excluding the city of Roswell formed Milton County. Figure A.1 is the Milton County map drawn in 1871 that clearly delineates those portions of each county that went to form Milton. True to traditional county formation, the legislature depended on nature and the course of rivers to form the boundaries of its administrative units.

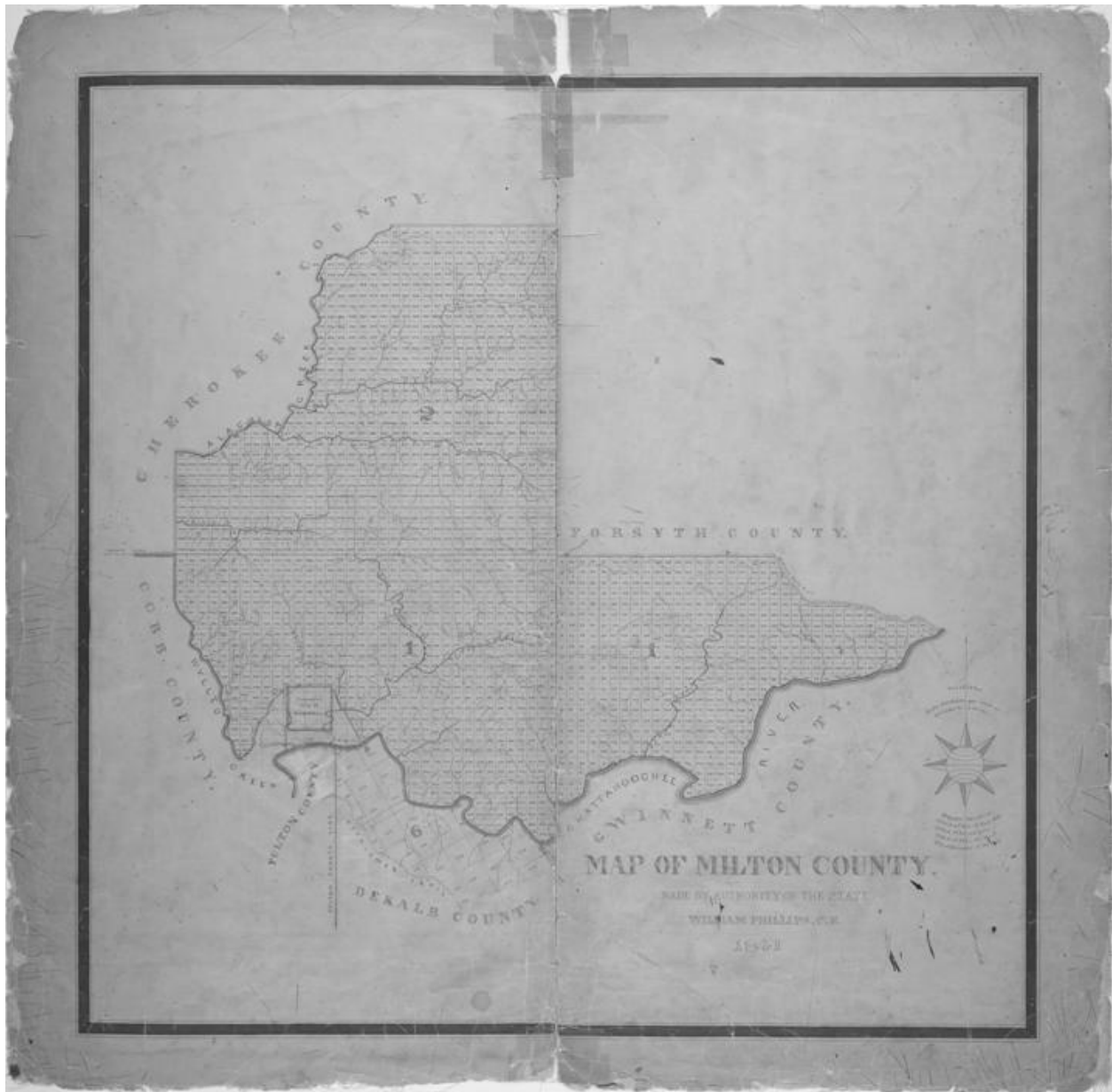


Figure A.1 Milton County. *Source:* Georgia Department Archives.

