

Summary of Argument

The Debates [Citation Key = TAS1]

Historians have long argued over the relationship of slavery to the world beyond slavery. Nineteenth-century slavery depended on shipping, exchange, communication, banking, and state formation associated with the cutting edge of historical change. On the other hand, forced labor clashed with ideals of individual autonomy, fluid labor markets, personal freedom, mechanization, and democracy considered synonymous with that change.

Both defenders and opponents of slavery wrestled with these polarities. Apologists for slavery sometimes claimed the institution as a crucial part of Western progress and other times portrayed slavery as an essential counterweight to destructive forces of modernity. Opponents of slavery sometimes portrayed the institution as the logical conclusion of rapacious economic development and sometimes as an impediment to the spread of benign institutions of free labor and free institutions. The debate held particular force in the United States, where one of the most advanced industrial economies in the world lived alongside the richest and most powerful slave society in the hemisphere.

The primary difference slavery made, of course, was in the lives of African Americans: hundreds of thousands of individuals tortured and families torn apart, desperate individual and collective acts of perseverance and resistance, and in the face of law, power, and authority, the creation of spiritual communities. That difference, the subject of an immense and rich historiography, is not the focus of this article, which focuses on the relationship between slavery and the forms of white society.

Some historians focus on the intrinsic opposition between slavery and the institutions of modernity, but recently scholars have tended to focus on the symbiosis among slavery, capitalism, and the modern state. Robin Blackburn has put the issue clearly, arguing that slavery in the Americas "was associated with several of those processes which have been held to define modernity: the growth of instrumental rationality, the rise of national sentiment and the nation-state, racialized perceptions of identity, the spread of market relations and wage labour, the development of administrative bureaucracies and modern tax systems, the growing sophistication of commerce and communication, the birth of consumer societies, the publication of newspapers and the beginnings of press advertising, 'action at a distance' and

an individualist sensibility." (Blackburn, *The Making of the New World Slavery*, 4)

Studies such as Blackburn's, ranging across centuries, vast oceans, and broad continents while synthesizing detailed secondary works, are of course essential to our understanding. Another approach to understanding the complex interplay between slavery and the forms of emergent modernity might be found closer to the ground, in a detailed comparison of two places which shared virtually everything except slavery. That is our approach in this article, which explores a paradox that lies at the heart of the study of slavery in the United States in the mid-nineteenth century. The difference slavery made is widely recognized to be profound and yet study after study has shown that slavery did little to create differences between North and South in voting patterns, wealth distributions, occupation levels, and other measurable indices. How should we understand that paradox?

Modernity in the United States Context [Citation Key = TAS2]

Much of the debate over the difference slavery made in the United States has been framed by the work of Eugene Genovese, who has explained the South as a pre-modern, pre-capitalist region where dominant planter elites enveloped society, economy, and politics. "Planter hegemony" set the South apart and explained the inevitable war with the North over slavery. Genovese put the master-slave relationship at the center of his argument about the South, arguing that it determined class and social relations, as well as ideology, law, political expression, and nearly every facet of southern life. The South, according to Genovese, was sharply different from the North, but not so different from other pre-modern societies in history. (Genovese, "Yeoman Farmers")

James M. McPherson has also put slavery at the center of the conflict, the system "underlying all" of the differences between North and South. For McPherson, the North and South took divergent paths of economic development and their differences far outweighed their similarities. Slavery was at the heart of the difference between the sections, according to these scholars, but the difference it made was in the form of a fork in the road taken long ago. According to McPherson, the North's path was characterized by "heavy investment in social overhead capital, which transforms a localized subsistence economy into a nationally integrated market economy; rapid increases in output per capita, resulting from technological innovation and the shift from labor-intensive toward capital-intensive production; the accelerated growth of the industrial sector compared with other sectors of the economy; rapid urbanization, made possible by an increase in agricultural productivity that enables farmers to feed the growing cities; an expansion of education, literacy, and mass communications; a value system that emphasizes change rather than tradition; an evolution from the traditional, rural, village-oriented system of personal and kinship ties, in which status is 'ascriptive' (inherited), toward a fluid, cosmopolitan, impersonal, and pluralistic society, in which status is achieved by merit." (McPherson, *Ordeal by Fire*, 13)

Recently, McPherson put the difference between North and South in starker terms. The North, he argued, "hurtled forward eagerly toward a future of industrial-capitalism that many Southerners found distasteful if not frightening; the South remained proudly and even defiantly rooted in the past." The South fought, according to McPherson, to preserve its vision of what the Constitution protected--property, including slave property, and a citizenry "comprised of an independent gentry and

yeomanry of the white race undisturbed by large cities, heartless factories, restless free workers, and class conflict." These generalizations have become widely accepted visions of how best to explain the coming of the Civil War. For the most part they confirm an inevitable conflict waged by opposing societies, one moving forward and the other moving backward. (McPherson, "Ante-bellum Southern Exceptionalism," 22)

