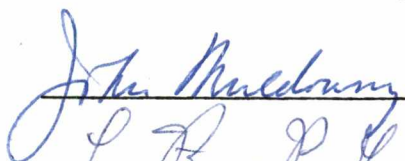
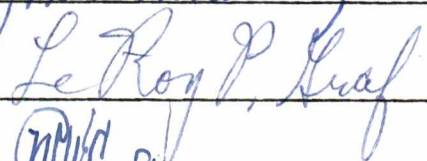
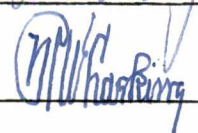


To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a dissertation written by Stephen V. Ash entitled "Civil War, Black Freedom, and Social Change in the Upper South: Middle Tennessee, 1860-1870." I have examined the final copy of this dissertation for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, with a major in History.


Paul H. Bergeron, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation
and recommend its acceptance:



Accepted for the Council:


The Graduate School

CIVIL WAR, BLACK FREEDOM, AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN THE
UPPER SOUTH: MIDDLE TENNESSEE, 1860-1870

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Stephen V. Ash

August 1983

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ABSTRACT

Middle Tennessee was one of the most prominent subregions of the antebellum South. A land of prolific farms, widespread slaveholding, and broad prosperity, it represented a "third South" which stood apart from both the plantation-dominated Deep South and the highland South of subsistence farms and slaveless yeomen. Prosperity, rural communalism, and the existence of a black slave caste all helped to unite Middle Tennessee whites before the Civil War, despite their society's glaring class distinctions and unequal distribution of wealth.

In the ensuing years Middle Tennesseans white and black saw the transforming fury of war at first hand, for the region was a fiercely contested battleground and one of the North's first conquests. They suffered devastation and privation on a scale matched in few other parts of the South and exceeded in none. More than that, they witnessed the virtual obliteration of the underpinnings of their society: slaves took advantage of military invasion by seizing their freedom; the aristocracy was humbled, impoverished, and exiled by Federal authorities; danger and disorder in the countryside disrupted rural institutions and communalism. The result was widespread social chaos, crime, and violence, epitomized by the rise of banditry.

Peace in 1865 restored order, hierarchy, and community, but not slavery or prosperity; and the years that followed consummated the transformation of Middle Tennessee society. Blacks withdrew from white families, churches, and communities, and (despite their eventual political

and economic subjugation) founded an autonomous, egalitarian culture centered in the towns. Whites conceded their inability to prevent the partition of their formerly biracial society and withdrew into their own culture, which remained rooted in the past. Whites in 1870 were as firmly committed as ever to their traditional class ideology; and (as quantitative analysis of census data reveals) they were even more agrarian than before, for many had moved from town to farm after 1865 to take up work the freedmen had abandoned. Thus, the years of Civil War and emancipation in Middle Tennessee had liberated black society and pointed it toward the future, only to immure white society and point it toward the past.

PREFACE

This is the story of the people in one part of the South during the central moment of their history—the years of secession, war, emancipation, and reconstruction between 1860 and 1870. Middle Tennessee was one of the most important subdomains of the Old South, a rich and prominent land which stood apart from both the Deep South of the great planters and the highland South of the slaveless yeomen. Its inhabitants saw the transforming fury of war and occupation at first hand, for the region was one of the Civil War's most fought-over battlegrounds and one of the North's first conquests. Understanding the ordeal of Middle Tennesseans in these years is thus not only important in itself, but is useful as a yardstick by which to measure the experience of Southerners elsewhere.

I have for the most part given only passing attention—some will say short shrift—to the political and military events of this crucial decade. These have been ably elucidated by other historians. The region's economy has claimed somewhat more of my attention, but the focus of this study is Middle Tennessee society and its constituents, white and black, rich and poor. I have been much influenced by the practitioners of the "new" social history of recent years, with their emphasis on nonelite groups and class relations, and their sharply defined analyses and precise measurements of quantitative data. But I make no apologies for the fact that my true purpose has been the plain, traditional one of telling the story of what happened in the past.

A separate chapter, at least, would be required to express fully my appreciation to all those who have assisted me through the years of research and writing. Unfortunately, a few lines must suffice. John Dobson and the staff of the Special Collections Department of The University of Tennessee Library provided not only comfortable research accommodations but wonderful company. The entire staff of the Tennessee State Library and Archives in Nashville was unfailingly helpful and gracious; in particular, Sara Harwell and Marilyn Bell helped make my weeks there productive and pleasant. Two of my Knoxville friends generously gave up their time to aid me in the most laborious tasks: Peggy O'Steen punched IBM cards and typed chapters; Molly Richardson proofread and typed tables. The University of Tennessee awarded me a Hilton A. Smith Graduate Fellowship for the 1978-79 year, and the Department of History provided research grants from its Bernadotte Schmitt Fund. The members of my dissertation committee—Professors Ralph W. Haskins, LeRoy P. Graf, John Muldowny, and Leonard Brinkman—all gave me the benefit of their knowledge and critical skills. Professor Haskins, in particular, subjected my manuscript to a thorough and judicious evaluation of the kind for which he has long been esteemed. My debt to my major professor, Paul H. Bergeron, is greater than he could know and more than I can ever repay. Good friend and patient advisor as well as keen and learned critic, he has guided not only my academic work in the narrow sense, but my professional and intellectual development in the broadest sense. My greatest debt, however, is to my wife Jeanie, without whose love, encouragement, and support all this would have come to naught.

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ABBREVIATIONS USED IN NOTES

LC	Library of Congress
NA	National Archives
SHC	Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
TSLA	Tennessee State Library and Archives
ETHSP	East Tennessee Historical Society's <u>Publications</u>
<u>JAH</u>	<u>Journal of American History</u>
<u>JSH</u>	<u>Journal of Southern History</u>
<u>MVHR</u>	<u>Mississippi Valley Historical Review</u>
<u>THM</u>	<u>Tennessee Historical Magazine</u>
<u>THQ</u>	<u>Tennessee Historical Quarterly</u>

VOLUME I

CHAPTER I

"A FAIR AND FRUITFUL COUNTRY": THE MIDDLE

TENNESSEE HEARTLAND IN 1860

In the early weeks of 1863, long columns of General Braxton Bragg's ragged Confederate troops tramped along the muddy country roads and turnpikes of Middle Tennessee. Hungry and cold, and unhindered by their sympathetic officers, the soldiers greedily pilfered food and fence rails wherever they passed, leaving trails of wasted fields, empty barns, and destitute farm families already despoiled by Yankee plunderers. A conscientious commander, Bragg deplored such misconduct as demoralizing to the army, and he resolved to halt the pillaging and to discipline the ranks. But the soldierly formality of his subsequent edict failed to conceal his profound personal sorrow at this scourging of an innocent land. "The general commanding has perceived with surprise and pain," the published orders began,

that some of the troops of this army have been engaged in the indiscriminate destruction of fences and houses, devastating a fair and fruitful country. . . .¹

Bragg's anguish was shared by many who had known this land at peace, for all who lived or traveled in Middle Tennessee in the midnineteenth century agreed that nature had bestowed its benediction thereon most

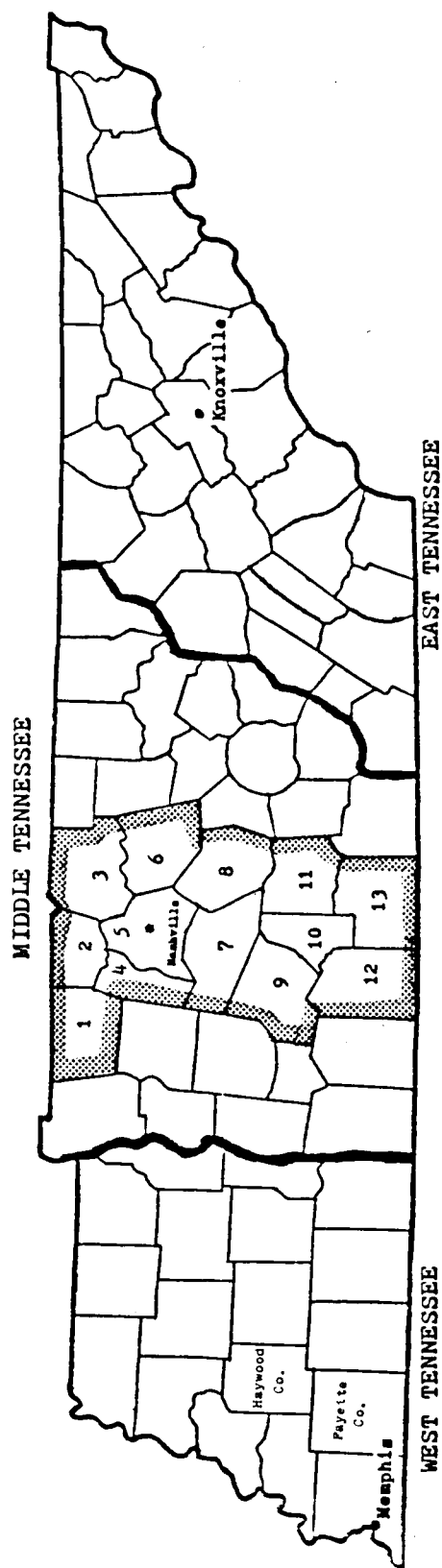
¹General Orders, No. 2, Army of Tennessee, January 9, 1863, United States War Department, The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (70 vols. in 128, Washington, 1880-1901), Ser. I, Vol. XX, Pt. 2, p. 492 (hereafter cited as OR).

lavishly. Few who sojourned in the region and described it for contemporaries failed to extol its fertile limestone soil and luxuriant fields of corn, wheat, tobacco, cotton, and a host of other crops: like the ancient Israelites who came unto the valley of Eshcol, "they took of the fruit of the land in their hands . . . and said, It is a good land. . . ." To a generation which gauged worldly worth with an agrarian measure, such riches bespoke a realm of wonderful opulence.²

When those witnesses thus testified, however, they did not envisage the Middle Tennessee of geographers and politicians, a vast area of some thirty-five counties and 19,000 square miles which stretched from the Cumberland Mountain plateau on the east to the Tennessee River on the west, and which constituted one of the three grand divisions of the state. They described instead what may be called the heartland of Middle Tennessee, comprising the most prosperous central counties bordered on the north by Kentucky and on the south by Alabama. This subregion coincided roughly with the Nashville Basin, the "garden of Tennessee," a lush oval of lowland at the core of the region, bracketed by generally barren highlands on either side. Yet the heartland did encompass two highland counties to the northwest, Montgomery and Robertson, whose fecund farmlands and abundant harvests rivaled those of the Basin (see Figure I).³

²Deuteronomy 1:24-25.

³The thirteen counties of the heartland were Montgomery, Robertson, Sumner, Cheatham, Davidson, Wilson, Williamson, Rutherford, Maury, Marshall, Bedford, Giles, and Lincoln.



- Counties:
- | | |
|---------------|---------------|
| 1. Montgomery | 8. Rutherford |
| 2. Robertson | 9. Maury |
| 3. Sumner | 10. Marshall |
| 4. Cheatham | 11. Bedford |
| 5. Davidson | 12. Giles |
| 6. Wilson | 13. Lincoln |
| 7. Williamson | |

Figure I

Tennessee in 1860—Highlighting the Thirteen Counties of the
Middle Tennessee Heartland

Man's exploitation of the natural bounty of the heartland had begun with the migrations unleashed by the American Revolution. Settlers penetrated the new land from Kentucky in 1779 and 1780, trekking overland along the Wilderness Road and by water up the Cumberland River (which flows southwestward from the Kentucky mountains, dips into the northern part of Middle Tennessee, and then turns northwestward toward the Ohio River). These pioneers rapidly overran the heartland, and before the 1780s ended the new town of Nashville on the Cumberland had become the center of a flourishing frontier agricultural region, and the river its lifeline of trade.

Statehood was achieved in 1796, embracing both "states" of Tennessee that the citizens had by then come to recognize: East, spreading along the Tennessee River, and Middle (at first called West), the two separated by the Cumberland Mountains and evolving almost independently. With the settlement of far West Tennessee after 1818, three-way interregional rivalries became the dominant theme of state politics. Steamboat navigation on the Cumberland River beginning in 1819, a wave of turnpike construction in the 1830s, and the railroad boom of the 1850s all swelled Nashville's population and economic importance and bound the rest of Middle Tennessee more closely to the city. Prosperity and the accomplishments of some illustrious native and adopted sons (among them Andrew Jackson, James K. Polk, and John Bell) brought the heartland in particular to national prominence in the antebellum decades.

By 1860 the thirteen counties of the heartland counted nearly 308,000 inhabitants, or 28 percent of the state's total population.

About four of every ten heartlanders were Negro slaves. Black or white, these were overwhelmingly a people of farm and village rather than town and city. Even by the broadest definition (nonfarmers living in civil districts with 1,500 inhabitants or more), hardly one-fifth were townspeople. If that term is restricted to those in communities with over 2,500 inhabitants, fewer than fifteen heartlanders out of 100 could qualify, and of these only Nashvillians could fairly be called city folk. The "Queen City of the Cumberland" numbered 17,000 residents; its nearest competitor, Columbia (in Maury County), about 5,400. No other towns in the heartland exceeded 3,300.⁴

Ruralism and slavery were two distinctive features of the antebellum South. But to say merely that the South had slaves and was rural and agricultural rather than urban and industrial is to slight its wide regional disparities: within the South as demarcated by these broad criteria, there were many Souths. The heartland of Middle Tennessee was a singular Southern domain whose peculiarity merits some consideration.

By conferring the blessing of rich soil, nature had decreed a special destiny for the heartland within the broad expanse of Middle

⁴United States Census Bureau, Population of the United States in 1860 . . . (Washington, 1864), 466-67; United States Census Bureau, The Statistics of the Population . . . (June 1, 1870) . . . (Washington, 1872), 261-69. My computations from the raw data given in these published sources and in the manuscript census returns are the basis of the statistics in this chapter. Appendix A discusses the problem of defining towns and townspeople in 1860. Giles, Montgomery, and Williamson did not report towns separately in the 1860 census, and I have excluded those counties in calculating the regional percentage of urban population. The heartland's whole population was about twice that of Florida in this period, half that of Texas.

Tennessee. That edict was ratified by subsequent acts of man. The railroads that stretched across the land from Nashville in several directions visited every county in the heartland save three; yet they skirted the eastern and western highlands except at a couple of points where it was necessary to cross. Of the twenty-two Middle Tennessee counties outside the heartland, only four were tied to Nashville and the outside world by the iron tracks.⁵

Thus insulated in an age when rail links might spell the difference between progress and stagnation, the highland counties stood in ever starker contrast to the luster of the heartland. In 1860 the counties of the heartland, comprising perhaps 40 percent of the area of Middle Tennessee, supported over 60 percent of the region's population and enjoyed almost 80 percent of its wealth. An average free family in the heartland held real estate worth \$4,767 and personal belongings worth \$5,024. Fellow Middle Tennesseans in the less favored counties could boast a total of only \$3,033 (see Figure II).⁶

⁵Of the three heartland counties unconnected by rail, one (Marshall) was surrounded by counties with railroads and the others (Wilson and Cheatham) lay directly east and west respectively of Nashville along the Cumberland River. Thus, all three were intimately linked to the city. The Nashville and Northwestern Railroad, shown on some maps extending west through Cheatham and beyond, was not yet completed in 1860. See Joseph B. Killebrew, et al., Introduction to the Resources of Tennessee (Nashville, 1874), 321.

⁶Pop. of U.S. 1860, pp. 466-67; United States Census Bureau, Statistics of the United States . . . in 1860 . . . (Washington, 1866), 312, 348. These figures for heartland families, taken from published census aggregates, vary slightly from those presented in Chapter IV, which are based on a sample of families from the manuscript census returns (see Appendix A). Figure II is based on per capita rather than

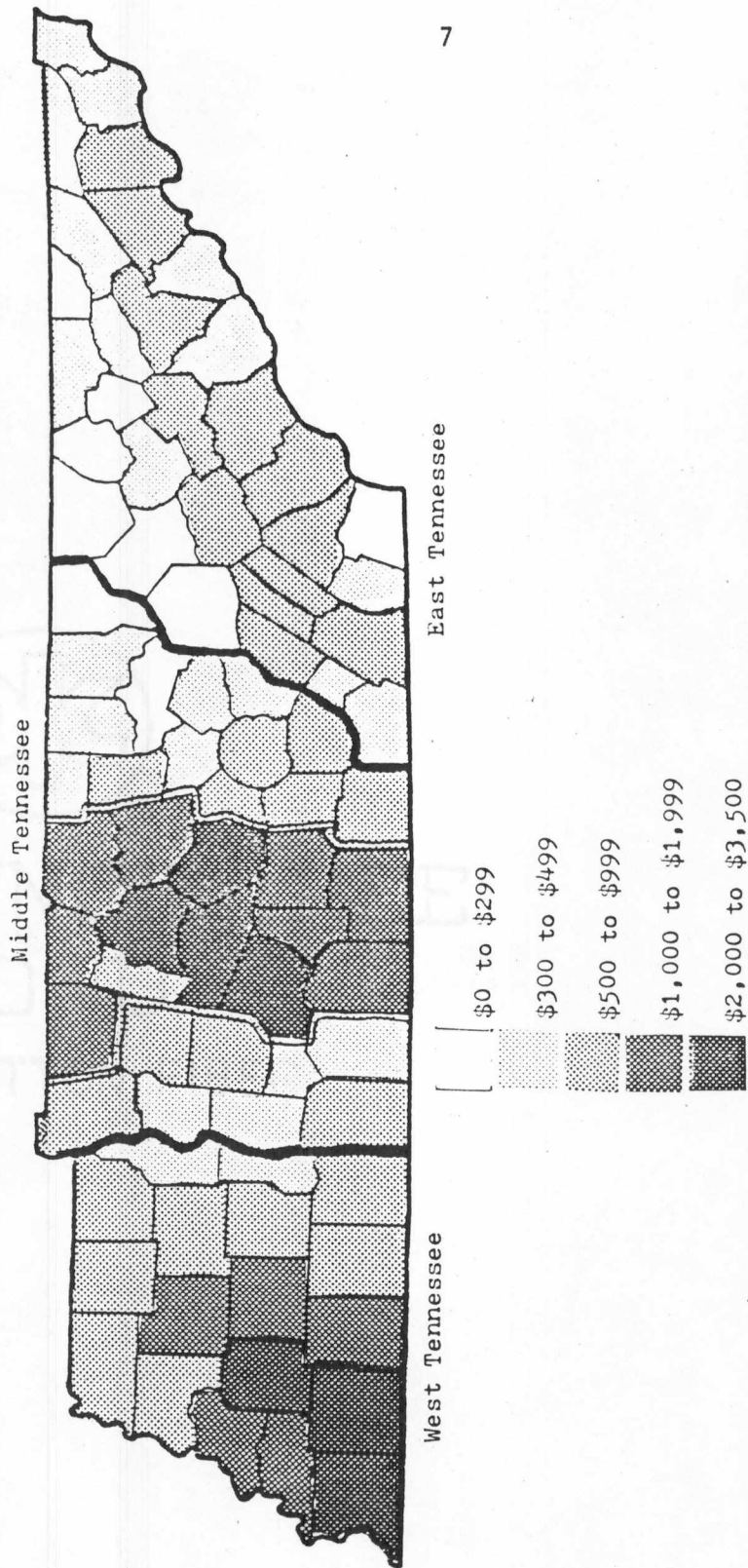


Figure II

Average Wealth of Free Inhabitants, by County, 1860

The contrast is further illustrated by examining the indexes most meaningful to the antebellum Southerner: land and slaves. Thirty-eight of every 100 heartlanders were chattels; in the highlands, only sixteen of 100 (see Figure III). There were more than four slaveholders for every ten white families in the heartland, but in the highlands fewer than two for every ten families. Altogether, heartlanders held nearly 80 percent of Middle Tennessee's slaves. Of the farms on which most Middle Tennesseans earned their livelihood, those in the hard-scrabble highlands averaged sixty-three improved acres and a cash value of \$1,875. In the idyllic heartland, an average farmer cultivated 104 improved acres on a farm worth \$5,723 (see Figures IV and V). State tax records for 1860 show that an acre of land in the heartland was worth, on an average, more than four times the value of an acre in the highlands.⁷

These figures suggest the distinctiveness of the heartland within its wider region, but what of its place in the state and the South?

family averages, but the pattern would be identical if the latter were used. "Wealth" is combined real and personal property value as listed in the census returns.

⁷Pop. of U.S. 1860, pp. 466-67; Stats. of U.S. 1860, p. 348; United States Census Bureau, Agriculture of the United States in 1860 . . . (Washington, 1864), 132-39, 215, 238-39; Tennessee, Report of James T. Dunlap, Comptroller of the Treasury . . . 1861 (Nashville, 1861), 4-5. For reasons explained in Appendix A, these figures on slaveholding vary from those in Chapter IV, and are used here for comparative purposes only. The statistics on improved acreage and cash value of farms likewise vary slightly from the sample averages given in Chapter V, where a somewhat different definition of a farm is used (see Appendix A).

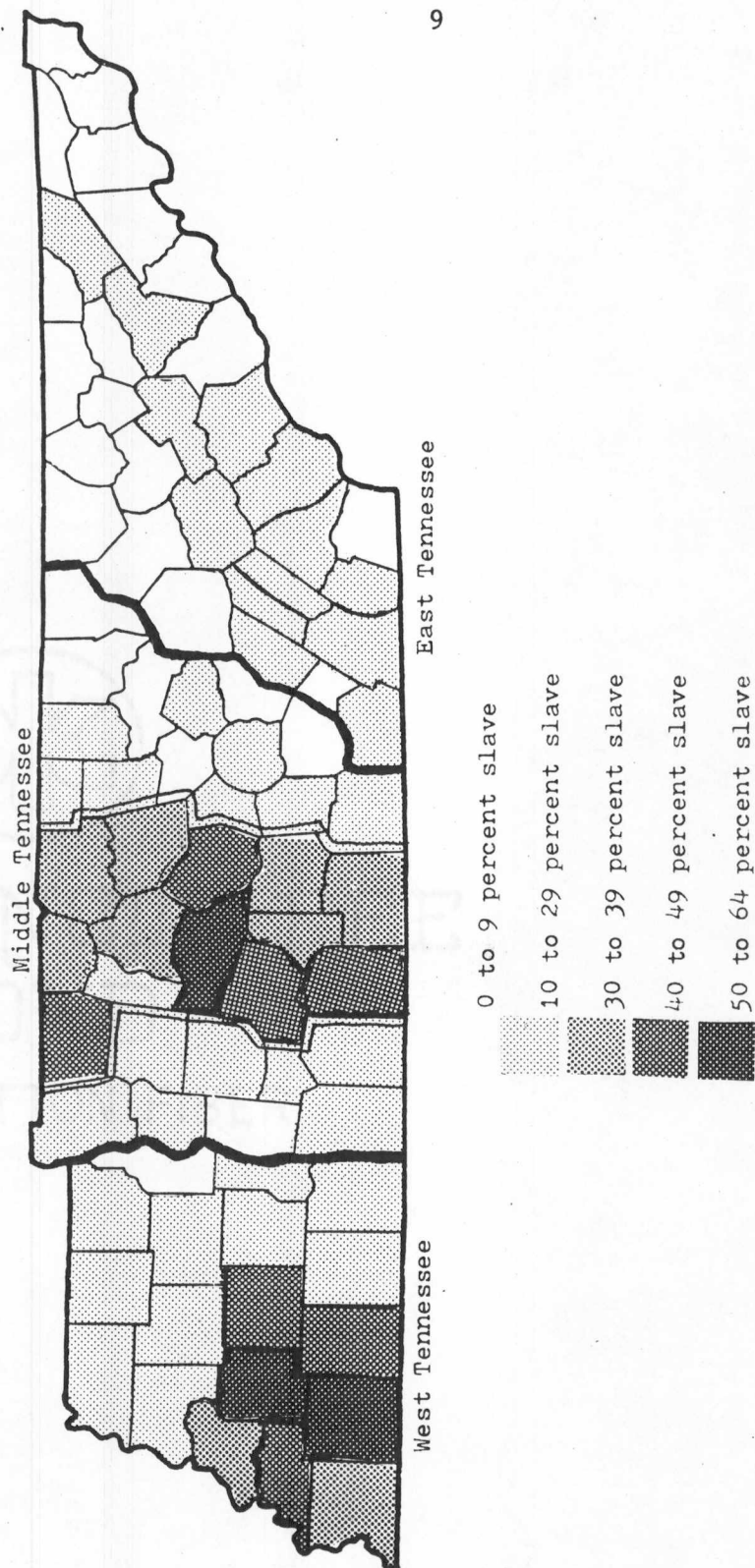


Figure III

Proportion of Slaves in Population, by Counties, 1860

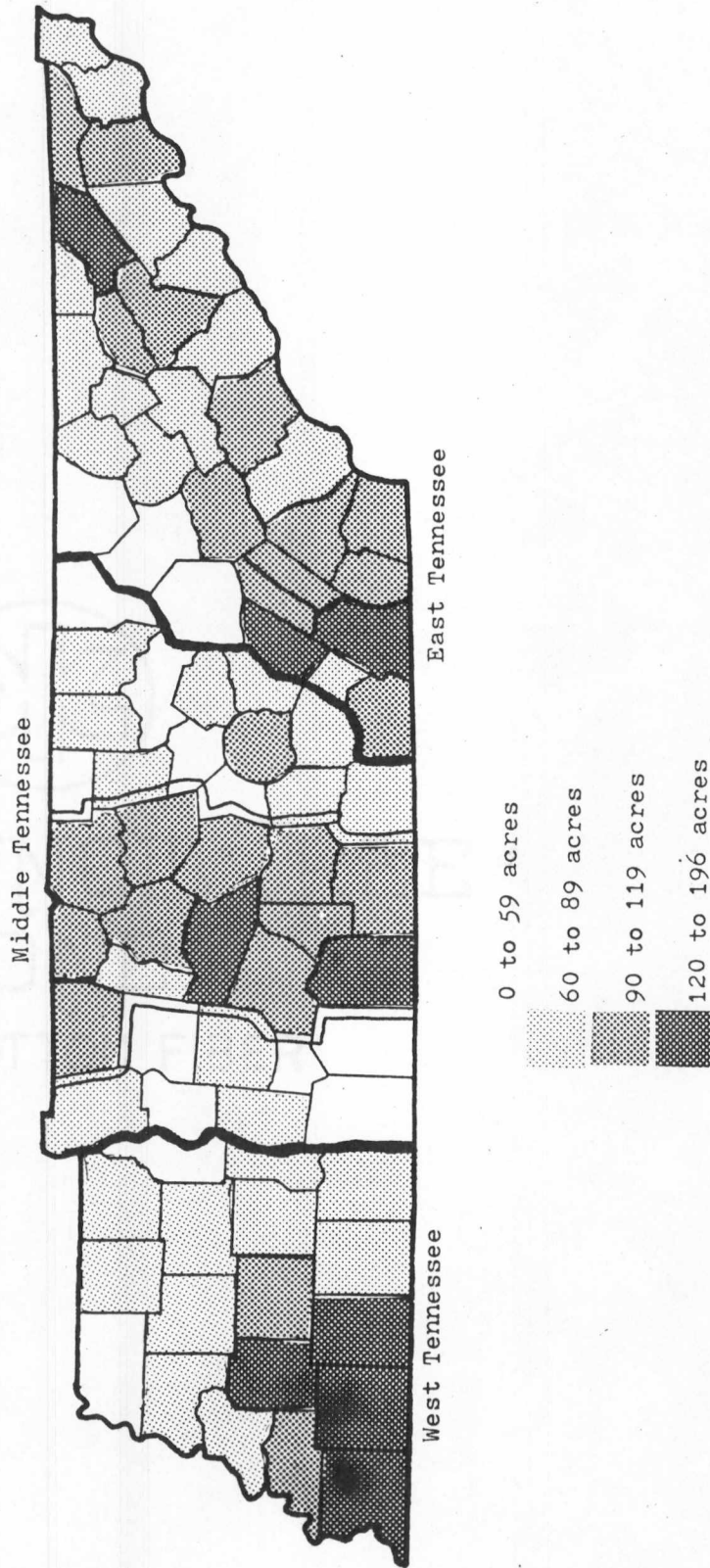


Figure IV

Average Improved Acreage of Farms, by County, 1860

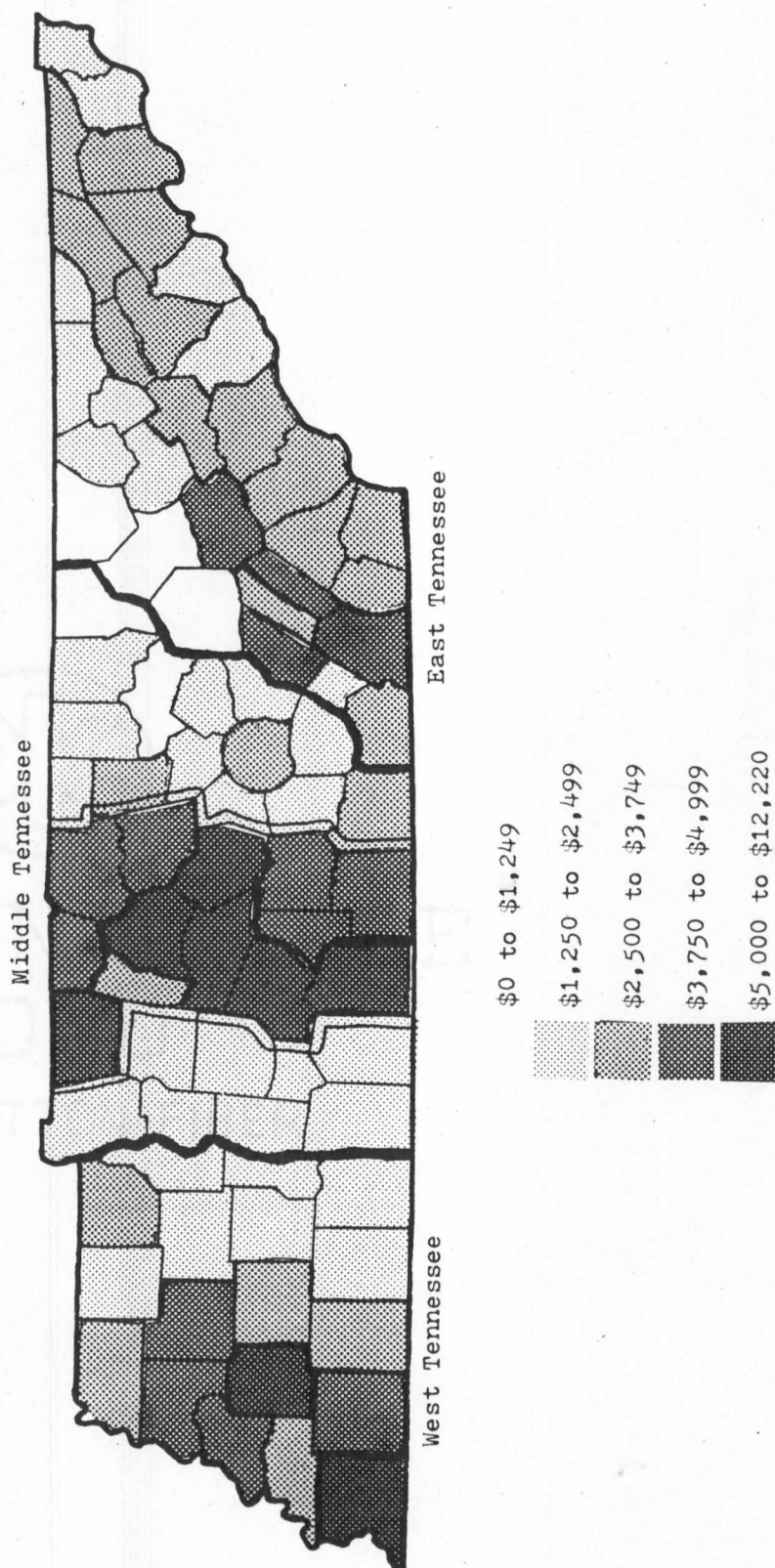


Figure V

Average Cash Value of Farms, by County, 1860

Tennessee's geographical diversity is proverbial. East Tennessee, drained by the southwestward flowing Tennessee River and bounded by the Appalachian range to the east and the Cumberlands to the west, is a land of hills, mountains, and (except for the narrow ribbon of the river valley) generally poor soil. No Southern region further from the grand plantation image of the South could be imagined. Farms there were mostly isolated, small, and self-sufficient, slaves few. Andrew Johnson, antipatrician and former illiterate tailor, was one of the region's leading spokesmen. His constituents likewise rejected aristocratic pretensions and proslavery extremism, and would for the most part remain loyal to the Union in the Civil War and be faithful to the Republican party thereafter. West Tennessee, a broad, fairly flat alluvial plain which gradually slopes westward down to the Mississippi River, conformed more closely to the plantation stereotype and resembled, at least in its southwestern subregion around Memphis, the deep South. Here were great plantations, gangs of slaves, and immense fields of cotton. Isham G. Harris, unyielding champion of slavery and Southern rights, and secessionist governor, was West Tennessee's most representative political leader.

Between these two extremes—physically and culturally—stood the Middle Tennessee heartland, representing a "third South" whose uniqueness has not been fully recognized by interpreters of Southern history. Deeply committed to Dixie's peculiar institution and way of life, yet conservative withal (as exemplified by their favorite son, John Bell, a moderate compromise candidate in the 1860 presidential election), the free people of the heartland gazed Janus-like toward the

egalitarian, nonslaveholding South of the yeoman farmer and toward the plutocratic, plantation South of the cotton nabobs. To ask which of these, if any of the three, was the "real" South misses the fundamental importance of Southern regionalism. Each was a South and the South was all of these, and each must be understood in its own right.

The heartland (roughly 7,000 square miles in area) exceeded in total population, though just barely, both East Tennessee with its thirty-one counties and 14,500 square miles and West Tennessee with its eighteen counties and 9,000 square miles. (But if white population alone is considered, heartlanders were outnumbered by both East and West Tennesseans.) In East Tennessee only one person out of ten was a slave, in the heartland four of ten, in West Tennessee as a whole one of three, and in the richest West Tennessee plantation domains (specifically, Fayette and Haywood counties) six of ten (see Figure I, page 3, and Figure III, page 9). The heartland contained 42 percent of the state's slave population, West Tennessee as a whole 37 percent, East Tennessee 10 percent. For every 100 free families, in East Tennessee there were eleven slaveholders, in the heartland forty-one, and in West Tennessee's Fayette and Haywood counties sixty-seven. Among slaveholders, those who held at least twenty bondsmen (the minimum needed to work a true "plantation") amounted to only three out of 100 in East Tennessee, less than one out of ten in the heartland, but one out of five in Fayette and Haywood. These last-named counties alone accounted for thirteen of the state's forty-seven owners of 100 or

more slaves (there were but nineteen of these great patriarchs in the heartland and one in East Tennessee).⁸

Large plantations were few outside the West Tennessee cotton lands. In East Tennessee farms exceeding 500 acres (improved and unimproved) numbered only 192, or less than one farm out of 100. The average improved acreage per farm in that region was ninety and the average cash value per farm was \$2,876 (see Figure IV, page 10, and Figure V, page 11). The husbandmen of the heartland, as before noted, worked on the average 104 improved acres on a farm worth \$5,723. Only 412 farmers (two out of 100) in the heartland could boast holdings of 500 or more total acres (i.e., improved and unimproved). In Fayette and Haywood counties alone, 155 farmers met that criterion—eight of every 100 who tilled the land. Improved acreage there averaged 166; yet it is a measure of the peculiar richness of the heartland's soil that the average cash value of these larger West Tennessee cotton farms (\$5,799) hardly exceeded that of the heartland's smaller holdings.⁹

⁸Pop. of U.S. 1860, pp. 466-67; Stats. of U.S. 1860, p. 348; Agr. of U.S. 1860, pp. 238-39. The figures for total population are: the heartland, 307,988; Middle Tennessee outside the heartland, 196,446; East Tennessee, 301,056; West Tennessee, 304,311; state total, 1,109,801.

⁹Agr. of U.S. 1860, pp. 132-39, 215. According to state tax returns, an average acre of land in the heartland was worth over three times as much as an acre in East Tennessee, and nearly twice as much as an acre in Fayette and Haywood. Tennessee, Report of Comptroller, 2-5. Improved acreage is the best gauge of farm size, and I have used that statistic for comparisons where possible. But the published census reports combine improved and unimproved acreage in reporting numbers of farms within various size classifications, and I have thus been forced to use that combined statistic in computing and comparing the number of large farms in the various regions.

Land and slaves meant wealth in the antebellum South, and wealth meant land and slaves. It is therefore no surprise that the typical East Tennessean in 1860 was impecunious by the standards of the heartland and West Tennessee. East Tennessee's free families averaged real and personal property totals of \$2,812, those in the heartland \$9,791, and those in Fayette and Haywood \$17,090 (see Figure II, page 7). Slaves accounted for 36 percent of the value of East Tennessee's personal property. In the heartland the figure was 55 percent, and in slave-rich Fayette and Haywood, 78 percent.¹⁰

The heartland of Middle Tennessee stood prominently among the subregions of the South, its lands and people celebrated and its influence far-reaching. It is justifiably seen (and was so viewed by contemporaries) as a coherent whole, manifesting certain broad qualities which marked it off from the rest of the state and the South. But statistical averages are not people and places. Within the embracing unity of the heartland there was much diversity, and anyone who peers closely enough can discover there a little bit of each South.

Whether by calculation, or chance, or merely whimsicality, nature had declined to grant its gifts of procreant soil and level land uniformly throughout the heartland. Long fingers of highlands poke into the Basin from every direction. Rocky wasteland patches of cedar mottle the landscape. A wide band of "barrens"—infertile, scrub oak

¹⁰Stats. of U.S. 1860, pp. 312, 348; Tennessee, Report of Comptroller, 2-5. The latter source provides these average slave prices used in my calculations: East Tennessee, \$833; heartland, \$828; Fayette and Haywood, \$1,028.

terrain—runs through Cheatham County and severs the northwestern highland counties of the heartland from the Basin. More barrens sully the edges of the heartland at other points.¹¹

In the farther reaches of the heartland, on the poorer lands distant from towns and railroads, existed enclaves of yeomanry akin to East Tennessee. Two districts in Cheatham County had slave populations of only 11 percent of the whole; two in Bedford less than 9 percent; one in Lincoln had no slaves at all. Every county had at least one or two districts where the slave population was less than 20 percent. Farms there were small and relatively unproductive, and their seclusion discouraged cultivation beyond that needed for self-sustenance. In these places farmland might be worth only a few dollars per acre; one district in Lincoln averaged \$1.81.¹²

By contrast, a few of the very richest parts of the heartland, especially those close to the towns and rail or river transportation, were almost indistinguishable from the deep South plantation regions. An impressionable Yankee who in 1858 journeyed from the outskirts of the heartland to Shelbyville, in Bedford County, marvelled that

¹¹The best physical descriptions of the heartland are in James M. Safford, Geology of Tennessee (Nashville, 1869), 81-84, 97-100; United States Census Bureau, Report on Cotton Production in the United States . . . (Washington, 1884), 378-86, 398-401 (which includes a soil map); and Killebrew, Introduction to Resources, 2-5, 286-96, 619-22.

¹²Stats. of Pop. 1870, pp. 261-69 (where district figures for 1860 are not available, I have used 1850 data in calculating slave population ratios); Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury, 1857 Tax Aggregates (Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville—hereafter cited as TSLA).

"it was like getting into a new world." Here were imposing manors, aristocratic refinements, and extensive landholdings worked by throngs of slaves. Staple crops were plentiful in these areas (tobacco in the northern heartland, cotton to the south), and surpluses of corn, wheat, and livestock were raised for export. Seven districts (one each in Davidson, Giles, Maury, and Williamson counties, and three in Rutherford) were over 65 percent black; a number of others exceeded 50 percent. Land values in these favored precincts were high, generally over twenty dollars per acre, but (for example, in the ninth district of Davidson, near Nashville, and around Franklin, in Williamson County) could surpass 100 dollars.¹³

The spectrum of conditions in the heartland is further exemplified by contrasting the poorest county, Cheatham, with its richer companions. There were but three slaveholders for every ten free families in Cheatham; in Williamson County there were almost six for every ten families. Only 7 percent of Cheatham's slaveowners held at least twenty blacks, but in Montgomery, Rutherford, and Williamson more than 14 percent had such plantation-sized holdings. Over half the farms in Cheatham were under fifty acres (improved and unimproved) and less than 1 percent were over 500 acres; overall, farms there averaged sixty-five improved acres and \$2,664 in value. Only a third of Giles County's farms were smaller than fifty improved and unimproved acres, while four

¹³A. T. Hamilton to John Hamilton, Sept. 9, 1858, Hamilton Letters (TSLA); Stats. of Pop. 1870, pp. 261-69; Tennessee Comptroller, 1857 Tax Aggregates.

out of 100 were larger than 500 acres. An average farm in Giles included 123 improved acres and was worth \$5,897. In Davidson, which straddled the Cumberland River and surrounded Nashville, with its markets and rail nexus, farms had an average value of more than \$12,000, or nearly five times that of Cheatham's farms. An average Cheatham County free family held property, real and personal, worth \$3,754; its Davidson County counterpart was worth almost \$15,000.¹⁴

Wide variations among the free folk of the heartland's farms and villages should not, however, obscure their fundamental kinship. Most were neither rich nor poor, neither august patrician-planters nor indigent dirt farmers. Most owned no slaves, or few. Most lived close to the soil, shared a common cultural heritage and like economic interests, and were tied closely enough to Nashville and the rest of the heartland by rail, river, turnpike, and history that they felt a genuine regional identity and community of interest. Their basic affinity is further highlighted by considering a small but important minority of heartlanders who lived in very different circumstances. Though still diminutive by today's standards, Nashville had evolved by 1860 into a true city. Within the traditional agrarian culture of the rural heartland sat an islet of modern urban society, an antithesis to be explored more fully in the next chapter.

One and yet many, a realm sui generis but one which mirrored the manifold faces of the Old South: the heartland of Middle Tennessee

¹⁴Pop. of U.S. 1860, pp. 461-67; Agr. of U.S. 1860, pp. 132-39, 215, 238-39; Stats. of U.S. 1860, pp. 312, 348.

seems peculiarly worthy of exploration for what it may reveal about itself and the whole South. To this end, the people of the heartland must now be scrutinized more closely, along with the customs and institutions which marked their world.

CHAPTER II

WORKS AND DAYS: THE PEOPLE AND INSTITUTIONS OF THE HEARTLAND

The people of the Middle Tennessee heartland were tillers of the soil. Six of every ten heads of free families in 1860 called themselves farmers or farm laborers, accounting for about 21,000 of the region's 35,000 families. Another 2,200 or so actually operated farms though they did not claim agriculture as their principal occupation. Thus, two-thirds of all free families in the heartland drew at least part of their livelihood directly from the soil.¹

The great majority of those listing an agrarian vocation managed their own farms on fields they owned. A few, however (about 7 percent), possessed no land and supervised no farm: they were hired hands who worked other men's acres for fifty cents or a dollar a day with board. Another small number (10 percent) held real property and identified themselves as farmers but did not run a farm (or at least had no farm

¹These figures, and all other statistics in this chapter not otherwise attributed, are derived from a computer-analyzed sample of 1,000 heartland families in the 1860 manuscript census returns of population, agriculture, and slaves. See Appendix A for a full explanation of the sampling procedure and analytical methodology employed.

From this point on, the terms "heartland" and "Middle Tennessee" will be used interchangeably, as a matter of convenience, to refer to the thirteen-county region which is the subject of this study. It should be kept in mind, of course, as explained in Chapter I, that this region is but a part of the broader region properly called Middle Tennessee, and that the two terms are thus technically not synonymous.

listed for their family in the census). In a few cases this may have been the census taker's oversight, but most of these were probably retired farmers or farm owners who rented out their farms.²

About 19,000 of the region's families, therefore, boasted a farm in 1860 (whether or not they called themselves farmers), or fifty-six families of every 100. But perhaps 1,000 of these farms (about 6 percent) must be disregarded because they had no improved acreage and could not have constituted a real farm (census takers were paid for each farm enumerated, and were sometimes tempted to make one out of any dwelling with a few chickens or a cow in the backyard). Thus, the heartland encompassed in 1860 probably about 18,000 farms, the homesteads of fifty-three of every 100 free families.

One reason that so few freemen in the countryside resorted to wage labor was that they might secure land by renting it, if they owned none. The 1860 census did not require that tenants be specified (though in some districts they were), but an assumption of tenancy can be made where a family ran a farm but owned no real property. Using this admittedly approximate method, it appears that 22 percent of all farms in the heartland, or about 4,000 in number, were occupied by tenants. Seventy-eight percent, or 14,000, were owner-operated family farms.³

²Average wages by county are given in United States Census Bureau, Eighth Census, 1860, Manuscript Returns of Social Statistics, Tennessee (National Archives, Washington—hereafter cited as NA).

³See Appendix A for a fuller explanation of this assumption, and a test of it.

Another explanation for the low incidence of free wage labor on the farm is that a great share of the toilsome burden of farm work was borne upon black shoulders. Almost half (49 percent) of farm-operating families owned one slave or more, and slaveholding was thus far more prevalent among farmers than nonfarmers in Middle Tennessee. Of those with slaves, more than half held five or more, and 14 percent held twenty or more. Thus, more than one-fourth of all farm-operating families possessed at least five slaves and garnered much, or most, of their living from the sweat of their bondsmen's brows.

That these farms were mostly of middling size, neither great nor small, has already been pointed out in contrasting the heartland with East and West Tennessee; yet the fact bears a little further examination. Only one farm out of ten comprised less than twenty improved acres; a like proportion exceeded 200 improved acres. Half of all farms were under sixty-five improved acres, three-quarters below 100. Fifty-five percent had between thirty and 100 improved acres. To use another point of comparison, only one farm out of ten was worth less than \$500; a similar proportion exceeded \$12,520 in value. Half of all farms fell below \$2,400 in value, three-quarters below \$6,000, and 55 percent between \$1,000 and \$5,880. Great plantations there were in the heartland—G. A. Washington's 5,100 improved acres in Robertson County, for example, worth a quarter of a million dollars and worked by 274 slaves, could

compare with anything in the Black Belt—but their conspicuousness obscures their rarity.⁴

The last killing frost of spring in Middle Tennessee usually comes no later than mid-April. It returns in mid-October, or sometimes later, and so the farmers of the heartland enjoyed a liberal growing season. Rainfall is plentiful (but a little less than in East or West Tennessee) and winters and springs are generally wet, though summer and fall are by no means dry seasons. Temperatures, even on the most grueling summer days and winter nights, almost never exceed 100 degrees or dip below zero; the summertime mean is in the seventies, in the winter near forty. But climatic amenities are a notoriously capricious boon: Middle Tennessee farmers understood how nature's vagaries could play havoc with their expectations and their crops, and a late spring frost or a rainy harvest were ever-threatening hazards.⁵

In the good years though, and most years were good, farming in the heartland was for the majority of husbandmen not just a subsistence but a lucrative enterprise. The generous soil yielded far more than was needed to fill the tables of the farmers, their families, and their slaves, and each harvest thus provided a surplus for which Southerners elsewhere were hungry. To the south and west, in the Black Belt and

⁴Information on G.A. Washington is in Chase C. Mooney, Slavery in Tennessee (Bloomington, Ind., 1957), 198-99. Chapter V analyzes in detail the role of large and small farms in the region's agricultural economy.

⁵United States Census Bureau, Report on Cotton Production in the United States . . . (Washington, 1884), 384-85; James M. Safford, Geology of Tennessee (Nashville, 1869), 529-32.

the expanding cotton frontier, planters found it profitable to concentrate on cotton and import much of their foodstuffs. These the heartland farmers were glad to provide from their surplus, on the hoof or in the barrel. Within Middle Tennessee, too, villages and towns offered a ready market for the superabundance of the farms. The heartland was thus one of the very few prosperous Southern regions (the Kentucky Bluegrass and the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia being two others) that were not reliant on a staple crop, but practiced instead a general agriculture which rendered good profits and kept land and slave prices rising. "Our country is in a flourishing condition," wrote an exuberant Bedford countian early in 1857;

lands have got Remarkably high so that it is not uncommon to bring 50 or 60 dollars per acre and some as high evin as \$100.00 dollars per acre Negroes also sell high likely men from 14 to 17 hundred dollars without any trade and produce of all kinds demand the cash at fair prices.⁶

It had not always been so. In the early years, as frontier farming evolved into a more settled stage and steamboats furnished access to outside markets, cotton, tobacco, and hemp culture boomed in the heartland and it seemed that the region was destined to be an adjunct of the plantation South. But wasteful agricultural practices,

⁶Lewis C. Gray, History of Agriculture in the Southern United States to 1860 (2 vols., New York, 1949 [1933]), II, 644-45, 812; Blanche Henry Clark, The Tennessee Yeomen, 1840-1860 (Nashville, 1942), 146; Testimony of G. W. Lane, United States War Department, The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (70 vols. in 128, Washington, 1880-1901), Ser. I, Vol. XVI, Pt. 1, pp. 475-76; Nashville Patriot, Sept. 11, 1860; Joel Shoffner to Michael Shoffner, Jan. 11, 1857, Michael Shoffner Papers (Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill—hereafter cited as SHC).

a legacy of frontier farming, sapped the vitality of even the heartland's prolific soil in the antebellum decades (as they had already in the eastern states) and eroded the profitability of the staple crops, particularly after the national cotton and tobacco busts of the 1830s and 1840s. Aggravating this was the skyrocketing price of slaves in the lower South due to high demand there, which threatened to siphon off many of the heartland's black hands. Casting about for a system of agriculture which would make money yet not squander precious soil and labor, farmers in Middle Tennessee settled increasingly on a corn and livestock economy.⁷

On broad pastures of bluegrass, amid lush fields of corn, timothy, red clover, and rye waiting to be cut for winter feed, the husbandmen of the heartland reared great hosts of horses, mules, cattle, sheep, and hogs, breeding them assiduously over generations to win a national reputation for excellence rivaled only by the stockmen of the Kentucky Bluegrass. (L. J. Polk of Maury County was one of the most famous horse breeders in the country; on a vast, 6,500 acre farm in Davidson, Mark Cockrill raised thousands of sheep whose fine wool won him international attention.) Professional drovers, or sometimes ambitious local men, gathered surplus animals in the fall (especially swine and cattle, but even turkeys, too) and drove them to Nashville to be slaughtered, packed, and shipped south by rail or river; or, more commonly, they herded the stock directly south to the cotton region of Alabama. Whether a great

⁷Gray, History of Agriculture, II, 691, 753-55, 821-22, 870, 878, 887, 892; Clark, Tennessee Yeomen, 108-12.

planter-breeder with hundreds of blooded animals browsing in ample pastures, or a lowly yeoman with a few hogs fattening in the pen, it is certain that virtually all Middle Tennessee farmers shared to some extent in this agriculture of grain and grazing: 98 percent of all farms in 1860 reported growing some corn and 99 percent reported livestock, pigs and cows being universal and horses, mules, sheep, and other cattle nearly so.⁸

This is not to say that the heartland scorned completely the great staples which distinguished the South. In some parts the green expanses of grass and corn were interrupted by the fleecy white of cotton fields. Despite its promising start, however, cotton had fared poorly in Middle Tennessee. It grew satisfactorily there, but did not bloom in quantity or quality as it did in the prime areas of the lower South. Its demands on land and labor further discouraged its cultivation in the heartland, as did recurring bad crop years after 1812. Besides, cotton and corn competed directly for labor, as their cycles of planting, maturing, and harvesting coincided. Consequently, cotton production in the region dwindled overall in the antebellum decades (though it rose and fell in response to market demands). By 1860 only 12 percent

⁸Sam B. Hilliard, Hog Meat and Hoecake: Food Supply in the Old South, 1840-1860 (Carbondale, Ill., 1972), 193-95; Gray, History of Agriculture, II, 837-41, 854, 878; Clark, Tennessee Yeomen, 121-28; A. T. Hamilton to John Hamilton, June 17, 1858, Hamilton Letters (TSLA); John Duling Memoir (TSLA); Mooney, Slavery in Tennessee, 198-99. On the average, each farm in the heartland had thirty-five swine, eleven sheep, five cattle, five horses, three cows, three mules, and one ox—though not every farm had all of these.

of farms grew any of the fiber, and most of these raised just a bale or two as a small money crop or for home use. Only a few mimicked the great cotton plantations of the deep South, gleaning their dozens or hundreds of bales. Too, cotton in 1860 was confined pretty much to the southern half of the region, whereas in earlier years it had been omnipresent. Giles, Lincoln, Maury, and Rutherford provided 88 percent of Middle Tennessee's output (about 35,000 bales out of 40,000), the last county alone 31 percent. The northern tier of counties harvested just a trifling few bales. Furthermore, the region as a whole raised only 14 percent of the state's cotton. The crop assumed central economic importance only in West Tennessee, where the great bulk of it was grown.⁹

Of greater significance in the heartland was its other big money crop, tobacco: the region cultivated a third of the state's total. Concentrated preponderantly in the northern counties, and especially in the red clay lands above the Basin (Montgomery County alone raised 36 percent of the region's crop, and together with Robertson, Sumner, and Williamson accounted for 81 percent of the total of 14,000,000 pounds), tobacco was a staple for a small but influential portion of

⁹Gray, History of Agriculture, II, 707, 878, 892; Clark, Tennessee Yeomen, 147; Joseph B. Killebrew, et al., Introduction to the Resources of Tennessee (Nashville, 1874), 841; United States Census Bureau, Agriculture of the United States in 1860 . . . (Washington, 1864), 132-33, 136-37; J. T. Trowbridge, A Picture of the Desolated States; and the Work of Restoration, 1865-1868 (Hartford, Conn., 1868), 280. This traveler noted that the quality of Middle Tennessee cotton was never better than "low middling"—the sixth of nine grades—and the quantity never greater than 800 pounds of seed cotton per acre, much below the deep South's average.

farmers. Though only 14 percent grew the weed, they tended to do it on a large scale, unlike cotton growers. Thus, in the principal tobacco districts, although corn and livestock were plentiful, land- and labor-intensive tobacco culture excluded the general agriculture which reigned in the balance of the heartland. This tobacco was of the dark variety, bound for the ports of Europe, and to help send it on its way there grew up a sizeable marketing and processing industry centered in Nashville and in Clarksville, in Montgomery County.¹⁰

Other crops were plenteous—indeed, visitors to the heartland marvelled at the omnifarious offerings of its fields—though none could emulate the primacy of corn, tobacco, and cotton. In the early antebellum years, apprehension about soil depletion and general agricultural decline had sparked an agrarian "awakening" in the state, pioneered by Middle Tennessee, which encouraged crop diversification and rotation, manuring, and conservational plowing and drainage. Through the media of journals, societies, fairs, and exhibitions, progressive agriculturalists struggled to reform farming practices against the inveterate prejudices and traditions of generations. The results were mixed, but there was an appreciable movement in the region toward diversification (to decrease reliance on imports) at the expense of money crops, including corn. Only in the tobacco districts, where

¹⁰Gray, History of Agriculture, II, 753-58, 774, 836, 878, 885-86; Clark, Tennessee Yeomen, 147, 149-50; Agr. of U.S. 1860, pp. 132-33, 136-37. In general, production of either tobacco or cotton in the heartland counties tended to exclude the other: only Williamson and Maury grew appreciable amounts of both.

the weed consumed ever more acreage, did a measure of experimentation fail to take root. Wheat, which had theretofore been sown in negligible amounts, was by 1860 (with the help of the stimulus of rail transportation and Crimean War demand) being raised in surplus by Middle Tennesseans. Oats and rye were less abundant, but still common. Timothy and clover simultaneously fed cattle and replenished worn soil. A variety of fruits and vegetables was tried, and a short-lived fad for silk worms in the 1840s indicated perhaps that the spirit of diversification had for some become a mania. Yet old and profligate habits lingered on to plague the more backward farms: a Northerner observing the fringes of the heartland in 1858 concluded that "The people are very far behind the age but are looking ahead. The land is hardly ever manured. The fields are run out then left to rest, until they become capable of producing."¹¹

A further consequence of the agricultural awakening was a slow but steady improvement in tools, equipment, and stock, permitting resourceful farmers to reap more from less labor and to keep pace with competitors in other regions who were rapidly boosting yields. Cradles supplanted sickles and scythes for cutting wheat and hay, and by the 1850s were themselves being replaced with mechanical reapers by the more enterprising farmers. A Shelbyville businessman excitedly reported in 1858 doing "a heavey business" selling reapers and threshing machines,

¹¹Killebrew, Introduction to Resources, 620-21; Gray, History of Agriculture, II, 779-89, 800, 807-8, 816, 878, 885; Clark, Tennessee Yeomen, 69-101, 111-19, 134, 140, 147-50; A. T. Hamilton to John Hamilton, June 17, 1858, Hamilton Letters.

the latter superseding the traditional ritual of trampling the grain and winnowing it with a fan mill. Crude hoes gave way to horse-drawn harrows, and wooden plows to iron. The last antebellum decade witnessed too a considerable expansion of cleared land for more planting and grazing, improved fencing and stricter enforcement of fencing laws, and redoubled importation and systematic breeding of livestock. The reported value of farm animals in Middle Tennessee swelled impressively in these years while their numbers leveled off, bespeaking the stock raiser's predilection for diligent improvement over mere expansion of his herd. Nevertheless, these refinements were not achieved universally in the region. The rich, educated farmer conversant with the latest scientific literature and with money to invest in improvements possessed vast advantages over his humbler neighbors. In some communities in 1860 yeomen could yet be observed trudging stoically behind rude, homemade plows, their scrawny hogs rooting freely and happily through the woods.¹²

Among the agrarian folk of the heartland a common goal prevailed. Whether high or low, exalted planters or tenant farmers, all tried in their separate ways to achieve a good measure of self-sufficiency, and most did. On the biggest farms this self-sufficiency was very nearly complete. Westview, the 1,200 acre plantation of Samuel Perkins in Williamson County, for example, was a self-contained world, boasting its own blacksmith shop, cotton gin, tobacco shed, gristmill, slaughter

¹²Gray, History of Agriculture, II, 779-94; Clark, Tennessee Yeomen, 121, 125-32, 147-48; Joel Shoffner to Michael Shoffner, Jan. 17, 1858, Shoffner Papers; Thomas B. Wilson Reminiscences (SHC), 15.

house, wagon scales, water works, ice house, and fish pond. Slave artisans on the plantations fashioned everything from shoes for man and horse, to shuck-bottom chairs, to coffins.¹³

Among the yeomen a kind of community self-sufficiency obtained. For example, a farmer would bring his cowhide to the village tanner, who would finish it in return for a half share. A shoemaker, in exchange for another portion, would turn the leather into rough shoes. Felled trees would be hauled from the farm to the local sawmill, and threshed grain to the gristmill, and cut or ground under a similar share arrangement. The farmer who raised no cotton or wool might swap for a little with his neighbor who did, and carry it home for his wife to assail with spinning wheel and loom (a Bedford County entrepreneur, contemplating opening a store in 1858, lamented that these machines were busily at work in every farmhouse, thus robbing him of a market for finished cloth). Jeans and shirts, soap and dyes, horsecollars and saddles, horseshoes and buckets, everything was improvised on the farm or in the village, save a few exotic items purchased in town, such as intricate hardware and tools, fancy clothes, and hard, scented soap for special house guests.¹⁴

¹³John Jordan, "My Recollections," John Leland Jordan Papers (TSLA).

¹⁴A. T. Hamilton to John Hamilton, Nov. 28, 1858, Hamilton Letters. Other illustrations of the self-sufficiency of farm life are in David Bodenhamer file, Civil War Questionnaires (Confederate) (TSLA); James Washington Matthews Journal (TSLA), *passim*; George P. Rawick, ed., The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography (41 vols. to date, Westport, Conn., 1972), Ser. Two, Vol. VIII (Ark.), Pt. 2, pp. 138-39; *ibid.*, Vol. XVI (Ohio), 7-8; Wilson Reminiscences, 16; Duling Memoir; and Jordan, "My Recollections."

Manifestly, those living in the countryside who dubbed themselves other than farmers or farm workers (and they amounted to fewer than one family head out of four) were nevertheless bound closely to the soil, sharing its bounty in a symbiosis of village and farm. In fact, so many of them had pigs and cows and fields of their own that in any given community the line between farm and village was likely to be blurred. (Dual occupations are commonly found in the 1860 census; memoirs of antebellum heartlanders are likewise replete with examples, such as the father of David Bodenhamer in Giles County, whom his son proudly remembered as a farmer, justice of the peace, and jack-of-all-trades; and Benjamin Batey's father in Rutherford, a "Mechanic[,] Farmer and Stock raiser." Among villagers (i.e., rural folk who did not farm), one of twelve families was headed by a professional man—doctor or merchant or minister, for example—who dealt daily with the farmers and received payment from them in produce, the common medium of exchange. A small proportion of village family heads (about four out of 100) likewise refrained from manual labor in their primary occupations, but held less exalted status: clerks, constables, school-teachers, and the like. The backbone of the village community was the nearly one-third of family heads learned in trades—the coopers, shoemakers, blacksmiths, millers, wagon makers, carpenters, furniture makers, and other artisans whose skills the farmers relied on, and who in turn needed the fruits of the farmer's toil. Common laborers, shop hands, teamsters, and other unskilled workers accounted for one-fourth of village families (a figure kept low, as with farm hands, by the

prevalence of slaves available for this kind of work). Another three-tenths of village family heads—mostly women—listed no occupation or a nonremunerative domestic one. Village families were very unlikely to own slaves (nine out of ten had none), although the professionals sometimes had a house servant or two. Overall, these nonfarm rural folk averaged just three slaves for every ten families; farmers averaged four slaves per household.¹⁵

The husbandmen of the heartland and their village neighbors lived and labored in the midst of an agricultural cornucopia. Reverently they offered thanks for the abundance it proffered and sumptuously they provisioned themselves from it. Corn was planted in the early spring in quantity ample to feed family, slaves, and animals, and still leave a surplus to sell or trade when ripe in the fall. Many favored a small wheat crop, enough for a little white bread to break the monotony of pone. Straw, hay, and corn leaves stripped from the stalk furnished fodder to keep the cattle through the winter. Hogs cleaned up after the other animals, and then fattened on corn. At slaughtering time farmers first set aside plenty of pork and beef for themselves and then sold or traded the rest. Every farmer and most villagers planted a garden (on the plantations slaves had their own) which grew Irish and sweet potatoes, peas, and beans enough to victual the family through the year, as long as the ripe produce was properly stored. The

¹⁵David Bodenhamer file and Benjamin Batey file, Civil War Questionnaires (Confederate). See Appendix B for a full list of occupations in each occupational category defined here.

ubiquitous cow provided milk and more; for those with a different thirst, whiskey flowed copiously from local stills. About all that the prudent family need buy for the table were salt, coffee, and sugar.¹⁶

This rustic sort of plenty abounded among the generality of the rural free folk, but not all partook. At the basest level subsisted a wretched few, such as the family a census taker discovered in the summer of 1860 only a few miles out in the country from Nashville. There, living literally in a hole dug out of a wooded hillside and sheltered with boards, wearing rags, and sleeping on the ground, were a middle-aged white man and his two maiden sisters. To eke out an existence, the head of this sylvan household hunted in the woods as the spirit moved him; the ladies took in a little knitting. Over two miles from their nearest neighbor, thoroughly and contentedly ignorant of the outside world, they declined all offers of assistance. Such squalor, by contrast with which even the slave quarters seemed elegant, was uncommon but not unknown throughout the rural heartland, and represented in its way yet another kind of self-sufficiency which some found congenial.¹⁷

For most of the country people, however, self-sufficiency did not mean independence and isolation. Except on the great plantations, and in the meanest hovels (and both were scarce in Middle Tennessee), self-sufficiency was in great part the reward of communal efforts impelled

¹⁶See Appendix C for the household inventory of a typical Middle Tennessee farmer.

¹⁷Nashville Patriot, Aug. 15, 1860.

by the awareness of mutual dependence. The rhythms of rural life dictated a routine of tasks—barn raisings, log rollings, corn shuckings, hog killings—that brought neighbor together with neighbor in toil, and a cycle of respites—after the laying-by of the crops in the summer, for example, and after harvest in the fall—which united them in leisure and diversion. A cult of neighborliness and hospitality among these people, which invariably impressed outsiders, was one manifestation of this interdependence, betokening a common recognition and affirmation of their abiding reliance, each upon each; and networks of kinship among the rural folk further bound them. A Northerner wrote of his visit to Bedford County in 1858 that "The people are so hospitable kind and obliging that I enjoyed myself beyond measure. Myself and horse received the kindest attention." The country people he had met "like to go to church and spend a meal hour with those who invite them. . . . It is one of the greatest pleasures to the Tennessee farmer to entertain strangers or friends—the latch string is always out." "People didn't look on money like they do now," recalled an elderly ex-slave about her youth in Rutherford County in the 1850s; "They was free with one another about eating and visiting and work too when a man got behind with the work." The loan of a mule or wagon to a needy neighbor, or a visit to a sick friend on the next farm, were essential elements of the fabric of rural life, symbol and substance of a tenacious social bond.¹⁸

¹⁸A. T. Hamilton to John Hamilton, July 30, Sept. 9, and Nov. 28, 1858, Hamilton Letters; Rawick, American Slave, Ser. Two, Vol. XI (Ark.), Pt. 7, p. 149. An excellent sense of the rhythm of agricultural life and the ethic of neighborliness is conveyed in the Matthews Journal, passim (he was a Maury County farmer), and the Duling Memoir (of a boyhood in

The towns of the heartland (if they are defined as districts with 1,500 or more inhabitants) were few and far between in 1860. Two counties (Cheatham and Robertson) had none—even their county seats were nothing more than villages huddled around the courthouse. Lincoln, Marshall, Rutherford and Wilson had but one apiece, in each case the county seat. (In Giles, Montgomery, and Williamson census takers failed to itemize district populations in 1860, but the county seats of all three were substantial towns.) Bedford and Sumner boasted three towns each. Maury and Davidson encompassed the heartland's two largest towns—Columbia and Nashville, the latter more properly a city—and each contained five others besides (three of Davidson's, however, were really but suburbs of the capital).¹⁹

Perhaps, then, twenty-five towns embraced what may be called the urban population of Middle Tennessee. Among whites, that population amounted to about one family of every five in the region. Slaves were far less likely than whites to live in towns: only about seven out of 100 did so. Free blacks were far more likely, but their numbers

Marshall County). Other glimpses of rural life in the heartland from the black perspective are in Rawick, American Slave, Ser. Two, Vol. IX (Ark.), Pt. 3, pp. 11-12; and ibid., Vol. XI (Ark.), Pt. 7, pp. 34-35. A good general treatment of the life and work of Tennessee yeomen is Fred A. Bailey, "The Antebellum Farmer and His Community in Tennessee" (unpublished paper in author's possession).

¹⁹United States Census Bureau, Population of the United States in 1860 . . . (Washington, 1864), 466-67; United States Census Bureau, The Statistics of the Population . . . (June 1, 1870) . . . (Washington, 1872), 261-69. See Appendix A for an explanation of "rural" versus "urban" as defined here.

were comparatively few. Thus, the proportion of the urban population which was black (free and slave) was substantially smaller than the proportion of blacks in the heartland's population as a whole. Even in Nashville, which had probably a greater proportion of blacks than any other town, slaves and free blacks made up only about 23 percent of the populace.²⁰

Divorced from the soil, townspeople traded the security of self-sufficiency for the conveniences of town living: rail and telegraph service, paved streets, running water, gas for home and street lighting, and even chemically manufactured ice all year around (not every town enjoyed all of these advantages, however). Newspapers (every county seat but Cheatham's published at least one), colleges and academies, large mercantile establishments, banks, and the courthouses made the towns the foci of local news, culture, business, and politics.²¹

The occupational structure of the free urbanites resembled that of the nonfarm rural people: a professional class comprised of about one family head out of five (a larger proportion than that among the rural folk, because it included virtually all the region's judges, lawyers, newspaper publishers, professors, bankers, and other kinds of professionals who were not to be found outside the towns); a small segment (four of every 100 family heads) of lesser professionals, such as

²⁰Stats. of Pop. 1870, pp. 261-69.

²¹According to the Eighth Census Social Statistics, there were nineteen political newspapers in the heartland, and nine agricultural, religious, educational, or other journals.

clerks; substantial groups of skilled workers (about one of every three family heads) and unskilled laborers (one of every four); and a portion (one of every six), again mostly female, without a listed occupation. One-fourth of all town families owned slaves (thus, slaveholding among urbanites was more widespread than among villagers, but less so than among farmers). The majority of urban bondsmen were the house servants of the professionals or were rented out by them as laborers.

Though necessary for comparative purposes, any fixed population limit defining "town" versus "country" is of course artificial and misleading. Urbanization in Middle Tennessee is properly viewed as a continuum, ranging from the tiniest towns (arguably nothing more than villages writ large), through bigger towns with increasingly "urban" characteristics, to the region's one true city, which most thoroughly embodied the distinctive features of urban life. A discrete word will therefore be said about Nashville as the paradigm of the heartland town, but it must be recognized that the smaller towns emulated it only in proportion to their size.

The milieu in which Nashvillians lived and worked can be contrasted in its every feature with the surrounding rural heartland. Extremes of wealth and poverty were conspicuous in the city, and class segregation of neighborhoods separated plutocrat from pauper. Teeming, ramshackle tenements crowded the poor districts, on the fringes of the warehouse and commercial blocks; these housed a mostly Irish proletariat which did the city's dirty work. The riverfront "Jungle" offered bars,

brothels, and violence for urbanites who craved those diversions, and a bustling underworld of thieves, pickpockets, confidence men, and whores provided vocational opportunities unknown in the village. The mansions of the rich adorned the heart of the city, each with its complement of black servants. To the consternation of whites, these slaves mingled promiscuously with free blacks, who numbered hundreds in Nashville though few in the countryside. German immigrants, among them Lutherans, Catholics, and Jews, enriched the city's ethnic and religious hodgepodge. Trade, some rudimentary industry, and state government formed the foundation of the capital's economy, removing Nashvillians from immediate dependence on the land and loosening their personal ties. A host of formal institutions—city government, a police force, an advanced school system—ordered the lives of the heterogeneous city folk in place of the informalities and rural ethic which bound together the country people of Middle Tennessee.²²

Whether big city merchant, village carpenter, or yeoman farmer, most free heartlanders enjoyed a greater or lesser share of the vast riches that the region yielded. But not all of this wealth grew

²²The best description of antebellum Nashville is in F. Garvin Davenport, Cultural Life in Nashville on the Eve of the Civil War, 1825-1860 (Chapel Hill, 1941), *passim*. See also Benjamin Walter, "Ethnicity and Residential Succession: Nashville, 1850 to 1920," in James F. Blumstein and Benjamin Walter, eds., Growing Metropolis: Aspects of Development in Nashville (Nashville, 1975); John Fitch, Annals of the Army of the Cumberland . . . (Philadelphia, 1864), 628; Blanche H. C. Weaver, "Shifting Residential Patterns of Nashville," Tennessee Historical Quarterly (hereafter cited as THQ), XVIII (Mar., 1959), 20-34; Peter Maslowski, Treason Must Be Made Odious: Military Occupation and Wartime Reconstruction in Nashville, Tennessee (Millwood, New York, 1978), 3-5.

directly out of the soil; a portion of it was generated by manufacturing establishments of various sorts. To be sure, these were mostly small affairs—the one- or two- or three-man shops of the village artisans, scattered across the countryside, fashioning simple equipment for local farmers or transforming raw farm products into useable goods. (The Census Bureau's liberal definition made a manufacturer of any smithy who shod more than a few mules.) Though most of these undertakings could therefore hardly be dignified as "industries," the most important by far in the grain-rich heartland were flour and meal mills: these produced over \$1,000,000 worth of goods annually at eighty-four sites with 198 workers. (Since the census ignored the many very small operations, these figures and those below must be taken as bare minimums.) The rocky plots of cedar and oak which dotted the region apologized for their barrenness by furnishing wood for a thriving lumber industry, behind flour and meal in value of products though of first rank in number of hands employed (595); 134 saw mills turned out lumber worth \$800,000. Beyond these were leather curing and tanning, blacksmithing, and a dozen other small, rural industries.²³

The towns had their share of local shops and mills, but boasted as well the only real industries to be found in Middle Tennessee (that is, those which produced goods on a large scale and for more than just the local market). Most notable was tobacco processing, centered in Clarksville. All told, fifteen factories employed 420 hands to prepare

²³United States Census Bureau, Manufactures of the United States in 1860 . . . (Washington, 1865), 560-78.

nearly \$1,000,000 worth of exportable weed each year. Machinery manufacturing, the next largest enterprise, was concentrated in four Nashville factories engaging 442 men. At other towns, women in factories wove much of the cotton not woven by women in homes. Five fair-sized textile plants, all but one in the southern counties, employed 244 hands, two-thirds of them female (this was the single industry in which women were a significant part of the work force). Nearly 300 workers sweated in the region's nine iron mills, the most important of which were in Clarksville—most notably the Cumberland Iron Works. Though the census recorded no data on it, pork packing was a prominent industry in a number of heartland towns, including Nashville, Clarksville, and Shelbyville.²⁴

Yet in reckoning with antebellum industry a proper perspective is essential, and that perspective lays bare one cardinal fact: agriculture dwarfed all other endeavors in Middle Tennessee. The total capital invested in manufacturing in the region, even using the Census Bureau's generous definitions, equalled only about 4 percent of the total cash value of farms, not to mention the value of slaves and equipment employed in agriculture. Even if all the hands at work in manufacturing are considered free (they were not, for many were slaves), they would represent at most only twelve free families of every 100. If only those in true industries (tobacco, machinery, cotton, and iron) are counted, fewer than four families out of 100 were represented. In just two counties did manufacturing have a significant economic role:

²⁴Ibid.

Montgomery, with its tobacco and iron plants at Clarksville, and Davidson, embracing Nashville's machinery factories and a few other industries, especially printing. These two counties generated 55 percent of the heartland's whole industrial output, 87 percent of the output of the four true industries. The millions of dollars worth of goods issuing from the mills and shops and factories of most of the important industries—flour and meal, cotton, tobacco, lumber, leather, and pork—evinced fundamentally the richness of the heartland's farms, not the marshalling of its industrial resources.²⁵

"Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates . . . and they shall judge the people with just judgment": like the children of Israel, the people of Middle Tennessee hearkened faithfully to the Lord's injunction to raise up institutions of law and government. English and colonial law had bequeathed forms and usages common to all the Southern states, and antebellum reforming enthusiasm had tempered these ancient ways with a full measure of Jacksonian democracy. Local government in the heartland was for the most part unobtrusive, however, its apparatus simple, as befitted a rural and self-reliant folk. The day to day dealings of neighbor with neighbor in the countryside were customarily regulated by informal, personal arrangements (whether

²⁵Ibid.; Agr. of U.S. 1860, pp. 132, 136; United States Census Bureau, Statistics of the United States . . . in 1860 . . . (Washington, 1866), 348. The general backwardness of industry in antebellum Tennessee is discussed in Constantine G. Belissary, "Industry and Industrial Philosophy in Tennessee, 1850-1860," East Tennessee Historical Society's Publications (hereafter cited as ETHSP), No. 23 (1951), 46-57.

consummated with a friendly handshake or a threatening fist) and by community consensus; grave indeed was the neighborhood squabble which provoked the intervention of constable, sheriff, or judge. The prevailing narrow definition of government prerogatives likewise circumscribed the legislative and administrative powers of local authorities.²⁶

At the heart of local government was the county court, composed of the elected justices of the peace of each civil district (two from every district except the county seat, which sent three). Rarely learned in the law, and devoting only part time to official duties, these magistrates were not professional administrators but merely respected men of the community, farmers and doctors and merchants like their neighbors. Sitting each January, April, July, and October as a quarterly court—the county's legislative and executive body—the justices levied county taxes, passed major appropriations, appointed and bonded various court and county officers, and supervised elections.

²⁶Deuteronomy 16:18. Charles S. Sydnor, "The Southerner and the Laws," Journal of Southern History (hereafter cited as JSH), VI. (Feb., 1940), 7-13, shows how the distinctive Southern social order left much of Southern life beyond the reach of law. I will deal here only with local government, the legal institution closest to the people. Tennessee state government is discussed in Ralph A. Wooster, Politicians, Planters, and Plain Folk: Courthouse and Statehouse in the Upper South, 1850-1860 (Knoxville, 1975), 1-96; and Lee S. Greene and Robert S. Avery, Government in Tennessee (Knoxville, 1966), 11-16.

Information on county government in antebellum Tennessee is in Tennessee General Assembly, The Code of Tennessee . . . (Nashville, 1858), 139, 141, 223-24, 754-75; Wooster, Politicians, 79-86, 91-92, 99, 100-6; Roy Bell, "History of County Government in Tennessee 1834-1860, and Its Failure in the 20th Century" (M.A. thesis, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 1938), 34-57; and Greene and Avery, Government in Tennessee, 14.

From among their number the justices designated three to serve as a quorum court—the county's judicial body—which met monthly for as many days as necessary to look after the routine matters of county business: probating wills, administering estates, supervising slave patrols and the maintenance of roads and public buildings, overseeing guardianships for those orphans with property and apprenticing those with none, adjudicating adoption and bastardy cases, regulating free blacks, and provisioning paupers. (A state law of 1856 had sought to modernize this hoary system by replacing the quorum court with a single elected County Judge, a professional man of law, who would also, like a modern county executive, assume the court's administrative duties. Jealous of their powers, justices of the peace across the state lobbied successfully the following year for repeal of this law, though special legislation retained the County Judge in Davidson, Montgomery, and Williamson counties, where popular demand was strongest.) Within their home districts, justices served individually as the bedrock of the state's judiciary, setting apart one day a month to resolve small debt haggles among their neighbors and to fine and scold the drunkards and brawlers who dared disturb the peace of the community.

Of the other county officials, the most prominent was the sheriff. Although the days of the notorious, autocratic colonial sheriff were long past, this elected officer was still a redoubtable force within his little demesne. Legally the representative of the state in his county, he was responsible for enforcing the law, making arrests, managing the jail, holding elections, collecting taxes, and seizing the property of tax delinquents. These powers endowed the sheriff

with considerable influence in local politics, while the commissions he was allowed made his office lucrative.

Other county functionaries chosen by the voters were the trustee, or county treasurer; register, who kept deeds, bills of sale, and other legal documents; constables (one for each district), charged with keeping the peace; public school commissioners (five for each district); county court clerk, the justices' right arm; and circuit court clerk, to assist the circuit judge who presided over criminal and some civil cases beyond the jurisdiction of the magistrates. The county court appointed certain of its own officials: revenue commissioners in each district to compile lists of taxable property and polls, a ranger to round up stray animals, a surveyor, and a coroner. Every courthouse accommodated also a clerk and master, or chancery clerk, commissioned by the chancery court (which had jurisdiction over most civil matters). Like the circuit court, the chancery court met periodically in each county to hear cases beyond the purview of the justices.²⁷

With the addition of perhaps a sheriff's deputy or two and an assistant to the register or county court clerk, these few officials carried on the whole business of county government in antebellum Middle Tennessee, with a budget so diminutive as to make a modern taxpayer sigh wistfully. Most counties levied a property tax of less than fifteen cents per hundred dollars of taxable property (including

²⁷In addition to the local courts mentioned, Davidson, Montgomery, and Rutherford counties had special criminal courts.

land and slaves) and a poll tax of twenty-five or fifty cents (state taxes were roughly equivalent); thus, the citizenry was hardly overburdened. Even those responsibilities which might be expected to impose considerable expense—upkeep of the jail and its inmates, for instance, and care of the poor—did not in actuality unduly tax the county's resources. When the census takers made their rounds in the summer of 1860 they found, for example, only six prisoners in the Montgomery County jail, two in Sumner's and two in Giles', and one each in Williamson's and Wilson's; Robertson's cells were altogether empty. Furthermore, they counted but forty-six paupers on the dole in all of Davidson County outside Nashville, thirty in Sumner, twenty in Giles, and even fewer in Cheatham, Lincoln, Montgomery, Robertson, Williamson, and Wilson; Rutherford County supported just one pauper, and Marshall none at all. Where rural habits of self-sufficiency, neighborliness, and personal retribution prevailed, a man could depend upon his neighbor equally for the loan of a little cornmeal to see him through a hard spell, and a swift, summary pummeling if he should steal that corn rather than ask for it. And since kinfolk and neighbors were commonly nearby to care for orphaned children, few had to be bound out as apprentices (though the courts were empowered to do so when unavoidable). Even when government did act, it was often just to give legal imprimatur to accomplished fact. Thus, for example, the Davidson County court in 1860 consented to the formal adoption of three year old Ida Wilcox by George Stubbs and his wife, who sometime earlier had on their own initiative taken in the girl after her abusive father and

stepmother abandoned her. In the countryside, therefore, wards of the county (whether lawbreaker, orphan, or hapless indigent) were naturally few, and the official agencies of justice and welfare necessarily minimal.²⁸

This was not so in the towns (and especially not in Nashville), where the complexities of urban life demanded more formal institutions. The larger towns in Middle Tennessee—Columbia, Clarksville, and a few others, including of course the capital city—had incorporated under state law and were privileged to elect their own guardians of the public weal (a mayor, aldermen, and so on) distinct from the county officeholders. Thus the towns endeavored to cope with characteristically urban problems (the need for streets, police, fire departments, water, and gas) with which the county governments were unequipped or unwilling to deal.²⁹

²⁸Eighth Census Social Statistics; Davidson County, Tennessee, County Court Clerk's Office, County Court Minutes, July 5, 1860, Bk. H, 466-67 (TSLA). A few counties such as Davidson and Montgomery assessed, besides regular county property and poll taxes, certain special-purpose taxes for schools, railroads, and the like. See *ibid.*, Jan. 2, 1860, Bk. H, 303; and Montgomery County, Tennessee, County Court Clerk's Office, County Court Minutes, Jan., 1860, Vol. XXVI, 5 (TSLA). But in no county was the total tax on property higher than twenty-seven cents per hundred dollars. In addition, all counties imposed small privilege taxes on such things as tippling houses, merchants' licenses, etc. State tax figures are in Tennessee, Report of James T. Dunlap, Comptroller of the Treasury . . . 1861 (Nashville, 1861), 1. The experience of J. B. Killebrew as an orphan in antebellum Montgomery County illustrates the importance of local kinship ties in caring for the helpless. See Joseph B. Killebrew Autobiography (2 unpublished vols., SHC), I, 35-48.

²⁹Code of Tennessee, 301-4.

Of necessity, Nashville advanced far beyond the other towns in elaborating its bureaucracy. The city's Board of Aldermen embraced standing committees to regulate such matters as finance, improvements and expenditures, public property, market house, springs, wharf, streets, schools, water works, gas, fire department, police, and slaves. Under the aegis of other committees, the city maintained several institutions to succor the helpless and coerce the fractious: for the sick, a hospital; for the contagious, a pest house; for the unruly, a police court; for the incorrigible, a work house; and, for those beyond earthly affliction and corruption, a cemetery. Paupers in Nashville numbered 145 in 1860, nearly as many as the counties supported in all the rest of the heartland.³⁰

While far from a cradle-to-grave authoritarianism, government in the towns was a more palpable and pervasive entity than in the country, a faceless authority confronting the townsman at every turn and accustoming him to day to day regulation and obedience, even in such matters as how fast he might ride his horse down Main Street and how far out his doorway he might throw the kitchen slops. To the country folk, civil authority was the sheriff calling once a year to collect taxes, and obedience was giving up a few days to work on county roads or serve on the circuit court jury. Of far greater social consequence in the rural areas than the tension between government and citizen was the interplay of community consensus and individual volition.

³⁰Nashville Patriot, Oct. 2, 1860; Nashville Daily Gazette, Apr. 25, 1860; Eighth Census Social Statistics.

As government touched only lightly the country folk of the antebellum heartland, so with another institution—education. In this rural culture, children customarily followed the livelihoods of their parents, and a boy learned from his father the necessary arts of butchering a hog, shoeing a horse, and cajoling a team of otherwise-minded mules to pull a plow in a straight line. A young girl similarly mastered the mysteries of spinning wheel and loom at her mother's knee. Book learning was a luxury to the common people, and the village schoolmaster did well to inculcate enough of the three Rs to enable his pupils to add up a few simple figures, read their Bibles, and scribble their names. Even those youngsters with bookish inclinations were lucky to attend school a few weeks or months out of the year: ". . . those in deep poverty," recalled a Giles countian, "could go to school only when not needed at home." The onerous demands of farm work and house chores left little time for the blue-back speller and McGuffey's Eclectic Reader.³¹

Thus, while basic literacy was widespread in Middle Tennessee (only about one free family head out of seven could not read and write), thorough, formal schooling was not. Public education was still in its infancy in the antebellum years. Prominent among Jacksonian precepts was a commitment to free education for the masses, but that worthy mission remained more a faith than a practice in the heartland before the Civil War. The state had created, in name at

³¹Duling Memoir; Bailey, "Antebellum Farmer"; David Bodenhamer file, Civil War Questionnaires (Confederate).

least, a public school system, and provided for its support a permanent common school fund and (thanks to the exertions of Governor Andrew Johnson) a modicum of tax revenues. But the system was altogether disorganized, badly administered, and underfunded, and it left too much responsibility for procuring teachers, schoolhouses, and additional revenues to the counties and districts, where the schools languished. There was never enough money, never enough enthusiasm, at the local level to fashion a true system of education. Many districts declined to set up any public schools at all. Where this was so, citizens fell back on the tradition of subscription schools, in which neighbors pooled their efforts to erect a community schoolhouse, or beg the use of a church building, and to hire a teacher, generally one of indifferent merit. "There never was no organized schools," David Bodenhamer recalled about his Giles County neighborhood, ". . . but only the old field private single schools, one teacher doing all the teaching from spelling book to arithmetic and grammar. There were frequent changes of teachers." In 1860 census takers counted fewer than 500 institutions of public education (variously labelled free, common, or district schools), and no more than 18,000 public pupils—this in a region whose free, schoolage population could not have numbered less than 40,000.³²

³²Robert H. White, The Development of the Tennessee State Education Organization, 1796-1929 (Kingsport, Tenn., 1929), 39-77; A. P. Whitaker, "The Public School System in Tennessee, 1834-1860," Tennessee Historical Magazine (hereafter cited as THM), II (Mar., 1916), 5-30; Stanley J. Folmsbee, Robert E. Corlew, and Enoch L. Mitchell, Tennessee: A Short History (Knoxville, 1969), 270-73; Clark, Tennessee Yeomen, 14-15; Bell, "History of County Government," 56-57; David Bodenhamer file, Civil War Questionnaires (Confederate); Eighth Census Social Statistics; Fred A. Bailey, "Caste and Classroom in Antebellum Tennessee," Maryland

In the towns, urban mores fostered a social climate more amenable to public education. Significantly, the only heartlanders to petition the state legislature in the late antebellum period for permission to levy a local school tax were the townspeople of Edgefield, in Davidson County: "We believe," they declared, "that it is the earnest & almost unanimous wish of the residents & property holders within the District to tax themselves for educational purposes." Not surprisingly, of all the region's towns Nashville had progressed the farthest. The city operated its own school system, stiffly taxed property and polls to sustain it, and staffed it with trained teachers. Alfred Hume, "father of the Nashville public schools," had conceived the system in the early 1850s after touring the most advanced schools of the North. Noteworthy in this era of the one-room schoolhouse was the three-tiered hierarchy of the city system, offering a succession of primary, grammar, and high schools to the ripening young scholar. The Nashville Board of Education supervised altogether in 1860 five schools with thirty-five teachers and over 1,800 students, a very large proportion indeed of the city's schoolage free children.³³

Historian, XIII (Spring/Summer, 1982), 39-54. The estimate of 18,000 does not include those in private academies. If those and college students are added in, it appears that about 12 percent of the heartland's free population attended school in 1860. By contrast, in the North where public education was more advanced, the figures were much higher: in New York 21 percent, in Ohio 26 percent. In Mississippi, on the other hand, it was 8 percent. Stats. of U.S. 1860, pp. 345-48, 505-7.

³³Tennessee Legislative Petitions, 1861, No. 32 (TSLA); Folmsbee, Tennessee, 272; Davenport, Cultural Life in Nashville, 52-54.