The primary issue at hand is whether the removal of 19,914 acreages and the associated population affected the basic demographic makeup of Forsyth County? Did the First Militia District of Forsyth County represent a disproportionate population distribution such as to disrupt the property, free, slave, and production ratio comparison between 1850 versus 1860? In an effort to determine whether the redrawing of country did have such an impact, a comparison of the aggregate ratios of the four effected counties will be analyzed such as to uncover any forensic

evidence to the pro or con of the argument. In Table A.1 approximates the acreage that each county contributed to the formation of Milton County.

Table A.1 Analysis of Forfeited Acreage to Form Milton County.

| | Full Lots | Fractional Lots | Acreage | % Contributed | Approximate Acreage Forfeited |
|----------|-----------|-----------------|---------|---------------|-------------------------------|
| Cherokee | 648 | 37 | 26,928 | 50% | 9% |
| Cobb | 626 | 73 | 26,678 | 50% | 11% |
| Forsyth | 452 | 82 | 19,914 | 37% | 12% |
| | | | 53,606 | 100% | |

Source: Georgia Archive.

The acreage contribution of each of the three counties indicates that Forsyth had the smallest contribution. Forsyth gave up approximately 12% of its total acreage. This closely approximates the population drop from 1850 to 1860 for Forsyth County.

The first step in the aggregate examination are the populations:

Table A.2 Analysis of Population Forfeited to Form Milton County.

| | 1850 | | 1860 | | % Increase or Decrease | | Slave Ratio | |
|----------|--------|-------|--------|-------|------------------------|-------|-------------|------|
| | Free | Slave | Free | Slave | Free | Slave | 1850 | 1860 |
| Cherokee | 11,630 | 1,157 | 10,047 | 1,199 | -14% | 4% | 0.10 | 0.12 |
| Cobb | 11,568 | 2,272 | 10,410 | 3,819 | -10% | 68% | 0.20 | 0.37 |
| Forsyth | 7,812 | 1,027 | 6,831 | 890 | -13% | -13% | 0.13 | 0.13 |
| Milton | | | 3,984 | 617 | | | | 0.15 |
| | 31,010 | 4,456 | 31,272 | 6,525 | 1% | 46% | 0.14 | 0.21 |

Source: U.S 1850 and 1860 Federal Census Free Inhabitant Schedule I.

Surprisingly the white population of the four counties increased only one percent. That would suggest that the decrease in Cherokee, Cobb, and Forsyth counties resulted directly from the forfeited districts.

The same cannot be said of the slave population which increased by forty-six percent in total. The shift in slave populations for the individual counties does not resolve the issue. On the surface, it would appear that Forsyth gave up a significant slave population. However, a comparison of the Forsyth's slave ratio .13 in 1850 versus .13 in 1860 implies that the Forsyth gave up an equal proportion of free inhabitants and slaves. Both populations decreased by approximately thirteen percent. A counter argument could be that new free inhabitants moved in or out of Forsyth, but the fact that the total population increased by only one percent insinuates the contrary. While the total slave population did increase, it appears to have primarily occurred in Cobb County. The aggregate increase in slave population was 2,069, while the slave increase in Cobb individually accounts for 1,589 of that. However, when one considers that Cobb gave up 1,158 free inhabitants with a slave ratio of .14, it suggests that Cobb also transferred 232 slaves to Milton. The real increase in the slave population for Cobb was more like 1,779. Cherokee transferred approximately 158 slaves and its real slave increase, like Cobb, was not 52 but more like 200. Forsyth's contribution to Milton's slave population was approximately 128 and its real slave population increase was approximately nine slaves. Analysis suggests that 518 slaves were transferred to Milton and its slave population increased by 99 or twenty percent. This analysis indicates that while there was an aggregate slave increase, it did not occur in Forsyth County.

A comparison of the Forsyth 1850 Slave Schedule to the Milton 1860 Slave Schedule identifies 11 previous Forsyth slaveholders now living in Milton. These individuals owned 92 slaves.

An examination of the cotton production presents a confusing analysis at best. Forsyth saw an increase in cotton production where as the aggregate counties saw a -15 percent drop. Overall, state production had increased approximate 40 percent.

Table A.3 Analysis of Cotton Bale Production for Aggregate Counties.

| | 1850 | 1860 | % Change |
|----------|-------|-------|----------|
| Cobb | 2,401 | 928 | -61% |
| Cherokee | 227 | 138 | -39% |
| Forsyth | 472 | 656 | 39% |
| Milton | | 925 | |
| | 3,100 | 2,647 | -15% |

Source: U.S 1850 and 1860 Federal Census Free Inhabitant Schedule I.