The perspectives of Genovese and McPherson are based on broad statistical indices of modernity, such as aggregate rates of urbanization, industrial production, literacy, and the like. They rely on political language and travelers' accounts to flesh out their portrayals. Social science historians in the 1960s and 1970s who investigated the structural underpinnings of Northern and Southern society, however, found more similarities than differences between the sections. The American Historical Review offered a roundtable on the issue in 1980. There, Edward Pessen asked, "How different from each other were the antebellum North and South?" His answer was: not fundamentally different, especially if one focused on property distribution among whites. In fact, Pessen argued, North and South were not so much different as complementary, joined through mutual benefit in their economies and common social and political structures. He relied on a range of research, most notably Gavin Wright's and Lee Soltow's analysis of the basic similarities in wealth distribution and income between the sections. Pessen concluded that the North's and South's similarities might have more to do with the coming of the Civil War than their differences. He pointed to "similarly selfish interests--or perceived interests" rather than to "differences in their cultures and institutions" as the most compelling explanation for the Civil War. (Pessen, "How Different")

One participant in the forum, Stanley Engerman, noted that much of the scholarship Pessen reviewed examined only either the North or the South. Few works were explicitly comparative, testing the similarities and differences across the sections. Another participant, Thomas Alexander, concluded with a discouraging, if accurate, summary: "there is still little agreement on how all of these [factors] interacted to bring about an intersectional war, nor is there agreement on which of the similarities and differences are central to understanding antebellum life." That statement remains true more than twenty years later. (Alexander, "Antebellum North and South,")

Geography and Difference [Citation Key = TAS3]

Nearly all of the major arguments about the sectional crisis turn on geographic explanations of one sort or another. A number of recent works have taken a comparative approach to slavery within the United States, usually focused on places in the Upper North and Lower South. Though such comparisons of distant areas would seem likely to emphasize difference, historians have found fundamental similarities in social institutions, political cultures, political structures, and economic structures. John Quist's study of nineteenth-century reformers in Michigan and Alabama, for example, emphasized that in both places reform grew in soil rich with evangelical revivals and growing markets. Quist found deep and striking similarities. (Quist, *Restless Visionaries*)

Historian William Freehling's influential interpretation of the Southern secession crisis proceeds from the view that the Upper South was less dependent on slavery and therefore less essentially Southern. According to Freehling, the closer to the border one traveled from the Deep South the less distinctively

southern places became until at the border there the difference was at points invisible. Along the border, "a world between," almost all whites, Freehling wrote, agreed that slavery would fade away. Freehling's "twilight zone" included Virginia, most prominently, which in 1860 had the largest number of enslaved persons of all the states in the South, as well as the largest number of slave holders. (Freehling, *Road to Disunion*, 19, and *The Reintegration of American History*, 182)

Other recent scholarship has discovered, by contrast, that in the late antebellum period slavery was expanding into parts of Virginia previously free of the institution. Kenneth Koons and Warren Hofstra's edited volume *After the Backcountry: Rural Life in the Great Valley of Virginia, 1800-1900* and Kenneth W. Noe's *Southwest Virginia's Railroad: Modernization and the Sectional Crisis* reveal the adaptability of slavery in the Shenandoah Valley and in mountainous southwest Virginia. While Koons and Hofstra consider the Valley a "middle ground" and imply that it was a region distinct from both the plantation South and the North, their research and essays indicate the complicity of the Valley in the economy and workings of slavery. Noe finds in Southwest Virginia all the elements of modernization: transportation revolution, shift to the market economy, slavery expansion, dynamic growth of communities, and larger scale agriculture. He contends that the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad "hastened the development of capitalistic, slave-based, cash crop agriculture in Southwest Virginia." Noe's study also indicates the importance of microanalysis of subregions and counties, because the growth of slavery was strongest in certain areas, largely ones connected to the market, and not others. (Noe, *Southwest Virginia's Railroad*)

Any analysis of the role of slavery in the conflict between the North and the South, and any understanding of its relationship to modernity, then, needs to account for the broad middle of the nation, the "border." The borderland encompassed vast areas of what became the Federal and Confederates sides in the Civil War. Kevin Phillips has argued in a recent book that "Together, the Lower North, Upper South, and Border counted off half of the U.S. states and two-thirds of the population." That may be a bit extravagant, depending on the method of calculation. This sweeping statement is not far wrong if we count, for example, all the Northern counties along the Mason-Dixon Line, Ohio River, and Mississippi River in which a significant number of men voted against Lincoln in 1860 and 1864 or if we count all the slave states south of that line that either did not secede or seceded only in April 1861. (Phillips, *The Cousins' Wars*)

The historical geographer D. W. Meinig describes the challenge of mapping the sections very well: "we must surely have something more than a simple map of North and South, of a Mason-Dixon Line (even as a shorthand term), of the Union and the Confederacy as two entities, if we are to have any sense at all of what 'secession' meant in this complicated geopolitical structure during its unprecedented crisis." With Meinig's caution ringing in our ears, we might examine the border especially closely. (Meinig, *The Making of America*)

Politics and Slavery [Citation Key = TAS4]

Political historians have tended to argue that the North and South went to war because their political system broke down. War, they argue, was not inevitable, nor was it a result of necessarily divergent economic or social paths. The war came from a critical political breakdown in the midst of the sectional

crisis. The complex connections and loyalties among national parties, state parties, and individual voters, they argue, explain the breakdown.