For those with money, and with elite status or pretensions to it, the preferred agent of education was the private academy. Scattered among the towns and villages of the heartland were at least fifty-five academies (most counties had several—even little Cheatham had one), almost all of them managed under religious or fraternal auspices. There some 3,400 young ladies and gentlemen imbibed classical literature and aristocratic refinements along with their spelling and ciphering. Some of these institutions were rather rustic, only a little more elegant than the log schoolhouse down the road, but a few were outstanding—the Clarksville Female Academy, for one, and Reverend C. D. Elliot's Nashville Female Academy—boasting some of the South's most prominent educators and enjoying a renown that extended far beyond the boundaries of Middle Tennessee. On the whole, the academies provided a good education as defined by antebellum Americans, probably the equal of the best Northern schools. (In the state of Tennessee overall, academies spent on the average \$38.77 per pupil, the public schools \$2.88.) In contrast to the wretched state of education for the many, education for the few was flourishing on the eve of the Civil War.³⁴

Very few, even of the elite, sent sons or daughters to college, for in the antebellum era few callings demanded such training. Lawyers for the most part still prepared by reading law in the office of a

³⁴Eighth Census Social Statistics; Folmsbee, Tennessee, 273-74; Whitaker, "Public School System," 29-30; Bailey, "Caste and Classroom," 39-54.

practicing attorney, and most doctors acquired their healing skills by making house calls with an established physician. Would-be ministers likewise learned in the pulpit rather than the classroom, and normal schools for prospective teachers were still in the future. Nevertheless, some initiates in these and other professions did earn degrees of higher learning, and Middle Tennessee was home to several notable institutions: the University of Nashville with its celebrated medical department enrolled over 600 students; Cumberland University in Lebanon (Wilson County), under the patronage of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, enrolled almost 500, including 188 law students and others in theology and civil engineering; Stewart College in Clarksville, a Presbyterian school, adhered to a classical curriculum. At least eight other smaller colleges, with perhaps 900 budding bachelors, adorned other of the heartland's towns.³⁵

It is tempting to conclude that the pitiful education doled out to the common folk of the heartland was no worse than their due, given their seeming lack of interest in formal schooling and the natural hindrances to it that their rural culture presented. Yet the few memoirs of these people often betray a whisper of wistfulness, even bitterness, as they recall schooldays, a hint of regret for their inadequate education and of envy of those with better. In perhaps no other aspects of life in antebellum Middle Tennessee save courtship, marriage, and slavery, were class distinctions so glaring, and so telling, as in education. The

³⁵Folmsbee, Tennessee, 274-80; Eighth Census Social Statistics.

well-to-do farmer or merchant resisted the proliferation of public schools in his community because he sent his own sons and daughters to the local academy, and he perceived no benefit in subsidizing the education of the lower ranks. The plain folk, for their part, felt keenly the stigma of attending a free school, and thus partook only grudgingly of the minimal education offered them. The pernicious consequences, tangible and intangible, of relegating members of a free society to ignorance or semi-ignorance were not fully grasped in the South in that era. Widely held, of course, was the notion that education (in its narrow sense) could transform the most impecunious plowman into a prosperous, scientific planter. But few understood how education in the broad sense could expand the common man's world—a world otherwise limited by the distance he could drive his wagon—and render him as self-reliant in his intellect as he was in his livelihood, better prepared to judge critically and independently the momentous social and political questions of the 1850s and 1860s.³⁶

In contrast to courthouse and schoolhouse, the ubiquitous meetinghouse reached out vigorously to embrace the people of the heartland. More than 500 churches, from the steepled edifices of the towns to the log chapels of the country, dotted the landscape of the thirteen counties of the region. No institution save the family loomed larger in the eyes of the rural folk, whose churches served not only as houses of worship, but as emotional vent, moral arbiter, and social adhesive.

³⁶Whitaker, "Public School System," 28-30; Bailey, "Caste and Classroom," 39-54.

The early nineteenth century wave of evangelicalism which swept the South had engulfed the heartland. With their frenetic revivals, their zealous and unpolished clergy, and their exaltation of emotional experience, personal conversion, and devout commitment to the Christian life, the evangelicals touched the souls of the rough-hewn frontier folk and lured them from the solemn, intellectual Presbyterianism of their fathers. No sooner were the people conquered, however, than they were divided, as the evangelical movement fractured into competing denominations, each with its own keys of the Kingdom. By 1860 the crudities of evangelicalism had been considerably refined, and its counter-cultural flavor much diluted, but its precepts of conversion, devotion, and salvation endured as the vital impulse of religion in Middle Tennessee, and the South.³⁷

The Southern Methodists (severed from their Northern brethren in 1845) won the largest following of any denomination in the heartland, as throughout the South, thanks to the thoroughness of their ecclesiastical organization, the labors of their hard-riding circuit preachers, and the appeal of their free-will Arminianism. In 1860 Methodists worshipped at 191 churches in Middle Tennessee; nearly four churches of every ten in the region were theirs.³⁸

³⁷The best study of antebellum Southern evangelicalism is Donald G. Mathews, Religion in the Old South (Chicago and London, 1977). See also Dickson D. Bruce, Jr., "Religion, Society, and Culture in the Old South: A Comparative View," American Quarterly, XXVI (Oct., 1974), 399-416.

³⁸Folmsbee, Tennessee, 285-87; Stats. of U.S. 1860, pp. 465-70.

Not far behind were the Southern Baptists (similarly split from their Northern coreligionists over slavery), who had 115 churches, or more than two of every ten. Though rent by dissension (exemplified in the secession of the "Missionary" Baptists), aggravated by its lack of a cohesive ecclesiastical authority, this church of modified Calvinists enthralled many of the commonalty, including slaves. The plain people liked the Baptists' emotional affirmation of human equality and future rewards, and their doctrinal practicality: a visitor in the heartland in 1858 noted wryly that the Baptists "believe that God does every thing right but when they get sick He has not done that right—consequently they send for a physician to controvert or annul afflictions."³⁹

Unlike the Methodists and Baptists, who antedated the Great Revival in Tennessee and used it to multiply their flocks, the Cumberland Presbyterians were the progeny of the Revival. Their church was born in 1810 in Middle Tennessee, when evangelical revivalists in the Cumberland Presbytery abandoned the Presbyterian Church and its dogmas of predestination, election, and an educated ministry. The Cumberland Presbyterians thereafter spread rapidly throughout the South, but their main strength remained in Tennessee, especially the heartland. In 1860 their congregations in the region outnumbered those of their

³⁹Ibid.; Folmsbee, *Tennessee*, 284-85; John L. Eighmy, *Churches in Cultural Captivity: A History of the Social Attitudes of Southern Baptists* (Knoxville, 1972), 25-26; A. T. Hamilton to John Hamilton, Sept. 9, 1858, Hamilton Letters.

parent church (by now mildly infected by evangelicalism itself, especially among its rural churches) by eighty-three to forty-seven.⁴⁰

A somewhat later addition to the ranks of the evangelicals were the Disciples of Christ (or Campbellites, or Christians), a coalescence of groups led by disaffected Upper South Presbyterian ministers who espoused Biblical fundamentalism and urged a great, ecumenical union of all Christians. These men energetically diffused their persuasion through North, South, and West. Some of their successors, in the radical Protestant tradition of civil noninvolvement, stubbornly preached pacifism during the Mexican War and afterwards. Like the Baptists, the Disciples were riven by doctrinal bickering and congregational autonomy, but like the Cumberland Presbyterians they regarded Middle Tennessee as a fortress of their strength. They had thirty-seven churches in the region in 1860, and Nashville was the home of two of their outstanding national spokesmen, Philip Fall and Tolbert Fanning.⁴¹

These four faiths—Methodist, Baptist, Cumberland Presbyterian, and Christian—along with the Presbyterian, accounted for more than nine of every ten churches in Middle Tennessee. The Episcopalians had failed to capture many souls in the region, for their sedate liturgy

⁴⁰Folmsbee, Tennessee, 282-83; Stats. of U.S. 1860, pp. 465-70.

⁴¹David E. Harrell, Jr., "Disciples of Christ Pacifism in Nineteenth Century Tennessee," THQ, XXI (Sept., 1962), 263-70; Herman A. Norton, Tennessee Christians: A History of the Christian Church in Tennessee (Nashville, 1971), 82-83; Folmsbee, Tennessee, 283-84; Stats. of U.S. 1860, pp. 465-70.

could compete but feebly with the fervent suasion pouring forth from the evangelical pulpits. In 1860 there were only eight Episcopal churches in the heartland, all in or near towns. Six Catholic churches, also in the towns, served the growing population of poor Irish and more prosperous German immigrants. Lutherans were very few in the region, though they had penetrated East Tennessee in some strength. Nashville had one Lutheran church (a German congregation), and Lincoln County two. The capital was also the home of a small Jewish synagogue.⁴²

Religion in Middle Tennessee's towns exemplified the diversity and extensive institutionalization of urban life. The faithful taken as a whole—the exotic Episcopalians, Catholics, Lutherans, and Jews, sprinkled among the more familiar Methodists, Baptists, and others, presented a variegated aspect. Yet each urban congregation was very homogeneous—in its creed, of course, but in its social constitution as well. Only in the towns were to be found the stately cathedrals patronized by the (generally nonevangelical) affluent: Christ Church, Episcopal, in Nashville, for example, a Gothic edifice where many of the city's prominent citizens worshipped; and the magnificent First Presbyterian Church in the same city, with its ornate, neo-Egyptian decor; and Trinity Episcopal in Clarksville, a church that owned slaves. Many blacks, free and slave, in the towns belonged to white churches, but they very often met for services separately from the

⁴²Ibid.; Folmsbee, Tennessee, 287-89; Davenport, Cultural Life in Nashville, 84-116; Fedora Small Frank, "Nashville Jewry during the Civil War," THQ, XXXIX (Fall, 1980), 310.

whites. Such was the case, for instance, at the Cumberland Presbyterian Church of Lebanon, whose elders purchased an old church building nearby for the use of their black brethren. There were as well several all-black urban congregations, such as the semiautonomous Negro mission of Nashville's First Baptist Church, and the fully independent black Christian Church in the city. With the rich, the poor, the black, and the foreign-born thus assembling for the most part separately to worship their God, the remaining urban congregations were distinctly white and middle class, and generally evangelical. Whether high church or low, the town church was likely to be large and highly structured. The Cumberland Presbyterian Church of Lebanon, for example, elaborately organized its congregation by residential districts and assigned its elders to formal committees on education, finances, discipline, public worship, benevolent enterprises, relief, and pastoral relations; in 1858 the church applied for incorporation under state law.⁴³

The urban churches, like the segregated urban neighborhoods, illustrate the nature of institutions in Middle Tennessee's towns. Each had a rigidly-defined constituency and sphere of activity, and all were

⁴³Ibid.; Trinity Episcopal Church, Clarksville, Records, Session Minutes, Dec. 21, 1858 (TSLA); Albert J. Raboteau, Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South (New York, 1978), 196-208; Mechal Sobel, "'They Can Never Both Prosper Together': Black and White Baptists in Antebellum Nashville, Tennessee," THQ, XXXVIII (Fall, 1979), 296; Norton, Tennessee Christians, 129-30; Historical Records Survey, Tennessee, Cumberland Presbyterian Church Records (2 vols., Nashville, 1938-41), II, 23-24, 28, 31, 44, 54-58. Segregation of urban churches by class and race was a general rule, not an inflexible law: some aristocratic churches had poor members, many white churches had black members.

circumfused by a pervasive civil authority. The urbanite found refuge from this impersonal authority and bewildering complexity in the comforting homogeneity of his neighborhood and his church.

In the countryside, by contrast, just as there were no segregated neighborhoods in any community, so there were no rich or poor, no white or black churches. A permeating rural culture subsumed all classes and races, and each church, like each community, was a motley assemblage of planter, yeoman, artisan, and slave families, all joined in an informal, eclectic fellowship. (The rural churches as a body, though, lacked the variety of the town churches, for virtually all were of one or the other major evangelical faiths, and their preachers, as one contemporary remarked, "of the old foggy stamp mostly—rough and unpolished.") This unifying culture, a product of the shared interests and mutual dependence of the country folk, generated an informal ethic of consensus which governed the rural communities in place of the political authority necessary to control the clashing interests in the towns. The country church served as a key agent of, indeed was inseparable from, that communal consensus, and the boundary between God's dominion and man's was thus blurred in the rural areas as it was not in the towns. By demanding from every member an absolute commitment to the Christian life, the evangelical rural churches sought to harmonize the relations of the country folk with each other as well as with their

Creator. Surviving records reveal the churches' scrupulous concern for the earthly propriety as well as future salvation of their flocks.⁴⁴

To avoid offense to the commandments of God and man, the churches enjoined a strict morality on their members and urged them to report breaches of it by their brethren. Sister E. A. Dandrige of Maury County learned this to her dismay when McCains Cumberland Presbyterian Church accused her in 1859 of winning "public fame of immoral conduct. . . . That she has for a number of years lived in such connecton and intimacy with James Kannon, as to bring a reproch upon her self and the church of Christ." Found guilty in a full-scale church trial of allowing "said Kannon to visite her house at untimely hours . . . [which] caused the publick to question her chastity," Sister Dandrige was suspended indefinitely from membership "for the Glory of God, and the good of the Church." Witnesses at her trial reported that some neighborhood ladies had stopped calling on her because of the rumors. Sister Dandrige's ordeal illustrates the frequent confluence of social and religious sanctions in disciplining the wayward of the rural communities.⁴⁵

To keep peace in the congregation, each church claimed exclusive jurisdiction in the settling of disputes among its brethren. The

⁴⁴A. T. Hamilton to John Hamilton, June 17, 1858, Hamilton Letters. The mingling of classes and races is exemplified in Wilson Creek Primitive Baptist Church in the Triune community of Williamson County, described in Jordan, "My Recollections."

⁴⁵McCains Cumberland Presbyterian Church, McCains, Maury County, Records, Session Minutes, July 23, Aug. 6, 10, 1859 (TSLA).

fathers of Mt. Olivet Primitive Baptist Church in Lincoln County were grieved to hear in March 1860 that a certain Brother Crofford had brought suit in civil court against Brother Troop for some property. Although Crofford admitted before the session "that he was rong in bringing sute before going to the church," he declined to withdraw the action, and the churchmen reluctantly concluded that in light of his transgression "thay can not feloship him. . . ."46

Fundamentally, the rural church sought to fuse its diverse constituency into a self-contained community, at once temporal and spiritual, with the church its touchstone and arbiter. This ideal community would exclude competing institutions such as government, while assimilating others like the family seen as complimentary; and it would be self-consciously distinct from and opposed to the "world"—the undisciplined, free-thinking, sinful world identified with the towns, the Babylons of drinking, dancing, gambling, and plays, the haunts of Catholics, free blacks, and foreigners. The fate of the unrepentant sinner was spiritual banishment to that world, in order to purge the righteous community of things evil in the sight of God or disruptive to social concord. To the believer, no punishment could be worse than that meted out to the slave Sam, a "cullard Brother" of the Wilson Creek Primitive Baptist Church of Williamson County. Accused of theft in 1860, Sam failed to explain himself to the satisfaction of his

⁴⁶Mt. Olivet Primitive Baptist Church, Lincoln County, Records, Session Minutes, Mar., 1860 (TSLA).

fellow church members, who ordered that "he ise thire fore excommunicated from fellow ship with this church Sam ise no more of us."⁴⁷

Zion Church, not far from Columbia in Maury County, illustrates almost paradigmatically the rural antebellum religious community. The Zion brethren—originally a band of South Carolina Presbyterians who migrated to the heartland early in the century as a group, and were thus a preexistent community with ancient traditions—consciously maintained, through generations of church guardianship and endogamous marriage, their distinctive customs and "oneness of belief." They were noted for their strict Sabbath observance, for example, which forbade even shaving or cooking on Sunday, and for their uncompromising moral standards. Sin the "Zionists" did, as their church trial records show, but so impermeable was their communalism that few of their indiscretions ever claimed the attention of the civil courts. Quarrel among themselves they did too, but records for the whole period from the founding of the church in 1807 to the Civil War reveal only five lawsuits between church members. The church session, Zionists held, was "practically the Supreme Court of the community and settled all differences without appeal to Civil Courts." Slaves (who made up over half the population of this affluent, agricultural community) worshipped, learned liturgy and Bible, took communion, and on occasion endured sessional castigation, right along with their masters. Membership in the church by no means debarred men of Zion from worldly affairs—many

⁴⁷Wilson Creek Primitive Baptist Church, Williamson County, Records, Session Minutes, Nov., 1860, and Jan., 1861 (TSLA).

served as local magistrates or other officials—but it did engender that "oneness" which made the church their first point of reference and set the Zionists apart, regarded by the world and defined by themselves as a social and spiritual entity.⁴⁸

To nurture their communities the churches applied not only the negative sanction of church discipline, but the positive inducement of appeals to the spirit. Besides the weekly or monthly preaching that every congregation attended, all the evangelical denominations continued the traditions of camp meetings and revivals. All across the heartland, a series of stirring revivals in the late antebellum years compelled thousands into the churches as worshipers, up to the front bench as penitent "mourners," and finally forward to the altar as proselytes, to begin a new life. The Nashville Daily Gazette in 1860 reported revivals in progress at dozens of sites in or near Nashville, Clarksville, Columbia, Shelbyville, Murfreesboro (Rutherford County), Gallatin (Sumner County), and Lebanon, at which many of the faithful were seeking, and the fortunate ones had found, the "pearl of great price."⁴⁹

Obviously, the power of the rural churches to impose order and virtue on the country folk was not absolute. It was checked by denominational rivalries, the geographical mobility of the people,

⁴⁸Mary W. Highsaw, "A History of Zion Community in Maury County, 1806-1860," THQ, V (Mar., June, and Sept., 1946), 3-34, 111-40, 222-33.

⁴⁹Nashville Daily Gazette, Feb. 24, Mar. 10, 25, July 31, Aug. 18, Sept. 14, Oct. 5, Dec. 15, 1860. An excellent description of an antebellum camp meeting in Montgomery County is in Killebrew Autobiography, I, 75-77.

the numbers of unchurched, and the proximity of the towns; thus the occasional recourse in every community to justice of the peace, sheriff, courts, or personal violence. Nevertheless, the country churches, and the folk communities they embodied, gave to rural life much of the unity and stability it possessed.⁵⁰

Examining the role of the churches and other institutions of Middle Tennessee, and understanding how the region's people earned their livelihoods, together reveal much about the structure of life in the antebellum heartland, but little about its content. To flesh out the portrait of Middle Tennessee society it is essential to delineate how that society's constituents viewed themselves and their world and how they conducted their relationships with one another. These crucial matters are the subject of the next chapter.

⁵⁰Church discipline and the identification of the church community with the social community are discussed in Mathews, Religion, 39-46, 81-83, 245-50; Raboteau, Slave Religion, 180-82; and William D. Blanks, "Corrective Church Discipline in the Presbyterian Churches of the Nineteenth-Century South," Journal of Presbyterian History, XLIV (June 1966), 89-105.

CHAPTER III

THEIR FATHER'S HOUSE: CLASS, RACE, AND SLAVERY

IN THE HEARTLAND

On Sunday, the first day of January 1860, the faithful of the Wilson Creek Primitive Baptist Church of Williamson County gathered to hear their preacher inaugurate the new decade. "Bro Watson delivered a very interesting discourse," the congregation's scribe recorded with satisfaction,

on the relative duties of Parents to their Children; children to their Parents; Husbands to their wives, wives to their husbands; masters to their servants, servants to their masters,—and the duty of all classes to the authorities and powers that be;—and of all mankind to God as supreme—all of which we believe to be in strict harmony with the letter and true Spirit of the Gospel, and with which we were truly delighted.

That same day, horrified Nashvillians read the sensational newspaper account of a "Fiendish Rape by a Negro" in that city. Jo, a slave, had attacked a white lady on the street, grabbed her from behind, overpowered the struggling woman and, ignoring her "begging and imploring for mercy," choked her until she submitted. The "infuriated brute" was quickly caught and jailed by the City Marshal.¹

The coincidence of these two forgotten but revealing episodes underscores their essential affinity, for both illuminate elements of

¹Wilson Creek Primitive Baptist Church, Williamson County, Records, Minutes of Sermons, Jan., 1860 (TSLA); Nashville Daily Gazette, Jan. 1, 1860.

the ideology which at the zenith of the antebellum era permeated and cemented white society like a kind of social mucilage binding disparate parts. Common assumptions, habits, and modes of perceiving the world constituted in a sense another of the heartland's institutions, this one not confined to town, village, or farm, nor to courthouse, schoolhouse, or meetinghouse, but immanent in nearly every white mind.

As Brother Watson affirmed, white Middle Tennesseans interpreted their society as a happy congruence of distinct components, congealed by the faithful fulfillment of mutual obligations. "God created all things for his own glory," proclaimed a Davidson County state legislator in a speech echoing Watson's sermon of a few days earlier,

and designed that each individual being should live and move in his own sphere, and when we are all attentive to our own duties and obedient to the laws for our government, there can be no "irrepressible conflict," but we will move in one grand harmonious march to the end of time.

But, as Watson insinuated, this was not a mutuality of equals but a hierarchical mutuality of superior and inferior. Middle Tennesseans, like Southerners elsewhere, often envisaged their society metaphorically as a household, that familiar, subtle synthesis of unity and inequality. The household of society, like the literal household, ideally subordinated all members to a benevolent patriarchy, mitigating potential conflicts of race, sex, age, or class. Other institutions—the churches, or local government—might act to buttress the societal and familial patriarchies, or in extraordinary circumstances intervene to influence or correct them,

but they did not challenge fundamentally the authority of those patriarchies over their respective households.²

In the hierarchies of family and society, slaves occupied the lowermost rank. Indeed, white heartlanders agreed that their society's admirable harmony rested on this foundation. "Society is a pyramid," explained the editor of the Nashville Daily Gazette late in 1860;

Slavery is the only base on which a stable republican government ever was or ever will be built. We may sympathise with the stones at the bottom of the pyramid of Cheops, but we know that some stones have to be at the bottom, and that they must be permanent in their place.

Another Nashvillian reminded his fellows early in 1861 that the existence of a slave class elevated all whites, slaveholders and nonslaveholders alike: "It seems to me that we are all bound up in the institution of slavery," he wrote, concluding that it was

morally, socially, politically, and religiously right, and a great blessing to the master and the slave—to the rich man as well as to the poor man—to the farmer as well as to the mechanic. . . .

Yet the slave's subjection, though unequivocal, was defined always within the context of his membership in the households of family and society. "The bible recognises servants as a part of the household of their masters," reported a committee of the First Presbyterian Church of Clarksville in 1860,

. . . and it is clearly the duty of all & especially of every Christian Master to endeavour to meet the solemn

²Nashville Patriot, Jan. 25, 1860. Examples of the bolstering of the family by the church are in Bethlehem Baptist Church, Robertson County, Records, Minutes, Vol. I, July 7, 1860 (TSLA); and Mt. Olivet Baptist Church, Wilson County, Records, Session Minutes, Vol. II, Mar., 1861 (TSLA).

obligation arising out of the very intimate responsible relation which he bears with his servants.

Thus, the shock with which Nashvillians received the lurid news of the "Fiendish Rape by a Negro" on the first day of 1860 stemmed perhaps not only from the overt transgression of the boundary lines of race and sexual propriety which the act signified, but from its darkly veiled suggestion of filial betrayal, and worse.³

In the household of the family higher, but still subordinate, niches were occupied by wife, sons, daughters, other relatives, boarders, and apprentices, each with his or her assigned role, obligations, and tasks. Over all, free and slave, in the ideal family presided the benign patriarch, whose prestige swelled with the size of his household. (Men headed 86 percent of all free Middle Tennessee households in 1860. A third—32 percent—of all families were extended by nonnuclear relatives or unrelated persons, even if slaves are not counted; if they are counted, the figure is 53 percent. Half of all free Middle Tennesseans lived in households with seven or more free members.) The patriarch exercised dominion over his lieges and expected from them deference, obedience, fealty, and service. In return he owed them protection, physical sustenance, and moral guidance. Such were the duties which Brother Watson was moved to recount on New Year's Day.⁴

³Nashville Daily Gazette, Nov. 25, 1860; Nashville Patriot, Jan. 24, 1861; First Presbyterian Church, Clarksville, Montgomery County, Records, Session Minutes, Vol. II, June 1, 1860 (TSLA). On the paternalism of slavery, see Eugene Genovese, Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made (New York, 1976).

⁴A sense of the division of labor by age and sex on the farm is conveyed in the John Duling Memoir (TSLA). The mutual responsibilities

In the household of society, with its many mansions, the patriarchy comprised wealthy planters and professionals and their families—most of them slaveholders, many of them large slaveholders—who monopolized important political offices and social prestige. These were men like William G. Harding, Davidson County planter and fabled host, whose 3,500 acre Belle Meade plantation, with its deer and buffalo park, was a showpiece of the South and the embodiment of gracious society. Harding and his lofty coterie were among the "authorities and powers that be" to whom Brother Watson urged obedience. They reigned over a loose but definable hierarchy of families of small slaveholders, yeomen, artisans, and poor white laborers—and of course slaves. Much ink has flowed in the historiographical battle over the nature of antebellum Southern society, but perhaps the fairest verdict is that Jacksonian reform had ushered in the forms of democracy (as it was understood in that era) to Middle Tennessee and the South while leaving intact much of the essence of aristocracy: conspicuous class distinctions, and habits of deference on the one hand and noblesse oblige on the other.

of master and apprentice—which by extension applied to all familial relationships—are spelled out in Marshall County, Tennessee, County Court Clerk's Office, County Court Minutes, Dec., 1860, Vol. J, 245 (TSLA); and Tennessee General Assembly, The Code of Tennessee . . . (Nashville, 1858), 498-99. Two insightful recent studies assess patriarchy and paternalism in family and society in the South, both in ideal and in practice. See Michael P. Johnson, "Planters and Patriarchy: Charleston, 1800-1860," Journal of Southern History, XLVI (Feb., 1980), 45-72; and Bertram Wyatt-Brown, "The Ideal Typology and Ante-bellum Southern History: A Testing of a New Approach," Societas, V (Winter, 1975), 1-29. An older study describes the legal and moral subjection of many whites as well as blacks in Southern society: see Richard B. Morris, "The Measure of Bondage in the Slave States," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XLI (Sept., 1954), 219-40.

These traits unfailingly impressed travelers in the South accustomed to the relatively vibrant bourgeois democracy of the North. One who accompanied the invading Union army into Nashville early in the Civil War marvelled at how the "leading families had had things all their own way" there. Another entering Murfreesboro at about that time pronounced it "an aristocratic town," declaring with considerable if pardonable exaggeration that "The poor whites are as poor as rot, and the rich are very rich. There is no substantial well-to-do middle class here." Yet even one native, looking back over many decades on the time of his youth in antebellum Middle Tennessee, characterized it discerningly as the "medieval period of American history [which] presented the bright side and the dark side of medieval civilization."⁵

⁵Herschel Gower, "Belle Meade: Queen of Tennessee Plantations," in Elinor Miller and Eugene D. Genovese, eds., Plantation, Town, and County: Studies in the Local History of American Slave Society (Urbana, Illinois, 1974), 209-24; Sir Christopher Chancellor, ed., An Englishman in the American Civil War: The Diaries of Henry Yates Thompson, 1863 (New York, 1971), 141; John Beatty, Memoirs of a Volunteer, 1861-1863 (New York, 1946), 96; John W. Burgess, Reminiscences of an American Scholar: The Beginnings of Columbia University (New York, 1934), 3.

Only the barest outlines of the vast body of literature on antebellum Southern society can be sketched here. Historians in the first decades of this century stressed the economic—and by implication social—hegemony of the planter class. See Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, Life and Labor in the Old South (Boston, 1929); and Lewis C. Gray, History of Agriculture in the Southern United States to 1860 (2 vols., New York, 1949). In the 1940s a flurry of writing appeared in reaction, not so much to the sophisticated interpretations of the earlier historians, but to the simplistic popular image of Southern society as a tripartite hierarchy of planters, poor whites, and slaves. This revisionist movement, led by Frank L. Owsley and his students, recognized the existence of class distinctions in the South but denied any real class conflict. These scholars discerned a large, prosperous middle class of yeomen between rich and poor whites, documented close relations existing between planters and yeomen, and asserted that social mobility and broad popular participation in politics undermined class antagonisms.

Social distinctions among whites protruded starkly in the antebellum heartland. Though smooth gradations rather than sharp cleavages marked the hierarchy, on the whole patrician and plebeian did not mix socially. "[A]ll were treated politely," recalled one upper class Middle Tennessean, "but all did not move in the exact same circle." John Jordan told of the popularity of dances in his Williamson County neighborhood, but differentiated between the genteel cotillions of the local aristocrats and the rowdy barn dances on sawdust-covered ground enjoyed by the "lower class of whites."

See, for example, Frank L. Owsley and Harriet C. Owsley, "The Economic Basis of Society in the Late Ante-Bellum South," Journal of Southern History, VI (Jan., 1940), 24-45; Frank L. Owsley and Harriet C. Owsley, "The Economic Structure of Rural Tennessee, 1850-1860," Journal of Southern History, VIII (May, 1942), 161-82; Frank Owsley, Plain Folk of the Old South (Baton Rouge, 1949); W. J. Cash, The Mind of the South (New York, 1969 [1941]); Clement Eaton, The Waning of the Old South Civilization, 1860-1880's (Athens, Georgia, 1968); Fletcher M. Green, "Democracy in the Old South," Journal of Southern History, XII (Feb., 1946), 3-23; Blanche Henry Clark, The Tennessee Yeomen, 1840-1860 (Nashville, 1942); Chase C. Mooney, Slavery in Tennessee, (Bloomington, Indiana, 1957); and Herbert Weaver, Mississippi Farmers, 1850-1860 (Nashville, 1945). Their work has been supplemented more recently by Ralph A. Wooster, Politicians, Planters, and Plain Folk: Courthouse and Statehouse in the Upper South, 1850-1860 (Knoxville, 1975), whose structural analysis affirms the basically democratic nature of antebellum politics and government.

These studies were a useful corrective to distorted popular views but they came immediately under attack for their interpretive inadequacies. Fabian Linden's critique of the Owsley school pointed out that the existence of a large yeoman class meant less than the relative shares of wealth and power held by planters and yeomen—which Linden found to be extremely unequal—and he insisted that the Owsleyites distorted the picture of Southern society by ignoring thousands of unprosperous nonagrarian folk. Roger W. Shugg found outright planter autocracy and class conflict in antebellum Louisiana. More recently Jonathan M. Wiener and Randolph B. Campbell and Richard G. Lowe have demonstrated aristocratic domination of wealth and power in Alabama and Texas, respectively. See Fabian Linden, "Economic Democracy in the Slave South: An Appraisal of Some Recent Views," Journal of Negro History, XXXI (Apr., 1946), 140-89; Roger W. Shugg, Origin of Class Struggle in Louisiana . . . (Baton Rouge, 1968 [1939]); Jonathan M.

Friendship and courtship similarly followed class lines. A Davidson County man observed that the blue-blooded young ladies "seemed at times to shun poor girls," and another heartlander noted that "the laboring white man did not visit the aristocratic girls." Even the all-inclusive rural churches and kinship networks sometimes failed to smother class divisions altogether. John S. Luna, of yeoman stock, wrote that in his locality planter families sought "the high seat" in church and "did not mingle" with their poor relatives.⁶

Wiener, Social Origins of the New South: Alabama, 1860-1885 (Baton Rouge and London, 1978); and Randolph B. Campbell and Richard G. Lowe, Wealth and Power in Antebellum Texas (College Station, Texas, and London, 1977). Other historians have agreed with Owsley and company that white Southerners were not torn by class strife, but have attributed this fact to biracialism and slavery rather than democracy and prosperity. See Ulrich B. Phillips, "The Central Theme of Southern History," American Historical Review, XXXIV (Oct., 1928), 30-43; Paul H. Buck, "The Poor Whites of the Ante-bellum South," American Historical Review, XXXI (Oct., 1925), 41-54; and George M. Fredrickson, The Black Image in the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny, 1817-1914 (New York, 1971).

Several recent historians have turned from the hoary, perhaps exhausted debate over aristocracy versus democracy to search for more subtle patterns in Southern society. Chief among these is Eugene D. Genovese, who has delineated a precapitalistic ideology of paternalism which tied yeomen to planters on a personal basis despite the repression and exploitation of the yeomen as a class. David M. Potter has suggested that the intimate folk culture which permeated Southern society lubricated racial and class frictions. Bertram Wyatt-Brown has ascribed a similar role to the extended family, which he defines as the central institution of Southern society. See Eugene D. Genovese, The Political Economy of Slavery (New York, 1965); Eugene D. Genovese, "Yeomen Farmers in a Slaveholders' Democracy," Agricultural History, XLIX (Apr., 1975), 331-42; Genovese, Roll, Jordan, Roll; David M. Potter, "The Enigma of the South," in The South and the Sectional Conflict (Baton Rouge, 1968); and Wyatt-Brown, "Ideal Typology and Ante-bellum Southern History." No historian has yet fully integrated Southern regionalism into a sophisticated analysis of society, beyond the superficial bipartite division of the South into plantation and highland regions.

⁶Fred A. Bailey, "The Poor, Plain Folk, and Planters: A Social Analysis of Middle Tennessee Respondents to the Civil War Veterans

Slaveholding marked the most obvious contrast between classes. Slaves were both symbol and substance of wealth, and their possession afforded that leisure which was one of the often-noted hallmarks of the upper crust. A Union officer stationed in Fayetteville (Lincoln County) during the war wrote in his memoirs that

It was curious to see what a difference slavery had made in the social life of these people. Everywhere work was considered disgraceful for a white man, and as only the occupation of the "nigger." In order to succeed socially, it was necessary to own slaves. The idea of hiring labor, or of being rich without negroes, was apparently incomprehensible. And in fact it was true that all of the people who had obtained any sort of success, intellectually or otherwise, had owned slaves.

This prim Yankee may have magnified the slaveowners' slothfulness but at least one native corroborated his testimony: "Practically all white men worked," wrote George Hornburger of his poverty-stricken younger years in antebellum Montgomery County, "except slave owners." Others commented on the ability of the master class, if not to avoid work altogether, at least to devote much time to more congenial pursuits. One heartlander wrote that big slaveowners usually hired an overseer, permitting them "to dine with the town people" and "to discuss politics

Questionnaires" (paper presented at the Mid-America History Conference, Springfield, Missouri, Sept. 18, 1981) (Bailey's work is the first thorough investigation of the voluminous Tennessee Civil War Veterans Questionnaires, a source which can be compared with the WPA slave narratives as a rich repository of rare, first-hand accounts by the common folk of the antebellum South); John Jordan, "My Recollections," John Leland Jordan Papers (TSLA).

farming, etc." "I notice a great many loafing gentlemen in the towns," another Northern-born observer remarked dryly in 1858.⁷

Slaveholders' offspring, too, luxuriated in the blessings of leisure. One poor heartlander recollected that "Slave holder boys did not work any. They would even make a negro slave hand him a drink of water." John W. Burgess, his memories vivid but perhaps tinted by the Lost Cause mythology of the postwar years, remembered "dashing young country squires who spent their time in hunting, horse racing, gambling, and drinking. . . ." The considerable advantages of the well-to-do in the realm of education have already been discussed.⁸

Among the darker consequences of such class distinctions were undoubtedly arrogance from above and resentment, even bitterness, from below. Burgess, who grew up in a wealthy Giles County family, recalled unfondly the "ignorant, slovenly, poor white trash in the country" who "were jealous of the riches and the social standing of the slave lords. They were ignorant, suspicious, superstitious, and vindictive." A Northerner in Murfreesboro commented interestingly on the local aristocrats' contempt for their social inferiors: "The slaves are, in fact, the middle class here. They are not considered so good, of course,

⁷ Julian Wisner Hinkley, A Narrative of Service with the Third Wisconsin Infantry (Madison, 1912), 112; Fred A. Bailey, "Tennessee's Antebellum Society from the Bottom Up: The Responses of Impoverished Ex-soldiers to the Civil War Veterans Questionnaires" (paper presented at the Duquesne University History Forum, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, October 14, 1981); Bailey, "Poor, Plain Folk, and Planters"; A. T. Hamilton to John Hamilton, June 17, 1858, Hamilton Letters (TSLA).

⁸ Bailey, "Poor, Plain Folk, and Planters"; Burgess, Reminiscences, 3.

as their masters, but a great deal better than the white trash." Poor heartlanders agreed. "[S]laveholders thought more of their slaves," one wrote, "than they did a poor honest young white man." A Sumner County man recalled acridly that slaveowners "did not want [a poor man] to stop on the highway and talk to [their] slaves. . . . The slaveholder kept a cold shoulder to him unless he [was worth] as much as a thousand dollars." An affluent Columbia man ingenuously bared his patrician hauteur when he insisted that all whites were equal—as long as they "were educated and refined and of good character." Every day, in a thousand small ways, upper class Middle Tennesseans betrayed their superciliousness toward the lower ranks. Early in the Civil War the editor of the Nashville Dispatch, who in every issue reported with amused condescension all the particulars of city police court hearings for assorted Irish, native poor white, free black, and slave miscreants, confessed that his policy generally was to withhold the names of "'respectable white folks'" who found themselves in some difficulty.⁹

Such aristocratic disdain was repaid in kind. The poor keenly felt slights from the rich and many sullenly harbored grudges all their lives. Furthermore, some complained, at least in retrospect, that patrician hegemony and exploitation constricted the poor man's opportunities. In political contests slaveholders, with their money and leisure time, were thought by some to hold a decisive advantage over working men, one of whom charged that slaveholders "could buy votes,

⁹Ibid., 3, 5; Beatty, Memoirs of a Volunteer, 96; Bailey, "Poor, Plain Folk, and Planters"; Nashville Dispatch, July 27, 1862.

with liquor and cigars." The economic ladder was similarly obstructed for some. A "renter had no chance to save anything," wrote William Beard of Bedford County; "slave holders were the only men that could make enough money to do any thing." "Slave holders wanted to hire [the poor man] and traffic out . . . his labor," declared a Sumner countian; "I no this by self experience." Upward mobility for the poor was stifled, another heartlander believed, because "the sons of rich men always got in first." One of the more prosperous Middle Tennesseans conceded this truth: he had known of a few poor boys who eventually reaped success, he wrote, but "like Lawyers going to Heaven, [they were] few and far between."¹⁰

Nevertheless, social distinctions—even social antagonisms—are endemic to mature societies and do not always represent fundamental social divisions or conflicts. This was so in antebellum Middle Tennessee, where ultimately the centripetal forces in white society overwhelmed the centrifugal. To that end the quintessential elements of life in the region—biracialism, slavery, ruralism, prosperity, and patriarchy—all contributed.

Whatever snobbery and resentment slaveholding aggravated, the existence of a black slave caste did in fact unify all whites, as many recognized. This was most dramatically confirmed during the slave revolt panics which sporadically swept Middle Tennessee and the rest of the South. But even in quiet times, nonslaveholders acknowledged their

¹⁰Bailey, "Poor, Plain Folk, and Planters"; Bailey, "Tennessee's Antebellum Society."

stake in, and professed their loyalty to, their slaveholding society. White skin was a badge of superiority that even the most miserable laborer or farm hand could wear, a symbol of identity with the high-born and a source of self-esteem—perhaps the only source for those without great wealth, exalted station, cultured manners, classical education, or illustrious pedigree in a society which venerated those attributes. This sense of racial identity tended to deflect the hostility of lower class whites away from the rich slaveholders and against the slaves, often with a fury that shocked observers. The patrician John W. Burgess wrote reprovingly that

The chief amount of slave whipping of which I had any cognizance was inflicted by gatherings of non-slaveholding whites. . . . It was the vast mass of the whites owning no slaves, who were the greatest enemy of the slaves.

Of course, however much some slaveholders wagged their heads and clucked their tongues over the poor whites' abuse of slaves, it was ultimately a source of profound satisfaction to them that their society cleaved fundamentally along the line of color, not class.¹¹

The prevailing ruralism of the heartland also muted social dissonance. The vivid disparities of class which impressed many witnesses were really most characteristic of the towns, where institutional segregation and extremes of wealth exaggerated social differences. The same Northerner who noticed so many "loafing gentlemen" in the towns concurrently observed that such were very scarce in the countryside, where most Middle Tennesseans lived. In the poorer neighborhoods

¹¹Burgess, Reminiscences, 4-5.

there were few slaveholders, and all free folk consorted on terms of equality. In rich neighborhoods where nearly all were slaveowners, or at least well-off farmers, a different sort of equality predominated. And in all rural parts, even where very rich and very poor resided side by side, kinship ties, the communal demands of agriculture, the ethic of neighborliness, and the broad embrace of the churches made white society in the eyes of its constituents (with a few exceptions) more a partnership of blood, work, and faith than a dichotomy of wealth and want.¹²

Slavery and ruralism and their social consequences were of course pandemic in the antebellum South. But prosperity was not, and the heartland's peculiar prosperity—peculiar both in degree and in nature—branded the region's society and marked it off from the South's other subsocieties. As suggested previously, the heartland represented a third South, with agricultural riches rivaling those of the Black Belt but with fewer of the grand plantations characteristic of that region, and with pockets of slaveless yeomanry not unlike the highland South but withal a much greater incidence of slaveholding and good-sized farms than that poorer region could boast. Whatever inequalities white Middle Tennesseans perceived among themselves, they could also perceive that in their land the very rich and the very poor were both few, and that the large majority in between lived affluently by the

¹²A. T. Hamilton to John Hamilton, June 17, 1858, Hamilton Letters. On the lessening of social distinctions in the richest and poorest areas, see Bailey, "Poor, Plain Folk, and Planters."

standards of most Southerners. (Even if it were true, as asserted by the aforementioned poor heartlander, that slaveholders scorned anyone worth less than a thousand dollars, the fact is that in 1860 well over half of all free families in the region held at least that much property—surely a much higher proportion than in most other parts of the South.) This common awareness of shared abundance (however unequally shared) drew the vast majority of the white folk of the heartland together in a bountiful feast of celebration, a kind of worldly agape.

Furthermore, whatever obstacles to their upward progress some of the poor discerned, most Middle Tennesseans were persuaded by the prosperity evident all around them (and by Jacksonian rhetoric) to believe that by sweat and perseverance any white man could scale society's ladder. A Nashvillian affirmed this article of faith when he declared in a letter to the Nashville Patriot that, unlike his Yankee counterpart, the Southern white laborer was comfortable and well paid and confident that he could save money to buy slaves and eventually "relieve his wife from the necessities of the kitchen and the laundry, and his children from the labors of the field," or at least was certain that his sons could so succeed. Many leading men, he asserted (affirming a second tenet of popular faith), had risen from humble origins.¹³

Above all, however, while some Middle Tennesseans chafed at aristocratic condescension and grumbled at aristocratic slights, the

¹³Nashville Patriot, Jan. 24, 1861.

typical common man benefited in small ways and large from the paternalism of the local patriarchy and agreed tacitly that a hierarchical society was natural, inevitable, and right (as long as slavery and biracialism assured a place for him above society's bottom rung). An editorial in the Nashville Daily Gazette in March 1860 exemplified the deeply-rooted social conservatism of white heartlanders:

In his infinite and inscrutable wisdom, God has, from the foundation of the world to the end of time decreed that on earth there should be "hew[er]s of wood and drawers of water." The same providence which "shapes our ends, rough hew them as we will," decrees to some wealth and idleness, and to others poverty and labor.

The aristocracy which ruled Middle Tennessee white society—an ill-defined and permeable aristocracy, to be sure—did so on the whole by consent of the governed.¹⁴

In antebellum Middle Tennessee the tributaries of slavery, race, ruralism, prosperity, and patriarchy flowed together to form a broad river of ideology which ran undammed through all parts of white society, bringing justification to the rich and powerful along with comfort to the poor and powerless, hope to the ambitious along with contentment to the complacent, and to all a sense of quiet satisfaction with the present and assured optimism about the future.

"We hold it here that African Slavry is an ordinance of God. . . .": thus a Robertson County farmer in 1860 succinctly affirmed the salience of slavery in the lives of Middle Tennesseans. Slavery invaded every aspect of life in the heartland, acting reciprocally with other

¹⁴ Nashville Daily Gazette, Mar. 30, 1860.

institutions, altering them, and in turn being altered—even transformed—by them. Wherever one turned in the antebellum heartland, the relationship of black bondsman to white master thrust itself into the line of vision.¹⁵

The history of slavery in the heartland is inextricably entwined with the region's history as a whole, for slaves were among the first settlers there. Arduously they broke the virgin soil alongside their pioneer masters, and fruitfully they multiplied themselves over generations. But the early Middle Tennessee free folk shared the doubts and guilt about slavery which pervaded post-Revolutionary America. Some worked to ameliorate or abolish it through societies for gradual emancipation and colonization, in which the Methodists—whose church officially opposed slavery—were especially active. Maury County in 1824 even spawned a radical antislavery association, the "Moral Religious Manumission Society of West Tennessee," composed of nonslaveholders inspired by Christian piety. But the 1831 Nat Turner slave uprising in Virginia and wild rumors of armed and murderous slaves in the heartland in 1832 chilled the hearts of Middle Tennesseans; and alarm at the subsequent rise of radical abolitionism in the North conspired with awareness of slavery's economic importance to harden those hearts. Thereafter fear and practical necessity vanquished moral

¹⁵Daniel P. Braden to Andrew Johnson, Jan. 10, 1860, in LeRoy P. Graf and Ralph W. Haskins, eds., The Papers of Andrew Johnson (6 vols. to date, Knoxville, 1967-), III, 374.

and religious principle. Antislavery advocates departed or were silenced and no more was heard of emancipation in the heartland.¹⁶

The slave population of the region waxed steadily through the antebellum years, particularly where tobacco and cotton were grown, and the price of slaves rose as a revived agriculture demanded their toil. The proportion of slaves in the population grew as well, as the lure of the West drew away many white heartlanders. The triumph of slavery in thought and practice was consummated in Tennessee in 1855, when the state revoked its long-standing ban on the importation of slaves as merchandise. Nashville and other towns thereupon became nexuses of the interstate slave trade, and soon black chattels could be seen crowding the same wagons, steamboats, and railroad cars that bore southward the heartland's surplus corn and hogs.¹⁷

Even more so than the free people of the heartland, the unfree were an agrarian folk. Whether they worked the land, plied a craft, or waited on master and mistress in the Big House, nearly all rural slaves lived on farms. Slavery in the heartland was thus closely bound to agriculture, and agriculture to slavery: almost half of all farms, as noted earlier, depended on black laborers—whether one, few, or many—and in general the bigger and more prolific the farm, the more

¹⁶Asa Earl Martin, "Anti-slavery Activities of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Tennessee," THM, II (June 1916), 98-109; Asa Earl Martin, "The Anti-slavery Societies of Tennessee," THM, I (Dec. 1915), 261-81; James W. Patton, "The Progress of Emancipation in Tennessee, 1796-1860," Journal of Negro History, XVII (Jan., 1932), 67-70, 82-102; Mooney, Slavery in Tennessee, 64-85.

¹⁷Gray, History of Agriculture, II, 648-67, 871-75.

dependent it was. Not all the richness of these farms was in their dark soil. Much of it was in their dark wonders, whose skills with tools and crops and animals the farmers needed as they needed sun and rain. One may well understand, then, the plaintive lament of a Williamson County planter in 1857 after a series of deaths among his slaves: "It appears like I am under the frown of Providence for I am losing all my negroes and becoming poor. Lord help me to bear the misfortune without a murmur."¹⁸

The realities of farm life transfigured slavery just as slavery transfigured farm life. On the plantations, where implacable overseers rigorously and meticulously regimented the work force, and where great social distance separated master from slave, and where, therefore, the strongest affirmation of the theoretically near-absolute power of the master might be expected, the slave's utter subjection was in practice tempered by circumstances. Ironically, the very dependence of the planter upon slave labor, which gave him wealth, power, and status, endowed his slaves with a measure, however small, of bargaining power. Most masters found it considerably more profitable in the long run to compromise with their laborers on such matters as working hours and food allotments than to try, by the unsparing use of the whip, to extract the maximum work at the minimum cost. (Bedford County ex-slave William Gant recalled his master—planter Jim Gant—as one who dealt reasonably with his "people" and "didn't whoop much. Give 'em three

¹⁸Joseph B. Killebrew et al., Introduction to the Resources of Tennessee (Nashville, 1874), 841; Mooney, Slavery in Tennessee, 177.

or four licks.") This was especially beneficial to the skilled slave artisan or driver or trusted house servant, who often used his position to win enviable privileges on the plantation. Too, the very possession of large numbers of slaves, strictly regulated and cloistered far from their aloof master—which distinguished the great, autocratic planter from the mere farmer—paradoxically removed those slaves in a sense from the planter's rule. It did so by fostering the evolution of a nearly autonomous black culture in the slave quarters, a world within a world, into which the slaves stepped after sundown, sheltered for a time from master's harsh command and overseer's lash.¹⁹

On the smaller farms slaves lived singly or in small groups very close to their white families, working side by side with them in the fields, sharing chores, eating the same food, and often sleeping in the same room. Here the absolutism of slavery was checked by intimate, even familial, connection and affection. In his reminiscences of antebellum Davidson County farm life, Thomas B. Wilson spoke sincerely and unpatronizingly of his few slaves as the "negro part of the family," one of whom, Uncle Wilkerson, "was a sort of foreman or boss as my father was rarely at home." And here, too, the slave was an integral constituent of that interdependence which underpinned the rural

¹⁹George P. Rawick, ed., The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography (41 vols. to date, Westport, Connecticut, 1972-), Ser. Two, Vol. IX (Ark.), Pt. 3, pp. 11-12.

community: his master's lot, and that of his black and white neighbors, was the slave's lot, their bread his bread.²⁰

This mutuality of interest between owner and owned was always qualified, however, and never fully reciprocal. Whether on a great plantation or small family farm, slavery rested fundamentally on compulsion. On the plantation this truth was naked and undisguised, and the whipping ceremony was a daily or weekly spectacle. On the farm it was obscured by the gloss of paternalism and intimacy, but it was nonetheless real. The near-limitless authority of master over slave (however moderated in practice), and the distinctions of race, kept blacks from full partnership in family or community. The white farmer helped his neighbor freely because he himself expected help freely given later on, and the mutual advantage was obvious. The slave did as he was told partly because the benefit to himself, his master, and his community was apparent, and partly because he would be beaten or sold away if he refused. Thus the slave retained a curiously equivocal status: at once family member and work animal, community member and helot. The bonds of kinship and mutual reliance that tied together the rural free folk reached out around their slaves, but were offset in a kind of Newtonian equipoise by the countervailing

²⁰Testimony of Edward H. East, American Freedmen's Inquiry Commission, Preliminary and Final Reports, Letters Received by the Office of the Adjutant General (Main Series), 1861-1870, RG 94 (NA); Thomas B. Wilson Reminiscences (SHC), 15-16. Other examples of close master-slave relationships, from both viewpoints, are in James W. Matthews Journal (TSLA), *passim*; Rawick, *American Slave*, Ser. Two, Vol. VIII (Ark.), Pt. 2, pp. 137-43; Bailey, "Poor, Plain Folk, and Planters."

tension of the slave's physical subjugation—taut tethers ready to snap at the touch of an outside force.

Slaves inhabited the heartland's towns in lesser proportion than did the free people: only about one slave out of fourteen lived in town. Most who did were servants of the well-to-do, but some (perhaps as many as one-fourth in Nashville) were hired out to work in streets, shops, or factories. But for all, the towns offered a measure of independence that would have seemed to a country slave, bound closely to farm or plantation and under the watchful eye of master or overseer, like the next thing to freedom. Since a black walking the streets might be on any legitimate errand, white urbanites could not assume, as country folk did when spying a Negro off the farm, that he was shirking work or running away. State law recognized this and softened restrictions on slaves traveling at large in towns. And since the size and bustle of the towns precluded minute surveillance of everyone's activities, slaves were able, despite state and local ordinances discouraging it, to fraternize regularly with free blacks and to taste a morsel of their freedom. This communion of Negroes free and slave, nurtured by the black church congregations in the towns, inspired a distinctive black urban subculture—yet another of those homogeneous entities within which self-conscious groups of urbanites sought sanctuary.²¹

²¹Code of Tennessee, 505-6; Mooney, *Slavery in Tennessee*, 13-14; Richard D. Wade, *Slavery in the Cities* (New York, 1964), 238-39; Clement Eaton, "Slave-Hiring in the Upper South: A Step toward Freedom," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* (hereafter cited as *MVHR*), XLVI (Mar., 1960), 663-78. A different view—that urban slavery, and

The unseemly behavior of urban slaves was the most persistent complaint of whites in the towns. Clarksvillians, to judge from their frequent grumbling, were singularly vexed by black rascality. In March 1860 the Clarksville Chronicle noted that frolicking Negroes were virtually taking over the town's omnibuses every Sunday afternoon and riding all over town. "Better stop the nigger line," was the editor's caustic advice to the omnibus officials, "if they want to establish a white-folks line." A few weeks later slaves buying liquor at the wharf, on Sundays at that, raised the editor's hackles and evoked his condemnation of the "intolerable evil" of this "vile practice." Several months afterward he bewailed the prevalence of slaves living in town away from their masters, and ruminated on the mischief provoked by such "darkey house-keeping." Those privileges so eagerly seized by urban blacks as tokens of their independence, were to whites merely proofs of the degeneracy of inadequately controlled Negroes.²²

Perturbed by the perceived breakdown of service discipline, urban whites loudly demanded that slaves be policed. The only force capable of that (since urban slaveowners could not closely supervise their slaves) was civil authority, which thus by necessity assumed in the towns much of the master's responsibility for his servant, just as it replaced the rural community ethic which found no footing among the factious urbanites. The Nashville Board of Aldermen formed a

especially industrial slavery, was as repressive in its way as plantation slavery—is taken by Robert S. Starobin, Industrial Slavery in the Old South (New York, 1970), vii-viii, 9-10, 115.

²²Clarksville Chronicle, Mar. 9, 30, 1860; Feb. 22, 1861.

special committee to deal with the city's slave population. The Nashville police and the Recorder's Court (which disposed of misdemeanors) were kept busy by unruly slaves as well as unruly citizens. When, for example, the police apprehended Eli, Lin, and Willis throwing rocks at an Irishman one September night in 1860, the slaves were hauled directly before the Recorder and sentenced to fifteen lashes apiece, promptly given them at the city's slave market. One may question whether their masters were even aware of the incident. In the countryside such a matter would have prompted the immediate intercession of the slaves' owners to administer stripes to the slaves and apologies to the Irishman. Thus, slavery helped transform the towns by stimulating the expansion of that civil power which characterized them, as surely as the towns transformed slavery by impairing the authority of the slaveowner and sustaining an insular black subculture.²³

Law and formal authority visited the slave but rarely in the countryside, for his master stood always over him as lord and protector, interposed between government and chattel. Except in the most flagrant cases, the punishment of slave crimes and misdemeanors in the rural heartland was personal, informal, and summary—a matter of the master's prerogative, beyond the official ken of sheriff or judge. (The law permitted "moderate correction," though it professed to safeguard the slave's life and limb.) By the same token, aged or orphaned slaves never demanded the succor of the county court, for the master was

²³Nashville Daily Gazette, Sept. 1, 1860.

charged with the care of his people, in sickness and in health, for as long as they lived.²⁴

The law assumed that it was often unnecessary—barring unusual circumstances—to act directly on the slave. The slave code, long part of the corpus of law in every Southern state but strongly reinforced in Tennessee and elsewhere after 1831, did undertake to regulate in detail how the slave behaved, where he traveled, and whom he met—statutes that betrayed, of course, the nightmare vision of slave insurrection which lurked in the back of every white Southerner's mind. Thus, the Tennessee code rigorously proscribed, among other things, insulting or disobedient conduct toward whites, the carrying of weapons, and assembling at "suspicious times or places." But the greater portion of these laws in fact coerced not slaves but whites, prohibiting any action by them which undermined control of the servile class: furnishing false passes to slaves, selling them liquor, harboring runaways, allowing a slave to hire his own time, permitting slaves to congregate without the master's leave, or any deed tending to "excite discontent" among the black masses. Even where the law compelled official supervision of slaves—every county was to maintain regular patrols, for example, to police slaves in the rural areas, and J. P.s were empowered to punish slaves summarily for minor offenses—it was very often ignored. Only two counties in the heartland (Davidson and Montgomery) had active patrols in 1860. The day to day regulation of

²⁴H. M. Henry, "The Slave Laws of Tennessee," THM, II (1916), 178; Code of Tennessee, 502, 512; Mooney, Slavery in Tennessee, 8.

slavery in the countryside, except in periods of emergency or panic, was a matter of master's whim and community custom.²⁵

Where law did intervene—most often in cases of serious slave crimes deemed a threat to the social order, and in manumission proceedings—it regarded the slave not in light of civil law, which defined the bondsman as a chattel, but of common law, which endowed all persons with inalienable rights. In the courthouse, at least, the slave was elevated from a mere creature of his master's will to a "moral agent," made in God's image and knowing right from wrong, with rights as well as responsibilities; the slave stood before the law (in the words of the Tennessee Supreme Court) "not in the condition of a horse or an ox." Slaves could be hanged for a number of crimes, some of them not capital offenses for whites—plotting insurrection, assault on a white with intent to kill, rape or attempted rape of a white woman, robbery, arson, and burglary, for example. But any slave charged with these or other serious offenses was by law due a jury trial "in the same manner as that of a free person," with counsel provided by the court if not by the master, and testimony acceptable from black as well as white witnesses. Where slaves were manumitted by testament but procedural complications or the objections of heirs delayed execution of the will, the slave could sue for his freedom through a white "next friend." Thus

²⁵Code of Tennessee, 502-8, 510-11, 514-19; Henry, "Slave Laws," 180-81, 187-92, 193-97, 202-3; Mooney, Slavery in Tennessee, 7-8, 10-18, 24, 27-28. Under an 1856 law county courts were responsible for appointing patrols, but a perusal of county court minutes for 1860 reveals appointments only in the two counties mentioned.

the law complemented that social consensus which reckoned the slave something more than property, something less than citizen.²⁶

Far from town and courthouse, however, the typical slave lived in a world shaped by the daily interplay of community, master, and slave. The social-religious community of the rural heartland embraced the slave as fellow Christian and fellow tiller of the soil. But as a rule it could do so only indirectly, through the agency (and with the consent) of the master, who stood between community and slave as he stood between slave and law. When, for example, the Wilson Creek Primitive Baptist Church cited Brother Sam to appear on charges of theft, it was with the stipulation that "his master ise willing." Thus, the churches incorporated the master-slave relationship differently from the way they incorporated the white family. Church elders frequently stepped in to resolve quarrels between husband and wife (the session records are full of such incidents), but they hesitated where master and slave were at odds. The long history of the Zion

²⁶Code of Tennessee, 508-11, 520; Henry, "Slave Laws," 177-78, 181-85, 193; Mooney, Slavery in Tennessee, 8-10, 15-17, 22-23, 26-27; Arthur F. Howington, "'Not in the Condition of a Horse or an Ox': Ford v. Ford, the Law of Testamentary Manumission, and the Tennessee Courts' Recognition of Slave Humanity," THQ, XXXIV (Fall, 1975), 249-63; Daniel J. Flanigan, "Criminal Procedure in Slave Trials in the Antebellum South," JSH, XL (Nov., 1974), 537-64. Instances of slaves on trial in the late antebellum heartland are noted in the Nashville Daily Gazette, July 20, Aug. 11, Dec. 20, 1860, dealing respectively with cases of murder of a master, murder of another slave, and attempted arson.

Church of Maury County, for example, reveals but one case—in 1825—of a master accused of mistreating slaves.²⁷

This demonstrates plainly the primacy of the rural church's social mission, which overshadowed even its godly tasks. Mundane actualities—the need to control slaves and compel them to work—prevailed over spiritual ideals of ecumenical Christian fellowship and the salvation of black souls. The words directed to the back pews on Sunday morning were more often injunctions to earthly docility than encouragements to spiritual fulfillment. As a Marshall County ex-slave remembered, the "preacher-man would git up dere en tell us 'Now you min' yo Marster en Missis en don' steal fum dem.'" The church was not so much a religious body held "captive" by a slaveholding culture, as one historian has described it, as it was an institutional expression, a precipitate, of the broad social realities of slavery, race, and ruralism.²⁸

Nevertheless, the church community did affect slavery by frequently reminding the master of his spiritual kinship with the slave, and by disciplining the slave—when master permitted—to remind him of his responsibilities as a member of the communities of God and man. And in extraordinary circumstances the community at large asserted direct control over the slave, ignoring master, God, and law: a Sumner

²⁷Wilson Creek Primitive Baptist Church, Williamson County, Session Minutes, Nov., 1860; Mary W. Highsaw, "A History of Zion Community in Maury County, 1806-1860," THQ, V (Mar., June, Sept., 1946), 135.

²⁸Rawick, American Slave, Ser. Two, Vol. XVI (Tenn.), 5-6; John L. Eighmy, Churches in Cultural Captivity: A History of the Social Attitudes of Southern Baptists (Knoxville, 1972), passim.

County slave who cut his owner's throat was hanged by a mob early in 1861, and the local newspaper applauded the "summary disposal" of the case. But slavery in return touched the community. By standing as a reminder that some matters lay above or below the purview of community consensus, slavery obliged free heartlanders to concede a place in their world for both personal volition and higher authority, for the will of the master as well as the constraints of law. When a Montgomery County overseer fatally shot a slave man in February 1860, the Clarksville Chronicle insouciantly brushed the incident aside by announcing that it would "forbear giving particulars"; and when, at the opposite pole, the slave Alfred was ceremoniously executed in Fayetteville (Lincoln County) for the murder of his master, after taking his case to the state Supreme Court, the local newspaper crowed the citizens' self-congratulations for their "adherence to the forms of law in this case. The murder was of an aggravated kind, yet the people submitted to 'the law's delay,' and allowed justice to take its tardy but certain course through the proper tribunals." Far more commonly, of course, the "proper tribunals" for slave misdeeds were defined not as the white man's courts, but the white man's conscience or consensus.²⁹

The exclusion of slave men and women from full communion in any part of the culture of the heartland left a vacuum which they filled with a remarkable culture of their own. This eclectic black folk culture comprised a separate (if not wholly independent) world which

²⁹Gallatin Courier, Mar. 27, 1861; Clarksville Chronicle, Feb. 3, 1860; Fayetteville Observer, Mar. 7, 1861.

afforded its denizens some measure of the justice, the learning, the religious sodality, the family and communal bonds, and ultimately the sense of dignity and worth which were denied them or but meagerly offered in the various institutions of the white world. The existence of a rich, slave subculture within the antebellum South is among the most striking revelations of the current generation of historical scholarship, and its exegesis has dominated writing on slavery for more than a decade.³⁰

The breeding ground of slave culture was in the limited autonomy, the "breathing room" away from master, white community, and law, which the slaves carved out for themselves. The isolation of the plantation slave quarters and the quasi-independence of the urban black neighborhoods have already been cited. Slaves elsewhere—in villages and on small farms—had access to this culture through the church, which regularly brought together slaves from all over the community; and through camp meetings, where after whites ended services and retired to their tents, blacks emerged to celebrate with emotional song and prayer their

³⁰Among the most important recent works dealing with slave culture are John W. Blassingame, The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South (New York, 1972); Eugene Genovese, Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made (New York, 1976); Herbert G. Gutman, The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925 (New York, 1976); Donald G. Mathews, Religion in the Old South (Chicago and London, 1977); Lawrence W. Levine, Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom (New York, 1978); Leslie Howard Owens, This Species of Property: Slave Life and Culture in the Old South (New York, 1977); Albert J. Raboteau, Slave Religion: The "Invisible Institution" in the Antebellum South (New York, 1978); Thomas L. Webber, Deep Like the Rivers: Education in the Slave Quarter Community, 1831-1865 (New York, 1978); Drew Gilpin Faust, "Culture, Conflict, and Community: The Meaning of Power on an Ante-Bellum Plantation," Journal of Social History, XIV (Fall, 1980), 83-97.

spiritual and social affinity. Certain black secular gatherings, too, were sanctified by local custom and tolerated by paternalistic whites. The big "June Meeting," a day-long, outdoor festival, was an old tradition among Maury County slaves, and Negro soirees and suppers were familiar features of social life in the towns. And after sundown a clandestine black community stirred to life in every neighborhood (despite the best efforts of whites to stifle it), as slaves gathered furtively in woods or cabins to share their stories, their dreams, and their prayers.³¹

Within this subculture, which surrounded the slaves like a chrysalis and kept the constricting chains of slavery from suffocating

³¹B. W. McDonnold, History of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church (Nashville, 1899), 433-34; Columbia Herald, June 10, 1870; Nashville Daily Gazette, Sept. 12, 26, 1860; Nashville Dispatch, Mar. 6, 1863; Rawick, American Slave, Ser. One, Vol. VI (Ind.), 53; *ibid.*, Vol. VII (Okla.), 146; Century Review, 1805-1905, Maury County, Tennessee . . . (Columbia, Tennessee, 1905), 39.

It must be pointed out here that although the average-sized slaveholding in the heartland was small, from the slave's perspective it was more usual to live with a large number of other slaves than to live with none or only a few. In the region as a whole, well over half of all slaves lived with at least nine other slaves; only about one slave of ten lived with three or fewer other slaves. In some rural areas—in Williamson County, for example—more than three-fourths of all slaves lived on farms which had ten slaves or more, a size of slaveholding which would have necessitated separate slave cabins. Thus, in the countryside, the vast majority of all slaves lived away from their masters and partook daily of the culture of the slave quarters. In Nashville, where slaves were generally domestic servants who resided in their masters' homes, most lived with fewer than four other slaves; but here, of course, as in all towns, slaves had access to the urban black culture previously discussed. (These statistics are based on the 1860 census sample discussed in Appendix A, and separate tabulations from manuscript slave census schedules for District 1, Williamson County, and Wards 1, 2, 3, and 4, Nashville.)

them, the black family struggled to survive, black elders struggled to educate the young in the deep folk wisdom of the unlettered, the black faithful struggled to transmute the Christianity of obedience preached by their churches into a Christianity of liberation and fulfillment, and the black community as a whole struggled to raise up leaders. The triumphs and the limits of black culture are epitomized in Brother Jim, a slave owned by an officer of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church of Lebanon. Appointed pastor to the church's 150 blacks, Jim energetically ministered to them in their cabins and in their chapel, and made himself prominent and respected among them. Nevertheless, every Sunday he dutifully submitted the text of his sermon for the approval of the white minister, who also monitored the black service and was never disappointed at the "pure gospel" Jim preached. In 1859 Jim's ministry and membership were abruptly suspended when the church session found him guilty of fornication.³²

Slaves recognized that they could manipulate their bondage within narrow bounds, but could never assault it frontally with any hope of victory. Their acknowledgment of this blunt fact, conjoined with their success in fashioning an alternate world on earth, accounts—more

³²Historical Records Survey, Tennessee, Cumberland Presbyterian Church Records (2 vols., Nashville, 1938-41), II, 28, 31, 46-47, 49; McDonnold, History of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, 432-33. The slave community, like the white community, manifested its own kind of social stratification. An elite of slave artisans, house servants, and ministers held itself above the common field hands, and slaves of great planters looked down on slaves owned by less affluent whites. See George L. Knox, Slave and Freeman: The Autobiography of George L. Knox (Lexington, Kentucky, 1979), 44; Burgess, Reminiscences, 5.

than personal and communal bonds between black and white, more than slavery's debasing effects on personality—for their overall accommodation to slavery. Resistance by slaves in the heartland (most often in the form of running away) was not unknown, but it was sporadic, short-lived, and generally reflected incidental, personal clashes between master and slave rather than any widespread revolutionary temperament among the enslaved masses. Rare was the master whose hands had not on occasion run off for an hour or a day after a whipping or an undeserved rebuke. But rare was the slave who dared go as far as one in Sumner County who, seeing an overseer beat the slave's mother, "picked up a chunk and that overseer stopped a'beating her." Not until the overwhelming physical power of master and community over the slave was stripped away by an intervening force could the potential rewards of radical, overt defiance outweigh, in the bondsman's mind, the threat of swift and savage retribution.³³

The ambiguities and anomalies of slavery—its degraded victims who were yet to their masters rational beings, family and community members, legal and moral entities, and brothers in Christ; and its imperious masters who were yet to their slaves patriarchs, workmates, and fellow sinners before God—generated tensions which plagued antebellum heartlanders, white and black alike. The slave diffused

³³Rawick, American Slave, Ser. One, Vol. VII (Okla.), 146. In 1860, only twenty-nine slaves in the entire state of Tennessee were listed as permanent fugitives. United States Census Bureau, Statistics of the United States . . . in 1860 . . . (Washington, 1866), 338.

his tension as far as possible in his black folk-world and in the day to day process of compromise with forces almost, but not quite, beyond his influence. Whites assuaged their stricken consciences by contriving a proslavery ethic and by bringing God into the slave quarters, and assuaged their fears by whipping and hanging enough recalcitrant slaves to set an example for the rest. Some masters found paternalism a soothing balm, such as the Giles County lawyer who, as he liberally doled out money for his slaves' provisions, joked that if his people "did not work more and get along better he would stop practising law for them." A few turned their paternalistic words into deeds, such as the two maiden sisters in Sumner County who in their 1858 wills freed their slaves and gave them all their property. Most slaveholders convinced themselves that their servants were, or should have been, grateful for Master's benevolence. "You know that we reared you as we reared our own children," wrote a hurt and uncomprehending Maury County woman to her runaway slave in the North, ". . . you was never abused." But fundamentally masters were no more able fully to overcome their insecurity about slavery than their slaves were able fully to overcome the repressiveness of slavery. "For my own part," a thoughtful former slaveowner of Montgomery County declared long after the Civil War, "I wish to put on record . . . that I was never free until my slaves were free."³⁴

³⁴Richard W. Johnson, A Soldier's Reminiscences in Peace and War (Philadelphia, 1886), 301-2; Charles C. Trabue, "The Voluntary Emancipation of Slaves in Tennessee as Reflected in the State's Legislation and Judicial Decisions," THM, IV (Mar., 1918), 60; Herbert Aptheker, ed., A Documentary History of the Negro People in

To assess slavery dispassionately as an institution without illumining its tragic human dimension is to betray the ideal of historical understanding. Slavery in the heartland, however tempered by affection or conscience, was first and last a system of brutal exploitation of black people by white people, and the fruit it bore was ugly and bitter. That fruit was corrupted dignity: a Northerner in Pulaski (Giles County) wrote that he was "quite sure that in half the negro children I can see white blood. . . . This fact alone is enough to stamp slavery as an unholy & a scandalous thing—Licentiousness seems a natural result of slavery." That fruit was broken promises: ". . . ould John Kimbrow died some few months back," a Shelbyville man reported in 1860,

was blind and had lost nearly all his reason made his will and sat his negroes all free and gave them his land to cara them off but the Heirs broke the will and they will be soled shortley.

That fruit was sundered families: ex-slave Annie Griegg painfully retold in her old age how, not yet ten years old, she was sold away from her mother in Nashville for \$100, sent to Arkansas, and never saw her family again. That fruit was mangled bodies: Annie Young, a slave on a Sumner County farm, watched as an overseer one day

staked a [slave] man down with two forked sticks
'cross his wrist nailed in de ground and beat him half to
death with a hand saw 'til it drawed blisters. Den he

the United States (3 vols., New York, 1969), I, 449-51; Joseph B. Killebrew Autobiography (2 unpublished vols., SHC), I, 176-77. A good example of the explication of the master's religious duties to the slave is in First Presbyterian Church, Clarksville, Montgomery County, Records, Session Minutes, II, June 1, 1860 (TSLA).

mopped his back wid vinegar, salt and pepper. Sometimes dey'd drop dat hot rosin from pine knots on dose blisters.

And ultimately, that fruit was shattered lives: in 1860, after an inquest into the death of the slave Ned Hill, Maury County jurors determined that "the said boy came to his death by hanging him self by the neck with a roape to an Iron wood sapling. . . ."35

Ambiguity and tragedy also afflicted another of the heartland's human entities—the free black. Perhaps even more anomalous than the slave who was more than slave or the master who was more than master was this freeman who was less than free. In the heartland, free blacks numbered less than 2,400, most of them in Davidson County, most of those in Nashville, and most of those in one ward of the city. In the course of a typical day, most heartlanders never saw a free Negro—there were only twenty-three in all of Giles County, for example, and none at all in Cheatham, and even in the counties where they were more numerous they concentrated in the towns. But despite their rarity free blacks constantly troubled the minds of whites, who saw them as a moral denial of the beneficence of racial slavery and a provocative example to the slaves: in the words of some Wilson County citizens, "a pest to society generally, and a dangerous element in our midst. . . ."36

³⁵Elijah P. Burton, Diary of E. P. Burton, Surgeon . . . (Des Moines, 1939), 5; Joel Shoffner to Michael Shoffner, Feb. 11, 1860, Shoffner Papers (SHC); Rawick, American Slave, Ser. Two, Vol. IX (Ark.), Pt. 3, pp. 113-14; *ibid.*, Ser. One, Vol. VII (Okla.), 359-60; Slave Scrapbook, Box 20, Jill K. Garrett Collection (TSLA).

³⁶United States Census Bureau, The Statistics of the Population of the United States . . . (June 1, 1870) . . . (Washington, 1872), 466-67;

If most whites were of one mind about free blacks, the law was of three. In some respects free blacks were equal before the law to any white. They could, for example, own property and bequeath it to their heirs. In other respects they were lumped with slaves: they were not citizens and could not vote or testify against whites in court, they could receive lashes as legal punishment, they were subject to the death penalty for all the same offenses as slaves, they were to behave respectfully toward whites, and they were not to be aroused to discontent by any white. But some laws set them apart as a distinct class, neither slave nor free. They were required, for example, to register annually with the county court, to post bond to insure their self-support and "peaceable and orderly" behavior, and to carry their "freedom papers" at all times. The poor laws which provided aid for indigent whites stipulated that destitute free blacks could be hired out by the county. Free blacks could not operate stores or tippling houses, and especially were they prohibited from entertaining slaves without the master's consent, or entertaining them at all after dark or on Sundays. Increasingly through the antebellum period (and concurrently with the tightening of the slave code) public attitudes and official enactments discouraged free blacks from entering or remaining in the state. By the 1850s state law required that any slave thereafter manumitted be removed to Africa, and if funds for transportation were not provided by the owner they were to be raised by hiring out the slave. Magnanimously, the legislature permitted any

Tennessee Legislative Petitions, 1860, No. 37 (TSLA). The free black population of the whole state in 1860 was 7,300; that of Nashville alone was about 800.

freed slave wishing to avoid removal to reenslave himself voluntarily, but apparently no black heartlander ever seized that opportunity.³⁷

In their day to day existence, however, free blacks ameliorated the harshness of law and white animosity, as did their enslaved brothers, by accommodation and compromise; and they succeeded in finding a place—however cramped—in a world which sought to deny them a place. Some whites were sympathetic, and local custom more than law usually determined the extent to which annual registration, the carrying of papers, and deportation were actually enforced. Some free blacks were thus able, by maintaining the proper deference, and perhaps by putting themselves under the patronage of friendly whites, to live unbothered in the countryside. Most, however, migrated to the towns where—though generally poor, illiterate, and relegated to menial labor and domestic work—they found fulfillment mingling with slaves in the urban black subworld. Some mastered trades and achieved a measure of prosperity and independence, and a few rose to prominence in the professions. Peter Lowery, for one, purchaser of his own freedom, successful businessman, and minister of Nashville's independent black Christian congregation, was one of the antebellum South's outstanding black leaders.³⁸

³⁷James M. England, "The Free Negro in Ante-Bellum Tennessee," *JSH*, IX (Feb., 1943), 37-58; Code of Tennessee, 502, 517-18, 520-28; Henry, "Slave Laws," 193-201; Mooney, Slavery in Tennessee, 18-21. Examples of the registration of free Negroes are in Maury County, Tennessee, County Court Clerk's Office, Minute Books, Dec. 5., 1860, Vol. XIII, 320 (TSLA); and Rutherford County, Tennessee, County Court Clerk's Office, Minute Books, Dec., 1860, Bk. DD, 422 (TSLA).

³⁸England, "Free Negro," 55-57; *Nashville Dispatch*, May 6, 1862; Herman A. Norton, Tennessee Christians: A History of the Christian Church in Tennessee (Nashville, 1971), 129-30.

Given the paucity of their numbers, however, it was the symbolic role of free blacks which defined their true importance in the antebellum heartland. For white and slave alike, free blacks stood as a challenge—for the one a baneful, for the other a welcome challenge—to the received wisdom of racial ideology.

CHAPTER IV

THE INVISIBLE WORLD OF MIDDLE TENNESSEANS

The people of Middle Tennessee, with their land and their institutions, comprised the "visible world" of the antebellum heartland. This was the world they themselves discerned and defined, even if certain aspects of it—their faith, their passions, their politics—were "visible" only to the mind's eye. But Middle Tennesseans inhabited as well a coexistent dimension which they did not apprehend, a latent dimension of subtly interwoven lineaments wherein their social fabric betrayed striking patterns that remained hidden or obscured in the visible world.

This chapter and others to follow examine Middle Tennessee society as documented in the manuscript federal census returns of 1860 and 1870. The data therein are multitudinous and mostly numerical, so this study employs some basic statistical procedures to secure and analyze random samples from each census from which inferences can be drawn about the whole population of Middle Tennessee. (These procedures and their attendant terminology are explained in Appendix A, which the reader should consult before proceeding further.) The recent contributions of quantitative history to the understanding of the past speak for themselves. Therefore it is no longer heresy to insist, even in a work of narrative history, that quantitative methods are an invaluable aid to reconstructing a lost (and especially invisible) world.

The present chapter encompasses five sections which survey the free families of the heartland in 1860 from five perspectives: residence, wealth, occupation of the family head, slaveholding, and age of the family head. Each of these "variables" is crosstabulated with others, including (besides the same five) family structure, sex, place of birth, and literacy. Where the correlation between two variables is high, that is, where there is a reasonably strong and seemingly significant relationship between them, the crosstabulation table and supplementary statistics are presented and analyzed in the text. Where correlations are not significant, tables are omitted and statistics relegated to a footnote. Following each section is a discussion of comparable findings for other parts of antebellum America, especially other Southern regions, providing a backdrop which highlights Middle Tennessee's distinctiveness while confirming its essential Southernness.

Middle Tennesseans of 1860 would have had no serious quarrel with the categorizations adopted here. Indeed, they knew themselves by these very names: town folk and village folk, rich and poor, farmer and laborer, slaveholder and nonslaveholder, old and young. These distinctions were intrinsic to their visible world. But none could have divined the intricacy of the webs which linked these categories and defined the invisible world.

The contrast of town and country indelibly marked the society of antebellum Middle Tennessee and is a prominent theme of the preceding chapters. The six tables presented in this section affirm and further elucidate that contrast. Families are divided here among three categories

of residence: farm, village, and town. Farm families include all whose head had an agricultural occupation (farmer, overseer, farm laborer) and all who actually operated a farm, whatever the occupation. All other families are divided between town and village depending on the population of the civil district in which they lived (Appendix A has details).¹

Table IV-1 compares the distribution of farm, village, and town families among nine wealth ranks, based on combined real and personal property. Immediately apparent are the extremes of wealth among townsfolk, as described in Chapter II. The wealthiest families (those in the top decile) were about evenly represented in the towns (they made up 11 percent of urban families), while the poor were grossly over-represented (40 percent of urban families were among the poorest 20 percent of all families). Those in the middling wealth ranks were generally under-represented in towns. Farm families were the most prosperous group as a whole, for (as other tables will show) most owned land and many owned slaves: 65 percent were among the wealthier half of all families, and only 6 percent among the poorest fifth. Villagers,

¹Because district population totals were not compiled for three counties in the heartland in 1860, sampled families in those counties have been eliminated from the analysis of residence (see Appendix A). This accounts for the low number of cases in all crosstabulations involving residence, and for the very slight variations in the distribution of some other variables crosstabulated with residence, as compared to their distribution in other crosstabulations. For example, families with twenty slaves or more constitute 3 percent of the sample in all crosstabulations involving residence, but 4 percent in all other crosstabulations.

Table IV-1
Residence by Wealth, 1860

Wealth Rank (Deciles)	Families Ranked by Residence (Percent of Each Rank Shown)		
	Town	Village	Farm
1	11	3	12
2	6	2	14
3	6	1	13
4	5	1	14
5	8	6	12
6	11	4	11
7	5	12	11
8	9	22	9
9+10	40	49	6
N	160	96	517
% of Total Families	21	12	67
Mean Wealth (\$)	8,036	1,680	11,126
% of Total Wealth	18	2	80

$\chi^2 = 215.2$ with 16 d.f., signif. = .0

C = .46667

N = 773

mostly skilled or unskilled workers and their families lacking land and slaves, were heavily concentrated in the lowest wealth ranks—nearly half (49 percent) in the poorest fifth of families and almost all (87 percent) in the poorer half. The mean wealth and percentage of total wealth figures for each residence category more vividly illustrate these disparities. They show, for example, that villagers, who made up 12 percent of families, held but 2 percent of all wealth.²

The occupational structures of town, village, and farm family heads are contrasted in Table IV-2. (Appendix B lists the specific occupations included in each of the eight general categories.) The similarities between town and village family heads are notable: each group embraced a sizeable corps of skilled workers (35 percent of urban and 31 percent of village family heads), an identical percentage of laborers (25 percent), as well as an identical percentage of minor professionals (4 percent). A small professional class (8 percent) served the villages, but its urban counterpart was proportionately much larger (19 percent) because it included not only the doctors, merchants, and clergymen who ministered to local needs of body and spirit, but the lawyers, judges, officeholders, newspaper editors, and such who served the exalted demands of the county or even region or state. Family heads without occupation in both towns and villages were overwhelmingly women—usually widows—with families. They made up a smaller proportion of town than of village family heads (16 versus 30 percent), probably in part because towns

²Cut-off points for wealth deciles are given below, in footnote 11.

Table IV-2
Residence by Occupation of Family Head, 1860

Occupation of Head	Families Ranked by Residence (Percent of Each Rank Shown)			N	% of Total Fams.
	Town	Village	Farm		
Professional	19	8	4	57	7
Landed Farmer	0	0	63	323	42
Minor Prof.	4	4	1	14	2
Skilled Worker	35	31	3	104	14
Overseer	0	0	2	8	1
Unskilled Laborer	25	25	0	64	8
Landless Agr. Worker	0	0	29	148	19
None	16	30	0	54	7
N	161	96	517		
% of Total Fams.	21	12	67		

$\chi^2 = 670.7$ with 14 d.f., signif. = .0

C = .68184

N = 772

offered more vocational opportunities for women (as domestics, washerwomen, seamstresses, or factory workers) than did villages, where a widow might have to depend for support solely on the labor of her sons or the charity of neighbors. The majority (63 percent) of farm families not surprisingly was headed by landowning farmers. The only other large percentage of farm family heads (29 percent) was landless agricultural workers (i.e., farm laborers or tenant farmers); a minuscule 2 percent were overseers. The relatively small numbers of professionals, minor professionals, and skilled workers in the farm category represent families whose heads listed such occupations but operated a farm as well.

The crosstabulation of residence and slaveholding shown in Table IV-3 also reveals a well-defined pattern. Not surprisingly, larger slaveholders (those with ten or more slaves) were over-represented among farm families and under-represented among others, for few enterprises besides farming required so much extra labor. In fact, all ranks of slaveholders were over-represented among farm families, 43 percent of whom owned at least one slave, as compared to 34 percent of families overall. (This statistic should not be confused with that in Chapter II, which indicated that 49 percent of farm operators had one or more slaves.) Furthermore, 91 percent of all slaves were owned by farm families. Nearly a fourth of urban families owned slaves but most owned four or fewer, as house servants. Most slaveholding farm families, on the other hand, owned five or more. Not one village family in ten owned any slaves, and none had large slaveholdings.

Table IV-3
Residence by Slaveholding, 1860

Slaveholdings	Families Ranked by Residence (Percent of Each Rank Shown)			N	% of Total Fams.
	Town	Village	Farm		
20+	0	0	5	26	3
10-19	2	0	9	49	6
5-9	8	3	10	64	8
1-4	14	6	19	129	17
0	76	91	57	506	65
N	161	96	517		
% of Total Fams.	21	12	67		
Mean No. Slaves	1	0	4		
% of Total Slaves	7	1	91		

$\chi^2 = 60.2$ with 8 d.f., signif. = .0

C = .26856

N = 774

In Table IV-4 four categories of family structure are linked with residence. While the relationship between these two attributes is not strong, there are noticeable structural differences among the families of farm, village, and town. ("Single" families were headed by an unmarried person, male or female; "couple" families were headed by a man with a wife. "Nuclear" families were those without any relatives or boarders in the household besides the wife and children of the family head; "extended" families were any with such nonnuclear relatives or boarders.)

The most common family type—comprising 56 percent of all Middle Tennessee families—was couple-nuclear, that is, a married couple with or without children, but with no others in the household. These families were slightly under-represented among village and more so among town folk; both those groups, however, had higher than average proportions of single-headed families, nuclear and extended. If the two categories of extended families are combined and contrasted with the combined nuclear family categories, it is seen that town and farm families were similar in their overall proportion of extended families (36 and 31 percent, respectively), but village families were substantially lower than both (24 percent). A corollary point of contrast is that while couple-nuclear was the most common family type among all three residence classes, the next most common was couple-extended among both town and farm families, but single-nuclear among villagers.

As an addendum to Table IV-4, figures show the average number of children and average total number of children, nonnuclear relatives, and boarders (marked simply "children and boarders") for families in each residence class. Farm families had the highest of both averages

Table IV-4
Residence by Family Structure, 1860

Family Structure	Families Ranked by Residence (Percent of Each Rank Shown)			N	% of Total Fams.
	Town	Village	Farm		
Single-nuclear	16	25	10	99	13
Couple-nuclear	48	51	59	429	56
Single-extended	13	10	6	64	8
Couple-extended	23	14	25	181	23
N	161	96	516		
% of Total Fams.	21	12	67		
Mean No. Children	2.3	2.3	3.2		
Mean No. Children and Boarders	3.4	2.9	3.9		

$\chi^2 = 30.7$ with 6 d.f., signif. = .0

C = .19529

N = 773

(3.2 children and 3.9 total). Town and village families had identical averages of children (2.3), but the large proportion of extended families among town families raised the latter group's total average considerably above that of villagers (3.4 to 2.9). Nonnuclear relatives and boarders made up a far larger proportion of urban family members than of village or farm family members.

A related correlation is shown in Table IV-5, which compares the proportions of male and female family heads in each residence class. Although women made up only 15 percent of family heads overall, they made up 20 percent in towns and 28 percent in villages. This accounted in great part for the large proportions of single-headed families in towns and villages, documented in Table IV-4, since all women family heads were single. Some simple subtraction between the two tables reveals that single males made up only 9 percent of family heads in towns, 7 percent of those in villages, and 5 percent of those on farms. Thus, single family heads overall were more than twice as likely to be women as men—in villages, four times as likely.

It is interesting also to compare Table IV-5 with Table IV-2, page 110 (residence by occupation). In towns the proportion of family heads without occupation (16 percent) was smaller than the proportion of female family heads, proving that some, perhaps many, urban female family heads were employed. In villages, on the other hand, the proportion of family heads without occupation (30 percent) was higher than the proportion of female family heads, suggesting the possibility that no village female family heads (or very few) were employed, as was surmised above.

Table IV-5
Residence by Sex of Family Head, 1860

Sex of Head	Families Ranked by Residence (Percent of Each Rank Shown)			N	% of Total Fams.
	Town	Village	Farm		
Male	80	72	89	658	85
Female	20	28	11	116	15
N	161	96	517		
% of Total Fams.	21	12	67		

$\chi^2 = 22.4$ with 2 d.f., signif. = .0

C = .16769

N = 774

Table IV-6 shows the rather strong relationship between residence and place of birth of the family head. Overwhelmingly, rural families were headed by natives of Tennessee or other parts of the upper South (generally North Carolina or Virginia): in all, 94 percent of farm and 82 percent of village families. Only one farm family and nine village families out of 100 were headed by someone born altogether outside the South. This cultural homogeneity of the countryside stands in stark contrast to the relative heterogeneity of the towns, as discussed in Chapter II. Fully 33 percent of urban family heads were born outside the South; of that number, 20 percent were from outside the United States, including 10 percent from Ireland alone.³

Studies of three other widely separated parts of the antebellum South offer findings comparable to these for Middle Tennessee. David Goldfield uses the 1850 census to analyze the free families of Richmond, Virginia, a large city in an upper South region much older than Middle Tennessee. Richmond's age was reflected in the nativity of its family heads, 70 percent of whom were born in Virginia, only 5 percent in the South outside Virginia, and 6 percent in the North. (Urban Middle Tennessee accommodated considerably greater proportions of Southern and Northern immigrants.) Richmond's overall proportion of foreign-born family heads was similar to urban Middle Tennessee's, though the Irish were comparatively fewer in Richmond in 1850 because great waves

³Crosstabulations revealed no appreciable relationship between residence and age of the family head (significance of $X^2 = .2824$, $C = .11166$), or between residence and literacy of the family head (significance of $X^2 = .0782$, $C = .08093$).