An analysis of the improved and unimproved acreage is not likely to draw any conclusion. While the aggregate acreage documented in the Schedule IV increased, Cobb county actual lost total acreage. Schedule IV's purpose was not to account for all of the acreage in a county, but for acreage that was being used. Therefore, it was an excellent measure of productive capacity but almost impossible to determine the nature of the 18,000 acres Forsyth gave up. The best indication is that in 1860, Forsyth's improved to unimproved acreage ration was 56% and Milton was 66%, suggesting similar land usage.

Appendix B: GEORGIA COUNTY FORMATION BETWEEN 1850 TO 1860

Formation of new counties in Georgia was prolific during the 1850's with forty new counties formed from and influencing forty-four different counties, many of them multiple times. The listing in Table B1 does not reflect those counties that had minor exchanges of acreage, often as little as a lot or two, usually at the request of specific individuals. The significance of the formation of these counties suggests that a historian must exercise caution with evaluating and comparing statistics between the 1850 and 1860 census.

Table B.1 Counties Created and Counties that Forfeited Land from 1850 to 1860.

| | Legislative Year | New County | Counties Forfeiting Acreage | | | |
|----|------------------|---------------|-----------------------------|-----------|---------|-------|
| 1 | 1850 | Gordon | Floyd | Cass | | |
| 2 | 1850 | Clinch | Lowndes | | | |
| 3 | 1851-52 | Polk | Paulding | Floyd | | |
| 4 | 1851-52 | Whitfield | Murray | | | |
| 5 | 1851-52 | Spalding | Pike | Henry | Fayette | |
| 6 | 1851-52 | Taylor | Talbot | Macon | Marion | |
| 7 | 1853-52 | Webster | Stewart | | | |
| 8 | 1853-53 | Dougherty | Baker | | | |
| 9 | 1853-54 | Catoosa | Walker | Whitfield | | |
| 10 | 1853-54 | Miller | Baker | Early | | |
| 11 | 1853-54 | Chattahoochee | Marion | Muscogee | | |
| 12 | 1853-54 | Clay | Early | Randolph | | |
| 13 | 1853-54 | Coffee | Clinch | Ware | Telfair | Irwin |
| 14 | 1853-54 | Fannin | Gilmer | Union | | |
| 15 | 1853-54 | Fulton | DeKalb | | | |
| 16 | 1853-54 | Hart | Franklin | Elbert | | |
| 17 | 1853-54 | Kinchafoonee | Stewart | | | |
| 18 | 1853-54 | Pickens | Cherokee | Gilmer | | |

| | Legislative Year | New County | Counties Forfeiting Acreage | | | |
|----|------------------|------------|-----------------------------|----------|------------|--|
| 19 | 1853-54 | Worth | Dooly | Irwin | | |
| 20 | 1854 | Charlton | Camden | | | |
| 21 | 1855-56 | Haralson | Polk | Carroll | | |
| 22 | 1855-56 | Colquitt | Thomas | Lowndes | | |
| 23 | 1855-56 | Berrien | Lowndes | Irwin | Coffee | |
| 24 | 1855-56 | Calhoun | Baker | Early | | |
| 25 | 1855-56 | Terrell | Lee | Randolph | | |
| 26 | 1855-56 | Townes | Union | Rabum | | |
| 27 | 1857 | Galscock | Warren | | | |
| 28 | 1857 | Dawson | Lumpkin | Gilmer | | |
| 29 | 1857 | Milton | Cherokee | Cobb | Forsyth | |
| 30 | 1857 | Mitchell | Baker | | | |
| 31 | 1857 | Pierce | Ware | Appling | | |
| 32 | 1857 | Schley | Marion | Sumter | | |
| 33 | 1857 | White | Habersham | | | |
| 34 | 1857 | Wilcox | Irwin | Dooly | Pulaski | |
| 35 | 1858 | Johnson | Emanuel | Laurens | Washington | |
| 36 | 1858 | Clayton | Henry | Fayette | | |
| 37 | 1858 | Banks | Habersham | Franklin | | |
| 38 | 1858 | Quitman | Lowndes | Thomas | | |
| 39 | 1858 | Echols | Lowndes | Clinch | | |
| 40 | 1858 | Brooks | Lowndes | Thomas | | |

Source: Georgia Archive.