Michael Holt, Daniel Crofts, and William Shade have compiled the most detailed studies of party formation in the antebellum period for Pennsylvania and Virginia. Their studies suggest several important patterns. First, ethnicity and religious affiliation were important determinants for party identification in this period in both places. Second, party leadership in both places shifted in the 1850s, becoming less differentiated by socioeconomic factors. Third, strong economic growth and prosperity in the 1850s challenged the patterns of party loyalty and allowed party institutions to weaken. Fourth, local issues, such as taxes, schools, and courts were crucial in creating party alignments and in many cases overshadowed the importance of national issues. Finally, all three studies point to the neighborhood or local network as the most important variable in determining how individuals voted and aligned themselves with political parties in both sections. (See, for example, Crofts, *Old Southampton*; Holt, *Political Crisis of the 1850s*; and Shade, *Democratizing the Old Dominion*)

Slavery's effect on voting and political behavior remains surprisingly unclear. At the local level men divided into parties for reasons so subtle that we can hardly reconstruct them. The most recent and complete study of voting patterns in Virginia, by Daniel Crofts, reveals that residence, slaveholding, and religion--in that order--explained how men voted. The confluence of "family, neighborhood, partisanship, slaveholding, agricultural production, and religious affiliation" depended on local geography, its cultural and social settlement patterns and the natural features around them. This portrayal corresponds with those of other parts of the United States, including Harry Watson's pioneering study of Cumberland County, North Carolina, and a remarkably detailed study of Washington County, Oregon, by Paul Bourke and Donald DeBats. (See Crofts, *Old Southampton*; Watson, *Jacksonian Politics and Community Conflict*; Bourke and DeBats, *Washington County*)

The most recent community-level study challenges the centrality of politics in American life on the eve of the Civil War. Glenn Altschuler and Stuart Blumin examined local political activity and institutions in eight nineteenth-century American communities and found a shockingly low level of participation and political activism in these places. Politics occupied a tenuous "space" within the lives of ordinary Americans, the authors suggested; instead, it competed for the attention of Americans who viewed parties as rude, base, self-aggrandizing institutions, far from the virtuous and altruistic presence in their lives of religion, civic duty, republicanism, and liberalism. White men in the nineteenth-century United States have a reputation among historians as enthusiastic partisans, voting in greater numbers and with greater zeal and commitment than ever in American history, but Altschuler and Blumin depicted a disaffected electorate, more interested in free booze than freedom, only vaguely aware of the candidates' positions, and largely disdainful of the parties' constant bickering. (Altschuler and Blumin, *Rude Republic*) At the local level, it is clear that communities presented a complex social geography of politics and of the social network in which politics took place.

The Case Studies: Augusta and Franklin [Citation Key = TAS5]

The two counties that serve as the basis of our study--Augusta in Virginia and Franklin in Pennsylvania--occupy the eastern border between the North and South. Both counties understood

themselves as "valley" counties, places within the Great Valley that cut across much of the eastern United States.

Both Augusta and Franklin claimed productive economies in 1860. Augusta, with its 27,749 residents, 5,616 of whom were enslaved, stood near the top of any measure of Virginia counties' wealth and development. Franklin, with its 42,216 residents, was rich as well. Augusta ranked first in Virginia in the cash value of farms in 1860, while Franklin ranked 10th in Pennsylvania. Augusta and Franklin were vibrant counties in the great border region that extended from Maryland and Delaware to Indiana and Illinois. They had much in common. As much as they shared, these counties differed in some important ways. Franklin, for example, had nearly double the number of commercial establishments, and far outpaced Augusta in its commitment to public schools. Franklin's businesses included more light industrial enterprises and a major locomotive works; its newspapers advertised a greater range of products. Franklin's cities and towns were more numerous and its places, both rural and urban, more densely settled. The county boasted the all-important railroad linkage to eastern markets in Philadelphia, but its status as the railroad's terminus hindered its trade with the west and south.

Yet Augusta's residents were also aggressively promoting economic growth around manufacturing, commercial agriculture, and trade. On a per capita basis Augusta invested nearly as heavily as Franklin in manufacturing. If only free white Augusta residents were the basis for comparison--not total population--Augusta had a higher per capita investment. Augusta's railroad connected it with eastern and western (as well as southern) markets. The border between North and South stood as a sharp and unrelenting line between slavery and freedom; that border also represented a vast territory crossed by networks of economy, religion, politics, and kinship, stretching from the Atlantic to beyond the Mississippi. The border embraced half of the country's population, much of its slavery, and most of its battlefields. The border tipped the balance in key elections and supplied more than its share of soldiers to both the Union and the Confederacy.