Table IV-6
Residence by Place of Birth of Family Head, 1860

Place of Birth of Head	Families Ranked by Residence (Percent of Each Rank Shown)			N	% of Total Fams.
	Town	Village	Farm		
Tennessee	38	55	65	449	58
Upper South	27	27	29	219	28
Lower South	3	8	4	35	5
New England	4	0	0	7	1
Middle Atlantic	6	2	0	13	2
Northwest	3	0	0	6	1
Ireland	10	7	1	26	3
Great Britain	4	0	0	8	1
Continental Europe	6	0	0	10	1
N	160	96	517		
% of Total Fams.	21	12	67		

$\chi^2 = 163.2$ with 16 d.f., signif. = .0

C = .41754

N = 773

of Celtic immigrants were still to come. The relative paucity of unskilled laborers among Richmond's family heads was probably related to this scarcity of Irishmen and to the prevalence of slaves, who were more numerous in Richmond than in Middle Tennessee towns. (In Richmond over 40 percent of families held at least one slave, in urban Middle Tennessee only 24 percent.) In other respects Richmond's occupational structure resembled urban Middle Tennessee's, although the proportion of family heads without occupation was greater in Richmond—due no doubt to the larger proportion of female-headed families there.⁴

Free blacks were more abundant in Richmond than in Middle Tennessee's towns. Many were employed as servants and counted in the census as family members, thus perhaps contributing to the large proportion of extended families among Richmonders (49 percent, compared to 36 percent among urban Middle Tennesseans, whose domestics were nearly all slaves). Single-headed families were also more prevalent in Richmond (39 percent) than in the heartland's towns (29 percent), due to the greater proportions of both single female family heads (25 percent in Richmond to 20 percent in Middle Tennessee) and single male family heads (14 percent to 9 percent).⁵

The study of Athens and surrounding Clarke County, Georgia, by Frank J. Huffman, Jr., analyzes a small town and its rural hinterland in the lower South cotton belt. Contrasting this locality in 1860

⁴David R. Goldfield, Urban Growth in the Age of Sectionalism: Virginia, 1847-1861 (Baton Rouge and London, 1977), 35-44, 61-62, 83.

⁵*Ibid.*, 44, 61-62, 77.

with Middle Tennessee underscores both the rather advanced urbanization of the heartland compared to most of the deep South, and the prosperity of the heartland's rural folk compared even to those in parts of the cotton kingdom. Despite its railroad and cotton mills, Athens retained something of a rural flavor. Extremes of wealth were not so glaring there as in urban Middle Tennessee; in fact, wealth was more equally distributed in Athens than in the countryside. The proportion of white males (whom Huffman samples rather than families) with property worth at least \$5,000 was nearly twice as great in Athens as in the rural areas, a far cry from Middle Tennessee where the proportion of urban families in roughly the same category was but two-thirds that of village and farm families considered together. As Table IV-1, page 108, showed, the richness of the heartland's countryside served to keep most rural denizens in the higher wealth ranks: the proportion of farm and village families (combined) in the bottom fifth of all Middle Tennessee families ranked by wealth was only 13 percent; urban families in that same rank constituted 40 percent of urban families. In Athens, white males at approximately the same wealth level (under \$100) made up a similar proportion of townsmen—38 percent. But in rural Clarke County the proportion was identical. As one point of similarity, however, cases of dual occupation—i.e., persons listing a nonagricultural occupation yet operating a farm—were as common in this Georgia piedmont cotton county as in the heartland of Middle Tennessee.⁶

⁶Frank J. Huffman, Jr., "Old South, New South: Continuity and Change in a Georgia County, 1850-1880" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1974), 152, 154-55, 170, 174, 224.

Hundreds of miles to the west on the South's expanding cotton frontier, Texas comprised a vast region (or rather a congeries of regions) whose town and country families have been studied by Randolph B. Campbell and Richard G. Lowe. Texas in 1860 was minimally urbanized. It boasted only four towns of any consequence, the largest but half the size of Nashville. The rawness of those towns was evidenced by their huge proportions of foreign immigrants (many of them Mexicans, but more Germans). In San Antonio the foreign-born made up 47 percent of family heads, in Austin 67 percent; in the state as a whole they made up only 15 percent.⁷

The presence of so many from cultures innocent of slavery may have contributed to the dearth of masters and slaves in Texas towns. Only 12 percent of urban families in Texas owned slaves, whereas across the state 27 percent of families did so. Those families may be contrasted with the slaveholders of Middle Tennessee, who constituted 24 percent of urban families and 34 percent of families overall. In both regions slaveholdings in the towns were considerably smaller, on the average, than those in the countryside. Thus, slavery in Texas was an even more overwhelmingly rural phenomenon than in the heartland, with its black urban subculture. (Free blacks, who also populated that subculture, were almost unknown in Texas, rural and urban.)⁸

⁷Randolph B. Campbell and Richard G. Lowe, Wealth and Power in Antebellum Texas (College Station, Texas, and London, 1977), 29, 90-92.

⁸*Ibid.*, 94.

The occupational structure of Texas's town folk very nearly paralleled that of Middle Tennessee's, if Campbell and Lowe's categories are adjusted to conform to those in Table IV-2, page 110; that is, in general, a substantial group of professionals, a large group of skilled workers, and a slightly smaller group of unskilled laborers. It might be asked why, if slaves were less common in urban Texas than in urban Middle Tennessee, the proportion of free unskilled laborers in Texas towns was not correspondingly higher, just as it was correspondingly lower in Richmond where slaves were more common. Perhaps the rawness of these new Texas towns precluded amenities—public works, for example, and services such as restaurants—which the more mature towns of Virginia and Tennessee offered and which employed much unskilled labor.⁹

Wealth in Texas, as in Middle Tennessee, was more highly concentrated in the towns than in the countryside. But unlike Middle Tennessee, rich urbanites in Texas raised the average wealth for all urban families (\$7,814) well above that for all families across the state (\$6,393). In Middle Tennessee the average wealth of urban families was similar (\$8,036), but the opulence of the heartland's farms raised the overall regional average (\$8,957) above it.¹⁰

Who owned property in the antebellum South, how much they owned, and how those who owned little or none differed from those who owned

⁹Ibid., 93-94.

¹⁰Ibid., 94-99.

much, were issues hotly disputed then and are still hotly disputed now, for they bear on a persistent central question: was prewar Southern society an aristocratic anachronism or a democratic paragon—or something in between? The following eleven tables help locate Middle Tennessee within that spectrum of historical possibilities.

Table IV-7 breaks down total value of property by wealth ranks and testifies to the heavy concentration of property in the hands of the heartland's richest families. The richest tenth held 65 percent of the value of all real and personal property, the poorer half only 2 percent. The huge gap between the mean wealth of the richest tenth and that of the next tenth (\$58,549 versus \$15,146) suggests that even in these highest ranks great economic distances separated the few very affluent families from the rest. Comparing the overall mean wealth per family (\$8,957) with the median (\$1,500) demonstrates the dubiousness of the mean by itself as a description of the whole population (though means serve well for comparing different populations or classes of the same population). Manifestly, the very wealthy families elevated the mean to a level actually achieved by few, for half of all families held less than \$1,500.¹¹

Real and personal property are generally combined for purposes of wealth analysis in this study, but it is instructive to examine them

¹¹The lower limit in dollar value of each wealth decile is as follows: first decile, \$23,537; second, \$10,013; third, \$5,690; fourth, \$3,000; fifth, \$1,500; sixth, \$800; seventh, \$400; eighth, \$150; ninth and tenth, zero.

Table IV-7
Breakdown of Wealth by Wealth Ranks, 1860

Wealth	Families Ranked by Wealth (Deciles)								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9+10
Mean Wealth (\$)	58,549	15,146	7,673	4,005	2,081	1,097	528	244	25
% of Total Wealth	65	17	9	5	2	1	1	0	0
Cumulative % of Total Wealth	65	82	91	96	98	99	100	100	100

Sample mean = \$8,957

N = 999

Sample median = \$1,500

(Proportion of families with zero wealth = 13 percent)

separately. Tables IV-8 and IV-9 show discrete breakdowns of each type of property. Interestingly, although personalty holding was more widespread overall than realty holding (86 percent of families had some personalty, only 57 percent had realty), the concentration of the value of holdings was slightly greater for personalty than for realty (68 versus 66 percent of the whole, respectively, being held by the top decile of families in each case). This was so because while nearly every family had at least a modicum of personal property in furnishings, utensils, and clothing, the great bulk of personal property in Middle Tennessee was in slaves, the ownership of whom was very concentrated. Table IV-10 depicts the distribution of real estate value after excluding the 43 percent of families which had no real estate. It shows a high degree of concentration even among these landowners, the upper tenth of whom held 52 percent of the value of all real estate.¹²

Table IV-11 crosstabulates wealth and residence, as did Table IV-1, page 108, but here from the perspective of wealth. Farm families

¹²The lower limit in dollar value of each personal property decile is as follows: first decile, \$12,500; second, \$5,500; third, \$2,525; fourth, \$1,060; fifth, \$600; sixth, \$405; seventh, \$250; eighth, \$104; ninth and tenth, zero.

The lower limit in dollar value of each real property decile is as follows: first decile, \$10,050; second, \$4,880; third, \$2,700; fourth, \$1,500; fifth, \$700; sixth through tenth, zero.

The lower limit in dollar value of each real property decile, excluding families without real property, is as follows: first decile, \$17,700; second, \$8,670; third, \$6,000; fourth, \$4,020; fifth, \$3,000; sixth, \$2,100; seventh, \$1,500; eighth, \$1,068; ninth and tenth, \$100.

Table IV-8
Breakdown of Personal Property by Personal
Property Ranks, 1860

Personal Property	Families Ranked by Personal Property (Deciles)								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9+10
Mean Personal Property (\$)	33,750	8,193	3,796	1,694	827	499	325	178	24
% of Total Personal Property	68	17	8	3	2	1	1	0	0
Cum. % of Total Personal Property	68	85	93	96	98	99	100	100	100

Sample mean = \$4,904

N = 999

Sample median = \$600

(Proportion of families with zero pers. prop. = 14 percent)

Table IV-9
Breakdown of Real Property by Real
Property Ranks, 1860

Real Property	Families Ranked by Real Property (Deciles)					
	1	2	3	4	5	6-10
Mean Real Property (\$)	27,368	6,831	3,602	1,980	1,014	52
% of Total Real Property	66	17	9	5	2	1
Cum. % of Total Real Property	66	83	92	97	99	100

Sample Mean = \$4,053

N = 999

Sample median = \$699

(Proportion of families with zero real property = 43 percent)

Table IV-10

Breakdown of Real Property by Real Property Ranks, 1860
(Families without Real Property Excluded)

Real Property	Landowning Families Ranked by Real Property (Deciles)								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9+10
Mean Real Property (\$)	37,261	12,136	6,790	4,839	3,454	2,483	1,775	1,191	646
% of Total Real Property	52	17	10	6	6	3	2	1	2
Cum. % of Total Real Property	52	69	79	85	91	94	96	97	100

Sample mean = \$7,128

N = 568

Sample median = \$3,000

Table IV-11

Wealth by Residence, 1860

Residence	Families Ranked by Wealth (Deciles)									N	% of Total Fams.
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9+10		
Town	21	12	11	10	15	22	11	18	46	160	21
Village	4	2	1	1	8	5	15	25	34	96	12
Farm	75	85	87	89	77	73	75	57	21	517	67

$\chi^2 = 215.2$ with 16 d.f., signif. = .0

C = .46667

N = 773

accounted for considerably more than their "share" of the wealthiest tenth of families (hereinafter called the rich), while villagers were greatly under-represented in that wealth rank and town families evenly represented. Though farm families made up 67 percent of all families, they made up only 21 percent of the poorest fifth (hereafter called the poor). Village and town families together made up only 33 percent of the whole population but 80 percent of the poor.

Table IV-12 compares the occupational structures of wealth ranks. Rich families were almost all headed by professionals (23 percent) or landed farmers (69 percent), the former group—comprising but 7 percent of all family heads—being especially over-represented among the rich. In fact, these two occupational groups together, though accounting for only 49 percent of all family heads, made up from 71 to 92 percent of those in each of the top five wealth deciles. On the other hand, professionals and landed farmers made up practically none of the poor, who were instead mostly made up of skilled workers, unskilled laborers, and landless agricultural workers. (Nearly every other occupation was also over-represented among the poor.) Skilled workers and landless agricultural workers, while much over-represented in the lower wealth ranks, did have considerable representation in the middle ranks (deciles four through seven). Significant numbers of the skilled were found even in the highest three wealth ranks. Similarly, family heads without occupation were over-represented in the lower ranks but present in all ranks.

Table IV-12
Wealth by Occupation of Family Head, 1860

Occupation of Head	Families Ranked by Wealth (Deciles) (Percent of Each Rank Shown)									N	% of Total Fams.
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9+10		
Professional	23	14	12	7	8	1	1	1	1	69	7
Landed Farmer	69	75	72	71	63	44	15	5	1	417	42
Minor Prof.	1	2	0	2	3	2	1	3	2	18	2
Skilled Worker	4	3	10	10	13	22	17	23	21	144	15
Overseer	0	0	1	0	0	2	4	3	3	15	2
Unskilled Laborer	1	0	0	0	1	2	7	7	29	75	8
Landless Agr. Worker	0	1	3	10	8	23	47	48	24	187	19
None	2	5	2	1	4	4	6	11	18	70	7

$\chi^2 = 722.2$ with 56 d.f., signif. = .0

C = .64851

N = 995

Wealth and slaveholding were closely connected, as Table IV-13 indicates. While the fact fails to astonish, the extreme degree of identification between slaveholding and wealth, and conversely between nonslaveholding and poverty, is striking. Put plainly, virtually all rich families were slaveholders (95 percent) and virtually all the poor were nonslaveholders (98 percent); and, even more, the majority of the rich was large slaveholders (67 percent owned ten slaves or more) and the majority of slaves (64 percent) was owned by the rich. Practically no family below the second wealth decile owned more than nine slaves. Though slaveholding families were not uncommon in the middling wealth ranks (deciles four through seven), those families held slaves in small lots and were substantially outnumbered by non-slaveholders in each of those ranks.

The age structure of the population reveals a clear pattern when crosstabulated with wealth, as in Table IV-14. In general, younger heads of families were over-represented in the lower wealth ranks and older heads in the upper. Those thirty-nine and younger (48 percent of all family heads) constituted 59 percent of the poor but only 25 percent of the rich. Those fifty and older (31 percent of family heads) constituted 21 percent of the poor but 53 percent of the rich. The average age of rich family heads was fifty, fully twelve years above the average of the poor. Undoubtedly, differential death rates between rich and poor influenced this pattern; but more important was the gradual acquisition of wealth through earnings and inheritance.

The crosstabulation of family structure in Table IV-15 reveals marked contrasts among poor, middling, and rich. Poor families were

Table IV-13
Wealth by Slaveholding, 1860

Slaveholdings	Families Ranked by Wealth (Deciles) (Percent of Each Rank Shown)									N	% of Total Fams.
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9+10		
20+	35	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	36	4
10-19	32	26	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	60	6
5-9	18	37	21	5	1	1	0	0	0	83	8
1-4	10	31	48	39	13	4	2	2	2	154	15
0	5	5	29	57	86	95	98	98	98	666	67
Mean No. of Slaves	19	7	3	1	0	0	0	0	0		
% of Total Slaves	64	22	9	3	1	0	0	0	0		

$\chi^2 = 1094.8$ with 32 d.f., signif. = .0

C = .72311

N = 999

Table IV-14
Wealth by Age of Family Head, 1860

Age of Head	Families Ranked by Wealth (Deciles) (Percent of Each Rank Shown)									N	% of Total Fams.
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9+10		
0-29	2	9	4	14	21	25	39	30	29	201	20
30-39	23	16	30	29	35	33	23	32	30	281	28
40-49	22	23	26	30	15	17	22	16	20	210	21
50-59	30	25	25	14	12	17	10	12	12	169	17
60+	23	27	15	14	16	8	6	11	9	137	14
Mean Age	50	50	47	44	42	40	37	38	38		

$\chi^2 = 146.3$ with 32 d.f., signif. = .0

C = .35753

N = 998

Table IV-15
Wealth by Family Structure, 1860

Family Structure	Families Ranked by Wealth (Deciles) (Percent of Each Rank Shown)									N	% of Total Fams.
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9+10		
Single-nuclear	7	11	13	10	15	7	10	15	20	127	13
Couple-nuclear	39	54	58	55	51	64	60	65	52	549	55
Single-extended	8	8	8	9	7	7	7	4	12	80	8
Couple-extended	46	27	21	27	27	22	22	15	17	241	24
Mean No. Children	3.5	3.1	3.6	3.2	2.8	3.2	3.0	2.6	2.4		
Mean No. Children and Boarders	4.8	4.2	4.1	4.1	3.4	3.8	3.7	3.0	3.0		

$\chi^2 = 59.5$ with 24 d.f., signif. = .0001

C = .23726

N = 997

more than twice as likely as rich families to have a single head (32 versus 15 percent). But the rich were more likely to have extended families (54 percent) than were the poor (29 percent). In fact, basic couple-nuclear families constituted only 39 percent of the rich, though they were a majority of families in every other wealth rank; and couple-extended families constituted nearly half of the rich, but no more than 27 percent of families in any other wealth rank. The average number of children was considerably greater among rich families than among poor (3.5 versus 2.4, due at least in part to the younger average age of poor family heads), as was the average total of children, other relatives, and boarders (4.8 versus 3.0). Middling families on the whole took middle ground between the rich and poor in all these respects.

The family head's place of birth is linked to wealth in Table IV-16. The proportion of those native to the upper South outside Tennessee (the oldest nativity group, on the whole) rises more or less steadily up through the wealth ranks; that group of Southerners, constituting 29 percent of family heads, owned 36 percent of all wealth. Native Tennesseans were over-represented in the middling wealth ranks but under-represented among the rich (where they were replaced by other upper South natives) and among the poor (where non-Southerners made up a larger proportion than in any other wealth rank). Natives of the lower South (also a mature cohort) were found in every wealth rank but their mean wealth was the highest of any nativity group. The poor were a heterogeneous assemblage: 22 percent came from outside the South,

Table IV-16
Wealth by Place of Birth of Family Head, 1860

Place of Birth of Head	Families Ranked by Wealth (Deciles) (Percent of Each Rank Shown)										N	% of Total Fams.	Mean Wealth (\$)	% of Total Wealth
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9+10					
Tennessee	49	50	53	59	61	66	64	64	52	570	57	7,218	46	
Upper South	39	42	35	29	30	22	22	27	22	290	29	11,196	36	
Lower South	4	6	4	6	5	5	7	3	6	51	5	20,531	12	
New England	0	1	2	2	0	0	1	2	1	9	1	4,986	1	
Middle Atlantic	3	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	2	14	1	15,290	2	
Northwest	1	0	2	1	0	2	0	0	1	7	1	8,456	1	
Ireland	1	0	1	1	0	1	3	2	12	33	3	1,509	1	
Great Britain	2	0	1	2	0	2	1	0	2	11	1	9,118	1	
Cont. Eur.	1	0	1	0	2	0	0	1	4	12	1	5,898	1	

$\chi^2 = 127.3$ with 64 d.f., signif. = .0000

N = 997

C = .33646

18 percent from outside the country, 12 percent from Ireland alone. The Irish, most of whom were common laborers, were thus vastly over-represented among the poor and their average wealth was the lowest of any nativity group. Northerners and non-Irish foreigners number but few in the sample and generalizations about them are dubious, but on the whole they seem to have been unremarkably distributed among all wealth ranks.

Table IV-17 shows an unambiguous pattern of literacy among heads of families ranked by wealth. (The Census Bureau in 1860 defined as illiterate those over twenty who could not read and write.) Illiterates constituted 13 percent of family heads overall but among the poor 27 percent; their proportion declines more or less steadily up through the wealth ranks. Heads of rich families were nearly all literate.¹³

The distribution of wealth in antebellum America has won lavish attention from historians, and studies offering data comparable to these for Middle Tennessee abound. To generalize, although wealth was certainly distributed unequally in Middle Tennessee it was distributed more or less unequally throughout the nation: in every region a few had much and many had little. Lee Soltow's analysis of a large national census sample shows that in 1860 across the United States 38 percent of adult men had under \$100 in combined real and personal wealth. (This greatly surpasses the 13 percent of Middle Tennessee families with under \$100, but some of the difference—by no means all—is

¹³Crosstabulation revealed no appreciable relationship between wealth and sex of the head of the family (significance of $X^2 = .1013$, $C = .11471$).

Table IV-17
Wealth by Literacy of Family Head, 1860

Literacy of Head	Families Ranked by Wealth (Deciles) (Percent of Each Rank Shown)									N	% of Total Fams.
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9+10		
Literate	99	94	97	92	84	87	88	79	73	865	87
Illiterate	1	6	3	8	16	13	12	21	27	134	13

$\chi^2 = 68.7$ with 8 d.f., signif. = .0

C = .25367

N = 999

due to dissimilar sampling methods. If the present study sampled adult men rather than families the figure for Middle Tennessee would be a bit higher because some adult men lived with families they did not head, in which all property was ascribed to the head.) Among large Northern cities this proportion ranged as high as 63 percent; in the Northeast as a whole it was 43 percent, in the Northwest 36 percent, and in the South 34 percent. The average wealth of free men across the U.S. in 1860 was \$2,580; in the North (east and west together) \$2,040; in the South \$3,978. Middle Tennessee families averaged \$8,957. Thus, even with allowances for sampling differences, property holding was certainly more widespread and free folk on the average more affluent in antebellum Middle Tennessee than in the nation or any of its three grand regions considered each as a whole.¹⁴

That is not the entire story, however. Though many held property in Middle Tennessee, the enormous holdings of a few families there resulted in a concentration of wealth much akin to that in the nation and the South as a whole. The richest tenth of Middle Tennessee families owned 65 percent of the region's wealth (again, this figure would be inflated if all adult men were considered). Soltow concludes that in the United States overall in 1860 the richest tenth of adult men owned 73 percent of all the property of adult men; in the North 68 percent; and in the South 75 percent.¹⁵

¹⁴Lee Soltow, Men and Wealth in the United States, 1850-1870 (New Haven, 1975), 23-24, 36, 44, 65.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 99.

Local and regional studies reveal much the same. In Huffman's Georgia cotton county, 38 percent of adult men in 1860 held total property worth less than \$100. This is very close to Soltow's figure for the South overall, as is Huffman's estimate of wealth concentration—72 percent of all Clarke County property held by adult men belonged to the wealthiest tenth. Texans on the eve of the Civil War were similarly unequal. Across that state, 7 percent of family heads held 56 percent of all wealth (Campbell and Lowe do not employ deciles). In the rich cotton and sugar subregion along the gulf coast, 8 percent held 62 percent of all wealth; on the north-central prairie frontier 9 percent held 54 percent. In Duval County, Florida (a plantation area with a sizeable city, Jacksonville), according to a study by C. A. Haulman, the richest 5 percent of free families held 42 percent of all wealth in 1860.¹⁶

Real and personal property in Middle Tennessee, considered separately, evinced like degrees of concentration (the top decile of families in each category held 66 percent of all realty and 68 percent of all personalty), though the proportions of families holding none of each varied widely (43 percent held no realty, only 14 percent no personalty). Patterns in other regions paralleled this. Nationally, according to Soltow, the upper tenth of men held 73 percent of all

¹⁶Huffman, "Old South, New South," 152, 172; Campbell and Lowe, Wealth and Power in Antebellum Texas, 46, 144; C. A. Haulman, "Changes in the Economic Power Structure in Duval County, Florida, during the Civil War and Reconstruction," Florida Historical Quarterly, XLII (Oct., 1973), 181.

real property, while 57 percent of men held none at all. (He gives no separate statistics for the South beyond noting that 57 percent there also had no real property.) Of men in Clarke County, Georgia, 61 percent had no real property and 40 percent no personal property to speak of; the upper tenth of men in each category held 78 percent of realty and 72 percent of personalty there. (Realty was thus more concentrated than personalty in Clarke County, contrary to the experience of Middle Tennessee.) Only 33 percent of Texas family heads lacked real estate and 10 percent personal estate. Although property holding was therefore more common among Texans than among Middle Tennesseans, the overall concentration of both species of property was similar in the two regions: 12 percent of Texas family heads held 73 percent of all real property, 10 percent held 64 percent of all personal property. Roger Shugg finds that in 1860 in the rural parts of Louisiana as a whole 51 percent of families had no real estate, but that among individual parishes this proportion varied from 15 to 85 percent. (He provides no figures on personal estate or property concentration.)¹⁷

Other studies of different regions have assessed the concentration of real estate among real estate holders only, in a manner comparable to Table IV-10, page 128. In two counties of Alabama's Black Belt (Marengo, examined by Jonathan Wiener, and Dallas, examined by Roger

¹⁷Soltow, Men and Wealth, 23, 44, 96; Huffman, "Old South, New South," 148, 151, 168-69; Campbell and Lowe, Wealth and Power in Antebellum Texas, 38, 45; Roger W. Shugg, Origin of Class Struggle in Louisiana . . . (Baton Rouge, 1968 [1939]), 321-22.

L. Ransom and Richard Sutch) realty in 1860 was slightly more concentrated than in Middle Tennessee, where the top decile of landowners held 52 percent of the value of all real property: in Marengo the top decile held 55 percent, in Dallas 60 percent. In one of the richest kingdoms of the great planters—the delta land surrounding Natchez, Mississippi—Kenneth S. Greenberg finds, paradoxically, a lesser concentration of real estate in 1860: there the upper decile held only 47 percent, perhaps because large planters made up such a great proportion of landowners in that region. James C. Bonner's survey of antebellum Hancock County, Georgia (a piedmont cotton belt county not far south of Clarke) gives no precise statistics but estimates that the top 15 percent of landowners held "more than half" of all real estate value there in 1860.¹⁸

The social characteristics of rich, middling, and poor have not attracted the quantitative attention that has been showered on wealth distribution. But available information hints that in many ways Middle Tennessee's rich folk resembled rich folk elsewhere in Dixie, its poor folk resembled other poor folk. In Clarke County, native Georgians were over-represented in the lower wealth ranks (like native Tennesseans

¹⁸Jonathan M. Wiener, Social Origins of the New South: Alabama, 1860-1885 (Baton Rouge and London, 1978), 15; Roger L. Ransom and Richard Sutch, One Kind of Freedom: The Economic Consequences of Emancipation (New York, 1977), 79; Kenneth S. Greenberg, "The Civil War and the Redistribution of Land: Adams County, Mississippi, 1860-1870," Agricultural History, XLII (Apr., 1978), 297-98; James C. Bonner, "Profile of a Late Antebellum Community," in Elinor Miller and Eugene D. Genovese, eds., Plantation, Town, and County: Essays on the Local History of American Slave Society (Urbana, Illinois, 1974), 33n.

in the heartland), while Southerners born outside the state were more prosperous (as in Middle Tennessee). But unlike their Middle Tennessee counterparts, Yankees and even foreigners in Clarke were over-represented in the upper wealth ranks (Clarke County had no large, poor Irish contingent). In both regions, however, these two nativity groups made up a very small proportion of the population overall. The lack of a substantial foreign-born lower class in Clarke County permitted natives of the state to dominate the ranks of the very poor there to a much greater extent than in Middle Tennessee.¹⁹

In Texas, too, so new that it practically lacked "natives," other Southerners crowded the upper wealth ranks. Foreigners there, like those in Middle Tennessee, were much over-represented in the lower ranks. The age structures of rich and poor in Texas resembled those in Middle Tennessee: older family heads were over-represented among the rich and under-represented among the poor. The occupations followed by family heads in the various wealth ranks in Texas also conformed generally to those in Middle Tennessee: farmers and professionals dominated the upper ranks, skilled and unskilled workers the lower. In Duval County, Florida, with its plantations and commercial port, farmers headed eleven and professionals thirteen of the twenty-nine richest families in 1860.²⁰

¹⁹Huffman, "Old South, New South," 160-63.

²⁰Campbell and Lowe, Wealth and Power in Antebellum Texas, 59-63; Haulman, "Changes in the Economic Power Structure in Duval County," 183.

It is interesting, finally, to compare rich Middle Tennessee families (three-quarters of whom were farm families) with an old and genuine plantation aristocracy—the great planter families of Charleston, South Carolina, studied by Michael P. Johnson. The patriarchs of these families, like rich Middle Tennessee family heads, were generally older: the average age of male planters was fifty-one, and 80 percent were over forty. Rich Middle Tennessee family heads averaged fifty years of age, and 75 percent were over forty. (In the Middle Tennessee population overall the average age of family heads was forty-two, and only 52 percent were over forty—see Table IV-14, page 133.) The great majority of the Charleston planters was married (79 percent) and well over half the planter families were extended by boarders or relatives. The same was true of the Middle Tennessee rich, who were more likely to be married (85 percent) than family heads in nearly every other wealth rank, and considerably more likely than others to have extended families.²¹

Middle Tennessee plutocrats mimicked the Charlestonians, too, in their dependence on slavery: 95 percent of the heartlanders held slaves, 79 percent of the Charleston planters (that is, slaves in their Charleston households—all had slave laborers on their distant plantations). The most striking contrast between the two groups, reflecting the relative infancy of the heartland's aristocracy and the antiquity of Charleston's, was in their origins: 89 percent of the Charlestonians

²¹Michael P. Johnson, "Planters and Patriarchy: Charleston, 1800-1860," Journal of Southern History, XLVI (Feb., 1980), 45-72.

were natives of their state, while less than half the Middle Tennesseans made that claim. Interestingly, however, both groups made room for small contingents of foreigners and Yankees (8 percent combined in the heartland, 6 percent in Charleston). Though the august patriarchs of Charleston would doubtless have been amused to hear themselves compared with the upstart nabobs of Middle Tennessee, the resemblances are conspicuous.²²

In antebellum Middle Tennessee a man's work marked his social longitude just as property marked his social latitude and race his social hemisphere. That is, to know the color of a man's skin, to know his wealth, and to know his calling is to be able fairly to estimate his locus on the "map" of antebellum society. Occupation showed strong correlations with residence and wealth in the previous sections; the following eight tables contrast Middle Tennessee family heads ranked by occupation in terms of those two attributes and others, revealing further significant correlations. Occupation is the most powerful "explanatory" variable, on the whole, of the five analyzed in this chapter.

Table IV-18 shows the residential distribution of family heads in each occupation. By definition, landed farmers, landless agricultural workers, and overseers were all heads of farm families. But since the farm category also includes any family operating a farm, it indicates for each nonagricultural occupation the proportion of families with

²²Ibid.

Table IV-18

Occupation of Family Head by Residence, 1860

Residence	Families Ranked by Occupation of Head (Percent of Each Rank Shown)							% of Total Fams.	
	Landed Farmer	Minor Prof.	Skilled Worker	Overseer	Unsk. Laborer	Landless Ag. Wkr.	None	N	
Town	54	0	50	55	0	63	0	46	161
Village	14	0	29	29	0	38	0	54	96
Farm	32	100	21	16	100	0	100	0	517
N	57	323	14	104	8	64	148	54	
% of Total Fams.	7	42	2	14	1	8	19	7	

146

 $\chi^2 = 670.7$ with 14 d.f., signif. = .0

C = .68184

N = 772

farms, and is thus a measure of dual occupations. Almost a third (32 percent) of professionals, 21 percent of minor professionals, and 16 percent of skilled workers had farms outside villages or towns; unskilled laborers had no farms. (Family heads who listed no occupation are assigned to the landed farmer or landless agricultural worker class if they operated a farm.) Unskilled laborers, and those skilled workers and minor professionals without farms, were all divided between towns and villages roughly in proportion to the overall ratio of town to village families (i.e., twenty-one to twelve). Professionals without farms, however, were much more prevalent in towns than in villages (by a ratio of four to one), for reasons given in connection with Table IV-2, page 110. Family heads without occupation, on the other hand, were mostly in villages (54 percent), a significant concentration considering that urban families as a whole greatly outnumbered village families. (As noted before, jobs for women were presumably more plentiful in the towns.)

Table IV-19, giving the distribution of each occupation group among wealth ranks, documents the abundance of professionals and landed farmers in the upper ranks. Of the former, 70 percent were in the top three wealth deciles; of the latter, 52 percent. No landed farmers, and almost no professionals, were among the poor. But in every other occupation the poor were over-represented, most glaringly among unskilled laborers, three-quarters of whom were poor. That occupational group, as well as overseers and landless farm workers, was concentrated almost wholly in the poorer half of the population. It is hardly

Table IV-19
Occupation of Family Head by Wealth, 1860

Wealth Rank (Deciles)	Families Ranked by Occupation of Head (Percent of Each Rank Shown)							
	Prof.	Landed Farmer	Minor Prof.	Skilled Worker	Overseer	Unsk. Laborer	Landless Ag. Wkr.	None
1	33	17	6	3	0	1	0	3
2	20	18	11	2	0	0	1	7
3	17	17	0	7	7	0	2	3
4	10	18	11	7	0	0	5	1
5	12	15	17	9	0	1	4	6
6	1	11	11	15	13	3	12	6
7	1	4	6	12	27	9	25	9
8	1	1	17	17	20	9	27	16
9+10	3	0	22	29	33	76	25	50
N	69	417	18	144	15	75	187	70
% of Tot. Fam.	7	42	2	15	2	8	19	7
Mean Wealth (\$)	24,977	15,145	4,122	2,364	952	453	783	4,278
% of Total Wealth	19	71	1	4	0	0	2	3

$\chi^2 = 722.2$ with 56 d.f., signif. = .0

C = .64851

N = 995

therefore an overstatement to say that to be a professional or landowning farmer in Middle Tennessee was to be prosperous; to be an unskilled laborer, overseer, or landless farm worker was to be indigent. Minor professionals, skilled workers, and family heads without occupation, while all predominantly among the poorer half of families, did have some members in the wealthier half (45, 28, and 20 percent, respectively) and even in the top decile. (In this and other tables generalizations about minor professionals and overseers are unsure, due to the small numbers of each in the sample.) The figures for mean wealth and percentage of total wealth cogently summarize the extreme maldistribution of wealth among occupational groups: professionals and landed farmers, comprising less than half the family heads of Middle Tennessee, held nine-tenths of the region's wealth—farmers alone seven-tenths.

Table IV-20 portrays a related phenomenon, i.e., the close association of occupation with slaveholding. Though only 34 percent of families throughout the region held slaves, 59 percent of professionals and 55 percent of landed farmers did so; and these two groups together owned 91 percent of all slaves (farmers alone 80 percent). Slaveholding was rare among overseers (7 percent), laborers (5 percent), and landless farm workers (10 percent); it was more common among minor professionals (28 percent), skilled workers (14 percent), and those with no occupation (20 percent—many of them perhaps well-to-do widows), though confined mostly to the lowest rank of slaveholding, that is, one to four slaves. On the other hand, most professionals and landed farmers who owned slaves had five or more.

Table IV-20

Occupation of Family Head by Slaveholding, 1860

Slaveholdings	Families Ranked by Occupation of Head (Percent of Each Rank Shown)							% of Total Fams.
	Landed Farmer	Minor Prof.	Skilled Worker	Overseer	Unsk. Laborer	Landless Ag. Wkr.	None	
20+	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
10-19	14	0	2	0	0	1	6	6
5-9	20	6	4	7	0	1	3	8
1-4	21	22	8	0	5	8	11	16
0	40	72	85	93	95	91	80	67
N	70	18	144	15	75	187	70	
% of Total Fams.	7	2	15	2	8	19	7	
Mean No. Slaves	5	1	1	0	0	0	1	
% of Total Slaves	11	0	3	0	0	2	3	

 $\chi^2 = 241.5$ with 28 d.f., signif. = .0

C = .44173

N = 996

The age structures of occupational groups are contrasted in Table IV-21. Younger heads of families (those in their twenties and thirties, constituting 48 percent of family heads) were over-represented among the occupations of lower status, i.e., minor professional (61 percent), skilled worker (65 percent), overseer (93 percent), laborer (64 percent), and landless farm worker (64 percent). These were essentially young men's occupations. Professionals were dominated by a somewhat older group: 65 percent were between thirty and forty-nine. Family heads in their twenties and those in their fifties and older were under-represented among professionals. Landed farmers were older on the average than members of any other occupational group (excluding those without occupation)—two-thirds were over forty, although overall just over half of family heads had attained that age. The elderliness of family heads without occupation (74 percent were over forty) reflects that group's large proportion of widows.

The same factor accounted for the structural distinctiveness of the families of those without occupation, as shown in Table IV-22; 85 percent of such families were single-headed, compared to 21 percent of families overall. The only other occupational group with an above average proportion of single family heads was minor professionals (28 percent). Professionals (10 percent), skilled workers (9 percent), overseers (14 percent), and landless farm workers (12 percent) were all notably less likely than others to be single, a fact closely related to the absence or near absence of women in those occupations (see Table IV-23). The proportion of extended families in the whole

Table IV-21
Occupation of Family Head by Age of Family Head, 1860

Age of Head	Families Ranked by Occupation of Head (Percent of Each Rank Shown)									% of Total Fams.
	Prof.	Landed Farmer	Minor Prof.	Skilled Worker	Overseer	Unsk.		Landless Ag. Wkr.	None	
						Laborer				
0-29	16	11	28	25	40	35	37	4	200	20
30-39	36	23	33	40	53	29	27	21	280	28
40-49	29	22	11	18	7	17	19	27	209	21
50-59	10	24	22	11	0	15	10	17	169	17
60+	10	20	6	6	0	4	7	30	137	14
N	70	417	18	144	15	75	186	70		
% of Total Fams.	7	42	2	15	2	8	19	7		
Mean Age	41	47	39	38	32	36	37	51		

$\chi^2 = 164.4$ with 28 d.f., signif. = .0

C = .37655

N = 995

Table IV-22

Occupation of Family Head by Family Structure, 1860

Family Structure	Families Ranked by Occupation of Head (Percent of Each Rank Shown)							% of Total Fams.	
	Prof.	Landed Farmer	Minor Prof.	Skilled Worker	Overseer	Unsk. Laborer	Landless Ag. Wkr.	None	N
Single-nuclear	3	11	17	5	7	9	9	61	125
Couple-nuclear	51	56	33	66	47	59	66	9	549
Single-extended	7	8	11	4	7	12	3	24	79
Couple-extended	39	25	39	25	40	20	23	6	241
N	70	417	18	143	15	75	186	70	
% of Total Fams.	7	42	2	14	2	8	19	7	
Mean No. Children	2.7	3.4	2.2	2.5	2.7	2.1	3.1	2.5	
Mean Chil., Boarders	4.0	4.2	4.3	3.3	3.3	2.9	3.5	3.0	

$\chi^2 = 240.5$, with 21 d.f., signif. = .0

C = .44136

N = 994

Table IV-23

Occupation of Family Head by Sex of Family Head, 1860

Sex of Head	Families Ranked by Occupation of Head (Percent of Each Rank Shown)							% of Total Fams.	
	Prof.	Landed Farmer	Minor Prof.	Skilled Worker	Overseer	Unsk. Laborer	Landless Ag. Wkr.	None	N
Male	100	86	89	100	100	87	95	19	857
Female	0	14	11	0	0	13	5	81	139
N	70	417	18	144	15	75	187	70	
% of Total Fams.	7	42	2	15	2	8	19	7	

154

 $\chi^2 = 314.3$ with 7 d.f., signif. = .0

C = .48975

N = 996

population was 32 percent, but such families were over-represented among professionals (46 percent), minor professionals (50 percent), and overseers (47 percent), due mostly to the large proportion of couple-extended families in those groups. Extended families were somewhat under-represented among landless farm workers (26 percent), but among the remaining occupational groups closely paralleled the population average. The basic couple-nuclear family was most prevalent among skilled workers (66 percent), unskilled laborers (59 percent), and landless agricultural workers (66 percent), least so among minor professionals (33 percent), overseers (47 percent), and those without occupation (9 percent).

Landed farmers and landless agricultural workers tended to have more children than others (averaging 3.4 and 3.1, respectively). But the large number of nonnuclear members in the families of professionals and minor professionals gave those two groups large average totals of children, relatives, and boarders (4.0 and 4.3, respectively). Of all occupational groups, landless agricultural workers had the smallest proportion of nonnuclear family members. Small families were especially the mark of unskilled laborers (average total 2.9) and those without occupation (3.0).

The proportion of females in each occupational group is shown in Table IV-23. Women comprised 14 percent of family heads overall but were over-represented only among those with no occupation, of whom they were an overwhelming majority (81 percent). In three occupations—professional, skilled worker, and overseer—there were no women at all. But women were fairly represented among landed farmers (they probably

being mostly widows managing their husbands' estates), minor professionals (often schoolteachers), and unskilled laborers (mostly domestic servants and washerwomen). The occupational groups in which women were common were the same groups with large proportions of single-headed families (see Table IV-22, page 153).

Table IV-24, which crosstabulates occupation and place of birth, affirms the domination of the agricultural classes by native Southerners: 99 percent of landed farmers, 100 percent of overseers, and 98 percent of landless farm workers were born in the South. (The large proportion of non-Tennessean upper South natives among landed farmers—and among those without occupation—relates in part to the high average age of persons in those occupational and nativity groups. Conversely, the abundance of native Tennesseans among overseers and landless agricultural workers relates in part to the youthfulness of persons in those three groups. Compare Table IV-21, page 152. Southerners made up the great majority of family heads in every occupation, in fact, but non-Southerners (8 percent of family heads overall) accounted for significant proportions of professionals (29 percent), minor professionals (18 percent), skilled workers (23 percent), and unskilled laborers (26 percent). The Irish accounted for much of the last group—24 percent of all nonagrarian laboring free family heads in Middle Tennessee were sons or daughters of Erin. Among skilled workers, the proportion of foreigners slightly exceeded that of Northerners; but among minor professionals, Northerners predominated. Among professionals those two nativity groups were about equally represented.

Table IV-24

Occupation of Family Head by Place of Birth of Family Head, 1860

Place of Birth of Head	Families Ranked by Occupation of Head (Percent of Each Rank Shown)								% of Total Fams.
	Prof.	Landed Farmer	Minor Prof.	Skilled Worker	Overseer	Unsk. Laborer	Landless Ag. Wkr.	None	
Tennessee	49	57	39	44	87	49	77	46	568 57
Upper South	19	36	28	28	13	19	18	43	289 29
Lower South	3	6	17	6	0	5	3	6	50 5
New England	6	0	6	3	0	0	0	0	9 1
Middle Atlantic	7	0	6	3	0	1	1	1	14 1
Northwest	1	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	7 1
Ireland	3	1	6	5	0	24	1	3	33 3
Great Britain	6	0	0	4	0	1	0	0	11 1
Continental Europe	6	0	0	4	0	0	1	1	12 1
N	69	417	18	142	15	75	187	70	
% of Total Fams.	7	42	2	14	2	8	19	7	

 $\chi^2 = 309.0$ with 56 d.f., signif. = .0

C = .48716

N = 993

Table IV-25 links occupation and literacy. Not surprisingly, all professionals were literate, since literacy was indispensable for professional activities. The very high illiteracy rate among unskilled laborers (33 percent) probably reflects that group's large contingent of Irish, very many of whom could not read or write. The high rate among those with no occupation (24 percent) may reflect that group's great proportion of women, who as a whole were probably less literate than men. The only other occupational group with an above average illiteracy rate was landless agricultural workers—male and native-born, to be sure, but young and poor as well.

Ransom and Sutch have delineated the 1860 occupational structure of white males in the cotton South, a region on the whole less urban and more plantation-dominated than Middle Tennessee. Their analysis helps put into perspective the occupations of the heartlanders. The overall proportion of agriculturalists (landed farmers, landless agricultural workers, and overseers) was higher among the men of the cotton South (71 percent) than among Middle Tennessee family heads (63 percent), reflecting the overwhelming ruralism of the cotton South. The proportion of overseers, in particular, was twice as high in the cotton South, due to the prevalence of slaves and great plantations there. (But this undoubtedly is influenced by sampling differences also: female family heads, who were never overseers, are included in the Middle Tennessee analysis but not the cotton South analysis; young men not heads of

Table IV-25
Occupation of Family Head by Literacy of Family Head, 1860

Literacy of Head	Families Ranked by Occupation of Head (Percent of Each Rank Shown)							% of Total Fams.
	Prof.	Landed Farmer	Minor Prof.	Skilled Worker	Overseer	Unsk. Laborer	Landless Ag. Wkr.	
Literate	100	90	94	93	93	67	79	87
Illiterate	0	10	6	7	7	33	21	13
N	69	417	18	144	15	75	187	70
% of Total Fams.	7	42	2	15	2	8	19	7

$\chi^2 = 63.5$ with 7 d.f., signif. = .0

C = .24489

N = 995

families, who were often overseers, are included in the cotton South analysis but not the Middle Tennessee analysis.)²³

The same three factors—ruralism, slaves, and plantations—surely accounted for the markedly smaller proportions of skilled workers and unskilled laborers among cotton South free men (8 and 5 percent, respectively) than among Middle Tennessee family heads. In the cotton South, plantation slaves performed much (or most) of the skilled and unskilled labor required in the rural areas, and few towns existed to demand more. Professionals and minor professionals (whom Ransom and Sutch do not dissociate) constituted 17 percent of free men in the cotton South, a rather larger proportion than in Middle Tennessee, where 9 percent of family heads followed those vocations. (Here again, the discrepancy may be due to the inclusion in the Middle Tennessee analysis of female family heads, who were absent in the professions and under-represented in the minor professions; and to the inclusion in the Ransom and Sutch analysis of young men who were not family heads and who—being often clerks or schoolteachers—were probably over-represented in the minor professions.)²⁴

The occupational structure of Clarke County, Georgia, as portrayed by Huffman, diverged considerably from Middle Tennessee's, partly because Huffman samples adult males, partly because the town of Athens bulked larger in its county's population than did the towns of the heartland in their region's population, and partly because Clarke

²³Ransom and Sutch, One Kind of Freedom, 16.

²⁴*Ibid.*

County and Middle Tennessee were fundamentally different. Only 46 percent of men in Clarke County in 1860 were agriculturalists, while the proportions there of professionals, minor professionals, and skilled workers were higher than in Middle Tennessee. Unskilled workers were relatively fewer in Clarke, due to the profusion of slaves (who made up half the population) and the absence of Irishmen. Landless agricultural workers in Clarke, unlike those in the heartland, outnumbered landed farmers (Huffman's tally of the landless group includes many young men who were not family heads, however).²⁵

Though these proportions all differed from Middle Tennessee's, the relationship of occupation to wealth and age in Clarke County paralleled that in Middle Tennessee: 53 percent of Clarke County professionals and 47 percent of landed farmers occupied the upper two wealth deciles; 84 percent and 98 percent, respectively, the upper five. As in Middle Tennessee, persons in all other occupations in Clarke were concentrated in the bottom half of wealth deciles, especially unskilled laborers (87 percent) and landless agricultural workers (82 percent). Excluding those without occupation, the oldest occupational group as a whole in both Clarke County and Middle Tennessee was landed farmers; professionals in both were somewhat younger. All other occupations in both regions were dominated by people considerably younger.²⁶

²⁵Huffman, "Old South, New South," 71.

²⁶Ibid., 95, 97.

Agricultural occupations were more preponderant in antebellum Texas than in Clarke County or Middle Tennessee: 70 percent of Texas family heads worked on farms, a figure very close to Ransom and Sutch's for the men of the cotton South. Contingents of professionals and minor professionals (10 percent combined) and unskilled laborers (9 percent) in Texas approximated the relative size of those in Middle Tennessee, but the predominance of plantations along the gulf coast and the scarcity of towns across the state probably helped keep the proportion of skilled workers (10 percent) small in Texas. The relationship of occupation to wealth in Texas resembled Middle Tennessee's. Professionals were the most prosperous group as a whole, followed by farmers (in absolute dollar amounts, however, neither group approached the average of its affluent heartland counterpart). All other occupational groups (save landless agricultural workers, not distinguished from landed farmers in the Texas study) were of substantially below average wealth, although in Texas the economic level of the unskilled relative to other occupational groups was considerably higher than in Middle Tennessee. This reflected, perhaps, the high demand for, and scarcity of, labor on the frontier.²⁷

In Bonner's planter-dominated Hancock County, Georgia, the overall proportion of agricultural occupations among family heads (64 percent) very nearly matched that in Middle Tennessee. But the relative proportions of the three occupations comprising the agricultural class were

²⁷Campbell and Lowe, Wealth and Power in Antebellum Texas, 30, 59, 63, 93.

conspicuously dissimilar in the two regions. The proportion of overseers in Hancock (13 percent of family heads) was far higher than in Middle Tennessee, while the proportion of landed farmers (33 percent) and the ratio of landed farmers to landless agricultural workers (less than two to one) were substantially lower. The proportions of professionals were equivalent in the two regions (7 percent), but Hancock's ruralism and huge slave population (twice that of whites) kept the proportion of free skilled workers there low (11 percent). (Bonner omits discrete figures for minor professionals, unskilled workers, and family heads without occupation.)²⁸

As in Middle Tennessee, landed farmers were the oldest group in Hancock (average age forty-six), but the unchallenged economic ascendancy of landed farmers manifested in Hancock was not found in Middle Tennessee. The agricultural class as a whole held 96 percent of all slaves in Hancock (in Middle Tennessee 82 percent), but those slaves were nearly all in the hands of the landed farmers. The proportions of overseers and landless agricultural workers owning slaves in Hancock (6 and 0 percent, respectively) were lower than in the heartland, as were the proportions of professionals (51 percent) and skilled workers (8 percent) owning slaves. And in Hancock, unlike Middle Tennessee, Texas, or Clarke County, the average wealth of landed farmers surpassed that of professionals (by a factor of more than two, in fact); and it was vastly larger than the average wealth of other

²⁸Bonner, "Profile of a Late Antebellum Community," 39-40, 43.

occupational groups. In absolute terms, too, the relatively small, powerful elite of landed farmers in Hancock outstripped its more broadly based counterpart in Middle Tennessee: the average real and personal wealth of Hancock County's landed farmers in 1860 was \$21,615, that of the heartland's \$15,145.²⁹

To those in the antebellum era who contemplated the South from without, and to many who observed it from within, the fundamental attribute defining classes of free Southerners was slaveholding. Every pronouncement on the Southern way of life, whether issuing from North or South, affirmed the coexistence (peaceful or not, depending on who was talking) in Dixie of a small number of white people who owned slaves and a large number of those who did not. Generations since have also preferred this perspective to the many others from which antebellum Southern society may be viewed. The seven tables below contrast the social and economic characteristics of large slaveholders, small slaveholders, and nonslaveholders in Middle Tennessee in 1860.

The number of slaves owned is broken down by ranks of slaveholders in Table IV-26. Large slaveholders (those with twenty or more slaves) constituted 4 percent of families yet owned 44 percent of slaves; if that rank is combined with the next (those owning ten to nineteen slaves), it is seen that 10 percent of families owned 70 percent of slaves. When all ranks are combined, it is seen that 33 percent of families owned all slaves. Thus, the concentration of slaves was greater than that of personal property overall (Table IV-8, page 126)

²⁹Ibid.

Table IV-26
Breakdown of Slaveholdings by Slaveholding Rank, 1860

Slaveholdings	Families Ranked by Slaveholdings				
	20+	10-19	5-9	1-4	0
Mean No. Slaves	36	13	7	2	0
% of Total Slaves	44	26	18	11	0
Cumulative % of Total Slaves	44	70	88	100	100
N	36	60	83	154	667
% of Total Fams.	4	6	8	15	67

Sample mean = 2.95

N = 1,000

and of real property (Table IV-9, page 127). The wide disparity between the average number of slaves held by families in the upper rank of slaveholders (thirty-six) and the average number held by those in the next rank (thirteen) implies the existence of a few very large slaveholdings.

Table IV-27 shows the distribution of slaveholders and nonslaveholders among towns, villages, and farms. For obvious reasons, families in the two highest ranks of slaveholding were virtually all farm families (100 percent of those in the first rank, 94 percent of those in the second). Farm families were over-represented among all ranks of slaveholders, village families under-represented among all, and town families under-represented among larger slaveholders but fairly represented among smaller. Town and village families made up 33 percent of all families but 41 percent of nonslaveholding families.

The high correlation between wealth and slaveholding is documented in Table IV-28. Very nearly all (97 percent) of the largest slaveholders were among the very rich. Few nonslaveholders (6 percent) were above the middling wealth ranks (deciles four through seven) while nearly half (44 percent) were below. Owning even one slave practically assured a place among the wealthier half of families; owning none pretty much assured a place among the poorer half. The mean wealth and proportion of total wealth figures succinctly depict the great economic gulf between slaveholders and nonslaveholders. Families in the upper rank of slaveholding held property worth, on the average, thirty-seven times that of a typical nonslaveholding family. Even families in the lowest

Table IV-27
Slaveholding by Residence, 1860

Residence	Families Ranked by Slaveholdings Percent of Each Rank Shown					N	% of Total Fams.
	20+	10-19	5-9	1-4	0		
Town	0	6	19	18	24	161	21
Village	0	0	5	5	17	96	12
Farm	100	94	77	78	59	517	67
N	26	49	64	129	506		
% of Total Fams.	3	6	8	17	65		

$\chi^2 = 60.2$ with 8 d.f., signif. = .0

C = .26856

N = 774

Table IV-28
Slaveholding by Wealth, 1860

Wealth Rank (Deciles)	Families Ranked by Slaveholdings (Percent of Each Rank Shown)				
	20+	10-19	5-9	1-4	0
1	97	53	22	7	1
2	3	43	45	20	1
3	0	3	25	31	4
4	0	0	6	26	9
5	0	0	1	8	13
6	0	0	1	3	14
7	0	0	0	1	15
8	0	0	0	1	15
9+10	0	0	0	3	29
N	36	60	83	154	666
% of Total Fams.	4	6	8	15	67
Mean Wealth (\$)	61,533	32,204	19,600	13,507	1,642
% of Total Wealth	25	22	18	23	12

$\chi^2 = 1094.8$ with 32 d.f., signif. = .0

C = .72311

N = 999

slaveholding rank averaged eight times the property value of nonslaveholding families. The nonslaveholding class as a whole, comprising two-thirds of the heartland's free families, held but 12 percent of the region's wealth. Slaveholders with ten or more slaves, comprising a tenth of families, held nearly half (47 percent) of all wealth.

Table IV-29 portrays the occupational structure of each slaveholding and nonslaveholding rank. Landed farmers composed the majority of family heads in each slaveholding rank—an overwhelming majority (92 percent) in the top rank. Professionals were over-represented among all ranks of slaveholders, and greatly so among the two middle ranks. Other occupations were not represented at all among the largest slave-owners, but were fairly common among the smaller. Skilled workers and family heads without occupation, in particular, were present in significant proportion in the lowest three ranks of slaveholders. In fact, all occupations save overseer were represented, even if minimally, among the owners of one to four slaves, 29 percent of whom were not professionals or landed farmers. All occupations were represented too among nonslaveholders, but their respective proportions contrasted sharply with their representation in the population as a whole. Whereas professionals and landed farmers together made up half (49 percent) of all family heads, they made up only a third (32 percent) of nonslaveholders. The less prestigious occupations were concomitantly over-represented among nonslaveholders—especially landless farm workers, who comprised a fifth (19 percent) of all family heads but a fourth

Table IV-29
Slaveholding by Occupation of Family Head, 1860

Occupation of Head	Families Ranked by Slaveholdings (Percent of Each Rank Shown)					N	% of Total Fams.
	20+	10-19	5-9	1-4	0		
Professional	8	17	17	8	4	70	7
Landed Farmer	92	70	70	62	28	417	42
Minor Prof.	0	0	1	3	2	18	2
Skilled Worker	0	5	7	8	18	144	15
Overseer	0	0	1	0	2	15	2
Unskilled Lab.	0	0	0	3	11	75	8
Landless Agr. Worker	0	2	1	10	26	187	19
None	0	7	2	5	8	70	7
N	36	60	83	154	663		
% of Total Fams.	4	6	8	16	67		

$\chi^2 = 241.5$ with 28 d.f., signif. = .0

C = .44173

N = 996

(26 percent) of nonslaveholders. However, agricultural occupations as a whole accounted for a smaller proportion of nonslaveholders (56 percent) than of the population as a whole (63 percent).

The relationship of slaveholding to the age of the family head, shown in Table IV-30, followed a pattern much like that of wealth to age (Table IV-14, page 133): that is, the upper ranks were dominated by older family heads. Almost none (3 percent) of the largest slaveholders were in their twenties; 64 percent were fifty and older, though only 31 percent of family heads as a whole were in that age group. Family heads in their twenties were in fact under-represented in every rank of slaveholders, and those in their thirties and even forties were under-represented in three ranks out of four. Not only were slaveholders overall likely to be older than nonslaveholders, but those in each rank of slaveholding tended to be older than those in the rank below. Nonslaveholding family heads were predominantly younger people: 57 percent were thirty-nine and under, though that age group accounted for no more than 43 percent of any rank of slaveholders. Fourteen years separated the average age of nonslaveholders from that of the largest slaveholders.

Family structure and slaveholding correlate weakly, as Table IV-31 indicates, but a pattern is perceptible. The essential distinction here, however, is between larger slaveholders (those with ten or more slaves) on the one hand, and small slaveholders and nonslaveholders on the other. The latter groups varied little among themselves and generally followed the overall distribution of family types. But the former groups—the two larger slaveholding ranks—had significantly

Table IV-30

Slaveholding by Age of Family Head, 1860

Age of Head	Families Ranked by Slaveholdings (Percent of Each Rank Shown)					N	% of Total Fams.
	20+	10-19	5-9	1-4	0		
0-29	3	5	5	12	26	202	20
30-39	17	13	19	31	31	281	28
40-49	17	15	35	18	21	210	21
50-59	33	30	19	24	13	169	17
60+	31	37	22	15	10	137	14
N	36	60	83	154	666		
% of Total Fams.	4	6	8	15	67		
Mean Age	53	54	49	45	39		

$\chi^2 = 125.5$ with 16 d.f., signif. = .0

C = .33409

N = 999

Table IV-31
Slaveholding by Family Structure, 1860

Family Structure	Families Ranked by Slaveholdings (Percent of Each Rank Shown)					N	% of Total Fams.
	20+	10-19	5-9	1-4	0		
Single-nuclear	11	10	11	11	14	127	13
Couple-nuclear	31	45	52	57	57	550	55
Single-extended	8	5	13	8	8	80	8
Couple-extended	50	40	24	23	22	241	24
N	36	60	83	154	665		
% of Total Fams.	4	6	8	15	67		
Mean No. Child.	3.3	3.1	3.1	3.1	2.9		
Mean No. Child., Boarders	5.0	4.2	3.9	3.9	3.5		

$\chi^2 = 29.3$ with 12 d.f., signif. = .0035

C = .16894

N = 998

more extended families (58 and 45 percent) than the population as a whole (32 percent) and were a little more likely than other groups to be headed by a married couple. The average number of children was higher for slaveholders than for nonslaveholders, and somewhat higher for the top-rank slaveholders than for lesser ones; the age structure of each group must have been a factor here (see Table IV-30). But the greater prevalence of nonnuclear relatives and boarders in the families of the larger slaveholders brought the average total size of those families to a level substantially higher than that of small- and nonslaveholders' families.

The relationship of slaveholding and literacy shown in Table IV-32 paralleled that of wealth and literacy. Illiteracy was unknown among family heads in the largest slaveholding rank, very rare among those in the lesser ranks, but more common among nonslaveholders (18 percent) than in the population as a whole (13 percent).³⁰

Comparable statistics on the distribution of slaveholding and the concentration of slaves in other regions are not plentiful, but those available suggest that Middle Tennessee was no aberration. In Louisiana overall, according to Roger Shugg's calculation, planters with twenty slaves or more held 71 percent of all slaves in 1860, a far greater concentration than in Middle Tennessee. In the alluvial cotton and sugar subregions of Louisiana the concentration of slaves in the hands

³⁰Crosstabulations revealed no appreciable relationship between slaveholding and sex of the family head (significance of $X^2 = .9931$, $C = .01562$), or between slaveholding and place of birth of the family head (significance of $X^2 = .2179$, $C = .20161$).

Table IV-32
Slaveholding by Literacy of Family Head, 1860

Literacy of Head	Families Ranked by Slaveholdings (Percent of Each Rank Shown)					N	% of Total Fams.
	20+	10-19	5-9	1-4	0		
Literate	100	97	94	97	82	865	87
Illiterate	0	3	6	3	18	134	13
N	36	60	83	154	666		
% of Total Fams.	4	6	8	15	67		

$\chi^2 = 42.2$ with 4 d.f., signif. = .0

C = .20139

N = 999

of these large planters was even greater: Fabian Linden estimates figures of 84 and 89 percent, respectively. In the subsistence farming areas of the Louisiana prairies, however, it was lower than in Middle Tennessee, being 35 percent in the eastern prairies and 32 percent in the western. In the northern upland area of the state, where diversified agriculture reigned, the concentration was nearly identical to that in Middle Tennessee: 45 percent of slaves were held by persons with twenty or more slaves.³¹

Slaveholdings in Clarke County, Georgia, were distributed very similarly to those in Middle Tennessee. In Clarke, 71 percent of adult men had no slaves, 18 percent had one to nine, 8 percent had ten to nineteen, and 4 percent had twenty or more. (These figures would no doubt be even closer to those for the heartland if Clarke County families, rather than adult males, were analyzed.) The upper decile of Clarke County men ranked by slaveholdings (roughly, those with ten slaves or more) held 72 percent of all slaves. Thus, the concentration of slaves there also closely paralleled that in Middle Tennessee.³²

Campbell and Lowe find a nearly identical overall pattern of distribution and concentration in Texas in 1860, but their discrete regional statistics reveal great variety within that vast state. In the gulf coast cotton and sugar plantation region 71 percent of families

³¹Shugg, Origin of Class Struggle in Louisiana, 323; Fabian Linden, "Economic Democracy in the Slave South: An Appraisal of Some Recent Views," Journal of Negro History, XXXI (Apr., 1946), 148-51.

³²Huffman, "Old South, New South," 153, 171.

owned no slaves (a figure slightly higher than Middle Tennessee's) and 11 percent owned ten or more (in Middle Tennessee 10 percent). But those 11 percent held 82 percent of all slaves (the 10 percent in Middle Tennessee held 70 percent). In the north-central prairie frontier 80 percent of families held no slaves; only 3 percent owned ten or more, and they held 48 percent of all slaves in the region.³³

Statewide, the 27 percent of Texas families who held slaves owned 78 percent of all wealth; the 33 percent of families in Middle Tennessee who held slaves owned, as noted earlier, 88 percent of all wealth. But closer scrutiny discloses that the economic disparity between slaveholders and nonslaveholders was far more glaring in Middle Tennessee than in Texas. The average wealth of slaveholding families in the heartland was \$23,587 and of nonslaveholding families \$1,642: a ratio of 14.4:1. In Texas as a whole, slaveholders were not so affluent (average wealth \$18,370) nor nonslaveholders so indigent (average wealth \$1,907), and their wealth ratio was 9.6:1. In the rich gulf coast region considered separately the ratio was also much lower (9.4:1) than in Middle Tennessee, but that was because both slaveholders and especially nonslaveholders on the gulf coast fared better (average wealth \$34,907 and \$3,716, respectively) than their heartland counterparts. On the frontier the ratio was considerably lower (6.9:1) because slaveholders there (whose average wealth was \$13,077) could not emulate the opulence of those in Middle Tennessee,

³³Campbell and Lowe, Wealth and Power in Antebellum Texas, 44, 141.

while nonslaveholders were a little more comfortable (average wealth \$1,888) than their opposite numbers in Middle Tennessee.³⁴

Basically, it would appear that Middle Tennessee's immense agricultural riches permitted its (overwhelmingly agrarian) slaveholders to amass substantial wealth—rivalling even the slavemasters of some of the deep South's most prominent and prolific plantation domains—while the region's comparatively advanced urbanization concurrently spawned in the towns a large propertyless class (see Tables IV-1, page 108, and IV-11, page 128) nearly unknown in much of the rest of the South, a protoproletariat exceedingly wretched by comparison to the yeomen who constituted the great bulk of nonslaveholders across the South. Thus did the free folk of the heartland drink at once a fuller measure of nature's bounty and a fuller measure of man's corruption than were commonly vouchsafed their fellow citizens of Dixie.

Gerontocracy ruled the antebellum South on many levels, from the exalted chambers of state to the county courthouses, and from the great slave plantations to the family farms and country churches. Age was an important correlative in the invisible world of Middle Tennesseans, as the three preceding sections indicated. The six tables below examine the population of Middle Tennessee from the perspective of age; that is, they compare the social and economic characteristics of families categorized by the age of the family head. The fact implicit in the previous tables—that older people and their families differed in important ways from younger people and theirs—is explicitly documented here.

³⁴Ibid., 63-64, 101.

Table IV-33 confirms the close relationship of age and wealth portrayed differently in Table IV-14, page 133. In general, younger family heads were poorer, older ones wealthier. Of those in their twenties, 28 percent ranked among the poor, almost none (1 percent) among the rich. Overwhelmingly these youngest family heads were among the poorer half of families (74 percent). The oldest family heads (in their sixties and older) presented a mirrored aspect: 70 percent were among the wealthier half (17 percent were rich) and only 12 percent among the poorest fifth. Age cohorts in between follow a more or less steady trend of increasing wealth with advancing age. Most arresting are the mean wealth and percentage of total wealth figures: family heads fifty and older were worth on the average over \$15,000, those in their twenties barely over \$2,000. The latter group, comprising 20 percent of family heads, owned but 5 percent of the region's wealth. Family heads fifty and older, representing less than a third of all families, owned over half (54 percent) of the region's wealth.

The occupational structures of the age cohorts varied significantly, as Table IV-34 shows. Most notable are the rising proportion of landed farmers up through the age ranks (from 22 percent of family heads in their twenties to 61 percent of those sixty and over) and the declining proportion of landless farm workers (from 34 to 9 percent). Overseers disappear completely in the two older age ranks. If these three agricultural occupations are treated together their combined proportion of family heads is seen to increase up through the age ranks (from 59 to 70 percent), while within that combined agricultural category the

Table IV-33

Age of Family Head by Wealth, 1860

Wealth Rank (Deciles)	Families Ranked by Age of Head (% of Each Rank Shown)				
	0-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+
1	1	8	11	18	17
2	5	6	11	15	20
3	2	11	12	15	11
4	7	11	15	9	10
5	10	13	7	7	12
6	12	12	8	10	6
7	19	8	10	6	4
8	15	12	8	7	8
9+10	28	21	18	14	12
N	201	281	210	169	137
% of Total Fams.	20	28	21	17	14
Mean Wealth (\$)	2,129	6,733	8,377	16,146	15,619
% of Total Wealth	5	21	20	30	24

$\chi^2 = 146.3$ with 32 d.f., signif. = .0

C = .35753

N = 998

Table IV-34

Age of Family Head by Occupation of Family Head, 1860

Occupation of Head	Families Ranked by Age of Head (Percent of Each Rank Shown)					N	% of Total Fams.
	0-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+		
Professional	5	9	10	4	5	70	7
Landed Farmer	22	35	44	59	61	417	42
Minor Prof.	3	2	1	2	1	18	2
Skilled Worker	18	20	12	10	7	144	15
Overseer	3	3	1	0	0	15	2
Unskilled Laborer	13	8	6	7	2	75	8
Landless Agr. Worker	34	18	17	11	9	186	19
None	2	5	9	7	15	70	7
N	200	280	209	169	137		
% of Total Fams.	20	28	21	17	14		

 $\chi^2 = 164.4$ with 28 d.f., signif. = .0

C = .37655

N = 995

proportion of landed farmers increases dramatically, from about one-third to six-sevenths. In fact, the most common occupation of family heads in their twenties was landless agricultural worker but it was landed farmer among those in all other age ranks.

Unskilled laborers, like landless agricultural workers, were relatively most common among the youngest family heads (13 percent) and least common among the oldest (2 percent); skilled workers and minor professionals, too, generally mimicked that pattern. Professionals were relatively most common among family heads in their thirties and forties, and least common among those younger than thirty and older than fifty. Family heads without occupation were found in every age rank but were over-represented among the oldest (15 percent) and under-represented among the youngest (2 percent). If all occupations below landed farmer are combined as a single "low-status" group and contrasted with the "high-status" professionals and landed farmers, the low-status proportion is seen to decline from 73 percent of family heads in their twenties to 34 percent of those in their sixties and older.

Table IV-35 shows clear-cut distinctions among age groups on the basis of slaveholding. Over half of the oldest family heads were slaveholders (54 percent), while the great majority of the youngest were not (87 percent). The proportion of slaveholders rises steadily up through the age ranks. Not only were the elderly more often than not slaveholders, but they were in considerable proportion (24 percent) large slaveholders, with ten or more bondsmen. Large slaveholders were

Table IV-35
Age of Family Head by Slaveholding, 1860

Slaveholdings	Families Ranked by Age of Head (Percent of Each Rank Shown)					N	% of Total Fams.
	0-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+		
20+	1	2	3	7	8	36	4
10-19	2	3	4	11	16	60	6
5-9	2	6	14	10	13	83	8
1-4	9	17	13	22	17	154	15
0	87	72	66	51	46	666	67
N	202	281	210	169	137		
% of Total Fams.	20	28	21	17	14		
Mean No. Slaves	1	2	3	5	7		
% of Total Slaves	4	16	19	27	33		

$\chi^2 = 125.5$ with 16 d.f., signif. = .0

C = .33409

N = 999

under-represented among all age ranks below age fifty. Family heads fifty and older owned 60 percent of all slaves, though they accounted for only 31 percent of families.

Table IV-36 illustrates the variation of family structure across age ranks. Among family heads under thirty, couple-nuclear was by far the most common family type (67 percent), but that proportion declines to less than half (48 percent) among those fifty to fifty-nine and to only 42 percent among those sixty and over. Obviously, this was in great part due to the deaths of spouses, as implied by the concurrently increasing proportion of single-headed families (from only 12 percent of those with heads aged twenty to twenty-nine, to 36 percent of those with heads sixty and older).

The ratio of single-nuclear to single-extended families was highest among families whose heads were in their forties and lowest among those whose heads were in their twenties. That is to say, below age fifty the proportion of single-extended families increases less rapidly up through age ranks than does the proportion of single-nuclear, whereas the opposite is true above age forty-nine. The proportion of both these family types, however, generally increases up through all age ranks at the expense of couple-nuclear. Interestingly, the proportion of couple-extended families remains fairly constant through all age ranks, never varying more than three percentage points from the population figure of 24 percent.

The combined proportion of single- and couple-extended families changes little through the first three age ranks (28, 32, and 29 percent, respectively). The declining proportion of couple-nuclear in

Table IV-36
Age of Family Head by Family Structure, 1860

Family Structure	Families Ranked by Age of Head (Percent of Each Rank Shown)					N	% of Total Fams.	Mean Age
	0-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+			
Single-nuclear	6	9	18	15	20	127	13	47
Couple-nuclear	67	59	54	48	42	550	55	40
Single-extended	6	5	8	10	16	80	8	49
Couple-extended	22	27	21	27	22	240	24	43
N	201	280	210	169	137			
% of Total Fams.	20	28	21	17	14			
Mean No. Child.	1.6	3.2	4.4	3.7	1.6			
Mean No. Child., and Boarders	2.1	3.8	5.1	4.4	2.7			

$\chi^2 = 53.1$ with 12 d.f., signif. = .0

C = .22478

N = 997

those ranks is balanced by the increasing proportion of single-nuclear. But in age ranks fifty to fifty-nine and sixty and over the overall proportion of extended families rises considerably (to 37 and 38 percent, respectively), because the still declining proportion of couple-nuclear in those ranks is balanced by the growth of single-extended, rather than single-nuclear as in the younger ranks.

The average number of children per family rises as age ranks progress from twenties to forties (1.6 to 4.4), but thereafter declines (to 1.6 for families whose heads were in their sixties). Families whose heads were in their forties thus had the most members overall (5.1 average total of children, nonnuclear relatives, and boarders), but the average size of families whose heads were elderly (sixty and over) was raised (to 2.7) by the large number of nonnuclear relatives and boarders in those families.

A closely related crosstabulation—Table IV-37—shows that the proportion of women family heads rises through the age ranks, presumably because husbands died and their widows survived. Women constituted 14 percent of family heads overall, but only 3 percent of those in their twenties. Among those sixty and over women constituted over one-fourth (28 percent). The average age of female family heads was a full nine years greater than that of male family heads.

The significant correlation between age and place of birth, shown in Table IV-38, derives primarily from the differential distribution among age ranks of family heads native to Tennessee, those native to the upper South outside Tennessee, and those native to the lower South. The high proportion of these last two groups among older age ranks

Table IV-37

Age of Family Head by Sex of Family Head, 1860

Sex of Head	Families Ranked by Age of Head (Percent of Each Rank Shown)					N	% of Total Fams.	Mean Age
	0-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+			
Male	97	90	83	81	72	858	86	41
Female	3	10	17	19	28	141	14	50
N	202	281	210	169	137			
% of Total Fams.	20	28	21	17	14			

$$X^2 = 49.8 \text{ with } 4 \text{ d.f., signif.} = .0$$

C = .21798

N = 999

Table IV-38

Age of Family Head by Place of Birth of Family Head, 1860

Place of Birth of Head	Families Ranked by Age of Head (Percent of Each Rank Shown)					N	% of Total Fams.	Mean Age
	0-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+			
Tennessee	79	71	62	39	12	569	57	37
Upper South	11	13	25	46	74	290	29	53
Lower South	4	4	2	8	10	51	5	48
New England	1	1	1	1	0	9	1	41
Middle Atlantic	1	2	1	1	2	14	1	44
Northwest	2	1	1	0	0	7	1	32
Ireland	3	6	3	2	2	33	3	38
Great Britain	0	0	2	3	0	11	1	47
Continental Europe	2	1	1	1	1	12	1	37
N	201	279	201	169	137			
% of Total Fams.	20	28	21	17	14			

 $\chi^2 = 290.4$ with 32 d.f., signif. = .0

C = .47513

N = 996

(54 percent of family heads aged fifty to fifty-nine, 84 percent of those sixty and older) reflects the origins of the early settlers of Middle Tennessee, most of them Virginians, North Carolinians, or South Carolinians. Below age fifty (that is, among those born in 1811 or later, after the great migrations had substantially populated Middle Tennessee) most family heads were native Tennesseans, outnumbering non-Tennessee Southerners by more than five to one in the youngest age rank. The combined proportion of non-Southerners was small among the elderly (5 percent of family heads sixty and older) but greater among the young (9 percent of those in their twenties, 11 percent of those in their thirties, 9 percent of those in their forties), reflecting the more recent immigration of young outlanders, both American and European. The over-representation of Irishmen in the thirty to thirty-nine age group, in particular, relates to the influx of young Irish immigrants (in their twenties) during the 1840s and 1850s.³⁵

Individual accumulation of wealth over time was a national phenomenon in the antebellum era. Soltow demonstrates that in the country as a whole in 1860 the proportion of adult men with property worth at least \$100 (approximately equivalent to the top eight wealth deciles in Table IV-33, page 180) rises from 40 percent of men in their twenties to 68 percent of men in their thirties and to 78 percent of men forty and older. Average wealth in those age groups rises from \$886 to \$1,999 to \$4,543. Middle Tennessee family heads of all ages were better off: 72 percent of those in their twenties, 79 percent of those in their thirties, and at least 82 percent of those forty and older

³⁵Crosstabulations revealed no appreciable relationship between age and residence (significance of $X^2 = .2824$, $C = .11166$), or between

were above the bottom two wealth deciles, and the average wealth of every age rank far exceeded the national averages. (These Middle Tennessee figures would somewhat diminish, however—especially for the under-thirty group—if adult men were sampled rather than family heads.) But the relative economic positions of the Middle Tennessee age cohorts corresponded closely to the national trend.³⁶

Huffman's Georgians revealed a similar pattern, except that the youngest men, only 38 percent of whom held \$100 or more, were considerably worse off than their Middle Tennessee counterparts who headed families. The proportion of Clarke County men in each age group worth at least \$5,000 (approximating the upper three wealth deciles in Table IV-33, page 180) rises steadily from 8 percent of those in their twenties to 46 percent of those in their fifties, very similarly to Middle Tennessee. But it declines to 42 percent of those sixty and older and thus differs from Middle Tennessee, where the proportion remains unchanged after age fifty-nine (perhaps, again, a consequence of different sampling methods).³⁷

Texans, too, could anticipate increasing wealth as they aged. In Texas, family heads overall were younger, and the relative economic position of the young was a little better, than in Middle Tennessee. Family heads averaged thirty-nine years of age in Texas and those under forty constituted 56 percent of the whole (48 percent in Middle Tennessee, where the average age was forty-two). The average wealth of

³⁶Soltow, Men and Wealth, 38, 77.

³⁷Huffman, "Old South, New South," 157.

Texas family heads in their twenties (\$3,091) was conspicuously higher than that of their Middle Tennessee counterparts (\$2,129), though in every other age group heartlanders outstripped Texans. Probably the relative immaturity of Texas had prevented the accumulation of wealth by 1860 on a scale rivalling that in other regions, and thus older men in Texas—most of them comparatively recent immigrants like the rest—had not attained dominance of wealth like those to the east. Nevertheless, the overall trend in Texas was increased wealth with age, and Campbell and Lowe find therein at least partial confirmation of the "American Dream."³⁸

The tables and statistics presented in this chapter reveal many crucial facts about Middle Tennessee society in 1860 which no one in that era could have known. Yet the broad conclusions to which these data point were for the most part apprehended intuitively by the people of the antebellum heartland. They understood, for example, that their society, far from being homogeneous, encompassed in microcosm the whole spectrum of the South's constituents, from the great planter to the humble slave, and from the yeoman and artisan of the countryside to the laborer and merchant of the town. They understood, too, that material possessions in their land were shared very unequally. But they understood above all that while differences of wealth and livelihood, of age and upbringing, of class and race, all separated Middle Tennesseans, two

³⁸Campbell and Lowe, Wealth and Power in Antebellum Texas, 28-29, 58-59, 61.

fundamental facts worked to unite them. These facts were, of course, pervasive ruralism and uncommonly broad prosperity—the one helping to define heartlanders as a people of the South, the other helping to set them apart as a people unto themselves.

CHAPTER V

THE VINEYARDS WHERE THEY LABORED: FARMS IN THE ANTEBELLUM HEARTLAND

The foregoing chapter examined the anatomy of Middle Tennessee society; the present one dissects that society's strong and nurturing heart. Agriculture in an essential sense created this society and sustained it, set its distinctive tone and shaped its contours. Fortunately, the detailed census returns of 1860 permit the close examination of agriculture that its fundamental importance demands.

The tables that follow are based on a random sample of farms from the 1860 manuscript returns of agriculture for Middle Tennessee (see Appendix A). The three sections embracing the tables survey these farms from three perspectives: acreage, slaveholding, and land tenure. Each section concludes with a discussion of comparable findings for other antebellum regions, in order better to understand Middle Tennessee's place within the agricultural South.

To many then and now, agriculture in Dixie's land before the Civil War was synonymous with the great plantations. Numerically, of course, such large estates were hardly appreciable in Middle Tennessee, where small and middling farms abounded. But their importance was far out of proportion to their numbers, and a thorough understanding of agriculture and society in the heartland requires an appreciation of the comparative influence of large and small landholdings. The eight tables below divide Middle Tennessee farms among eleven size ranks of

improved acreage (decile ranks, with the uppermost decile further separated into two 5 percent ranks or half-deciles) and contrast the characteristics of large, middling, and small farms as thus defined.¹

Table V-1 gives, for each decile, means and proportions of four basic agricultural measurements: improved acreage, cash value of farm, annual corn production, and value of livestock. Acreage was dominated by big farms. The largest 20 percent of farms held over half (56 percent) of all improved land in the region, the largest tenth held 39 percent, and the few great plantations (in the upper half-decile) alone held 25 percent. The smaller half of farms held but 17 percent of improved acreage. The great difference between the average acreage of the upper half-decile of farms (549) and the next half-decile (267), further illustrates the eminence of the plantations. Farm value was even more concentrated than acreage, reflecting the greater average value per acre of big farms: the largest 20 percent of farms garnered 60 percent of the region's total farm value, the smaller half but 13 percent.

As concentrated as farm acreage and value were, however, they did not rival the extreme concentration of wealth—real, personal, or total—in the population as a whole (see Chapter IV). Half of all farms were of sixty-five improved acres or more and 90 percent were of

¹The lower limit in acres of each improved acreage decile is as follows: top half-decile, 317; next half-decile, 220; second decile, 145; third, 100; fourth, 80; fifth, 65; sixth, 50; seventh, 36; eighth, 26; ninth, 20; tenth, 1.

Table V-1
Breakdown of Improved Acreage, Farm Value, Corn Production, and Livestock Value
by Improved Acreage Ranks, 1860

Variables	Farms Ranked by Improved Acreage (Deciles)										Sample	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N	Mean Median
Mean Improved Acreage	549	267	171	108	83	71	55	41	31	22	12 527	100 65
% of Total Improved Acreage	25	14	17	4	6	6	4	4	3	2	1	
Cum. % of Total Improved Acreage	25	39	56	73	77	83	89	93	96	98	100	
Mean Farm Value (\$)	26,758	15,777	9,101	5,344	4,300	3,308	2,197	1,599	1,347	841	492 506	5,090 2,399
% of Total Farm Value	25	17	18	17	4	6	5	3	3	2	1	
Cum. % of Total Farm Value	25	42	60	77	81	87	92	95	98	100	100	
Mean Corn Prod. (bu.)	2,396	1,852	1,291	882	647	566	571	431	525	354	241 523	766 501
% of Total Corn Prod.	14	13	16	18	4	6	9	5	7	5	3	
Cum. % of Total Corn Production	14	27	43	61	65	71	80	85	92	97	100	
Mean Livestock Value (\$)	4,584	2,997	1,947	1,238	1,061	856	728	486	455	394	292 523	1,113 621
% of Total Livestock Value	18	14	17	18	5	7	8	4	4	3	3	
Cum. % of Total Livestock Value	18	32	49	67	72	79	87	91	95	98	100	

twenty acres or more; half were worth at least \$2,400 and 90 percent were worth at least \$500. Thus, the possession of practically any farm assured its owner a fair share of the heartland's bounty.

Corn and livestock, the foremost constituents of Middle Tennessee's agricultural economy, were more democratically distributed than acreage and farm value because small farms concentrated heavily on corn and livestock and nearly all had substantial amounts of both. Big farms had more, but not generally in proportion to their size. Half of all farms produced at least 500 bushels of corn and 90 percent produced at least 200 bushels; half had at least \$620 worth of livestock and 90 percent had at least \$175 worth. Only 2 percent of farms grew no corn and less than 1 percent had no livestock. Farms in the upper half-decile had on the average forty-six times more improved acreage than farms in the lowest decile, yet averaged only about ten times more bushels of corn and sixteen times more livestock value. Overall, the largest 20 percent of farms produced 43 percent of the region's corn and held 49 percent of its livestock value; the largest 10 percent, 27 percent of corn and 32 percent of livestock value; the largest 5 percent, 14 percent of corn and 18 percent of livestock value. The smaller half of farms produced 29 percent of all bushels of corn and held 21 percent of livestock value. The slightly higher concentration of livestock value reflects the holdings of the few great stockraisers—like Mark Cockrill of Davidson County—discussed in Chapter II.

Table V-2 summarizes the close relationship between farm size and slaveholding. (The number of slaves indicated is that owned by

Table V-2
Improved Acreage by Slaveholding, 1860

Slaveholdings	Farms Ranked by Improved Acreage (Deciles) (% of Each Rank Shown)											N	% of Total Farms
	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
20+	63	46	8	1	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	35	7
10-19	17	43	31	11	8	4	7	0	0	0	2	50	10
5-9	8	0	26	24	20	16	8	9	6	0	6	62	12
1-4	0	4	29	39	32	33	29	23	6	12	4	112	21
0	13	7	6	26	32	47	57	68	89	89	89	268	51
Mean No. Slaves	33	18	9	4	5	2	2	1	0	0	1		
% of Total Slaves	31	20	18	13	5	4	5	2	1	0	1		

$\chi^2 = 462.8$ with 40 d.f., signif. = .0

C = .68380

N = 527

the family operating the farm.) Not unexpectedly, the largest farms generally had the largest slaveholdings: 80 percent of the upper half-decile of farms and 89 percent of the next half-decile had ten or more slaves. Farms in that top decile accounted for 51 percent of all farm slaves. Farms below the top decile but among the larger half of farms were more likely than not to have slaves, but much more likely to have few slaves (under ten) than many. Most farms among the smaller half, on the other hand, had no slaves; only 9 percent of all farm slaves were held on farms in those lowest five deciles. Among the smallest farms (those in the bottom three deciles) slaveholding was very uncommon: 89 percent were operated by nonslaveholding families. The few large farms without slaves (13 percent of those in the upper half-decile, 7 percent of those in the next half-decile) implies the use of hired labor—whether slave or free—since farms of that size (220 improved acres or more) could not have been worked without additional hands.

Table V-3 indicates the relationship of farm size to local land values. The left-hand column shows the average rural land value per acre in the civil district where the farm was located (these figures are from state tax records and are useful for comparisons only; they do not represent the true cash value of land per acre). These values reflected both the quality of the soil and proximity to markets. For convenience, the first land value category—which includes farms in districts where land was worth more than fifteen dollars per acre—is designated the "rich" district category, comprising 22 percent of all

Table V-3

Improved Acreage by District Land Value, 1860

District Land Value	Farms Ranked by Improved Acreage (Deciles) (% of Each Rank Shown)			N	% of Total Farms	Mean Impr. Acres	% of Total Impr. Acres
	1-3	4-7	8-10				
	(Large)	(Medium)	(Small)				
Rich (\$15+/Acre)	31	14	22	71	22	113	27
Middling (\$10-15/ Acre)	38	55	44	145	46	93	45
Poor (\$0-10/Acre)	31	30	34	101	32	85	29

 $\chi^2 = 11.3$ with 4 d.f., signif. = .0237

C = .18531

N = 317

farms. The next category, which includes farms in districts where land was worth ten to fifteen dollars per acre, is designated the "middling" district category, comprising 46 percent of all farms. The last category, including farms in districts where land was worth less than ten dollars per acre, is designated the "poor" district category, comprising 32 percent of all farms. (These terms are of course relative: nearly all land in the heartland was "rich" by other standards.) To facilitate analysis of this correlation, farms in acreage deciles one through three are treated together as "large" farms, those in deciles four through seven as "medium," and those in deciles eight through ten as "small."

Large farms were proportionately more common in rich districts (31 percent) than were medium (14 percent) or small farms (22 percent). Small farms were slightly more common in poor districts (34 percent) than were large (31 percent) or medium farms (30 percent). Medium farms were more common in middling districts (55 percent) than were large (38 percent) or small farms (44 percent). To put it another way, poor-district farms were slightly over-represented among small farms, middling-district farms were substantially over-represented among medium farms, and rich-district farms were substantially over-represented among large farms, based on the overall proportions of poor-, middling-, and rich-district farms in the region. The figures for mean improved acreage and percentage of total improved acreage further substantiate this generalization. Rich-district farms, accounting for 22 percent of all farms, held 27 percent of all acreage and averaged 113 acres per

farm. Middling-district farms, accounting for 46 percent of all farms, held 45 percent of acreage and averaged ninety-three acres per farm. Poor-district farms, accounting for 32 percent of all farms, held but 29 percent of acreage and averaged only eighty-five acres per farm. Though large, medium, and small farms could be found in every district, of whatever average land value, the overall trend was for larger farms to be more often than others in richer districts, and smaller farms more often than others in poorer districts.

Farm tenancy was common in Middle Tennessee. As Table V-4 shows, 22 percent of farms were operated by tenants, but those farms were much more prevalent in the lesser size ranks than in the greater. Over half (58 percent) of farms in the bottom decile were tenant-operated. That proportion decreases up through the size ranks but, interestingly, tenant farms were present in all ranks (though relatively rare in the upper ones). Thus, tenancy was not invariably a badge of indigence: some of the very largest farms (8 percent of those in the top half-decile, for example) were operated by someone who was not the owner.