Steven Hahn compared Jackson and Carroll counties using 1850 and 1860 census data. No mention is made of the fact that approximately 25% of Carroll County was sliced off in 1855 to form Haralson County. The maps in Figure B.1 and Figure B.2 below suggested this. The lots given up by Carroll County are clearly indicated by different method of lot designation between

Carroll and Polk. Formed from portions of Polk and Carroll counties, any attempt to reassemble the original counties is complicated by the fact that Polk County itself was formed in 1851 from portions of Paulding and Floyd counties. While the odds are that the forfeiture of this acreage by Carroll County does not impact Hahn's conclusions, it should be a documented event.

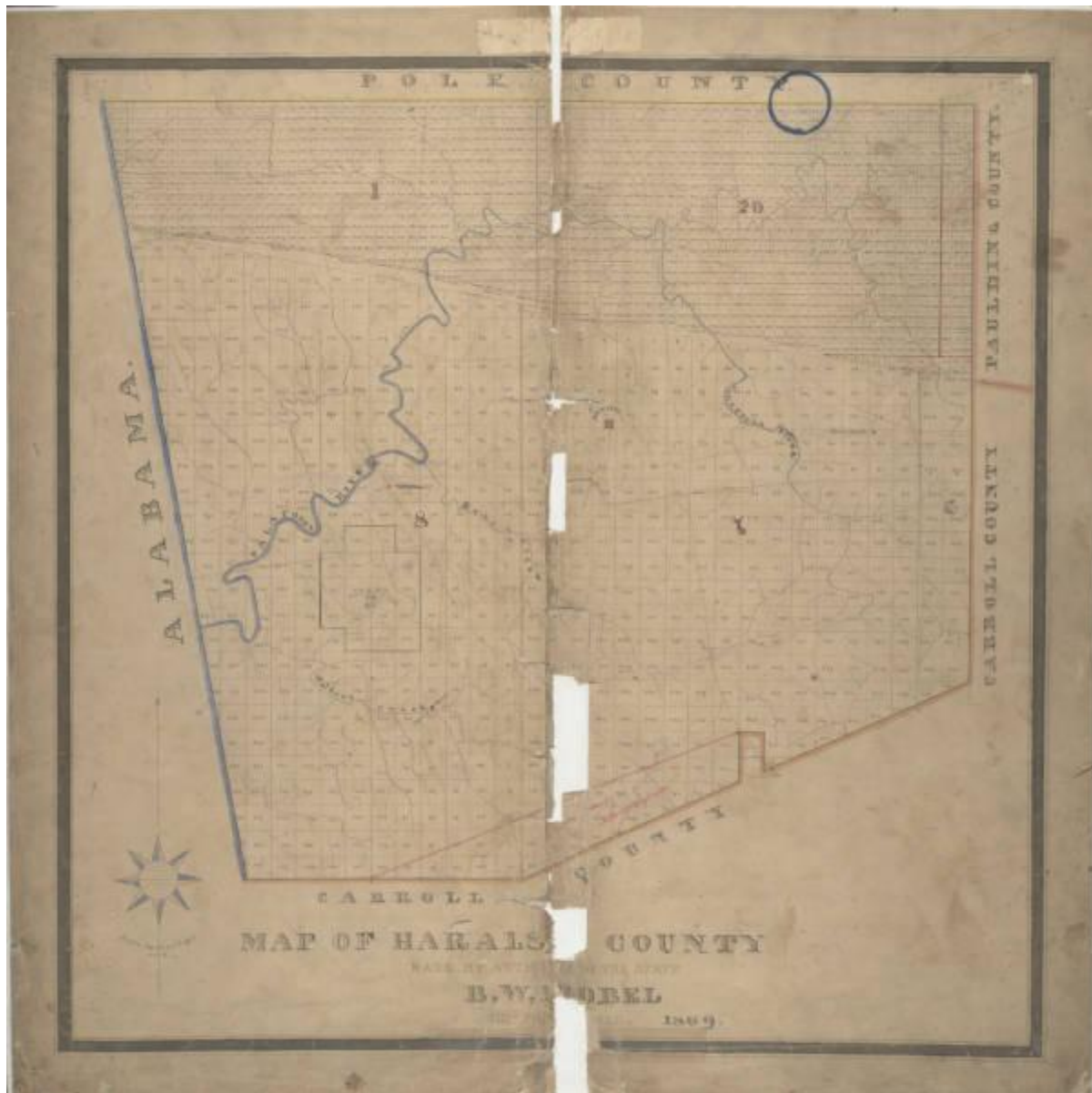


Figure B.1 Haralson County. *Source:* Georgia Archive.