These counties embodied many crucial aspects of their larger societies. Augusta was thoroughly enmeshed in slavery, and its white people gave themselves over to the Confederacy for four years with far less dissent than many counties farther south. Still, Augusta remained Unionist for as long as possible in the crisis, and so it stood in an especially revealing place--the last to secede and the most dedicated to the cause. Franklin, for its part, voted for Abraham Lincoln and supported the Union cause start to finish. Franklin's black residents played a critical role in the county, affecting the presidential and gubernatorial elections there in 1860 and a few years later signing up in droves for the 54th Massachusetts Regiment. By these important measures of the Civil War era, these counties are representative, if not in all respects typical.

Comparing Economies [Citation Key = TAS6]

Both Augusta and Franklin were prosperous and diversified. Blessed with the advantages of rich soil, abundant water, and mild weather, both places grew vast quantities of grain, sustained towns, and depended on railroads that came into their counties. Both had thriving industrial sectors, sustained commercial newspapers and internal trade networks, traded intensely with other cities, and provided similar employment opportunities. The white class structure did not differ markedly between the

Northern and Southern communities; similar proportions of propertyless and unskilled whites lived in both places. Non-slaveholders were not pushed onto marginal land in the Southern county. In fact, they were distributed across the landscape, and across the best land, in the same proportion as non-slaveholders. The same availability of excellent soil characterized the Northern county. Occupations did not differ between the two places, and the laboring classes were comprised of people of the same general age and wealth. (See, for example, Table: Occupations; and Table: Laborers)

In some significant ways, though, the economic structures of these places differed. By almost any measure, whites were wealthier in Augusta, for they owned more property and had larger farms than whites in Franklin. Some whites in Augusta accumulated huge fortunes in slaves as personal property. Women in Augusta outpaced their counterparts in Franklin, amassing larger real and personal estates. In addition, free blacks in Augusta were richer than black residents in Franklin. In the view of many whites in Augusta, their society was responsible for a higher standard of living, one that benefited all whites.

Slaves, too, Augusta's whites told each other, were better off in slavery than in freedom, and better off than the free laborers in the North. Other differences in the distribution of wealth require closer scrutiny of the geographic locus of wealth in these communities. For example, although household wealth was distributed in the same proportion in each county, wealth's geographic location was different. Augusta's wealth was proportionately greater in its town areas, while Franklin's was greater in its rural areas. Franklin's towns were more densely settled than Augusta's and more populated by lower classes, and Augusta's towns were the preferred locations for the residences of the county's wealthiest planters. Slaves as property boosted the wealth of town dwellers in Augusta, whether those slaves lived in the town or worked on outlying plantations. (See Table: Town and Rural Distribution of Household Wealth)

Slavery exerted profound effects on the very structures of population and production of Augusta. Enslaved people worked throughout the entire county, on every type of soil and in every kind of labor. The southern county generated smaller towns than its Northern counterpart and created industries confined to lower levels of processing. Farms that looked quite similar to those in Franklin in fact devoted their resources to different crop mixes. Slaveholders shifted their enslaved labor from agricultural to quasi-industrial work as the seasons changed. Those who worked in wheat fields also worked in distilleries, forests, and mines. The institution of slavery proved remarkably adaptable, and Augusta whites who did not own slaves hired them in great numbers. (See Table: Industries Using Enslaved Labor)

A remarkable but largely unspoken difference between the communities lay in their approaches to agricultural production, which constituted the basis of the economy in both places. Franklin and Augusta both grew large amounts of wheat, corn, hay, and other grains. Franklin's commitment to wheat production far exceeded Augusta's, and Franklin's wheat farmers were more productive on average and on a per acre basis than their Augusta counterparts, especially on the best soil. Augusta's corn production far exceeded Franklin's on average and on a per acre basis, and Augusta's farmers were more productive with this crop than Franklin's. The difference was more than one of preference. Corn was undoubtedly the crop that fed the enslaved population in Augusta and neighboring counties. It also was the primary raw material for more than twenty distilleries in the county employing enslaved labor throughout their operations. In Franklin wheat was considered the crop of a free labor society. (Map: Franklin Agricultural Production and Map: Augusta Agricultural Production)