Table V-5 documents the relationship between farm size and cash value per acre. (The latter is derived by dividing total cash value of the farm by improved acreage—see Appendix A. It should not be confused with the average district land value per acre crosstabulated in Table V-3, page 199.) To facilitate analysis, land value deciles are grouped into three categories: rich (deciles one through three), middling (deciles four through seven), and poor (deciles eight through ten). In general, the larger the farm the greater its value per acre,

Table V-4
Improved Acreage by Tenure Class, 1860

Tenure Class	Farms Ranked by Improved Acreage (Deciles)											N	% of Total Farms
	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Owner-Operated	92	96	92	92	92	93	86	77	64	54	42	413	78
Tenant-Operated	8	4	8	8	8	7	15	23	36	46	58	114	22

$\chi^2 = 101.3$ with 10 d.f., signif. = .0

C = .40160

N = 527

Table V-5
Improved Acreage by Farm Land Value per Acre, 1860

Farm Land Value per Acre (Deciles)	Farms Ranked by Improved Acreage (Deciles) (% of Each Rank Shown)										% of Total Impr. Acres				
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	N	Mean Impr. Acres			
Rich (1-3)	46	61	38	37	36	33	23	11	29	10	23	151	30	133	39
Middling (4-7)	33	29	46	37	48	40	44	55	37	47	26	204	40	101	40
Poor (8-10)	21	11	16	25	16	27	34	34	35	43	51	151	30	74	22
Mean Farm Land Value per Acre (\$)	51	59	54	50	52	46	40	39	43	37	70				

$\chi^2 = 55.6$ with 20 d.f., signif. = .0000

C = .31470

N = 506

and vice versa: rich farms, representing 30 percent of all farms, accounted for 46 percent of farms in the top half-decile and 61 percent of those in the next half-decile; furthermore, rich farms held 39 percent of all improved acreage and averaged 133 acres per farm. Poor farms, on the other hand, likewise representing 30 percent of all farms, were under-represented among the largest tenth of farms, but greatly over-represented among the smallest tenth: poor farms accounted for 51 percent of farms in the bottom acreage decile, and they held only 22 percent of all improved acreage and averaged but seventy-four acres per farm. The average values per acre for each acreage decile show a generally upward trend. (The exception is the bottom acreage decile, which had unexpectedly the highest average value per acre. This is because census takers were reluctant to assign a value of less than \$100 to any farm, no matter how small, and a number of farms in this acreage rank were of but one improved acre; this yields a very misleading value of \$100 per acre, putting these farms in the top value per acre rank and substantially raising the average value per acre of all farms in that bottom acreage decile.) The tendency of larger farms to be in richer agricultural districts (see Table V-3, page 199) doubtless accounted in part for the pattern apparent here, but that pattern must relate also to the tendency of the bigger farms to be better improved and maintained than their smaller neighbors, as discussed in Chapter II.²

²The lower limit in dollars of each farm land value per acre decile is as follows: top half-decile, \$98; next half-decile, \$82; second decile, \$65; third, \$54; fourth, \$46; fifth, \$40; sixth, \$33; seventh, \$29; eighth, \$21; ninth, \$16; tenth, zero.

Table V-6 crosstabulates farm size with the number of crops grown on the farm. (These are the major field crops only—corn, wheat, oats, rye, tobacco, and cotton—not garden vegetables or grasses.) Only 21 percent of all farms grew fewer than two crops, and these farms were greatly over-represented in the lower size ranks; in the bottom decile they were a majority (60 percent). In all other size ranks the majority of farms grew two or three crops. Only among the largest farms did a considerable proportion grow more than three crops: 42 percent of the upper half-decile of farms, 36 percent of the next half-decile. (The mutually exclusive nature of tobacco and cotton meant that virtually no farms grew all six crops.) The average figures for each size rank summarize vividly the difference between large and small farms. In general, this table supports the implication of Table V-1, page 195, and the assertion in Chapter II that small farmers concentrated on corn production while large farmers diversified.

Table V-7 complements Table V-6 by crosstabulating farm size with the number of types of animals present on the farm. (Note that the numbers in the left column represent types of animals—hogs, cows, horses, oxen, mules, sheep, and all others—not total number of animals.) Here again, the ability of the large plantations to diversify is evident. Though only 20 percent of farms overall had all seven types of animals, 58 percent of those in the upper half-decile did so. None of the farms in the lowest two acreage deciles had all seven. Even in the lowest decile, however, 68 percent of farms had four kinds of animals or more (overall, 89 percent of farms had at least four), reflecting the omnipresence of horse, mule, pig, and cow.

Table V-6
Improved Acreage by Number of Crops, 1860

Number of Crops	Farms Ranked by Improved Acreage (Deciles)											N	% of Total Farms
	1/2	1/2	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
6	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
5	4	7	6	2	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	10	2
4	38	29	22	15	24	20	13	6	6	6	0	73	14
3	38	36	39	39	28	33	34	23	19	23	11	154	29
2	17	18	24	37	36	36	36	47	42	46	29	183	35
1	0	11	8	5	8	7	18	19	34	21	49	92	18
0	4	0	0	2	0	2	0	4	0	4	11	14	3
Mean No. of Crops	3.2	3.0	3.0	2.7	2.8	2.7	2.4	2.1	2.0	2.1	1.4		

$\chi^2 = 166.4$ with 60 d.f., signif. = .0

C = .48988

N = 527

Table V-7

Improved Acreage by Number of Types of Animals, 1860

Number of Types of Animals	Farms Ranked by Improved Acreage (Deciles)											N	% of Total Farms
	1/2	1/2	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
7	58	39	41	27	24	20	16	15	6	0	0	104	20
6	21	39	29	48	36	44	29	30	17	27	6	159	30
5	17	14	26	18	28	18	34	17	32	21	20	119	23
4	0	7	4	6	12	18	8	26	21	29	42	86	16
3	0	0	0	0	0	0	11	11	19	14	16	38	7
2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	4	6	9	11	2
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	2	2	4	1
0	4	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	6	6	1
Mean No.	6.2	6.1	6.1	5.9	5.7	5.7	5.2	5.1	4.5	4.4	3.7		

$$\chi^2 = 236.1 \text{ with } 70 \text{ d.f., signif.} = .0$$

$$C = .55624$$

$$N = 527$$

Table V-8 relates cotton production in particular to farm size. (This does not indicate the amount of cotton grown, merely whether any was grown at all; and it tabulates only farms in the major cotton-growing counties—Bedford, Davidson, Giles, Lincoln, Marshall, Maury, Rutherford, and Williamson.) Clearly, large farms were much more likely than small farms to grow cotton. Although even in these cotton counties only 18 percent of farms overall grew cotton, 59 percent of those in the upper half-decile and 42 percent of those in the next half-decile did so. Cotton-growing farms were much under-represented in the lower size deciles and their average improved acreage was well over twice that of noncotton-growing farms.³

Concentrated though farm acreage was in the heartland in 1860, it was less so than in the deep South where plantations reigned supreme. Two studies of the cotton belt on the eve of the Civil War have estimated the concentration of acreage there based on samples from the agricultural census schedules. Gavin Wright finds that the largest 5 percent of farms in that region held 30 percent of all improved acreage; in some subregions the proportion was as high as 37 percent (in Middle Tennessee, as noted above, it was 25 percent). The smaller half of farms in the cotton belt held but 13 percent of acreage (in Middle Tennessee, 17 percent). Roger L. Ransom's and Richard Sutch's

³Crosstabulation revealed no appreciable relationship between improved acreage and tobacco culture class (significance of $X^2 = .0948$, $C = .17302$), indicating that tobacco was grown on farms of all sizes. This does not contradict the assertion in Chapter II that the bulk of tobacco was grown on large farms, however.

Table V-8
Improved Acreage by Cotton Culture Class, 1860

Cotton Culture Class	Farms Ranked by Improved Acreage (Deciles)										N	% of Total Farms	Mean Improved Acreage
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			
No Cotton	41	58	78	82	79	84	91	81	93	89	95	289	82
Cotton	59	42	22	19	21	16	9	19	7	11	5	62	18
													84
													198

$\chi^2 = 38.0$ with 10 d.f., signif. = .0

C = .31257

N = 351

survey yields similar findings, and indicates too that large farms were much more common in the cotton South (where a farm of 500 improved acres was among the largest 7 percent) than in Middle Tennessee (where a 317 acre farm was among the largest 5 percent).⁴

Among other areas that have been analyzed, only in Clarke County, Georgia, (studied by Frank J. Huffman, Jr.), was acreage more equally distributed than in Middle Tennessee. The largest tenth of farms in Clarke County held 33 percent of improved acreage (in Middle Tennessee, 39 percent), and the smaller half 20 percent. Fabian Linden (estimating from published data rather than samples) finds a substantial degree of concentration in all parts of Louisiana in 1860, but particularly in the alluvial cotton and sugar regions. In the former, where a 1,000 acre holding was required to be among the largest 4 percent of farms, the largest 18 percent held 65 percent of improved acreage and the smaller half held less than 8 percent. In the latter, 1,000 improved acres barely ranked a farm with the largest 5 percent, and the largest 19 percent held 67 percent of all improved acreage; the smaller half held less than 7 percent. (In Middle Tennessee, it will be recalled, the largest 20 percent of farms held 56 percent of improved acreage.) For Texas overall in 1860, Randolph B. Campbell and Richard G. Lowe show that the largest 4 percent of farms held 28 percent of improved acreage,

⁴Gavin Wright, "Economic Democracy and the Concentration of Agricultural Wealth," in William N. Parker, ed., The Structure of the Cotton Economy of the Antebellum South (Washington, 1970), 72-74, 83; Roger L. Ransom and Richard Sutch, One Kind of Freedom: The Economic Consequences of Emancipation (New York, 1977), 71.

and the largest 8 percent held 40 percent. But in the coastal plantation region of the state the largest tenth of farms held 53 percent of acreage, and the smaller half less than 8 percent. Only in the frontier prairie region of Texas was farm acreage concentrated more or less equivalently to Middle Tennessee.⁵

The prevailing notion of the antebellum South identifies the great plantations with the great slaveholders and the small farms with the nonslaveholding yeomen. Certainly, as Table V-2, page 197, showed, statistics on the whole corroborate that generalization for Middle Tennessee. Yet the identity was not absolute—some small farms had slaves, some large ones had none—and it is profitable to compare farms on the basis of slaveholding as well as acreage.

Table V-9, the counterpart to Table V-2, page 197, shows the distribution among acreage deciles of farms classified by slaveholding. Clearly, big farms were over-represented among the great slaveholdings:

⁵ Frank J. Huffman, Jr., "Old South, New South: Continuity and Change in a Georgia County, 1850-1880" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1974), 240; Fabian Linden, "Economic Democracy in the Slave South: An Appraisal of Some Recent Views," Journal of Negro History, XXXI (Apr., 1946), 150; Randolph B. Campbell and Richard G. Lowe, Wealth and Power in Antebellum Texas (College Station, Texas, and London, 1977), 70-72, 156-57. I have adjusted Campbell and Lowe's figures to remove "farmers" without farms and thus make their data comparable to mine. It is unfortunate that Frank Owsley's Plain Folk of the Old South (Baton Rouge, 1949), which has the broadest region-by-region survey of Southern farms, uses total acreage and is thus not comparable to the present study. Owsley's tables do indicate in general, however, that slaveholders in each of the fourteen subregions of Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Tennessee he studies were heavily over-represented in the upper ranks of acreage, though Owsley himself sidesteps that conclusion.

Although none has statistical data on farm value that is precisely comparable with those in this chapter, all of the following

Table V-9
Slaveholding by Improved Acreage, 1860

Improved Acreage (Deciles)	Farms Ranked by Slaveholdings (% of Each Rank Shown)				
	20+	10-19	5-9	1-4	0
$\frac{1}{2}$	43	8	3	0	1
$\frac{1}{2}$	37	24	0	1	1
2	11	32	21	13	1
3	3	18	32	30	8
4	6	4	8	7	3
5	0	4	11	13	8
6	0	8	8	16	13
7	0	0	7	10	12
8	0	0	5	3	18
9	0	0	0	5	17
10	0	2	5	2	18
N	35	50	62	112	268
% of Total Farms	7	10	12	21	51
Mean Improved Acreage	382	183	103	88	52
% of Total Improved Acreage	25	17	12	19	26

$\chi^2 = 462.0$ with 40 d.f., signif. = .0

C = .68380

N = 527

80 percent of farms with twenty or more slaves ranked in the top decile of farm acreage. None of those great slaveholding farms ranked below the fourth decile. Farms with smaller slaveholdings were still overwhelmingly in the upper half of acreage deciles. On the other hand, 78 percent of the nonslaveholding farms fell in the bottom half of acreage deciles. Farms in the highest rank of slaveholdings (7 percent of all farms) held a quarter of all improved acreage in the region; together with those which had ten to nineteen slaves (10 percent of farms) they held 42 percent of acreage. All slaveholding farms together held 73 percent of acreage, though constituting just under half of all farms. The average improved acreage of farms even in the lowest rank of slaveholding was more than half again as great as that of nonslaveholding farms, and that of farms in the highest slaveholding rank was over seven times as great. Nevertheless, a few nonslaveholding families did operate large farms (11 percent of non-slaveholding farms ranked in the upper three deciles of farm size) and probably hired extra labor, while a few slaveholding families operated

sources suggest that larger farms in their respective regions were worth more per improved acre than were smaller farms—either because of superior soil or better improvement—as Table V-5, page 203, documented for Middle Tennessee: Wright, "Economic Democracy," 75-78 (cotton South); Huffman, "Old South, New South," 240 (Clarke County, Georgia); Linden, "Economic Democracy," 168-74 (Mississippi and Alabama); Campbell and Lowe, Wealth and Power in Antebellum Texas, 72-74; Roger W. Shugg, Origin of Class Struggle in Louisiana (Baton Rouge, 1968 [1939]), 95-105; and James C. Bonner, "Profile of a Late Antebellum Community," in Elinor Miller and Eugene D. Genovese, eds., Plantation, Town, and County: Essays on the Local History of American Slave Society (Urbana, Illinois, 1974), 41-42 (Hancock County, Georgia).

farms in the lowest acreage decile and perhaps hired out their surplus hands.

Table V-10 breaks down slaveholdings, cash value of farm, corn production, and value of livestock by slaveholding rank. Although slaveowning was more widespread among farm operators than among the population as a whole (49 percent of farm operators owned slaves, versus 33 percent of families overall), large slaveowners held a greater proportion of farm slaves than of slaves overall (see Table IV-26, page 165); this was so because large slaveowners were practically all farm operators. Half of all farm slaves were held on farms which had twenty or more slaves, and three-quarters on farms which had ten or more.

Farm value was notably more concentrated in the farms of the large slaveowners than was acreage, signifying a higher average value per acre for those farms than for others: 52 percent of the whole cash value of farms in the region was in farms with ten or more slaves, 31 percent alone in those with twenty or more. Nonslaveholding farms accounted for but 19 percent of total cash value. The average value of a farm in the top slaveholding rank was over ten times that of a nonslaveholding farm, and over five times that of a farm in the bottom slaveholding rank. Corn production, on the other hand, was considerably less concentrated than acreage or land value. Farms with ten or more slaves accounted for 36 percent of the region's total corn crop, nonslaveholding farms 31 percent. Livestock value was more concentrated than corn production or acreage, but still less so than farm value.

Table V-10

Breakdown of Slaveholdings, Farm Value, Corn Production,
and Livestock Value by Slaveholding Ranks, 1860

Variables	Farms Ranked by Slaveholdings					Sample		
	20+	10-19	5-9	1-4	0	N	Mean	Median
N	35	50	62	112	273			
% of Total Farms	7	9	12	21	51			
Mean No. Slaves	37	13	7	2	0	532	5	1
% of Total Slaves	50	25	16	9	0			
Cumulative % of Total Slaves	50	75	91	100	100			
Mean Farm Val. (\$)	22,781	11,429	5,143	4,088	1,877	506	5,090	2,399
% of Total Farm Value	31	21	12	17	19			
Cum. % of Total Farm Value	31	52	64	81	100			
Mean Corn Prod. (Bu.)	2,194	1,463	879	680	469	528	766	501
% of Total Corn Production	18	18	13	19	31			
Cum. % of Total Corn Production	18	36	49	68	100			
Mean Livestock Value (\$)	4,125	2,227	1,283	1,052	513	528	1,113	621
% of Total Livestock Value	24	19	14	20	24			
Cum. % of Total Livestock Value	24	43	57	77	100			

Farms with ten or more slaves held 43 percent of the total value of livestock and nonslaveholding farms only 24 percent, reflecting the number of great stockraisers among the big slaveowners.

Farms with large slaveholdings were more prevalent in rich than in poor agricultural areas, as Table V-11 shows. Of farms with twenty or more slaves, 45 percent were in rich districts, though only 22 percent of farms overall were in those districts; 31 percent of farms with ten to nineteen slaves were also in those districts. Rich-district farms were likewise over-represented in both lesser ranks of slaveholding farms but under-represented among nonslaveholding farms, of which they comprised only 14 percent. Furthermore, rich-district farms averaged eight slaves per farm and held 38 percent of all farm slaves. On the other hand, poor-district farms—representing 32 percent of all farms—accounted for only 20 percent of farms with twenty or more slaves, but accounted for 37 percent of farms without slaves; in addition, these poor-district farms averaged but three slaves per farm and held only 23 percent of all farm slaves (somewhat surprisingly, however, poor-district farms were over-represented among farms with ten to nineteen slaves). Farms in the middling agricultural districts (45 percent of all farms) were under-represented among farms with ten or more slaves and over-represented among those with fewer slaves or none; these middling-district farms averaged four slaves per farm and held 39 percent of all farm slaves.

Farm tenancy was far more common among nonslaveowners than slaveowners. Table V-12 indicates that over a third (36 percent) of

Table V-11
Slaveholding by District Land Value, 1860

District Land Value	Farms Ranked by Slaveholdings (% of Each Rank Shown)				N	% of Total Farms	Mean No. Slaves	% of Total Slaves
	20+	10-19	5-9	1-4				
Rich (\$15+/acre)	45	31	28	26	14	71	22	8
Middling (\$10-15/acre)	35	28	51	48	48	145	46	4
Poor (\$0-10/acre)	20	41	21	26	37	101	32	3
N	20	32	39	73	153			
% of Total Farms	6	10	12	23	48			

$\chi^2 = 19.7$ with 8 d.f., signif. = .0114 C = .24214 N = 317

Table V-12
Slaveholding by Tenure Class, 1860

Tenure Class	Farms Ranked by Slaveholdings (% of Each Rank Shown)					N	% of Total Farms
	20+	10-19	5-9	1-4	0		
Owner-Operated	100	98	98	85	64	414	78
Tenant-Operated	0	2	2	15	36	118	22
N	35	50	62	112	273		
% of Total Farms	7	9	12	21	51		

$\chi^2 = 71.5$ with 4 d.f., signif. = .0

C = .34424

N = 532

nonslaveholding farms were tenant-operated, though tenant farms constituted but 22 percent of farms overall. Even among the lowest rank of slaveholding farms, tenancy was considerably less prevalent (15 percent); it was extremely rare among farms with five slaves or more, and nonexistent among those with twenty or more.

A moderately strong correlation between slaveholding and cash value of farm per acre is documented in Table V-13. Of farms with at least twenty slaves, 63 percent were rich farms (i.e., were among the top three deciles of farms ranked by value per acre), while only 6 percent were poor farms (bottom three deciles). Rich farms were likewise heavily over-represented among farms with ten to nineteen slaves, but were only slightly over-represented among farms with five to nine or one to four slaves; among these last two categories, it was middling farms which were substantially over-represented. Rich and middling farms were both under-represented among nonslaveholding farms, while poor farms were greatly over-represented: 45 percent of nonslaveholding farms were poor, though poor farms accounted for only 30 percent of farms overall. Rich farms averaged ten slaves per farm and held 57 percent of all farm slaves; middling farms averaged four slaves and held 33 percent of all farm slaves; poor farms averaged two slaves and held only 10 percent of all farm slaves. The average farm value per acre of each slaveholding rank further illustrates these differences: even the lowest rank of slaveholding farms averaged considerably higher value per acre than nonslaveholding farms (fifty dollars to thirty-seven), while the highest rank averaged nearly twice

Table V-13
Slaveholding by Farm Land Value per Acre, 1860

Farm Land Value per Acre (Deciles)	Farms Ranked by Slaveholdings (% of Each Rank Shown)					N	% of Total Farms	Mean No. Slvs.	% of Total Slvs.
	20+	10-19	5-9	1-4	0				
Rich (1-3)	63	65	34	33	17	151	30	10	57
Middling (4-7)	31	23	46	52	38	204	40	4	33
Poor (8-10)	6	13	20	15	45	151	30	2	10
N	35	48	61	107	255				
% of Total Farms	7	10	12	21	50				
Mean Farm Land Value per Acre (\$)	70	64	69	50	37				

$\chi^2 = 98.6$ with 8 d.f., signif. = .0000

C = .40390

N = 506

that of nonslaveholding farms. The conclusion is inescapable that slaveowning farmers, more concentrated in the richer agricultural districts and able to employ their black laborers to improve their landholdings, boasted significantly more valuable acreage than nonslaveowners.

Table V-14 reveals a close relationship between slaveholding and crop diversification. Over one-third (35 percent) of farms in the highest slaveholding rank grew four or more crops. Even among those in the lowest slaveholding rank, 20 percent grew four crops. Yet only 6 percent of nonslaveholding farms were so diversified, while the great majority (70 percent) raised two crops or fewer. The majority of slaveholding farms in every rank raised at least three crops.

Slaveowning farmers were also more likely than nonslaveowners to diversify their livestock holdings, as indicated in Table V-15. Though 80 percent of nonslaveholding farms had at least four types of animals and such farms averaged nearly five types of animals, less than a third (32 percent) had six or more and only 8 percent had seven. On the other hand, over half the farms in the top slaveholding rank (51 percent) had seven types of animals, 82 percent had six or more, and virtually all had at least five. Even those farms in the lowest slaveholding rank averaged fully one type of animal more than nonslaveholding farms, and those in the top rank one and one-half more.

Slaveholding farms in the major cotton counties were substantially more likely to raise cotton than were nonslaveholding farms. Table V-16 shows that only 8 percent of nonslaveholding farms in those counties

Table V-14
Slaveholding by Number of Crops, 1860

Number of Crops	Farms Ranked by Slaveholdings (% of Each Rank Shown)					N	% of Total Farms
	20+	10-19	5-9	1-4	0		
6	3	0	0	0	0	1	0
5	3	14	2	0	0	10	2
4	29	20	23	20	6	73	14
3	40	30	36	37	24	157	30
2	20	28	31	30	41	185	35
1	3	8	7	13	25	92	17
0	3	0	3	1	4	14	3
N	35	50	62	112	273		
% of Total Farms	7	9	12	21	51		
Mean No. Crops	3.1	3.0	2.7	2.6	2.0		

$\chi^2 = 123.3$ with 24 d.f., signif. = .0

C = .43378

N = 532

Table V-15
Slaveholding by Number of Types of Animals, 1860

Number of Types of Animals	Farms Ranked by Slaveholdings (% of Each Rank Shown)					N	% of Total Farms
	20+	10-19	5-9	1-4	0		
7	51	32	23	30	8	104	20
6	31	36	48	32	24	161	30
5	14	26	19	21	24	119	22
4	0	6	5	13	24	87	16
3	0	0	5	4	12	40	8
2	0	0	0	0	4	11	2
1	0	0	0	0	2	4	1
0	3	0	0	0	2	6	1
N	35	50	62	112	273		
% of Total Farms	7	9	12	21	51		
Mean Number of Types of Animals	6.2	5.9	5.8	5.7	4.7		

$\chi^2 = 118.6$ with 28 d.f., signif. = .0

C = .42697

N = 532

Table V-16
Slaveholding by Cotton Culture Class, 1860

Cotton Culture Class	Farms Ranked by Slaveholdings (% of Each Rank Shown)					N	% of Total Farms
	20+	10-19	5-9	1-4	0		
No Cotton	41	63	78	86	92	289	82
Cotton	59	38	22	14	8	62	18
N	27	32	41	71	180		
% of Total Farms	8	9	12	20	51		

$\chi^2 = 52.7$ with 4 d.f., signif. = .0

C = .36129

N = 351

grew cotton, while all ranks of slaveholding farms had much greater proportions of cotton growers—particularly those with ten to nineteen slaves (38 percent) and twenty slaves or more (59 percent).⁶

The preeminence of slaveowners—especially large slaveowners—in agriculture was a fact not only in Middle Tennessee but throughout the antebellum South, the voluminous affirmations of Frank Owsley and his disciples to the contrary notwithstanding. Gavin Wright shows for the cotton South as a whole that farm slaves, who made up the bulk of agricultural labor in that region, were highly concentrated (similarly to Middle Tennessee) in the hands of a few big slaveowners; Huffman's data for Clarke County, Georgia, support that generalization. Owsley and his students Blanche Henry Clark and Chase C. Mooney, in separate studies of Tennessee, all demonstrate (though they are loath to admit) that large landholders were invariably over-represented among slaveowning farm operators and under-represented among nonslaveowning farm operators in every county studied, not just in Middle Tennessee but in slave-rich West Tennessee and slave-poor East Tennessee. (For example, Mooney shows—albeit obliquely—that in West Tennessee 53 percent of slaveowners and 9 percent of nonslaveowners operated farms of 100 or more improved acres—equivalent to the top three acreage deciles in Table V-9, page 212; in East Tennessee, 69 percent and 28 percent, respectively.) In fact, Owsley's statistics document the same general truth for all fourteen

⁶Crosstabulation revealed no appreciable relationship between slaveholding and tobacco culture class (significance of $X^2 = .6455$, $C = .06852$).

subregions of the deep South and Tennessee he examines—areas of many slaves and few, good soil and poor, alike.⁷

Owsley and Mooney both demonstrate, too, that in every subregion nonslaveowners were much more likely to be tenants than were slaveowners. In four East Tennessee counties, for example, where the overall proportion of tenants among farm operators ran as high as 45 percent in 1860, among slaveowners it was no higher than 15 percent in any county but among nonslaveowners as high as 52 percent. In seven counties of the rich Mississippi Black Belt, where the overall proportion of tenants was as high as 36 percent, the proportion among slaveowners did not exceed 11 percent; in one of those counties, on the other hand, 78 percent of nonslaveowning farm operators were tenants.⁸

Campbell and Lowe's analysis of antebellum Texas agriculture provides much comparable data to lend perspective to the picture of Middle Tennessee rendered here. Slaveholding farms, comprising 39 percent of all Texas farms in 1860, held 71 percent of all improved acreage. (In Middle Tennessee such farms comprised a greater proportion—49 percent—but held only slightly more improved acreage—74 percent.)

⁷Wright, "Economic Democracy," 79, 83; Huffman, "Old South, New South," 242; Owsley, Plain Folk, 150-229 (incorporating findings for Mississippi by Herbert Weaver and Louisiana by Harry Coles); Blanche Henry Clark, The Tennessee Yeomen, 1840-1860 (Nashville, 1942), 57; Chase C. Mooney, Slavery in Tennessee (Bloomington, Indiana, 1957), 118.

⁸Owsley, Plain Folk, 150-229, especially 193-202 and 209-29; Mooney, Slavery in Tennessee, 106-7. The "Owsleyites" do not use the term tenant in their tables, but they enumerate nonlandowning farm operators, whom I have defined as tenants.

But in the Texas coastal region, where the proportion of slaveholding farms (59 percent) was somewhat higher than in Middle Tennessee, those farms held 93 percent of all improved acreage—an ascendancy of slaveholders far outstripping that in Middle Tennessee. On the Texas frontier, however, slaveholding farms were in a substantial minority (29 percent), and though they held a great share of improved acreage (49 percent) they did not dominate landholding.⁹

Across Texas, as throughout Middle Tennessee, cash value of farms was more concentrated in slaveowners' hands (74 percent) than was acreage, indicating that slaveowners had relatively more valuable land than nonslaveowners. (The disparity was slighter than in the heartland, however.) On the frontier in particular, the slaveowners' share of farm value (61 percent) greatly outweighed their share of acreage. Interestingly, livestock value in Texas was far less concentrated on slaveowners' farms (60 percent) than was corn production (72 percent). Corn production in Texas thus exceeded also the degree of concentration of improved acreage and nearly equaled that of farm value. In Middle Tennessee, it will be recalled from Tables V-9, page 212, and V-10, page 215, slaveowners' share of livestock value (76 percent) exceeded their share of corn production (69 percent) and improved acreage (74 percent), though not their share of farm value (81 percent). In this frontier era before the immense cattle kingdoms, the slaveholding elite

⁹Campbell and Lowe, Wealth and Power in Antebellum Texas, 70-71, 156-57 (figures therein adjusted to eliminate "farmers" without farms).

of Texas drew instant wealth from corn, cotton, and sugar, and did not rival the great stockraisers of Middle Tennessee, patiently breeding their animals over generations.¹⁰

Farm tenancy, customarily reckoned the curse of the post-war South, was familiar in antebellum Middle Tennessee. Two of the foregoing tables implied pronounced differences in acreage and slaveholding between tenant- and owner-operated farms. The tables below further investigate these distinctions and others.

Table V-17 shows the distribution of owners' and tenants' farms among deciles of improved acreage. Manifestly, large farms were over-represented among owner-operated farms (42 percent of which were in the upper three deciles of acreage), while small farms were over-represented among tenant farms (66 percent of which were in the bottom three deciles). Owners made up 78 percent of farm operators but tilled 89 percent of all improved acreage, and the average improved acreage of an owner's farm was over twice that of a tenant's. Nevertheless, tenant farms were present in every acreage rank. A few of the biggest farmers in Middle Tennessee worked acres not their own, and fully 18 percent of all tenants operated farms of above median size.

Slaveholding marked an even clearer distinction between owners and tenants, as Table V-18 reveals. It would be only mild hyperbole to say that farm owners were slaveowners and tenants were not. Well over half (58 percent) of farm owners held slaves, and all ranks of

¹⁰Ibid., 72-78, 160-69.

Table V-17
 Tenure Class by Improved Acreage, 1860

Improved Acreage (Deciles)	Farms Ranked by Tenure Class (% of Each Rank Shown)	
	Owner-Operated	Tenant-Operated
$\frac{1}{2}$	5	2
$\frac{1}{2}$	7	1
2	11	4
3	19	6
4	6	2
5	10	3
6	13	8
7	9	10
8	8	17
9	7	21
10	6	28
N	413	114
% of Total Farms	78	22
Mean Improved Acreage	113	52
% of Total Improved Acreage	89	11

$\chi^2 = 101.3$ with 10 d.f., signif. = .0

G = .40160

N = 527

Table V-18
Tenure Class by Slaveholding, 1860

Slaveholdings	Farms Ranked by Tenure Class (% of Each Rank Shown)		N	% of Total Farms
	Owner-Operated	Tenant-Operated		
20+	9	0	35	7
10-19	12	1	50	9
5-9	15	1	62	12
1-4	23	14	112	21
0	42	84	273	51
N	414	118		
% of Total Farms	78	22		
Mean No. Slaves	6	0.5		
% of Total Slaves	98	2		

$\chi^2 = 71.5$ with 4 d.f., signif. = .0

C = .34424

N = 532

slaveholders were over-represented among farm owners. Only 16 percent of tenants held slaves and nearly all of these were in the lowest rank of slaveholders, with one to four slaves. No tenants were in the highest rank of slaveholders. Most remarkably, 98 percent of all farm slaves were held by farm owners.

Breakdowns of farm value, corn production, and livestock value given in Table V-19 buttress the impression of the inferiority of tenant farms. Owners retained a share of farm value (93 percent) disproportionate to their share of improved acreage (89 percent), implying that their farms were worth more per acre on the average than tenant farms (see Table V-20). But owners' share of corn production (85 percent) was less than their share of acreage, suggesting that they diversified while tenants concentrated on corn (see Table V-21). The proportion of livestock value held by owners equaled their share of acreage but still far exceeded their share of farms.

The crosstabulation of farm tenure with district average land value per acre is not shown, but will be mentioned precisely because its lack of statistical significance and association (significance of $\chi^2 = .6764$, $C = .04960$) is important. Owner-operated and tenant farms were nearly identically distributed among ranks of district land value. That is, tenant farms were no more (or less) likely to be in poor agricultural districts than were owner-operated farms, and owner-operated farms were no more (or less) likely to be in rich districts than were tenant farms. Thus, the crosstabulation of farms classed by tenure with farm value per acre (Table V-20), showing tenants concentrated

Table V-19

Breakdown of Farm Value, Corn Production, and Livestock
Value by Tenure Class, 1860

Variables	Farms Ranked by Tenure Class		N	Sample Mean	Sample Median
	Owner- Operated	Tenant- Operated			
N	414	118			
% of Total Farms	78	22			
Mean Farm Value (\$)	5,829	1,936	506	5,090	2,399
% of Total Farm Value	93	7			
Mean Corn Prod. (bu)	838	509	528	766	501
% of Total Corn Production	85	15			
Mean Livestock Value (\$)	1,264	570	528	1,113	621
% of Total Livestock Value	89	11			

Table V-20
Tenure Class by Farm Land Value per Acre, 1860

Farm Land Value per Acre (Deciles)	Farms Ranked by Tenure Class (% of Each Rank Shown)		N	% of Total Farms
	Owner-Operated	Tenant-Operated		
Rich (1-3)	33	17	151	30
Middling (4-7)	41	39	204	40
Poor (8-10)	26	45	151	30
N	410	96		
% of Total Farms	81	19		
Mean Farm Land Value per Acre (\$)	51	36		

$\chi^2 = 15.9$ with 2 d.f., signif. = .0004

C = .17432

N = 506

Table V-21
Tenure Class by Number of Crops, 1860

Number of Crops	Farms Ranked by Tenure Class (% of Each Rank Shown)		N	% of Total Farms
	Owner-Operated	Tenant-Operated		
6	0	0	1	0
5	2	0	10	2
4	16	7	73	14
3	32	20	157	30
2	32	43	185	35
1	15	25	92	17
0	2	5	14	3
N	414	118		
% of Total Farms	78	22		
Mean No. Crops	2.5	2.0		

$\chi^2 = 24.0$ with 6 d.f., signif. = .0005

C = .20782

N = 532

in the lowest ranks of value per acre (45 percent in the poor category, i.e., bottom three deciles) strongly implies that tenants on the whole failed to improve their land as owners did. (It does not prove this, however, since the district figures are averages and it might be that tenants were on the poorer land within each district, and that therefore soil quality could account for differences in farm value per acre.) The average value per acre of owners' farms was fifty-one dollars, that of tenant farms thirty-six. The typical tenant was undoubtedly disinclined to expend much effort to improve land—by mending fences or manuring, for example—that was not his and that might be in someone else's hands next year.

Tenants concentrated for the most part on one crop or two, as Table V-21 indicates, while owners were more likely to diversify. Only a fourth (27 percent) of all tenant farms raised more than two crops, while half (50 percent) of all owner-operated farms did so.

Table V-22 shows that tenants also generally owned fewer kinds of animals than did owners. Less than half of all tenants (43 percent) owned five kinds or more, whereas the great majority of owners (80 percent) did so.

Table V-23 examines the relationship between tenure and cotton cultivation in the cotton counties. Owners were more likely than tenants to grow cotton (20 percent versus 10 percent), but the correlation statistic is not high due to the small number of cases in this crosstabulation.¹¹

¹¹ Crosstabulation revealed no appreciable relationship between tenure class and tobacco culture class (significance of $X^2 = .7270$, $C = .02169$).

Table V-22
 Tenure Class by Number of Types of Animals, 1860

Number of Types of Animals	Farms Ranked by Tenure Class (% of Each Rank Shown)		N	% of Total Farms
	Owner-Operated	Tenant-Operated		
7	22	10	104	20
6	34	17	161	30
5	24	16	119	22
4	12	31	87	16
3	5	15	40	8
2	1	4	11	2
1	0	3	4	1
0	1	3	6	1
N	414	118		
% of Total Farms	78	22		
Mean Number of Types of Animals	5.5	4.4		

$\chi^2 = 68.1$ with 7 d.f., signif. = .0

C = .33687

N = 532

Table V-23
Tenure Class by Cotton Culture Class, 1860

Cotton Culture Class	Farms Ranked by Tenure Class (% of Each Rank Shown)		N	% of Total Farms
	Owner-Operated	Tenant-Operated		
No Cotton	80	90	289	82
Cotton	20	10	62	18
N	260	91		
% of Total Farms	74	26		

$\chi^2 = 4.4$ with 1 d.f., signif. = .0358

C = .11973

N = 351

The bold assertion of Roger L. Ransom and Richard Sutch that tenancy of family farms was nearly unknown in the antebellum cotton South is inapplicable to Middle Tennessee, and must in general be regarded skeptically in light of Owsley's statistics for various Southern subregions (including parts of the cotton belt), Huffman's for Clarke County, Georgia, and Mooney's for Tennessee. The proportion of landless farm operators in counties studied by Owsley was as high as 46 percent in the Georgia uplands, 36 percent in the Mississippi Black Belt, and 43 percent in the Louisiana prairies; in every other subregion there were counties of at least 24 percent. Most of these tenants were nonslaveowners with small farms, as in Middle Tennessee. They did not operate the slave plantations that Ransom and Sutch believe accounted for most rented farms in the cotton South.¹²

That some farms may be incorrectly deemed tenant farms in the present study and others, because their owners failed to report real estate in the population schedule, is undeniable. These could have been but few, however, and could not begin to explain the huge proportion of landless farm operators in many counties. That some

¹²Ransom and Sutch, One Kind of Freedom, 88, 336n.; Owsley, Plain Folk, 150-227. Huffman, "Old South, New South," 222, 230, shows that Clarke County had a tenancy rate of about 19 percent and that rented farms there were considerably smaller on the average than others. Mooney, Slavery in Tennessee, 104-5, 108-9, finds a tenancy rate of 16 percent in two East Tennessee counties, 25 percent in seven Middle Tennessee counties (including two Highland Rim counties), and 25 percent in six West Tennessee counties. With the single exception of plantation-dominated Fayette County in West Tennessee, the great majority of tenants in every county studied by Mooney had no slaves.

tenants were relatives of the owner is also undoubtedly true, as Ransom and Sutch suggest, but that in no way alters their status as landless farm operators (i.e., tenants) except in the surely rare cases where the owner resided in the same family. (For the present study a farm operator is considered landless only if no one in his family owned real estate.) That some supposed tenants were actually hired managers may also be true (although, again, such are not counted as tenants in this study if they lived with the owner). However, in the Middle Tennessee agricultural schedules for several districts where census takers exceeded their instructions by clearly marking the numerous tenants (see Appendix A), virtually no farm operators were marked as agents or managers. The conclusion must stand that small-farm tenancy was known in the antebellum South and common in many parts of it, including Middle Tennessee.¹³

Agriculture, more than anything else, defined antebellum Middle Tennessee as a special South. The region's broad prosperity was for the most part a gift of the rich soil; its singular economy was a product of the interaction of man and land. But, as the foregoing analysis has shown, the patterns of landholding, slaveowning, and cultivation which marked the region were not all unique. Agriculture in Middle Tennessee mimicked agriculture everywhere in Dixie in enough crucial respects to permit the conclusion that the heartland was not only in the South, but of it.

¹³Ransom and Sutch, One Kind of Freedom, 88.

CHAPTER VI

"THOSE WHOM THE GODS DESTROY": FEAR, SECESSION, AND WAR, 1860-1862

It is one of the ironies of the Southern experience that in the very hour of the South's greatest optimism, self-assurance, and complacency, forces external and internal were conspiring to overturn the Southern world. White Middle Tennesseans had begun to sense the danger by 1860, even as they congratulated themselves on the sublimity and solidity of their society and the radiance of their future.

A generation of sectional political strife and mounting Southern alienation culminated dramatically, to many incredibly, during the seventeen months from October 1859 to February 1861 which witnessed John Brown's Harpers Ferry raid, the election of Abraham Lincoln, the secession of South Carolina and all the lower South, and the establishment of the Confederate States of America. Increasingly through this period Middle Tennesseans were swept up in a torrent of political excitement unlike anything they had known, even in this land where the citizenry traditionally batted themselves on politics as zestfully as on their cornbread, meat, and whiskey. Politics was on every tongue, the latest news from Washington and Nashville eagerly awaited and ravenously devoured. A veteran Clarksville political observer at a public meeting in January 1861 found the Montgomery County courthouse "jammed with one of the most excited crowds I ever saw." A Maury countian in early February invoked and misquoted the Bard in describing

the turbulent state of affairs: "'Bubble, Bubble, Toil and Trouble,'" he wrote, "has been the order of the day for the last three months. . . ."1

Underlying all the ferment and the impassioned rhetoric of these months was profound anxiety. In the eyes of many white Middle Tennesseans, the nomination and election of a Republican president who opposed the spread of slavery, along with the verbal (and now physical) attacks of abolitionists who condemned the institution and its advocates, together constituted a dire threat to three of the underpinnings of the Southern way of life—slavery, white supremacy, and the patriarchal society. A letter to a Nashville newspaper in January 1860 reaffirmed the credo of the white South and summarized with a familiar metaphor the interpretation read into recent events by uneasy Middle Tennesseans:

The position of the white and black races, as it exists among us, cannot be changed by fanaticism or by Black Republicanism. It exists, in obedience to the laws of nature. . . . No foreign power pretends to disturb our quiet on this subject; but a worthless crusade is waged by a portion of our own household, upon this "domestic relation." . . . This institution must and ought to be preserved; and the best mode of meeting this assault upon our rights is a question of moment.²

¹Charles O. Faxon to Andrew Johnson, Jan. 15, 1861, in LeRoy P. Graf and Ralph W. Haskins, eds., The Papers of Andrew Johnson (6 vols. to date, Knoxville, 1967-), IV, 170-71; L. J. Polk to Emily, Feb. 1, 1861, Polk-Yeatman Papers (SHC). See also Nashville Daily Gazette, Dec. 7, 1860, concerning a public meeting in Gallatin.

²Ibid., Jan. 8, 1860. On the ideological bases of secession in the South see Steven A. Channing, Crisis of Fear: Secession in South Carolina (New York, 1970); and William Barney, The Secessionist Impulse: Alabama and Mississippi in 1860 (Princeton, 1974).

Such apprehensions, of course, blanketed the whole South in this period, but in Middle Tennessee peculiar economic problems exacerbated them and simultaneously imperiled society's other foundations—prosperity and the integrity of rural life. Drought struck the heartland in the summer of 1860. Crops withered in the fields, harvests fell short, barns earlier crammed with surpluses emptied; in a few areas there was actual want. Reverberations sounded throughout the whole economy, bound as it was so intimately to the soil. A Nashville merchant pronounced "all business and financial matters gloomy indeed in middle Tennessee." In Maury County a newspaper editor discussed the epidemic of debt default and predicted that "until another crop is made . . . the ring of the sheriff's hammer will resound more frequently than is desirable within the sound of our Court House." Wilson countians cancelled their agricultural fair and recommended that the money be used for the poor. Talk of debtor stay laws—the old democratic nostrum—alarmed creditors, who warned that such measures would succeed only in "encouraging dishonesty and corrupting the public morals . . . shaking the confidence of the people in the sanctity of the laws and the stability of the government. . . ."³

With the cornerstones of their society thus seemingly battered and undermined, Middle Tennesseans saw their optimism turn slowly to

³Alexander J. D. Thurston to Andrew Johnson, Mar. 11, 1861, in Graf and Haskins, Papers of Andrew Johnson, IV, 383-84, 384n.; Columbia Mirror quoted in Fayetteville Observer, Oct. 25, 1860; Tennessee Legislative Petitions, 1861, No. 55 (TSLA); Nashville Patriot, Sept. 11, 1860; Fayetteville Observer, Aug. 30, 1860.

doubt, their blithe presumptions of harmony and plenty give way to desperate forebodings of anguish and doom. A Sumner County teacher floridly echoed this mood in his diary entry for January 1, 1861:

Another year is inaugurated today. . . . Yet how different will be the experiences of 1861 from those of 1860! . . . What will its panoramic views disclose, as they pass successively before us? What will be the history of my afflicted country for the next twelve months? Will it be a record of disasters and revolutions? . . . What shall be the end of all this, we know not.⁴

As the national crisis deepened, doubt turned to trepidation, trepidation to fear, and fear to near-hysteria, which as it intensified also became more sharply focused. Even as they peremptorily proclaimed the loyalty and docility of their slaves, white Middle Tennesseans became utterly convinced that the ultimate consequence of unchecked Republicanism, abolitionism, and sectional agitation would be a bloody slave uprising. A wealthy Maury County planter wrote in February 1861 that

a servile rebellion . . . is more to be feared now than [it] was in the days of the Revolution against the mother country. Then there were no religious fanatics to urge our slaves to deeds of rapine, murder, &c.—now the villainous blood hounds of Abolitionism will glory in gloating in the blood of the "Slave Drivers" and turn loose upon us the very worse material in our midst.

In Clarksville a political speaker "painted [a] scene of butchery" in September 1860 as he described how slaves "might, in the dead hour of night, murder their masters. . . ." An anonymous correspondent of a Clarksville paper asserted that if civil war came, Southerners would

⁴Francis M. Carmack Diary, Jan. 1, 1861 (SHC).

face "two powerful and blood-thirsty foes, the one without and the other within"; he advocated a statewide patrol system which by a show of force and "a few examples of shooting judiciously executed" would overawe the restless slaves and prevent "a fate to our wives and children equal to the sacking of a city by barbarians. . . ." This scheme, he blandly advised his readers, held advantages both practical and humane over that proposed by others to "massacre the slave population, at the first note of civil war, as a measure of self defence."⁵

Local incidents small and great also fed the burgeoning fears of white Middle Tennesseans in these months. A rash of fires broke out in Nashville, Clarksville, and elsewhere in 1860, and in almost every case "some devilish incendiary" was blamed, as often as not a "refractory" Negro. The entire region was aroused in March 1861 when a Sumner County master was murdered by his slave, who died promptly at the hands of a lynch mob. On three occasions in 1860 public furor exploded when "suspicious" white men were overheard uttering abolitionist sentiments or were caught associating too intimately with blacks. One of these villains in Shelbyville absconded with two slaves; the two others, both in Nashville, were deemed outright abolitionists and ordered out of town with the threat of tar and feathers. One culprit, the newspaper reported, had for months worked undetected in the guise of a minister and corresponded seditiously with the North, until citizens began to

⁵L. J. Polk to Emily, Feb. 1, 1861, Polk-Yeatman Papers; Clarksville Chronicle, Sept. 28, 1860; Clarksville Jeffersonian, Jan. 18, 1860.

suspect "that he was not altogether 'right on the goose'—or, in other words, that he was making himself too familiar with colored individuals, free and slave." "Let the people of the South be diligent in watching him," the Nashville Daily Gazette urged, "and all others of his ilk."⁶

Many of the deeply brewing apprehensions of white Middle Tennesseans surfaced in the Nashville "Express Negro" episode, the local public sensation of the spring of 1860. On April 17 the newspapers reported that a large box shipped from the city two days earlier by Adams Express had broken open in Indiana, revealing a smuggled slave, Alec, the property of a Nashville man. City police quickly arrested the drayman (a slave) who had delivered the box to the express company, and a free black whom the drayman named as an accomplice. Authorities returned Alec and the black driver of the express wagon to the city, whereupon Alec implicated another slave and (to the immense consternation of Nashvillians) a white man, who was never found. Investigation revealed that the box had been addressed to a Cincinnati mercantile firm that was "not at all sound on the negro question." ("They are now spotted, at least so far as Southern people are concerned," the Daily Gazette warned.) When the box was hauled back to Nashville and displayed at the express company office, large and excited crowds turned out to see the curiosity, "carefully scrutinizing its dimensions, marks, odor, &c."⁷

⁶Clarksville Chronicle, Apr. 6, July 27, 1860; Nashville Daily Gazette, Jan. 25, Apr. 10, 17, Nov. 18, Dec. 1, 1860; Nashville Patriot, Mar. 26, 1861; Gallatin Courier, Mar. 27, 1861.

⁷Nashville Daily Gazette, Apr. 17, 20, 26, 27, 1860; Nashville Patriot, Apr. 19, 1860.

Fear of enemies without, fear of conspirators and traitors within, fear of slave unrest and the unholy collusion of slaves and free blacks—all of these the Express Negro case laid bare. How much of this and other sensational affairs was genuine and how much merely a phantom concoction of paranoid minds can never be known. Whether grounded in fact or fantasy, however, these incidents are revealing, for they illuminate starkly the writhings of an ideology under seige.

The more firmly Middle Tennesseans persuaded themselves that the foe was at their gates and within their walls, the more they turned to the task of reinforcing their fortress battlements and assuring the security of the keep and the safety of its beleaguered defenders. Volunteer military companies sprang up around the region: Davidson, Williamson, and Maury counties boasted showy uniformed cohorts by the summer of 1860. These were ostensibly political marching clubs, but some like the Bell Greys of Davidson reorganized in the wake of Lincoln's election "on a neutral and permanent basis." The election results spawned new companies in several counties, too, their militancy now boldly declared. The Maury Guards, for example, organized in Columbia in late November "as an encouragement of the military spirit among us, and also . . . for the permanent defence of the county."⁸

Controlling the black population became an even greater concern than military preparedness by late 1860, as the racial anxieties of white heartlanders continued to fester. Noting apprehensively the

⁸Nashville Daily Gazette, Aug. 2, 11, Nov. 10, 21, Dec. 1, 1860; Fayetteville Observer, Mar. 21, 1861.

approach of Christmas—traditionally a time of relaxed discipline for slaves—the editor of the Fayetteville Observer urged the reactivation of the dormant patrol system in Lincoln County. "[W]hile we do not learn of any misgivings as to continued quiet hereabouts," he wrote,

yet the news that is frequently reaching us of attempted insurrectionary movements elsewhere, are a warning that the most certain mode of insuring a continuance of the peace and safety that now reign here, is to be ready to promptly stop any arrangements that might be made for a disturbance.

The Maury County court revived the patrol in that county early in 1861 and levied a special tax on slave property to maintain it. The Davidson County patrol, active throughout 1860, redoubled its vigilance in the winter of 1861, invading the cabins of slaves and free blacks and seizing an occasional gun, knife, or powder flask. In other places citizens rode as informal patrols, endeavoring to spread terror among the supposedly mutinous slaves and their coconspirators. A Rutherford County woman described in 1863 the temper of the times three years earlier in her rural neighborhood:

. . . if a negro was found away from home without a pass he was taken up and whipped or beat most cruelly with a paddle or a leather strap and stripped naked at that[.] patrollers were out all night watching. The martial law was in force and any one was punished who was seen conversing with a negro. . . .

But some whites put their trust in renewed moral suasion rather than increased physical force to keep blacks in line. Across the region, churches, for example, devoted more attention to the religious

instruction of black members and debated more earnestly the nature of their mission to the slaves.⁹

Racial nightmares haunted townsfolk frequently, for urban blacks exercised considerable independence and freedom of movement. The Clarksville city council moved toward restricting that independence in February 1861 with an ordinance prohibiting slaves in the town from living apart from their masters. A Nashville newspaper editor, troubled by the growing number of quasi-independent slave artisans, went so far as to urge masters and lawmakers to ban slaves from skilled trades and restrict them to positions more readily supervised and less competitive with white labor. "It has ever appeared to us," he declared, "that the proper field for slave labor is agricultural pursuits and menial service."¹⁰

A more sinister threat than the slaves in the eyes of some white heartlanders were the free blacks, long abominated but now sometimes

⁹Ibid., Oct. 18, 1860; Maury County, Tennessee, County Court Clerk's Office, Minute Books, Jan. 7, Apr. 1, 1861, Vol. XIII, 328, 435 (TSLA); Davidson County, Tennessee, County Court Clerk's Office, County Court Minutes, Jan. 7, Apr. 1, 1861, Bk. H, 580, 644 (TSLA); Jane C. Warren to Electa Ames, Aug. 27, 1863, Electa Ames Papers (Duke University); First Presbyterian Church, Clarksville, Montgomery County, Records, Session Minutes, Vol. II, May 8, June 1, 1860 (TSLA). Increased missions to slaves were common among churches across the South in this period: see W. Harrison Daniel, "Southern Protestantism and the Negro, 1860-1865," North Carolina Historical Review, XLI (July, 1964), 346-50. Renewed religious efforts for slaves in times of crisis were not unprecedented in the heartland: Zion Presbyterian Church of Maury County, among others, had begun such during the 1856 slave revolt scare. See Mary W. Highsaw, "A History of Zion Community in Maury County, 1806-1860," THQ, V (June, 1946), 135.

¹⁰Clarksville Chronicle, Feb. 22, 1861; Fayetteville Observer, May 3, 1860; Nashville News, quoted in Fayetteville Observer, Mar. 1, 1860.

viewed as the critical link between seditious abolitionists and disaffected slaves. "They are a source of discontent among slaves," wrote a correspondent to a Nashville paper,

. . . they are the channel through which our household enemies may reach the slave with evil suggestions, and thus increase the dangers lately shown at Harper's Ferry.

When legislation was proposed to remove all free blacks from the state, a group of Wilson County citizens wrote the General Assembly in support of the bill:

Your petitioners . . . are satisfied that the slave property of this state is seriously injured [by] the contact and association with the free negro population. . . . [which] is generally lazy, worthless, and engaged in trading with the slave race & thereby injuring their morals & the property of the masters. . . .¹¹

Free blacks fell increasingly under suspicion through 1860, especially in Nashville where they numbered in the hundreds. By November the city council was sufficiently concerned to pass a resolution to "ascertain the number of free negroes in the city, their rights to remain here, &c." In December the mayor, city marshal, and three deputies raided an eatery run by two free blacks which had become a Sunday gambling hangout; the officers rounded up at least twenty Negroes whom they caught with whiskey and cards. The newspaper noted that the culprits had been suspect for several weeks, and "Their movements have been closely watched. . . ." The following January, Wiley, a recently emancipated slave, petitioned the Davidson County

¹¹Nashville Daily Gazette, Jan. 8, 1860; Legislative Petitions, 1860, No. 37.

court for permission to remain in Tennessee under a proviso of state law, and offered to post the required bond. Though in the recent past such requests had been granted, now the court demurred and ordered Wiley out of the state.¹²

More slowly than their fellows in the deep South, but nonetheless surely, some white Middle Tennesseans arrived at the certainty that the only real security against black enemies at home and white enemies at the gates lay in secession. Early in 1861 a Nashville proslavery advocate prophesied that emancipation would inevitably follow the Republican assumption of power and, being "unwilling to see [slavery's] speed retarded or its abolition worked out among us," he called for the immediate secession of Tennessee, with or without the rest of the Upper South. Some, having reluctantly accepted the necessity of secession, began to work actively for it and even welcomed further abolitionist outrages as a goad to conservative Southerners. "I Say then if come it must, Tho I Pray God may forbid it let us Seperat let us part," a Robertson County farmer wrote;

. . . I think a few more Such developments as Browns Revelations, would do more good for the South, than a twelve month Seshion of debates would do in Congress. "Old vanwinkle" has awoke Out of his twenty years Sleep. . . .¹³

Despite the radical persuasion of some white Middle Tennesseans, however, and the misgivings of nearly all, political conservatism

¹²Nashville Daily Gazette, Nov. 21, Dec. 11, 1860; Davidson County Court Minutes, Jan. 11, 1861, Bk. H, 586.

¹³Nashville Patriot, Jan. 24, 1861; Daniel P. Braden to Andrew Johnson, Jan. 10, 1860, Graf and Haskins, Papers of Andrew Johnson, III, 373-75.

reigned in the heartland through 1860 and the winter of 1861. Most remained convinced, even after Lincoln's election and the secession of the Lower South, that the drastic measures necessary to neutralize the undeniable threats to the Southern way of life were better taken within the Union than outside of it. Repeatedly heartlanders denounced fire-eating secessionism as stupidity or insanity engendered by the triumph of hot passion over cool reason. One drew on a martial simile to make his case:

It seems to me that to go out of the Union to fight for our rights would be like the commander of a fortress going outside of his walls to fight mutineers who were left within, with all the advantage of arms, and works, while the commander exposed himself in the open field. We might possibly admire the bravery of the man, but what would we think of his judgment?

A Williamson County state legislator castigated abolitionism and secessionism in the same breath; both, he sneered, "are the remedies of political quacks. . . ." Other heartlanders were yet more blunt. "I cannot but regard the course pursued by South Carolina as one of madness, demented folly," a Nashville lawyer declared. "Has it not occurred to you, in the last 18 months or 2 years," another Nashvillian demanded of Andrew Johnson in 1862,

that for one crazy man in [the] Lunatic Asylum—there are a hundreds if not thousands running at large—There can be a species of Secession or proslavery madness as well as Abolition fanaticism.¹⁴

¹⁴O. N. Chapin to Andrew Johnson, Dec. 20, 1860, *ibid.*, IV, 58; Nashville Patriot, Jan. 11, 1860; A. Waldo Putnam to Andrew Johnson, Dec. 22, 1860, Graf and Haskins, *Papers of Andrew Johnson*, IV, 73-74; anonymous correspondent to Andrew Johnson, Oct., 1862, Andrew Johnson Papers (Library of Congress—hereafter cited as LC).

Many conservatives espied in secessionism a plot by a clique of ambitious politicians to dupe the masses and seize power. A Nashville merchant spoke in March 1861 of the "dissatisfied spirits among us, and I am afraid their patriotism does not proceed from love of country, but more from a thirst after the loves and fishes. . . ." "I think we have one set of politicians South who want to save the Union on the Sly," another Nashvillian wrote, "and another who wish to destroy it in the same way. I sympathize with the former. . . . The latter are among us." A Williamson County planter condemned the secessionist ringleaders of the Deep South "with their madness for place and position. . . ." A few compromise amendments to the Constitution would, he believed,

deprive [such] Politicians of food to feast upon, to elevate themselves to office, such as the "Negro" question, "Territorial" question, &c., but they will in their corrupt and fruitful imagination, find out something else to Demagogue or mislead an unsuspecting People!¹⁵

Conservative leaders likewise condemned the burgeoning racial and political phobias of white Middle Tennesseans. Some decried the free black expulsion bill—an "iniquitous measure," the Daily Gazette's editor pronounced it. A Williamson County legislator spoke out publicly to deny any real threat from free blacks, calling attention to their relatively small numbers in the state and their dependence on

¹⁵Alexander J. D. Thurston to Andrew Johnson, Mar. 11, 1861, Graf and Haskins, Papers of Andrew Johnson, IV, 383-84; John Lellyet to Andrew Johnson, Dec. 20, 1860, *ibid.*, 62; John S. Claybrooke to unknown correspondent, Feb. 25, 1861, Claybrooke and Overton Papers (TSLA).

whites: "They received the few privileges they have as a free gift from the dominant race; shall we not protect them in the enjoyment of the fruits of our own bounty? Or shall we ruthlessly exile them . . .?"

On the eve of the presidential election the editor of the Nashville Patriot ridiculed a wildly circulating "'cock and bull story'" about an imminent, abolitionist-led slave insurrection:

The thing is too absurd to deceive any one having an ounce of brains. . . . Let the people of Tennessee be on guard. No means will be left untried to alarm their fears, in a crisis like the present. . . .

After the election a Nashvillian published a plea to reject the calls for arming and drilling, and denounced the rising tide of anti-abolitionist mob violence in the South which undermined the "force and dignity of all law, the power of moral sentiment, and the safe guards of rights of person and rights of property. . . ." Furthermore, he pointed out, the specter of abolitionists massing to invade the South like a barbarian horde was a chimera. They would have to "sneak through the land with cautious tread," he wrote, and could corrupt no one. And besides, he added, "Our slaves are well cared for, and they know it: They also know that their masters are their only and their best friends. . . ."16

Reasoned disquisitions and calm reassurances did not, however, controvert the fact that conservatives shared the fundamental convictions and fears that inspired every white heartlander. All recognized slavery

¹⁶ Nashville Daily Gazette, Feb. 22, 1860; Nashville Patriot, Jan. 11, Nov. 1, 28, 1860; Clarksville Chronicle, Jan. 20, 27, 1860.

and white supremacy as the groundsills of society and all saw that foundation violently buffeted by recent events. What divided conservatives and secessionists were their conflicting interpretations of the ultimate source of the danger. Secessionists believed that Northern abolitionists were working—through both law and revolution—to overthrow slavery, and that the longer the South stayed in the Union the more certain was that outcome. Conservatives envisioned an identical phantasmagoria of bloody servile rebellion, but saw it as the result of continued agitation by extremists of both North and South. The Clarksville Chronicle censured a fire-eating election speaker for his all too graphic portrayal of the horrors of a slave uprising, delivered before a local audience which included blacks:

It is no sufficient apology to say that he was only pointing out the effects of Republican policy; such remarks ought not to be tolerated in a slave-holding community. . . . It is just such speeches . . . which prompts negroes to fly to free States, stirs up insubordination, and suggests murder, and one such man . . . does more mischief than a thousand Black Republicans. Had a Northern man made such a speech here, he would have been lynched. . . .

Moderation and compromise were the true safeguards of slavery, conservatives insisted, and those could be achieved only by stifling hotheads and by staying in the Union. Secession would mean war, and the consequences of war would be the very consequences most dreaded by secessionists and conservatives alike. A Nashville unionist summed it up pointedly and prophetically in December 1860: "Secession is the short Cut to abolitionism. . . ." ¹⁷

¹⁷ Ibid., Sept. 28, 1860; William R. Hurley to Andrew Johnson, Dec. 23, 1860, Graf and Haskins, Papers of Andrew Johnson, IV, 74-75.

Through the hectic autumn of 1860 and winter of 1861, and even into early spring, Middle Tennessee unionists remained sanguine, for the people of the region and the state repeatedly reaffirmed their conservatism. The free black expulsion bill had gone down in defeat in the legislature in February 1860. Voters in the heartland chose their favorite son, the moderate former Whig John Bell, by a slight margin over the Southern-rights candidate John C. Breckinridge in the November presidential election. A February 1861 plebiscite on the subject of a state convention to consider secession sparked a great fulmination of unionism in the heartland and across the state; "Tennessee has indeed spoken in thunder tones," an exultant Shelbyville conservative proclaimed. When Marshall County unionists assembled on April 2 an old Whig among them rejoiced at the optimism that pervaded the meeting: ". . . struck with the harmony and zeal that seemed to beam from every eye," he wrote,

I accosted some old weather beaten democrats that I had been fighting for nearly twenty years, and said to them we have at last met on a common platform the Union & heard the reply yes the Union fo[re]ver. . . .¹⁸

¹⁸Joseph H. Thompson to Andrew Johnson, Feb. 10, 1861, *ibid.*, 269-70; J. D. Johnson to G. W. Gordon, Apr. 3, 1861, George W. Gordon and William T. Avery Papers (TSLA); Mary E. R. Campbell, The Attitude of Tennesseans toward the Union, 1847-1861 (New York, 1961), 130-33, 175-76, 285-86, 289-90; Marguerite B. Hamer, "The Presidential Campaign of 1860 in Tennessee," East Tennessee Historical Society's Publications (hereafter cited as ETHSP), No. 3 (1931), 3-22; Paul H. Bergeron, Antebellum Politics in Tennessee (Lexington, Kentucky, 1982), 163-66. The vote for Bell in the heartland was 18,250, for Breckinridge 17,947; on a county-by-county basis the vote followed traditional Whig and Democratic lines—Bell took seven counties, Breckinridge five (Cheatham County did not vote independently at that time). On a statewide basis Bell won with a large plurality but not a majority, because of the strong showing of the Northern Democratic candidate, Stephen A. Douglas,

Ten days later, with the bombardment of Fort Sumter, the unionists' tower of hope and faith came crashing down. War was now a reality, and Lincoln's subsequent call for troops to coerce the seceded states made neutrality impossible. Faced with two all but unthinkable choices—to make war on the Union or to make war on the South—Middle Tennesseans overwhelmingly resolved to join hands with the seceders to defend the South.

For most the change of heart came almost literally overnight, so forceful was the shock of Sumter. A Nashville woman wrote on April 19 that the city "is in a perfect uproar, nothing is thought of or talked of either by its men or its women but the coming struggle. . . . Every night speeches are made and the union men are fast disappearing by becoming secessionists. . . ." On the sixteenth a delirious public assembly in Clarksville—including a number of the town's leading men who were without exception erstwhile conservatives—resolved for immediate secession; the next day the Confederate flag unfurled over the Montgomery County courthouse. On the twenty-fourth the Rector of Columbia's Episcopal church was advised by his bishop to delete the customary prayer for the President and Congress of the United States. A witness in Davidson County who was later asked to give an account of what he saw could only reply that he would "not pretend to undertake to describe the state of things when this rebellion first broke out in

in West Tennessee. The February vote in the heartland—16,740 for a convention, 14,482 against—is misleading because many unionists voted for a convention but elected unionist delegates. In the state as a whole the convention proposal was rejected by a considerable majority.

Tennessee, but no man who was not there will ever comprehend it. Never." The statewide referendum on June 8, in which heartlanders voted 37,262 to 1,927 for secession, was an anticlimax: Middle Tennessee had been effectively out of the Union for almost two months.¹⁹

The course of secession reaffirmed the primacy of race over class as a social force in the heartland. Despite the later asseverations of a few Northerners and die-hard unionists, there is no good evidence that slaveholding aristocrats for their own selfish purposes tricked, cajoled, or browbeat the ignorant, ingenuous common folk into following them out of the union; if anything, the elites of the region set a conservative tone. For example, John W. Burgess, a Giles County unionist, alleged in his memoirs that during the secession crisis

The social racket was . . . played with high success. The secessionist slave lords and their ladies "stooped to conquer" the adherence of the bourgeoisie and even the poor white trash by social recognition.

¹⁹ Annie R. Maney to Bettie Kimberly, Apr. 19, 1861, John Kimberly Papers (SHC); Clarksville Chronicle, Apr. 19, 1861; Bishop James H. Otey to David Pise, Apr. 24, 1861, David Pise Journals (SHC); Testimony of Russell Huston (1863), United States War Department, The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (70 vols. in 128, Washington, 1880-1901), Ser. I, Vol. XVI, Pt. 1, p. 501 (hereafter cited as OR); Campbell, Attitude of Tennesseans, 205-6, 292-93; J. Milton Henry, "The Revolution in Tennessee, February, 1861, to June, 1861," THQ, XVIII (June, 1959), 99-119; Peter Maslowski, Treason Must Be Made Odious: Military Occupation and Wartime Reconstruction in Nashville, Tennessee (Millwood, New York, 1978), 10-13. See also Nashville Patriot, Apr. 19, 1861; Fayetteville Observer, Apr. 18, 25, 1861; James Washington Matthews Journal, Apr. 22, 1861 (TSLA). For some the journey from conservatism to secessionism was slower and more painful; see, for example, Henry C. Yeatman to wife, Apr. 15, 16, 1861, Polk-Yeatman Papers. Across the state the vote in June was 104,913 in favor of secession, 47,238 against.

But Burgess contradicted himself by noting that on a visit to Wilson County that year he found that most of the leading families there were unionist. Middle Tennesseans high and low were on the whole conservative until Fort Sumter but turned radical in the main thereafter, executing a volte-face so instantaneous as to negate the possibility of aristocratic manipulation. Only a fierce jolt to a society's ideological nervous system could provoke such a reaction. The great majority of white heartlanders of every rank shared a common nervous system, were simultaneously galvanized by the events in Charleston harbor, perceived as with one pair of eyes a mortal threat to their racist, slaveholding society, and subsequently marched shoulder to shoulder into the ranks of the rebels. The Clarksville Chronicle described with some hyperbole the scene just after the news of Sumter burst upon formerly conservative Montgomery County:

The wildest enthusiasm pervaded the entire community; and every class and condition, every age and sex, united in glorification of the event. . . . Whatever differences of opinion may have existed, heretofore, there were none now, and but one single heart seemed to animate the entire town, and that heart to throb under one single impulse of patriotic exultation!²⁰

²⁰John W. Burgess, Reminiscences of an American Scholar: The Beginnings of Columbia University (New York, 1934), 13, 16; Clarksville Chronicle, Apr. 19, 1861. For other assertions of the class basis of secessionism see Testimony of Colonel Marc Mundy (1863), OR, Ser. I, Vol. XVI, Pt. 1, p. 633; and Report of Major General J. J. Reynolds, Feb. 10, 1863, *ibid.*, Vol. XXIII, Pt. 2, pp. 54-55. The John Duling Memoir (TSLA), passim, on the other hand, notes that many of the large slaveholders in Marshall County opposed secession. The ideology of the planter class, its role in secession, and the unity of society in the secession crisis are discussed in James L. Roark, Masters without Slaves: Southern Planters in the Civil War and Reconstruction (New York, 1977), 1-32.

In the hothouse atmosphere of the weeks following Fort Sumter the frenzy and paranoia which had sprouted in the preceding months proliferated like rank weeds. "Every body is and has been in a state of the most intense excitement" a Murfreesboro girl recorded in her diary in July; "The War is the all absorbing topic of conversation and of letters. . . ." "Farmers, look to your safety," cautioned the Fayetteville Observer in a May 2 editorial urging the arming of every household;

The times are uncertain. Black Republicanism is bent on war and insurrection. . . . You should organize patrols in every neighborhood, and see that all trampers give an account of themselves.

A later column warned of "Northern spies scattered throughout the South. . . . Look out for them."²¹

Under the dual impetus of war and fear, Middle Tennessee became an armed camp. Young men flocked to the colors and volunteer companies by the dozens mustered and marched off to training camps in the region to prepare to defend the South against Yankee invaders. Those left behind, however, poured nearly as much spirit, energy, and treasure into the defense of the heartland against enemies at home, giving free rein now to their nightmarish anxieties about the menace within. Under mandate of a hurriedly enacted state law, every county began in May or June to organize, equip, and drill home guards—"minute men" they were called in these weeks of revolutionary fervor. The Cheatham

²¹C. Alice Ready Diary, July 15, 1861 (SHC); Fayetteville Observer, May 2, June 27, 1861.

County court concurrently appointed commissioners to "employ good Gun Smiths to repair all the guns in the County that need repairing," and the Robertson County court ordered its justices to enumerate all shotguns, rifles, and muskets in their respective districts. Towns across the region reinforced their police squads—Clarksville doubled its own before the end of April. Not content to wait for official measures, some Middle Tennesseans frantically organized extra-legal vigilante groups almost as the smoke cleared from Fort Sumter: the Nashville "Committee of Vigilance and Safety" offered its services to the city as early as April 27.²²

These guardians of domestic tranquility, whether constituted legally or extra-legally, formally or informally, moved immediately to secure the heartland against supposed enemies within the household. In the process, and with the support of an increasingly apprehensive and intolerant public temperament, they assumed vast powers in their neighborhoods and in some cases established a virtual tyranny. The Nashville Committee of Vigilance and Safety, ostensibly committed to cooperation with the police, announced its intention to defend the

²²Clarksville Chronicle, Apr. 19, 26, 1861; Gallatin Courier, Apr. 17, 1861; Nashville Patriot, Apr. 19, 21, 23, 28, 1861; Cheatham County, Tennessee, County Court Clerk's Office, Court Minute Books, June 3, July 1, Aug. 7, 1861, Vol. B, 167-69, 181, 188-89 (TSLA); Robertson County, Tennessee, County Court Clerk's Office, County Court Minutes, May 13, 1861, Vol. XIV, 624-26 (TSLA). A good sense of the excitement and activity in this period is conveyed in the journal of Maury County farmer James W. Matthews, which also notes the formation of a vigilante group in rural Maury County in early May. See Matthews Journal, May 4, 8, 22, June 22, 29, Aug. 10, 16, 31, 1861.

innocent and bring the guilty to punishment and urged all citizens to bring their complaints before the Committee, so that "justice may be done to each and every one." In Lincoln County the Norris Creek Home Guards declared themselves pledged to

the purpose of protecting our homes and firesides from the aggression and unholy crusade of Abe Lincoln and his army, and for the protection of our home from secret enemies, whether they be negro insurrectioners, abolition emissaries, or home traitors,

and to those ends asserted their right and their determination to arrest, try, and punish anyone suspected of treachery or insurrection. A Bedford County man who ran afoul of the home guard and vigilantes reported in June that "A perfect reign of terror has existed among us for some weeks."²³

From the welter of private fears and public threats, haunting apparitions and dark prophecies, there emerged a common theme: the heartland could be preserved through this crisis, many concluded, only by the absolute, unremitting unity in thought and spirit of its people. "Let no leader in Israel endeavor to distract the councils of the Nation," the editor of the Nashville Patriot pleaded; "let us stand together as a band of brothers . . . and when the work is accomplished, and we are a free and independent people, then we can afford to differ . . . but for God's sake, have no quarrel sooner." Another heartlander similarly cautioned about the perils of disunity:

No society or government can long remain where the people are divided and distracted by discordant sentiments.

²³Nashville Patriot, Apr. 28, 1861; Fayetteville Observer, May 16, Aug. 22, 1861.

. . . Let party names be done away. . . . Let all divest themselves of every selfish principle. . . . We should avoid the rock on which many thousands have made shipwreck. "A prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself; but the simple pass on, and are punished."

The citizens of Boone Hill, in Lincoln County, invoked a less elegant but pithier maxim when they met in May to organize their home guard:

". . . he who is not for us," they warned, "is against us. . . ." ²⁴

Indeed, in those ebullient weeks the spark of patriotic unity kindled by the news of Sumter appeared to wax to a glorious blaze. On May 1 sixty-two year old James Matthews rode into Columbia, shouldered a musket, and marched alongside the young men in one of the volunteer companies drilling there. In June, Fayetteville boys under military age—some as young as twelve—formed their own company and paraded. Similar inspiring scenes were cheered all across the region. The Maury County court was absolved of the necessity of raising funds to pay the home guards, "it being the opinion and sense of the court that all good citizens in these times of Peril will serve their country in that capacity free of charge." In Wilson County the court likewise discovered to its gratification that "good men would willingly serve without pay in most if not all the districts." "Our people are now united," the Fayetteville Observer announced; "political barriers

²⁴Nashville Patriot, July 6, Aug. 9, 1861; Fayetteville Observer, May 16, 1861.

are broken down, and but one spirit, a determination to protect Southern homes and defend Southern honor, animates all."²⁵

Those who proclaimed such sentiments as the Observer's, however, were either dissembling for patriotic purposes or were blinded by the dazzle of patriotic effusions. Whether the consummate unanimity they celebrated was lie, myth, or mirage, their land was in truth a house divided, and most of its occupants discerned the rift, acknowledged it, loathed it, feared it. Despite the shock of Sumter and the overwhelming reversal of opinion, a small number of heartlanders remained resolutely opposed to secession. Some were prominent and influential leaders, like Jordan Stokes of Lebanon and Robert S. Northcott, editor of the Murfreesboro Telegraph. These indomitable unionists, whose political principles held fast amid the ideological tidal wave of April, were few; but that did not mitigate, in the eyes of the majority, the threat they posed to the sacred unity of the people demanded in this parlous hour. As the unionists stubbornly persisted in the weeks after Sumter, the high-minded call for unity degenerated into a vicious crusade to crush the dissenters.

Across the heartland angry, fearful men and women turned the power of psychological and physical coercion against any hint of defiance. "[S]everal persons have been sent off or promised a coat of tar &

²⁵Matthews Journal, May 1, 1861; Fayetteville Observer, Apr. 25, June 6, 1861; Maury County Court Minutes, May 20, 1861, Vol. XIII, 463; Wilson County, Tennessee, County Court Clerk's Office, County Court Minute Books, Quarterly Court Minutes and Actions, May 23, 1861, Vol. 1859-1864, p. 486 (TSLA).

feathers with a lighted match a little closer than would be agreeable,"

a Nashville woman wrote on April 27;

Mrs McEwen has her union flag still waving. . . . She refuses to take it down, but that is an expression of feeling that will not be tolerated and her flag will soon be taken down for her.

A Bedford County unionist wrote acridly after the war of his travail in 1861:

. . . I with the few Union men were denounced by the Rebels as being traitors, Abolitionists and black republicans, and every vile epithet that a wicked heart could imagine & a bitter tongue express[,] and some of those persons who call themselves Christians indulged freely in the abuse.

Another recalled that as the date of the June secession referendum approached, unionists "were afraid to vote. They were bullied and frightened." A secessionist Fayetteville newspaper editor seriously advocated marking ballots to "make known Old Abe's sympathisers, if he has any here." One spunky elderly unionist finally capitulated, vowing contemptuously that he would vote for "separation, representation and damnation, for it would all end in that if secession prevailed."

"[A] Union man is looked upon as the verriest enemy on earth," a

Lutheran minister in Bedford County wrote in June;

I have been threatened with the halter, and am now a marked subject for future operations. . . . You have never heard of such fraud and perversion of facts practiced upon any people . . . [the secessionists] have threatened and dragooned, until thousands for fear of personal violence have been deterred from voting.

Bitterly he cursed his tormentors as he affirmed his own certainty

of ultimate vindication: "One truth remains—God is judge and He has a purpose to fulfil. Those whom the Gods destroy, they first make mad."²⁶

The illegitimization of political dissent and the persecution of the otherwise-minded marked an ominous departure in the heartland. Though free debate on sensitive racial issues had, of course, been silenced for a generation, popular politics in Middle Tennessee had long remained vibrant, expansive, exuberantly competitive, since all participants implicitly professed the fundamental social creed. But democracy died in Middle Tennessee in April 1861 at the hands of an ideology driven frantic by fear for its own life. Confronting a sword seemingly poised to eviscerate their society, and reckoning a political maneuver—secession—their only shield, heartlanders came to identify the political unity theretofore unattainable and unnecessary with the ideological unity now more than ever compulsory. Those few who declined to make that identification felt the hysterical wrath of the many who did make it, and the victims sensed what a profound transformation had been wrought in their land. A Bedford County unionist wrote that the furious abuse heaped on him by his secessionist neighbors "at once convinced me that they were my personal enemies as well as my political enemies, and the horrid wishes too that was

²⁶ Annie R. Maney to Bettie Kimberly, Apr. 27, 1861, Kimberly Papers; William Taylor to Enon Primitive Baptist Church, Aug. 18, 1867, Enon Primitive Baptist Church, Unionville, Bedford County, Records, Church Letters (TSLA); Nashville Daily Times and True Union, Jan. 11, 1865; Fayetteville Observer, May 30, Aug. 22, 1861. The Duling Memoir mentions the banishment of unionists from a Marshall County church in 1861.

hurled against the Union people was shocking to humanity . . . all prooveing deepe personal animosity."²⁷

What most deeply disturbed the mass of Middle Tennesseans, and what provoked their extreme reaction, were the ideological implications of the defection of the unionists, especially of those who were among the heartland's leaders. Suddenly it appeared that this once harmonious, tightly woven society was discordant and unraveled—consensus fractured, mutual obligations repudiated, the revered patriarchy at odds with itself. No longer, it seemed, were unity and concord inherent qualities of this society which might be taken for granted, but were instead elusive and vital prizes to be hunted down, seized, and jealously guarded. Those who jeopardized the success of the hunt, or questioned its necessity, found the hunters' weapons turned on themselves: "he who is not for us is against us."

The preservation of harmony demanded too, besides enforced unity, the severing of "foreign" connections and the purging of incongruent elements which could not be coaxed or hounded into the fold. These movements had begun even earlier, really, with the free black expulsion bill and talk of a "home policy" to exclude Yankee manufactures and Yankee ideas; but after Sumter they became a mania. Northerners were of course a prime target. The Nashville Patriot recommended that each one in the region should, in the course of "the elimination [from] our population of dangerous elements," be scrutinized for signs of Black

²⁷William Taylor to Enon Primitive Baptist Church, Aug. 18, 1867, Enon Primitive Baptist Church, Bedford County, Church Letters.

Republicanism or "over-zealous . . . sympathy for the poor slave." That newspaper also reported that many voters had written on their June referendum ballots

"No more Yankee school teachers." This is a sentiment which has been steadily growing in Nashville for some years past; and has now become pretty general. . . . Let it be understood that the employment of Southern born teachers is hereafter to be the rule and not the exception. . . .

On July 1 the Davidson County court resolved not to pay interest on their bonds held by citizens of any non-Confederate state. Four days later the First Presbyterian Church of Clarksville advised its Presbytery to cut ties with the national church, and not long after all Middle Tennessee "Old School" Presbyterians ended their affiliation with their Northern coreligionists. Before the summer was out, Northern insurance companies packed up their papers and left the towns of the heartland. On the same trains which bore northward the outcast Yankees rode many of the die-hard native unionists, pariahs now too, who reasoned sadly like Robert S. Northcott that "I did all I could, to check the monster, but when I saw my State . . . completely under the influence of the 'reign of terror,' I concluded that my duty called me elsewhere."²⁸

²⁸Daniel P. Braden to Andrew Johnson, Jan. 10, 1860, Graf and Haskins, Papers of Andrew Johnson, III, 373-75; Nashville Patriot, June 13, 21, 1861; Davidson County Court Minutes, July 1, 1861, Bk. H, 668; First Presbyterian Church, Clarksville, Session Minutes, Vol. II, July 5, 1861; D. Little, History of the Presbytery of Columbia, Tennessee (Columbia, Tennessee, 1928), 24; Clarksville Chronicle, Aug. 30, 1861, Feb. 14, 1862; Robert S. Northcott to Andrew Johnson, Feb. 17, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Papers of Andrew Johnson, V, 145.

As they solidified and purged their society, white Middle Tennesseans in the first months of the war also intensified their efforts to suppress the black population, convinced now more than ever that (as a manifesto of leading Nashvillians declared), "The horrors of servile war are to be added to the merciless butchery and plunder to be carried on over the South by the vandal hordes of the Northern cities." Slave patrols revived and burgeoned across the region, assisted in their nocturnal vigils by home guards and vigilantes. Blacks free and slave were watched with renewed suspicion, their gatherings more closely regulated or altogether proscribed. In July the Cumberland Presbyterian Church of Lebanon appointed one of its congregation to take charge of the separate, theretofore casually overseen Sunday services held by black members, and to "see that some white man attend with them at every meeting." In early June the people of Fayetteville deliberated the problem of the free blacks and resolved that since those troublesome habitants had shared with whites "the blessings of peace [they] should be willing to bear a part of the burdens of war," and decreed that all free black men prepare themselves forthwith for duty as cooks, washers, and laborers in the volunteer companies; names of the recalcitrant would be reported "for further action." Undoubtedly uppermost in the minds of these anxious citizens was not the additional labor, but the reinforced command over a "dangerous element" which this measure would secure.²⁹

²⁹Nashville Patriot, May 18, 1861; Historical Records Survey, Tennessee, Cumberland Presbyterian Church Records (2 vols., Nashville, 1938-41), II, 50; Fayetteville Observer, June 6, 1861; John V. Cimprich,

The primary instrument of the crusade for self-preservation, unification, purification, and subjugation was violence. Apprehending onslaughts from within and without, Middle Tennesseans determined to meet force with force, and as they did so a violent aura suffused their society as never before. The rabid imprecation of a normally staid Nashville lady in May, as she contemplated the coming "unholy war" contrived by the North, vividly illustrated the heartland's increasingly militant social consciousness:

If come it must . . . I only pray God may be with us to give us strength to conquer them, to exterminate them, to lay waste every Northern city, town and village, to destroy them utterly. It is nothing more than they deserve, nothing but what they wish to do for us.³⁰

The same fury was turned against domestic enemies. Violence against blacks was an old acquaintance, of course; only its redoubled frequency and ferocity were new: "negro hung for incendiaryism," a Maury County farmer noted almost insouciantly on May 28, 1861, among the minutiae in his journal of farm activities. But the purposeful violence by white against white—much of it collective violence—which stained the heartland in these months was a decidedly new phenomenon. The threat of physical abuse and even death which accompanied every new rumor of unionist perfidy or abolitionist subversion was very real. A leading Lebanon unionist who spoke out at a public meeting in April was harassed at his home that night by a mob of twenty men, as his effigy

"Slavery Amidst Civil War in Tennessee: The Death of an Institution" (Ph.D. diss., Ohio State University, 1977), 12-17.

³⁰Annie R. Maney to Bettie Kimberly, May 12, 1861, Kimberly Papers.

burned nearby; he drove off the attackers only after an exchange of pistol fire. Such incidents (and there were many), along with frequent public and private muttering about "hemp cravats," were spawned by and in turn fed the new consensus of violence, and persuaded even the most obstinate nonconformists that their only alternatives were silence or flight.³¹

The casual observer in Middle Tennessee in the latter half of 1861 might understandably have concluded, however, that the heartland at war differed but little from the heartland at peace. The Second Revolution to that point was predominantly a revolution of mind and spirit; the barricades Middle Tennesseans manned were ideological ones, the monarch they deposed an abstract principle. Tearful, romantic scenes at railway stations were plentiful, of course. Young men were already dying in filthy army hospitals and faraway battlefields. And even the dullest attendant could hardly pretermit the ferment and the tension of these months, as he read the newspapers teeming with news of war and rumors of war, or eavesdropped on the excited conversations at every street corner, or watched eager, awkward volunteers drill on the courthouse square, or woke to the furious galloping of patrollers

³¹Matthews Journal, May 28, 1861; Gallatin Courier, Apr. 3, 1861; Fayetteville Observer, May 2, 1861; Nashville Patriot, June 19, 1861; Edmund Cooper to William Cooper, June 5, 1861, Cooper Family Papers (TSLA); Nashville Daily Times and True Union, Jan. 11, 1865; Burgess, Reminiscences, 10-16. On Southern violence in general during this period see Richard Maxwell Brown, "Historical Patterns of American Violence," in Hugh Davis Graham and Ted Robert Gurr, eds., Violence in America: Historical and Comparative Perspectives (Beverly Hills, California, 1979), 22-23.

in the darkest hours of night. But for most Middle Tennesseans the wonted routines of life abided, and the river of their existence flowed smoothly in its accustomed channel.