Appendix C: OCCUPATION DATA FROM 1850 TO 1860 CENSUS

Table C.1 Occupations Listed in the 1850 and 1860 U.S. Census.

| | 1850 | | | 1860 | | |
|----|-------------|-------|-------|--------------------|-------|-------|
| | Occupation | Count | % | Occupation | Count | % |
| 1 | Farmer | 1589 | 87.5% | Farmer | 1017 | 78.0% |
| 2 | Blacksmith | 37 | 2.0% | Mechanic | 44 | 3.4% |
| 3 | Carpenter | 27 | 1.5% | Blacksmith | 30 | 2.3% |
| 4 | Merchant | 25 | 1.4% | Teacher | 30 | 2.3% |
| 5 | Physician | 13 | 0.7% | Seamstress | 26 | 2.0% |
| 6 | Teacher | 13 | 0.7% | Washer | 26 | 2.0% |
| 7 | Clergyman | 11 | 0.6% | Merchant | 19 | 1.5% |
| 8 | Miner | 10 | 0.6% | Weaver | 16 | 1.2% |
| 9 | Wagonwright | 9 | 0.5% | Physician | 13 | 1.0% |
| 10 | Clerk | 7 | 0.4% | Minister | 11 | 0.8% |
| 11 | Guns | 7 | 0.4% | Carpenter | 10 | 0.8% |
| 12 | Student | 7 | 0.4% | Miller | 7 | 0.5% |
| 13 | Cabinet | 6 | 0.3% | Shoemaker | 7 | 0.5% |
| 14 | Chairs | 6 | 0.3% | Attorney at Law | 4 | 0.3% |
| 15 | Lawyer | 6 | 0.3% | Hatter | 3 | 0.2% |
| 16 | Shoemaker | 6 | 0.3% | Hotel keeper | 3 | 0.2% |
| 17 | Tailor | 6 | 0.3% | Miner | 3 | 0.2% |
| 18 | Hatter | 5 | 0.3% | Sewer & washer | 3 | 0.2% |
| 19 | Tobacconist | 5 | 0.3% | Cooper | 2 | 0.2% |
| 20 | Wheelwright | 4 | 0.2% | Wagonmaker | 2 | 0.2% |
| 21 | Sales | 3 | 0.2% | Wheelwright | 2 | 0.2% |
| 22 | Millwright | 2 | 0.1% | Amlerotypist | 1 | 0.1% |
| 23 | Saddler | 2 | 0.1% | Brickmason | 1 | 0.1% |
| 24 | Carriages | 1 | 0.1% | Chickenraiser | 1 | 0.1% |
| 25 | Cigarmaker | 1 | 0.1% | Clerk Inferior Ct. | 1 | 0.1% |
| 26 | Jeweler | 1 | 0.1% | Clerk Superior Ct | 1 | 0.1% |
| 27 | Painter | 1 | 0.1% | County Keeper | 1 | 0.1% |
| 28 | Pauper | 1 | 0.1% | Ditcher | 1 | 0.1% |

| | 1850 | | | 1860 | | |
|----|-------------|-------|------|-------------------------|-------|------|
| | Occupation | Count | % | Occupation | Count | % |
| 29 | Peddler | 1 | 0.1% | Ferryman | 1 | 0.1% |
| 30 | Potter | 1 | 0.1% | Gaylor | 1 | 0.1% |
| 31 | Stone Mason | 1 | 0.1% | Gun Smith | 1 | 0.1% |
| 32 | Tanner | 1 | 0.1% | Harness Maker | 1 | 0.1% |
| 33 | | | | Mail Contractor | 1 | 0.1% |
| 34 | | | | Medical Student | 1 | 0.1% |
| 35 | | | | Mill Right | 1 | 0.1% |
| 36 | | | | Mistress | 1 | 0.1% |
| 37 | | | | Ordinary Judge | 1 | 0.1% |
| 38 | | | | Pauper | 1 | 0.1% |
| 39 | | | | Post Master | 1 | 0.1% |
| 40 | | | | Prisoner | 1 | 0.1% |
| 41 | | | | Slay Maker | 1 | 0.1% |
| 42 | | | | Stone Mason | 1 | 0.1% |
| 43 | | | | Tanner | 1 | 0.1% |
| 44 | | | | Tax Collector | 1 | 0.1% |
| 45 | | | | Tobacco Manufacturer | 1 | 0.1% |
| 46 | | | | Tobacconist | 1 | 0.1% |
| 47 | | | | Wood worker | 1 | 0.1% |

Source: U.S 1850 and 1860 Federal Census Free Inhabitant Schedule I.