Yet, to complicate matters, Augusta's white planters increasingly concentrated their enslaved labor on wheat, producing on the largest plantations a high level of productivity. The very largest planters were devoting some of their enslaved labor to compete with the free-labor wheat producers in Pennsylvania. Their success in producing wheat was remarkable and would not have gone unnoticed in the North. These planters, the richest in Augusta County, could use their enslaved labor to match the more mechanized Northern farms' productivity, and do so in a crop that was by tradition non-Southern and by cultivation non-labor intensive. Other places in the Upper South, especially the Eastern Shore of Maryland and the Delmarva Peninsula, were beginning to turn slavery toward wheat production as well. Augusta's large planters seemed to be quickly adapting to wheat production, so much so that their lack of experience with the crop proved a minor barrier to their potential success in the market. (See Table: Wheat and Corn Production)

Just as crop choices showed subtle differences, so did both places' investment in manufacturing. Augusta residents used enslaved labor to create localized agricultural systems and semi-finished manufacturing enterprises that exploited the availability of unskilled labor. Franklin residents, from small farms and skilled workshops, produced high-value goods for sale through national and international markets. Property owners in both places made efficient use of the resources of labor they commanded. Augusta planters chose to enter the wheat economy and deployed their enslaved labor across an array of agricultural and industrial tasks. Augusta's handful of skilled artisans, on the other hand, eschewed enslaved labor, perhaps unable or unwilling to afford it, while Franklin's numerous artisans made substantial capital investment in their businesses.

Just as Augusta's and Franklin's agricultural production exhibited subtle differences in crop mixes, so too did their infrastructures. While both places were highly networked, Franklin built more miles of major roadway per square mile in the county while Augusta concentrated on the minor roads connecting farms and smaller towns. Augusta's corn crop required local distribution on minor roads, and Franklin's wheat required greater access to markets through major roads. Augusta's wheat investment, though, was increasingly significant and so was its commitment to the major roads and railroads necessary to move it out of the county. Augusta built major roads when measured on a per capita basis just as energetically and successfully as Franklin. (See Map: Comparison, Railroads and Roads)

By their own lights, white people in both Franklin and Augusta were highly successful in 1860. Property holders and businessmen in both places had adjusted their resources to take advantage of the labor, land, transportation, raw materials, and skills available to them. In this respect Augusta and Franklin represented the wide region of the border, stretching from Virginia and Pennsylvania across Ohio and Kentucky. For the sixty counties along the border of slavery from the Mason-Dixon Line to the Ohio River, the farms in southern counties had a higher cash value, while the smaller farms in northern counties were more valuable on a per acre basis. (See Table: Regional Comparison)

Comparing Social Structures [Citation Key = TAS7]

The most startling and observable difference on the ground to Northerners and Southerners alike was the difference slavery made in population density. In the North the average population per square mile was 32 persons. Ninety-five percent of Southern counties had a lower density of white residents than the

Northern average. In Franklin County the population density was 55 persons per square mile, while Augusta held just 28 persons per square mile (22 white residents per square mile). When the Reverend Abraham Essick came south from his home in Pennsylvania in 1860 to minister in the Valley of Virginia, he noted the difference the border made whenever he traveled back home. "During my visit to Pennsylvania I was deeply impressed by the contrast between the general appearance of the country and this. Naturally they are similar, both lying in the same valley, and presenting many of the same characteristics. But in Virginia the farms are large and the population sparse. The differences in cultivation, productiveness, and the general indications of thrift, are immensely in favor of Pennsylvania. It is usual to account for this on the grounds of Slavery." (Diary of the Reverend Abraham Essick, June 6, 1857)

Historians have suggested that such a thorough and persistent difference might account for other sectional differences in economy, social structure, or understanding of political power. For many contemporaries the difference between North and South was observable and real, visible on the ground in the ways buildings looked, were arranged or cared for, in the ways crops were planted, tended, or harvested, in the ways roads and towns intersected and developed. Northern travelers looked at the relative sparseness of people on the land in the South and viewed it as a lack of progress and energy. The Northerners saw scattered schoolhouses and churches, isolated villages and empty roads. White Southerners, however, thought they lived in places more beautiful and more humane than the crowded rural districts of the North. They argued that their farms, plantations, and towns were just as productive as those of the North, that white people in the South were actually better off than those in the North.

Augusta's and Franklin's churches, schools, newspapers, and political parties were clearly variants of the same kinds of institutions. People in both communities drew on the same cultural traditions, found the same topics, trends, and fads fascinating, adopted the same fashions, and read the same books. They eagerly employed the same new technologies. White women found similar opportunities above and below the Mason-Dixon Line. Free black people faced similarly restricted economic opportunities in both places. While both counties had some immigrants, the population of each was heavily native-born. White residents in both places often treated African Americans with disregard and contempt.