Continuity was most evident in the heartland's institutions which, with their inherent stability, evinced a mostly seamless transition from old flag to new, from peace to war. Southern-born teachers took up chalk and pointers abandoned by departing Yankee schoolmarms and the education of the young proceeded. With the adoption of a prayer for the Confederate President and Congress, and with a more watchful eye on their black brethren, the churches of the heartland pursued their dual task of proclaiming the glory of God in heaven while battling the sins of man on earth. Labor shortages and inflated wages plagued the towns as men went off to war, but trade was lively, spirits high, and the busy pulse of urban life beat unabated, even quickened, in these feverish months. As the soldier's call for swords drowned out the farmer's call for plowshares the heartland's fledgling industry was spurred to greater efforts: in Clarksville alone, for example, between July and October an iron foundry began casting cannons, shells, and grapeshot; a grocer began baking army crackers; the government rented a pork house and converted it to military use; and a wagon factory began producing army supply wagons. The rhythm of the seasons continued as always to rule the world of the farmers, who toiled on in their fields, inspired now to expand acreage and raise more corn and cattle to feed the hungry armies. In those fields, too, still labored black bondsmen, conscious of the enormity of the crisis at

hand yet unsure of its outcome and, being at the mercy of the new tyranny, unable yet to seek advantage from it. Political contests still evoked excited crowds and retained their raucous prewar flavor. though contestants debated now within narrowly constricted bounds. In the courthouses, over which the stars and bars now flew, the inveterate proceedings of local government went on uninterrupted and the same men sat gravely in the same seats of power, the transition of polity imperceptible at this level; so unjarring was the bureaucratic experience in that summer of 1861 that well into August the Rutherford County court clerk still mechanically prefaced each meeting's minutes with the customary flourish "the year of American Independence the 86th. . . ."32

Disruptions and discontinuities there were, of course, sufficient to remind Middle Tennesseans that they were indeed at war. Railroad

32J. F. Gilmer to W. W. Mackall, Dec. 7, 1861, OR, Ser. I, Vol. VII, 741; Clarksville Chronicle, July 5, Aug. 16, Oct. 25, Dec. 6, 1861; Fayetteville Observer, May 2, 23, 1861; Rutherford County, Tennessee, County Court Clerk's Office, Minute Books, Aug., 1861, Bk. DD, 545 (TSLA). The Matthews Journal, passim, gives a good sense of the undisturbed routine of agriculture and daily business through 1861 and early 1862. All county court records in the same period evince great continuity of leadership and administration. That slaves were well aware of current events from hearing their masters discuss them is indicated by the testimony of ex-slave Hammet Dell of Rutherford County, in George P. Rawick, ed., The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography (41 vols. to date, Westport, Connecticut, 1972-), Ser. Two, Vol. VIII (Ark.), Pt. 2, pp. 137-38. On blacks see also Cimprich, "Slavery Amidst Civil War," 21-24. On the role of Southern churches during the Civil War see W. Harrison Daniel, "Southern Protestantism—1861 and After," Civil War History, V (Sept., 1959), 276-82. On Southern agriculture in the first year of the war see Paul Gates, Agriculture and the Civil War (New York, 1965), 13. On politics and government in Tennessee, see John H. DeBerry, "Confederate Tennessee" (Ph.D. diss., University of Kentucky, 1967), passim.

service and mail deliveries were frequently delayed all over the region, as northern connections were broken and military authorities monopolized tracks and rolling stock. Shortages of some goods and high prices for many others were chronic in these months, especially in the towns, so dependent on importation. Coal, clothing, coffee, liquor, and a dozen other commodities were in very short supply; in Clarksville an unusually quiet Christmas was ascribed to "the absence of Cincinnati tangle foot and chain lightning, cut off by the war." On top of these vexations, most counties imposed sharp tax increases to equip and pay patrollers and home guards and to provide for the growing number of indigents. Cheatham, for example, doubled its property tax rate in early 1862.³³

Delays, shortages, inflation, and taxes Middle Tennesseans bore with patriotic stoicism and humor. But conflicts with the army were a rankling irritant in this period. Middle Tennessee was hardly a heavily occupied country—only Nashville and Clarksville quartered substantial troop concentrations—but army hospitals and procurement offices were in most of the bigger towns. Where troops billeted restrictions were tight: by early 1862 Clarksvillians, who of all heartlanders were nearest the military front, saw soldiers posted outside every liquor store and were forbidden to leave town without a pass from the provost marshal. Farmers close to Nashville complained

³³Clarksville Chronicle, July 12, 26, 1861, Jan. 10, 17, 1862; Clarksville Jeffersonian, Nov. 13, 20, 1861, Jan. 3, 1862; Cheatham County Court Minutes, Jan. 7, 1861, Jan. 6, 1862, Vol. B, 104, 221. On economic privations in the South during the early Confederate period see Charles W. Ramsdell, Behind the Lines in the Southern Confederacy (Baton Rouge, 1944), 2-31.

loudly about pilfering of hogs, chickens, and timber by poorly provisioned and worse disciplined Confederate soldiers camped nearby, who acted "with violence and utter contempt for the rights of the sufferers," as one victim protested. Even more exasperating were the constant appeals by the military for slave laborers from the already hard pressed farmers. Army officials eventually threw up their hands at the slaveowners' grumbling and foot-dragging and resorted to outright impressment. In the winter of 1862 soldiers rounded up hundreds of slaves all over the region and marched them off with picks and shovels to dig fortifications around Nashville and Clarksville.³⁴

It was the heartland's most intimate institution—the family—which endured the heaviest affliction in these early months of war. Every man and boy who donned a uniform, took up a musket, and trooped away left behind a family weakened, more vulnerable, an entity headless or limbless. Knowing this made the choice very painful for some. "I am pulled between two inclinations most unpleasantly," a Nashvillian sadly wrote his wife in August 1861, just prior to his enlistment;

The first & strongest is to stay near you my precious wife & my little daughter. The other is to go & do my part as a soldier. . . . I cant make up my mind to leave [you] & yet I feel dissatisfied with myself.

³⁴Clarksville Chronicle, Sept. 27, Nov. 8, Dec. 6, 20, 1861, Jan. 10, 17, 24, 1862; Clarksville Jeffersonian, Jan. 29, Feb. 3, 1862; Nashville Patriot, Dec. 28, 1861; Matthews Journal, Feb. 13, 1862; L. Polk to L. Tilghman, Dec. 4, 1861, OR, Ser. I, Vol. VII, 736-37; G. O. Watts to Hugh McKrew, Dec. 6, 1861, *ibid.*, 739; J. F. Gilmer to W. W. Mackall, Dec. 7, 1861, *ibid.*, 741; J. F. Gilmer to Isham G. Harris, Dec. 11, 1861, *ibid.*, 757; Isham G. Harris to A. Sidney Johnston, Dec. 31, 1861, *ibid.*, 811-12; G. A. Henry to W. J. Hardee, Jan. 21, 1862, *ibid.*, 841-42.

The anguish endured by families parted was for some exacerbated when the circumstances of war compelled them to live together with other families in Procrustean households. A newlywed Nashville woman, forced to move in with her parents while her husband was away in the army, gave vent to her discontentment in October 1861: "O if I could only keep house. If the war were but over! I don't think I can stand it much longer . . . for it would kill me to live as we do. It is the ruin of soul as well as body." Not only established but incipient families too were victims of the war: the Fayetteville Observer noted that the number of marriages in Lincoln County in 1861 was smaller than that in any year since 1852, and attributed the fact to the many young men gone as soldiers.³⁵

Other institutions—churches, and especially local government—stepped in to sustain the family in its travail. Every county court in the heartland moved immediately upon the outbreak of war to succor needy families of volunteers; most counties raised considerable revenues to be doled out in cash or kind by magistrates or home guards, who in some cases distributed to their charges (besides food) clothing, soap, candles, wood, coal, and even subsidies for house rent and medical care. This was direct public assistance on a far greater scale than ever before in the region, and it evidenced the profound public solicitude for society's central institution in this crisis of unprecedented magnitude. By the winter of 1862 Maury County supported perhaps

³⁵Henry C. Yeatman to wife, Aug. 14, 1861, Polk-Yeatman Papers; Annie Sehon to Bettie Kimberly, Oct. 10, 1861, Kimberly Papers; Fayetteville Observer, Jan. 16, 1862.

200 families, Davidson over 500 families at a cost of \$22,000. The Maury County court even assumed responsibility for sick soldiers left behind by the army and too far from home to return there.³⁶

As the turbulent spring and summer of 1861 gave way to autumn, white Middle Tennesseans came gradually to believe that, despite the earlier prophecies of some, Armageddon was not yet at hand. Many grew hopeful that the months ahead would bring not the winter of their discontent but the springtime of their now secure and revitalized world. They saw their people at last wholly unified and strongly armed against the twin evils within and without; they saw their land purged of the most baneful poisons; they saw their institutions unshaken in the storm, their social fabric strained but not torn; and they saw the most crucial elements of their ideology still intact and now impregnable.

With undisguised smugness white Middle Tennesseans remarked the frequent affirmations of the loyalty of their black helots, so recently depicted as restive and bloodthirsty. The Clarksville Jeffersonian reported in December that free blacks were working cheerfully and ably in the town's army hospital and that "most of them express their

³⁶Montgomery County, Tennessee, County Court Clerk's Office, County Court Minutes, May 17, July 1, 1861, Jan. 6, 1862, Vol. XXVI, 208-9, 217-18, 248 (TSLA); Maury County Court Minutes, May 6, 20, Aug. 7, Oct. 7, 1861, Vol. XIII, 450, 462-63, 519, 536-38, Mar. 6, 1862, Vol. XIV, 95; Davidson County Court Minutes, May 18, July 1, Oct. 7, 1861, Jan. 6, 1862, Bk. H, 657, 665, 668, 702-3, 728, 732. Other examples of governmental concern are in Williamson County, Tennessee, County Court Clerk's Office, Minutes, May, Dec., 1861, Jan., 1862, Vol. XIX, 253, 286, 301-2 (TSLA); Wilson County Court Minutes, May 23, 1861, Jan. 6, 1862, Vol. 1859-1864, pp. 486, 535-36. William Frank Zornow, "State Aid for Indigent Soldiers and Their Families in Tennessee, 1861-1865," THQ, XIII (Dec., 1954), 297-300, is a general survey.

satisfaction that they are able there to contribute to the cause of the country." In Lincoln County a fifteen-year-old slave girl secretly and on her own time sewed a quilt which she presented to her mistress with the request that it be donated to a needy soldier; and a group of blacks in Fayetteville planned and presented without white assistance a tableaux exhibition at the Cumberland Presbyterian Church which raised forty dollars for the benefit of sick soldiers. "This incident contains a large lesson for Old Abe and his satraps," the Observer's editor announced with satisfaction, "if they will only heed it."³⁷

The flush of contentment which suffused these months was, however, a kind of drunkard's euphoria. Intoxicated by the heady wine of political independence and ideological triumph, white Middle Tennesseans experienced a blurring of collective vision, a numbing of senses. Many failed utterly to perceive the currents of fear and disunity which flowed—now submerged but still powerful—beneath the surface of their society.

If there were brash assurances of the fidelity of the blacks, there were also more quietly acknowledged misgivings: in early December the Marshall County court appended to its routine orders an unusual official recommendation that "the owners of the slaves in this county should keep them at home during the Christmas Hollidays"; a Maury County farmer wrote in his diary for Sunday, January 19, that his activities that day had included attending church in the morning,

³⁷Clarksville Jeffersonian, Dec. 13, 1861; Fayetteville Observer, Nov. 14, Dec. 12, 1861.

then a visit to a neighboring farm "where the minute men were examining & whipping negroes supposed to be guilty of burning . . . corn. . . ."

If there was outspoken confidence that the social entity was whole and pure, there were also deep, sporadically confessed doubts: the editor of the Shelbyville Expositor grudgingly conceded in October the lukewarm patriotism or downright disloyalty of many in that town, though he proffered the unconvincing reassurance that "It will not be long before the people of old Bedford will be of one heart and mind"; and Nashvillians at year's end were so panicked by rumors of a plot by Yankees and Southern traitors to infiltrate the city and burn it down that they begged for a military police force and spoke earnestly of instituting loyalty checks to root out subversives among citizens and leaders.

If there was a widespread conviction that secession and independence would bring moral renewal and spiritual resuscitation, there were already hints of war-engendered moral degeneration and weariness of spirit: newspapers charged as early as October that avaricious speculators were deliberately raising food, fuel, and clothing prices to exorbitant levels, cruelly afflicting the poor, and one editor expressed the hope that this outrage would be corrected "before the wrongs and hatred of the oppressed culminate in scenes which all would remember with regret and shame"; in December an elderly Maury countian, as patriotic as any but now disheartened rather than inspired by the sight of so many neighbors and friends leaving their families to go off to war, laid a curse on both houses: "May god with his infinite Wisdom, severely punish those North & south who was instrumental in bringing on this dreadful calamity upon our once beloved & prosperous country."

And if there were steadfast public faith and cocksure predictions of victory and absolution, there were also profound personal trepidations about the future: an itinerant Williamson County minister, who rode far and wide with his message of the applicability of Biblical prophecies to current events, recapitulated on December 31, 1861, his experiences of the past twelve months:

This year I have traveled two thousand four hundred and sixty miles. . . . I have had more and larger cong[regation]s than I ever have had since I have been preaching. . . . the congs not only large but [exhibiting] the most intence anxiety to hear me upon the prophesies I ever saw.³⁸

These undercurrents of apprehension, whose wellsprings were real though dimly discerned perils, were about to come boiling to the surface, exposing and demolishing the flimsy foundations of public complacency and optimism. In early February 1862, Union army and navy forces under Ulysses S. Grant invaded Middle Tennessee from Kentucky along the Tennessee and Cumberland rivers and at Fort Donelson quickly destroyed a large portion of the Confederate army defending the heartland. Continuing upriver, the Union forces occupied Clarksville on February 19 and six days later entered Nashville. During the next three years many of the gloomiest premonitions of the dourest prophets of a year earlier would come to pass; the prophecies of the hopeful would be buried with the many other casualties of the war.

³⁸Marshall County, Tennessee, County Court Clerk, Minutes, County Court, Dec., 1861, Vol. J, 431; Matthews Journal, Jan. 19, 1862; Shelbyville Expositor, Oct. 11, 1861; A. S. Johnston to J. P. Benjamin, Dec. 30, 1861, OR, Ser. I, Vol. VII, 807-8; Nashville Patriot, Oct. 2, 15, Dec. 29, 1861; Fayetteville Observer, Oct. 31, 1861; Nimrod Porter Journals, Dec. 16, 1861 (SHC); Jesse Cox Diary, Dec. 31, 1861 (TSLA).

CHAPTER VII

"I WISH THERE WAS A RIVER OF FIRE": THE DEVASTATION OF THE HEARTLAND, 1862-1865

The invasion of Middle Tennessee in early 1862 by tens of thousands of armed Yankees evoked stoic resignation from some heartlanders and muted joy from some others. The rest of the populace—including many with a political or financial stake in the Confederacy—stayed at home in dismay or panic, or frenetically took to the highways in flight. "At the commencement of the Battle of Fort Donaldson," reported a Clarksvillian on February 20,

the Citizens of this place commenced moving from Town in every direction and are keeping it up to this time. Not more than half of the Families have remained. You can't imagine the said appearance of our City. All the dry goods merchants have left except the Coulters.

A Maury County farmer breathlessly described the spectacle that same day in his community, still far removed from the advancing enemy:

. . . greate excitement people leaving every where for the south. . . . The strong secessionist[s] leaving every where, oure state bank in Columbia packing up for a run off with all the money[.] Thousands people come from Nashville to Columbia a perfect stampead.¹

¹William Epps Newell to Sallie Ann Newell, Feb. 20, 1862, Historical Records Survey, Tennessee, Civil War Records (4 vols., Nashville, 1939), III, 116; Nimrod Porter Journals, Feb. 20, 1862 (SHC). See also H. B. Titcomb to George W. Gordon, Mar. 2, 1862, George W. Gordon and William T. Avery Papers (TSLA); Ebenezer Hannaford, The Story of a Regiment: A History of the Campaigns, and Associations in the Field, of the Sixth Regiment Ohio Volunteer Infantry (Cincinnati, 1868), 201; Report of Andrew H. Foote, Feb. 20, 1862, United States

The capital itself witnessed scenes hardly imaginable to its proud citizens. "The whole city of Nashville was in an uncontrollable panic," a Confederate officer recalled in his memoirs;

people were rushing madly about with their most valuable possessions in their arms. . . . I never saw such frantic apprehension any time during the war as I saw here. . . . It was a supreme pandemonium. . . . Hysterical women, half laughing, half crying, dragged their children behind them. . . .

A unionist who remained in the city vowed that "Such Scenes as were enacted in Nashville will never be fully known in this world[.]" Scornfully he described the frenzied exodus of politicians, jurists, editors, and ministers, and the disgraceful vandalism by retreating Confederate troops. "[T]he City puts on the appearance to day of Sabbath in cholera times," he wrote four days after the arrival of the Union army; "Not a house in the city open Not one[.] Oh but the judgments of Heaven has fallen heavily upon Nashville. . . ."2

Most Middle Tennesseans, however, believed in their hearts that those judgments, though harsh, were not final. Despite their agitation,

War Department, The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (70 vols. in 128, Washington, 1880-1901), Ser. I, Vol. VII, 422-23 (hereafter cited as OR); W. Williams, "A Reminiscence of Clarksville, Tennessee," Confederate Veteran, XXII (May, 1914), 206.

²Adam R. Johnson, The Partisan Rangers of the Confederate States Army (Louisville, 1904), 71; Rees W. Porter to Andrew Johnson, Mar. 1, 1862, LeRoy P. Graf and Ralph W. Haskins, eds., The Papers of Andrew Johnson (6 vols. to date, Knoxville, 1967-), V, 168-69. See also Testimony of Nathan Bedford Forrest, OR, Ser. I, Vol. VII, 429-31; The Great Panic: Being Incidents Connected with Two Weeks of the War in Tennessee (Nashville, 1862), *passim*; Peter Maslowski, Treason Must Be Made Odious: Military Occupation and Wartime Reconstruction in Nashville, Tennessee (Millwood, New York, 1978), 14-15.

many saw the invasion only as a test of faith, not an irrevocable consignment to perdition. They would have agreed with the Murfreesboro girl who declared, as the Union troops entered her town, "I cannot feel yet . . . that God has forsaken us. I do not believe it, he will yet smile upon [us]. . . ." The heartland would be soon redeemed, the faithful affirmed, by a revived and reinforced Confederate army. But in truth they knew not the will of their Lord, Who for His own ineffable purpose had sided with their enemy.³

The Yankee invaders had come to stay. They held Middle Tennessee as long as the war continued, and beyond, occupying the important towns except for a time from the fall of 1862 to the early summer of 1863 and for a few weeks in late 1864, periods when Confederate forces reoccupied the southern portion of the region. Nashville itself the Northern army never relinquished during the war; that city became in fact the center of the Union's whole western war effort. No other major Southern region, except northern Virginia, endured enemy occupation during the Civil War for as long as Middle Tennessee.⁴

³C. Alice Ready Diary, Mar. 22, 1862 (SHC).

⁴There is no general history of Middle Tennesseans under Federal occupation, though there are studies of wartime Nashville and of the military campaigns in the region. On Nashville see Maslowski, Treason Must Be Made Odious; Stanley F. Horn, "Nashville during the Civil War," THQ, IV (Mar., 1945), 3-22; Charles F. Bryan, Jr., "Nashville under Federal Occupation," Civil War Times Illustrated, XIII (Jan., 1975), 4-11, 40-47. On the military campaigns see Stanley F. Horn, The Army of Tennessee (Norman, Oklahoma, 1953); Stanley F. Horn, ed., Tennessee's War 1861-1865 Described by Participants (Nashville, 1965); Thomas L. Connelly, Army of the Heartland: The Army of Tennessee, 1861-1862 (Baton Rouge, 1967); Thomas L. Connelly, Autumn of Glory: The Army of Tennessee, 1862-1865 (Baton Rouge, 1971). Clifton R. Hall, Andrew Johnson, Military Governor of Tennessee (Princeton, 1916); and Edwin T.

The most conspicuous consequence of three years and more of war and occupation in the heartland was the region's physical devastation. Wartime travelers bemoaned the stark ruination and sterility of the land as impassioned as their antebellum counterparts had marveled at its lush beauty and fecundity. "This is a dreary, desolate, barren and deserted looking country," wrote a Federal officer who crossed the northern heartland in late 1862;

All the small towns that we have passed through have been deserted except by a few negroes, occasionally. The houses and stores are either closed or smashed to pieces. Everything is going to utter destruction.

A sympathetic Yankee cavalryman wrote home the following April to describe Davidson County:

It is really sad to see this beautiful country here so ruined. There are no fences left at all. There is no corn and hay for the cattle and horses, but there are no horses left anyhow and the planters have no food for themselves.

A Confederate soldier who marched through Bedford and Rutherford at about the same time lamented that

the country wears the most desolate appearance that I have ever seen anywhere. there is not a stalk of corn or blade of wheat growing, and some places they have not even as much as a small garden planted. . . .

"Let this point (Murfreesboro) be the centre," a Northern newspaper

Hardison, "In the Toils of War: Andrew Johnson and the Federal Occupation of Tennessee" (Ph.D. diss., The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 1981) are primarily political studies. The Civil War experience of civilians in one part of northern Virginia is examined in Edward H. Phillips, "The Lower Shenandoah Valley during the Civil War: The Impact of War upon the Civilian Population and upon Civil Institutions" (Ph.D. diss., University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 1958).

correspondent proposed in 1864,

and then make a circumference of thirty miles, and with me we will stay "a week in the womb of desolation." Whether you go on the Salem, the Shelbyville, the Manchester, or any other pike, for a distance of thirty miles either way, what do we behold? One wide, wild, and dreary waste, so to speak. The fences are all burned down; the apple, the pear, and the plum trees burned in ashes long ago; the torch applied to thousands of splendid mansions, the walls of which alone remain.⁵

The towns of Middle Tennessee suffered as sorely as the farms and villages. "Our town looks like desolation itself," wrote a Clarksville lady in early 1863; "All its glory has departed." A Union officer in Pulaski later that year judged that "the war has used it about like other southern towns. No business now, no stores." Another officer there a few months later concurred: "Pulasky is [a] nice town but like all Seceshdom gone to Seed." Nashville, as the Federals' primary post, bore the hardest usage. The city "was one of the brightest, most wealthy and prosperous cities of the Union," observed a Northern staff officer in 1864;

⁵Jay Caldwell Butler, Letters Home [by] Jay Caldwell Butler, Captain, 101st Ohio Volunteer Infantry (Binghamton, New York, 1930), 32-34; "Documents: the Shelly Papers," Indiana Magazine of History, XLIV (June, 1948), 187, 189-90; Hannibal Paine to sister, June 4, 1863, Paine Family Papers (TSLA); Philip M. Hamer, ed., Tennessee: A History, 1673-1932 (4 vols., New York, 1933), II, 601. Other contemporary accounts of devastation are plentiful, but see especially William D. Bickham, Rosecrans' Campaign with the Fourteenth Army Corps . . . (Cincinnati, 1863), 50; Louis to sister, Apr. 9, 1863, Talbot and Related Families Papers (TSLA); Frank A. Handy Diaries, Jan. 12, 1865 (Duke); "Documents: Civil War Diary of Jabez T. Cox," Indiana Magazine of History, XXVIII (Mar., 1932), 47-48, 53; John Fitch, Annals of the Army of the Cumberland . . . (Philadelphia, 1864), 655; Sir Arthur J. L. Fremantle, Three Months in the Southern States: April-June, 1863 (New York, 1864), 161-62.

Of all this she is now the exact reverse. Her finest buildings . . . are now used as military hospitals and store-houses. Her streets are dirty, and . . . they have been cut in two,—dug out . . . as barricades against rebel attack. . . . Her suburbs are a mournful wreck in many localities,—houses deserted, fences gone, fruit-trees gnawed and disfigured. . . . As we write, the city of Nashville is stagnant, prostrate, and in the abject position of a subjugated city.⁶

Destruction is the ineluctable spawn of war. But the utter desolation of the heartland demands some further explanation. One essential point is evident: the principal agent of destruction in Middle Tennessee was not armed conflict per se, but the Union army. Though the region was among the Civil War's most fought-over battle-grounds (Confederate armies contested it 1862-63 and late 1864; smaller military forces and guerrillas did so throughout the war), relatively little damage resulted from actual combat between blue and gray regiments on the battlefield. It was instead the region's roles as breadbasket of the Federal army and strategic gateway to the deep South which brought down upon it the full wrath of war.

Middle Tennessee's prolific farms were called upon to furnish the main Union army in the western theater with food, equipment, and draft animals, even after the greater portion of that army moved on to Chattanooga and Georgia. Not once or twice, but day after day, season after season, year after year, farmers had to stand by impotently

⁶Sarah Kennedy to husband, Feb. 2, 1863, Sarah Ann (Bailey) Kennedy Letters (TSLA); Oscar L. Jackson, The Colonel's Diary; Journals Kept before and during the Civil War by the Late Colonel Oscar L. Jackson . . . (Sharon, Pennsylvania, 1922), 103; David M. Smith, ed., "Documents: The Civil War Diary of Colonel John Henry Smith," Iowa Journal of History, XLVII (Apr., 1949), 142; Fitch, Annals of the Army, 643.

as Federal foraging squads helped themselves to horses and pigs, bales of cotton, and barrels of corn meal. "When we have eaten a place empty," an Indiana cavalryman wrote in 1863, "we go a few miles farther and take everything there we can find." An Ohio officer boasted that year of seeing "hundreds of acres of wheat in the sheaf disappear in an hour." At least as troublesome as formal requisitions was informal pillaging by loosely disciplined troops. "The Federal soldiers have taken every horse mare and mule that I have leaving me but two little work mules & two mule colts," a Williamson County planter complained in his diary in 1863;

They have broken into my smoke house repetedly and have taken all my hams. They have taken a goodeal of my corn and all of my hay and near all my fodder. My health is very bad. I will certenly go crazy.⁷

⁷"Documents: Shelly Papers," 193; John Beatty, Memoirs of a Volunteer 1861-1863 (New York, 1946), 217; Samuel Henderson Diary, Mar. 31, Apr. 13, 1863 (TSLA). See also Jesse Cox Diary, Aug. 26, 1862, Feb. 3, Mar. 15, 1863, Feb. 16, Mar. 5, 9, 1864 (TSLA); Thomas A. Faw to his wife, Sept. 22, 1862, Walter Wagner Faw Papers (TSLA); anonymous correspondent to Andrew Johnson, Oct., 1862, Andrew Johnson Papers (LC); S. W. Adkisson to Andrew Johnson, Jan. 16, 1865, *ibid.*; Sarah Kennedy to husband, Dec. 29, 1862, Jan. 7, 1863, Kennedy Letters; "Major Connolly's Letters to His Wife, 1862-1865," Transactions of the Illinois State Historical Society (1928), 247-48; Zeboim Cartter Patten Diaries, Feb. 22, 1863 (Chattanooga Public Library—microfilm copies in TSLA); A. T. Volwiler, ed., "Documents: Letters from a Civil War Officer," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XIV (Mar., 1928), 512; Fremantle, Three Months in the Southern States, 141-43n.; Testimony of Speed S. Fry, OR, Ser. I, Vol. XVI, Pt. 1, pp. 227-28; Testimony of Robert Macfeely, *ibid.*, 333-38; C. Johnson to Jefferson Davis, Oct. 17, 1862, *ibid.*, Vol. XVII, Pt. 2, pp. 730-31; G. M. Dodge to Henry R. Mizner, Nov. 27, 1863, *ibid.*, Vol. XXXI, Pt. 3, pp. 261-62; Lovell H. Rousseau to W. D. Whipple, Jan. 30, 1864, *ibid.*, Vol. XXXII, Pt. 2, pp. 267-69.

The determination of Federal authorities to hold and defend this rich, strategic region, and deny its use to the Confederacy, engendered other sorts of mayhem. Even after the main field army moved on, large Union garrison forces occupied the heartland's important towns and a few other key points on turnpikes and railroads. These detachments served both to keep Rebel armies at bay and to cow hostile native whites. Each garrison seized buildings for barracks, hospitals, and supply depots, and dug mountains of fortifications—often with the help of local slaves impressed en masse. Wherever troops billeted or camped, fence rails (the soldiers' favorite fuel) disappeared. All civilian travel, correspondence, publishing, trade, and industry the occupation authorities strictly limited or simply proscribed. Railroads and bridges, except those the army needed, they destroyed.⁸

To these afflictions incidental to war and occupation was added that of deliberate, spiteful destruction. The mutual enmity of Yankee invaders and their recalcitrant subjects often provoked retaliatory or simply malicious measures against Middle Tennesseans. Such acts became common as the war went on bitterly and heartlanders remained restive, even rebellious. In September 1862, two thousand angry Federal soldiers in Clarksville went on a two-day rampage—victims described

⁸Sarah Kennedy to husband, Dec. 11, 1862, Kennedy Letters; "Documents: Shelly Papers," 190; William B. Cassilly to Andrew Johnson, June 28, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Papers of Andrew Johnson, V, 511-12; C. Johnson to Jefferson Davis, Oct. 17, 1862, OR, Ser. I, Vol. XVII, Pt. 2, pp. 730-31; Clarksville Chronicle, July 28, 1865. Nashville alone had a permanent garrison of 10,000 troops. See Maslowski, Treason Must Be Made Odious, 142-43.

it as a "reign of terror, kept alive by every species of outrage"—in reprisal for aid the townsfolk had given Rebel cavalry lurking in the area; the Northern troops broke into stores and houses, insulted ladies, stole horses, took away slaves, and in general pillaged freely. A Union officer marching through Lynnville, Giles County, late in 1864 noted casually in his journal that

It was formerly a village of about thirty houses, most of which were burned a week ago by the Tenth Tennessee [Federal] Cavalry in revenge for being fired upon by some rebel guerrillas in the neighborhood.

"[I]t does us good to distroy the greesey belleys property," a soldier wrote home from another part of the heartland;

when some of the boys gets holt of any property of any kind beloning to the rebels they distroy it as fast as they can and then say dam him he was the coss of bringing us here. . . .

After his return from a foraging expedition which had stripped many Middle Tennessee families to the point of starvation, a Northern officer in Gallatin wrote his wife that "We are obeying your christian exhortation 'to kill them' but prefer to let them die by inches to shooting them down."⁹

Nevertheless, the Union army did not lay waste to Middle Tennessee single-handedly. Much of the demolition of industry, railroads, and

⁹Clarksville, Tennessee, citizens to Ulysses S. Grant, Sept. 15, 1862, Confederate Collection (TSLA); Sarah Kennedy to husband, Sept. 16, 1862, Kennedy Letters; Journal of Jacob D. Cox, Nov. 14, 1864, OR, Ser. I, Vol. XLV, Pt. 1, pp. 356-57; Elias Brady to wife, Nov. 24, 1862, Elias Brady Papers (SHC); Volwiler, "Documents: Letters from a Civil War Officer," 512. See also Fitch, Annals of the Army, 430; D. M. Ransdell Diary, Jan. 30, 1863 (SHC).

bridges, and the burning of stored supplies like cotton, was in fact the work of retreating Rebel troops in early 1862; and then and afterward many heartlanders came to dread the "friendly" visitations of foraging Confederates as intensely as the depredations of the enemy. Furthermore, as order deteriorated in the countryside from late 1862 on, vicious bandit gangs appeared, preying on defenseless farms and plundering without mercy. And as the bonds of slavery loosened and fell away during the war years, some blacks seized the opportunity to appropriate the comforts of life long denied them. "[I]t is the blacks that are doing most of the stealing at this time," insisted a Maury County farmer in March 1865, after his wagon disappeared.¹⁰

Finally, there was an intangible enemy whose work was nearly as ruinous as the spoliations of soldiers, slaves, and bandits. This was uncertainty, a pervasive trepidation about the unknown future which kept the farmers of the heartland from sowing their fields or multiplying their flocks. "The farmers in this section are not planting much," a Confederate artilleryman wrote from his camp south of Murfreesboro in the spring of 1863;

They are in a bad fix—they do not know whether to plant or not, for if we do not hold the country the enemy will destroy the whole crop.

¹⁰Hannaford, Story of a Regiment, 201; Porter Journal, Mar. 20, 1862, Jan. 13, July 23, 1863, Jan. 1, Nov. 27, Dec. 2, 1864, Mar. 2, 11, 1865; Fayetteville Observer, Mar. 26, 1863; General Orders, No. 10, Army of Tennessee, Dec. 11, 1862, OR, Ser. I, Vol. XX, Pt. 2, p. 446; Report of S. Palace Love, May 6, 1863, *ibid.*, Vol. XXIII, Pt. 1, p. 327; General Field Orders, No. 37, Army of Tennessee, Nov. 28, 1864, *ibid.*, Vol. XLV, Pt. 1, p. 1,255; Circular, Army of Tennessee, Dec. 8, 1864, *ibid.*, Pt. 2, p. 665; Fitch, Annals of the Army, 650.

Nimrod Porter of Maury County noted ruefully two years later that "We are gitting along in the crop line but slow . . . verry few of the citizens are trying to raise a crop in this county. . . ." A Federal officer in Nashville remarked in 1864 that throughout Middle Tennessee impressment and theft had left farms without a horse, mule, or ox with which to plow, and the farmers hesitated to buy more animals for fear of losing those as well. Even as the husbandmen of the heartland were enjoined to feed their enemies as well as themselves, their rich acres fell idle and their bountiful harvests dwindled.¹¹

The furies of rack and ruin careered savagely through Middle Tennessee from 1862 on; their visitations, however, were not even-handed and impartial but cruelly capricious. The likeliest victims were in and near occupied towns and along main highways. Such heartlanders might suffer daily pillaging while others in remote parts went unmolested for months at a time. Yankee foragers descended on John N. Barker, a Montgomery County planter, five times in six days in February 1863, carrying away forty wagon loads of corn and hay; a month later the "Links" (as he dubbed them) drove off with his wagon, black driver, and six mules. Nimrod Porter, whose farm was perilously near the important town of Columbia, saw hardly a day after the summer of 1862 in which he or his close neighbors did not lose food, stock, fencing,

¹¹John E. Magee Diary, Apr. 9, 1863 (Duke); Porter Journal, Mar. 11, 1865; Lovell H. Rousseau to W. D. Whipple, Jan. 30, 1864, OR, Ser. I, Vol. XXXII, Pt. 2, pp. 268-69; Nashville Dispatch, Apr. 3, Nov. 13, 1863; Patten Diary, June 3, 1863; Clarksville Chronicle, July 28, 1865; Clarksville Gazette, Feb. 20, 1864 (photocopies in Confederate Collection, TSLA).

or equipment to troops of one side or the other. "[You] might hear 100 guns firing of a day," he wrote in late 1864, after a particularly appalling and prolonged foray by Federal "rogues and robbers" who slaughtered "every thing [i.e., animal] they could find & frequently they would take the liver & some times one quarter & leave the rest to lay in the fields & woods. . . ." Jesse Cox, a Williamson County farmer and preacher, was equally tormented: "the yankies hear for something to day," he wrote on March 29, 1863, ". . . every day 2 or 3 times in the day and never pay anything." During a raid five days earlier, Cox wrote, one trooper "galloped up to me presented his gun . . . called me a damn old sun of a bich and said he would blow my brains out," and then rode off with half a bushel of corn. By contrast, however, James W. Matthews, whose farm lay in an out-of-the-way section of Maury County, suffered not a single depredation until December 1864, when squads of Yankees ransacked his house and barn, stealing his food, horse, and pocket watch. And in the summer of that year a Federal cavalry officer passed through parts of Wilson County which, he noted, showed "but slight signs of the war, everywhere the fields are cultivated & fine crops of Corn will be made."¹²

The rich, the prominent, and the outspoken also drew an unhappily large measure of the havoc of war. Unionists in areas under Confederate control were singled out and onerously levied upon, some of them

¹²John Nick Barker Diaries, Feb. 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, Mar. 15, 1863 (TSLA); Porter Journal, Dec. 26, 1864, and passim, 1862-65; Cox Diary, Mar. 24, 29, 1863, and passim; James W. Matthews Journal, Dec. 25, 1864, and passim (TSLA); Alvan C. Gillem to Andrew Johnson, Aug. 9, 1864, Johnson Papers.

stripped or even burned out as thoroughly as any Rebel was ever scourged by the Yankees; a Northern officer reported after an expedition in 1863 that some of these unfortunates had been "left in a condition that is rapidly becoming one of absolute want." Where Federal power prevailed, military authorities often marked leading secessionists for brutal harassment. The Washingtons, a wealthy and distinguished Robertson County planter family, suffered repeated depredations throughout 1864 by ruthless Union troops. During one raid the plantation mistress broke down and cried as soldiers led away her last horse, "and can you believe it," she wrote, "they jeered . . . and laughed at me." On a later foray the Yankees tormented her husband with loaded guns for two hours before finally shooting him, then ransacked the plantation house and burned the outbuildings. Mark Cockrill, the renowned Davidson County planter and stock raiser, had by 1863 lost to the Federal army hundreds of his celebrated sheep, dozens of horses, mules, and cattle, thousands of bushels of corn, and vast quantities of bacon, oats, hay, and firewood; he declared himself "very much aggravated by the taking of my property," which also included slaves impressed by the Yankees. William G. Harding's Belle Meade plantation, perhaps the most famous estate in the heartland and unluckily close to Nashville on a major thoroughfare, was simply devastated before the war ended—its deer and buffalo shot down in their fabled park, its work animals and food stores plundered, its fields and fences stripped.

Harding estimated his losses during the first year of occupation alone at \$32,000.¹³

The people of the heartland suffered during the war in body and in spirit, but the nature and extent of their suffering varied according to their circumstances. The demons of privation and affliction haunted urbanites and rural folk alike, but those demons did not assume the same form in the towns that they manifested in the countryside.

From the first days of occupation the Union army's interdiction of trade deprived country people of the few necessities not produced in their predominantly self-sufficient communities. Articles formerly taken for granted suddenly became scarce luxuries. "You have but little idea of the privations that 'Secessh' has brought upon this 'glorious Confederacy,'" a unionist woman wrote sardonically from

¹³Report of J. J. Reynolds, Feb. 10, 1863, OR, Ser. I, Vol. XXIII, Pt. 2, pp. 54-57; Porter Journal, Oct. 3, 1862; Jane S. Washington to George A. Washington, Feb. 29, Mar. 2, May 4, July 25, Aug. 8, 1864, Washington Family Papers (TSLA); Jane S. Washington Letter to son, Dec. 18, 1864 (TSLA); Fitch, Annals of the Army, 641; "Diary of Jacob Adams, Private in Company F, 21st O.V.V.I.," Ohio Archaeological and Historical Society Publications, XXXVIII, (Oct., 1929), 639; William D. Gale to wife, Oct. 17, 1862, Gale-Polk Papers (SHC); Wife to William G. Harding, June 16, 1862, Harding-Jackson Papers (SHC); Randal M. Ewing to William G. Harding, Aug. 28, 1862, *ibid.*; Herschel Gower, "Belle Meade: Queen of Tennessee Plantations," in Elinor Miller and Eugene D. Genovese, eds., Plantation, Town, and County: Studies in the Local History of American Slave Society (Urbana, Illinois, 1974), 215-19; Maslowski, Treason Must Be Made Odious, 67.

Devastation in the wartime South has not been adequately analyzed from a social perspective. Most studies offer only a broad, impressionistic picture of devastation without accounting precisely for its causes, its nature, or its differential distribution within a given region; or (in the case of the economic historians) they offer only an analysis

rural Rutherford County in 1863; "No sugar, no tea, no coffee, no soda, no salt, no kind of cloth but what is made by hand—& finally no nothing. . . ."14

As the war and occupation wore on, however, above these annoyances rose the specter of true suffering in the countryside. The loss of stored food and meat on the hoof, the loss of money and valuables and cash crops with which food might have been purchased, and the diminution of harvests due to the loss of growing crops, work animals, buildings, equipment, fencing, and slaves (not to mention the pernicious effects of uncertainty), all colluded to reduce most rural Middle Tennesseans to the meanest subsistence, and some to actual starvation. "I am trying to get money to get eatables & pay some little debts," a formerly affluent Rutherford County woman wrote from her farm in 1864; "I make out to live and 'tis as much as I can do. . . . all I care for is to pay my debts and have enough to keep from suffering." A Yankee cavalry trooper near Nashville in 1863 wrote his wife that

Only yesterday I talked to a farmer at whose house I was picketing. He told me he had no potatoes to plant and

of economic consequences. See, for example, Paul Gates, Agriculture and the Civil War (New York, 1965), 73-126; Fred A. Shannon, The Farmer's Last Frontier: Agriculture, 1860-1897 (New York, 1945), 77-79; Thomas B. Alexander, "Neither Peace Nor War: Conditions in Tennessee in 1865," East Tennessee Historical Society's Publications, No. 21 (1949), 33-35; James L. Sellers, "The Economic Incidence of the Civil War in the South," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XIV (Sept., 1927), 179-91; Roger L. Ransom and Richard Sutch, One Kind of Freedom: The Economic Consequences of Emancipation (New York, 1977), 40-44, 324n.

¹⁴Jane C. Warren to Electa Ames, Aug. 27, 1863, Electa Ames Papers (Duke).

all winter long he lived on corn and a very little smoked meat. . . . everything they had planted and also their cattle was stolen. . . . I can't see how the people live at all.

An officer who rode through Wilson County in August 1864 reported that "There is no corn in the Country[.] the people are in absolute want of bread." Another who traversed Giles that year beheld shocking scenes of distress, declaring (according to the Nashville Dispatch) that "no man who has not visited the localities he has, can form any conception of the great scarcity of every thing necessary to sustain life that exists there."¹⁵

Want and famine were not the only tribulations of war in the rural heartland. Many country people confronted as well the necessity of arduous and unaccustomed labor. Food shortages, equipment losses, the unavailability of manufactured goods, the dearth of able-bodied white men, and the ever-increasing desertion of slaves all compelled rural people—especially white women—to work as never before. A Rutherford County lady wrote her sister in the North in 1863 describing the tedious process of making cloth—compulsory now with store-bought material unobtainable—"that you may know how to make it if ever you should 'join the Confederacy.' . . . and by the time you have enough for ten or twelve yds of cloth you will feel like joining the Yankees."

¹⁵Nancy B. Smith to James B. Smith, May 18, 1864, Nancy B. Smith Letters (TSLA); "Documents: Shelly Papers," 187; Alvan C. Gillem to Andrew Johnson, Aug. 9, 1864, Johnson Papers; Nashville Dispatch, Jan. 12, 1864. See also *ibid.*, Apr. 3, 1863, Jan. 7, 1864; Testimony of Lovell H. Rousseau, OR, Ser. I, Vol. XVI, Pt. 1, p. 352; Testimony of Speed S. Fry, *ibid.*, 234; Testimony of Francis Darr, *ibid.*, 613-14.

A Confederate soldier who observed white women and girls toiling in the fields south of Murfreesboro in the spring of 1863 noted with satisfaction this evidence that they were "devoting themselves to our cause"; he did not consider that perhaps hunger more than patriotism spurred the women to such unwonted drudgery. Boastfully describing himself as a "nigger thief," a Union officer in the same area told of carrying off slaves from every farm he raided, "leaving the women to do their own work as do the blessed yankee girls. . . ." But even those who retained their black workers faced burdensome new chores. "I have no O[ver]seer but I me and my self," wrote a Rutherford County woman, obliged for the first time to manage a large slaveholding estate; "I have in about a half a crop this year [1864] and hope we will try to tend it as well as we can considering. . . ." A slaveowning farmer-preacher, who preferred to let his Williamson County farm take care of itself while he attended to matters of God, lamented "having to labour for a support" all through 1864; "I am compelled to labour," he explained, "as I lost about eight thousand dollars worth of property by the yankees, for wich I have never received any compesation."¹⁶

A final point about suffering in the rural heartland demands underscoring: manifestly, it was no respecter of class or race. As one Union general observed, "all suffer, rich and poor. . . ." The black field hand sweated and anguished along with his white master, the

¹⁶Jane C. Warren to Electa Ames, Aug. 27, 1863, Ames Papers; Magee Diary, Apr. 10, 1863; "Major Connolly's Letters," 248; Nancy B. Smith to James B. Smith, May 18, 1864, Smith Letters; Cox Diary, Apr. 13, 1864.

plantation mistress went hungry along with the wagon maker's wife and the tenant farmer's children. Suffering thus mirrored the nature of rural culture itself, pervading the community at every level; suffering was the common denominator of society in the Middle Tennessee countryside during the Civil War. Hammett Dell, raised as a slave on a small Rutherford County farm, described his wartime experiences on "our place" (as he fondly called it) in passages indistinguishable from many a white narrative: "There couldn't be a chicken nor a goose nor a year of corn to be found. . . . It was sich hard times." When Yankees set fire to the house, Dell recollected, the whole family—white and black—joined in to put out the blaze. A slave's possessions, though few, were fair game for bandits and the more rapacious uniformed plunderers. Nimrod Porter observed with anger and disgust in late 1864 that the Federals most recently terrorizing his Maury County neighborhood "have not left any corn meet hogs sheep horses . . . & have condise[n]ded to robing the Negroes all round us." The same torments, of course, assailed rural heartlanders at the opposite end of society's scale, leaving aristocrats broken and humbled. John W. Burgess, a Giles County unionist who spent the war in Nashville, recalled that

Day after day I saw the wives and daughters of the once wealthy and well-to-do planters of my own acquaintance getting out of [railroad] box cars, clad in tatters, carrying bundles of bedding, and staring about themselves vacantly as not knowing where to look for food or shelter.¹⁷

¹⁷Maslowski, Treason Must Be Made Odious, 132-34; George P. Rawick, ed., The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography (41 vols. to date,

The awful visages of ruin and violence and want confronted Middle Tennesseans in the towns, too. Subject not sporadically but daily and unremittingly to the imperious demands of Federal garrison troops, townspeople sustained appalling incidental losses and willful destruction. Houses and public buildings by the hundreds were seized for use as military command posts, barracks, hospitals, or supply depots. Yankee soldiers proved as adept at breaking into homes and buildings while billeted in towns as they were at breaching barns and smokehouses while on the march. An Episcopal rector in Columbia watched heartbroken in May 1864 as soldiers invaded his church, stole everything they could carry off (including surplices), and even tried to pry loose the church's cornerstone in search of valuables. Seven months later he wrote in his diary "Saturday—Xmas Eve—Soldiers in the ch[urch] carrying on work of despoilation—The organ is a complete ruin. 'How long, O Lord!'" After troops wrecked her town's cistern without cause, Sarah Kennedy concluded that "They seem to have a particular spite at Clarksville, that secesh hole, as they call it. A Gallatin girl who witnessed frequent Yankee depredations and bodily violence remarked wryly in her diary in April 1864, "Well, well, was ever such

Westport, Connecticut, 1972-), Ser. Two, Vol. VIII (Ark.), Pt. 2, pp. 139-44; Porter Journal, Dec. 26, 1864; John W. Burgess, Reminiscences of an American Scholar: The Beginnings of Columbia University (New York, 1934), 31. Robbery and abuse of blacks by bandits and guerrillas are documented in Mary C. Washington to Jane S. Washington, Mar. 25, 1865, Washington Papers; Henderson Diary, Apr. 11, 1864; John W. Gorham to Andrew Johnson, Jan. 15, 1865, Johnson Papers; Porter Journal, May 26, 1864. Further evidence of privation and suffering among blacks is in Rawick, American Slave, Ser. Two, Vol. XI (Ark.), Pt. 7, p. 28.

a time seen before since [Post Commander] E. A. Payne has been here; they have neither burned any houses or killed any body in three whol[e] days."¹⁸

Privation stalked the towns implacably. But there it was not the consequence of direct enemy impressment and pillaging, as in the countryside, but of economic derangement, especially the drastic curtailment of imports from the farms. Stripped of their food surpluses (indeed, hardly able to feed themselves), and fearful of traveling on dangerous highways, the farmers of the heartland could not after 1862 victual the towns anywhere near as copiously as before. And those towns had ever more hungry inhabitants to feed, as soldiers, Northern civilians, runaway slaves, and white refugees poured in. The inevitable results were shortages and high prices in the towns—not just of food, but of firewood, which even in the depths of their affliction rural folk could take for granted. Supplies did trickle in under watchful

¹⁸David Pise Journals, May 5, Dec. 24, 1864 (SHC); Sarah Kennedy to husband, Dec. 11, 1862, Kennedy Letters; Alice Williamson Diary, Apr. 23, 1864 (Duke). For other accounts of urban devastation (besides those cited in note 6 above) see Beatty, Memoirs of a Volunteer, 183-84 (describing Murfreesboro); Kate S. Carney Diary, May 13, June 17, 1862 (SHC) (describing Murfreesboro); Sir Christopher Chancellor, ed., An Englishman in the American Civil War: The Diaries of Henry Yates Thompson, 1863 (New York, 1971), 137 (describing Nashville and Murfreesboro); First Presbyterian Church, Murfreesboro, Rutherford County, Records, Session Minutes, July 18, 1864 (TSLA); Ready Diary, Mar. 24, 1862 (describing Murfreesboro); James Whiteside to sister, Nov. 5, 1865, Whiteside Family Papers (TSLA) (describing Shelbyville); John Hope Franklin, ed., The Diary of James T. Ayers, Civil War Recruiter (Springfield, Illinois, 1947), 38 (describing Clarksville); Sallie to John Minor, May 15, 1864, Sailor's Rest Plantation, Montgomery County, Tennessee, Papers (TSLA) (describing Clarksville).

Federal eyes or through smuggling, but on the whole the heartland's urbanites suffered an immense decline in their level of sustenance.¹⁹

There simply was not enough food and fuel to go around. "I was in Murfreesborough yesterday," a Rutherford County woman wrote in 1864; ". . . times hard and tight every thing sells high[,] common negro cloth [a dollar per yard] . . . eatables very scarce and price high." Sarah Kennedy in Clarksville observed in 1863 that "Every day the reins are tightened. . . . I find it next to impossible to get any thing to eat for the family. . . ." Two years later she reported that "Goods are . . . enormously high. . . . The ladies say they have to carry their money in a basket and bring the goods home in their pocket." In Nashville, bursting at the seams with soldiers and civilians, the price of wood rose to fourteen dollars per cord by September 1862, evoking great public concern at a time when a laboring man might earn a dollar or two a day. A year and a half later the price was thirty dollars.²⁰

Had supplies been plentiful and prices low, however, many townspeople would still have gone hungry and cold because they had no work. Unlike the agrarian country folk, whose privations impelled them to desperate exertions, urbanites subsisted on trade and industry,

¹⁹Nashville Dispatch, Sept. 11, Oct. 31, 1862, notes the hesitancy of local farmers to bring food into the city. For evidence of smuggling see Williams, "Reminiscence of Clarksville," 206; Fitch, Annals of the Army, 489-98.

²⁰Nancy B. Smith to James B. Smith, May 26, 1864, Smith Letters; Sarah Kennedy to husband, Mar. 13, Nov. 9, 1863, Feb. 20, 1865, Kennedy Letters; Nashville Dispatch, Sept. 11, Oct. 22, 1862, Mar. 28, Nov. 1, 1863, Jan. 8, 1864; Handy Diary, Dec. 24, 1864; Patten Diary, Feb. 13, 1863.

which evaporated at the appearance of the Yankees in early 1862, driving thousands of laborers and tradesmen into idleness. "When we first arrived at Fayetteville," a Union officer recalled, "not a person was to be seen on the streets. . . . There was not a vestige of any kind of business left in the town. Even the stores and taverns were vacant." As the occupation forces settled in, some lucky merchants received permission to resume business (a few even prospered), and some workers eventually found employment in industries (mostly military-related) revived by the Federals; but neither trade nor industry ever regained during the war anything approaching its antebellum level. Nashville's important publishing houses and newspapers, for example, were all seized by the Federal authorities for the duration of the war. Clarksville's tobacco processing establishments were closed and its iron manufactories demolished. Furthermore, Northern merchants following in the wake of the army garnered for themselves much of the remaining trade, while "contraband" blacks flooding into the towns took many of the available unskilled jobs. From early 1862 to the end of the war, the townspeople of the heartland endured grossly inflated prices, economic recession, high unemployment, and profound distress—a cruel, nineteenth century "stagflation" whose withering effects Americans of the late twentieth century will readily appreciate.²¹

²¹Julian Wisner Hinkley, A Narrative of Service with the Third Wisconsin Infantry (Madison, Wisconsin, 1912), 111; Nashville Dispatch, May 6, 18, Nov. 1, Dec. 7, 1862, May 31, 1863; Sarah Kennedy to husband, Feb. 9, 1863, Feb. 11, 1864, Kennedy Letters; 83rd Illinoisan (Clarksville), Mar. 24, 1865; Fitch, Annals of the Army, 643; Williams, "Reminiscence of Clarksville," 207; Chancellor, Englishman in the Civil War, 135-36; Carney Diary, June 20, 1862; Elvie Eagleton Skipper and

The agony of the urban poor, however, starkly eclipsed the mere discomfort of the affluent. Suffering in the towns was a function of wealth, in contrast to the rural experience. Urban suffering thus underscored the exaggerated class distinctions and extremes of wealth which had long distinguished urban from rural society in the heartland. The urban rich held much of their wealth in currency, securities, gold, or other easily safeguarded valuables. Some of the rich lost fortunes in Confederate bonds or in business or bank failures, to be sure, and Yankee pillaging did take its toll on material possessions. But the Federals made no systematic effort to appropriate the assets of the urban wealthy. High prices curtailed conspicuous consumption, but the rich for the most part retained their fortunes and could always afford the necessities of life no matter how far prices rose. Those ladies who complained of hauling their depreciated currency to market in a basket at least had money to carry—thousands of the urban poor (including many blacks) had none, and went to market only to beg. Yankee marauders might on occasion break into the palatial homes of the rich to steal the family silver, but the rich continued to dwell in those homes while the poor crowded into foul, disease-ridden tenements,

Ruth Gove, eds., "'Stray Thoughts': The Civil War Diary of Ethie M. Foute Eagleton," East Tennessee Historical Society's Publications, No. 40 (1968) and No. 41 (1969), Pt. 2, p. 116; Joseph G. McKee and M. M. Brown to Andrew Johnson, Nov. 3, 1863, Johnson Papers; Nashville Daily Times and True Union, Dec. 3, 12, 1864; W. Harrison Daniel, "The Effects of the Civil War on Southern Protestantism," Maryland Historical Magazine, LXIX (Spring, 1974), 52; Stephen V. Ash, "A Community at War: Montgomery County, 1861-65," Tennessee Historical Quarterly, XXXVI (Spring, 1977), 39-42; Maslowski, Treason Must Be Made Odious, 131-36.

or simply wandered. In the winter of 1864 a Sumner County official wrote imploringly to the local Federal commander about the condition of the poor house inmates in Gallatin:

. . . they are now living on nothing but bread and have been for some time . . . some of them are so naked they are very bad objects to look at and further those of them that are able to travel about, are going from place to place begging. . . .

While the poor tramped and starved, the well-to-do dined, and discussed with genteel concern the high price of bread and the scarcity of black servants to wait upon them.²²

Even the well-fed urban rich, however, endured cruel mental torments; their gold could not buy sustenance for the spirit, which the war's vicissitudes beleaguered as relentlessly as they assailed

²²John W. Brooks to E. A. Paine, Feb. 24, 1864, Johnson Papers; Sarah Kennedy to husband, Feb. 11, May 8, 1864, Kennedy Letters; Agnes Whiteside to E. E. Peacock, Nov. 30, 1863, Whiteside Papers. The destitution and suffering of the Nashville poor, unsurpassed anywhere else in the region, is described in Handy Diary, Dec. 24, 1864; Burgess, Reminiscences, 31-32; Nashville Dispatch, Sept. 11, 27, Oct. 22, Nov. 5, Dec. 7, 1862, Mar. 28, 1863, Feb. 3, 6, 1864. On the emigration of blacks to the towns and their suffering there, see Maslowski, Treason Must Be Made Odious, 110-11; John V. Cimprich, "Slavery Amidst Civil War in Tennessee: The Death of an Institution" (Ph.D. diss., Ohio State University, 1977), 98-120.

Wartime privation in the rural and urban South has been more fully and satisfactorily analyzed than has devastation, undoubtedly because privation in some form affected people in every part of the South. However, the special nature of suffering and privation in Middle Tennessee—especially in the rural areas—as a result of the region's nearly unique Civil War experience, has not been adequately explicated. (Standard studies focus for the most part on Confederates behind the lines, where rural suffering was often a function of relative wealth.) See Bell I. Wiley, Plain People of the Confederacy (Baton Rouge, 1943), 36-69, 90; Charles W. Ramsdell, Behind the Lines in the Southern Confederacy (Baton Rouge, 1944), passim, especially 18-34, 44-56; Mary E. Massey, Ersatz in the Confederacy (Columbia, South

the body. Thus it may be said that the war brought hardship in one embodiment or more to very nearly all the people of Middle Tennessee, the rich and the poor, the humble and the exalted. "What dreadful sufferings has been produced by this unnecessary war," wrote one agonized heartlander in 1864, "no one living ever will be able to give a full picture of its consequences and distresses. . . ."

Physical privation and material loss, grief and anxious uncertainty, all inflicted wounds on flesh and soul which imperiled an entire worldview. Insofar as optimism, prosperity, and plenty had sustained the ideology of this people, that ideology was by 1864 in collapse.²³

Some Middle Tennesseans took the ultimate step, leaving their homes as refugees to follow the retreating Rebel army south, or to seek haven in the occupied towns, or even to escape to the North. Others, resolutely staying on as their world crumbled around them, took refuge

Carolina, 1952), *passim*, especially 7-58; Allan Nevins, The War for the Union (4 vols., New York, 1959-71), II, 291-98, III, 376-92; Emory M. Thomas, The Confederate Nation: 1861-1865 (New York, 1979), 199-201. Even those studies which deal with Tennessee are guilty of understatement, overstatement, or misstatement as regards the heartland. Thomas B. Alexander, for example, asserts that "thousands" died of starvation in rural areas of the state. This is very doubtful even for Middle Tennessee, which was harder hit than either East or West Tennessee. The authors of the standard textbook on Tennessee history state that during the war "urban dwellers [in the state as a whole] suffered more than did their rural neighbors," and furthermore that "the sufferings of the people [in the state as a whole] are not to be compared with those of the people of South Carolina or northern Virginia. . . ." Both these generalizations are untrue if applied to Middle Tennessee. See Alexander, "Neither Peace Nor War," 34; Stanley J. Folmsbee, Robert E. Corlew, and Enoch L. Mitchell, Tennessee: A Short History (Knoxville, 1969), 348-49.

²³Porter Journal, Jan. 1, 1864.

in deep religious faith. An afflicted but devout Williamson County man found a measure of peace at the end of 1863: "My dependance is entirely upon the Lord," he avowed, ". . . in this dark and trying hour." The fathers of the First Presbyterian Church of Murfreesboro, meeting in 1864 to chronicle the "many sad events [which] have transpired in our midst & around us," concluded their report with a declaration of undiminished trust:

Having made this sad record the Session would humbly rear an Ebenezer, & render thanks to God for mercies that are still continued, & to the honor of his name acknowledge that we have never yet seen an end to the goodness of the Lord!²⁴

Other heartlanders, unwilling to flee but lacking inner sources of strength, suffered profound emotional traumas which left them helpless and spiritless—a desolation of the psyche as thorough and calamitous as the desolation of the land. A Robertson County widow, ill and rapidly declining into poverty due to thievery and the desertion of her few slaves, wrote pathetically to Military Governor Andrew Johnson in December 1863:

²⁴Cox Diary, Dec. 31, 1863, Apr. 13, 1864; First Presbyterian Church, Murfreesboro, Session Minutes, July 18, 1864 (for the meaning of "rear an Ebenezer" see I Samuel 7:12). For evidence of refugees from Middle Tennessee see Nashville Dispatch, May 21, 1863; Porter Journal, July 10, 1863, Nov. 3, 1864; Beatty, Memoirs of a Volunteer, 94; Handy Diary, Dec. 24, 1864; Williams, "Reminiscence of Clarksville," 206; James Whiteside to sister, Nov. 5, 1865, Whiteside Papers; Mary E. Massey, Refugee Life in the Confederacy (Baton Rouge, 1964), 6, 83-84, 86, 89. Further examples of religious faith are in Barker Diary, Dec. 31, 1862, Feb. 9, 1863; James Whiteside to sister, Nov. 5, 1865, Whiteside Papers; Jane S. Washington to son, Dec. 18, 1864, Washington Letter; wife to William G. Harding, June 24, 1862, Harding-Jackson Papers.

Great God, Sir to think of the relations friends and propety I once had around me, and now this christmas day sitting here alone no one even to whisper a kind word of consolation[.] I have lost what little mind I had and my little remaining strength is fast giving away. I see nothing before me but beggery and suffering[.]

Plagued by violence and unruly blacks as the war neared its end, another Robertson County lady wrote her daughter-in-law in deep despair: "if I am to live long like I am liveing now and have been I had wrather die and be clear of this troublesome world, indeed I do not know what nor how to do. . . ."25

Most Middle Tennesseans, however, simply abided and silently hoped. But on occasion they evoked the pathos of their experience with words of impassioned imagery summoned up from the depths of an agonized soul. Thus did elderly, long-suffering Nimrod Porter, a customarily prosaic diarist, voice his distress at the "greate trouble in the country" in one entry made during the last autumn of the war: "I wish there was a river of fire between the North & South," he wrote, "that would burn with unquentionable fury for ever more & that it could never be passed, to the endless ages of eternity by any living creature."26

The old man's anguished plea for an end to war and affliction would be granted. But it was time, not a fiery river, which would bring that to pass.

²⁵W. W. Pepper to Andrew Johnson, Dec. 25, 1863, Johnson Papers; Mary C. Washington to Jane S. Washington, Mar. 17, 1865, Washington Papers. Other references to severe, war-related psychological depression are in Nashville Dispatch, May 7, 1863; Carney Diary, May 13, 1862.

²⁶Porter Journal, Oct. 22, 1864.

The land and people of Middle Tennessee were not the only casualties of war. The region's institutions, those inveterate manifestations of society's deepest convictions and loftiest achievements, also suffered in the years of turmoil following the invasion. At no time were all institutions—schools, courts, government, churches—wholly suspended; but few escaped some disruption, and many sustained crippling and near-mortal wounds.

The institutions of the heartland faced two deadly enemies during the Civil War: one haunted the towns and another the countryside. In the towns constant and pervasive Federal presence was the rule. Thus, many institutions fell victim to the expropriation of buildings for army needs, and many to deliberate, politically-motivated military interference. In the rural areas such tribulations were not unknown, but they were rare. Far more lethal there was the restriction of mobility, and thus social intercourse, imposed by wartime conditions. Fear of Yankee rapine and abuse, fear of Rebel conscription, fear of guerrilla and bandit violence—such trepidations kept anxious rural heartlanders at home, and away from church, schoolhouse, village, town, and courthouse. "I have only been to Clarksville three times in the last two years," wrote a Montgomery County farm woman in 1864, "and visit but little in the neighborhood"; and when Williamson County farmer Jesse Cox called on a sick neighbor in June 1863, he noted in his diary

that it was "the first time I have been outside of my farm in three months."²⁷

Schools in the countryside were mostly abandoned upon the advent of the Yankees, and subsequent hazards kept pupils and teachers away. A few private academies and subscription schools persisted or later reopened in remote communities luckily free of danger, but rural public schools—such as they were—ceased altogether as county government faltered or disappeared. Urban schools were untroubled by disrupted mobility and aided by the Federals' benign neglect (or in some cases outright encouragement). Many private schools, at least, continued and even flourished under the towns' enforced order and relative peacefulness. Most urban schools closed temporarily in the initial panic of early 1862, and occasionally thereafter the army seized school buildings for military use (Stewart College in Clarksville and the famous Clarksville Female Academy, both used as hospitals, were wrecked); and too, financial distress closed public schools in the towns, most notably in Nashville, whose excellent school system was shut down in 1862 by a nearly bankrupt city council. Nevertheless, urban schools as a whole—insulated from rural turbulence, generally unharassed by Federal authorities (who perceived no threat from schools), and patronized by the still-prosperous

²⁷Sallie to John Minor, May 15, 1864, Sailor's Rest Plantation Papers; Cox Diary, June 16, 1863. The disruption of mobility and communication in the rural areas—a phenomenon with profound social implications, which are explored in Chapter IX—is further documented in Jane C. Warren to Electa Ames, Aug. 27, 1863, Ames Papers; Clarksville Chronicle, July 28, 1862; Sarah Kennedy to husband, Feb. 12, 1863, Kennedy Letters; Fitch, Annals of the Army, 641; Wife to William G. Harding, Aug. 5, 1862, Harding-Jackson Papers; Matthews Journal, July 13, 16, 18, 1863; Nashville Dispatch, July 12, Sept. 11, Oct. 31, 1862.

affluent of the towns—endured war and occupation better than any other of the region's institutions.²⁸

The hand of war struck much more fiercely at county government. With few exceptions county courts closed after the capture of Nashville, even where the Federal army was not present, as terror-stricken magistrates and clerks fled (some with all their records). In Franklin the Federal commandant encountered a typical predicament in June 1862: the Williamson County court was dissolved, taxes were uncollected, the treasury held less than fifty dollars, the poor fund was altogether gone, many citizens were in destitution, and bridges were out all around the county. Several county governments in the southern heartland

²⁸The closing of rural schools is indicated in Matthews Journal, July 17, 1862, July 10, 1863. Their occasional persistence is evidenced in *ibid.*, Apr. 6, 1863, Mar. 7, 1864; Jane C. Warren to Electa Ames, Aug. 27, 1863, Ames Papers; Nancy B. Smith to James B. Smith, May 18, 1864, Smith Letters; Sallie to John Minor, May 15, Nov. 15, 1864, Sailor's Rest Plantation Papers. On the survival or revival of urban schools see Sallie F. McEwen Diary, May 6, 1862 (TSLA); Henderson Diary, Aug. 18, Sept. 21, 1863; Richard W. Johnson, A Soldier's Reminiscences in Peace and War (Philadelphia, 1886), 299; Nashville Dispatch, Nov. 26, 1862; Williamson Diary, Mar. 30, 1864. Military seizure or destruction of school buildings in the towns is noted in Carney Diary, June 19, 1862; Ash, "Community at War," 37-38; Carlton C. Sims, ed., A History of Rutherford County (Murfreesboro, 1947), 152. On the fate of the Nashville public schools see Nashville Dispatch, Aug. 13, 19, 1862, July 7, Aug. 12, 14, 1863. Charles F. Bryan, Jr., "The Civil War in East Tennessee: A Social, Political, and Economic Study" (Ph.D. diss., The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 1978), 233-58, documents a similar degree of disruption among schools in the eastern section of the state, which like Middle Tennessee experienced military occupation and great economic devastation. There is no adequate study of public or private education in the state as a whole during the Civil War. Robert H. White, The Development of the Tennessee State Education Organization, 1796-1929 (Kingsport, Tennessee, 1929), 78-79, offers only the sketchiest analysis.

resumed under Confederate control for a few months after the summer of 1862, when the Union army withdrew to Nashville. But thereafter, to the end of the war, the fate of government in each of the region's thirteen counties was determined by a combination of local circumstances, the caprices of the local commandant, the broader military situation, and political maneuvers of Military Governor Andrew Johnson in Nashville.²⁹

It was Johnson's devout belief that the white masses of Middle Tennessee were true patriots at heart who had been hoodwinked into secession by a handful of villainous leaders. His policy, therefore, was to reestablish civil government in the region as quickly as possible after purging the body politic of the truly disloyal and disenthraling the rest of the populace. In pursuit of this he was willing, initially at least, to let local officeholders carry on (until elections could be held) if they merely took an oath of allegiance to the Union. Some army commanders denounced this policy as overly lenient, but many upheld it because a functioning civil administrative body could relieve military occupation forces of many burdens. Courts were most easily revived where a stalwart nucleus of unionists was already on hand to assist. Such was the case in Davidson and in Bedford, and thus county

²⁹William B. Cassilly to Andrew Johnson, June 28, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Papers of Andrew Johnson, V, 511-12. See also Curran Pope to Andrew Johnson, Apr. 19, 1862, *ibid.*, 311. For information on Johnson and his appointment as military governor of Tennessee see Maslowski, Treason Must Be Made Odious, 20-26; Hall, Andrew Johnson, *passim*; Hardison, "In the Toils of War," *passim*.

government there, and in Robertson as well, resumed soon after the invasion with the blessing of the Yankees.³⁰

Other counties enjoyed no such smooth resumption of government. In Lincoln, for example, every officeholder left the county with his records, or just went home, when Fayetteville was occupied. The post commander exhorted all to return, but in vain. Williamson County officials tried to resign when ordered by the Franklin post commander to take the oath. He refused to allow that and arrested their leader in hopes of breaking down the others. They apparently did not yield. Confederate military threats hamstrung the Federals' efforts as severely as did civil defiance. Little governmental reconstruction could be accomplished while the Confederate army contested Middle

³⁰Ormsby M. Mitchell to Andrew Johnson, Apr. 5, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Papers of Andrew Johnson, V, 269; Shelbyville Tri-Weekly News, June 19, 1862. See my bibliography for the volumes of Davidson and Robertson County court records which indicate the dates of reopening (a wartime fire destroyed the Bedford County court records for April 1860 through December 1862). All county, chancery, and circuit court records used in this study are on microfilm in TSLA.

Military control of Bedford County changed hands at least five times during the war. The travails of the county court, alternately taken over by unionists and secessionists, are interestingly documented in Bedford County, Tennessee, County Court Clerk's Office, County Court Minutes, May, Aug., 1863, Vol. A, 6, 14 (TSLA). By contrast, the Davidson County court, aided by the uninterrupted Federal occupation of Nashville, experienced less disruption than any other in the region—a mere two-week hiatus following the fall of the city in early 1862.

Andrew Johnson's policies and the restoration of local and state government in Tennessee are discussed in Maslowski, Treason Must Be Made Odious, 26-38, 47-69, 74-94; Hall, Andrew Johnson, *passim*; Hardison, "In the Toils of War," *passim*; James W. Patton, Unionism and Reconstruction in Tennessee, 1860-1869 (Chapel Hill, 1934), 30-45; Thomas B. Alexander, Political Reconstruction in Tennessee (Nashville, 1950), 14-17.

Tennessee; and even after that, small Rebel units and guerrilla bands continued to challenge civil government under Yankee aegis. Slowly, however, courthouse by courthouse, local government returned to the heartland—although in three counties (Montgomery, Cheatham, and Sumner) it did not reappear until very near the end of the war.³¹

Army cooperation with these county governments ranged from generous to null. Some local commanders resented the frequent reappearance of old, familiar faces in the courthouses; in Rutherford County, for example, complaints surfaced loudly in 1864 about the large number of allegedly unreconstructed secessionists among the newly-seated officeholders. But other Federal officers worked faithfully to supervise local elections, administer oaths to voters and elected officials, and get the wheels of local government turning again, however creakily—and to give them an occasional push after that, if necessary. When smallpox hit Nashville in 1863-64, army doctors aided so selflessly that the Davidson County court was moved to tender its

³¹Curran Pope to Andrew Johnson, Apr. 19, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Papers of Andrew Johnson, V, 311; William B. Cassilly to Andrew Johnson, June 28, 1862, *ibid.*, 511-12.

The Wilson County court reopened under Federal control in October 1862; Marshall in October 1863 (after the initial Federal withdrawal in late summer, 1862, this court had remained open under Confederate control until November 1862); Williamson in October 1863 (open under Confederate control from October 1862 until January 1863); Maury in February 1864 (open under Confederate control from probably late summer, 1862, until July 1863); Lincoln in April 1864 (open under Confederate control from October 1862 until June 1863); Rutherford in May 1864; Montgomery in February 1865; Sumner in March 1865; Cheatham in June 1865. (Giles County court records for the war years are unavailable, but that county's experience probably paralleled Lincoln's.) See my bibliography for the volumes of county court records which provide these data.

"lasting thanks and gratitude . . . for their noble conduct. . . ."

And until the courts were operating, army officers acted—often at the behest of citizens—as administrators, judges, and even welfare commissioners. The Fayetteville provost marshal recounted in his memoirs how he frequently redressed grievances among the local folk, who came to his office because they had nowhere else to turn:

Some had had horses taken by our army, or by bushwhackers; some had been robbed of money or other valuables; some wanted permits to carry firearms, which were of course never granted; and others needed assistance from the Government to keep from starving.

Following the desperate plea of county officials in 1864, the Gallatin commandant agreed (albeit reluctantly) to take responsibility for Sumner County's paupers, who had been without any county aid for two years and were living in wretched conditions.³²

Nevertheless, even where Federal authorities were most helpful and the courts were soon meeting, persistent problems prevented the restoration of county government to anything like prewar efficacy. Taxes were generally uncollectable: not only were citizens impoverished, but traveling in the rural areas was perilous for tax collectors (and anybody else). Records were often missing, and courthouses sometimes

³²Nashville Daily Times and True Union, July 15, 1864; Davidson County, Tennessee, County Court Clerk's Office, County Court Minutes, Jan. 4, 1864, Bk. I, 224 (TSLA); Hinkley, Narrative of Service, 109-11; Report of Sumner County poor house commissioners, Jan. 18, 1864, Johnson Papers; John W. Brooks to E. A. Paine, Feb. 24, 1864, *ibid.*; E. A. Paine to B. H. Polk, Mar. 2, 1864, *ibid.* Fitch, Annals of the Army, 282-83, also gives a colorful description of the role of the provost marshal in Middle Tennessee. A perusal of the lists of county court justices appointed or elected under Federal rule reveals, in every county, many names familiar from antebellum lists.

damaged or occupied by troops. Lawyers and litigants were, many of them, off in the army or in refuge elsewhere. Vexatious legal questions arising from the war stymied the resolution of what business the courts did undertake: how to divide among heirs an estate whose slaves had run off, for example, or whether to accept Confederate money in payment of debts. On top of all this, the Confederate invasion of late 1864 threw every county court south of Nashville into turmoil and shut down some for months—magistrates and clerks now, in an ironic turnabout, dodging Rebel troops as resolutely as they had the Yankees not three years earlier.³³

The experience of the Lincoln County court is illustrative. It reopened in April 1864, following a Federally-supervised county election which returned several old hands to office. Assembling in a storeroom and later a church because troops occupied the courthouse, and proceeding under the scrutiny of the Fayetteville provost marshal, the magistrates (now oath-bound defenders of the Union) swore in the

³³Practical problems involving estates, slaves, taxes, and debts, as well as disruption due to Confederate invasion, are illustrated in Bedford County Court Minutes, Sept., Nov., Dec., 1863, Jan., Dec., 1864, Vol. A, 18-19, 32-34, 44, 55, 248; Davidson County Court Minutes, July 7, 29, 1862, July 6, 1863, Bk. I, 82, 87-88, 152; Marshall County, Tennessee, County Court Clerk, Minutes, County Court, Mar., 1864, Vol. L, 38-39 (TSLA); Maury County, Tennessee, County Court Clerk's Office, Minute Books, Jan. 5, May 4, 1863, Oct. 3, 1864, Vol. XIV, 191, 234, 325 (TSLA); Rutherford County, Tennessee, County Court Clerk's Office, Minute Books, Mar., 1865, Bk. DD, 669-70 (TSLA); Williamson County, Tennessee, County Court Clerk's Office, Minutes, Jan., 1867, Vol. XX, 244-46 (TSLA); Wilson County, Tennessee, County Court Clerk's Office, County Court Minute Books, Quarterly Court Minutes and Actions, Feb. 1, 1864, Vol. 1859-1864, pp. 608-9 (TSLA).

new sheriff, constables, and other officers and endeavored to resume business. They met for four succeeding months but, lacking records (carried south in 1862) and unable to collect a penny in taxes or to summon persons at will, they accomplished almost nothing save dividing a few estates. They met not at all from September through January "on account of Raids made by Gens Wheler, Forrest & Hood of the Rebel Army and occupying this Section of the contry. . . ." Not until the summer of 1865, with records at last restored, litigants on hand, and tax revenues trickling in, did the court resume its accustomed level of business.³⁴

A deeper problem was that Federal cooperation, even at its most magnanimous, was always qualified. Andrew Johnson's enthusiasm for speedy political reconstruction notwithstanding, Federal authorities for the most part viewed local government and local functionaries with wary eyes. Although many Union commanders were willing enough to revive the county courts to help administer conquered territory, they regarded the courts jealously as competing institutions of power (unlike the schools) and they supervised them closely; and they were rarely as well disposed toward resuscitating the chancery and circuit courts, because from a strictly military standpoint the provision of civil and criminal justice was pretty much a frill, contributing little to the practical administration of a subject land and people. Whether

³⁴Lincoln County, Tennessee, County Court Clerk's Office, Minutes, Apr., 1864, to July, 1865, passim, especially Apr., 1864 (p. 1), and Feb., 1865 (p. 24), Vol. A, 1-63.

the local folk were able to transfer title to real estate, or sue a neighbor for welshing on a contract, or legally prosecute a swindler, were matters of supreme indifference to most army officers. In only four counties—Maury, Rutherford, Williamson, and Davidson—were both chancery and circuit courts functioning before the war ended, and only in the last-named were they operating prior to mid-1864 or with anything like a normal volume of business. All the same problems that plagued the county courts afflicted the courts of civil and criminal justice, too, with the added vexation of having to rely on hard-to-convene and usually recalcitrant juries composed of local men. When, for example, the Davidson circuit court met in October 1864 to consider the case of a runaway slave, the jury adamantly refused to recognize emancipation despite the judge's direct order, so outraging his Honor that he set aside the verdict and

sharply rebuked the jury for their unprecedented impudence, regretting that he could not fine them heavily for contempt, and finally discharging them from further attendance on Court, as unfit to mete out justice to their fellow-citizens.³⁵

³⁵Nashville Daily Times and True Union, Oct. 7, 1864; Maslowski, Treason Must Be Made Odious, 64-66. Problems affecting the reinstitution of civil and criminal courts in wartime are further illustrated in Lincoln County, Tennessee, Circuit Court, Minutes, Civil and Criminal, Apr. 27, 1863, Vol. 1859-1863, p. 464 (TSLA); Nashville Daily Times and True Union, May 13, 1864; Shelbyville Tri-Weekly News, June 21, 1862; Sumner County, Tennessee, Circuit Court Clerk's Office, Minute Books, 1862, passim, Vol. T, especially p. 178 (TSLA); Williamson County, Tennessee, Chancery Court Office, Minutes, Oct., 1864, Apr., 1865, Vol. J, 126, 133-34, 136-45 (TSLA); Wilson County, Tennessee, Chancery Court Office, Minute Books, Oct., 1865, Vol. E, 280-82 (TSLA); Wilson County, Tennessee, Circuit Court Office, Circuit Court Minutes, May 16, 1864, Vol. 1861-1867, pp. 146, 150 (TSLA); Andrew Johnson to George H. Thomas, Sept. 26, 1864, OR, Ser. I, Vol. XXXIX, Pt. 2, p. 482. In a few cases military officials did encourage the reopening of courts of

More stultifying to every reopened court than any other difficulty, however, was this: no matter how formidable the court's arm, its reach could not extend far beyond the limits of town. As long as the countryside remained chaotic and dangerous to travelers, rural folk simply had no recourse to the courts, nor could the courts exert their authority over the rural citizenry. Law, justice, and government had by 1863 ceased to exist in the rural heartland. The experience of sixty-year-old magistrate Isaac Ivy of Williamson County is poignantly

justice, especially where it relieved the army of the burden of trying civilians by military commissions on criminal charges. See, e.g., the case of a Rutherford County man accused of murdering a slave, in the Nashville Daily Times and True Union, Apr. 13, 1864.

The Bedford County chancery court reopened in March 1865, the circuit court in April 1864. The Cheatham County chancery court reopened in June 1865 (Cheatham did not have its own circuit court in these years). The Davidson County chancery and circuit courts reopened in April 1862, and the special criminal court in January 1863. The Giles County circuit court reopened in April 1865 (the chancery court records for the period of occupation are missing). The Lincoln County chancery court reopened in August 1865, the circuit court in July 1865. The Marshall County chancery court reopened in August 1865, the circuit court no later than June 1865 (records prior to that date, as far back as 1853, are missing). The Maury County chancery court reopened in September 1864, the circuit court in May 1864. The Montgomery County chancery court reopened in April 1865, the circuit court no later than September 1864. The Robertson County chancery court reopened in May 1865, the circuit court in February 1865. The Rutherford County chancery court reopened in October 1864, the circuit court in May 1864. The Sumner County chancery court reopened in March 1865, the circuit court in February 1865. The Williamson County chancery court reopened in October 1864, the circuit court in July 1864. The Wilson County chancery court reopened in October 1865, the circuit court in May 1864. In addition to the circuit and chancery court records themselves (see bibliography), the following sources provide information on the reopening of the courts: Nashville Dispatch, Jan. 24, 1863; Nashville Daily Times and True Union, May 13, 1864; Andrew Johnson to George H. Thomas, Sept. 26, 1864 (cited above); Maslowski, Treason Must Be Made Odious, 65.

illuminating. Ordered in 1864 to enroll every man in his district in the state militia, Ivy replied pleadingly to Governor Johnson, explaining that the district was

very large, & thinly settled, consequent[ly] there is a large portion of it mountains, Hills & timber, Generally thick Set with undergrowth, in which bands of Guerrilas & Robers are frequently Seen. . . . Some of them have threatened me, and other Justices of the Peace. . . . The Cituation . . . is Such, that no protection would be of benefit to me that could or would be given. Now I hope the above will be Sufficient excuse for not enrolling [the citizens] . . . and your excellency will appoint some young man. . . .

Ivy's ordeal was reenacted many times across the rural heartland.³⁶

The towns, by contrast, bustled with the activity of government throughout the war (save just after the initial panic), even where county, chancery, and circuit courts were functioning meagerly or not at all. Federal authorities keenly desired order in the towns, their bases of operation. Thus, they often tolerated and even encouraged urban government. And, though chronically short of funds, town governments (unlike the county courts) enjoyed an accessible and readily coerced citizenry by virtue of protected mobility within their dominions: the streets of town, however full of pickpockets and drunken soldiers, were far safer thoroughfares than the country roads. In Murfreesboro, for example, government went on for weeks after the invasion before military

³⁶Isaac Ivy to Andrew Johnson, Sept. 30, 1864, Johnson Papers. See also Williamson County, Tennessee, Circuit Court Office, Civil and State Minutes, Apr., 1863, Vol. XV, 518 (TSLA), which notes that court was not opened because the Federals had earlier occupied Franklin and thus "persons residing beyond the limits of said Town could not enter the same." Bryan, "Civil War in East Tennessee," 204-23, finds similar disruption of the county, chancery, and circuit courts in that region.

authorities demanded so much as an oath of allegiance from the officeholders. When they finally did so, only the mayor, recorder, and two aldermen refused; those officers were removed and quickly replaced by others chosen by the remaining aldermen. Town government thereupon proceeded as usual. Nashville city government, nearly overwhelmed by newly-aggravated problems of crowding, crime, disease, and poverty, found itself busier than ever before. With army assistance (and after a thorough political purgation by Andrew Johnson), it set about to police the unruly, warm and feed the poor, and bury the dead, all at a pace which made antebellum Nashville seem sleepy by comparison.³⁷

The churches of the heartland saw harsh trials and knew deep anguish from 1862 to 1865, for the house of God was no sanctuary from the all-permeating pestilence of war. Urban churches, like urban schools, did benefit from the preservation of order in the towns by

³⁷Murfreesboro Union Volunteer, May 20, 1862; Nashville Dispatch, Oct. 22, Nov. 5, Dec. 7, 11, 21, 30, 1862, Nov. 3, 1863; Nashville Daily Times and True Union, May 12, 1864; Maslowski, Treason Must Be Made Odious, 53-54, 121-37; Stanley F. Rose, "Nashville and Its Leadership Elite, 1861-1869" (M.A. thesis, University of Virginia, 1965), 16-26, 65-67. See also Shelbyville Tri-Weekly News, June 19, 1862. Clarksville was an exception to this rule. Antagonistic relations between citizens and military authorities there resulted in the suppression of town government. See Clarksville Weekly Chronicle, Sept. 22, 1865, Feb. 16, 1866. Direct evidence on the experience of other towns is lacking, but presumably even where town government was suspended Federal authorities endeavored to maintain, at least minimally, certain functions of urban government such as police and health measures and regulation of commerce. Even in Clarksville, badly devastated and without civil government, contemporary newspapers indicate economic and social activities in 1864 which presuppose some level of urban administration, presumably overseen by the provost marshal. See Clarksville Gazette, Feb. 20, 27, 1864. Bryan, "Civil War in East Tennessee," 222-23, shows that the town governments of that region experienced a similar boom during the war years.

Federal bayonets, but concomitantly they suffered from the constant, destructive presence of troops. Many continued services uninterruptedly, or nearly so, through the war (some even received substantial additions to their weekly congregations in the form of blue-uniformed worshippers). The Presbyterian Church of Lewisburg, for example, met regularly during the entire occupation. So unruffled was this church by the war raging all around it that it took occasion in January 1865 to condemn formally (and at great length) the "promiscuous collection of young people for objects which we consider sinful," i.e., dancing. But an urban location was no guarantor of serenity and safety for any church. The First Baptist Church of Nashville valiantly carried on despite financial problems, low attendance, and Federal harassment of its minister, only to be abruptly suspended in 1863 when the army seized its house of worship for a hospital, and ultimately wrecked it. The fathers of the First Presbyterian Church of Murfreesboro recorded sadly in July 1864, on the occasion of their first meeting in two and a half years (and their last until 1865), that "There has been an unprecedented destruction of property . . . & even the resting-place of the dead . . . & the Sanctuary itself . . . have been & still are desolated & desecrated!" In Franklin, particularly ill-used by its Federal occupiers, hardly a single church building remained undamaged or undestroyed at the war's end. But even without deliberate Yankee vandalism or expropriation, many churches of the heartland's towns found the tribulations of war insurmountable. The large Cumberland Presbyterian Church of Lebanon, for example, was disorganized through the entire

period of occupation. As its minister explained in 1866, "The w[or]lts of war—armies, battles, alarms and woes, broke up not only regular session meetings, but regular services. . . ."38

Along with all the familiar "alarms and woes" of war, another affliction plagued the urban churches. Like local government, but unlike the schools, churches were institutions of power and influence in the towns, real or potential rivals of the jealous Yankee conquerors. But the churches offered no service of practical value to the occupiers comparable to that provided by local government, no tribute to propitiate a distrustful ruler. Thus, the merest hint of sedition or disobedience from the pulpit was usually enough to provoke the Federals to close a church's doors or lock up its minister. Such political retaliation probably disrupted as many urban churches from 1862 to 1865 as did all the other exigencies of war together. In Murfreesboro in the first weeks of occupation army authorities closed every church until clergymen agreed to take the oath, then jailed the recalcitrant and required permits of the rest even to hold a funeral. "It seems hard that we are

³⁸Ready Diary, Mar. 31, 1862; Carney Diary, May 25, 1862; Handy Diary, Feb. 19, 1865; Presbyterian Church, Lewisburg, Marshall County, Records, Session Minutes, Jan. 21, 1865 (TSLA); Rufus B. Spain, "R. B. C. Howell: Nashville Baptist Leader in the Civil War Period," THQ, XIV (Dec., 1955), 338; First Presbyterian Church, Murfreesboro, Session Minutes, July 18, 1864; Daniel, "Effects of Civil War," 47-49, 52, 57; Historical Records Survey, Tennessee, Cumberland Presbyterian Church Records (2 vols., Nashville, 1938-41), II, 51-52. Other examples of the disruption of urban churches are in Historical Records Survey, Tennessee, Presbyterian Church Records, Tennessee (2 vols., Nashville, 1937-41), I, 34; First Presbyterian Church, Gallatin, Sumner County, Records, Session Minutes, 1861-65, passim (TSLA); Louis to sister, Apr. 9, 1863, Talbot Papers; Ash, "Community at War," 38.

not permitted to Pray to God, when and how we want to," one resident remarked. The wealthy and defiant First Presbyterian Church of Clarksville was closed by military edict from the arrival of the Yankees until very near the end of the war; seeing an armed guard on the church steps in late 1862, Sarah Kennedy declared that she "felt mad enough to run the bayonet through him." In Nashville, Andrew Johnson wasted little time before rounding up all the leading ministers, including R. B. C. Howell of the First Baptist Church and C. D. Elliott of the Nashville Female Academy, to demand the oath from them. Those who refused he banished to the south or imprisoned; Howell and Elliott, for example, spent months in a penitentiary. One woman pronounced the governor's peremptory stroke "a severe blow to the Christian community of Nashville, for it vacates nearly every pulpit." Helpless physically to oppose such measures, the urban faithful could only mourn, or rage, or beg for heavenly intervention. "I can't think that God in his 'tender mercy' will allow such a state of things much longer," wrote a Murfreesboro woman in 1862;

Surely he will not allow his church doors to be closed by a set of vile invaders. Are there not enough good people in his ch[urch] to send up petitions to the throne of grace for the opening of their Ch[urch] & the renewal of their ministers labours. "The prayer of the righteous availeth much."³⁹

³⁹Carney Diary, May 16, June 18, July 3, 1862; First Presbyterian Church, Clarksville, Montgomery County, Records, Session Minutes, Vol. II, 1862-65, passim (TSLA); Sarah Kennedy to husband, Dec. 29, 1862, Sept. 2, 1864, Kennedy Letters; Spain, "R. B. C. Howell," 335-37; Hardison, "In the Toils of War," 102-13; wife to William G. Harding, June 29, Aug. 5, 1862, Harding-Jackson Papers; Daniel, "Effects of Civil War," 61-62; Skipper and Gove, "Stray Thoughts," Pt. 2, pp. 116-17.

The ordeal of St. Peter's Episcopal Church of Columbia, and its rector David Pise, evoked much earnest (but unavailing) prayer from the righteous; and it exemplifies the experiences of many an urban congregation. On the first Sunday in April 1862, Pise, preaching to a congregation which included many Federal soldiers and officers, boldly added a prayer for Jefferson Davis and the soldiers of the Confederacy. Two days later he noted tersely in his journal, "The Church closed for the remainder of this month." In August he was commanded to take the oath or cease preaching. But Pise took his stand on principle, vowing that "The path of duty, though painful, is plain." After punctiliously explicating his political tenets, he denounced the Yankees' "attempt to subject a free people by laying them under an 'Interdict,'" which he was determined to oppose "as stoutly as if [it were] made by the Pope himself." Arrested two weeks later and hauled before the provost marshal and commandant, Pise was threatened with banishment to the south. The sudden Federal retreat from Maury County in September enabled him to resume his duties for the rest of 1862 and most of the next year, but in December 1863 the now securely reestablished Union authorities demanded that he incorporate in his sermons a prayer for the U.S. president. Sadly but firmly Pise refused. He then turned control of his church over to the Yankees, who for the remainder of the war used the building as a hospital and barracks. His poignant journal entry for December 25 speaks volumes of melancholy: "Christmas—
No service—In passing the ch[urch] saw suspended from the Knob of the

front door . . . a small green wreath. . . ." Not until May 1865 did Pise relent and recover his church, by then a battered ruin.⁴⁰

Most ministers in Middle Tennessee's towns escaped the fate of David Pise only by treading very lightly, or by actually embracing the Union cause. Philip Fall of the Disciples of Christ, who conscientiously preserved a strict neutrality during the war and preached a pure gospel devoid of politics, was perhaps the only Nashville minister allowed to carry on unmolested by Andrew Johnson. In Murfreesboro soon after the invasion another clergyman quietly omitted at Sunday services the customary prayer for the Confederacy, and a week later—with numerous Federal soldiers in attendance—"preached a sermon more in accordance with their feelings than of the Southern portion of his congregation," as one reproachful member wrote. Not long afterward the Baptist minister in that town declared himself a unionist and prayed outright for the Yankees. In Nashville that year the Second Presbyterian Church witnessed a virtual palace revolution when a unionist faction of the church elders (deposed in 1861), after intriguing with Federal authorities, occupied the church building with a squad of armed troops, seized records and funds, and reclaimed control of the church.⁴¹

⁴⁰Pise Journal, Apr. 6, 8, Aug. 13, 15, 30, 31, 1862, Dec. 8, 9, 25, 1863, May 5, Dec. 24, 1864, May 10, June 11, 1865; Historical Records Survey, Tennessee, Records and Histories of Certain Episcopal Churches in Tennessee (Nashville, 1938), St. Peter's Episcopal Church History, 3-4. The similar harassment of an unyielding Episcopal clergyman in Clarksville is described in Paul G. Ashdown, "Samuel Ringgold: An Episcopal Clergyman in Kentucky and Tennessee during the Civil War," Filson Club Historical Quarterly, LIII (July, 1979), 236-38.

⁴¹Herman A. Norton, Tennessee Christians: A History of the Christian Church in Tennessee (Nashville, 1971), 99-100; David Edwin Harrell, Jr.,

Violence, not politics, ruled the fate of the heartland's rural churches. As the war continued inexorably and the countryside grew ever more perilous for wayfarers, rural congregations (particularly those dependent on circuit-riding ministers) despaired of keeping up regular Sunday preaching and session meetings. Sadly, unwillingly, but nonetheless surely, the churches one after another defaulted their sacred obligations to nurture the spirit, correct the errant, and sustain the community of believers.

The extent of rural church disruption, as well as its chronology, varied with local circumstances: the important determinants were the relative isolation of the neighborhood, the propinquity of Union troops, and the magnitude of guerrillaism and banditry. But few country churches escaped disruption at some point after the occupation began. A Disciples of Christ minister who rode circuit in Rutherford County traveled unhindered until 1863, but thereafter was so frequently harassed and robbed (of his horse, for one thing) that he gave up his work until the spring of 1865. The fathers of Enon Primitive Baptist Church of Bedford County gathered in September 1863 for the first time in nine months, ascribing their long absence to "bad weather and troublesome times." They met next in April 1864 and resumed regular monthly sessions for a time, but then again failed to meet from October of that

"Disciples of Christ Pacifism in Nineteenth Century Tennessee," THQ, XXI (Sept., 1962), 268-70; Ready Diary, Mar. 23, 31, 1862; Carney Diary, June 22, 1862; Mrs. Roy C. Avery, ed., "The Second Presbyterian Church of Nashville during the Civil War," THQ, XI (Dec., 1952), 356-75.

year until the war was nearly over. The New Hope Primitive Baptist Church congregation in Bedford assembled but twice in 1862, "on account of the federal soldiers being among us," and did not meet again during the war. Even Zion Church of Maury County, the Presbyterian community whose "oneness" was proverbial, suffered anguishing interludes of suspension: "Owing to the disturbances in the country," the church clerk recorded in April 1864, "& also to the fact that we had no regular preaching part of last year, we have had no communion since October 1862; & Session have had no meeting since that time." Most striking and evocative are the wartime minutes of West Station Primitive Baptist Church of Sumner County. From July to December 1862 each month is simply marked "No conference," followed by the terse explanation "war"; similar notations appear for every month of 1863, along with the scribbled entreaty "Lord save us"; the record for all of 1864 comprises but one entry: "No meetings (Lord have mercy and revive us[)]"; for the conflict's last months in 1865 there is this epigraph, in a penciled scrawl: "War War War War War War."⁴²

⁴²Norton, Tennessee Christians, 100; Enon Primitive Baptist Church, Unionville, Bedford County, Records, Session Minutes, 1862-65, passim, especially Sept., 1863 (TSLA); New Hope Primitive Baptist Church, Fairfield, Bedford County, Records, Session Minutes, 1862-66, passim, especially Oct. 4, 1862 (TSLA); Zion Presbyterian Church, Columbia, Maury County, Records, Session Minutes, Apr. 10, 1864 (TSLA); West Station Primitive Baptist Church, Sumner County, Records, Session Minutes, 1862-65, passim (TSLA). For other examples of the disruption of rural churches and ministry see Robertson Fork Church of Christ, Marshall County, Records, Session Minutes, 1862-65, passim (TSLA); Mt. Olivet Baptist Church, Mt. Juliet, Wilson County, Records, Session Minutes, Vol. II, 1862-65, passim, especially Feb., 1864, June, 1865 (TSLA); Silver Creek Society of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Maury County, Records, Session Minutes, 1862-65, passim, especially Sept. 27, 1862

Only a few fortunate congregations, remotely sequestered and safe from roaming pillagers and murderous brigands, sustained their fellowship throughout the war. Bethlehem Baptist Church of Robertson County, for one, dutifully carried on its work without interruption. Throughout 1863 and 1864, as violence and ruin convulsed the heartland and churches everywhere were empty and their worshippers scattered, Bethlehem Church was meeting regularly to exalt the Lord, conduct church business, and discipline wayward members for their drinking, dancing, swearing, and other acts of debauchery (all seemingly unabated by the war). In April 1863 alone, the church took time to expel two women for "acting the Harlot," another for "having an unlawful child," and one hapless brother "For his repeated conduct in showing his Secrets to the Ladies."⁴³

Even where a church endured, however, war brought absences and loss which threatened its heart and soul: the circle did not abide unbroken. Often when congregations did assemble, white women, children, and older men comprised the whole of the faithful: young white males were away in the army or in fearful hiding from Yankees, Rebels, or guerrillas; black brothers and sisters of every age were seeking a new life.

(TSLA); Fall Creek Baptist Church, Lebanon, Wilson County, Records, Session Minutes, 1862-65, passim (TSLA); Cox Diary, Apr. 6, Aug. 24, Dec. 31, 1862, Dec. 31, 1863; Matthews Journal, Oct. 11, 1863, Apr. 17, 1864.

⁴³Bethlehem Baptist Church, Robertson County, Records, Session Minutes, Vol. I, 1863-65, passim, especially Apr., 1863 (TSLA). For other examples of rural churches and ministry relatively unaffected by the war see Spring Creek Primitive Baptist Church, Robertson County, Records, Session Minutes, 1862-65, passim, (TSLA); Cool Springs Primitive Baptist Church, Peytons ville, Williamson County, Records, Session Minutes, 1862-65, passim (TSLA); Norton, Tennessee Christians, 97-99.

Surviving church minutes sometimes transcend their routinism to convey poignantly a sense of the congregation's grief. When the Yankee occupation kept Brother Watson of Wilson Creek Primitive Baptist Church of Williamson County from joining his anxiously waiting congregation in October 1862, the clerk dolefully reported that "after reading a chapter the church sung & p[r]ayed with & for each other & also for our beloved pastor & retired in pensive silence." A month later Watson was again absent, and the faithful sang, prayed, and "retired in silent gloom trusting in a merciful God for better times. . . ." Still without their preacher in December, the congregation "retired with sadness of hearts." Brother Watson eventually returned to his flock, but many another church suffered losses that could not be redeemed on earth. One was McCains Cumberland Presbyterian of Maury County, which in August 1862 mourned the death of Brother Robert H. Maxwell, Confederate volunteer, of pneumonia in a Yankee prison camp: ". . . while we deeply deplor our loss," the congregation resolved, "we will bow in submission to the divine and mysterious dispensation of God in this our sad bereavement."⁴⁴

⁴⁴Ibid., 101; Wilson Creek Primitive Baptist Church, Williamson County, Records, Session Minutes, Oct., Nov., Dec., 1862 (TSLA); McCains Cumberland Presbyterian Church, McCains, Maury County, Records, Session Minutes, Aug. 13, 1862 (TSLA).

General studies of churches in the Confederacy tend to concentrate on the experience in unoccupied regions, where institutional continuity was the rule. See Daniel, "Effects of Civil War," 44-63; James W. Silver, Confederate Morale and Church Propaganda (Tuscaloosa, Alabama, 1957); Willard E. Wight, "Churches in the Confederacy" (Ph.D. diss., Emory University, 1957). Bryan, "Civil War in East Tennessee," 259-98, documents much church disruption as a result of danger in the rural areas, but shows as well the devastating effects of political divisions within congregations—a frequent phenomenon in East Tennessee, though rare in the heartland.

Mysterious indeed must God's dispensations have appeared to all the people of Middle Tennessee in the three years following the Northern invasion; terrible, too, did they seem, dark and wrathful. Those heartlanders who endured saw their rich land ravaged, their handiworks smashed and burned. They saw the grandest living symbols of their culture—their institutions of learning, of law, of worship—gutted and trampled, or grievously wounded. They saw their countrymen suffer and die. Yet amid the pain and ruin, certain of these people joyously perceived a glorious boon: freedom. Of all the cataclysms of war, only this one—emancipation—evoked any cheers from the people of the heartland. But among the majority who cheered it not, no church's demise, no village's obliteration, no patriot's martyrdom, was ever so agonizingly apprehended and deeply mourned as was the death of slavery.

CHAPTER VIII

YEAR OF JUBILEE: SLAVES, MASTERS, YANKEES, AND FREEDMEN, 1862-1865

Many a Yankee soldier's most vivid impression of the march into Middle Tennessee in the first months of 1862 was not of verdant fields and fat cattle, but of rapturous black faces at every point along the route. As the Sixth Ohio Infantry passed through Williamson County its men saw

gangs of slaves . . . at work upon almost every plantation, or else clinging to the fences by the road side, whence they watched the marching column with wondering eyes and unmistakable delight, as long as it remained in view.

In Clarksville "The negroes were all excited by the near approach of the men in blue," one resident recalled; "They were gathered on the water front, watching eagerly . . . and of all the population, they alone were to welcome the invaders." An Ohio officer en route to Murfreesboro with his regiment wrote that

at every plantation negroes came flocking to the roadside to see us. They are the only friends we find. They have heard of the abolition army, the music, the banners, the glittering arms . . . [they] welcome us with extravagant manifestations of joy. They keep time to the music with feet and hands and hurrah "fur de ole flag and de Union," sometimes following us for miles.¹

¹Ebenezer Hannaford, The Story of a Regiment: A History of the Campaigns, and Associations in the Field, of the Sixth Regiment Ohio Volunteer Infantry (Cincinnati, 1868), 227; W. Williams, "A Reminiscence of Clarksville, Tennessee," Confederate Veteran, XXII (May 1914), 206; John Beatty, Memoirs of a Volunteer 1861-1863 (New York, 1946), 93.

When the troops and the excitement had passed, however, the slaves of the heartland dutifully returned home, picked up their hoes, and went back to the fields. Slavery in Middle Tennessee did not dissolve at the mere touch of the enemy. The "abolition army" whose paeans the jubilant blacks sang was far from being that in 1862. The general disposition of the army high command in the first year and more of occupation was an earnest desire to avoid unsettling the institution of slavery, and especially to avoid being annoyed by slaves. Strict orders went out to field and post commanders limiting the military employment of slaves and forbidding the harboring of fugitives. These edicts were for the most part well received and faithfully obeyed by subordinate officers, for this citizen-army had a strong streak of conservative Democracy—to the pleasant surprise of many white Middle Tennesseans, who had long viewed every blue-coated brigade as an arm of radical Republicanism. In April 1862 the Clarksville post commander, holding in jail a black boy accused of poisoning his master, wrote of his determination to prosecute the slave in words that would have warmed the heart of any slaveholder:

. . . it is necessary that the negros of this town & County should know that punishment will follow such offences as this boy has been guilty of[.]

A Rutherford County woman complimented the Murfreesboro commandant on his moderation and his willingness to aid local whites whose slaves had run off to the army; "I know of one or two he has sent home," she added, "& instructed their owners to chastise them." In Nashville the military authorities vowed not to interfere with the city's enforcement of the slave code, and enthusiastically joined the civil police in

cracking down on black vagrancy. Military Governor Andrew Johnson's typically outspoken remark on Lincoln's preliminary Emancipation Proclamation in late 1862 summed up the attitude of many of his subordinates: "Damn the negroes," he declared; "I am fighting these traitorous aristocrats, their masters!"²

Most of those bondsmen who greeted so joyfully the arrival of the supposed army of liberation were soon disillusioned. Typical was the experience of a Murfreesboro slave who with high expectations visited the Union occupiers soon after they entered the town in March 1862: the next day his mistress wrote that

Our negro returned this afternoon—he went into the Camp with a confederate coat on—they called him a secesh negro and put him to hard work—about noon they gave him a pail to get some water, he gave them the slip and came home perfectly satisfied says he will never leave his master again.

Slaves in Nashville, too, came to believe that the Yankees were best avoided, especially after a surprise raid in September in which hundreds

²D. C. Buell to J. R. Underwood, Mar. 6, 1862, United States War Department, The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (70 vols. in 128, Washington, 1880-1901), Ser. I, Vol. X, Pt. 2, p. 11 (hereafter cited as OR); D. C. Buell to O. M. Mitchell, Mar. 11, 1862, *ibid.*, 31; Testimony of Lovell H. Rousseau, *ibid.*, Vol. XVI, Pt. 1, pp. 350-51; Fayetteville Union Herald, June 18, 1862; Thomas C. James to Andrew Johnson, Apr. 11, 1862, LeRoy P. Graf and Ralph W. Haskins, eds., The Papers of Andrew Johnson (6 vols. to date, Knoxville, 1967-), V, 292; Sarah Ridley Trimble, ed., "Behind the Lines in Middle Tennessee, 1863-1865: The Journal of Bettie Ridley Blackmore," THQ, XII (Mar., 1953), 63; Nashville Dispatch, Dec. 30, 1862, Feb. 14, 1863; John Cimprich, "Military Governor Johnson and Tennessee Blacks, 1862-65," THQ, XXXIX (Winter, 1980), 461; Peter Maslowski, Treason Must Be Made Odious: Military Occupation and Wartime Reconstruction in Nashville, Tennessee (Millwood, New York, 1978), 99; John V. Cimprich, "Slavery amidst Civil War in Tennessee: The Death of an Institution" (Ph.D. diss., Ohio State University, 1977), 67-80.

of blacks were rounded up to work on fortifications. "The colored population of that city," chuckled a Union officer some time after, "have probably not yet forgotten the suddenness with which [the army] gathered them in from barber-shops, kitchens, and even churches." Several bloody encounters between blacks and soldiers in the city also served to teach Nashville's slaves and free blacks the sad lesson that the soldiers of the Union were not necessarily the friends of the oppressed. In one incident early in September soldiers hunting seats in a crowded theater beat up and evicted blacks in the audience, then spilled out into the street after the show, assaulting every black man they could lay hands on.³

Such evidence of personal hostility and official conservatism persuaded many slaves in this early period of occupation that life under the Stars and Stripes held no more promise of freedom than that under the Stars and Bars. Most therefore abandoned their initial exultation, readopted their habitual masks of insouciance, and resumed their accustomed toil, to the profound satisfaction of their masters and mistresses. Every indication of slave loyalty and contentment was seized upon and flaunted by relieved whites. A Murfreesboro slaveowner proudly recounted in May 1862 how a drunken soldier had accosted her female servant and demanded to know if she was for the South or the North: South, the slave replied (in the presence of her mistress).

³C. Alice Ready Diary, Mar. 24, 1862 (SHC); John Fitch, Annals of the Army of the Cumberland . . . (Philadelphia, 1864), 182, 651; Nashville Dispatch, Sept. 9, 1862. See also ibid., Sept. 2, 1862; Maslowski, Treason Must Be Made Odious, 99-101.

The eminent Davidson County planter William G. Harding received welcome news from his family about affairs at his Belle Meade plantation that spring. "Every one [i.e., slave] seems determined to do his or her best," his wife wrote on May 2, "and there has been no trouble, and you know how gratifying it is to me to make such a report." A few days later Harding's daughter informed him that "all the servants are in good health and are getting on well and working well, giving Mr. Beasley [the overseer] no trouble, all want to see you very much and wish you were at home."⁴

More perspicacious observers were less sanguine. Subtle counterevidence was there for those who had eyes to see it. A young Murfreesboro woman noticed in July 1862 that the mood of local slaves rose and fell with the movements of the Union army. Confederates recaptured the town on the thirteenth and released all the jailed secessionists: "They looked so happy," she wrote, "but, who did not except the dusky forms that hovered around our front steps." The Rebels soon departed and the Federal troops returned, only to pull out again on the twenty-second: "I can see the spirits of the servants are ebbing low since the Yankees are pushing along. . . ." The next day, however, another Union force passed through: "The ebony images, were overjoyed to see them return." A sharp-eyed Northern officer in Murfreesboro, studying the black multitude which turned out to watch troops parade

⁴Kate S. Carney Diary, May 25, 1862 (SHC); wife to William G. Harding, Apr. 27, May 2, 31, 1862, Harding-Jackson Papers (SHC); Selene to Harding, May 8, 1862, *ibid.*; Susanna to Harding, June 3, Aug. 25, 1862, *ibid.*

in March 1862, concluded that every slave would readily desert his master if he could get away with it.⁵

The slaves of Murfreesboro and all Middle Tennessee would soon have such opportunity, proffered by the circumstances of war. The war had its own liberating momentum, scarcely impeded by the conservatism and apathy of the Union army or by the determination of native whites to keep their slaves in bondage, but mightily reinforced by the desire of black heartlanders to be free. Even as the mass of bondsmen went placidly about their work in field and kitchen under the contented gaze of their masters, hairline cracks appeared in the edifice of slavery, cracks which gradually widened and which ultimately crumbled the institution, giving freedom to its captives.

In the first place, the Federal army—however intolerant its commanders were of idle slaves and runaways around the camps—needed strong black arms and backs and usually welcomed Negroes as teamsters and spade-wielders. When these did not come in voluntarily in sufficient numbers (which was invariably the case in these early months) the Yankees did not hesitate to go out and seize them. The army took in or impressed many hundreds, perhaps thousands, of black laborers throughout the heartland during 1862, and a number of those slaves did not return home. Some, reckoning that working for the Yankees was no worse than working for old Master, willingly stayed with the Union army when

⁵Carney Diary, July 13, 22, 23, 1862; Beatty, Memoirs of a Volunteer, 96.

it retreated from southern Middle Tennessee in the fall. "Large crowds of them were on the railway trains," an officer remembered, "picked up from the stations . . . and I saw a great many going north in wagons by the country roads." Others, who ran off from their trench-digging or were released or expelled from the Federal camps without being sent home, wandered at large, their fate a matter of indifference to the Federals as long as they did not burden the army.⁶

These first months of occupation witnessed also a few deliberate acts of liberation unconnected with the army's need for labor and in direct contravention of the wishes of the high command. Sometimes the motive was true compassion for the slave on the part of some Union soldier or officer; more often it was revenge against slaveholding secessionists. Sympathetic Illinois soldiers in Fayetteville forged passes in June 1862 to help a Lincoln County slave girl escape to Kentucky. Her master complained to Andrew Johnson that fugitive slaves were often "Set at liberty by the military authorities of this place." An Ohio officer professed in March his concern about "trouble with escaped negroes," but then confessed slyly that those coming into the lines "in some mysterious way are so disposed of that their masters

⁶Testimony of Lovell H. Rousseau, OR, Ser. I, Vol. XVI, Pt. 1, pp. 350-51; Testimony of Francis Darr, ibid., 617; Hannaford, Story of a Regiment, 326; Fitch, Annals of the Army, 100; Nashville Dispatch, Aug. 12, 1862; Ready Diary, Mar. 22, Apr. 3, 30, 1862; Thomas B. Johnson to Andrew Johnson, Aug. 8, 1863, Andrew Johnson Papers (LC); sister to William G. Harding, Aug. 14, 1862, Harding-Jackson Papers; Randal M. Ewing to William G. Harding, Aug. 17, 1862, ibid.; Samuel Henderson Diary, Apr. 14, 1863 (TSLA); William D. Bickham, Rosecrans' Campaign with the Fourteenth Army Corps . . . (Cincinnati, 1863), 87; Bobby Lee Lovett, "The Negro in Tennessee, 1861-1866: A Socio-Military History of the Civil War Era" (Ph.D. diss., University of Arkansas, 1978), 26-37.

never hear of them again." When slaveowners finally demanded the return of their property, this officer grandly ordered all the fugitives to be relinquished, and protested his astonishment when they did not appear. In September Federal soldiers bent on retaliation ransacked Clarksville and led away not less than 200 slaves. "[T]he negroes were induced by both private persuasion and shameless public invitation," wrote outraged townspeople, "and often compelled to join the ranks and flee from their masters."⁷

Even those slaves who found the Yankees unhelpful, inhospitable, or downright malevolent (and they were certainly the great majority of slaves before 1863) came to recognize that in a subtle way the mere fact of military occupation compromised their masters' authority. Instances of black disaffection and disobedience—all in some way connected to the presence of the Yankees—multiplied during 1862 and early 1863, even as slaveowners assured one another of their bondsmen's steadfast fidelity.

Much of this was a furtive sort of impudence or disloyalty, well hidden from the eyes and ears of a potentially furious master—but nonetheless corrosive to the "proper" subordination of the slave. As the Yankee army approached, blacks in Lincoln County composed wickedly insubordinate ditties and sang among themselves with spiteful glee:

⁷Alexander P. Smith to Andrew Johnson, June 27, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Papers of Andrew Johnson, V, 510-11 and n.; Beatty, Memoirs of a Volunteer, 91-92; Clarksville, Tennessee, citizens to Ulysses S. Grant, Sept. 15, 1862, Confederate Collection (TSLA).

Ole massa runned away,
 And de darkey stayed at home . . .
 De Lincum soldiers come;
 Dere's wine and cider in de cellar,
 And de niggers must hab some.

Oh black gal, you can't shine,
 I done quit foolin' wid de kinky-headed kin';
 First of July and de las of May,
 I've had a white gal on my min'.

Others secretly aided the invaders with information not obtainable from uncooperative whites. "The white people are treacherous and unreliable, all lying to deceive us," a Union officer reported in March 1862; "We can only depend on the statements of negroes." Another officer questioned the military worth of such intelligence, but agreed that "nearly all [the slaves] are friendly to our Government."⁸

In growing numbers, however, the blacks of the heartland—with a glance over their shoulders at the nearby Yankees—dared to flaunt their contumacy and infidelity in overt, openly defiant acts. A Davidson County slave went boldly to the Federals in May 1862 and charged his owner and two other men with keeping forbidden weapons; the three were promptly arrested and turned over to the Nashville provost marshal. In August, only three months after she boasted of the decorous comportment of her own slaves, Mrs. William G. Harding noted that a neighboring planter "has had a good deal of trouble of late, about keeping his servants away from town, the camps, and running about generally." In

⁸Bell I. Wiley, Plain People of the Confederacy (Baton Rouge, 1943), 74-76; Report of John Kennett, Mar. 8, 1862, OR, Ser. I, Vol. X, Pt. 1, p. 6; Testimony of Lovell H. Rousseau, *ibid.*, Vol. XVI, Pt. 1, p. 351; J. S. Negley to J. B. Fry, July 30, 1862, *ibid.*, Pt. 2, p. 233.

Williamson County that spring, Sam, a fifteen-year-old slave of farmer Jesse Cox, had been "doing bad for some time," according to his master's breathless report,

refuse[d] to be corrected by me, jerked me down I being very weak, and then took the ax and started off I sent the other [slave] after him, he presently returned with the ax and said the yankey cavelry had taken Sam behind one of them. . . .

Washington, a Nashville slave married to the slave of another owner, so persistently harassed his wife's mistress in January 1863 that she banned him from her house. He thereupon cursed her, went off, returned with an armed soldier and a wagon, and proceeded to haul away furniture and bedclothes from the woman's home over her loud but unavailing objections.⁹

Washington received thirty-nine lashes from the city police and a term in the workhouse, then returned to the custody of his master. Sam reappeared at Cox's farm the same day he ran off, and went back to work. But many slaves who deserted their owners in these early months of occupation had no such qualms as Sam and did not go home again; and, increasingly, those slaves (following in the footsteps of antebellum free blacks) made their way to the towns, especially Nashville, in hopes of losing themselves in the black urban subculture and dodging the determined searching of an angry master. By the end of 1862 Nashville was filling up with these "contrabands," and civil authorities and white residents of the city grew concerned about the problem. The

⁹Wife to William G. Harding, May 15, Aug. 5, 1862, Harding-Jackson Papers; Jesse Cox Diary, Apr. 16, 1862 (TSLA); Nashville Dispatch, Jan. 10, 1863.

editor of the Dispatch declared that the contrabands mistakenly thought themselves free and "they define freedom to mean a license to do as they please." He urged the authorities to round them up, put them to work, and relieve the city of "an intolerable burden and nuisance."¹⁰

The citizens of Nashville sided with the Dispatch, but history sided with the contrabands. Slavery in Middle Tennessee, already under stress in 1862, fractured in 1863 and disintegrated in 1864. What can account for this momentous, nearly incredible turn of events?

The death of slavery in the heartland can be concisely (though perhaps facilely) explained thus: rural chaos permitted it, the Union army encouraged it, the slaves desired it and perpetrated it. Physical devastation and the breakdown of order and social intercourse in the countryside destroyed not only the coercive power of master and state over the slave, but the whole web of human and institutional relationships which bound the slave to his master and defined him as a slave. Where ruin and disorder reigned, the rural community could not extend its broad embrace, the rural church could not unite the faithful and discipline the errant, the conscientious master could not feed and protect his "people," the abusive master could not whip his, and the gun-toting sheriff with his dogs could not track down a runaway. But such social and institutional disruption meant only that slaves could leave their masters if they so chose. That they did leave, in ever-growing numbers after 1862, was a consequence of the Union army's

¹⁰Ibid., Nov. 1, 1862, Jan. 18, Feb. 10, 1863.

increasingly antislavery policy and of the slaves' unquestionable urge to be free. These two forces fed one another reciprocally: the more the slaves liberated themselves from bondage, the more the Federal army was inclined to treat them as free men and women; the more the Federal army considered them free, the more the slaves deemed themselves so. It may be said that if Yankee soldiers made the slaves of Middle Tennessee freedmen, the slaves of Middle Tennessee made the Yankee soldiers abolitionists.¹¹

By 1863 slaveholders and civil authorities realized that the Union army was something less than a reliable ally in preserving slavery. That army became in fact not just neutral, but more and more an active agent of emancipation—not so much from any accretion of sympathy for the slave, but from a growing desire to punish the recalcitrant Rebels. An irate Nashville slaveowner reported that year that while proceeding home with a recaptured runaway he was stopped by soldiers who released the slave and then arrested the master "for daring to take my own negroe home." In February another slaveholder in the city asked the military police to help retrieve her slave girl who had jumped out a window with her baby and run off; the chief of police informed the woman that he would in no way "lend his services to fugitive-slave catchers." Two weeks later the city council, in the midst of formulating a sterner policy toward contrabands, received a letter from the army provost marshal decreeing that if city police made any further attempts to return black runaways to secessionist slaveholders "I will take the

¹¹Rural social disruption will be fully analyzed in Chapter IX.

case into my own hands, and give [the policemen] a term in the city prison." Around the region military officials increasingly ignored civil law, standing army directives, and even direct orders to return fugitives. The officer in charge of contrabands in Gallatin from September 1863 to August 1864 routinely turned away fugitive-hunting masters, even those bearing official authorization from army headquarters. Another officer who took charge of all contrabands in the region in June 1864 testified afterward that during his tenure he always acted as if the blacks were free, whatever the legal technicalities, since Tennessee was an "insurrectionary district."¹²

The army did not confine itself merely to preventing the reenslavement of runaways. Increasingly, field officers seized slaves outright, going far beyond the early, restrained impressment policy. Before long they were taking every black they could find, whether those blacks were needed for labor or not. The policy by 1864 was, in the words of one officer, "keep all we get, and get all we can." A woman who complained in late 1863 that Federal soldiers habitually went into the countryside to "carry off slaves bodily to Nashville" did not exaggerate; a high-ranking Union commander in the city wrote a little

¹²Thomas B. Johnson to Andrew Johnson, Aug. 8, 1863, Johnson Papers; Nashville Dispatch, Feb. 11, 27, 1863; United States Senate, Report of the Commissioners of Investigation of Colored Refugees in Kentucky, Tennessee, and Alabama (Sen. Ex. Doc. 28, 38 Cong., 2 sess., Serial 1209), 11; Testimony of R. W. Barnard, United States Congress, Joint Committee on Reconstruction, Subcommittee on Tennessee—Report (House Report 30, 39 Cong., 1 sess., Serial 1273), 120-22; Maslowski, Treason Must Be Made Odious, 98-99; Cimprich, "Slavery amidst Civil War," 69-80, 89-90. Louis S. Gerteis, From Contraband to Freedmen: Federal Policy toward Southern Blacks, 1861-1865 (Westport, 1973), is the standard study.

later that "It is now and has been for some time the practice of soldiers to go to the country and bring in wagon-loads of negro women and children to this city, and I suppose to other posts." Another military man in Nashville reported that "any officer who wants [laborers] . . . impresses on his own authority." In October 1863 Maury countian Nimrod Porter learned that the Yankees were in his neighborhood grabbing every slave "they can git a holt of." Several of his own were taken off to nearby Columbia and, despite Federal promises to return them, the blacks were eventually sent out of the county. Just two months later, Porter recorded, the Yankees were back, "pressing all the blacks to work on rodes. . . ." An Illinois officer wrote his wife in 1863 describing his raids through the countryside, during which his troops routinely took every horse and slave they could find: "Now what do you think of your husband," he teased,

degenerating from a conservative young Democrat to a horse stealer and "nigger thief," and practicing his nefarious occupation almost within gun shot of the sacred "Hermitage" and tomb of Andrew Jackson? Yes, while in the field I am an abolitionist. . . .¹³

¹³Fitch, Annals of the Army, 270; Sir Christopher Chancellor, ed., An Englishman in the American Civil War: The Diaries of Henry Yates Thompson, 1863 (New York, 1971), 135-36; Lovell H. Rousseau to W. D. Whipple, Jan. 30, 1864, OR, Ser. I, Vol. XXXII, Pt. 2, pp. 267-68; George L. Stearns to E. M. Stanton, Sept. 25, 1863, *ibid.*, Ser. III, Vol. III, 840; Nimrod Porter Journals, Oct. 4, 5, 9, 10, 17, Dec. 8, 1863 (SHC); "Major Connolly's Letters to His Wife, 1862-1865," Transactions of the Illinois State Historical Society (1928), 247-48. Other examples of impressment are in Porter Journal, Jan. 20, 1865; James W. Matthews Journal, July 16, Sept. 23, 1863, Jan. 13, 1864 (TSLA); Fitch, Annals of the Army, 430; Nashville Dispatch, Apr. 3, 1863. Official Federal policy is embodied in General Orders No. 6, Jan. 27, 1863, OR, Ser. I, Vol. XXIII, Pt. 2, pp. 17-18; J. A. Garfield to D. S. Stanley, July 10, 1863, *ibid.*, 527; Circular, Headquarters Left Wing, Sixteenth Army Corps, Nov. 19, 1863, *ibid.*, Vol. XXXI, Pt. 3, p. 198;

Many of those slaves led away by the Yankees were handed not pick and shovel but musket and bayonet. The recruitment of black troops became official Federal policy in 1863, and that summer a regiment was raised in Nashville from among laborers impressed in 1862 and still in the army's hands. By September army officials had regularized the procedure and hired a corps of white recruiters and black assistants. Zealously these agents and officers of black regiments scoured city streets and countryside, making speeches and enrolling volunteers (and sometimes just conscripting others), reinforcing their appeals with the promise of government care for wives and children. So successful were they (new regiments soon mustered at Gallatin, Shelbyville, Clarksville, and Murfreesboro) that officers responsible for black work details complained that the recruiters were siphoning off needed labor.¹⁴

As they forcibly released fugitive blacks from their masters' clutches and gathered in others by the thousands to work or fight,

General Orders No. 172, July 23, 1863, *ibid.*, Ser. III, Vol. III, 559-60.

¹⁴George L. Stearns to E. M. Stanton, Sept. 25, 1863, and enclosure, *ibid.*, 840; R. D. Mussey to C. W. Foster, Oct. 10, 1864, *ibid.*, Vol. IV, 762-64; Lovell H. Rousseau to W. D. Whipple, Jan. 30, 1864, *ibid.*, Ser. I, Vol. XXXII, Pt. 2, pp. 267-69; G. M. Dodge to U. S. Grant, Dec. 9, 1863, *ibid.*, Vol. XXXI, Pt. 3, pp. 366-67; U.S. Senate, Report of Commissioners, 9-11; John Hope Franklin, ed., The Diary of James T. Ayers, Civil War Recruiter (Springfield, Illinois, 1947), xvi, 38, 106; Maslowski, Treason Must Be Made Odious, 102-7; Cimprich, "Slavery amidst Civil War," 183-95; Lovett, "Negro in Tennessee," 40-123; Leon F. Litwack, Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery (New York, 1979), 65-87; Dudley T. Cornish, The Sable Arm: Negro Troops in the Union Army, 1861-1865 (New York, 1956), *passim*.

Federal authorities brushed aside legalities and issued their own proclamations of de facto emancipation. In July 1863 the provost guard arrested a Nashville man—a prominent jurist and unionist at that—who had waylaid his recently runaway servant on the street, pounced on her, and locked her up in his house after holding off would-be black rescuers with his cane. Releasing the woman, the provost marshal politely but firmly informed the judge (Manson M. Brien) that "the time had passed when negroes could be whipped in this country."

In September the officer supervising black recruitment in Middle Tennessee gave orders explicitly proffering freedom at the end of service to slave volunteers fleeing secessionist masters. Two months later the same official declared flatly before a government commission on contraband policy that "Slavery is dead; that is the first thing. That is what we all begin with here, who know the state of affairs." By 1864 even the conservative army high command was echoing those words: the major general commanding the District of Nashville conceded in January that "Slavery is virtually dead in Tennessee. . . ." Later that year Military Governor Johnson decreed that in any case before the civil courts involving blacks, they must be deemed free. One observer accurately characterized this as "a most sweeping and thorough edict of emancipation, for any slave has only to get before a court to be pronounced judicially free, and so go upon the records."¹⁵

¹⁵Nashville Dispatch, July 28, 1863; George L. Stearns to E. M. Stanton, Sept. 25, 1863, OR, Ser. III, Vol. III, 840; Testimony of George L. Stearns, American Freedmen's Inquiry Commission, Preliminary and Final Reports, Letters Received by the Office of the Adjutant General (Main Series), 1861-1870, RG 94 (NA); Lovell H. Rousseau to W. D. Whipple,

Yankee pronunciamientos were superfluous, however, because by late 1864 most of the black men and women of the heartland had declared themselves free. Those authorities who announced the death of slavery had in mind, in fact, not so much the government's armed emancipation of the slaves as the slaves' spontaneous self-liberation. Their own recognition of freedom marked the turning point of the slaves' Civil War, and they came to that understanding through the agency not of Federal decrees or legal writs but of their own minds and hearts. The popular image of emancipation—a group of field hands gathered by the cabins at the end of the war listening with hushed excitement as Master or some blue-uniformed officer reads aloud from an official document and pronounces them free—has no place in Middle Tennessee history. Emancipation in the heartland is best exemplified by the story of Joel, a trusted Rutherford County slave who in 1864 accompanied his mistress to a store in Murfreesboro and held her horse while she went in. When she emerged a few minutes later, Joel was gone. She found him nearby at army headquarters: "The little rascal was perfectly insolent & defiant," she reported indignantly; "—told me 'you have no business to take me out of town—I intend to stay and go to school & be free. I won't go.'" Unable to get any help from the indifferent Yankees, Joel's mistress rode home alone and Joel became a free man.¹⁶

Jan. 30, 1864, OR, Ser. I, Vol. XXXII, Pt. 2, pp. 267-68; R. D. Mussey to C. W. Foster, Oct. 10, 1864, *ibid.*, Ser. III, Vol. IV, 772; Cimprich, "Military Governor Johnson," passim.

¹⁶Trimble, "Behind the Lines," 70-71.

Freedom took many forms, however, for not every beneficiary of emancipation or self-emancipation ran off to town or donned an army uniform. Freedom was not a place or a pursuit but a state of mind and a set of human relationships, just as slavery had been. Freedom came when the slave realized that his master no longer held the power of compulsion over him: that is, when he understood that he could leave without fear of recapture, or could refuse orders and resist punishment without fear of ultimate retribution. Before the Civil War, of course, slaves could, and not infrequently did, run away or refuse a whipping. But such an act was always a desperate one, committed with the knowledge that certain punishment would follow because, even if Master had been foiled, the potent fury of the whole white community would quickly be leveled at the refractory servant. After 1862, however, as social disarray, institutional disruption, and Federal interposition destroyed the coercive power of master and community, and as the slave grasped this fact and acted upon it, he ceased to be a slave.

The black people of the heartland came to perceive this intuitively. A few perceptive whites noted it explicitly. At the end of 1864 two Federal commissioners reported to the U.S. Senate about a government camp established near Clarksville for contrabands:

. . . this camp, by its moral influence, has greatly weakened and almost broken the bonds of the slave in all [the] surroundings. The master knows his slave has the power to leave him and to reach this camp, where he will be secure, and consequently the tasks and punishments he has been accustomed to exact, or to inflict, are greatly reduced and ameliorated.

The slave who knew that he could lay down the plow and walk away was no longer a slave, even if he kept on plowing; the master who knew

that his slave could walk away was no master, even if he still gave orders.¹⁷

A few blacks renounced slavery in spirit even while the white community still held dominion over their bodies. For such slaves the mere fact of Yankee invasion terminated servility even if it had not yet diminished Master's sovereignty. Thus did Edmund, a Maury County slave owned by an estate and awaiting assignment to an heir, declare himself free in the summer of 1862 when the Union army marched through. Edmund ran off with the Yankees but was recaptured when they retreated and, according to the county court's report in May 1863, he

has since been . . . confined in jail where the administrator has [been] compelled to keep him to prevent his running away again to the federal lines, . . . he still persists in his determination of returning to the Federals and has repeatedly expressed his intention of doing so.

Fearing that without some preventive measure Edmund "will in all probability escape again to the Federal lines & his value be entirely lost to the parties," the court ordered him sold south.¹⁸

The actions of Edmund and Joel and thousands like them obviously gave the lie to all the old white affirmations of the loyalty and contentment of the heartland's slaves. Those masters who had convinced themselves that paternalism was a mutual bond of affection and allegiance were, over and over again, proved wrong. The disruption of slavery frequently brought out bitterness and anger within slaves which the

¹⁷U.S. Senate, Report of Commissioners, 10.

¹⁸Maury County, Tennessee, County Court Clerk's Office, Minute Books, May 4, 1863, Vol. XIV, 234 (TSLA).

realities of slavery had long suppressed. Asked teasingly by a soldier in 1864 if she were afraid of the Yankees, a Rutherford County black woman replied sincerely, "Oh no sah . . . hadent bin for the yankees dey a done had me used up afor dis time. . . ." Even where personal ties between master and slave were strong, they were (unbeknown to the master) usually neutralized by the slave's resentment of his physical and social subjugation. When the whites' power of compulsion dissipated, bonds of affection and inveterate habits of obedience were rarely adequate to sustain the master-slave relationship. The war revealed for all to see that the true foundation of slavery was not nature or paternalistic and filial devotion, but force backed by violence. A Yankee officer apprehended this during a slave-gathering sweep through Wilson County in 1863, when an elderly white lady begged him not to take her servant Mollie whom she had been raised with and whom she loved. The officer noticed that the slave "seemed to give no attention" to this declaration of affection and that she remained silent even after further pleading by the old mistress's daughter. He thereupon led the unprotesting Mollie off with all the other slaves.¹⁹

A few blacks, however, out of deep attachment to their owners, did remain steadfastly loyal. Tales of slave fidelity in wartime are not merely the rosy-hued myths of a later generation of Lost Cause votaries. At the plantation of George A. Washington in Robertson County, for example, some slaves faithfully stayed on even during their owner's

¹⁹"Documents: Civil War Diary of Jabez T. Cox," Indiana Magazine of History, XXVIII (Mar., 1932), 47; "Major Connolly's Letters," 263-64.

long absence in the latter part of the war: "Granville [is] very anxious to see his Master," the plantation mistress wrote in March 1865; "George very often says I wish he would come home he says he never wanted to see him so much in his life." Slaves on occasion selflessly protected their master's property, and even saved their master's life. A Williamson County planter affirmed that only the timely warning of his slaves enabled him to drive off with his shotgun two robbers who appeared at his home in October 1864. When a Yankee tried to rob Nimrod Porter at gunpoint in November 1864, his slaves came to the rescue and subdued the soldier; Porter noted with satisfaction that the would-be thief was "bad used up" by the blacks. An angry and frustrated Federal officer reported in February 1865 that his nighttime raid on a Williamson County farmhouse had failed to trap all the guerrillas hiding inside, because as he and his squad approached they stumbled upon a group of blacks, one of whom jumped up and ran to the house shouting "The soldiers are coming." In an episode with all the elements of romantic fiction (but nonetheless true) a Giles County farmer about to be lynched by bushwhackers was saved—with the rope literally around his neck—by his slave Angeline, who convinced them that her master was a loyal Confederate.²⁰

²⁰Mary C. Washington to Jane S. Washington, Mar. 15, 1865, Washington Family Papers (TSLA); Henderson Diary, Oct. 12, 1864; Porter Journal, Nov. 12, 1864; Report of Robert H. Clinton, Feb. 12, 1865, OR, Ser. I, Vol. XLIX, Pt. 1, pp. 38-39; L. C. Ewell to Campbell Brown, June 4, 1865, Polk-Brown-Ewell Papers (SHC). For other cases of slave fidelity see George P. Rawick, ed., The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography (41 vols. to date, Westport, Connecticut, 1972-), Ser. One, Vol. VII (Okla.), 308, and Ser. Two, Vol. VIII (Ark.), Pt. 2, pp. 138-41.

A very few slaves were not only faithful but servile long after the compulsions of slavery ceased. These blacks, due perhaps to deeply ingrained habits of deference or to a naturally dependent personality, remained slaves in spirit even after the white community relinquished physical mastery of them. Isham, owned by Maury County farmer James W. Matthews, stayed with his master through the war and as late as May 1865 submitted to a whipping for sneaking off on a "fishing spree" during working hours. Some blacks returned themselves to white control after involuntary emancipation. A youth who had accompanied his master in the Confederate army showed up at Nimrod Porter's farm in the last days of 1864, asking for permission to remain there now that his master was a Federal prisoner; "he seemed to be quite uneasy," Porter wrote, "until I give him liberty to stay." Three months later a slave from the neighborhood appeared at Porter's door asking to be taken in because his mistress had just died.²¹

Most blacks, however, abandoned submissiveness by 1865 because it had never suited them and now no constraints necessitated it. But they did not perforce have to run away to accomplish that. Many chose to stay on at their ex-master's farm or town house. Those who did so demonstrated that their unwillingness to leave was not to be equated with slavishness, for they evinced their freedom in other ways.²²

²¹Matthews Journal, Nov. 7, 1864, May 8, 1865; Porter Journal, Dec. 25, 1864, Mar. 27, 1865.

²²For an example of blacks who remained with their ex-master see William D. Gale to wife, Dec. 9, 1864, Gale-Polk Papers (SHC).

Slavery had meant, above all, obedience and work. Thus, disobedience and refusal to work were the most common manifestations of black freedom. By 1863 these were epidemic in town and country alike. Trying to explain the proliferation of slave misbehavior in the city that year, the Nashville Dispatch pointed to the decline "of a proper understanding on the part of the colored population of their duty to themselves as well as to the community." Nimrod Porter observed in August that the blacks on his Maury County farm "are all getting along as usual only there is but verry little doing in the way of working." A year later the situation had further deteriorated: "Nothing doing around the plantation," Porter wrote; "I am verry tyered of it." A Pulaski man took up his pen in March 1864 to write an absentee slaveowner about the "deadhead negroes you have on your lot." As the war neared its end the mistress of the Washington family's vast plantation in Robertson County complained that "I do not know what to do with those negro devils they will not work. . . ."23

A Rutherford County plantation lady's journal chronicles the dissolution of slavery in microcosm. Bettie Blackmore recorded in September 1863 that

The servants had become very demoralized during the summer, they would not work, were becoming insolent. . . . Still

²³Nashville Dispatch, June 24, 1863; Porter Journal, Aug. 16, 30, 1863, Sept. 19, 1864; W. Rivers to Sarah Trotter, Mar. 25, 1864, Pope-Carter Family Papers (Duke); Mary C. Washington to Jane S. Washington, Mar. 11, 1865, Washington Papers. See also Lovell H. Rousseau to W. D. Whipple, Jan. 30, 1864, OR, Ser. I, Vol. XXXII, Pt. 2, pp. 267-68; Rawick, American Slave, Ser. One, Vol. VI (Ind.), 55-56.

they remained. . . . The negroes would sleep until the sun was high, then saunter out hands in their pockets look around & get to their work about 9 or 10. Then take a nap in the evening & come home early.

By November the blacks were "growing more and more unruly. They are not only indolent & perfectly trifling every way, but, are very insolent & disobedient." In early 1864 she reported

Negroes doing badly. Hulda & Celeste have not done one day's work since Christmas—they are too lazy to feed the few cows that are under their care. Hardin drinks less, but comes up every few nights to know "what terms he is to work upon this year." Says he ought to have one-half. . . . All negroes have lost their respectful manner & they generally seem to dislike their owners more than anyone else.

By the last winter of the war no pretense of servility lingered: "My negroes refractory and insolent and not supporting themselves," wrote another lady on the plantation who continued the journal in December 1864; ". . . the negroes are so worthless they will not put up fences and [they] burn the rails to keep from cutting wood."²⁴

Theft, vandalism, and disloyalty were further manifestations of the black heartlanders' manifold new freedom, for slavery had denied slaves the possessions that they had sweated to secure for others, and had demanded of the slaves strict propriety and fidelity while they toiled. Nimrod Porter complained frequently of thievery by local blacks as slavery disintegrated; horses and mules were specially popular booty, he observed, for they could be readily sold for good prices. Bettie Blackmore railed against similar malefaction in Rutherford County: the slaves

²⁴Trimble, "Behind the Lines," 62-63, 65, 68, 70, 77-80.

"steal anything they can and sell it. . . .," she declared in 1863;

"they find it easier to steal at home, than work with the Yankees."

Other blacks saw the end of slavery as an opportunity not for personal gain, but for vengeance: Albert, the slave of a Davidson County lawyer, was apprehended in 1864 after setting fire to his master's barn and causing thousands of dollars in damage. Similar acts of arson and sabotage multiplied around the region.²⁵

Black pilferage and vandalism were of course nothing new to Middle Tennessee slaveholders; it was the sheer volume of such mayhem after 1862 which made it remarkable. More novel, and even more galling to whites, was the loss of property to the Yankees through black treachery. A young Wilson County slave woman walked six miles through darkness and rain to inform Union troops that her master had cached barrels of salt behind a garden fence, and horses, mules, and guns in a cave. Old Humphrey, a slave on the Washington plantation, deliberately betrayed to Yankee foragers the hiding place of his owner's last remaining horses; "Oh how enraged I was at the old wretches perfidy," his mistress wrote in exasperation.²⁶

A few blacks challenged slavery's holiest injunction by threatening or even physically assaulting their masters or other whites. When a Nashville slave woman tried to beat her master and mistress in March 1863,

²⁵Porter Journal, Aug. 29, Dec. 24, 1863, Jan. 1, 1864, Mar. 2, 11, 1865; Trimble, "Behind the Lines," 62, 63, 65, 70; Nashville Dispatch, Jan. 13, 1864.

²⁶Fitch, Annals of the Army, 236-37; Jane S. Washington to George A. Washington, Aug. 8, 1864, Washington Papers.

the Dispatch commented that she, like most of the city's blacks in recent months, "took the liberty of doing as she pleased." A Williamson County planter reported a week later that the slaves of a neighboring lady had tried to poison her. In Sumner that year Federal soldiers were awakened at midnight by a woman's screams; rushing to her nearby home they found her "scared most to death," as one soldier wrote; "She had been assaulted By a negro the colored person could not be found." A Union general asserted in 1864 that "Many straggling negroes have arms obtained from soldiers, and by their insolence and threats greatly alarm and intimidate white families, who are not allowed to keep arms. . . ." At least one slave perpetrated the ultimate act. Henry, of Williamson County, trailed his master who was fleeing the Yankees with his valuables, caught the man asleep in the woods, axed him to death, then fled to Nashville with his property.²⁷

Most conspicuously, however, freedom revealed itself in the form of running away: since slavery had meant confinement, freedom would mean mobility. A Union officer with a literary bent colorfully limned a scene being repeated over and over in the heartland, after he observed contrabands making their way into Murfreesboro in 1863:

They are on foot, and early travellers. . . . The women invariably toil along with their babies in their arms; the men and the larger boys and girls trudge past, laden with bundles of grotesque form and appearance; while the

²⁷ Nashville Dispatch, Mar. 24, 1863; Henderson Diary, Mar. 31, 1863; D. M. Ransdell Diary, Jan. 30, 1863 (SHC); Lovell H. Rousseau to W. D. Whipple, Jan. 30, 1864, OR, Ser. I, Vol. XXXII, Pt. 2, pp. 267-68; Frank H. Smith, Frank H. Smith's History of Maury County, Tennessee (Columbia, Tennessee, 1969), 183.

little picanninies mix in and patter on as would a flock of young quails in a wheatfield. Perhaps . . . [the] fugitives [have] borrowed "ole massa's" best horse, or mule, or yoke of cattle, and the large farm-wagon, in the night-time, and are coming in, bag and budget in hand. . . .²⁸

Most Middle Tennessee slaves voluntarily left their masters before the Civil War ended. Slaveowner Sarah Kennedy in Clarksville reported in June 1863 that "Negroes are leaving daily," and in October "Every day or two we hear of several leaving"; four months later she wrote that "almost every family have been deprived of every one they had." Most of Mark Cockrill's ninety-eight slaves left his Davidson County farm by 1863. At the Giles County plantation of William Stoddert, which may be typical of the largest holdings, seventy blacks had absconded by the end of the war, and but thirty-four remained.²⁹

Several impulses drove Middle Tennessee slaves from their masters' homes and farms. One was the urgent desire of some to escape rural privation and suffering, which blacks in the countryside shared in full measure with whites. (Here, ironically, the penury of the slave was a positive boon: many an anguished white man or woman stayed at home unwillingly and endured hunger and danger in order to protect property.) An army surgeon in Pulaski, for example, heard recently-arrived

²⁸Fitch, Annals of the Army, 283.

²⁹Sarah Kennedy to husband, June 17, Oct. 6, 1863, Feb. 11, 1864, Sarah Ann (Bailey) Kennedy Letters (TSLA); Fitch, Annals of the Army, 641; L. C. Ewell to Campbell Brown, June 4, 1865, Polk-Brown-Ewell Papers. See also Jane C. Warren to Electa Ames, Aug. 27, 1863, Electa Ames Papers (Duke); John Nick Barker Diaries, 1862-63, passim (TSLA); Agnes Whiteside to E. E. Peacock, Nov. 30, 1863, Whiteside Family Papers (TSLA); Elijah P. Burton, Diary of E. P. Burton, Surgeon, 7th Reg. Ill., 3rd Brig., 2nd Div., 16 A. C. (Des Moines, 1939), 8; Trimble, "Behind the Lines," 63.

contrabands declare that "our soldiers had got all the provisions & so they could not stay at home."³⁰

Sometimes more immediate perils sent blacks fleeing. In 1863 and again in 1864 Nimrod Porter saw hundreds run off to the Federals or to the woods when the imminent arrival of Confederate troops sparked fears that blacks would be gathered up and sent south. Less palpable threats, spread by panicky rumors from farm to farm and cabin to cabin, also galvanized blacks who remained at home. John Thompson of Davidson County, an eight-year-old slave boy in 1865, recalled in his old age that he and his mother left their master only because "all de darkies say dat all de niggers what stayed wid dere Marsters, somebody gwine do somethin' to 'em."³¹

More often, slaves were persuaded to desert by other blacks who had already renounced their bondage. A Robertson County slaveholder complained in late 1863 that her blacks "have been happy and contented untill that old Negro came here from Cincinnati he is not only getting them off but taking my stock also. . . ." At the Washingtons' plantation in the same county a number of local runaways appeared at the slave

³⁰Burton, Diary, 6. Privation in the countryside is further illustrated in Rawick, American Slave, Ser. Two, Vol. VIII (Ark.), Pt. 2, p. 139, and Vol. XI (Ark.), Pt. 7, p. 28.

³¹Porter Journal, Aug. 13, 1863, Nov. 27, Dec. 16, 1864; Rawick, American Slave, Supplement, Ser. Two, Vol. IX (Tex.), Pt. 8, pp. 3,844-46. Slave-catching by Confederate troops was not just a rumor, but a fact. See Nashville Daily Times and True Union, Sept. 29, 1864; N. B. Forrest to R. Taylor, Oct. 12, 1864, OR, Ser. I, Vol. XXXIX, Pt. 3, p. 816.

quarters in 1864 with guns and a squad of Yankees, informed the slaves that all who wanted could come along, and led away several.³²

More potent than any other propellent force, however, was the instinctive conviction that true freedom entailed a fresh beginning in a new home. One slaveholder who came to understand this testified before a Federal commission of inquiry in Nashville in late 1863 that she had seven slaves who were "well clothed and fed . . . but they were unwilling to stay, because they thought they would not be free unless they went away." This lady insisted that her servants were "devotedly attached" to her, "but still," she added, "there is the desire for freedom, which you know is very desirable to all."³³

Many of those who walked or rode away from their masters' homes relocated nearby, a few roamed aimlessly, but many others had a destination. Thousands, for example, headed for contraband camps hurriedly established by the army at several points around the region in 1863 and 1864. Many thousands more trekked to the black enclaves of the towns. Whether they went to camp or town, these blacks sought not only to realize their immediate freedom, but to assure their future security and advancement. Over and over again they spoke of their desire for education: since slavery had meant ignorance, they were determined that freedom would mean knowledge. A sympathetic Union army

³²W. W. Pepper to Andrew Johnson, Dec. 25, 1863, Johnson Papers; Jane S. Washington to George A. Washington, Feb. 29, Mar. 2, Aug. 15, 1864. See also Thomas B. Johnson to Andrew Johnson, Aug. 8, 1863, Johnson Papers.

³³Testimony of Mrs. De Noville, American Freedmen's Inquiry Commission Report.

chaplain in Nashville, pondering the future of the Negro race, concluded in 1863 that "The anxiety of these people for education is an omen for good." The prospect of schools and liberty within a black community was a powerful tractive force, drawing the freedmen to the towns and government camps as vigorously as rural privation and their own aspirations for a new life propelled them from the countryside.³⁴

Those attractive and propulsive forces acted upon the black population as a whole, but ultimately the decision to leave was an individual one, determined by personal considerations. Most slaves did not merely follow the pack, but made at some point a rational calculation of whether their lot would be improved by leaving. For many the answer was not an automatic yes. Andy Davis of Wilson County, invited to accompany a group of departing fellow slaves, replied, "I am going to stay right here . . . I believe I will get my freedom just as soon as you get yours." A few slaves returned to their old homes after a brief, unsatisfying experiment with liberty. Those likeliest to run off were young, healthy, unmarried men and women: the elderly, the infirm, and women with children were less often willing to endure a hard journey and an uncertain fate, whatever the potential rewards. "Rutherford [County]

³⁴Lovell H. Rousseau to W. D. Whipple, Jan. 30, 1864, OR, Ser. I, Vol. XXXII, Pt. 2, 267-68; U. S. Senate, Report of Commissioners, 1-11; Henderson Diary, Sept. 26, Nov. 13, 1862, June 18, 1863; Nashville Dispatch, Nov. 19, 26, 1862; Agnes Whiteside to E. E. Peacock, Nov. 30, 1863, Whiteside Papers; Daniel Chapman to Brother Whipple, Nov. 18, 1863, American Missionary Association, Tennessee Records (Amistad Research Center, Dillard University); Daniel Chapman to Mr. Editor, Dec. 9, 1863, *ibid.*; L. Pettijohn to S. S. Jocelin, Mar. 8, 1864, *ibid.*; Burton, Diary, 6; Trimble, "Behind the Lines," 70-71.

has lost nearly all her able bodied negroes," wrote Bettie Blackmore in 1863; "those that remain are old & sick or too lazy to make the effort to get away. . . ." At the Stoddert plantation in Giles, of thirty-four blacks who remained in 1865, thirty were children and three were women.³⁵

Some departed singly, slipping away at night or boldly walking off before their master's eyes. Most, however, fled in small or large groups, often whole families, sometimes whole plantation communities. One August night in 1863, for example, twenty-two blacks belonging to a Maury County farmer ran off together. Late in 1862 sixty slaves deserted their Williamson County master and trooped into Nashville. Such mass escapes were plainly the fruit of planning and deliberation, but the flight of some bondsmen was casual, even accidental. George Knox, a Wilson County slave devoted to his master, abruptly decided to decamp in 1863 after the two quarreled. A Sumner County slave, standing next to his master as Union troops marched by in 1862, bolted when an officer invited him offhandedly to come along and, according to

³⁵History Associates of Wilson County, The History of Wilson County: Its Land and Life (Nashville, 1961), 281; Trimble, "Behind the Lines," 63; William Stoddert to R. S. Ewell, May 24, 1865, Polk-Brown-Ewell Papers; L. C. Ewell to Campbell Brown, June 4, 1865, *ibid.* For instances of blacks returning after running away see Harriet Ellen Moore Diary, Jan. 1, 1863 (SHC); Matthews Journal, Oct. 16, 1862, and *passim*, 1862-63; William B. Lewis to George A. Washington, Mar. 6, 1863, Washington Papers; Porter Journal, Dec. 22, 1864. For further evidence of the influence of age and sex on the decision to go or stay, see Jane C. Warren to Electa Ames, Aug. 27, 1863, Ames Papers; Sallie to John Minor, Nov. 15, 1864, Sailor's Rest Plantation, Montgomery County, Tennessee, Papers (TSLA); Agnes Whiteside to E. E. Peacock, Nov. 30, 1863, Whiteside Papers.

a witness, "fell into the ranks without so much as casting a look behind" at his dumbfounded owner.³⁶

Freedom—that is, the self-defined emancipation not only of the slave who ran off but of him who stayed with his master but refused any longer to act like a slave—came at different times in different places. Indeed, since slavery was a frame of mind and a personal relationship as much as a legal and social institution, it is fair to say that there were as many acts of emancipation in the heartland as there were slaves. The chronology of freedom was determined by the complex interaction of factors internal and external to the bondsmen. Two of these stand out as critical determinants of the advent of freedom.

The first, manifestly, was the presence of the Union army. Though a few dauntless spirits like Edmund of Maury County proclaimed themselves free while still in Confederate hands, most slaves realized their freedom only after Northern ascendancy was incontrovertibly established and Union troops were on hand. Thus, blacks far from Federal army camps and permanent installations in the towns, and those in the southern part of the heartland in general (where Confederate

³⁶Porter Journal, Aug. 14, 1863; Nashville Dispatch, Nov. 19, 1862; George L. Knox, Slave and Freeman: The Autobiography of George L. Knox (Lexington, Kentucky, 1979), 53-54; Wilbur F. Hinman, The Story of the Sherman Brigade . . . (Alliance, Ohio, 1897), 260. Examples of single, family, and group slave desertions are in Chancellor, Englishman in the Civil War, 135-36; Jane S. Washington to George A. Washington, July 25, 1864, Washington Papers; Porter Journal, Dec. 16, 1864; Matthews Journal, Mar. 10, 1865; Henderson Diary, Sept. 26, Nov. 13, 1862, June 18, 1863, Nov. 6, 1864; Cox Diary, Feb. 2, 1864.

control was reestablished for a time after the invasion), tended on the whole to find their freedom later than did others more happily situated.

Of equal or greater consequence was the precise nature of the master-slave relationship in each case. In households with few slaves or only one, master's authority and slave's subordination were swathed in an atmosphere of intimate personal association. If that association were affectionate, freedom usually came later, but if there were bad blood, freedom came sooner. Thus, Hammett Dell, who lived with four other slaves on a small Rutherford County farm and loved his master dearly, had no transcendent experience of self-liberation, and stayed with his master in a relationship that evolved only gradually into freedom. Mary Scott, on the other hand, the young house servant of an abusive Williamson County woman whom she despised, left gladly as soon as her father came from a neighboring farm to take her away. As Mary departed she sabotaged her mistress's spinning wheel because, she explained, the woman had "been so mean. . . ."37

On large plantations familiar interracial relationships were less common; the distance from slave quarters to Big House was far greater than the sum of its linear parts. Plantation slavery relied on the dominating presence of an aloof patriarch and on the whip he or his overseer wielded. Where such an imposing white personality was absent during the war, freedom tended to appear earlier than where such a

³⁷Rawick, American Slave, Ser. Two, Vol. VIII (Ark.), Pt. 2, pp. 137-44, and Vol. X (Ark.), Pt. 6, pp. 124-26.

figure abided. In December 1862 a Federal officer outside Nashville found a black woman living luxuriously in her slave cabin, surrounded by beautiful furniture from the Big House, which her refugee master and mistress had recently abandoned. The officer apparently believed the woman's story that "Misses gib de brack folks all de nice things when she gone away, and tell dem to take good care of it till she come back." Though that slave's freedom was in a sense thrust upon her by her owners' desertion, she was obviously quick to take advantage of it. Where authority and force did not vanish altogether, but were compromised, slaves seized their freedom piecemeal. Bettie Blackmore, endeavoring to manage a large estate by herself, concluded in 1863 that the lack of white men on the plantation encouraged her slaves' growing insolence and indolence. In the absence of their planter-patriarch during the last months of the war, most slaves on the Washington estate ceased work and deference altogether. But when another forceful white man returned to the plantation he aggressively reinstituted some of the old compulsions. "[I]f he was not here I do not know what we would do," wrote a young boy on the plantation; ". . . he has spread terror abroad among the Negros. . . ." And an elderly lady there affirmed her belief that "the negroes . . . will not cut up while he remains her[e]." ³⁸

³⁸Hans Christian Heg to Editor, Dec. 21, 1862, Theodore C. Blegen, ed., The Civil War Letters of Colonel Hans Christian Heg (Northfield, Minnesota, 1936), 181-82; Trimble, "Behind the Lines," 62-63; Joseph E. Washington to Jane S. Washington, Mar. 11, 1865, Washington Papers; Mary C. Washington to Jane S. Washington, Mar. 3, 17, 1865, *ibid.*

A second point about the slaves' self-emancipation concerns not timing but tactics. With few exceptions, freedom derived not from an institutional or legal mechanism, but from a personal stroke. The black people of the heartland had long known that institutions—government, court, and church—were instruments of the white man's subjugation of blacks as surely as were the whip and chain. When the time came to seize freedom, blacks shunned institutions of law and religion (even where they were functioning) in favor of the individual coup. Sometimes such coups employed the threat of physical force, for Middle Tennessee's slaves understood force and its efficacy as only the long-suffering victim can know his oppressor. Over and over again a scene was enacted in the wartime heartland: a black man (sometimes himself armed) would appear with an escort of armed Yankees whom he had cajoled into accompanying him, at the home of a slaveowner who held the man's wife or child or lover or friend, and would attempt to rescue the other from slavery. Bettie Blackmore witnessed one such visitation at her Rutherford County plantation in early 1863, when a black man arrived with seven soldiers to claim his wife and child: "The negro had a very haughty consequential air," she reported, "wore a brace of pistols—strutted about the house with great freedom, talking loudly and boldly and altogether the incident alarmed us a good deal."³⁹

A great many white people were alarmed by such incidents, which seemed to presage that gory servile uprising whose specter had terrorized

³⁹Trimble, "Behind the Lines," 50. For similar examples see Nashville Dispatch, Jan. 10, 18, 1863; Jane S. Washington to George A. Washington, Feb. 29, Mar. 2, 1864, Washington Papers.

the South for generations. But no such bloodbath stained the soil of Middle Tennessee, despite the opportunity ostensibly offered by war and occupation. Long after Appomattox a former slaveholder of Montgomery County commended the slaves for their wartime comportment: "Any other race known to history," he declared, "would have spread devastation over the land, waylaid and murdered the ruling classes and shocked the world by their crimes." This man attributed the blacks' laudable conduct not only to their humanity, which was certainly a factor, but to their inveterately temperate treatment at the hands of their masters, which is dubious. There was another reason: the early invasion and occupation of Middle Tennessee offered the region's enslaved blacks an unprecedented opportunity to realize their long-desired freedom simply by walking away from their bondage, or at most by breaking Master's weakened hold through a show of force. No guns really had to be fired, no axes bloodied. Thus, ironically, it may be that at no time in the history of Middle Tennessee was a slave insurrection there less likely than after the Northern invasion. In their haste to vilify the detested Yankees for ushering in the destruction of slavery, the white people of the heartland never thought to thank them for delivering white society from its own bondage of fear.⁴⁰

⁴⁰Joseph B. Killebrew Autobiography (2 unpublished vols., SHC), I, 176; Cimprich, "Slavery amidst Civil War," 47-48.

The historiography of the slave experience during the Civil War is surveyed in Clarence L. Mohr, "Southern Blacks in the Civil War: A Century of Historiography," Journal of Negro History, LIX (Apr., 1974), 177-95. Most recent students of the subject have moved away from the assumption of older, often racist historians that slaves on the whole remained docile and faithful, toward the understanding that the slaves desired to be free and took an active part in their own

The slaveholders of Middle Tennessee refused to bow graciously to fate. They resisted vigorously, even desperately, the dissolution of their peculiar institution and the loss of their valuable black bondsmen. More eclectic (from necessity) than their slaves, whose self-emancipation was almost wholly personal and pacific, slaveholders resorted to an array of devices to preserve slavery, including government and law, suasion and subterfuge, but above all violence. And on this single issue unionists and secessionists joined hands, for not even the divisive politics of the Civil War could dilute the potency of slavery and race as a unifying ideological force in Middle Tennessee.

Few whites understood during the first year and more of occupation that slavery was dying. As late as November 1863 a Union officer in

liberation whenever possible. This modern consensus is best exemplified in Litwack, Been in the Storm So Long. But the nearly unique wartime experience of Middle Tennessee, whose black inhabitants saw invasion and war at first hand from an early date, sets the region apart from most of the South and demands discrete analysis. This is ably provided in John Cimprich, "Slave Behavior during the Federal Occupation of Tennessee, 1862-1865," The Historian, XLIV (May 1982), 335-46. Cimprich's analysis shows, as does my own study, that while the heartland's slaves in general wanted and worked for freedom, they displayed a broad range of attitudes and behavior which defies simplistic generalization. He thus judges as too narrow (but does not contradict) both Eugene Genovese's thesis that slavery's paternalistic ethos bound slaves so closely to their masters as to hinder black self-liberation in wartime, and Edward Magdol's quite different assertion that the quasi-independent slave communities had fostered assertiveness and millennialism which broke out into open disloyalty during the war. As Cimprich shows, examples of slaves who fit each of these models can be found in Middle Tennessee, along with many other examples supporting Paul Escott's contention that slaves distrusted whites and rejected paternalism, but held no millennial hopes and remained loyal in many cases out of pragmatic considerations. See Eugene Genovese, Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made (New York, 1976); Edward Magdol, A Right to the Land: Essays on the Freedmen's Community (Westport, 1977); Paul D. Escott, Slavery Remembered: A Record of Twentieth Century Slave Narratives (Chapel Hill, 1979).

Nashville judged that

the bulk of the people here are not yet exactly satisfied that the slaves are to be free. Many of them give it up, but there is a lingering hope that by some hocus-pocus things will get back to the old state.

Whites in this early period perceived only temporary disruptions of the institution and random incidents of insubordination rather than a pattern of ineluctable decline; and they met each challenge with fierce determination. Slaveowners pursued the growing number of wartime runaways as energetically as they had chased down antebellum fugitives, availing themselves whenever possible of the aid of friendly, conservative army officers, and railing loudly against those who were less than helpful. A Lincoln County farmer traveled all the way to Kentucky in the summer of 1862 to retrieve his runaway slave girl, Tabby, whom authorities there were holding. When she again slipped away in Nashville while being brought home, her master, still resolute, turned to Andrew Johnson for help: "The Girl I claim is very valable," he wrote, "a good house Servant and an excellent seamstress, and I should be extremely glad to regain possession of her." A Nashville slaveowner whose runaways were forcibly liberated by soldiers when he tried to fetch them home likewise beseeched Johnson for assistance, appealing in his outrage to law and justice: ". . . there not having been any Law of Congress or Proclamation of the President," he declared,

to deprive me of them [I am] as much entitled to the contrroll & injoyment of them as you or I am to our Horses & Cattle & Houses—to say that I may take my negroes home if they wish to go or may contrroll them

if they [are] willing I should—is to say that slavery ceases to exist except at the will of the slave.⁴¹

Violence against slaves redoubled as masters anxiously sought to maintain their grip. The familiar whip appeared even more frequently. In May 1862 two of Jesse Cox's slaves—a boy and his mother—ran off from his Williamson County farm. The next day Cox recorded the elder's fate: "To day the old woman came back, and said she had been to the yankies, to get them to come after me. I gave . . . [her] a whipping." Another master lured his fugitive slave woman, Maria, from the Union army camps by kidnapping the child she had taken with her and then paying a soldier to coax her back home with the promise of help in rescuing the child. When Maria did return, her master seized her, locked her up for four days, and beat her until she was scarred. Where owners could not constrain their fractious bondsmen, guerrilla bands lurking in the countryside sometimes acted in the master's stead by catching and punishing delinquents. Nimrod Porter noted in the summer of 1863, for example, that guerrillas in his neighborhood had recaptured several fugitive slaves, and thus had succeeded in frightening potential runaways.⁴²

⁴¹Testimony of George L. Stearns, American Freedmen's Inquiry Commission Report, 57; Alexander P. Smith to Andrew Johnson, June 27, Aug. 18, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Papers of Andrew Johnson, V, 510-11, 621-22; Thomas B. Johnson to Andrew Johnson, Aug. 8, 1863, Johnson Papers. See also William B. Lewis to George A. Washington, Feb. 24, Mar. 6, 1863, Washington Papers.

⁴²Cox Diary, May 12, 13, 1862; Thomas Cotton to Andrew Johnson, Oct. 19, 1863, Johnson Papers; Porter Journal, Aug. 17, 1863. For other examples of violence against slaves by masters see *ibid.*, May 16, 1864, Mar. 8, 1865; Murfreesboro Union Volunteer, May 20, 1862; Matthews Journal, Sept. 25, 27, 1862; History Associates of Wilson County,

Whites exacted the ultimate price in these months from those few slaves who dared to strike back at their oppressors. After Gilbert Dowell burned the barn of his wife's Maury County master in late 1862 (in retaliation for selling off Dowell's wife and child to Louisiana), dogs tracked the slave down and, even though the county government was operating, a shotgun-wielding kangaroo court expeditiously tried, convicted, and lynched him. Henry, the Williamson County slave who axed his sleeping master to death in the woods, was captured by Confederate troops after being turned away by the Federals at Nashville. The Rebels put a noose around Henry's neck, stood him on a rail fence, and kicked out the rails.⁴³

In the towns institutions of authority helped maintain slavery (as before the war) in place of the personal supervision of slaves which urban life had always obstructed—and now more so than ever. The Federal presence, by keeping order in the towns, thus helped indirectly to safeguard slavery there even as it increasingly disrupted it. Urban slavery withered from daily contact with Yankee soldiers, to be sure, but urban slaveholders did not have to contend with that social and political chaos which vitiated the coercive power of their rural brethren. Nashville's civil officials, though loyal unionists to a man, stood squarely for the preservation of slavery in this early

History, 281. Other instances of guerrilla violence against blacks are documented in Porter Journal, May 26, 30, 1864; Jane S. Washington to George A. Washington, July 27, 1864, Washington Papers. Guerrillaism as a social phenomenon will be explored in Chapter IX.

⁴³Smith, Frank H. Smith's History of Maury County, 183, 239-41.

period of occupation. The city police and courts aggressively enforced all standing ordinances on buying from or selling to slaves, providing liquor to slaves, and permitting slaves to live by themselves or to unlawfully assemble. The municipal whipping post and workhouse saw constant service as the police apprehended unruly blacks, and masters turned incorrigibles over to the authorities. The masses of contrabands crowding into the city could not be regulated by government, however, due to their ambiguous legal status and their sheer numbers. White Nashvillians therefore turned to other institutions to control this "source of great annoyance to the citizens," as the city aldermen described it. They pleaded with the army to round up black vagrants and put them to work, and called on black churches to carry out their responsibility for "making and keeping [blacks] honest, sober, industrious, and well-conducted in all respects." The contrabands, however, persisted in asserting their freedom and, as officials continued their crackdown on the city's slaves, bondage and liberty paradoxically flourished side by side in Nashville.⁴⁴

In their determination to preserve slavery some slaveowners in both town and country resorted to precautions unknown before the

⁴⁴Nashville Dispatch, Dec. 11, 1862, Mar. 6, June 25, 1863; Cimprich, "Slavery amidst Civil War," 82-89. The determination of Nashville whites in general and city authorities in particular to preserve slavery and strictly control free blacks is shown in Nashville Dispatch, May 6, July 27, Dec. 14, 27, 1862, Jan. 14, Feb. 13, 14, 17, 22, June 24, 1863. For examples of masters turning unruly slaves over to civil authorities, or approving of official punishment of their slaves, see *ibid.*, July 29, Aug. 2, 16, 17, 1862, Jan. 16, 1863. Complaints about black vagrants are in *ibid.*, Dec. 19, 1862, Jan. 18, Mar. 3, 1863.

invasion. A few, rather than tightening discipline, relaxed it for fear of triggering an incident which might turn a loyal servant into a disgruntled fugitive. A fellow planter advised G. A. Washington early in 1863 to "look closely after those who are still at home and direct your overseer to abstain, as far as possible, from giving them any excuse for leaving you." A Giles County plantation lady wrote at the same time that

overseers generally are doing very little good and they complain of the negroes getting so free and idle, but I think it is because most every one is afraid to correct them. I tried to correct our negroes for a thing last summer; it would frighten Mr. Ashford [the overseer] out of his wits almost.

Persuasion and soft words—whether from their own lips or those of some trusted black—also availed uneasy masters. G. A. Washington's correspondent told his own slaves that

the very best thing they can do for themselves is to remain quietly at home and attend to their work, and wait until it is known what disposition is to be made of the negroes generally, and in case they shall all be emancipated, mine also will be set free. . . . This advice seemed to them reasonable and I think they are disposed to follow it.

Two months later he dispatched a slave man to Washington's plantation, ostensibly on an errand: "But my principal object in sending him," the planter admitted, "was that he might see and talk with your negroes. I think his advice to them may have a good effect upon them and you may have the fullest confidence in him." Other slaveowners, fearing positive inducements would not suffice, spread horror stories among their slaves,

detailing the abuse they could expect at the hands of the Yankees if they were foolish enough to run off to the Federal camps.⁴⁵

Some masters, putting no reliance on their powers of persuasion, physically restrained their slaves. Wilson County officials declined in February 1864 to turn over the slave Henry to his new owner after dividing the estate of Henry's deceased master; the magistrates permitted the estate administrator to continue holding the slave, "owing to the turbulent times which now exist making the tenure of such property quite precarious." Many owners hid their slaves along with other valuables at the approach of the Yankees, asserting (not always truthfully) that they feared not their slaves' disloyalty, but Federal labor impressment. A Northern officer, looking through his field glasses while on patrol near Lebanon in mid-1863, saw a white man and two blacks rushing furtively through the brush and into the woods; he forced two black women nearby to confess that their master was trying to hide two male slaves from the Yankees. An ex-slave of Sumner County recalled in old age that his mistress, whose favorite he was, concealed him for four days in the cellar when Union troops came by.⁴⁶

Other slaveholders left nothing to chance and carried their slaves south, altogether out of the region and safe from both Yankees and aspirations for freedom. Most often owners did this hurriedly, before

⁴⁵William B. Lewis to George A. Washington, Mar. 6, May 1, 1863, Washington Papers; Bell I. Wiley, Southern Negroes, 1861-1865 (New Haven, 1938), 76; Fitch, Annals of the Army, 651.

⁴⁶Wilson County, Tennessee, County Court Clerk's Office, County Court Minute Books, Feb. 1, 1864, Vol. 1859-64, n.p. (TSLA); "Major Connolly's Letters," 262-63; Rawick, American Slave, Ser. One, Vol. VI (Ind.), 43-47.

the arrival of the enemy; but on occasion they carried it out deliberately, under the Federals' very noses. In late 1862 a Davidson County man brazenly gathered up a dozen slaves from the farm of a refugee slave-owner who had hired him for the purpose, chained several of them, and drove them all off in a wagon to their waiting master in Alabama. Arrested for kidnapping by the Nashville military police upon his return, the abductor protested guilelessly that his deed was "open & above board. I made no secret of it and did not think I was doing wrong. . . ."47

If such precautions seemed to insinuate misgivings about their slaves and anxiety about slavery's survival, few masters in the early period of occupation would have admitted openly to such trepidations. The slaveholders' ideological devotion to slavery remained as firm as their trust in God, and repeatedly they affirmed the dogma of their faith: slavery was a positive good; masters and slaves shared mutual obligations; slaves were fundamentally loyal and contented. Masters continued to trumpet their trust in the good sense and docility of their pampered bondsmen. A Davidson County planter declared confidently that

My negroes . . . have no great liking to a camp life—they saw enough of it when the troops were camped close around their houses for some five or six weeks, to satisfy them that they were much better of[f] at home, and in their own houses, than in the care and under the protection of their northern friends.

⁴⁷Hannibal Paine to sister, Apr. 26, 1863, Paine Family Papers (TSLA); Testimony concerning Silas Norris case, Jan. 15, 1863, Johnson Papers; Thomas T. Smiley to Andrew Johnson, June 15, 1863, Thomas Smiley Papers (State Historical Society of Wisconsin).

On New Year's day, 1863—the date of presidentially-declared freedom for slaves in most of the Confederacy outside Tennessee—the Nashville Dispatch found the city's slaves "quietly going to work as usual," after realizing the Emancipation Proclamation was inapplicable to them. At the same time a Nashville woman gloated in her diary:

The day so long looked for by the North in which the "poor oppressed race" would rush to their northern bretheren has dawned upon us, and yet we have witnessed no insurrections no massacres, but all moving quietly along. Harvey and Jeff left us when the Yankees first entered but both are at home. The rest seem perfectly contented.⁴⁸

Other slaveowners proudly proclaimed their paternalistic solicitude for their bondsmen. "Just come from a negro funeral," a Murfreesboro woman wrote in April 1862; "—a parson by the name of Willis preached & one by the name of Miles had service at the grave—O Yankee what would you say to that." A Fayetteville slaveowner in the Confederate army instructed his wife in 1863 to

Say to the servants that I hope to hear that they have been kind and attentive to you and the children. . . . I have endeavored to do my duty towards them but if they are dissatisfied & should leave you all I can say to them is what I have often said viz. if they can do without me, I can do without them. They know how I have labored to make them comfortable. . . .⁴⁹

⁴⁸William B. Lewis to George A. Washington, Mar. 6, 1863, Washington Papers; Nashville Dispatch, Jan. 2, 1863; Moore Diary, Jan. 1, 1863.

⁴⁹Elvie Eagleton Skipper and Ruth Gove, eds., "'Stray Thoughts'; The Civil War Diary of Ethie M. Foute Eagleton," East Tennessee Historical Society's Publications, No. 40 (1968) and No. 41 (1969), Pt. 1, p. 136; James R. Bright to wife, Aug. 26, 1863, Douglass-Maney Family Papers (TSLA). See also testimony of Mrs. DeNoville, American Freedmen's Inquiry Commission Report, 56.

Evidence impugning their protestations of black fidelity the slaveholders dismissed as temporary aberrations due to unsettled conditions, or, more often, as the villainies of outside agitators and "bad niggers." The latter ascriptions were, of course, the stock in trade of antebellum slavery apologists, and in Middle Tennessee from 1862 on every day brought new contradictions to be thus rationalized. "Oh! these wretched-wicked Yankees," exclaimed Bettie Blackmore in 1863, spurning the notion that her increasingly disobedient blacks were self-motivated; "If they would only see the terrible effect of their teachings, upon the negroes." The Nashville Dispatch complained frequently in 1863 about the erosion of slave discipline and morality in the city, and blamed it on the insidious influence of contrabands and Northern free blacks: "It is a well known fact," the editor aphorized, "that one bad negro will corrupt many. . . ." After vigilantes lynched Gilbert Dowell for barn-burning in the fall of 1862, white Maury countians agreed that Dowell had always been a "bad darkey," whose owners had a reputation for not controlling their slaves.⁵⁰

As black deference and allegiance deteriorated, however, ideology collided with reality and the slaveholders' serene professions of faith turned shrill and tremulous. Fear and distrust, long submerged, began to surface. Whites grew cautious about their words and deeds in front of blacks. A Murfreesboro girl whose family briefly harbored some

⁵⁰Trimble, "Behind the Lines," 65; Nashville Dispatch, Jan. 18, Mar. 6, 1863; Smith, Frank H. Smith's History of Maury County, 241. See also Fitch, Annals of the Army, 651.

escaped, disguised Rebel soldiers in June 1862 was forced to pretend the fugitives were Yankees "so that the servants might believe they were Union. I don't like to act deceitfully, but, occasions require it, in war times." A Williamson County man, plotting some secret expedition late that year, warned a confederate to "Say nothing to any one, especially w[h]ere negroes are, as to our destination."⁵¹

Before long, voices of concern could be heard across the heartland—faint at first, nearly drowned out by the loud avowals of confidence, but swelling as the months passed. A Maury County woman wrote that "I have sent Louisa off to the country to be hired out. She has acted in such a way lately as to destroy my confidence in her. . . ." The Murfreesboro girl who cautiously dissembled in front of her servants in June 1862 declared flatly in July that "I don't trust the negroes now. They have too much of the yankees about them, to suit me." Sarah Kennedy of Clarksville, apprehensively scrutinizing her slaves' demeanor as the date of presidential emancipation neared, confessed that "I feel . . . quite anxious sometimes, at the events which are likely to take place the first of January."⁵²

As reality continued to hammer away at their faith, whites evidenced shock, disbelief, dismay. Convinced that their complacent servants could never prefer the vile Yankees over their benevolent

⁵¹Carney Diary, June 13, July 21, 1862; Edward C. Bain to James B. Crockett, Nov. 1, 1862, Andrew Crockett Papers (TSLA).

⁵²Sarah Trotter to Cynthia Carter, n.d. (probably 1862), Pope-Carter Papers; Carney Diary, July 21, 1862; Sarah Kennedy to husband, Dec. 22, 29, 1862, Kennedy Letters.

masters, slaveowners watched uncomprehending as blacks left in droves for the army camps. "The negroes will run to them from good homes of kind masters," sputtered an incredulous Bettie Blackmore in late 1863, "& bear more oppression than they ever knew before, get no pay & yet love the Yankee for his meanness." Persuaded that slaves needed their masters even more than masters needed their slaves, slaveholders choked on the emerging bitter truth that masters were superfluous to their slaves, slaves indispensable to their masters. A Shelbyville unionist begged Andrew Johnson in 1863 to protect his two slave men from conscription:

. . . these servants of mine, have stayed with me all the time during the troubles—they are faithful, honest, trustworthy—absolutely necessary for my comfort and convenience—if taken away I do not know how I would supply their place—and I would be compelled to break up Housekeeping.

"I cannot see how we are to get through the winter," wrote a Shelbyville woman after all but one of her slaves had run off, "for I do hate to work. . . . We are all tired to death by seven oclock but I guess we will get used to it."⁵³

As slavery unraveled, ripples of doubt and consternation turned to waves and then torrents, and the slaveholders of Middle Tennessee faced a crisis of ideology. The incontrovertible fact that the Yankees were there to stay destroyed all assurance that this was merely a

⁵³Trimble, "Behind the Lines," 65; Edmund Cooper to Andrew Johnson, Nov. 1, 1863, Johnson Papers; Agnes Whiteside to E. E. Peacock, Nov. 30, 1863, Whiteside Papers. See also W. W. Pepper to Andrew Johnson, Dec. 25, 1863, Johnson Papers.

transitory muddle to be endured and afterwards rectified. The mass desertion of slaves exploded the myths that slavery was a decree of nature and that slaves reveled in their bondage. The withering away of black deference and obedience turned "good darkeys" by the tens of thousands into "bad darkeys," refuting the slaveholders' doctrine that black miscreancy was the work of a few bad apples. Black self-assertion gave the lie to notions about outside agitators. Nothing remained of slavery's ideological edifice but the slaveholders' credos that slavery was a necessary good and that masters had a duty to their bondsmen. These cornerstones could not stand alone against the tidal wave of events. The consequence was nothing less than the intellectual abandonment of slavery and paternalism by the slaveholders of the heartland.

This was the turning point of the slaveholders' Civil War, the opposite side of the coin from the slaves' realization of their freedom. Much as the slave apprehended that he was no longer a slave, his master came to understand that he was no longer a master. The evanescence of the slave's servility found its counterpart in the dissolution of his master's paternalistic ethos: just as the slave rejected his master as an oppressor he no longer had to endure, so the master renounced his slave as a burden he no longer had to bear. The disappointed father drove from his house the rebellious and ungrateful son.

The first signs appeared in 1863, as slaveholders in growing numbers acknowledged the inevitability of slavery's death and declined to retrieve runaways or hold on to slaves who wished to leave. In

January the Nashville police arrested Dan, a local slave who had run off the previous November; when they prepared to turn Dan over to his owner, the latter announced that he would take the slave back only if he wanted to return. Later that year an Englishman traveling through the city was told by a resident that slaveowners there generally no longer bothered to go after fugitives. When Winfield McNary, a Pulaski slave, ran away with Union troops his master and mistress made no effort to get him back: ". . . they wouldn't low me to come back," he recalled. In the summer of 1864, Cherry, owned by James Matthews, ran off from her master's Maury County farm; she soon returned, only to announce that she would be staying less than a week: "I am not willing for her to stay on her terms," Matthews huffed in his diary, "so she packed up with her child and left." Nimrod Porter wrote in February 1864 that one of his neighbors "wants [the slaves] all freed as his is gone he wants all to go." ". . . I wish you would look at the stern reality of facts. . . .," a Pulaski man advised a Maury County slaveholder that same year;

In my own opinion slavery has run its race in Tennessee, in no contingency is it likely to be revived or profitable, no use then in electioneering around negroes to stay with us unless they can be made profitable, or at least be made to pay their own expense. . . . [I] symply suggest that you divest your sel[f] of all negroes that are not able & willing to make ther own support.⁵⁴

⁵⁴Nashville Dispatch, Jan. 22, 1863; Chancellor, Englishman in the Civil War, 135-36; Rawick, American Slave, Supplement, Ser. Two, Vol. I (Ala., et al.), 101; Matthews Journal, Aug. 1, 1864; Porter Journal, Feb. 23, 1864; W. Rivers to Sarah Trotter, Mar. 25, 1864, Pope-Carter Papers. See also R. D. Mussey to C. W. Foster, Oct. 10, 1864, OR, Ser. III, Vol. IV, 772.