Yet slavery had insinuated itself into every facet of life in Augusta. Slavery touched every corner of Augusta, reaching into its mountains, valleys, and hollows. The institution was found at every elevation, on every soil type. The newspapers were filled with the business of slavery, and business adapted itself to the opportunities and constraints of bondage. (See Map: Residences with Slavery)

White slaveholders and enslaved people in Augusta engaged in a series of daily performances from mundane greetings to fully costumed plays. For the enslaved such acts were full of tension and double meaning, but for whites these nuances seemed to have been either lost or ignored. Augusta plantations even held winter performances of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Alansa Rounds Sterrett organized one such "social" and had the Sterrett's oldest slave, "grey headed Uncle Kit Matthews," play Uncle Tom. Sterrett, a Northerner who moved to Augusta in the late 1850s, was swept up in the beautiful and charming life of wealthy Southern society. Like others who attended nearby schools, such as the Virginia Female Institute, and whose fathers and mothers owned plantations and held slaves, she witnessed any number of "novel scenes" in which enslaved people performed for whites. For example, Sterrett described in her memoir a "darkey wedding," as "comical, mirthful, and hilarious affairs to black and white alike." Augusta residents, black and white, went through elaborate rituals of deference and command, in which

whites managed to keep underlying tensions offstage. Again and again, these scenes were played out in the homes and plantations that dotted the Augusta landscape. (See Memoir of Alansa Rounds Sterrett)

Politics and the Election of 1860 [Citation Key = TAS8]

Both Augusta and Franklin maintained vigorous political parties. Residents of both places were linked into national institutions through networks of party structure, patronage, and interest. Party activists in both places used the newspapers to mobilize supporters and disparage opponents. As they chose representatives and party leaders in the months preceding the election of 1860, residents of each place followed patterns established in previous political contests.

The connections between political expression and economic and social life prove far more complicated than aggregate numbers suggest. While we can discern patterns in the detailed numbers and maps, neither in the North nor in the South did the way a man voted simply reflect his material interests, ethnic background, or geographic location. Historians have developed sophisticated techniques for measuring ethnic and religious correlations with voting and party preferences in period from 1830s to the election of 1860. William G. Shade's work on Virginia concludes that the Valley region's political alignments correlated closely with the region's religious and ethnic groupings--Valley Scots-Irish Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and Methodists preferred the Whig Party, while German Lutherans, Mennonites, and Reformed found the Democrats attractive. Within Augusta County, however, the geographic location of churches, for example, bore little relationship to voting patterns at the precinct level. (See Shade, *Democratizing the Old Dominion*, 138-142, especially Shade's analysis of Augusta as "religiously diverse" [140], predominately Scotch-Irish, and heavily Presbyterian--and therefore, Whig. "Nowhere in the Old Dominion," Shade writes, "were the cultural contrasts between Whigs and Democrats more strongly drawn than in the Valley where they were reinforced by religion and language." [139])

Still, some patterns in Augusta and Franklin's voting in 1860 seem clear. In Franklin Abraham Lincoln won precincts where blacks lived, even though they could not vote; Lincoln's victory was connected unmistakably to a geography of black residence. With the exception of one township, every precinct that went for Lincoln by more than 59 percent was a place where blacks lived in relatively large numbers. Democratic newspapers vilified the Republicans for courting black voters and black financial contributions during the 1860 election. Only after the election did the extent of black support for Republicans in Philadelphia and Ohio become clear to Democrats. (See Table: African American Residence by Town; Map: Franklin Co. Election of 1860; and Valley Spirit, "The Negro Government")

Franklin Democrats tried to paint the Republicans as the party of the Negro, but Republicans defended themselves by loudly proclaiming from every organ that they were the party that disenfranchised black voters a few years earlier. Still, the largest support for Lincoln in Franklin came from those districts with the highest proportions of black residents. Either Republicans were masterfully organized, exhibiting a public white face while working for support and funding from the black community, or black Pennsylvanians were looking past the Republican public rhetoric, listening carefully to Lincoln's words and hearing new narratives of change and hope in them. How could they not? Republicans urged their men--making no mention of color--to strike for freedom: "REPUBLICANS OF FRANKLIN!--You have a part to perform in the grand achievement--the enfranchising of your Southern brethren. Every right

which a freeman holds dear, has been there stricken down by the co-horts of Slavery. Liberty of speech is unknown; the Press--which is formidable only to tyrants--is muzzled; and every impulse that ennoble humanity and beautiful freedom, is dwarfed, smothered, crushed out by the reign of terror which has been inaugurated by the Southern leaders of the Locofoco party. It therefore behooves every lover of Freedom to buckle on his armor to do many battle in the great contest for Free Principles that we are now about entering upon." (Franklin Repository, May 2, 1860)

When the recruiters for the 54th Massachusetts came to Franklin a few years later, dozens of black men enlisted. Lincoln's precincts in Franklin were connected not only by their high proportion of black residents but also by geography. They stretched across the urban middle of the county and up its eastern edge, and had a larger proportion of young voters in their twenties and thirties. Franklin's Democrats voted mostly for Breckinridge, following the local party leadership's decision to spurn Stephen Douglas, and they carried precincts far from the urban centers of the county.

In Augusta, where Constitutional Unionist John Bell easily won, the Democrats secured support in the rural areas most closely linked to large-scale slavery. In the mountains and towns, where Whig sensibilities were predominant, Bell's commitment to slavery and union together represented their interests and they turned out for him. (See Map: Augusta Co. Election of 1860)

Augusta's voting patterns were somewhat different from those Kenneth Noe found for Southwest Virginia in the election of 1860. There many men voted for Breckinridge, while in Augusta few did so. And the Breckinridge vote came from areas in Southwest where slavery was less well-established, while in Augusta the Breckinridge vote came from the highest slaveholding areas. Bell, on the other hand, was most successful in the Eastern Plateau of Southwest Virginia where slavery was the strongest. In Augusta the Bell vote was located most strongly in places where slavery was on par with the average in the county. Noe finds the voting in 1860 did not so much turn on slavery as perpetuate previous voting patterns. (Noe, *Southwest Virginia's Railroad*, 94)

In the politics of slavery, each subregion voted for candidates they considered to be the best protectors of their vision for regional growth and prosperity. All in all, very few Augusta or Virginia voters changed parties in 1860. The strongest Old Whig districts of 1859 remained the strongest Old Whig districts in 1860, mainly concentrating their vote in the Constitutional Unionist Party; the strongest Democratic districts remained the strongest Democratic districts. They had read the editorials and listened to the speeches; they had talked with their neighbors, wives, and in-laws. They had calculated personal economic gains and losses that might follow the election of one man or another. They noted which candidate seemed most in line with their own religious beliefs. After all the consideration was done, however, most men would not abandon their party's traditions and ideals even for a remarkable election such as that of 1860. They might become disgusted by in-fighting and lethargy within their party, but to change the allegiances of a lifetime and vote for another party altogether was quite rare, even in the strange days of 1860. (See Map: 1860 Presidential Election; and Table: 1860 Presidential Election)

Across the North, as in Franklin County, more than eight out of ten men went to the polls on November 6. Abraham Lincoln won by appealing to men who had been neither Republicans nor Democrats before 1860. Three-fourths of those new Republicans were, like Lincoln himself, former Whigs. The rest were split about evenly between men who had been Democrats and those who had been Free Soilers. Lincoln

won in part because he made inroads into the Border North, in southern Illinois, southern Indiana, and southern Ohio, where he pulled in 30 to 45 percent of the vote. Lincoln proved especially attractive to men under the age of 25. Those young voters, eligible to cast a ballot for the first time in 1860, found the Republicans tailor-made for them. The Wide-Awakes drew these young men to the vigorous new party that promised opportunity in a West filled with white men. That these same men lived in the precincts with the highest proportion of black residents connected their cause to that of the antislavery abolitionists in the North. (See, for example, Fogel, *Without Consent or Contract*, 382-6; and Table: Age and Party Affiliation, Franklin Co.)

Pennsylvania proved critical to Lincoln's election. The fusion between Know Nothings and Whigs, nativists and immigrants, old Free Soilers and old Democrats, so delicate at the beginning, could hardly have worked better. More men from Pennsylvania joined the Republicans than in any other state: over 120,000 of them, 24 percent of the electorate, voted for the party in 1860 though they had not in 1856. Only 12 Pennsylvania counties, 35 fewer than in 1856, went to the Democrats. Such abrupt swings had been almost unheard of in the United States during the fiercely partisan political wars over the preceding three decades. The shift was a product of Pennsylvania's unique mixture of Protestant Germans and nativists, of fervent antislavery men in the northern counties and conservative Union men in the southern counties, of dysfunctional Democrats and shrewd Republicans. (See Map: 1860 Presidential Election; and Table: 1860 Presidential Election)

The Republican victory was both impressive and deceptive. On the impressive side, the party won half a million more votes than four years earlier; Lincoln carried every northern state except New Jersey, which he split with Stephen Douglas; he gathered 180 electoral votes, 27 more than necessary to take the election; he would have won in the electoral college even if all his opponents had combined their votes. The Republicans, though, knew the fragility of this stirring victory: if one half of 1 percent of Northern voters in crucial places had voted differently, the election would have been thrown into the House of Representatives, where the Republicans were a minority. Abraham Lincoln, who won less than 40 percent of the popular vote in the country as a whole, would not have been president.

Decades later, Franklin's Alexander McClure, the head of the Republican Party in Pennsylvania, reflected in his memoirs on the meaning of this election. "A decided political revolution was generally expected in 1860, but none then dreamed that it would mean anything more than merely halting the extension of the slave power, and liberalizing the policy of the government in the support of free industries against the slave labor of the South," he thought. "Had it been generally believed in 1860 that the election of Lincoln would bring the bloodiest civil war of modern times, and the sudden and complete overthrow of slavery at the point of the bayonet, it is doubtful whether the popular vote of the country would have invited such an appalling entertainment." Voters on both sides profoundly misunderstood and underestimated the other. "The North believed that the South was more bombastic than earnest in the threat of provoking civil war for the protection of slavery, and the South believed that the Northern people were mere money-getters, ready to yield anything rather than accept fratricidal conflict." (McClure, *Old Time Notes*)

Both Augusta and Franklin saw their social arrangements as successful and productive, and that very success exacerbated sectional tensions. The physical experience of citizens, the arrangements of their institutions, towns, farms, and businesses, differed between Northern and Southern communities in subtle but profoundly meaningful ways. Republicans and Southern Democrats created aggressive

political movements that appealed to large numbers of white male citizens by championing their regionally distinct visions of appropriate economic and social strategies and obscuring the complementary nature of the Northern and Southern economic approaches.