More and more, slaveowners did take steps to "divest" themselves of unproductive blacks. In scenes that would have been incredible two or three years earlier, ex-masters across the heartland ordered away their ex-slaves. James Childress, a Davidson County slave, later recalled that his master commanded all hands to leave the farm and make their own homes, after self-emancipation had rendered them "too excited to work in the fields or care for the stock." A Federal officer (and future president) sympathetic to the blacks described how "Thousands have been abandoned by their masters, who have lost all hope of gain by keeping them and now cruelly turn them out to perish or to become a burden which this army cannot safely assume. . . . It is one of the saddest pictures I ever witnessed. . . ."55

As often as not, however, the newly liberated and now defiantly assertive blacks simply ignored orders to vacate, leaving their ex-masters to fume impotently or seek help in evicting them. "My negroes are trifling, ill mannered and impertinent," a Rutherford County woman wrote in exasperation; "I can not drive them off and yet they want me to pay them for all they do and support them too." The Union officer supervising black recruitment asserted late in 1863 that

Numerous applications have been made to me by planters in the vicinity of Nashville . . . to take their slaves by force, as they say they have become a nuisance to them. . . . Many of them wished their slaves taken, whether

⁵⁵Rawick, American Slave, Ser. One, Vol. VI (Ind.), 55-56; James A. Garfield to Salmon P. Chase, Apr. 23, 1863, Frederick D. Williams, ed., The Wild Life of the Army: Civil War Letters of James A. Garfield (East Lansing, Michigan, 1964), 257; Cimprich, "Slavery amidst Civil War," 53-55.

they got compensation or not. About forty have been offered to me in the last month.⁵⁶

The ordeal of the wealthy Washingtons of Robertson County epitomizes the decline and fall of the slaveholders' world view. Slaves on the family's huge plantation began running off to Nashville and the Federal camps by early 1863. George A. Washington, the great planter-patriarch, pulled every string that year to retrieve his fugitive blacks, fretted constantly about those still at home, and took every precaution to keep them there. But slaves continued to abscond through 1863 and 1864, and those who remained began to exhibit the familiar symptoms of "impudence," disloyalty, and refusal to work. The determination of the Washingtons to hold on to their bondsmen dwindled concomitantly. "Henry Terry and his whole family took their departure last night," Washington's wife, Jane, reported in July 1864; "—a good riddance." By early 1865, as blacks and whites alike agreed, slavery was finished on the Washington plantation. Most blacks not only declined to work or move on, but some who had previously run away returned with the intention of living comfortably and without excessive toil. "Monroe has been here a week," a white family member wrote,

. . . but has not done a solitary thing since he has been here[.] Cousin P has told him that he could not & should not stay here, but he does not regard it any more than if she did not speak to him.

A provoked white lady on the plantation reported in March that "No negroes [have] left will never leave until their houses are thrown

⁵⁶Trimble, "Behind the Lines," 79; Testimony of George L. Stearns, American Freedmen's Inquiry Commission Report, 69.

down or burned down I wish they were all gone. . . ." Those whites who, like the Washingtons, had built their world around patriarchal and paternalistic racial ideals were the most vehement in their repudiation of those ideals when that world crumbled.⁵⁷

Slavery, as the Washingtons and thousands of lesser slaveholders discovered, was the weak link of the heartland's patriarchal society, a link forged in the cold ashes of force and violence, not the white-hot coals of nature or internalized values. The slaves of Middle Tennessee, like those all across the South, were free as soon as that frangible bond was broken. But, as the most recent scholarship has shown, slaveholders in other parts of the South were not so quickly freed as those in the heartland from the chains of ideology. Why did the slaveholders of Middle Tennessee so decisively abjure slavery and paternalism by 1865, while those elsewhere attempted to hold fast to their bondsmen and their peculiar, moribund institution for years after Appomattox?⁵⁸

⁵⁷William B. Lewis to George A. Washington, Feb. 24, Mar. 6, May 1, 1863, Washington Papers; Jane S. Washington to George A. Washington, Feb. 29, Mar. 2, July 25, Aug. 8, 15, 1864, *ibid.*; Joyce A. Davis to Jane S. Washington, Feb. 19, 1865, *ibid.*; Mary C. Washington to Jane S. Washington, Mar. 1, 3, 11, 29, Apr. 1, 3, 1865, *ibid.*

⁵⁸James L. Roark, Masters without Slaves: Southern Planters in the Civil War and Reconstruction (New York, 1977), 94-108; Litwack, Been in the Storm So Long, 179-90. The war did not extinguish every trace of paternalism, of course, just as it did not destroy close and affectionate black-white relationships in some cases. For an example of continued paternalism see William Stoddert to R. S. Ewell, May 24, 1865, Polk-Brown-Ewell Papers.

The explanation lies in Middle Tennessee's uniquely shattering Civil War experience, an ordeal which was as lethal to ideology as it was to lives and fortunes. Certainly no other part of the South was battered more furiously by the mailed fist of war than the heartland, and few regions even approached the degree and duration of physical devastation, institutional disruption, and human suffering which the heartland endured. The planter in southern Georgia or Alabama who never saw a Yankee soldier until the war was over or nearly so, whose fields remained green and prolific, whose slaves toiled diligently with no opportunity of escape until the last armies of the Confederacy laid down their arms—such a man might very well cling stubbornly to an ideology which, though superseded by reality, had not been wrested from him by violence. The slaveholders of Middle Tennessee were as forcibly stripped of their ideology after 1862 as they were of their corn and cattle. No one who watched columns of armed Yankees pass by daily, plundering and destroying without hindrance, could deny that the war was a palpable, transforming entity. No one who beheld black men and women in great numbers throw down their scythes and hoes, stand tall, denounce their masters to their faces, and defiantly walk away, could fail to understand that slavery was dead and paternalism repudiated.

Slavery as an institution of law followed a similar course from tenacity to uncertainty to ultimate dissolution. The deteriorating legal status of slavery during the war can be traced through the judicial decrees of Judge Manson M. Brien of Nashville, a native unionist and influential leader of wartime reconstruction. Presiding over the

Davidson County criminal court in February 1863, Brien instructed the grand jury to enforce strictly all existing slave codes and laws governing free blacks. Noting that he had been assured of Federal cooperation in such enforcement, he sternly charged the jurors to take action on the "many grievances" Nashvillians were suffering at the hands of contrabands. By the time court met in December, however, Brien's policy had changed markedly. Concerning the slave code and free black laws the judge remarked (according to the Nashville Dispatch) that

the new state of things . . . had rendered [them] inoperative in many respects, and [he] left it with the jury to discriminate between such laws as can and ought to be enforced . . . and those which cannot and ought not to be executed.

He further advised the jurors that if they reasoned that the Emancipation Proclamation had indeed liberated Tennessee's slaves, then all coming before the court would be treated as free blacks under state law. By May 1864, when he opened the Rutherford County circuit court, Brien was insisting that "we must recognize the rebellion and war as it is," meaning that the Federal policy of encouraging runaways would be acknowledged: "So this slave code and slave policy of Tennessee is virtually repealed," he concluded, "at least it is not practicable or expedient to enforce it, and so I charge you is the law." Finally, in March 1865, as he opened court in Williamson County, Judge Brien—who not two years earlier had clashed with Federal authorities after waylaying and forcibly restraining his own runaway slave—read slavery's obituary. Blacks would be deemed free, he ordered, slavery would be

considered abolished, and any blacks still coerced by their former masters could sue for damages.⁵⁹

The threatened spectacle of militant freedmen hauling their stubborn ex-masters into court was anathema to white Middle Tennesseans. So, too, were the spectacles of black men in uniform shouldering muskets, black field hands stuffing weekly wages into their pockets, black children at schooldesks laboring over McGuffey's Reader, and black revelers joyously parading and dancing in celebration of freedom. Having disavowed slavery and their obligations to the slave, most whites

⁵⁹Nashville Dispatch, Feb. 10, Dec. 8, 11, 1863; Nashville Daily Times and True Union, May 13, 1864, Mar. 17, 1865. See also *ibid.*, Oct. 7, 1864; R. D. Mussey to C. W. Foster, Oct. 10, 1864, OR, Ser. III, Vol. IV, 772. Slave sales and other legal transfers of slave property in Middle Tennessee were disrupted in 1862 and 1863 due to runaways and ceased for the most part by 1864, though in a few cases slaves were sold or inherited and blacks treated legally as slaves in local courts as late as early 1865. For evidence of the disruption of sales and other legal transfers see Bedford County, Tennessee, County Court Clerk's Office, County Court Minutes, Sept., Nov., Dec., 1863, Jan., 1864, Vol. A, 18-19, 32-34, 44, 55 (TSLA); Davidson County, Tennessee, County Court Clerk's Office, County Court Minutes, July 29, 1862, Bk. I, 87-88 (TSLA); Wilson County Court Minutes, Feb. 1, 1864, Vol. 1859-64, n.p. For legal recognition of slavery and slave property in 1865 see Marshall County, Tennessee, County Court Clerk, Minutes, County Court, Feb., 1865, Vol. L, 72-74 (TSLA); Robertson County, Tennessee, County Court Clerk's Office, County Court Minutes, Mar. 6, 1865, Vol. XV, 94 (TSLA); Williamson County, Tennessee, County Court Clerk's Office, Minutes, Feb., 1865, Vol. XIX, 425 (TSLA).

Andrew Johnson's policy toward slavery (which moved from conservative to radical as the war progressed) is discussed in Cimprich, "Military Governor Johnson," *passim*; and Edwin T. Hardison, "In the Toils of War: Andrew Johnson and the Federal Occupation of Tennessee" (Ph.D. diss., The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 1981), 269-92. Slavery was formally abolished in Tennessee in February 1865 by state constitutional amendment. See Cimprich, "Slavery amidst Civil War," 226-63, for a full discussion.

took not another step. They denounced all the manifestations of black legal, economic, and social equality which pullulated in freedom's wake: "They will do nothing recognizing that the negro is entitled to anything," wrote an outraged Northerner in Murfreesboro in the spring of 1864. Whites in Columbia raged furiously that year when authorities announced that black testimony would be admitted in the trial of an accused guerrilla, and some turned violent when a black man opened a school in the town. Unionists and secessionists alike railed against the footloose wandering of contrabands in the countryside and the unbridled merrymaking of those in Nashville and other towns. Some whites denied the freedmen even the fundamental economic right of earning their own keep. When a number of blacks began working for wages in 1864 an observer in Rutherford County reported that their ex-masters "will not hire the slaves themselves; they prefer to sit in solitary destitution. They will not consent to see others hiring them; they prefer to see a general embarrassment of all parties, and predict with pleasure the hoped for failure of the new experiment." White violence against black soldiers was common (three were murdered in a ten-day period in Nashville in the spring of 1864) and army recruiters of blacks met enormous white animosity across the region. "Destructive vengeance is everywhere to be seen and felt in this country," declared a Northerner who had heard native whites excoriate every token of black equality. The intransigence and violent racial hostility of Middle Tennessee whites which would stain the Reconstruction era represented

simply the rank proliferation of an ugly weed which had sprouted while the armies still battled.⁶⁰

Whatever exultation and revelry the heady wine of first freedom provoked, other, grimmer realities of the war years kept the black men and women of the heartland sober, determined, and steady on their feet. The joy and hope which accompanied deliverance from thralldom were tempered by the agonies of getting along in a world still inimical, still brutal. Hardship and uncertainty confronted the freedman wherever he turned, whatever road he took. Whether he remained in the countryside, or fled to town, or sought his fate with the Northern invaders, the newly emancipated black soon apprehended that the epoch of freedom would be no millenium.

Many who traded Southern owners and overseers for Yankee bosses very quickly discarded any lingering notions about Northern benevolence. The army's mass roundups of unwilling black laborers in town and country continued through the war, and many a black man thus seized must have sought in vain to define the distinction between such involuntary servitude and the slavery he had just left behind. The abuse of impressed blacks and others employed by the army became so common and so scandalous as to provoke condemnation from every quarter—from blacks, Northerners, and native whites alike. "The colored men here are treated like brutes," a Federal officer wrote from Nashville in

⁶⁰Nashville Daily Times and True Union, Apr. 18, 25, May 10, 20, 30, 1864; Porter Journal, Apr. 16, 22, July 23, 1864; Nashville Dispatch, Nov. 26, 27, 1862, June 25, Mar. 6, July 9, Dec. 9, 1863; Franklin, Diary of James T. Ayers, xvi-xvii.

September 1863. A free black in the city testified about a typical experience: he was stopped on a Sunday on his way home from church by a guard who confiscated his pass and ordered him to fall in with dozens of other unlucky victims, whose passes were all taken and burned. "At dark they put a double guard around us," he continued,

and told us if we attempted to escape we would be shot down. We were left that way, out in the cold all night, without tents, blankets, or fire. . . .

Rations for impressed blacks were usually scanty and poor, shelter inadequate, conditions unhealthy, the work laborious, and the pay meager or nonexistent. Some contrabands were hired out to private contractors whose "only thought is to clutch and sease upon green Backs regardless of the rights of the poor Negro," as one white man protested; the contractors cheated the blacks of their provisions and ignored their welfare, letting them go for days without food and thus forcing them to plunder farms. These freedmen "dye by dozens from there neglect," that same man insisted, and he concluded with some justification that they "are in a much wors condition than in a state of slavery." A Davidson County planter who observed contrabands in an army camp on his land characterized them as

the most miserable wretched looking creatures I ever saw—lousy, ragged, dirty, half starved devils . . . and, what is still worse, when sick no more att[ent]ion was paid to them than if they were so many dogs, and, in fact, five of them died in camp. . . .

Nimrod Porter echoed that description after he saw "conterbands" brought into Columbia to work in early 1865: "They looked verry bad & sickly ragged & dirty," he declared. A Cheatham County farmer wrote to Andrew

Johnson at the same time about the maltreatment of his impressed blacks: "of the 8 slaves that went to Nashville," he stated sadly, 7 is dead, & the other one wants to returne."⁶¹

Abuse was not confined to those working for the army. Blacks suffered at the hands of malevolent soldiers wherever they encountered them, whether army camps or city streets or country roads. Noting that neighboring blacks and whites frequently came into town to sell food, an Indiana soldier in Murfreesboro remarked that "the darkies are all that sell reasonable to soldiers and are really the only friends we have yet whenever they come to camp the boys curse them and threaten them." Nimrod Porter concluded in 1864 that the Yankees occupying Columbia "have no use for the negro. . . ."; at a Fourth of July celebration held by blacks and Northern troops in town that year, he wrote,

A dinner was prepared for many [blacks] . . . but [when] the black ladies was marched to the Table the Soldiers pitched in & devoured it & so the blacks was quite unlucky (they got none).

Verbal hostility and petty pilferage were but the mildest of the Yankees' misdeeds, however. Armed robbery, physical violence, and even murder

⁶¹George L. Stearns to E. M. Stanton, Sept. 25, 1863, and enclosure, OR, Ser. III, Vol. III, 840; John W. Birdwell to Andrew Johnson, Nov. 4, 1864, Johnson Papers; William B. Lewis to George A. Washington, Mar. 6, 1863, Washington Papers; Porter Journal, Feb. 13, 1865; S. W. Adkisson to Andrew Johnson, Jan. 16, 1865, Johnson Papers. For further evidence of the frequent impressment of blacks, and their ill-treatment, see Testimony of George L. Stearns, American Freedmen's Inquiry Commission Report, 57-58; Fitch, Annals of the Army, 270, 275; Nashville Daily Times and True Union, Apr. 11, 1864; Nashville Dispatch, Dec. 30, 1862, Feb. 13, Mar. 11, Apr. 26, Dec. 19, 1863; Porter Journal, July 4, 1864, Jan. 20, Mar. 20, 1865; J. St. C. Morton to J. D. Kurtz, Apr. 29, 1863, OR, Ser. I, Vol. XXIII, Pt. 2, pp. 290-91; Maslowski, Treason Must Be Made Odious, 99-102.

became commonplace before the war's end. On at least two occasions, while at work in the fields, Porter's blacks were robbed at gunpoint by Federal soldiers; and such incidents were repeated over and over across the heartland. The sexual abuse and exploitation of black women by white soldiers was prevalent enough to prompt condemnation by Northern humanitarians and military commanders. Reports of unprovoked assaults on blacks by soldiers proliferated all over the region.⁶²

The freedmen of Gallatin were the victims of probably the worst sustained military brutality against blacks in the region, at the hands of the Thirteenth Tennessee Cavalry—a regiment of East Tennessee unionists and by all odds the most malicious band of Negrophobes among the Federal occupiers. Entering Gallatin in May 1864, and apprehending scornfully (as one soldier recalled) that the previous garrison troops "had made the 'colored man and brother' think he was the whole thing," the soldiers of the Thirteenth set about to teach the town's contrabands a lesson. "They are the meanest men I ever saw," wrote a Gallatin girl whose diary chronicles their terrorism, "but they have one good trait they make the negroes 'walk a chalk.'" Within a day of their

⁶²"Documents: Civil War Diary of Jabez T. Cox," 52; Porter Journal, Mar. 25, Apr. 8, July 4, Nov. 12, 1864. Other examples of prejudice or violence against blacks are in Nashville Daily Times and True Union, Apr. 18, Nov. 14, 1864, Mar. 14, 1865; Porter Journal, Dec. 26, 1864; William B. Lewis to George A. Washington, Feb. 24, 1863, Washington Papers. The sexual abuse of black women, and interracial sex in general between soldiers and black women (which was common during the occupation) are documented in the Testimony of George L. Stearns, American Freedmen's Inquiry Commission Report, 71-72; Burton, Diary, 4; "Documents: The Shelly Papers," Indiana Magazine of History, XLIV (June 1948), 196-97; Joseph G. McKee and M. M. Brown to Andrew Johnson, Nov. 3, 1863, Johnson Papers.

arrival the troopers burned down a black school (vowing that "they will have none of that while they stay here") and threatened to do likewise to an old tavern which blacks were occupying and preparing for use as another school; when citizens remonstrated that such a conflagration might ignite the whole town the soldiers relented, but warned that if a school did open in the tavern "they will burn it and G[allatin] may go to H____." Two days later a soldier shot and killed a contraband whom he overheard insulting a white youngster, and soon thereafter other soldiers vowed to "kill every negro in G[allatin]" as soon as they could get away with it. A few weeks later the troopers set fire to a new schoolhouse which the blacks had courageously opened. The travail of the freedmen of Gallatin was simply the ugliest manifestation of a phenomenon prevalent throughout Middle Tennessee from 1862 to 1865.⁶³

To be sure, not every Union soldier was a Negro-baiting bully. The black men and women of the heartland had, in fact, much to thank the Yankees for before the war was over: acts of kindness, acts of generosity, acts of protection, and acts of dedicated mission by a few idealistic soldiers who desired to use the war to set the future of the black race on a sound foundation. By late 1863 local commanders had orders to provide food and shelter for every contraband woman and child coming into the lines (men were to be impressed for work or

⁶³Samuel W. Scott and Samuel P. Angel, History of the Thirteenth Regiment Tennessee Volunteer Cavalry U.S.A. (Blountville, Tennessee, 1903), 140-41; Alice Williamson Diary, May 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 15, June 5, 1864 (Duke).

enlisted), whether by offering direct aid at army expense, or by quartering the blacks on abandoned or secessionist-owned farms, or by simply returning the blacks to their ex-masters with instructions to feed and house them. The very worst abuses of blacks by native whites often met a quick response: more than one white man who dared to whip or kill a freedman found himself in the guardhouse awaiting military justice. And where civil courts were open the army sometimes provided critical help in enforcing what judgments blacks could secure. Much succor and justice for the freedmen, of course, emanated from the mundane desire of the Federals, of whatever persuasion, to preserve order and punish Rebels. But a strain of high-mindedness was also at work, well represented by Colonel R. D. Mussey, whose formal report on the recruitment and training of black soldiers in Middle Tennessee concluded with this personal note:

I regard and have regarded the organization of colored troops as a very important social, humanitarian, as well as military measure, and as a providential means of fitting the race freed by this war for their liberty. . . . I have now, after a year's labor in this department, more hope and more faith than ever in the capability of the negro to make a good soldier and a good citizen.⁶⁴

⁶⁴R. D. Mussey to C. W. Foster, Oct. 10, 1864, OR, Ser. III, Vol. IV, pp. 762-74; Cimprich, "Slavery amidst Civil War," 129-31. A favorable assessment of military treatment of blacks in Nashville (written by a Northern missionary) is David Chapman to Mr. Editor, Dec. 9, 1863, American Missionary Association, Tennessee Records. Federal policy on providing for contrabands is outlined in Circular, Headquarters Left Wing, Sixteenth A. C., Nov. 19, 1863, OR, Ser. I, Vol. XXXI, Pt. 3, p. 198; E. R. S. Canby to G. H. Thomas, Dec. 19, 1863, *ibid.*, 444. Instances of Federal protection of freedmen or punishment of whites who mistreated them are in Julian Wisner Hinkley, A Narrative of Service with the Third Wisconsin Infantry (Madison, 1912), 101-2; Porter Journal, May 4, 16, 1864, Mar. 8, 1865; Chase C. Mooney, Slavery in Tennessee (Bloomington, Indiana, 1957), 204n.; Maslowski, Treason Must Be Made Odious, 102-3, 110-16.

The best and the worst of Yankee intentions were mirrored in the contraband camps which harbored thousands of Middle Tennessee freedmen during the war. The Gallatin post commander established one informally in 1863, but by early 1864 the army high command began to systematize the procedure and soon founded other camps at Nashville, Clarksville, Murfreesboro, and Pulaski. Official policy envisioned these as temporary shelters for women and children and the elderly who came into the lines, to house them until they could be settled (under contracts) on the farms of loyal whites or on secessionists' abandoned lands.⁶⁵

The Clarksville and Pulaski camps, however, became something more than depots. Under the direction of idealistic and energetic officers, blacks in these two camps (numbering over a thousand in each) farmed their own acres, built their own cabins and barracks, operated a blacksmith and other trade shops, cut lumber and firewood, pooled money earned from their labor and crop sales, and moved towards self-sufficiency. Northern missionaries conducted well-attended schools in both camps, and the government provided medical care. Camp authorities endeavored to keep families together, to exempt young children from heavy work, and to ensure that blacks who hired out to local whites were well treated and fairly remunerated. Federal inspectors who visited the Clarksville camp in the summer of 1864 lauded it as a well-managed enterprise generating profound social repercussions throughout its

⁶⁵U.S. Senate, Report of Commissioners, 1-3, 11; R. D. Mussey to C. W. Foster, Oct. 10, 1864, OR, Ser. III, Vol. IV, 770-71; Cimprich, "Slavery amidst Civil War," 101-19; Lovett, "Negro in Tennessee," 15-26.

environs, by safeguarding the black family and severing the last bonds of slavery.⁶⁶

The same observers proffered no such encomia for the Nashville camp. "[I]t would be difficult to imagine," they indignantly reported, "a more deplorably destitute condition of things than we found here to exist." The officers in command, whom the inspectors charged with unconscionable lack of humanity and disregard of duty, had ignored orders to build barracks, and instead crowded their black charges into a few leaky tents. They similarly shirked other responsibilities: a number of the women and children were in rags, schooling was neglected, and the blacks did not get enough to eat. Many were sick and many others had died. "We are free to say," the inspectors concluded, "we have never witnessed an aggregate of wretchedness and misery equal to that we were here called to look upon."⁶⁷

Most freedmen, however, never saw a contraband camp, good or bad. Far more of those who left the countryside headed for towns than camps, for the quasi-autonomous black urban communities continued to beckon seekers of independence as in antebellum days. By the thousands blacks poured into the towns. But the economic calamities of war had rendered those towns incapable of absorbing such swarms without drastic consequences. Those consequences, growing direr with every month that passed,

⁶⁶L. Pettijohn to S. S. Jocelin, Mar. 8, 1864, American Missionary Association, Tennessee Records; Burton, Diary, 8; U.S. Senate, Report of Commissioners, 1-2, 9-10.

⁶⁷Ibid., 3-9; Maslowski, Treason Must Be Made Odious, 111.

were crowding, unemployment, poverty, and all their attendant evils. There were simply too many freedmen, too few jobs, too little housing.

Blacks in every town confronted these hardships by 1863, but those in Nashville faced the severest trials. Most could find no regular, gainful work. They took odd jobs when they could; they scrambled for meager army handouts; they begged. Some stole what they had no money to buy. A number of black women worked in army hospitals for nothing more than board, for there was no provision for paying them wages; many others turned to prostitution. In the winter most Nashville contrabands went cold, and in every season they went hungry. Some black men, after weeks or months of dodging army impressment squads, finally allowed themselves to be taken just to get a meal. Desperate for shelter, blacks crowded into decrepit buildings, dank cellars, and even outhouses. As many as a dozen or even twenty could be found crammed into a twenty-foot-square room. These were the lucky ones, for many had no roof at all over their heads and languished in streets or alleys in cold weather and hot. City officials found one homeless black woman in May 1863 asleep on a manure pile. Disease ran rampant among the contrabands under these conditions—smallpox was a persistent menace—and they died by the hundreds.⁶⁸

⁶⁸Joseph G. McKee and M. M. Brown to Andrew Johnson, Nov. 3, 1863, Johnson Papers; Nashville Dispatch, Nov. 1, 26, 27, 1862, Mar. 3, 6, Apr. 26, May 23, June 25, July 9, Nov. 27, Dec. 9, 1863; Maslowski, Treason Must Be Made Odious, 110-11. For evidence that the problems of crowding and unemployment were not unique to Nashville see Williams, "Reminiscence of Clarksville," 206; and Thomas H. Caldwell to Andrew Johnson, June 25, 1864, Johnson Papers (concerning Shelbyville).

Besides cold, famine, and pestilence, contrabands in Nashville and elsewhere endured intolerance and gross mistreatment. The death of slavery did not end formal or informal discrimination against blacks. Civil authorities segregated them on railroad cars, prosecuted them for buying liquor, harassed and punished them for every petty offense. Native whites in the towns abused contrabands with even greater regularity than Federal soldiers did. Some blacks who found work were cheated of their wages by white employers, and then could get no justice in the courts. Violent interracial hostility, aggravated by the fierce competition among whites and blacks for jobs, triggered scuffles and bloody brawls without number.⁶⁹

Why then did the freedmen flock to the towns, and why did they remain in the face of such tribulations? One reason, of course, is that many left behind even worse suffering and greater violence in the rural areas. But more than that, these freedmen understood that the towns, oppressive as they were, offered the best opportunity for black self-expression, for liberation from white control, and for a safe future in the postemancipation era. Though no overseer would ever again brandish a whip over black chattels in the field, and no black family would ever again be relegated to the slave quarters, life in the countryside still pivoted around the white man's farm, the white man's village, the white man's church (or would so pivot again, once

⁶⁹Chancellor, Englishman in the Civil War, 135; James Q. Smith to Andrew Johnson, Aug. 18, 1864, Johnson Papers; Joseph G. McKee and M. M. Brown to Andrew Johnson, Nov. 3, 1863, *ibid.*

peace had restored social equilibrium). Only in the towns could black people live in a world all—or nearly all—their own. In concentrated numbers there was not only greater personal safety, but a more independent and secure black community.

Those black urban communities, well-established before the war, endured as military occupation sheltered them from rural chaos. Furthermore, they flourished (despite the terrible hardships in the towns) as emancipation brought in new constituents by the thousands and freed the communities from many of the old constraints. Crowded black tenements and taverns, and noisy black house parties and street celebrations, were the most conspicuous emblems of the fructification of black community and consciousness during the war. Quieter but nonetheless significant manifestations went mostly unremarked: the semi-independent black mission of Nashville's First Baptist Church, for example, doubled its membership during the war years (while the enrollment of white churches declined); in March 1865 the mission petitioned for and received full independence from its parent church.⁷⁰

Those privileges most stringently denied them as slaves were those most avidly seized by the ex-slaves of the heartland's towns, especially those privileges which might help safeguard the freedmen's future. Most notably, black education and political activity had their

⁷⁰Nashville Dispatch, Mar. 6, Apr. 9, June 11, 1863; Nashville Daily Times and True Union, July 11, 1864; Porter Journal, July 4, 1864; Mechal Sobel, "'They Can Never Both Prosper Together': Black and White Baptists in Antebellum Nashville, Tennessee," THQ, XXXVIII (Fall, 1979), 306; Cimprich, "Slavery amidst Civil War," 98-101, 173-75; Lovett, "Negro in Tennessee," 126-34, 160-65, 169-72.

genesis in the towns during the war. By late 1863 at least 1,200 Nashville blacks were attending nine schools (some of them Northern missionary schools, some private), and many other blacks in the city received less formal instruction from Union army chaplains. Clarksville, Springfield, Columbia, Edgefield, Murfreesboro, Gallatin, and Pulaski also boasted schools before the war ended. Black political demonstrations kept the streets of Nashville and other towns crowded in the last months of the war. The freedmen paraded, concocted memorials to government leaders, and held mock plebiscites to demonstrate their fealty to the Union cause and their eagerness for legal freedom and civil and political rights. The abolition of slavery by state constitutional amendment evoked an immense celebration in the capital in March 1865, featuring processions and speeches and regimental bands, a day-long black festival the like of which the city had never before seen. "The Darkies here seem to think 'De year ob Jubilee am cum,'" wrote a Federal lieutenant who witnessed the affair, "and I expect they are about right in regard to the matter."⁷¹

⁷¹On education see Daniel Chapman to Brother Whipple, Nov. 18, 1863, American Missionary Association, Tennessee Records; Daniel Chapman to Mr. Editor, Dec. 9, 1863, *ibid.*; Ellen Tyle to S. S. Jocelin, Apr. 27, 1864, *ibid.*; Jane C. Warren to Electa Ames, Aug. 27, 1863, Ames Papers; Nashville Daily Times and True Union, Mar. 29, 1865; Williamson Diary, May 9, 16, 1864; Maslowski, Treason Must Be Made Odious, 113; Cimprich, "Slavery amidst Civil War," 164-72; Lovett, "Negro in Tennessee," 144-54. On black political activity see Frank A. Handy Diaries, Mar. 20, 1865 (Duke); Nashville Dispatch, Jan. 2, 1864; Nashville Daily Times and True Union, Aug. 16, Oct. 25, Nov. 14, 1864, Jan. 3, 18, Feb. 23, Mar. 21, 1865; Porter Journal, Oct. 29, 1864; Cimprich, "Slavery amidst Civil War," 247-52; John Cimprich, "The Beginning of the Black Suffrage Movement in Tennessee, 1864-1865," Journal of Negro History, (Summer, 1980), 185-95.

Those freedmen who remained in the countryside during the war had scant opportunity for schools or politics or parades. Until the summer of 1865 their lives perforce centered on evading Rebels, robbers, guerrillas, and starvation. Not all succeeded. Nimrod Porter, his neighborhood plagued by larcenous black vagrants in the early weeks of 1865, commented that "many of them . . . seems much like starved." Hammett Dell, who remained with his ex-master in Rutherford County as the war ended, remembered "droves [of] darkies just rovin' round. Said they huntin' work and homes. Some ask for victuals. . . . When they come in droves they couldn't give em much." Nevertheless, some rural blacks managed, despite besetting chaos and suffering in the countryside, to take a few first steps toward independence; and most often those steps manifested the same universal ambitions which Hammett Dell heard the vagabonds speak of—work and homes.⁷²

Slavery had meant living in the quarters, or a back room of Master's house. Thus, the freedmen reasoned, freedom would have to mean living under their own roofs. A Marshall County farmer described how a "stray negro" came by the farm during the war, worked for a day, decided to stay, and subsequently moved not into the farmhouse but into an unoccupied cabin nearby. As the war neared its end Nimrod Porter noted that his man Caleb, having determined to rent a plot of Porter's land, was busy building his own house. All across the region, wherever conditions

⁷²Porter Journal, Jan. 22, 1865; Rawick, American Slave, Ser. Two, Vol. VIII (Ark.), Pt. 2, p. 143.

were safe enough, rural blacks abandoned their old quarters in favor of new homes beyond the white man's scrutiny.⁷³

Slavery had also meant working without recompense for a master not of one's own choosing. Freedom would mean something very different. Economic reality, Federal injunctions, and the resolute determination of the freedmen soon compelled even the most obstinate white to capitulate and commence paying his black farmhands and servants with wages or crop shares. One Giles County planter began as early as 1863 to divide the harvest among himself and the thirty or so blacks remaining on his plantation; they received one-third and furnished their own board and lodging. As spring planting time approached in 1865 Nimrod Porter agreed to pay his laborers ten dollars per month. March found the blacks all hard at work and their employer well pleased: "The plowers are braking up in the field next the garden where the wagons have been runing over the ground," Porter wrote, "the girls are cutting stalks in the field next to Town[,] Press & Alfred making a . . . fence in the orchard[,] Green fixing the plows, &c, all doing something."⁷⁴

Some rural freedmen worked under Federal aegis. The Treasury Department and the army seized a number of abandoned farms in the region and leased them to loyal native whites or to Northern "carpetbaggers"; blacks on those estates made contracts and received monthly wages under

⁷³John Duling Memoir (TSLA); Porter Journal, Feb. 28, Mar. 7, 1865.

⁷⁴L. C. Ewell to Campbell Brown, June 4, 1865, Polk-Brown-Ewell Papers; Porter Journal, Mar. 7, 21, 1865. See also Nashville Daily Times and True Union, May 30, Oct. 29, 1864; Rawick, American Slave, Ser. Two, Vol. VIII (Ark.), Pt. 2, p. 143.

explicit government regulations. By the spring of 1864 as many as fifteen such farms were operating near Murfreesboro alone, employing perhaps hundreds of ex-slaves. Blacks in the contraband camps who hired out in the neighborhood were similarly protected and supervised by army officials. At least one post commander, too (General E. A. Paine at Gallatin), took it upon himself to write and enforce wage-labor contracts between blacks and whites in his bailiwick.⁷⁵

Three salient points emerge respecting the conduct of Middle Tennessee blacks in their earliest months and years of freedom during the war. The first is the matter of perspective. In the eyes of most Southern whites, prepared to grant the freedmen legal freedom and little else (Nimrod Porter was an exception), blacks in the early period of emancipation were lazy, insolent, and outrageously unreasonable. The exasperated outburst of a Rutherford County woman in January 1865 exemplifies the white viewpoint: "I am annoyed to death with the negroes," she wrote;

Lamb wants to crop himself—Wash is hired to Mr. Doves, but talks of leaving. Hardin wants to make a new bargain every week—Henry gets drunk and is impertinent to everybody. In short everyone wants all they make and to live on my place and be comfortable.⁷⁶

⁷⁵Nashville Daily Times and True Union, Apr. 14, May 30, 1864; "Documents: Civil War Diary of Jabez T. Cox," 49; U.S. Senate, Report of Commissioners, 1-3; Lovell H. Rousseau to W. D. Whipple, Jan. 30, 1864, OR, Ser. I, Vol. XXXII, Pt. 2, p. 268; Nashville Dispatch, May 22, 1863; Maslowski, Treason Must Be Made Odious, 113-15. Cimprich, "Slavery amidst Civil War," 140-48, emphasizes the negative aspects of contract labor overseen by the Federals, suggesting that the system helped to insure black economic dependence rather than independence.

⁷⁶Trimble, "Behind the Lines," 78. For another exception to the general rule of white dissatisfaction with the freedmen in this period, see Killebrew Autobiography, I, 172-73.

A very different tableau appears, however, when viewed through the eyes of the freedmen. From this perspective, founded on the resolve of the blacks to test the limits of their freedom, unreasonableness is seen as a rational calculation of the blacks' own interests and a determination to bargain for the best terms while withdrawing as far as possible from white control; insolence and laziness are seen as a refusal any longer to act or work like slaves—an insistence, that is, on something more than a mere technical, legal sort of freedom. Freedmen in the towns for the most part did work if work were available. The prevalence of idle contrabands on the sidewalks owed more to economic derangement than to black sloth. Freedmen on the farms worked too, as conditions permitted, but they declined to render the laborious, sunup to sundown toil which their former masters had routinely extorted, and they insisted reasonably enough on some payment for their labor.

At least one compassionate slaveholder did come to appreciate this. After visiting his family's Davidson County plantation in December 1864, Confederate officer William D. Gale gave a report which stands out among native white accounts for its sympathetic and thoughtful tone: "It is true nothing can be got out of the negroes but what they choose," he wrote,

and sometimes they are impudent but not generally and I am inclined to think that they are not so much so as one might imagine creatures would be similarly situated. Every body has to pay them wages . . . [but] I see but little difference in them. They talk of leaving whenever "they have words" . . . with the white folks. But their own interests soon bring them to their senses and they

seek to return. . . . They do but little & yet that little supports [their employer] and them.⁷⁷

The second point about the earliest days of black freedom is that the freedmen, who had already demonstrated their initiative through self-emancipation, continued to demonstrate it in a thousand ways—proving beyond cavil that slavery had only suppressed, not destroyed, much black ambition and talent. The militant politicking of the urban freedmen was but the most arresting manifestation of black self-assertion. Other blacks, more quietly but nonetheless resolutely, went about confirming their ability to make their own future as free men and women. Northern observers, not prejudiced by experience with slavery, remarked often in this period on the freedmen's zeal for education and their proficiency at making their own living. Natural qualities of leadership, unleashed by emancipation, emerged in some blacks. Those contrabands who worked in labor gangs for the Union army chose their own officers, who proved thereafter their ability to command. Altered conditions in the countryside also opened up new opportunities for black aptitude. After Nimrod Porter reorganized his farm on a wage system in the spring of 1865 he noted with satisfaction that his employee (and ex-slave) William

has been issuing out the rations for the blacks & feed for the horses & is attending to that branch of business which requires a good deal of attention he has been doing it from the commencement of our engagements on the farm.

⁷⁷William D. Gale to wife, Dec. 9, 1864, Gale-Polk Papers.

In the towns a number of blacks came forward to organize political associations or to establish their own schools for the freedmen. Notable among them was Cap Jordan, a Columbia preacher, who began a school in a church building soon after the town first fell to the Union army, and steadfastly continued classes through the war despite threats and brutal physical abuse at the hands of Confederates, Yankees, and local whites alike.⁷⁸

The final point is that during this earliest period of freedom the blacks of the heartland manifested an attachment to family, community, and place which confirmed their essential Southernness, however much they differed from their ex-masters in other ways. The first step for many upon emancipation was to reunite separated parents and children, brothers and sisters, husbands and wives. Many black men avoided enlistment or army labor until assured their families would be cared for, and once in the service they remained keenly solicitous for the welfare of loved ones left behind in towns or camps or on farms.⁷⁹

⁷⁸Daniel Chapman to Brother Whipple, Nov. 18, 1863, American Missionary Association, Tennessee Records; Daniel Chapman to Mr. Editor, Dec. 9, 1863, *ibid.*; Nashville Daily Times and True Union, Apr. 18, May 30, Oct. 29, 1864; Burton, Diary, Apr. 15, 1864; Fitch, Annals of the Army, 665; Randal M. Ewing to William G. Harding, Aug. 17, 1862, Harding-Jackson Papers; Porter Journal, Mar. 24, 1865; Century Review, 1805-1905, Maury County, Tennessee . . . (Columbia, Tennessee, 1905), 24; Cimprich, "Slavery amidst Civil War," 250-53; Lovett, "Negro in Tennessee," 132-34.

⁷⁹Rawick, American Slave, Ser. Two, Vol. X (Ark.), Pt. 6, p. 126; U.S. Senate, Report of Commissioners, 10; J. St. C. Morton to J. D. Kurtz, Apr. 29, 1863, OR, Ser. I, Vol. 23, Pt. 2, pp. 290-91; Testimony of George L. Stearns, American Freedmen's Inquiry Commission Report, 61-63; Nashville Daily Times and True Union, June 25, 1864; Cimprich, "Slavery amidst Civil War," 159-63; Lovett, "Negro in Tennessee," 154-60.

The majority of blacks left their masters' homes during the war, of course, but some stayed and probably most who left remained in the neighborhood, or at least in the wider community; and often they adamantly resisted being taken or forced away. William D. Gale noted, for example, that those who had left his father's Davidson County plantation by late 1864 for the most part still resided in the vicinity. Whenever Federal impressment squads came through Nimrod Porter's neighborhood the blacks were "much alarmed" and hid out in the woods. After Winger Vanhook's master ordered Vanhook and family off his Wilson County plantation, the freedmen packed up their clothes and moved only about four miles away, taking up work at another farm in the community. Blacks in Middle Tennessee had always been partners—albeit subordinate partners—in the culture of town and country. Though no longer bound to their masters by loyalty and law, they remained tied to their native communities by bonds of blood, faith, and custom. Even those who ran off to the towns generally chose the nearest town; even those who fled to distant parts did not often leave the region, though many had such opportunity. Middle Tennessee was the homeland of its black denizens, too, and their roots ran deeply into its soil.⁸⁰

The full expression of black community, however, like the unhindered release of black energy and ambition, had to await peace. Until the

⁸⁰William D. Gale to wife, Dec. 9, 1864, Gale-Polk Papers; Rawick, American Slave, Supplement, Ser. Two, Vol. X (Tex.), Pt. 9, p. 3,905; Porter Journal, Oct. 17, 18, Dec. 8, 1863, Feb. 24, 1864. A few blacks did emigrate from the region during the war. See, e.g., History Associates of Wilson County, History, 281; Rawick, American Slave, Ser. One, Vol. VI (Ind.), 52, and Ser. Two, Vol. IX (Ark.), Pt. 3, p. 68.

summer of 1865 the freedmen's land—save for the occupied towns—remained a place of danger and disorder, an inhospitable clime in which to nourish the seedlings of a liberated black society. The harsh winter of discontent and war took its toll, too, on white society. The white men and women of the heartland, whose story is the subject of the next chapter, witnessed a transmutation of their society during the war years as startling as the metamorphosis of slaves to freedmen; but their ordeal conferred none of the rewards for body and spirit which the black experience proffered.

CHAPTER IX

LAMENTATIONS: WHITE SOCIETY, 1862-1865

The tranquil social landscape of the antebellum heartland became, in the three years following the Northern invasion, a dark and bloody ground, a tumultuous arena of violence and anarchy. Men and women who had lived their days in an orderly world of familiar faces, inveterate institutions, manageable or at least comprehensible forces, broad prosperity, and unbroken rhythms of life, were hurled into a murky, ungovernable wilderness where few of the old rules and none of the old certainties prevailed, a storm-wracked wasteland with no recognizable landmarks. The horrifying ordeal of a Clarksville family graphically epitomizes the agony of Middle Tennessee society in the war years. "Of all the Sad Seans that any Mortal Man was ever Called to witness on earth," wrote John W. Gorham in January 1865,

I suppose mine is the most Heart rending

I have a farm upon the opiset Side of the River from this place about Two miles distent upon which my Negroes lived, with a plenty of all the Cumforts of life Surrounding them. On Monday Night One Weak ago A lot of ruffians Came to the House and forced the doors and verry illey treated the Negroes by Beating One a women over the Head with a Pistoll &c taking off with them a dead Negroes Cloathing &c &c, but did not disturb any thing else, the Negroes becoming uneasy My Son a Boy about 18 years of age went to the Farm to protect them. they felt Secure but alas alas how Mistaken. On the following Monday Night last a band came and forced the doors again after Shooting throw the Shelter Killing a Negro Woman and wounding my Son badly, he Killing one of them and wounding another their conduct after then was too horrible to tell, they then Shot my Son Several times and cut his ears off with a knife & otherwise maimed him and left him for dead they then Shot

the Old Negro Woman in the feat and body and Set the House Beads &c on fire left the House & went to My Barnes Set fire to them Containing Some 750 Bushes Corn A Considerable quantity of Hay &c.&c. taking 2 Horses Set the Hay Stacks on fire a short distance off and left. to day they returned about . . . 1 oclock and Burnt the Dwelling and all other Buildings, belonging to the Place. . . .¹

A land where such blind atrocities come to pass routinely, without hindrance or retribution, is one whose social fabric has been ravaged, a nightmarish bedlam wherein the customary personal, communal, and institutional constraints on human behavior are vitiated or annihilated—a land, that is, in social chaos. Before the Civil War ended, rural Middle Tennessee had become just such an earthly abyss. But the people of the heartland did not reach that dreadful judgment overnight. The disintegration of their society was a gradual process, a degenerative disease which progressed inexorably in the months and years following the invasion.

The first contacts with the invaders underscored the cohesion and profound conservatism of white society in Middle Tennessee. Determined to preserve their society and institutions intact, and not yet convinced that the Federal occupation would be permanent (indeed, patriotically confident that it would prove ephemeral), whites conquered their initial panic and then stood shoulder to shoulder in resolute hostility and resistance to the Yankees. As the enemy troops approached in February 1862, a Nashville woman defiantly declared that "I hope to be able to entertain a large number. I would with pleasure give each a cup of

¹John W. Gorham to Andrew Johnson, Jan. 15, 1865, Andrew Johnson Papers (LC).

coffee and I think it would be the last any of them would ever drink." A magistrate in the city swore two months later that he "will have his neck stretched as long as a clothes line" before he would take the loyalty oath demanded of him. After two Federal officers visited her home and called for music, Kate Carney vowed that

I would cut my hands off, before I would play for Yanks. . . . The very idea, I hope I will die before I am found receiving Yankees. They said they had never received a single kind word from anyone in Murfreesboro. . . .

Sarah Kennedy noted likewise that soldiers in Clarksville said "they have never before been treated so coldly as they are here." When Federal foragers visited minister Jesse Cox's Williamson County farm, Cox recorded, "I talked very plain to the officers I told them they were all rogues and that God would punish them." Brashly continuing his pro-Confederate preaching despite warnings and harassment, Cox darkly denounced the Yankees as "anti christ, the Beast that assend from the bottomless pits. . . ."2

²Annie Sehon to Bettie Kimberly, Feb. 8, 1862, John Kimberly Papers (SHC); Hugh C. Thompson to Andrew Johnson, Apr. 28, 1862, LeRoy P. Graf and Ralph W. Haskins, eds., The Papers of Andrew Johnson (6 vols. to date, Knoxville, 1967-), V, 346-47; Kate S. Carney Diary, May 24, 1862 (SHC); Sarah Kennedy to husband, Feb. 9, 1863, Sarah Ann (Bailey) Kennedy Letters (TSLA); Jesse Cox Diary, May 17, June 29, Aug. 10, 1862, Mar. 15, 1863 (TSLA). Among many other such examples, see Daniel Leib Ambrose, History of the Seventh Regiment Illinois Volunteer Infantry . . . (Springfield, Illinois, 1868), 45; "Documents: Civil War Diary of Jabez T. Cox," Indiana Magazine of History, XXVIII (Mar., 1932), 53; Wilbur F. Hinman, The Story of the Sherman Brigade . . . (Alliance, Ohio, 1897), 316; C. Alice Ready Diary, Mar. 31, 1862 (SHC); O. M. Mitchell to D. C. Buell, May 24, 1862, United States War Department, The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies (70 vols. in 128, Washington, 1880-1901), Ser. I, Vol. X, Pt. 2, p. 212 (hereafter cited as OR); Testimony of Thomas J. Wood, *ibid.*, Vol. XVI, Pt. 1, p. 156; Report of J. J. Reynolds, Feb. 10, 1863, *ibid.*, Vol. XXIII, Pt. 2, p. 54. Similar reactions characterized

Women, as many observers remarked, seemed to be the more outspoken and uncompromising in their animosity. Undoubtedly this reflected the popular assumption, in that age of chivalry, that even the abominable Yankees would not dare retaliate against a lady, whereas a man might risk liberty or even life with an intemperate word. A Federal general in Gallatin in December 1862 requested that "no more women be sent here [from army headquarters] for the purpose of passing through the lines. I consider them more insinuating and far more dangerous than men." Another in Columbia pronounced the women there "intense bitter & unbearable[.]" As an Illinois cavalry regiment rode past a cotton mill near Pulaski that summer, female workers hissed and jeered so obstreperously from the windows that the soldiers had to threaten to burn the building down to silence them. Gentlewomen in Nashville held their noses when passing Union officers on the street, and some, in a most unladylike display, would stop at the house of an officer whose wife was at home, spit over the gate, and yell "Yankees!" Diehard female pugnacity was exemplified by an elderly Murfreesboro lady who, according to an acquaintance,

refused to take the oath. Said the Yankees might
blow her brains out, & bury them, before she would take

Southerners in most other invaded sections of the Confederacy. See Bell I. Wiley, "Southern Reaction to Federal Invasion," JSH, XVI (Nov., 1950), 491-96. Exceptions were mostly in the highland areas of the South, where unionism was strong. See, for example, Charles F. Bryan, Jr., "The Civil War in East Tennessee: A Social, Political, and Economic Study" (Ph.D. diss., The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 1978), passim.

it as she had 3 sons & 7 grandsons in the Southern army. Hurrah! for her.³

More exasperating to the Federals than scathing words and insulting gestures were the outright aid and comfort which the unsubmissive heartlanders gave Confederate troops during their periodic forays through the region. When Rebel cavalry passed through Sumner County in March 1862, its commander noted that

The whole country . . . turned out in masses to welcome us. I have never before witnessed such enthusiasm and feeling: men, women, and children never wearied in their efforts to minister to [our] wants.

Another Confederate reported that citizens around Columbia were so "thoroughly loyal and anxious to render any service they can" that if necessary they could be relied on to burn an important railroad bridge near town. During 1862 Rebel forces briefly retook Clarksville, Murfreesboro, and Gallatin, and in each instance local men turned out with guns and joined in the attack. Other heartlanders more covertly served the cause as guides, scouts, and spies for the Southern army. "Clothed in the peaceful garb of the citizen," complained one Union

³G. H. Thomas to J. P. Garesche, Dec. 17, 1862, OR, Ser. I, Vol. XX, Pt. 2, p. 193; J. S. Negley to Andrew Johnson, Aug. 10, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Papers of Andrew Johnson, V, 605; Henry H. Eby, Observations of an Illinois Boy in Battle, Camp, and Prisons—1861 to 1865 (Mendota, Illinois, 1910), 56; John Beatty, Memoirs of a Volunteer 1861-1863 (New York, 1946), 91; Wiley, "Southern Reaction to Federal Invasion," 508; Carney Diary, May 9, 1862. See also Ready Diary, Apr. 15, 1862; William D. Bickham, Rosecrans' Campaign with the Fourteenth Army Corps . . . (Cincinnati, 1863), 113-15; Sir Arthur J. L. Fremantle, Three Months in the Southern States: April-June, 1863 (New York, 1864), 140. Wiley finds a similar phenomenon across the occupied South, attributing it to the ladies' loss of poise under the strain of invasion.

officer, "they enter our camps and pass through our lines, and the citizen's dress is generally but the disguise of a spy."⁴

Resistance was not only a personal commitment but a communal affirmation, reflecting and at the same time reinforcing traditional bonds among whites. For example, when Federal troops in Gallatin set out in the summer of 1862 to seize tools from citizens in the countryside, word spread so quickly through the network of neighborhoods and communities that the impressment squads came up nearly empty-handed. After the army arrested Maury County farmer James W. Matthews and sent him to the guardhouse at Columbia, friends visited his cell daily to succor and encourage him.⁵

Such positive communal reinforcement for the afflicted faithful was complemented when necessary by negative sanctions against the perfidious. A frequent phenomenon in the early months of occupation was the social ostracism of unionists and collaborators. Outright

⁴Report of John H. Morgan, Mar. 19, 1862, OR, Ser. I, Vol. X, Pt. 1, pp. 31-32; Samuel Jones to S. B. Maxey, Aug. 27, 1862, *ibid.*, Vol. XVI, Pt. 2, p. 783; Report of John G. Parkhurst, July 13, 1862, *ibid.*, Pt. 1, p. 805; Report of Rodney Mason, Aug. 18, 27, 1862, *ibid.*, 863-64; Report of William H. Sidell, Aug. 13, 1862, *ibid.*, 844; Report of Edward M. McCook, Dec. 14, 1862, *ibid.*, Vol. XX, Pt. 1, p. 51. See also Report of John H. Morgan, Aug. 22, 1862, *ibid.*, Vol. XVI, Pt. 1, p. 881; Samuel Jones to Braxton Bragg, Sept. 16, 1862, *ibid.*, Pt. 2, p. 837; Testimony of J. F. Miller (1862), *ibid.*, Pt. 1, p. 269; Report of William Nelson, July 24, 1862, *ibid.*, 816-17; Braxton Bragg to Samuel Cooper, Nov. 22, 1862, *ibid.*, Vol. XX, Pt. 2, pp. 416-17; Braxton Bragg to Jefferson Davis, Nov. 24, 1862, *ibid.*, 421-22; E. A. Paine to C. Goddard, Feb. 1, 1863, *ibid.*, Vol. XXIII, Pt. 2, p. 33; Beatty, Memoirs of a Volunteer, 167.

⁵Statement of J. R. Boone, Aug. 12, 1862, OR, Ser. I, Vol. XVI, Pt. 1, pp. 853-54; James W. Matthews Journal, July 31, Aug. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 1862 (TSLA).

unionists were rare in occupied Middle Tennessee (except in Shelbyville), but every town had its stalwart handful; and as the occupation continued a few other heartlanders gave up the struggle from weariness or practicality and cooperated or even socialized with the Federals. These turncoats earned the bitter enmity of the whole community and suffered the lonely fate of the pariah. "They would turn their faces away from me with undisguised contempt and hatred whenever we met," a Giles County unionist wrote about his old friends after he joined the Union army. The editor of a Shelbyville newspaper remarked in late 1862 on the "utter non-intercourse, and in many cases, the bitter recriminations" with which townspeople punished those who fraternized with the enemy. A poor widow in Clarksville who sewed a Union flag for an officer just to earn a little money was visited soon after by local ladies who informed her that she should no longer expect any charity, or even civility, from them. When her close friend took up with a Yankee beau, a Murfreesboro girl exclaimed "Poor goose, I wish I had never been intimate with her, but I will never be so again." A Columbia minister publicly denounced brethren of his own church who had invited the post commander to tea; and when three members of the First Baptist Church of Nashville declared for the Union soon after the city fell, their fellow worshippers were "immeasurably mortified," according to their pastor, and shunned the three along with their families "as if they had been infected with leprosy."⁶

⁶John W. Burgess, Reminiscences of an American Scholar: The Beginnings of Columbia University (New York, 1934), 32; Shelbyville Reveille, Dec. 4, 1862; Lizzie to Andrew Johnson, July 10, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Papers of Andrew Johnson, V, 547-48; Carney Diary, June 15,

Social sanctions like these were all that could avail those heartlanders in the immediate presence of the occupation forces. But where Union troops were not on hand, the community could more harshly enforce its decree of solidarity. Many unionists and apostates were threatened, persecuted, or even physically abused by their neighbors or by Confederate soldiers. Some fled their homes at the first opportunity from fear for their lives. A Davidson County unionist reported in April 1862 that a group of his "used to be friends" accosted him soon after the invasion and asked him menacingly if he liked the Yankees; when he answered affirmatively they told him "very well old fellow we will jerk you off the ground when they go away from here[.]" A Cheatham

1862; John A. Campbell to Andrew Johnson, June 6, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Papers of Andrew Johnson, V, 447; Rufus B. Spain, "R. B. C. Howell: Nashville Baptist Leader in the Civil War Period," THQ, XIV (Dec., 1955), 334. See also Sallie F. McEwen Diary, May 6, 1862 (TSLA); R. A. Shackelford to brother, Feb. 27, 1863, R. A. Shackelford Letters (TSLA); Amanda to Mary, Sept. 12, 1862, Clarksville, Tennessee, Correspondence Concerning Civil War Guerrillas (TSLA); Carney Diary, May 7, 1862; Fremantle, Three Months in the Southern States, 141-42; Report of John Coburn, Aug. 1, 1863, OR, Ser. I, Vol. XXIII, Pt. 1, p. 91; Pulaski Citizen, June 28, 1868.

The fervent unionism of many or most Shelbyvillians, which never failed to astonish and gratify Federal soldiers in the town, is illustrated in Beatty, Memoirs of a Volunteer, 98; Bedford County, Tennessee, County Court Clerk's Office, County Court Minutes, May, Aug., 1863, Vol. A, 6, 14; Fayetteville Union Herald, June 18, 1862; John Fitch, Annals of the Army of the Cumberland . . . (Philadelphia, 1864), 449, 654; W. L. Gammage, The Camp, the Bivouac, and the Battle Field . . . (Little Rock, 1958 [1864]), 72-73; "Major Connolly's Letters to His Wife, 1862-1865," Transactions of the Illinois State Historical Society (1928), 271; Shelbyville Tri-Weekly News, June 21, 1862; Report of John Kennett, Mar. 28, 1862, OR, Ser. I, Vol. X, Pt. 1, pp. 46-50; Report of G. Granger, July 13, 1863, ibid., Vol. XXIII, Pt. 1, p. 537.

The dearth of unionism elsewhere in the region (see Chapter VI) is documented in B. R. Peart to Andrew Johnson, June 5, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Papers of Andrew Johnson, V, 443-44; Report of D. C. Buell, Feb. 26, 1862, OR, Ser. I, Vol. VII, 425; Testimony of Thomas J. Wood (1862), ibid., Vol. XVI, Pt. 1, p. 156; Statement of company officers of 71st Ohio Infantry (1862), ibid., 868.

County man who suffered punitive pillaging that spring at the hands of the Rebels declined to go to the Federal authorities in Nashville because, as he explained, "being a union man I have to stay close in order to avoid suspicion and perhaps cruel assassination[.]" "I have been threaten to be hanged and notice to leave the county," wrote a spunky Maury County unionist in June; "the more they talk about hanging me the harder I cursed the Secession Movement[.]" A somewhat less doughty unionist, having been assaulted by a drunken secessionist in broad daylight on the public square in Franklin, begged Andrew Johnson for protection:

I am quite uneasy[.] I know nothing about the use of fire arms & am too old to learn it. . . . [S]uch men are a terror to timid men. . . . he has nothing against me except that from the beginning of this rebellion I have adhered to the union and am hated and despised. . . .⁷

Nothing more cogently illustrates the communal nature of resistance in the occupied heartland than the emergence of guerrillaism. Within weeks of the invasion of the region in 1862 armed guerrilla bands began

⁷Hugh C. Thompson to Andrew Johnson, Apr. 28, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Papers of Andrew Johnson, V, 346; J. B. Williams to Andrew Johnson, *ibid.*, 407-8; John A. Campbell to Andrew Johnson, June 6, 1862, *ibid.*, 447; Thomas W. Spivey to Andrew Johnson, June 5, 1862, *ibid.*, 444-45; Thomas A. Faw to wife, Sept. 22, 1862, Walter Wagner Faw Papers (TSLA); Report of William W. Lowe, Sept. 10, 1862, OR, Ser. I, Vol. XVI, Pt. 1, p. 956. See also Report of John Kennett, Mar. 28, 1862, *ibid.*, Vol. X, Pt. 1, pp. 46-50; Report of E. A. Paine, Apr. 18, 1863, *ibid.*, Vol. XXIII, Pt. 1, p. 262; Report of J. J. Reynolds, Feb. 10, 1863, *ibid.*, Pt. 2, pp. 54, 57; Nimrod Porter Journal, Oct. 3, 1862 (SHC); William B. Stokes and William B. Campbell to Andrew Johnson, May 8, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Papers of Andrew Johnson, V, 370; A. G. W. Thomas to Andrew Johnson, June 9, 1862, *ibid.*, 460-61; J. S. Negley to Andrew Johnson, June 23, 1862, *ibid.*, 499; Nashville Dispatch, Nov. 14, 1863.

to harass the Federal occupiers, and they continued to plague them to the end of the war. Never strong enough to assault the main fortified posts in the towns, the guerrillas struck at isolated outposts, railroad and wagon trains, telegraph lines, couriers, foraging squads, and other small parties of soldiers on detached duty. As their disruptive sorties multiplied over the months the guerrillas seriously jeopardized the maintenance of Federal power in Middle Tennessee; and as the war continued relentlessly the violence of their attacks reached a brutal intensity. In December 1863, for example, near the village of Mulberry in Lincoln County, guerrillas captured five Yankees who were straying from the main body of their foraging detachment, then led the soldiers off the road and into the woods, tied their hands, lined them up, and shot them all down in cold blood.⁸

The guerrillas of Middle Tennessee were not, however, merely footloose partisans waging ruthless war on the Yankee invaders. They

⁸Report of Silas Colgrove, Dec. 26, 1863, OR, Ser. I, Vol. XXXI, Pt. 1, pp. 623-24. Guerrilla attacks on military targets, and the concern they inspired among Federal commanders, are documented in Oliver D. Greene to E. C. Williams, Apr. 17, 1862, *ibid.*, Vol. X, Pt. 2, p. 110; D. C. Buell to E. M. Stanton, May 12, 1862, *ibid.*, 183; Testimony of E. M. Cook, *ibid.*, Vol. XVI, Pt. 1, pp. 326-29; Testimony of J. D. Bingham, *ibid.*, 628-30; J. S. Negley to J. S. Fry, July 30, 1862, *ibid.*, Pt. 2, p. 233; W. H. Sidell to J. B. Fry, Aug. 23, 1862, *ibid.*, 402-3; Report of Benjamin S. Nicklin, Oct. 10, 1864, *ibid.*, Vol. XXXIX, Pt. 1, p. 843; 83rd Illinoisan (Clarksville), May 5, 1865; Nashville Daily Times and True Union, July 26, 27, Aug. 5, 1864, Feb. 17, Mar. 17, 1865; Nashville Dispatch, July 30, 1863. John S. Daniel, "Special Warfare in Middle Tennessee and Surrounding Areas, 1861-62" (M.A. thesis, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 1971), is a comprehensive study of the early activities of guerrillas and regularly commissioned "partisan rangers," emphasizing their early success in hindering the Union war effort in the region.

were men (and boys) of the rural communities, known to their families and neighbors, harbored and supported by them, and committed to safeguarding their world. Federal authorities, in an ironic misapprehension, saw guerrillaism in the region as evidence of anarchy—ironic because it was in fact just the contrary. An extension of rural society, the guerrillas of the occupied heartland became the surrogate instruments of communal integrity and discipline when the customary instruments faltered or disappeared under the stress of war; and they enforced with loaded guns the deeply conservative values of the communities they embodied.⁹

Tapping (and simultaneously helping to sustain) the nervous system of rural society—that is, the traditional network of neighborly contacts and communication, the communal sharing of news, rumor, and opinion—the guerrillas (acting now in place of the generally defunct churches, courts, and less formal bodies) identified deviants and transgressors who jeopardized the purity, the unity, or the very existence of the community. Then, with threats and violence, they endeavored to bring the wayward back into the fold or failing that, to expel them, so that the community

⁹For evidence of the relationship of the guerrillas to their local communities see "Documents: Civil War Diary of Jabez T. Cox," 50; J. S. Negley to Andrew Johnson, Aug. 10, 1861[62], Graf and Haskins, Papers of Andrew Johnson, V, 605; Julian Wisner Hinkley, A Narrative of Service with the Third Wisconsin Infantry (Madison, 1912), 105-9; Nashville Daily Times and True Union, Nov. 28, 1864; Porter Journal, July 23, 1864; Testimony of Francis Darr, OR, Ser. I, Vol. XVI, Pt. 1, pp. 613-14; J. S. Negley to J. B. Fry, Aug. 9, 1862, *ibid.*, Pt. 2, p. 300; Report of Robert H. Clinton, Feb. 12, 1865, *ibid.*, Vol. XLIX, Pt. 1, pp. 38-39; A. A. Smith to B. H. Polk, Apr. 20, 1865, *ibid.*, Pt. 2, p. 418.

might retain its virtue and cohesion. He who took the oath, sold goods to the Yankees, or in any way cooperated with the invaders, and anyone who opposed guerrillaism itself, were deemed enemies of the community. In one illustrative incident during the summer of 1863, Nimrod Porter was accosted on his farm by a guerrilla who had heard rumors that Porter had encouraged another man to take the oath. Porter, however, explained himself to the satisfaction of the guerrilla, who thereupon affirmed that he would spread the word to his cohorts, all of whom had taken note of Porter's alleged misconduct. Some unionists and collaborators received blunt orders to leave the community. A band of guerrillas who in early 1864 ran a Giles County unionist out of the county, subsequently, in a perhaps symbolic gesture, auctioned off the victim's property to his neighbors.¹⁰

When suasion did not suffice, guerrillas resorted without hesitation to destruction, assault, and even murder. A Williamson County magistrate, under orders to enlist the men of his district in the state militia, wrote fearfully in 1864 that

Guerillas & Robbers are frequently seen [there]. . . .
Some of them have threatened me . . . that if I enroll
the citizens of my District, that they will destroy (or
in other words) burn my house, and take me where I will
not be Seen or heard of Soon &c.

¹⁰Porter Journal, July 18, 1863; Special Orders No. 42, Headquarters, Left Wing, Sixteenth Army Corps, Feb. 15, 1864, OR, Ser. I, Vol. XXXII, Pt. 2, pp. 400-1. See also Burgess, Reminiscences, 22; John Hamilton to Andrew Johnson, Nov. 26, 1862, Johnson Papers; Maury County refugees to Andrew Johnson, July 8, 1863, *ibid.* Hinkley, Narrative of Service, 107-8, indicates that guerrillas in Lincoln County knew and communicated with one another, and that one was in fact caught with a list containing the names of others.

Such warnings were not idle ones. A Union officer reported that thirteen guerrillas attacked the home of a Sumner County unionist one night in April 1863, wounded and captured the man, dragged him away from his horrified family to a spot some miles away, and there killed him, "literally hewing him to pieces." Near Pulaski in 1862 guerrillas lynched two unionists and left their bodies dangling publicly as a grisly warning of the consequences of disloyalty.¹¹

Slaves had always been an integral part of the rural communities, and their subjugation was among the cornerstones of Middle Tennessee society. Thus, the guerrillas endeavored to safeguard slavery as vigilantly as they did white unity. Roving guerrilla bands pounced on and whipped or otherwise chastised black miscreants and fugitives, filling at least partially the vacuum left by the demise of the court-administered slave patrols and the weakening of masters' authority through Federal interference. Nimrod Porter reported in 1863 that guerrillas had recaptured several local runaways and thus "some of the rest have taken a scare." A year later guerrillas ambushed a Federal

¹¹Isaac Ivy to Andrew Johnson, Sept. 30, 1864, Johnson Papers; A. J. Cropsey to Phelps Paine, Apr. 27, 1863, OR, Ser. I, Vol. LII, Pt. 1, p. 355; Testimony of Marc Mundy, *ibid.*, Vol. XVI, Pt. 1, p. 636. See also Jane C. Warren to Electa Ames, Aug. 27, 1863, Electa Ames Papers (Duke); Edmund Cooper to Andrew Johnson, July 10, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Papers of Andrew Johnson, V, 545-46; Nashville Daily Times and True Union, June 14, Aug. 10, 1864; Nashville Dispatch, Aug. 9, 1862; Testimony of J. D. Bingham, OR, Ser. I, Vol. XVI, Pt. 1, pp. 628-30; J. S. Negley to J. B. Fry, Aug. 1, 2, 1862, *ibid.*, Pt. 2, pp. 242, 252; John C. Smith to William S. Rosecrans, Oct. 14, 1863, *ibid.*, Vol. XXX, Pt. 4, pp. 364-65; R. H. Milroy to G. H. Thomas, Oct. 12, 1864, *ibid.*, XXXIX, Pt. 3, p. 238.

work party in Porter's neighborhood and shot two blacks, resulting in "greate excitement & running amongst the negroes that were there. . . ."12

Guerrillas defended their communities not only against defectors within, but intruders from without. A Northern "carpetbagger" who leased a farm near Franklin, hired fifteen blacks, and began planting early in 1865 became a prime target of local guerrillas, who so persistently bedeviled the man that he very nearly had to give up the enterprise. At the same time in Maury County guerrillas raided a farm operating under Federal auspices, thoroughly stripped it, and made threats against others: "[their] destruction is expected," Nimrod Porter wrote.¹³

The guerrillas were the guardians of rural society in its hour of peril, but they were also its faithful subjects. They yielded to the traditional authority of family and folk and they affirmed the collective will of their people. (Near the war's end a number of guerrillas, approaching the Union army about surrender, requested that it be made to look like capture so that they might avert opprobrium in the eyes of their community.) The guerrillas loyally championed the local aristocracy (which in turn patronized the guerrillas in their role as

¹²Porter Journal, Aug. 17, 1863, May 26, 30, 1864. See also Jane S. Washington to George A. Washington, July 27, 1864, Washington Family Papers (TSLA).

¹³R. Pierce Beaver, "An Ohio Farmer in Middle Tennessee in 1865," Tennessee Historical Magazine, 2 Ser., I (Oct., 1930), 31-36; Porter Journal, Mar. 31, 1865.

watchdogs of the social order) and, as the Federal army soon apprehended to its benefit, they remained dutifully obeisant to patriarchal sovereignty.¹⁴

Resistance in its various manifestations—the insult hurled at a Yankee soldier, the cold shoulder turned toward an oath-taker, the midnight ambush of a passing troop train, the rope tightened around a kidnapped unionist's neck—denoted the dogged persistence of traditional ideology in the heartland and the adamant determination of the region's whites to preserve their society and shield it from the corrosive storms of war and occupation. The implacable defiance of white Middle Tennesseans, some of whom became ruthless, unpardonable terrorists and killers in defense of their world, suggests how serious they deemed the threat to their way of life which the invasion represented—a mortal threat, they judged, far direr than that posed even by the shattering political events of 1859-61, which had moved heartlanders then to panic and violence. As in that earlier period of terrified reaction, Middle Tennesseans after the invasion identified political defection with social disintegration, and therefore reckoned unionists and collaborators a menace to the survival of the community, a malignancy in the social body to be remedied or excised. Retribution against transgressors,

¹⁴For evidence of the subservience of the guerrillas to family, community, and patriarchy, as well as the aristocracy's encouragement of guerrillaism, see Hinkley, Narrative of Service, 106-9; W. J. Clift to E. T. Wells, Feb. 7, 1865, OR, Ser. I, Vol. XLIX, Pt. 1, p. 665; J. S. Negley to J. B. Fry, Aug. 9, 1862, *ibid.*, Vol. XVI, Pt. 2, p. 300; Fitch, Annals of the Army, 641; J. S. Negley to Andrew Johnson, Aug. 10, 1861[62], Graf and Haskins, Papers of Andrew Johnson, V, 605; Shelbyville Tri-Weekly News, June 21, 1862.

Civil War guerrillaism as a social phenomenon has not received adequate scholarly attention, but two studies are worthy of mention

which included social sanctions and physical violence aimed at coercing the wayward back into the fold or expelling them altogether, harked back to the traditional methods of control in the rural social-religious communities and served nearly as effectively as those methods, now vitiated by the war. Thus, through the first year and more of occupation Middle Tennessee's white society held essentially intact its structure and its ideological foundations (if not all of its institutional instruments), stubbornly perpetuating the status quo ante bellum under the enemy's very nose.

The Federal high command was at first disinclined to challenge that status quo. Just as they refused to interfere with slavery in the early months of occupation, Union commanders generally declined to meddle with white society beyond ousting prominent secessionist political leaders,

here for purposes of comparison. Richard Maxwell Brown, "The American Vigilante Tradition," in Hugh Davis Graham and Ted Robert Gurr, eds., Violence in America: Historical and Comparative Perspectives (Beverly Hills, California, 1979), 153-85, shows that over its long history vigilantism in America has exhibited a persistent pattern. It has most often been an attempt to impose social order on a raw, frontier society which lacks the usual instruments of social control, namely institutions and communalism. Brown stresses the local popular consensus in favor of vigilantes, and especially the support of vigilantism by local elites, who had the most to gain from social order. If rural Middle Tennessee after the invasion is viewed as a sort of "frontier," its customary institutions in disarray, guerrillaism there can be seen as part of the history of American vigilantism as described by Brown.

Don R. Bowen, "Guerrilla War in Western Missouri, 1862-1865: Historical Extensions of the Relative Deprivation Hypothesis," Comparative Studies in Society and History, XIX (Jan., 1977), 30-51, focuses on a specific outbreak of pro-Southern guerrillaism, and especially on the question of who the guerrillas were. He finds that they were generally the sons of community leaders, who were mostly prosperous, secessionist slaveowners—i.e., a threatened local elite.

quashing overt resistance, and encouraging what they were convinced was the latent unionism of most Middle Tennesseans. The "rose-water" policy pursued by Major General Don Carlos Buell, commander of the army of occupation that first spring and summer, strictly prohibited troops from pillaging or entering private homes and encouraged civilians to report such incidents, eschewed the arrest or harassment of minor secessionist leaders and peaceable citizens, and relied on the advice of local unionists, who for the most part magnanimously urged a lenient course of action toward their deluded fellow heartlanders. "We are in arms," Buell admonished his soldiers after the fall of Nashville, "not for the purpose of invading the rights of our fellow-countrymen anywhere, but to maintain the integrity of the Union and protect the Constitution. . . ."15

From the lips of Union commandants in these months came propitiatory speeches more often than harsh edicts. The naval officer who captured Clarksville on February 19 announced, after the town fathers entreated him to calm the panicky townsfolk, that "all peaceably-disposed persons . . . neither in their persons nor in their property shall . . . suffer

¹⁵General Orders No. 13a, Department of the Ohio, Feb. 26, 1862, OR, Ser. I, Vol. VII, 669-70; D. C. Buell to George McClellan, Feb. 28, 1862, *ibid.*, 671; James B. Fry to O. M. Mitchell, Mar. 1, 1862, *ibid.*, 675-76; Testimony of Lovell H. Rousseau, *ibid.*, Vol. XVI, Pt. 1, pp. 350-55; Testimony of Russell Huston, *ibid.*, 497-504; Testimony of Marc Mundy, *ibid.*, 632-36; Fitch, Annals of the Army, 99-100; William B. Campbell and Jordan Stokes to Andrew Johnson, Apr. 23, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Papers of Andrew Johnson, V, 322-23; Marcellus Mundy to Andrew Johnson, Apr. 23, 1862, *ibid.*, 325-26. Buell's policy in Middle Tennessee is sketched in Edwin T. Hardison, "In the Toils of War: Andrew Johnson and the Federal Occupation of Tennessee" (Ph.D. diss., The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 1981), 179-81.

molestation . . . and . . . they may in safety resume their business avocations with the assurance of my protection." The Fayetteville provost marshal reported in April that his command was doing its best to "conciliate the Citizens," and suggested that "mild yet firm measures in the course of two or three months will bring the people back to their allegiance." Most commanders preferred positive inducements, such as public pro-Union meetings and indulgent supervision of the citizens' business and social activities, over negative sanctions like mass arrests and oath-administering. A secessionist woman who came to know the Federal officers stationed in Columbia felt compelled to admit in May 1862 that

Some of them I liked. Genl Buell was as nice a gentleman as I ever met he treated the people well. . . . [T]aking all things into consideration, the Yankees have treated us very well. . . .

Elite heartlanders, in particular, often received quite cordial treatment from senior officers who felt a kind of patrician kinship with those conquered gentlefolk, whatever their political persuasion. "I have no reason to complain of the higher officers of the Federal Army," a Davidson County aristocrat wrote; "They have treated me, I am happy to say (without an exception) with great kindness and respect."¹⁶

¹⁶Report of Andrew H. Foote, Feb. 20, 1862, OR, Ser. I, Vol. VII, 422-23; Curran Pope to Andrew Johnson, Apr. 19, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Papers of Andrew Johnson, V, 311; Lizzie Rogers to G. W. Gordon, May 18, 1862, George W. Gordon and William T. Avery Papers (TSLA); William B. Lewis to George A. Washington, Feb. 24, 1863, Washington Papers; Peter Maslowski, Treason Must Be Made Odious: Military Occupation and Wartime Reconstruction in Nashville, Tennessee (Millwood, New York, 1978), 44. See also Marcellus Mundy to Andrew Johnson, Apr. 23, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Papers of Andrew Johnson, V, 325-26; Testimony of Russell Huston, OR, Ser. I, Vol. XVI, Pt. 1, pp. 497-504; Testimony of Marc Mundy,

The honeymoon was a brief one, however. Before long it became obvious that Middle Tennesseans would not be so easily coaxed back to the bosom of the Republic. The continuing stiff-necked defiance manifested even by those in towns under the army's thumb, the utter failure to spark an appreciable grassroots unionist movement in the region, and the accelerating, bloody armed resistance in the unsubjugated countryside, all conjoined to convince most Union commanders to discard the carrot and take up the stick. Buell and his policies came under political fire in Washington, too, and he was replaced in the fall of 1862. Thereafter it was generally understood among the Federal occupiers that the citizens of the heartland were to be not cajoled, but subdued. "These people are proud, arrogant rebels," wrote a brigadier general in Pulaski in late 1863; ". . . I propose, so far as I can, to let these people know that we are at war. . . ." Andrew Johnson decided as early as the summer of 1862 that his own conciliatory policy had failed, and subsequently concluded that disloyal citizens "must be made to feel the burden of their own deeds."¹⁷

ibid., 632-36. For an example of a subordinate commander (General James S. Negley) who abjured Buell's wishes and enforced a severe policy from the earliest months of occupation, see Fitch, Annals of the Army, 99-101.

¹⁷G. M. Dodge to Henry R. Mizner, Nov. 27, 1863, OR, Ser. I, Vol. XXXI, Pt. 3, pp. 261-62; W. H. Sidell to J. B. Fry, Aug. 1, 1862, ibid., Vol. XVI, Pt. 2, pp. 242-43. For further evidence of the Federal high command's hardening of policy toward the conquered population, see Henry W. Halleck to William S. Rosecrans, Oct. 24, 1862, ibid., 640-41; General Orders No. 19, Department of the Cumberland, Nov. 19, 1862, ibid., Vol. XX, Pt. 2, pp. 71-72; Report of J. J. Reynolds, Feb. 10, 1863, ibid., Vol. XXIII, Pt. 2, pp. 54-57; James A. Garfield to D. S. Stanley, July 10, 1863, ibid., 527; Daniel McCook to Gordon Granger, Aug. 29, 1863, ibid., Vol. XXX, Pt. 3, p. 223. Andrew Johnson's change of heart and subsequent repudiation of Buell's policy are discussed in Hardison, "In the Toils of War," 181-85; and Maslowski, Treason Must Be Made Odious, 67-68, 74-89.

That burden weighed more and more heavily upon the people of Middle Tennessee as the war went on. Having abandoned their attitude of hopeful indulgence toward the rebellious in spirit, military authorities after 1862 ruled with a naked iron hand. The arrest and punishment of outspoken secessionists became a matter of routine. Guardhouses and provost marshal's offices grew crowded with sullen citizens summoned at bayonet point to atone for their contumacy. Jesse Cox, who all through 1862 had continued his rebel preaching in Williamson County pretty much unmolested, was arrested in March 1863 and thereafter strictly prohibited from leaving his farm to ride his pastoral circuit. In April the Nashville provost guard rounded up over seventy-five people for their secessionist sympathies and locked most of them up in the state penitentiary. Eventually the occupation authorities ordered citizens across the region to take the oath or go south. And, as a further measure of control, in 1864 all able-bodied male citizens were conscripted into the state militia under Andrew Johnson's command.¹⁸

The recalcitrant endured not only sterner regulation but destruction and violence. Not satisfied that edicts alone would cow the audacious

¹⁸Cox Diary, Mar. 25, Dec. 31, 1863; Nashville Dispatch, Jan. 1, Apr. 18, 25, 26, 28, 30, May 6, 1863; James S. Negley to Andrew Johnson, Aug. 13, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Papers of Andrew Johnson, V, 614; Sarah Kennedy to husband, May 25, 1863, Kennedy Letters; Nashville Daily Times and True Union, Nov. 28, 1864; Porter Journal, Oct. 4, 1863, May 3, Sept. 15, 20, 1864; Betsy S. Underwood, "War Seen through a Teen-Ager's Eyes," THQ, XX (June 1961), 182; General Orders No. 43, Department of the Cumberland, Mar. 8, 1863, OR, Ser. I, Vol. XXIII, Pt. 2, p. 121; Special Orders No. 35, Left Wing, Sixteenth Army Corps, Feb. 4, 1864, *ibid.*, Vol. XXXII, Pt. 2, p. 330; Maslowski, Treason Must Be Made Odious, 57-62.

Jesse Cox, soldiers came to his farm in April 1863 and

threatened to burn [my house] and drive me off.
We are packed up as well as we can not knowing what
will be the result, will the Lord help us to bare it
with patience, no tunge can describe the intence
anxiety.

A cavalry expedition through Rutherford and Wilson counties that same month methodically stripped all the secessionists' farms and redistributed the goods to unionist families. In neighborhoods where guerrillas had attacked Federal troops or unionist citizens, the army sometimes wrathfully punished secessionists: soldiers in Giles County, for example, put an entire village to the torch in 1864 after guerrillas ambushed an army detachment nearby. Guerrillas and spies captured by the military could expect swift and fatal retribution, often without the formality of a trial.¹⁹

The Yankees' efforts to crush the individual spirit of resistance eventually converged to touch white society as an entity. The military government instituted strategies directed deliberately against the cornerstones of Middle Tennessee society. Reinforced and furiously accelerated by the blind momentum of war itself, this calculated campaign swelled to an overwhelming force which battered that society relentlessly and jarred it to its foundations. Stout but not indestructible, the edifice of society ultimately collapsed into ruins.

¹⁹Cox Diary, Apr. 13, 1863; Fitch, Annals of the Army, 430; Journal of Jacob D. Cox, Nov. 14, 1864, OR, Ser. I, Vol. XLV, Pt. 1, p. 356. Military executions are documented in Hans C. Heg to Gunild, June 19, 1863, Theodore C. Blegen, ed., The Civil War Letters of Colonel Hans Christian Heg (Northfield, Minnesota, 1936), 218; William D. Gale to wife, Oct. 17, 1862, Gale-Polk Papers (SHC); Alice Williamson Diary, June 16, Sept. 10, 1864 (Duke).

Among the first targets of peremptory military rule was the ruthlessly-enforced unity of white society in opposition to the invaders. Unionists and collaborators coerced by social pressure or violence were protected by the Yankees, encouraged by them, placed in positions of power, and even armed, permitting many at last to confront the despotic majority without submitting or fleeing. Some used the opportunity to avenge old wrongs. Unionists in Shelbyville, for instance, seized control of the county court after the Rebel army retreated from the heartland in 1863, and promptly cashiered a number of officeholders, including the sheriff, who had helped raise troops for the Confederacy. A Murfreesboro collaborator took power in 1862 with the aid of Northern bayonets and proceeded to persecute his secessionist neighbors mercilessly (at least in their eyes): one denounced him as a "wicked man" and moaned that "tyranny stalks in open day, & private grudges of years standing are brought to light, & revenge is considered sweet." A group of Maury County unionists, "driven from our homes by a lawless band of rebel ruffians because we refused to fight in their unholy cause," petitioned Andrew Johnson in 1863 for a supply of double-barreled shotguns and permission to return to their communities, reclaim their homes, and punish the "outlaws."²⁰

Eventually the government did organize and equip unionists to fight rebel resistance in their counties. Implacably these "home

²⁰Testimony of Marc Mundy, OR, Ser. I, Vol. XVI, Pt. 1, p. 636; Bedford County Court Minutes, Aug., 1863, Vol. A, 14; Carney Diary, May 12, 1862; Maury County refugees to Andrew Johnson, July 8, 1863, Johnson Papers; Maslowski, Treason Must Be Made Odious, 77-78, 87, 122-23.

guards" tracked down guerrillas and their abettors: "[T]hey are killing many of the worst men in this part of the State," a Union officer wrote after scouting through Wilson County in 1864,

& will soon drive all the Guerrillas out. They are passing through the Country in small parties killing (they take none) all the robbers & Scoundrels. I am convinced of their usefulness.

A number of unionists, emboldened by the triumph of Federal power in the heartland, enlisted in the Union army itself. The better part of an entire Federal regiment—the 1st Middle Tennessee Cavalry—was recruited in the region in the summer of 1862, and its members served to the end of the war as scouts, guides, and avenging angels in their own homeland. Thus, as the omnipotence of the heartland's obdurate white majority withered, the long-stifled dissenters, few in number but formidable in their righteous wrath, took up arms and turned on their oppressors, with the result that white Middle Tennesseans faced for the first time not just the threat but the dreaded reality of an unleashed enemy within their own ranks.²¹

As the Yankees remained in the heartland their understanding of its people grew. Just as they came to appreciate the crucial significance of white unity, so too they became aware of the immense influence of patriarchal authority and communal bonds in that society. Eventually

²¹David A. Briggs and James P. Brownlow to Andrew Johnson, Aug. 9, 1863, Johnson Papers; D. W. Nye to Andrew Johnson, Sept. 7, 1863, *ibid.*; Alvan C. Gillem to Andrew Johnson, Aug. 9, 1864, *ibid.*; Fitch, Annals of the Army, 213-15; Frederick H. Dyer, A Compendium of the War of the Rebellion (3 vols., New York, 1959 [1908]), III, 1,638-39; Maslowski, Treason Must Be Made Odious, 41-43.

they sought to use those hierarchical and communal forces for their own ends. By pressuring both local leaders, who in turn exerted their social authority downward against their deferential liegemen, and "significant others," who in turn exerted their persuasiveness outward toward kith and kin, the army found it could curtail overt local resistance and more readily work its will on the populace.²²

The Federal authorities found this tactic notably successful against guerrillaism. Abandoning their initial assumption that the guerrillas were footloose anarchists unassimilated by the community (an "idle floating population," one officer had called them, with "no habitation, . . . here today and in another place to-morrow"), the Yankees came to recognize and to exploit the communal nature of guerrillaism. As one enlightened official wrote after the telegraph wire was cut near Clarksville in September 1862, "The secesh attend their farms in the day-time and go bushwhacking at night." If such culprits could not be apprehended, local commanders found it efficacious to apply pressure at sensitive points in the guerrillas' communal or familial context. In localities where guerrillas had destroyed the property of unionists, the Federals often forced every secessionist family in the neighborhood to pay stiff fines. Where unionists or soldiers had been killed, Federal troops would march in and take

²²For evidence of the Federals' growing awareness of the role of the aristocracy in Middle Tennessee society, see William B. Cassilly to Andrew Johnson, June 28, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Papers of Andrew Johnson, V, 511-12; Report of Joseph J. Reynolds, Apr. 30, 1863, OR, Ser. I, Vol. XXIII, Pt. 1, pp. 269-70; Report of J. J. Reynolds, Feb. 10, 1863, ibid., Pt. 2, pp. 54-57.

neighboring men and women hostage until the perpetrators were caught or their attacks ceased. If, as was sometimes the case, the guerrillas could be specifically identified, even more direct pressure was brought to bear. For example, when a Federal officer in Lincoln County learned that certain young guerrillas had made off with a four-hundred-dollar mule, he merely notified the boys' parents, who lived nearby, that they would have to reimburse the owner. After a Bedford County guerrilla and his gang murdered ten home guardsmen in 1864, the district commandant wrote his superior for permission to arrest and banish the guerrilla's wife, who lived in Shelbyville, and to burn the guerrilla's house down. In Sumner County that same year occupation authorities arrested the wife and four neighbors of a guerrilla chieftain believed responsible for the kidnapping of a local unionist, and held them hostage for the victim's safe return.²³

The Federals also attacked guerrillaism vertically downward through the local aristocracy. This was an equally effective expedient, based on the army's growing awareness that guerrillaism was an extension of the community, that the community bowed to the aristocracy, and that

²³Testimony of R. W. Johnson, *ibid.*, Vol. XVI, Pt. 1, pp. 266-67; C. Dwyer to J. B. Fry, Sept. 5, 1862, *ibid.*, Pt. 2, p. 484; *Nashville Daily Times and True Union*, Aug. 8, 1864; *Nashville Dispatch*, Nov. 14, 1863; General Orders No. 199, Department of the Cumberland, Aug. 15, 1863, *OR*, Ser. I, XXX, Pt. 3, pp. 33-34; General Orders No. 4, Military Division of the Mississippi, Nov. 5, 1863, *ibid.*, Vol. XXXI, Pt. 3, p. 58; General Orders No. 6, Department of the Cumberland, Jan. 6, 1864, *ibid.*, Vol. XXXII, Pt. 2, pp. 37-38; Hinkley, *Narrative of Service*, 105-7; R. H. Milroy to G. H. Thomas, Oct. 12, 1864, *OR*, Ser. I, Vol. XXXIX, Pt. 3, p. 238; Walter T. Durham, *Rebellion Revisited: A History of Sumner County, Tennessee, from 1861 to 1870* (Gallatin, Tennessee, 1982), 208-9.

the aristocracy supported guerrillaism. "The wealthy secessionists of this neighborhood are undoubtedly aiding & sympathizing" with the guerrillas, a Union general in Maury County told Andrew Johnson in August 1862. The officer was certainly correct, but Johnson needed no such reminders. As early as May 1862, the governor had ordered the arrest and punishment of five prominent secessionists in any neighborhood where guerrillas assailed loyal citizens or soldiers. This edict and later ones like it were enforced with a vengeance—many a patrician found his plantation stripped, his valuables confiscated, and himself behind bars after local guerrillas murdered a unionist or ambushed a foraging party—and they very often achieved their intended effect, as harried patriarchs quietly but sternly passed orders to the community that guerrilla attacks must cease. The Fayetteville provost marshal claimed, for example, to have virtually wiped out guerrillaism in Lincoln County in 1864 by assessing rich Rebels for every penny of loss or damage caused by guerrillas.²⁴

While with one hand the Yankees thus strove to use the power of the patriarchy against the common folk, with the other they endeavored

²⁴James S. Negley to Andrew Johnson, Aug. 10, 1861[62], Graf and Haskins, Papers of Andrew Johnson, V, 605; Governor's Proclamation, May 9, 1862, *ibid.*, 374; Hinkley, Narrative of Service, 105-7. For other examples of the enforcement of Johnson's guerrilla proclamation, and its burdensome effect on patricians, see Rutherford County citizens to Andrew Johnson, May 22, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Papers of Andrew Johnson, V, 410-11; Andrew Johnson to Rodney Mason, July 30, 1862, *ibid.*, 581; wife to William G. Harding, July 13, 1862, Harding-Jackson Papers (SHC); Shelbyville Tri-Weekly News, June 21, 1862. Guerrillaism was not, of course, completely quashed everywhere in the region until the war was over. But it was significantly curtailed by such measures as those described here.

to turn the common folk against the patriarchy. It was an article of faith among most Federals—in particular Andrew Johnson—that secession had been an aristocratic coup carried out insidiously against the true interests of the masses, who were intrinsically loyal but deluded by their overbearing superiors: ". . . coaxed and browbeat," as one unionist declared to Johnson, "by their devilish aggressive leaders—the Secession disease being in the thin upper Stratum of society." If told the truth, Johnson and others assumed, the people would surely see their error, reembrace the Union, and renounce the villainous slaveholding patriarchy which had brought upon them such travail and woe.