The politics of slavery controlled the decision-making process at the local level, and indeed at the state, regional, and national levels. When faced with the binary choice of separating from the Union or challenging the economic and social systems that had served them so well for so long, most white men South and North would make their decision quickly and with conviction. The choice posed by Republicans and Southern Democrats would wash out the similarities between the North and South and emphasized their contrasting visions of the proper ways to create and manage labor and economic production in the United States. In defense of those contrasting visions, local people from both regions committed themselves to a national war.

After the election of 1860, the secessionists of the Confederacy, of Virginia, and of Augusta expertly narrowed the range of choices. "The question is not 'Union,' the Vindicator argued, "That is irretrievably, hopelessly broken up. No compromise of right--no palliation of wrong, or denunciation of its resistance, can restore its fallen columns." Only one question mattered: "where shall we go? With the North or the South?" Once the secessionists had drawn the boundaries in that way, slavery, the fundamental issue often lost in the layer-upon-layer of constitutional debate, immediately reasserted itself in the most immediate way. It was no longer a matter of hypothetical slaves in hypothetical territories, but real slaves in Augusta County and Virginia. If we go with the North, "what are we to do with our Negroes?" the Vindicator asked rhetorically. "Converted into pests and vampyres as they soon must be in such connexion, they will suck out the very lifeblood of the Commonwealth. And there will be no help for us. The North would gloat over our distresses, while the South, in self-defense, would be compelled to close her doors against us. The 'irrepressible conflict' will then be upon us with all its horrors." The next step in the logic was clear: "who will not say, give us war, give us anything, extermination itself, rather than such a consuming life of degradation and ruin?" (Republican Vindicator, March 29, 1861)

Conclusion [Citation Key = TAS9]

Two sets of observations emerge from this article, one about its subject matter and another about its form. Both sets point to the necessity of integrating things often kept apart. We hope to have shown that slavery and modernity need to be seen as parts of the same process in the United States, just as they had been for the preceding three centuries throughout the Atlantic world. Rather than a fight of modernity against slavery, the American Civil War could be seen as a fight between variants of modernity, not as the inevitable clash of the future against past. The twentieth and twenty-first centuries have shown all too clearly that forms of modern life can be adapted to forced labor and racial domination. The American South pioneered in this fusion.

Augusta County and Virginia were far from being the only places where slavery and modernity combined. To see the machinery of the modern age working most directly in the service of slavery, one might look much farther south to the sugar plantations of Louisiana, the rice plantations of the Sea Islands, or the cotton plantations along the Mississippi River. There, advanced forms of transportation,

communication, and commercial rationalization worked in conjunction with people enslaved for perpetuity to create the most profitable economic engines and the most dominating class in the United States. Augusta's mixed agriculture of corn and wheat would have seemed old-fashioned indeed to those who used steam-driven engines for sophisticated processing machinery and steamboats capable of great speeds on both rivers and seas. Staunton's weekly newspapers, lyceums, and intermittent railroad traffic would have seemed sadly deficient compared with the daily newspapers of New Orleans, the rich cultural life of Charleston, or the industrial clamor of Richmond. Slavery and modernity coalesced in many ways.

This article has tried to show, too, that the history of regional identity and conflict cannot be told only from one side of the border. Too often, broad generalizations about the North and the South have been made from the grossest measurements. When historians talk about the South, it is easy to imagine the North as a perfect counterpoint, thoroughly industrialized, urbanized, and full of autonomous people on the move. When we talk about the North, it is easy to imagine the South as rural and fixed, a place virtually without history. When we have bothered to compare the two directly, we have often used the most extreme places-Boston versus Charleston, say, or Massachusetts versus South Carolina-to confirm the dualistic notions we held before we began.

This article has tried to demonstrate that integration might be useful in its form as well as its content. We have tried to recover aspects of social science history-explicitly framing and testing questions with quantitative and spatial evidence-that have fallen into disfavor over the last few decades. We have also experimented with a combination of social science history and political history that is not as common as it might be. Too often, social historians and political historians talk past one another. Combining the two can strengthen both.

By encouraging us to recast our arguments into new forms, digital history may lead us to revisit some old questions in new ways, as we have done in this article. As historians grow more fluent in its use, the digital environment may offer bold new ways of understanding the vast record of the human past.