A Union commander in Fayetteville advised Johnson early in the occupation that the suffering of the plain folk—especially the soldiers' families, whom aristocrats had promised to care for when they encouraged volunteering in 1861—was a "fruitful . . . Cause for future prejudice and disaffection—if wisely used. . . ." Another in Pulaski told the governor in June 1862 that upper class secessionists were still stealthily intimidating and coercing the common people, and insisted that "the masses must be disenthralled." Thereafter antiaristocratic propaganda became a staple of Federal policy in Middle Tennessee. The Nashville Daily Times and True Union, purporting to speak for the working people of the region while actually representing the more radical elements among the occupiers, declared in 1864 that large slaveholders had always ruled the state, and thus

A non-slaveholder was nothing but a poor white man,
and his wife and daughters nothing but poor white trash.
. . . [Aristocrats] were society, they were the State,
and . . . in their madness, they destroyed government

and dashed society into broken fragments. Oppressed and cruelly wronged fellow-sufferers, shall we longer remain the base slaves of these cold-hearted aristocratic few? . . . What have we to gain by longer remaining subservient to a heartless, domineering aristocracy, that has no feeling in common with us or for us? What have they done for us but brought ruin upon us?

Other editorials denounced the "rapacious slaveocracy" monopolizing the best farm land, called for the abolition of slavery and the redistribution of land, and exhorted poor whites to consider the need for "social revolution."²⁵

The Yankees were not content merely to incite the masses to insurrection, for while the occupation was still young they embarked on a campaign whose ultimate aim was nothing less than the crushing of the patriarchy by Federal force: as one officer declared in June 1862, ". . . the bad rich men must feel our power. . . ." Indeed, some occupation authorities in Middle Tennessee came to see this as the crux of their mission. A major general wrote after scouting the region in 1863 that

the only effectual mode of suppressing the rebellion must be such a one as will conquer the rebellious [leaders] now

²⁵Alexander W. Moss to Andrew Johnson, Apr. 28, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Papers of Andrew Johnson, V, 344-45; Curran Pope to Andrew Johnson, Apr. 19, 1862, *ibid.*, 311; Marc Mundy to Andrew Johnson, June 8, 1862, *ibid.*, 456-58; Nashville Daily Times and True Union, Feb. 22, 26, May 4, 1864. See also *ibid.*, July 15, Aug. 25, 1864. The pervasive belief among the Federals (and many native unionists as well) that the common folk were fundamentally loyal and aristocrats were traitors is illustrated in J. O. Shackelford to Andrew Johnson, Mar. 6, 1864, Johnson Papers; W. H. Sidell to J. B. Fry, Aug. 1, 1862, OR, Ser. I, Vol. XVI, Pt. 2, pp. 242-43; Report of Joseph J. Reynolds, Apr. 30, 1863, *ibid.*, Vol. XXIII, Pt. 1, pp. 269-70; Report of J. J. Reynolds, Feb. 10, 1863, *ibid.*, Vol. XXIII, Pt. 2, pp. 54-57.

at home as well as defeat their armies in the field; either accomplished without the other leaves the rebellion unsubdued.

Andrew Johnson summed up his own war policy in late 1862 after learning of the preliminary Emancipation Proclamation: "Damn the negroes," he roared; "I am fighting these traitorous aristocrats, their masters!"²⁶

One way to neutralize the pernicious sway of the patriarchs, the Federals discovered, was simply to uproot them from their social context through imprisonment or expulsion. (Many, of course, had already uprooted themselves by enlisting in the Rebel army in 1861 or fleeing in 1862.) Beginning in the summer of 1862 the army rounded up many prominent leaders, especially wealthy planters and outspoken politicians and ministers. Those who refused the oath were locked up in the guard-house or ordered to Northern penitentiaries (the grand patriarch of the heartland himself, William G. Harding, spent months in a prison in Michigan), or were exiled beyond Rebel lines. After learning from some of the local folk how deeply they feared the revenge of the aristocracy should they openly embrace the Union cause, the Pulaski commandant arrested twenty Giles County bigwigs in June 1862 and threatened them with banishment if they declined the oath. Six who did were promptly escorted to Confederate territory. Some Union commanders favored the wholesale expulsion of the elite rather than selective measures against the recalcitrant alone. As one officer explained in 1863,

²⁶Marcellus Mundy to Andrew Johnson, June 8, 15, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Papers of Andrew Johnson, V, 456-58, 480-82; Report of J. J. Reynolds, Feb. 10, 1863, OR, Ser. I, Vol. XXIII, Pt. 2, pp. 54-57; John Cimprich, "Military Governor Johnson and Tennessee Blacks, 1862-65," THQ, XXXIX (Winter, 1980), 461.

If the leading men of the neighborhoods are allowed to remain, although they may give bonds [for good behavior], when the rebels run into their neighborhoods they will be forced to aid them. If they are sent away, their presence and their influence are gone.²⁷

Leaders who were offered the option of submission or exile faced an anguishing choice. One of the six banished Giles countians, a proud and prominent lawyer-politician, remarked that he had regretfully elected to leave "a Community in which I have been raised . . . let the pain be as Keen as it may," because to take the oath would leave him "degraded in the estimation of the Community." Whether prompted by pride, conscience, fear, or Yankee bayonets, however, the removal of influential patriarchs reached in some localities a scale great enough to imperil society's very structure. Jesse Cox of Williamson County noted at the end of 1863, for example, that "many nay all my brothers

²⁷Herschel Gower, "Belle Meade: Queen of Tennessee Plantations," in Elinor Miller and Eugene D. Genovese, eds., Plantation, Town, and County: Studies in the Local History of American Slave Society (Urbana, Illinois, 1974), 215-18; Testimony of Marc Mundy, OR, Ser. I, Vol. XVI, Pt. 1, pp. 632-33; Marcellus Mundy to Andrew Johnson, June 15, 29, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Papers of Andrew Johnson, V, 480-82, 519-20; Report of Joseph J. Reynolds, Apr. 30, 1863, OR, Ser. I, Vol. XXIII, Pt. 1, pp. 269-70. Other examples of arrest or banishment of elites, particularly ministers, are in L. Pettijohn to Brother Jocelin, Feb. 15, 1864, American Missionary Association, Tennessee Records (Amistad Research Center, Dillard University, New Orleans); wife to William G. Harding, June 29, Aug. 5, 1862, Harding-Jackson Papers; Carney Diary, June 18, 1862; David Pise Journal, Aug. 30, 31, 1862 (SHC); D. M. Ransdell Diary, Jan. 12, 1863 (SHC); Cave Johnson to Jefferson Davis, Oct. 17, 1862, OR, Ser. I, Vol. XVII, Pt. 2, pp. 730-31; Fitch, Annals of the Army, 641. The flight of elites in early 1862 and later is documented in H. B. Titcomb to George W. Gordon, Mar. 2, 1862, Gordon and Avery Papers; Rees W. Porter to Andrew Johnson, Mar. 1, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Papers of Andrew Johnson, V, 168-69; Nashville Daily Times and True Union, Apr. 14, 1864.

in the ministry that live near have been banished from thair homes and proptert[y]. . . ."28

Those patriarchs who remained in their homes and communities suffered harassment, ruination, impoverishment, and violence at the hands of the Yankees. One officer leading his men on a devastating "clean sweep" through Rutherford County in 1863 deplored the plight of the poor but, as he remarked, "For the rich rebels I have no sympathy. . . ." Troops despoiled Belle Meade plantation over and over, while authorities in Nashville persecuted its owner, William G. Harding. Another famous Davidson County planter, Mark Cockrill, likewise sustained huge losses of crops, livestock, equipment, and dignity. Dragged before the military police in 1863 for further reprisals, the exasperated, seventy-four-year-old Cockrill lost his composure and screamed his denunciation of his tormentors: "Kill 'em! Plant 'em out! Manure the soil with 'em!" A number of large plantations in the region were so ravaged by looting, impressment, and slave desertions that their owners abandoned farming; some of those planters resorted to renting their land to Yankee entrepreneurs in order to make any money at all. Wealthy secessionists in town and country alike were heavily levied upon by the Federals throughout the war, some to the point of penury, to help care for indigents and unionist refugees or as retribution for Rebel and guerrilla attacks.²⁹

²⁸Thomas M. Jones to Andrew Johnson, June 14, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Papers of Andrew Johnson, V, 474-76; Cox Diary, Dec. 31, 1863.

²⁹Beatty, Memoirs of a Volunteer, 217; Gower, "Belle Meade," 217-19; Fitch, Annals of the Army, 641-42; Nashville Daily Times and True Union,

Draconian measures against patriarchal property and pride were sometimes accompanied by physical violence. During a viciously destructive Yankee raid in 1864 the great planter-patriarch George A. Washington of Robertson County stoically endured two hours of "threats, curses, jeers and taunts . . . pistols . . . snapped in his face and shaken over his head," only to be shot and wounded in a scuffle with one of the pillaging soldiers. Federal cavalry troops near Fayetteville in 1864 furtively trailed and then coldbloodedly murdered a prominent local man, Judge Chilcothe, who earlier had bravely confronted them to demand the return of the horse they had stolen from him.³⁰

Three years of havoc and punishment brought the exalted patriarchs of Middle Tennessee to their knees. Assailed bodily and spiritually by

Apr. 14, 1864. Cash levies on the wealthy are noted in William B. Cassilly to Andrew Johnson, June 28, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Papers of Andrew Johnson, V, 511-12; E. A. Paine to B. H. Polk, Mar. 2, 1864, Johnson Papers; Nashville Daily Times and True Union, Mar. 23, 1864; Nashville Dispatch, Dec. 13, 14, 27, 1862; General Orders No. 4, Military Division of the Mississippi, Nov. 5, 1863, OR, Ser. I, Vol. XXXI, Pt. 3, p. 58; General Orders No. 6, Department of the Cumberland, Jan. 6, 1864, *ibid.*, Vol. XXXII, Pt. 2, pp. 37-38; Special Orders No. 26, Left Wing, Sixteenth Army Corps, Jan. 26, 1864, *ibid.*, 228-29. The harassment and impoverishment of wealthy Nashvillians in particular are noted in Bickham, Rosecrans' Campaigns, 56; Fitch, Annals of the Army, 626-41, 643. Andrew Johnson's personal war against the patriarchy is examined in Maslowski, Treason Must Be Made Odious, 53-57; and in Hardison, "In the Toils of War," 82-134, which stresses its ritualistic and rhetorical nature. Johnson himself, Hardison argues, was satisfied with a symbolic victory over the aristocracy through the use of tough language, forced oaths, and brief jail terms, but never went so far as to confiscate property wholesale or to execute leaders.

³⁰Nashville Daily Times and True Union, Dec. 13, 1864; Jane S. Washington to son, Dec. 18, 1864, Jane S. Washington Letter (TSLA); Hinkley, Narrative of Service, 114-15.

the Yankees, stripped of their wealth and their slaves and their aristocratic ornaments, compelled in many instances to labor like plain folk, the heartland's elites were left humbled and defeated, the abject detritus of a once lordly class.

Witnesses and victims alike vividly and sometimes poignantly depicted the humiliating debasement of the patriarchy. In 1862, for example, authorities ordered a group of Nashville's eminent ministers to appear before Andrew Johnson for refusing the oath. The governor proceeded to deliver a "violent and vituperative" harangue, tongue-lashing the astounded clergymen (as one of them recalled) like "an angry overseer speaking to a herd of grossly offending slaves." The ministers were afterward arrested and marched at gunpoint through the city's streets to the provost marshal's office. That same year a relative at Belle Meade wrote to William G. Harding that

I am of opinion that you are happier in your Northern prison than we are here, who are in the midst of [this] exacting and lawless state of things. . . . Imprisonment is hard to bear, but degradation and misery is still harder.

An aristocratic Shelbyville woman lamented her own degradation and misery: "I cannot see how we are to get through the winter," she wrote after her slaves had run off and she was forced to do housework: ". . . for I do hate to work. . . . We are all tired to death by seven oclock but I guess we will get used to it." John W. Burgess, a Giles County unionist working in Nashville, saw

wives and daughters of the once wealthy and well-to-do planters of my own acquaintance getting out of [railroad] box cars, clad in tatters, carrying bundles of bedding, and staring about themselves vacantly as not knowing where to look for food or shelter.

The war against the upper class left some of its tormented members literally begging for anonymity. "It is a happy thing these days to be obscure," Mrs. William G. Harding wrote her imprisoned husband,

and a man's safety now depends on his insignificance . . . and if I could you would find, on your return, Belle Meade and all it's appurtenances occupying as unfindable a place as possible.³¹

Facing invincible power, once-imperious aristocrats prostrated themselves before the Northern conquerors. "The tone of this class in February," a Union general remarked wryly in April 1863,

was quite defiant; they were determined to persevere in their rebellion until they secured their rights. They have since that time lost no little property . . . and . . . their negro men have run away. . . . The tone of this class is now changed. They have discovered their mistake. They had been misled. They have found their rights, and they are now anxious to take the non-combatant oath, give bonds, and stay at home.

Later that year an officer in Nashville asserted that next to the death of slavery the

most distinguishing feature in this country . . . is the manner in which these people are cowed by the force of the Gov't. Slaveholders of all classes—the common farmer, the most aristocratic man and the most aristocratic lady—come . . . to talk with me about their slaves, and are the most polite people I ever saw.³²

³¹Spain, "R. B. C. Howell," 335; Hardison, "In the Toils of War," 102-13; Randal M. Ewing to William G. Harding, Aug. 17, 1862, Harding-Jackson Papers; Agnes Whiteside to E. E. Peacock, Nov. 30, 1863, Whiteside Family Papers (TSLA); Burgess, Reminiscences, 31; wife to William G. Harding, June 16, 1862, Harding-Jackson Papers.

³²Report of Joseph J. Reynolds, Apr. 30, 1863, OR, Ser. I, Vol. XXIII, Pt. 1, pp. 269-70; Testimony of George L. Stearns, American Freedmen's Inquiry Commission, Preliminary and Final Reports, Letters Received by the Office of the Adjutant General (Main Series), 1861-1870, RG 94 (NA). Other examples of aristocratic submission to the Federals are in

The mortification of the proud patriarchs who once bowed to no one but their Creator is exemplified in the travail of Gideon J. Pillow, Confederate general and eminent Maury County planter, master of eighty-one slaves and a vast plantation worth over half a million dollars. His estate confiscated and his family impoverished and evicted from their home by the Yankees, Pillow swallowed his pride and from behind Confederate lines wrote to Union general William T. Sherman in late 1864, beseeching him to permit Pillow "as a personal courtesy, amenitory of the harshness of this war," to travel to Middle Tennessee and take his distraught wife and seven children south. "If the application is not allowed in the form presented," Pillow continued,

you will confer a favor on me to allow a personal interview with yourself. . . . A small guard of Confederates or Federals will be necessary to guard my family, which you will also please allow, to protect them from bushwhackers and robbers.³³

Dispossessed of dignity, property, and position, or altogether exiled, the patriarchs of the heartland forfeited their majesty and saw their power and moral authority evaporate. Compounded with institutional disarray and with the eruption of black self-assertion at the opposite end of the social scale, the assault on the patriarchy

"Documents: Civil War Diary of Jabez T. Cox," 50; James H. Negley to Andrew Johnson, Aug. 13, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Papers of Andrew Johnson, V, 614; William B. Lewis to George A. Washington, May 1, 1863, Washington Papers; Jane S. Washington to George A. Washington, Aug. 15, 1864, *ibid.*

³³Gideon J. Pillow to William T. Sherman, Nov. 2, 1864, OR, Ser. I, Vol. XXXIX, Pt. 3, pp. 639-40; Chase C. Mooney, Slavery in Tennessee (Bloomington, Indiana, 1957), 198-99.

shattered the hierarchical structure of Middle Tennessee society. No longer could the lofty planter influence his humble neighbors by word, by example, or by political or economic coercion; no longer could the fatherly pastor tend his white and black flock, encouraging some, scolding others, ministering to all; no longer could the local magistrate punish the community's scofflaws; no longer could the master beat his fractious slave into submission; no longer could whites of whatever class tyrannize blacks with impunity. Middle Tennessee had become an alien and bewildering land to its white inhabitants, a land where aristocratic trappings were a curse, where rank had no privileges, where white skin conferred no prerogatives—a world turned upside down, and violently shaken.

The society of the heartland had not just one dimension, however, but two: a dimension not only of height and hierarchy, but one of breadth and community. But the forces of war touched that aspect of society as well, and smashed the bonds of communalism. Danger, disruption, and ruin in the countryside stifled the activities and institutions through which rural culture exerted its powerful embrace. The burgeoning violence all around them kept most rural folk fearfully at home, isolated from their neighbors and estranged from the churches, courthouses, schools, and village taverns where they had always gathered in solemn attendance or noisy revelry; and even where traveling was safe, Yankee interference often shut down those institutions for reasons of politics and war. Destruction and uncertainty disintegrated the unifying fellowship of agrarian life and work: where there was no

cotton or tobacco to be picked, no corn to be shucked, no horses to be shod, no barns to be raised, and no quilts to be sewn, no neighbors came together to share labor and leisure and gossip. Moreover, the suppression of guerrillaism by the Federals wrecked what in many areas was the last remaining instrument of communal integrity. And even as these plagues of war withered society's sinews and vital organs, death and flight removed many of that society's constituents—white and black—and thus drained its lifeblood.³⁴

War and occupation devastated not only the corpus of society, but its psyche as well. Before the war ended the ideological underpinnings of Middle Tennessee society were destroyed. Among the cluster of common assumptions and revealed truths constituting the social credo of white heartlanders were three essential tenets whose widespread acceptance had done much to define and shape that society: first, that the salutary relationship of person to person, class to class, and race to race depended not only on authority and submission, but on the faithful performance of mutual obligations; second, that survival required society to close ranks and present a staunch and united front against all threats; third, that natural abundance and widespread affluence were enduring facts of life in Middle Tennessee, helping to ensure harmony and a bright future. But the scourge of war laid waste to ideological consensus. Looking around aghast after 1862 amid the blazing ruins of their land,

³⁴For detailed documentation of institutional disorganization, economic devastation, and the disruption of mobility in the rural areas, see Chapter VII.

heartlanders saw their countrymen of high rank and low defaulting on or abjuring their sacred obligations to one another. They saw some of their fellows, white and black, allying with the mortal enemy and taking up arms against their own people. They saw prosperity and optimism consumed in the awful conflagration.

The demise of authority and deference, the dissolution of communal bonds, and the collapse of society's ideological foundations toppled the props of social order in the rural heartland. By 1864 the Middle Tennessee countryside was a moral as well as geographical no man's land: a world without accepted verities and shared convictions, without collective obligations and common rewards, without all the customary formal and informal instruments for commending the virtuous, reproofing the wayward, and punishing the wicked. Subject no longer to coercion from authorities above, or from peers around, or in many cases from conscience within, individual volition was cast adrift on a turbulent sea of social anarchy. Clarksvillian Sarah Kennedy limned the plight of heartland society thus in 1864: ". . . very little social intercourse—and every man for himself seems to be the motto." A Robertson County plantation lady concurred: "I can see every day people are for them selves and no boddy else," she wrote in March 1865; "I think . . . most of [the] people have turned out to steal and lie[,] not many that care for any one but themselves. . . ." The elders of Zion Presbyterian Church in Maury County recorded sadly in the summer of 1865 that

During the terrible conflicts which have passed over the country . . . religion has been and still is, at a very low ebb, and the conduct of many professors has been such, as to justify the declaration, "the Master has been wounded in the house of his friends"

"I have gone through centuries of experience in human villainy during the last two years," wrote a bitter Giles County planter at the end of the war;

. . . the robbers and thieves and the lower population here in Ten. are as atrocious as the larger part of the upper classes are superior. Society in a moral aspect is in extreme beyond any I ever knew. I never saw better or viler men. I have been robbed, persecuted, slandered, threatened. . . .³⁵

The most striking manifestation of the fracturing of Middle Tennessee society was the proliferation of crime. During the latter part of the war the region was engulfed by an indigenous crime wave of tidal proportions, a deluge of villainies committed by heartlanders against heartlanders which left no high ground anywhere for refuge. The first signs appeared early. In October 1862 Lincoln County citizens met publicly to denounce the

lawless persons [who have taken] advantage of the exigency of the times . . . seizing . . . the property of citizens, and otherwise committing gross offenses against the peace and good order of society. . . .

The following April a Union officer in Sumner County reported that robberies there were an "Almost nightly" occurrence. Crime continued to mushroom. In the fall of 1864, for example, there were ten highway robberies in a single day near Clarksville. A group of Murfreesboro

³⁵Sarah Kennedy to husband, Feb. 11, 1864, Kennedy Letters; Mary C. Washington to Jane S. Washington, Mar. 18, 31, 1865, Washington Papers; Zion Presbyterian Church, Columbia, Maury County, Records, Session Minutes, Aug. 22, 1865 (TSLA); William Stoddert to R. S. Ewell, May 24, 1865, Polk-Brown-Ewell Papers (SHC). See also Nashville Daily Times and True Union, Aug. 25, 1864; First Presbyterian Church, Clarksville, Montgomery County, Records, Session Minutes, Apr. 17, 1867 (TSLA).

unionists described their land that year as one "where crime of every grade unrebuked, runs riot at noonday, where there is neither safety for the person or protection for the property of the citizen." In Maury County Nimrod Porter woefully chronicled the burgeoning incidence of lawbreaking. "[M]idnight robberies . . . on the high ways are the order of the day," he wrote at the beginning of 1864: "in every part of the country committed in every neighborhood & every day. . . . O how long will divine providence permit such a state of affairs to continue." Three weeks later he again remarked "a greate Many robberies & thefts, as far, every way as has been heard of[.] it is truly become alarming"; and he detailed fifteen recent cases in his community alone. By the last months of the war lawlessness was epidemic: "There are sore trouble[s]," he wrote in November, "thefts, robberies & murders every day all round us"; and early in 1865 he noted "Many house breakings & robing going on all over the country it is truly distressing to hear of so much lementations coming up from all round the country of robing & plundering &c."³⁶

Crime in every form was rampant by 1864, but that which most cogently epitomized the disintegration of society was the emergence of bandit gangs. Banditry was almost unknown in the antebellum heartland. By 1864 it was rife in the seething rural areas. Banditry arose almost simultaneously with guerrillaism, coexisted with it in many places, but

³⁶Fayetteville Observer, Oct. 9, 1862; A. J. Cropsey to Phelps Paine, Apr. 27, 1863, OR, Ser. I, Vol. LII, Pt. 1, p. 355; Nashville Daily Times and True Union, Oct. 6, Aug. 25, 1864; Porter Journal, Dec. 24, 1863, Jan. 1, 25, Feb. 6, July 7, Nov. 20, 1864, Jan. 20, 22, 1865. See also Hinkley, Narrative of Service, 110; Nashville Dispatch, Feb. 2, 1863; Nashville Daily Times and True Union, May 13, 1864.

progressively overshadowed it everywhere across the region as guerrillaism was checked and disorder grew. Federal authorities consistently mistook bandits for guerrillas, and labeled them as such, because bandits often attacked military targets. Nevertheless, crucial distinctions separated the two.³⁷

Unlike the guerrillas, bandits had no ultimate social or political purpose. They acted not to keep their society unified and their world intact, but to pillage and scourge their fellow heartlanders from the basest of personal motives, notably greed and vengeance. Guerrillaism, while far from exemplifying any sort of lofty idealism, at least symbolized the persistence of community, hierarchy, and ideology. The rise of banditry represented the obliteration of all three. Its victims were not just the unionists, Yankees, and runaway slaves who threatened the integrity of the community. The mayhem of the bandits was undirected, or rather, directed against all—against unionists and secessionists, Yankees and Rebels, slaves and contrabands, plebeians and patricians, men, women, and children. These were not the "social bandits" of Western lore; instead, these were rapacious, egocentric, conspicuously asocial

³⁷The appearance of bandit gangs is noted in Oliver D. Greene to E. C. Williams, Apr. 17, 1862, OR, Ser. I, Vol. X, Pt. 2, p. 110; Report of S. Palace Love, May 6, 1863, ibid., Vol. XXIII, Pt. 1, p. 327; James Davidson to J. C. Parrot, Apr. 6, 1864, ibid., Vol. XXXII, Pt. 3, p. 274; Nashville Dispatch, Dec. 11, 1862, July 25, 26, 28, 1863; D. W. Nye to Andrew Johnson, Sept. 7, 1863, Johnson Papers; Nashville Daily Times and True Union, Apr. 2, 1864. Banditry arose also in other areas of the South hard hit by the war. See Charles P. Roland, The Confederacy (Chicago, 1960), 176; Emory M. Thomas, The Confederate Nation: 1861-1865 (New York, 1979), 247-48; Bryan, "Civil War in East Tennessee," 147-49.

or antisocial brigands. Arising from and feeding on social chaos, they were completely unresponsive to social coercion from above or around. Thus, Federal attempts to quash banditry through the standard anti-guerrilla tactic of pressuring local aristocrats or neighbors or kinfolk failed utterly. Where rural anarchy was worst, bandit gangs roamed without hindrance and in some cases continued their depredations for months after the war had ended and all justification for political or military resistance had vanished.³⁸

Bandits did, however, share with the guerrillas two characteristics: they were for the most part men of the community, often known to their neighbors, and they did not hesitate to use brutal violence to attain their ends. Evidence suggests, in fact, that some guerrillas metamorphosed into bandits or quasi-bandits, still selectively attacking unionists and soldiers but also robbing them or stripping their corpses. Whether degenerate guerrillas or just opportunistic desperadoes, the

³⁸Personal vengeance as a motive behind banditry is illustrated in Nashville Daily Times and True Union, Feb. 4, 8, 1865; Nashville Dispatch, Mar. 7, 1863; and Jane S. Washington to George A. Washington, July 31, 1864, Washington Papers. The indiscriminate nature of bandit violence is noted in Nashville Dispatch, Feb. 2, 1863. Depredations against secessionists are documented in Lincoln County News, Sept. 26, 1868, and Nashville Daily Times and True Union, July 25, 1864; against blacks in Samuel Henderson Diary, May 7, 1864 (TSLA), and John W. Gorham to Andrew Johnson, Jan. 15, 1865, Johnson Papers; against the rich and against Yankees in Nashville Daily Times and True Union, Oct. 1, 1864; against itinerant ministers in Herman A. Norton, Tennessee Christians: A History of the Christian Church in Tennessee (Nashville, 1971), 100; and against unionists, women, and children in R. H. Milroy to George H. Thomas, May 12, 1865, OR, Ser. I, Vol. XLIX, Pt. 2, p. 737, and Nashville Daily Times and True Union, Mar. 5, 1864. Persistent banditry beyond the end of the war is noted in Special Orders No. 104, Sixth Division, Cavalry Corps, Military Division of the Mississippi, May 21, 1865, OR, Ser. I, Vol. XLIX, Pt. 2, p. 863; and W. D. Whipple to John E. Smith, July 25, 1865, *ibid.*, 1,090.

bandits routinely terrorized their communities with a viciousness that beggars description. Nimrod Porter recorded in 1864 that the local bandits' favorite expedient was

attacking [a] house in the dead of the night gitting the doore open & punishing the inmates by partially hanging & choking them until they tell where there moneys & valuables are.

Early in 1865 in another part of Maury County a bandit gang robbed a wealthy secessionist, James Coughran, who promptly complained to authorities in Columbia. When the bandits learned of this they returned, burst into Coughran's home, dragged his wife upstairs and put a bullet through her head, likewise murdered Coughran, and then plundered the house and rode off. Near the end of the war a Union officer reported that a notorious bandit chieftain plaguing the southern counties of the heartland had, in one recent night of savagery,

murdered two of my scouts, shot a number of loyal men, robbed them of everything they had, even women's and children's clothes, ravished one loyal lady, with fifteen of his gang, and made a similar attempt on an orphan girl sixteen years of age in the same room with the corpse of her cousin, whom they had killed. . . . I consider him and his gang demons incarnate. . . . The parties spoken of had to borrow clothes to bury their dead [in], so destitute were they left.³⁹

³⁹Porter Journal, Feb. 6, 1864; Nashville Daily Times and True Union, Feb. 8, 1865; R. H. Milroy to George H. Thomas, May 12, 1865, OR, Ser. I, Vol. XLIX, Pt. 2, p. 737. See also John W. Gorham to Andrew Johnson, Jan. 15, 1865, Johnson Papers, quoted at the beginning of this chapter.

That bandits were residents of their communities (many of them teenage boys) and sometimes known by name there is shown in Matthews Journal, Feb. 10, 1864; Jane S. Washington to George A. Washington, July 27, 1864, Washington Papers; R. H. Milroy to B. H. Polk, Apr. 9, 1865, OR, Ser. I, Vol. XLIX, Pt. 2, pp. 291-92. Attacks on soldiers,

The proliferation of atrocities like these all across the heartland in the latter part of the war, hand in hand with unremitting Yankee violence, left rural Middle Tennesseans vulnerable and terror-stricken. "What will we do," pleaded an anguished Nimrod Porter as bandit outrages convulsed his neighborhood in early 1864; "We cant defend our selves." Almost a year later, with no end of "trouble & distress" yet in sight, he begged for remission: "O how long will it continue." Even the mighty Washingtons of Robertson County, masters of hundreds of slaves and thousands of acres, cowered before the merciless fury of the bandits. Menaced in the summer of 1864 by a local gang whose leader had sworn vengeance against all who had testified against him, men and women and children of the Washington clan gathered their belongings, stockpiled pistols and ammunition, and literally barricaded themselves inside the Big House, boarding up windows and fortifying doorways. "We have everything so concentrated," the plantation mistress pluckily wrote her absent husband on July 27, "that I think it would take a battery of 12 pounders to capture our citadel." But a few days later she confessed anxiously that "I do not think that we can live here much longer."⁴⁰

unionists, military outposts, and other traditional guerrilla targets which featured robbery as well are noted in Hans C. Heg to Gunild, June 19, 1863, Blegen, Civil War Letters of Colonel Heg, 211; Nashville Daily Times and True Union, July 26, 27, 1864; Mary C. Washington to Jane S. Washington, Mar. 25, 1865, Washington Papers; Report of Silas Colgrove, Dec. 26, 1863, OR, Ser. I, Vol. XXXI, Pt. 1, pp. 623-24; Durham, Rebellion Revisited, 206.

⁴⁰Porter Journal, Jan. 25, Nov. 22, 1864; Jane S. Washington to George A. Washington, July 25, 27, 31, Aug. 8, 1864.

Brutalized and plundered to the point of desperation, some heartlanders eventually counterattacked. Nothing more compellingly attests the antisocial nature of banditry and its fundamental distinction from guerrillaism than the determined efforts of Middle Tennesseans of all classes and political persuasions to destroy the bandit gangs. A group of Williamson County citizens, fearful that an infamous local bandit recently caught and convicted might be pardoned by Andrew Johnson, wrote to the governor in 1863 in order to "Most earnestly and respectfully Solicit and beseech" him to keep the culprit in prison; ". . . it is absolutely necessary," they insisted,

—for the Security of persons and property—during this unhappy State of our Country—Surrounded as we are by unlimited Thieves and Robbers, all over the land—to make Suitable Examples of Such[.]

Late in 1862 Robertson County citizens arrested, on their own initiative, three men claiming to be Confederate partisan rangers "but [who] are nothing more or less than thieves traveling through the Country, Committing depredations upon quiet Citizens[.]" The Robertson countians asked Johnson for armed guards to escort the bandits to Nashville to be "dealt with as they deserve." The following summer provoked Shelbyvillians mounted their horses and went after a bandit gang which had been preying on travelers in Bedford and Lincoln counties; they rode for days, bagging at least one of the outlaws. "The Citizens are becoming aroused," one of the gang's victims reported exultantly, "and feele a determination to put down bushwhackers & thieves[.]" Near the end of the war the Union general whose district included Bedford, Lincoln, and Marshall counties organized local home guard companies under military control and, simply

to subjugate more effectively the still restive citizenry, he required every white male over fourteen years old to enroll. But he found to his gratification that many of these men and boys cooperated willingly, armed themselves with shotguns and squirrel rifles, and set out without military assistance to track down and kill the bandits who had been wantonly sacking their communities. Familiar with the bushwhackers' haunts and thirsty for vengeance, the home guards wiped out banditry in Bedford and Lincoln by April 1865 and won the gratitude of nearly all the populace, who, as the general reported, "now feel more freed from apprehension and terror of lawless men than at any time since the beginning of the war." The home guard units even went beyond the suppression of banditry to attack rural anarchy at its roots, by setting up in their communities informal courts, presided over by the older guard members, which resolved neighborhood problems of every sort—the first institutions of order and justice in months or even years to make their power felt in the Middle Tennessee countryside.⁴¹

Order in the rural areas, though earnestly desired by the people of the heartland, was not, however, the paramount concern of the

⁴¹Williamson County citizens to Andrew Johnson, Dec. 25, 1863, Johnson Papers; E. M. Reynolds to Andrew Johnson, Nov. 25, 1862, E. M. Reynolds Letter (Department of Special Collections, University of California, Los Angeles); R. P. Shapard to Andrew Johnson, Aug. 23, 1863, Johnson Papers; R. H. Milroy to B. H. Polk, Apr. 9, 1865, and enclosure, OR, Ser. I, XLIX, Pt. 2, pp. 291-93. Other examples of citizen opposition to banditry are in Jane S. Washington to George A. Washington, July 27, 1864, Washington Papers; Nashville Dispatch, Mar. 4, 7, 1863. The home guards referred to here are not to be confused with the exclusively unionist home guard units organized earlier to combat guerrillaism.

Northern invaders. The occupiers had a more imperative object: to crush the will of the people to resist. Despite the continued suffering of Middle Tennesseans and the manifest preponderance of Federal power, this was a difficult task. Confederate sentiment in the region represented not just political predilection, but allegiance to a peculiar ideology and an entire way of life which the deeply conservative white heartlanders were loath to renounce. Moreover, lacking the benefit of modern hindsight, no one in Middle Tennessee before late 1864 could be certain of ultimate Union victory. Until then Confederate morale in the region persisted, its intensity rising and falling in response to the proximity of Rebel troops and the war news from other fronts. When Confederate detachments threatened Nashville in the summer of 1862 a Davidson County woman reported that

The Secess. about here are in fine spirits—spunky as ever, "never say die" while those who from fear or other motives, have taken "the oath" are as a general thing, morose, bitter and sullen.

As late as September 1864 Andrew Johnson complained that "The raids . . . [by Confederate units] in this section of the country have a great tendency to keep a rebellious spirit alive." A Montgomery County woman wrote her brother in the spring of 1864 that

It would take me weeks to tell you all that we as a people have suffered since our troops were driven out of Tennessee. But we are more hopeful than we have been for a long time, indeed we are full of hope. We are expecting a great deal from Lee.⁴²

⁴²M. Southall to William G. Harding, July 30, 1862, Harding-Jackson Papers; Andrew Johnson to George H. Thomas, Sept. 26, 1864, OR, Ser. I, Vol. XXXIX, Pt. 2, p. 482; Sallie to John Minor, May 15, 1864, Sailor's Rest Plantation, Montgomery County, Tennessee, Papers (TSLA). Further

The deteriorating Confederate military situation, however, and especially the repulse of Rebel commander John B. Hood's invasion of Middle Tennessee in December 1864, blasted the last shreds of faith that the enemy would yet be driven from the land. As heartlanders realized that their enormous sacrifices would never be rewarded with victory and that the Yankees were there to stay, Confederate morale collapsed. Few of these discouraged Middle Tennesseans embraced the Union cause outright, while most continued to hate the invaders with all their hearts; but before 1864 ended, nearly all bowed to the inevitability of Northern victory. Even as Hood's army entered the region jubilantly in November, hundreds or perhaps thousands of local men—already convinced that the Confederate cause was lost, and determined not to be conscripted into its service—fled to the safety of Nashville and its Federal occupiers; and in the wake of Hood's decisive defeat Andrew Johnson remarked that "its withering influence upon rebels [in Middle Tennessee] is more decided than anything which

evidence of the persistence of Confederate morale in the region through 1864 and its relationship to the successes and failures of the Confederate army is in Fitch, Annals of the Army, 130, 641; William B. Campbell and Jordan Stokes to Andrew Johnson, Apr. 23, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Papers of Andrew Johnson, V, 322-23; Hugh C. Thompson to Andrew Johnson, Apr. 28, 1862, *ibid.*, 346-47; John T. Gordon to Joseph Ramsey, Sept. 19, 1864, Johnson Papers; Nashville Daily Times and True Union, Dec. 1, 1864; Porter Journal, July 1, 1863; Louis to sister, Apr. 9, 1863, Talbot and Related Families Papers (TSLA); W. H. Sidell to J. B. Fry, Aug. 23, 1862, OR, Ser. I, Vol. XVI, Pt. 2, pp. 402-3; G. M. Dodge to Henry R. Mizner, Nov. 27, 1863, *ibid.*, Vol. XXXI, Pt. 3, pp. 261-62; Report of Benjamin S. Nicklin, Oct. 10, 1864, *ibid.*, Vol. XXXIX, Pt. 1, p. 843; Maslowski, Treason Must Be Made Odious, 34-37.

has transpired since the beginning of the rebellion." The Confederate governor of Tennessee, Isham G. Harris (who was traveling with Hood's army), himself admitted that "the unfortunate result [of the campaign] was very discouraging to our people. . . ."43

Signs of defeat began to appear all around. Citizens by the thousands consented to take the oath and submit to a reconstructed state government. Guerrillas still active in the rural areas surrendered to Federal authorities. Some of the refugees of 1862, seeing now the handwriting on the wall, ended their self-exile and returned to the heartland. Many Middle Tennessee soldiers deserted their commands, came home to their long-suffering families, took the oath, and endeavored to get on with their lives. "If we judge the Confederacy by this section," wrote a Clarksvillian after seeing a number of returning Rebel soldiers in January 1865, "the army must be greatly depleted."44

As heartlanders forsook the struggle but continued to endure the tribulations of war, their prayers for glorious victory turned to pleas

⁴³Andrew Johnson to George H. Thomas, Jan. 1, 1865, OR, Ser. I, Vol. XLV, Pt. 2, p. 471; Isham G. Harris to Jefferson Davis, Dec. 25, 1864, ibid., 732. Refugees from Hood's invasion are mentioned in Frank A. Handy Diary, Dec. 24, 1864 (Duke); Nashville Daily Times and True Union, Dec. 1, 2, 20, 1864; Porter Journal, Nov. 3, 27, Dec. 16, 1864.

⁴⁴Unknown correspondent to John Minor, Jan. 25, 1865, Sailor's Rest Plantation Papers. The surrender of guerrillas is noted in W. J. Clift to E. T. Wells, Feb. 7, 1865, OR, Ser. I, Vol. XLIX, Pt. 1, p. 665; A. A. Smith to B. H. Polk, Apr. 20, 1865, ibid., Pt. 2, p. 418; H. D. Brown to B. H. Polk, May 10, 1865, ibid., 710. The return of many citizens who had fled the region in 1862 or 1863 to escape Federal occupation is documented in Nashville Dispatch, Feb. 6, 1864; Nashville Daily Times and True Union, June 24, July 13, 1864.

for simple peace. As early as January 1864 a Union general declared that most civilians in the district around Nashville had recently evidenced a "very marked and decided" change of attitude: sick of anarchy and affliction, they were now ready for peace "on almost any terms." Nimrod Porter articulated the thoughts of many a Middle Tennessean in the last months of the war: "O will that time ever come that . . . the country [is] once more in peace," he wrote in November 1864; "what would I give yes all I have to effect it. . . ." Three months later, more desperate still, he wrote

I would agree to go any where to live in any kind of government that would stop our troubles. . . . O for a change Some way I feel like agreeing to any thing to stop the war.⁴⁵

Such sentiments marked the watershed of white society's Civil War in Middle Tennessee. The persistence of Confederate patriotism had signified the heartlanders' profound commitment to preserving the world they knew in 1861. The abandonment of it signified not only war-weariness and the admission of military defeat, but ideological surrender on the enemy's terms and the acknowledgement of a new and transformed world. Though most whites were determined to retain as much of the old world as they could, all understood that the new one would inevitably stand in stark contrast to that which they had known

⁴⁵Lovell H. Rousseau to W. D. Whipple, Jan. 30, 1864, OR, Ser. I, Vol. XXXII, Pt. 2, 267-68; Porter Journal, Nov. 20, 1864, Feb. 19, 1865. Other examples are in Nancy B. Smith to James B. Smith, May 26, 1864, Nancy B. Smith Letters (TSLA); W. W. Pepper to Andrew Johnson, Dec. 25, 1863, Johnson Papers; "Documents: The Shelly Papers," Indiana Magazine of History, XLIV (June 1948), 187; Testimony of William G. Brownlow, OR, Ser. I, Vol. XVI, Pt. 1, p. 678.

all their lives and for which many had died and many had killed.

"It is now pretty well understood the Southern Confederacy has gone up," Nimrod Porter wrote in resignation three weeks after Lee's surrender; "& peace of some sort either for well or for woe, will take place . . . shortly. . . ."46

Defeatism appeared earliest in the towns, where Federal power was most palpable and irrefutable. Well before rural heartlanders laid down their ideological arms most urbanites had acknowledged Northern victory and conceded the futility of resistance. Many came to rely on the army for subsistence and protection and eventually identified their own interests with those of the Yankee occupiers. Some began to fraternize openly with the enemy without fear of social disgrace. Before the war ended it was common for heartlanders in the occupied towns to attend church services, picnics, balls, and teas with Federal soldiers, on the most affable terms. Many townsfolk welcomed officers as boarders and even condoned courtship and marriage between soldiers and local women. A Yankee in Murfreesboro wrote in the spring of 1863 that

Our officers are getting to be great favorites with the girls down here. . . . The people . . . are not as strong Secesh as they used to be, in fact I am pretty sure many of the young ladies would be right glad to marry some of our gay and handsome looking officers and the old Ladies seem to be very willing for their daughters to get on good terms with our boys.

⁴⁶Porter Journal, Apr. 29, 1865.

In some towns the post headquarters or provost marshal's office became a kind of social center. The Fayetteville provost marshal related this anecdote in his memoirs:

When we first arrived at Fayetteville not a person was to be seen on the streets. . . . The people soon made their appearance, however, when they found that we had come to stay, and before very long we had established the most friendly relations with them. By the time we were ready to leave, almost every family in town had its friends among the soldiers. They were very sociable, and always seemed glad to have the Federal officers call on them. The young ladies would sing and play the piano beautifully, and make things quite home-like for us after the routine of the day's work. . . .

Most of the men . . . had served in the Confederate army. . . . [P]robably most of them, had deserted when they became sure that the fight was hopeless. My office was a common resort for these people after they had taken the oath of amnesty. They would sit around by the hour and spin their yarns about the Confederate service. . . .

When his regiment was finally ordered elsewhere, this officer continued, "I think that [the townspeople] really were, as they professed to be, sorry at our going. . . ." Similar instances could be found in other towns, and it was not unknown for townspeople to issue a formal commendation of their occupation troops or to petition to keep a particular unit which they had grown fond of. Perhaps the most remarkable indication of the mellowed sentiments of urban Middle Tennessee appeared in Clarksville—long known as the most rabidly secessionist town in the region—when a great crowd of citizens gathered in April 1865 to express formally and publicly their sorrow at Lincoln's assassination.⁴⁷

⁴⁷Hans C. Heg to wife, May 14, 1863, Blegen, Civil War Letters of Colonel Heg, 211; Hinkley, Narrative of Service, 105-13; 83rd Illinoisan (Clarksville), Apr. 21, 1865; R. M. Baldwin to Andrew Johnson, Apr. 18, 1865, Johnson Papers. Resignation to Confederate defeat among citizens of occupied towns is illustrated in Nashville Daily Times and True Union,

Well might the vanquished heartlanders of the occupied towns feel some measure of gratitude toward their Federal conquerors, for the muskets and cannons and fortifications of the Yankee garrisons held rural anarchy at bay and spared urbanites the horrors of social disintegration which ravaged the countryside. To be sure, military authorities could be brutal in suppressing resistance in the towns, and unofficial violence and pillaging by undisciplined or vengeful soldiers plagued every town throughout the war. Moreover, townsfolk suffered as surely as their rural brethren most of the other personal, social, and ideological disasters spawned by the war—dire privation, the loss of loved ones, the degradation of the patriarchy, the decline of prosperity and optimism, and most conspicuously the proliferation of moral degeneracy and crime. Nashville, in particular, brimming with drunks, murderers, thieves, confidence men, smugglers, and prostitutes, was condemned by one outraged Northerner as "rotten, morally and socially," and by another as "about as disorderly a place as I ever resided in." A third pronounced the city absolutely insufferable and

May 20, 1864; Porter Journal, Feb. 1, 22, 1864. Social mingling of Yankees and townspeople is further evidenced in Handy Diary, Feb. 19, Mar. 4, 1865; J. C. Harwood Diary, Nov. 29, 1863 (TSLA); Samuel W. Scott and Samuel P. Angel, History of the Thirteenth Regiment Tennessee Volunteer Cavalry U.S.A. (Blountville, Tennessee, 1903), 140; Underwood, "War Seen through a Teen-Ager's Eyes," 183; Wiley, "Southern Reaction to Federal Invasion," 503, 504-5, 508. Resort to and reliance on army authority by civilians in the towns is shown in Fitch, Annals of the Army, 282-83; James Gilfillan to Andrew Johnson, Jan. 28, 1865, Johnson Papers. Expressions of good will and gratitude toward occupation troops and officers are noted in Nashville Dispatch, June 10, 1863; Porter Journal, Mar. 21, Apr. 8, Dec. 31, 1864. Wiley, "Southern Reaction to Federal Invasion," 508-10, finds similar civil-military cordiality in occupied towns throughout the South, increasing with the length of occupation.

blamed the war, which had "undermined and demoralized the whole foundation of society in Tennessee." These three witnesses reacted understandably enough to the evident moral decay in the towns, but all three misread the essential fact about urban society in the wartime heartland.⁴⁸

The war had indeed "undermined and demoralized the whole foundation of society" in the rural areas, because rural society was built upon personal bonds which after 1862 were shattered, inundating the countryside with chaos. But urban society rested more on formal institutions of authority than on personal relationships; and most of those institutions (town councils, courts of law, police departments, highly-structured churches and schools) carried on their work under Yankee rule (and Yankee protection) or were supplanted by equally authoritative and effective ones, such as the provost marshal's office, the military guardhouse, and the Northern humanitarian agency. The poor might starve in their filthy tenements, lordly merchants and ministers might languish behind bars, and urbanites might swindle, rob, and assault one another with scandalous frequency, but urban life remained structurally intact, morally but not socially "rotten," noxious and boisterous and dangerous

⁴⁸Fitch, Annals of the Army, 350; Richard W. Johnson, A Soldier's Reminiscences in Peace and War (Philadelphia, 1886), 304; Allan Nevins, The War for the Union (4 vols., New York, 1959-71), II, 297-98. Nashville's wartime crime and immorality are documented in Nashville Daily Times and True Union, Nov. 21, 1864, Feb. 2, 7, 1865; Nashville Dispatch, May 28, July 24, Oct. 31, 1862, July 21, 24, Sept. 30, 1863; Thomas B. Alexander, "Neither Peace Nor War: Conditions in Tennessee in 1865," East Tennessee Historical Society's Publications, XXI (1949), 35-38; Maslowski, Treason Must Be Made Odious, 124-31.

but not in essence "disorderly." Vice, venality, and suffering, rampant though they were in the towns, did not fundamentally threaten the institutions of authority which governed urban society. They merely pointed up the need for more police, bigger jails, better-organized relief services, and other extensions of formal administration. On a social scale, individual volition in the towns remained subordinate to the ordained power. In the countryside, by contrast, where personal ties and obligations knit society, widespread immorality, disaffection, and violence represented the dissolution of social order and the wholesale untethering of individual volition. Middle Tennessee after 1862 was a kind of social archipelago, a dozen or so little islands of quasi-normality (the occupied towns, with institutions and order more or less intact) surrounded by a stormy sea of anarchic rural communities.

It remains to set this miniature of Middle Tennessee's white society at war alongside a broad-canvas portrait of the whole white Confederacy, and to compare the two subjects' features. This reveals two very different visages. In general outline, of course, there are certain likenesses: Confederates everywhere sooner or later endured invasion, occupation, and emancipation. But beneath the superficial resemblances there are fundamental dissimilarities, all deriving from the fact that invasion came so early in Middle Tennessee and occupation lasted so long. The experience of the heartland, in fact, defies or exaggerates nearly every important generalization about Southern white society in the Civil War. The degree of devastation and human suffering in the wartime heartland—equalled in few Southern regions and probably

exceeded in none—has been documented in a previous chapter which also explored the ideological consequences thereof. Another chapter has contrasted the traumatic nature of emancipation in Middle Tennessee with that in most other parts of the South, and has shown that the shock of slavery's rapid dissolution forced slaveholders in the heartland to abandon the institution intellectually while their fellows elsewhere clung to it. Three further points remain to be examined.

Some historians have suggested that wartime exigencies opened up the restricted, aristocratic Southern leadership class to aspirants from below, plebeian or nouveau riche arrivistes who made their way to the top through merit rather than old wealth, family connections, and cultured manners. Manifestly, no such democratization occurred in Middle Tennessee, simply because after Federal control was secured in the towns and order broke down in the countryside, no native leadership class remained in power anywhere to accept new members, from whatever rank.⁴⁹

More conspicuous, and more thoroughly documented by historians, was the exacerbation of class tensions in the Confederacy arising from the unequal sharing of the terrible burdens of war among patricians and plain folk. In most parts of the Confederacy behind the lines this led to popular indignation against what was perceived as "a rich man's

⁴⁹William B. Hesseltine, Confederate Leaders in the New South (Baton Rouge, 1950), 4-5; Emory Thomas, The Confederacy as a Revolutionary Experience (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1971), 105-13; Emory Thomas, The American War and Peace, 1860-1877 (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1973), 130-33, Peter J. Parish, The American Civil War (New York, 1975), 329-33; Thomas, Confederate Nation, 233.

war and a poor man's fight," and ultimately to widespread political disaffection among the yeomanry. A few areas witnessed overt, armed insurrection against aristocratic hegemony. But in wartime Middle Tennessee no such class hostility emerged, no red flags or mutinous mobs materialized (despite the efforts of Federal authorities to provoke lower class resentment)—for the plain reason that the rich as well as the poor suffered there. The small farmer of the heartland and his family endured unspeakable privation and brutality from 1862 to 1865, to be sure, but they could look down the road and see the great planter's fields similarly stripped, his mansion plundered, his children ragged and hungry. In this respect, then, the war did bring a kind of democracy to the heartland; but it was a democracy of devastation which mitigated class discord among whites by punishing and humbling high and low alike. There was indeed class conflict in Middle Tennessee during the Civil War but it pitted insurgent slave against master, not angry yeoman against planter. Thus, the social experience of the wartime heartland was in a sense the antithesis of that behind Confederate lines, where for the most part slaves remained quiescent while yeomen grew restive.⁵⁰

⁵⁰Hardship, resentment, and alienation among the masses are described in Georgia L. Tatum, Disloyalty in the Confederacy (Chapel Hill, 1934), 3-23; Charles H. Wesley, The Collapse of the Confederacy (Washington, 1937), vii, 82-93; Bell I. Wiley, Plain People of the Confederacy (Baton Rouge, 1943), viii, 36-54, 64-69; Charles W. Ramsdell, Behind the Lines in the Southern Confederacy (Baton Rouge, 1944), 14-56, 90-119; Mary E. Massey, Ersatz in the Confederacy (Columbia, South Carolina, 1952), 57-58; Clement Eaton, A History of the Southern Confederacy (New York, 1954), 86, 247-48; Nevins, War for the Union, III, 380-92; Roland, Confederacy, 148-65; Stephen E. Ambrose, "Yeoman Discontent in the Confederacy," Civil War History, VIII (Sept., 1962), 259-68; Thomas, Confederacy as a Revolutionary Experience, 100-13; Thomas, American War and Peace, 130-33; Robert Cruden, The War That Never Ended: The American

Underlying every general survey of the Southern people at war is the unspoken understanding that, although its structure was in greater or lesser degree challenged or altered, white society as an entity remained intact. But the rural heartland's white society had by 1864 virtually ceased to exist as an entity, its fragments drifting chaotically after the bonds of hierarchy, community and ideology had been snapped. In no other respect does Middle Tennessee stand so starkly apart from the Confederacy as a whole.⁵¹

Severed from their Confederate brethren, the white people of the occupied heartland were unable to judge their own experience within its

Civil War (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1973), 162-67; Parish, American Civil War, 329-33; James L. Roark, Masters without Slaves: Southern Planters in the Civil War and Reconstruction (New York, 1977), 35-67; Paul D. Escott, After Secession: Jefferson Davis and the Failure of Confederate Nationalism (Baton Rouge, 1978), x-xi, 104-35; Thomas, Confederate Nation, 233-35. Most of these authors imply (and Thomas, Parish, and Roark state explicitly) that these class tensions did not break out into widespread antiaristocratic rebellion. But Paul D. Escott, "The Moral Economy of the Crowd in Confederate North Carolina," Maryland Historian, XIII, (Spring/Summer, 1982), 1-17, shows that lower class violence aimed deliberately at aristocrats was frequent in several North Carolina counties.

Chapter VII of this study did suggest that in the heartland's towns the poor suffered physical privations which the rich escaped. There is no real evidence of the development of lower class resentment in the towns, however, perhaps because the Federal assault on the aristocracy in Middle Tennessee humiliated and humbled urban patricians even if it did not starve them.

⁵¹Moral and social degeneration in the collapsing Confederacy has been noted by a number of scholars, but to my knowledge none has documented complete social disintegration in any region such as I have found in Middle Tennessee. This does not mean that no other areas experienced such. Indeed, the prevalence of crime and banditry elsewhere (see note 37) suggests that social chaos might have been widespread in occupied or contested areas. It means only that more detailed analyses from a social perspective are needed. See Wesley, Collapse of the Confederacy, 55-74; Wiley, Plain People of the Confederacy, 62-63; Nevins, War for the Union, II, 291-98, IV, 233-47; Roland, Confederacy, 176.

wider context. They knew only that theirs was a land of ruin and suffering. Their ordeal provoked a multiplicity of bitter explanations, pathetic pleas, and plaintive laments; but increasingly such expressions drew upon the precepts and words and metaphors of Biblical faith—for many the last remaining truth in a world of vanishing certainties. An anguished Robertson County woman wrote Andrew Johnson in December 1863:

God knows why he has allowed this horrible war to afflict the country. May his wrath be appiesed and piece restored[.] I feel that unknow[n] callamities are now su[s]ppended as if by a thread over the heads of the Wicked rulers of this land that had to do in bringing it on. . . . They have fanned [the people's] zeal into fanitisism and made them mad. The wind they have sown has become a whirlwind . . . God help the innocent and helpless. . . .

Another in Rutherford offered the governor a different interpretation of the war and a personal admonition:

. . . I am not bitter at either party, as I think it is a fulfillment of the bible, as the learned of all denominations admit that their is some important event to take place between this and 1866 the melenial year. . . . [A]nd if that be a correct opinion we all should be ready to appear before the juge to receive our final doom. . . . Mr. Johnson you have power now but recollect the bible says whatsoever measure we meete out it will be measured back again. . . .

As the war ended the fearful prophecies of 1861 had come to pass and were now bewailed in the lamentations of 1865. That spring Nimrod Porter looked sadly around and saw his neighbors

with many aking hearts for the loss of there friends & there All. We will set down & mourn in Sack Cloathes & ashes for many days, weeks, months & years to come.⁵²

⁵²W. W. Pepper to Andrew Johnson, Dec. 25, 1863, Johnson Papers; Narcissa R. Hall to Andrew Johnson, June 27, 1862, Graf and Haskins, Papers of Andrew Johnson, V, 509-10; Porter Journal, Apr. 29, 1865. Religious interpretations of war and defeat were common across the South.

Those who read carefully and with faith the words of the Prophets, however, found therein cogent expression and deep understanding of their own travail, and some measure of comfort to assuage their grief. "Your country is desolate," the Lord told the impenitent people of Israel through Isaiah; "your cities are burned with fire: your land, strangers devour it in your presence. . . ." The author of Lamentations gave voice to the sufferers after God's punitive devastation of Jerusalem; and vividly he presaged the fate of white society in Middle Tennessee:

Remember, O Lord, what is come upon us . . .
 Our inheritance is turned to strangers, our houses
 to aliens.
 We are orphans and fatherless, our mothers are as
 widows. . . .
 Our necks are under persecution: we labour, and have
 no rest. . . .
 Servants have ruled over us: there is none that doth
 deliver us out of their hand. . . .
 Princes are hanged up by their hands: the faces of
 elders were not honoured. . . .
 The joy of our heart is ceased; our dance is turned
 into mourning.

But through His spokesman Jeremiah the Lord delivered not only prophetic judgment against the sinful, but lasting hope to the faithful:

Lo, I will bring a nation upon you from far . . . it
 is a mighty nation. . . .
 Their quiver is an open sepulchre, they are all
 mighty men.
 And they shall eat up thine harvest and thy bread . . .
 they shall impoverish thy fenced cities. . . .
 Nevertheless in those days, saith the Lord, I will
 not make a full end with you.⁵³

See W. Harrison Daniel, "Southern Protestantism—1861 and After," Civil War History, V (Sept., 1959), 278-82; Charles R. Wilson, "The Religion of the Lost Cause: Ritual and Organization of the Southern Civil Religion, 1865-1920," JSH, XLVI (May 1980), 219-38.

⁵³Isaiah 1:7; Lamentations 5:1-15; Jeremiah 5:15-18.

Like the children of Israel, the white men and women of the heartland were direly punished but ultimately permitted to abide. Subdued and chastened, but not destroyed, they turned in the spring of 1865 to the task of reconstructing their shattered world according to the sublime will of their Lord and the dictates of worldly necessity.

VOLUME II

CHAPTER X

RESURRECTION: ECONOMIC AND INSTITUTIONAL

RECOVERY, 1865-1870

Nature's resplendent self-renewal in the spring of 1865 veiled but could not altogether conceal the ugly scars of war in Middle Tennessee—scars on society and landscape alike. A Union officer in Nashville rode a few miles into the Davidson County countryside on April 1 and found spring "fully inaugurated," with beautiful peach, pear, and apple trees blossoming, and forest trees and clover already green. But his gaze took in also ruined fences and barren fields, and he could only conclude that this land "must have been almost an earthly Paradise before Secession set its seal of desolation upon it." A returning Murfreesboro preacher found his church "an utter wreck, nothing standing but the cupola, and the graveyard is also a desolation. May we soon be permitted to witness the return of more auspicious times. . . ." Another minister in Williamson County likewise beheld spring's glorious arrival and the land's awful devastation, but what preoccupied him was the loss of his slaves and livestock and his consequent inability to ride his preaching circuit: "I am undertaking to make a crop by myself this year," Jesse Cox wrote, "so I cannot travel far during crop time having only one blind mair to do it with." A Fayetteville exile who returned home optimistically that summer was disappointed to find the town dilapidated and its citizens "not

altogether as bouyant and hopefull of the future as I had hoped to have found them."¹

If there were gloom and ruin in the land that spring, however, there were also signs of hope and restoration. Black heartlanders exuberantly celebrated their newly-won liberty and anticipated in the postwar era of freedom a greater share of life's rewards than slavery had permitted them. Whites acquiesced, if grudgingly, in black emancipation and in the defeat of the Confederate nation manqué. Men and women of both races mourned the loss of dead friends and kin, but joyously welcomed the return of the survivors from the battle front or from exile. A Nashville woman remarked in May that the city had begun

to assume its old air again—the streets are not so bare of familiar faces and on yesterday I could hardly listen to the sermon at Church for recognizing old friends whose places have so long been filled by strangers. . . .

The more sanguine Middle Tennesseans detected evidence of a popular willingness to forsake the past and to get on enthusiastically with the business of living in the present. The editor of the Shelbyville American Union, for one, espied "returning enterprize and energy . . .

¹Frank A. Handy Diary, Apr. 1, 1865 (Duke University); William Eagleton to Martha Pride, Mar. 17, 1865, Pope Papers (TSLA); Jesse Cox Diary, entry dated Jan. 1, 1865, but, as internal evidence indicates, written the following spring (TSLA); G. W. Jones to Andrew Johnson, July 26, 1865, Letters Received, First Special Agency, Civil War Special Agencies of the Treasury, RG 366 (NA). Thomas B. Alexander, "Neither Peace Nor War: Conditions in Tennessee in 1865," ETHSP, No. 21 (1949), 33-51, is a general survey.

every where around—the people seem to have forgotten almost that such a 'thing' as Rebellion ever visited our country."²

That editor may perhaps be forgiven his hyperbole, because in some respects the heartland's postwar recovery was indeed remarkably rapid and thorough. To be sure, the wartime destruction of property had been immense. Insofar as buildings and implements and other tangibles constituted the region's institutions and economy, both were in ruins and their revival would demand great effort. But those institutions and that economy consisted too of people and their knowledge, their skills, their needs, and their passions; and these had not been destroyed, but merely held in abeyance while the disruptions and uncertainties of war prevailed. Once peace was restored, trade and production and cultivation and institutions of every kind could rebound. With a new roof and pews for the church, a new door and a coat of whitewash for the courthouse, a new bridge for the turnpike, and a new fence for the cornfield, but above all with men and women able and willing to participate, recovery could proceed swiftly.

The key to economic and institutional revival in Middle Tennessee was the restoration of order in the rural areas. Wartime violence and chaos had kept country folk fearfully at home, thus sundering their social bonds, strangling their economy, and maiming or wrecking their institutions of government, education, religion, and community. Rural

²Lady Ewing to unknown correspondent, May 29, 1865, Polk-Brown-Ewell Papers (SHC); Shelbyville American Union, Aug. 19, 1865. See also Clarksville Chronicle, July 14, 1865; Pulaski Citizen, Jan. 5, 1866.

anarchy and danger—a consequence not just of Yankee pillaging and brutality, but of the mayhem of the murderous bandit gangs which infested the countryside after 1862—could not be suppressed until Union authorities were convinced that white heartlanders had ended their resistance (thus rendering further Federal repression unnecessary) and were certain that Confederate troops no longer threatened Northern control of the region (thus permitting the occupation forces to turn their attention to subduing banditry). Those conditions were met by the spring of 1865, however, and the Federals thereupon ended their punitive harassment of the citizenry and moved vigorously out of their fortified urban enclaves to quell rural disorder. As soon as the country people perceived that travel was again safe, that brigands and cutthroats and vengeful Yankee soldiers no longer lurked on every trail and turnpike, they hitched up their mule teams or mounted their horses (if they had any left) and rode off to meet one another and resume their interrupted fellowship. Thus, the rural heartlanders' traditional activities and institutions sprang to life again.³

The first stop for many was at the long-vacant country churches, for second only to their livelihoods, farm and village folk valued their Christian sodality. The ability to ride the country roads freely

³Evidence of the waning resistance of rural dwellers to Federal authority is in J. O. Shackelford to Andrew Johnson, May 28, 1865, Andrew Johnson Papers (LC); and Pulaski Citizen, Mar. 30, 1866 (see also Chapter IX). A good sense of the gradual return of normal activities among the country people is conveyed in James W. Matthews Journal, 1865, passim (TSLA); and Nimrod Porter Journal, 1865, passim, especially June 1, 1865 (SHC). The efforts of Union troops and "home guards" to quash banditry are detailed in Chapter IX.

brought rural families of high rank and low together again on Sunday mornings, and allowed circuit preachers once more to bring comfort and salvation to their waiting flocks. The restoration of rural mobility also permitted church elders to reconvene and to bring long-delayed judgment against transgressors of God's laws and society's mores, and thus to help reknit the shredded bonds of community.⁴

Some urban churches, too, quickly revived (many, in fact, had not been at all disrupted), but others were resuscitated only very slowly and laboriously. A number of outspokenly secessionist town churches had been closed by Federal authorities, and many of those and others had been seized for army use and reduced to wreckage by 1865. The end of the war brought the lifting of political sanctions, but extensive physical damage was not easily repaired by destitute congregations. Thus, some urban churches remained boarded up for months after Appomattox. The elders of the First Presbyterian Church of Gallatin, which was closed throughout the war, met for business in July 1865, only to admit that they could not pay the pastor's salary and could not even hold services until the church building was repaired. A Cumberland Presbyterian church in Pulaski was still closed as late as January 1866, due to wartime damage and the poverty of its small congregation. Another

⁴Herman A. Norton, Tennessee Christians: A History of the Christian Church in Tennessee (Nashville, 1971), 100. For examples of the rapid recovery of rural churches see Mt. Olivet Baptist Church, Mt. Juliet, Wilson County, Records, Session Minutes, Vol. II, June 1865 (TSLA); Robertson Fork Church of Christ, Marshall County, Records, Session Minutes, Aug., 1865 (TSLA); Enon Primitive Baptist Church, Unionville, Bedford County, Records, Session Minutes, Mar., 1865 (TSLA); West Station Primitive Baptist Church, Sumner County, Records, Session Minutes, May 1865 (TSLA).

in Clarksville reopened its doors only in April 1866; and one in Lebanon held no services until even later that year. Whether swiftly or slowly, however, nearly all urban and rural churches ultimately regenerated, and the faithful gave thanks. "We have all mourned," the Reverend David Pise told his Episcopal parishioners in Columbia at their first gathering since Federals took over the church in December 1863,

over the temporary alienation of this House from the holy purpose to which it was . . . set apart—and with pious hands hastened to efface the scars that the ungloved hand of War had left upon its walls. To day we rejoice over its restitution. . . . Here again will the voice of prayer and praise be heard.⁵

⁵First Presbyterian Church, Gallatin, Sumner County, Records, Session Minutes, July 25, 1865 (TSLA); Pulaski Citizen, Jan. 12, 1866; Clarksville Weekly Chronicle, Apr. 20, 1866; Historical Records Survey, Tennessee, Cumberland Presbyterian Church Records (2 vols., Nashville, 1938-41), II, 52; David Pise Journal, June 11, 1865 (SHC); Historical Records Survey, Tennessee, Records and Histories of Certain Episcopal Churches in Tennessee, St. Peter's Episcopal Church History, 3-4. See also Rufus B. Spain, "R. B. C. Howell: Nashville Baptist Leader in the Civil War Period," THQ, XIV (Dec., 1955), 338-39; Historical Records Survey, Tennessee, Presbyterian Church Records, Tennessee (2 vols., Nashville, 1937-41), I, Presbyterian Church of Pulaski, Session Minutes, 34. With the exception of the Second Presbyterian Church of Nashville (discussed in Chapter VII) there are no known examples in Middle Tennessee of political divisions within congregations which culminated in the splitting of churches, such as frequently occurred in East Tennessee. See Mrs. Roy C. Avery, ed., "The Second Presbyterian Church of Nashville during the Civil War," THQ, XI (Dec., 1952), 356-75; Charles F. Bryan, Jr., "The Civil War in East Tennessee: A Social, Political, and Economic Study" (Ph.D. diss., The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 1978), 273-80. More significant in the heartland was the exodus of black members to form their own churches, which will be discussed in the next chapter. The generally strong recovery of churches across the region is documented in Norton, Tennessee Christians, 139-47; and Journal of Conferences, Methodist Churches in Middle Tennessee District, Records, 1866-70 (TSLA). All the major faiths increased the number of their churches in the region between 1860 and 1870. See United

Formal learning had never stoked the zeal of Middle Tennesseans as religious faith and fellowship had done, and thus in the difficult years of postwar institutional and economic reconstruction schools progressed more slowly than churches. Among the plain folk, in particular, education languished after the war, for hard times and public indifference hindered the rehabilitation of both subscription schools and county-administered public schools, nearly all of which had closed during the occupation. The sorely pressed yeoman farmer who willingly gave up a day of work to help repair his church, and gladly donated a few bushels of corn to pay the minister, was loath to do as much to secure a schoolhouse and teacher for his children, who at any rate were desperately needed on the farm. County magistrates, too, could hardly justify spending tax money for schools when roads and bridges were out and the courthouse was in ruins. The Lincoln County court, for example, did not even begin to consider reorganizing its public schools until August 1866. Ironically, the only public education in Middle Tennessee in the immediate postwar period was that provided for the freed blacks, through the efforts of the Union army, Northern humanitarian agencies, and the newly established Freedmen's Bureau.⁶

States Census Bureau, Ninth Census, 1870, Manuscript Returns of Social Statistics, Tennessee (NA); and United States Census Bureau, Statistics of the United States . . . in 1860 . . . (Washington, 1866), 465-70.

⁶Lincoln County, Tennessee, County Court Clerk's Office, Minutes, Aug., 1866, Vol. A, 436-37 (TSLA); See also Shelbyville American Union, Aug. 19, 1865. A. B. Coleman to John Eaton, Oct. 1, 1868, John Eaton Correspondence (TSLA), shows that subscription schools were back in operation in Lincoln County by that date.

The private academies and colleges which had served the region's elite before the war also struggled against postwar economic woes, but they enjoyed certain advantages over the common folks' schools which aided recovery. For one, many were located in towns and had been disrupted not at all, or only briefly, by invasion and occupation. Too, many of the patrons of these private schools were well-to-do urbanites who had not been stripped of their prosperity during the war as had the planters. But among all the elite, even the rural gentry whose wealth had been decimated by the war, there persisted an ethic of education which made schooling for them not a luxury or a frivolity but a necessity, an element of their social constitution as essential as wealth and position. Thus, the academies and colleges in time revived, though that time was often measured not in weeks or months as with churches, but in years. For instance, although both schools were relinquished by military authorities in 1865, the Clarksville Female Academy did not reopen until the fall of 1866, and Stewart College in the same town remained closed until 1869. Union University in Murfreesboro, its library and other buildings wrecked during the occupation, reopened only in 1868. Nevertheless, private education in postwar Middle Tennessee not only recouped but surpassed its antebellum glory. The number of academies and colleges in the region increased several fold between 1860 and 1870, while student enrollment more than doubled.⁷

⁷Clarksville Chronicle, Sept. 1, 8, 1865, Sept. 18, 1869; Clarksville Weekly Chronicle, Sept. 7, 1866; Carlton C. Sims, ed., A History of Rutherford County (Murfreesboro, 1947), 152; Ninth Census Social

Public education in Middle Tennessee did manage to take some strides forward by the end of the decade, though it enjoyed no such boom times as private education. Under the energetic direction of Radical Republican John Eaton in Nashville, a new statewide school system appeared in the late 1860s. Better funded than its predecessor, demanding higher standards of its teachers, and most notably providing schools for the freedmen, the new system was a vast improvement over the old and attracted much public attention in its inaugural months. Nevertheless, on the whole, education in Middle Tennessee ended the decade much as it had begun it—skewed by elitism and racism and debilitated by apathy among the white masses, for whom public schooling remained as much a stigma as a prize.⁸

Statistics; United States Census Bureau, Eighth Census, 1860, Manuscript Returns of Social Statistics, Tennessee (NA). On the dearth of private schools just after the war, see Pulaski Citizen, June 15, 1866; J. T. Trowbridge, A Picture of the Desolated States; and the Work of Restoration, 1865-1868 (Hartford, Connecticut, 1868), 273. For other examples of the revival or founding of private schools after the war, see Clarks-ville Weekly Chronicle, Jan. 12, 26, Mar. 2, Sept. 14, 1866; Pulaski Citizen, Aug. 17, 1866, Mar. 13, 1868.

⁸Robert H. White, The Development of the Tennessee State Education Organization, 1796-1929 (Kingsport, Tennessee, 1929), 78-104; Frank B. Williams, "John Eaton, Jr., Editor, Politician, and School Administrator, 1865-1870," THQ, X (Dec., 1951), 291-319. Statistics presented in John Eaton, Jr., First Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction for the State of Tennessee . . . (Nashville, 1869), XLI, CLXXXV, show that although 675 white and 229 black public schools had been established in the region by 1869, the number of students of both races enrolled was but a small proportion of the total number of schoolage children; and, furthermore, the actual daily attendance represented an even smaller proportion. For examples of public interest among blacks and whites alike in the free schools, see W. Houston to John Eaton, Apr. 13, 1868, Eaton Correspondence; William Mack to John Eaton, July 3, 1868, *ibid.*; R. W. Humphreys to John Eaton, Mar. 24, 1868, *ibid.* Evidence of white apathy or outright opposition is in Report of N. G. Alexander, Jan. 5, 1869, Eaton, First Report, CL; Joseph B. Killebrew, et al., Introduction to

Nowhere was institutional recovery swifter and continuity more evident than in local government. Most county courts were already functioning, with Federal assistance and supervision, before the war's end. The remainder were operating by the summer of 1865, as were nearly all the circuit and chancery courts and town governments. As the countryside was gradually pacified the courts were able to extend their reach beyond the towns, to which they had been confined by wartime rural chaos; and, by the same token, rural people were able to take their business to the courthouse for the first time in years.⁹

While administrative and judicial machinery was readily resurrected, social, economic, and political derangement in the postwar months complicated the full restitution of local government and justice. For example, when the Cheatham County chancery court opened in June 1865 the judge and sheriff were obliged to pick a grand jury from among bystanders, since there had been no opportunity to summon jurymen. Only after the jury was seated and deliberations had begun was it discovered that one of the jurors was a criminal defendant in the very case under consideration, and another juror was his relative. More

the Resources of Tennessee (Nashville, 1874), 827. For specific instances of the implementation of the new school system within counties, see Davidson County, Tennessee, County Court Clerk's Office, County Court Minutes, Jan. 4, 6, Apr. 4, 5, 1870, Bk. K, 259, 269, 368, 372 (TSLA); Rutherford County, Tennessee, County Court Clerk's Office, Minute Books, Apr., 1870, Bk. F, 376 (TSLA); Joseph Buckner Killebrew Autobiography, I, 186-87 (SHC). Much of the new system was undone when Conservatives recaptured control of the state legislature in 1869. See White, Development of Education, 104-13.

⁹Details of the reorganization of the courts in the last months of the war are in Chapter VII.

serious still was the fiscal plight of town and county governments. In most cases taxes had not been collected for years, treasuries were empty, few citizens could pay even current assessments, and financial records were temporarily missing or lost forever. Moreover, taxable property was vastly reduced in value because of wartime destruction and emancipation. The Clarksville mayor and city council, for example, found themselves in September 1865 with only \$6,705 to pay current expenses and interest past due of \$74,000. Nevertheless, the gradual return of social and economic stability in the region permitted local governments eventually to get back on their feet. Most raised taxes from prewar levels, worked to pay current expenses first, and then turned to long-term debt. All were solvent within a matter of a few years, or even months.¹⁰

Vexing legal questions arising from the war plagued local government, however, even after the resolution of administrative and financial problems. There was, for instance, the matter of debts,

¹⁰Cheatham County, Tennessee, Chancery Court Minutes, June 19, 1865, Vol. 1857-67, p. 172 (TSLA); Clarksville Weekly Chronicle, Sept. 22, 1865, Feb. 16, 1866. Other examples of the confusion surrounding the opening of courts are in Sumner County, Tennessee, Circuit Court Clerk's Office, Minute Books, Feb., 1865, Vol. T, 180-81 (TSLA); Williamson County, Tennessee, Chancery Court Office, Minutes, Apr., 1865, Vol. J, 144-45 (TSLA). Further instances of how local governments dealt with financial problems are Lincoln County News, June 29, 1867; Robertson County, Tennessee, County Court Clerk's Office, County Court Minutes, May 7, 1866, Vol. XV, 299 (TSLA); Sumner County, Tennessee, County Court Clerk's Office, County Court Minutes, July 1865, Jan., 1866, Vol. 1858-66, pp. 419, 564-66 (TSLA); Williamson County, Tennessee, County Court Clerk's Office, Minutes, Jan., 1867, Vol. XX, 244-46 (TSLA). Most county and town governments simply wrote off uncollected taxes for 1862-64. See, for example, Marshall County, Tennessee, County Court Clerk, Minutes, County Court, July 1865, Vol. L, 157 (TSLA). The

contracts, and wills made before the war, especially those involving slaves. And what was to be done about obligations that had been paid during the war in Confederate money? In general the courts took a practical approach to such conundrums, while refusing to acknowledge any tabula rasa. Prewar debts and contracts and other legal obligations were deemed still valid. Criminal acts committed before or during the war were prosecuted afterward, if the culprits could be apprehended, and civil suits based on wartime or antebellum actions were accepted by the courts. Slaves were of course free, however, so those provisions of wills which bequeathed slaves were simply ignored. But slavery was not treated as if it had never existed. Thus, for example, an unpaid debt incurred for the purchase of a slave in 1861 was held to be still due in 1865. Payment of taxes, debts, and all other liabilities in Confederate money during the war was (with some qualifications) declared valid, thus avoiding a potential bottomless morass of suits and counter-suits, into which the overburdened postwar courts could ill afford to plunge.¹¹

restoration of missing records is indicated in Cheatham County, Tennessee, County Court Clerk's Office, Court Minute Books, Oct. 2, 1865, Vol. B, 315 (TSLA).

¹¹The resumption of prewar or preoccupation civil and criminal cases is illustrated in Cheatham County Chancery Court, Minutes, Oct. 16, 1865, Vol. 1857-67, pp. 180-85; and Giles County, Tennessee, Circuit Court, Minutes, Civil and Criminal, Aug. 9, 11, 1865, Vol. 1865-66, n.p. (TSLA). Examples of how the postwar courts dealt with estate or other property cases involving slaves are in Bedford County, Tennessee, Clerk and Master's Office, Minute Books, Mar. 8, 1865, Bk. 1859-65, p. 572 (TSLA); Davidson County Court Minutes, Nov. 25, 1865, Bk. I, 665; Montgomery County, Tennessee, Clerk and Master's Office, Minute Books, Apr. 28, Oct. 18, 1865, Vol. V, 64-65, 90 (TSLA); Robertson County, Tennessee, Clerk and Master's Office, Minute Books, Nov. 18, 20, 1865, Vol. II,

More troublesome still was the matter of the freedmen. Many were now indigent or in jail, but their legal status was uncertain. There were no longer any masters to assume responsibility for such blacks as before the war, but the prerogatives of local government in dealing with the freedmen were unclear. A committee of the Williamson County court, arduously grappling in 1866 with the legal, financial, as well as humanitarian questions raised by the problem of black paupers, pronounced the issue "one of perplexity and difficulty." The army and the Freedmen's Bureau stepped in forcefully at first, but those institutions gradually faded into the background and local government was obliged to come up with solutions. This is did ultimately by incorporating the blacks into its traditional functions, that is, by taxing black property owners, apprenticing black orphans or authorizing guardianships for them, imprisoning black lawbreakers, and putting black indigents into black poor houses. But the freedmen were not merely acted upon by the courts. More and more they exercised their new legal rights by filing lawsuits, writing wills, and so on, though with few exceptions they were denied seats of power or responsibility in local government.¹²

457-58, 476 (TSLA). On debts paid in Confederate money, see Fayetteville Observer, Mar. 21, 1867; Bedford County Clerk and Master's Office Minutes, Mar. 9, 1865, Vol. 1859-65, p. 580, June 25, 1866, Vol. 1865-68, p. 253; Lincoln County Court Minutes, Jan., 1869, Vol. B, 175-76; Sumner County Court Minutes, Aug., 1867, Vol. 1866-69, pp. 267-68.

¹²Williamson County Court Minutes, Aug., 1866, Apr., 1867, July 1868, Vol. XX, 163-64, 285, 431. See also Bedford County, Tennessee, County Court Clerk's Office, County Court Minutes, July 1866, Vol. B, 94 (TSLA); Davidson County Court Minutes, Oct. 2, 1865, Bk. I, 577; Marshall County Court Minutes, July 1866, Vol. M, 175; Wilson County,

Even with all the dilemmas of Reconstruction, however, the heartland's local governments revived rapidly. This was so in part because, despite the subsumption of the freedmen, government remained small and unobtrusive. Notwithstanding the many revolutionary changes wrought by war, the people of Middle Tennessee in 1870—black as well as white—were for the most part a traditional, self-reliant people, as they had been in 1860. The government that served them continued perforce to be a simple apparatus, offering few services to its constituents and demanding little of them in return. Taxes remained low (despite increases), public debt small, public charges few. Moreover, the dramatic power struggles of Radicals versus Conservatives which wracked government at the state level during Reconstruction rarely threatened the county courthouses, where continuity, quiet routinism, and minimal activity prevailed.¹³

Tennessee, County Court Clerk's Office, County Court Minute Books, Jan. 8, 1867, Vol. 1864-67, pp. 431-32 (TSLA). On the anomalous legal position of the freedmen, see also Fayetteville Observer, Nov. 30, Dec. 21, 1865. State legislation defining black legal status after emancipation is discussed in Theodore B. Wilson, The Black Codes of the South (University, Alabama, 1965), 111-13. Instances of legal actions brought by blacks are in Bedford County Clerk and Master's Office Minutes, Sept. 12, 1866, Bk. 1865-68, 326; Bedford County Court Minutes, Aug., 1865, Vol. A, 349 (see also Chapter XI). In Nashville a few blacks did attain local political office. See Stanley F. Rose, "Nashville and Its Leadership Elite, 1861-1869" (M.A. thesis, University of Virginia, 1965), 46-49.

¹³Census statistics on the number of paupers and criminals under county aegis show no great increase from 1860 to 1870, despite the addition of blacks to the rolls of both. Compare Eighth Census Social Statistics and Ninth Census Social Statistics. Continuity is further evidenced by the large number of postbellum local officials who had also served before the war. Postwar county court records for every county reveal many names familiar from antebellum records. An effort by the

The towns which accommodated those county courthouses had, paradoxically, both suffered and thrived as a result of war and occupation. The presence of Federal troops had kept urban society and most of its institutions intact, but concomitantly had exposed townspeople to constant punishment and despoliation. Furthermore, military occupation had simultaneously stimulated the urban economy, by bringing in thousands of blue-coated consumers, and strangled it, by cutting the towns off from their rural hinterlands and extraregional markets. By 1875 Middle Tennessee's towns seemed whole and vibrant only by contrast with the devastated countryside: compared to the towns of 1861, they were mutilated and prostrate. A Fayetteville man, for example, returned home in the summer of 1865 and reported that "Our once beautiful village I found with all the evidences of the evils, of that terrible scourge of nations, present on all sides and on all hands, Ruin and devastation all around." A Maury County farmer who rode into Columbia that fall pronounced it a "poor dull place."¹⁴

Radical-dominated state legislature to modernize the county court system was overturned by Conservatives in 1869, and the new 1870 state constitution did not materially change the structure of county government. See Davidson County Court Minutes, Nov. 1, 1869, Bk. K, 215; Pulaski Citizen, Mar. 26, 1869; Roy Bell, "History of County Government in Tennessee, 1834-1860, and Its Failure in the 20th Century" (M.A. thesis, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 1938), 66. State politics in this period is discussed in Thomas B. Alexander, Political Reconstruction in Tennessee (Nashville, 1950); and James W. Patton, Unionism and Reconstruction in Tennessee, 1860-1869 (Chapel Hill, 1934). Nashville city government was an exception to the rule that partisan political battles did not affect local government during Reconstruction. See Rose, "Nashville and Its Leadership Elite," 30-49.

¹⁴G. W. Jones to Andrew Johnson, July 26, 1865, Letters Received, First Special Treasury Agency; Diary of John Orr, Oct. 31, 1865, Orr Family Diaries (TSLA). See also Trowbridge, Picture of the Desolated

The restoration of peace breathed life into the towns, however, and the rapid resuscitation of the urban economy seemed a marvel to many heartlanders. The decline of violence and uncertainty in the countryside brought rural folk once again into the towns, which thereupon resumed their role as local entrepôts; and the revocation of military restrictions permitted the renewal of interregional trade. "Our town is entirely free from soldiers," a Franklin newspaper reported in the fall of 1865;

Everything is moving along [at] something like the ante-bellum pace. . . . Our merchants are doing a prosperous business. . . . So on the whole, we are getting along amazingly.

A Shelbyville editor in 1866 likewise remarked the "undeniable evidence of mercantile prosperity" in the town, and noted that "Our streets are resuming their business appearance and the routine of traffic so suddenly deranged a short time since seems clothed with new vitality." A Fayetteville lawyer declared in November 1865 that his business was booming: "if the practice thus continues," he wrote, "I hope I will not only get out of debt, but be able to finish my house next year." At the same time the editor of the Clarksville Weekly Chronicle observed that in the few months since the "incubus of restricted trade" was removed, "a new life and energy have characterized our population."

States, 273; Pulaski Citizen, Feb. 1, 1867; Fayetteville Observer, Feb. 25, 1869.

Business houses in Clarksville were being repainted and refurbished and tobacco warehouses were reopening; Northern insurance companies were returning to the town for the first time since their hasty exodus in 1861. In December 1865 the first shipment of Montgomery County tobacco since 1861 left Clarksville for New Orleans, and by the following summer postal routes were reestablished in the county, the Cumberland River bridge was rebuilt, and the town's rail service to Memphis was resumed. The scars of war were literally and symbolically erased in Clarksville and every town as gangs of workmen took up picks and shovels to level the earthworks left behind when Yankee regiments decamped.¹⁵

Accompanying the remarkable postwar physical and economic restoration of the towns was a striking social phenomenon: a radical change in the heartland's urban constituency. In 1860 hardly 8 percent of Middle Tennessee blacks (free and slave) had resided in towns, and the region's urban population had been only about 19 percent black. Contrabands and freedmen poured into the towns during and just after the war, however, and many whites departed. By 1870, 20 percent of

¹⁵Franklin Review, quoted in Gallatin Examiner, Nov. 11, 1865; Shelbyville Republican, Oct. 16, 1866; James R. Bright to wife, Nov. 20, 1865, Douglass-Maney Family Papers (TSLA); Clarksville Weekly Chronicle, Oct. 27, Nov. 3, 24, 1865, Jan. 5, Mar. 23, July 27, Aug. 17, 1866; Clarksville Chronicle, Aug. 4, 11, Sept. 8, 1865; Stephen V. Ash, "Postwar Recovery: Montgomery County, 1865-70," THQ, XXXVI (Summer, 1977), 211; Fayetteville Observer, Jan. 31, 1867, Feb. 25, 1869; Lincoln County News, Jan. 26, 1867. See also Shelbyville American Union, Aug. 19, 1865; Sumner County Republican, July 4, 1868.

blacks lived in towns and the region's urban population was 44 percent black. Nashville alone saw its black population more than double over the decade, climbing from 3,945 to 9,709.¹⁶

Nevertheless, increased urbanization was not the experience of the region's inhabitants considered as a whole. While the urban population (white and black combined) did grow between 1860 and 1870 (from about 50,000 to about 60,000), the rural population kept pace. In 1860 about 16 percent of all Middle Tennesseans were townspeople; in 1870, about 17 percent. Nashville did grow considerably during those years, its population swelling from 17,000 to 26,000; but that increase by itself nearly accounted for the region's entire urban population increase. Most other towns experienced little growth, or suffered outright stagnation. Nashville's boom times testified only that urbanism was becoming more focused in Middle Tennessee, not more significant.

Besides urbanism, another measure of modernization suggests that Middle Tennessee's Civil War experience had not propelled the region—or even nudged it—toward the future. The heartland's industry, which was ravaged during the war, languished in the postwar years. Large-scale

¹⁶The urban population figures given here and below are based on the census samples discussed in Appendix A. See Chapters XIII, XIV, and XV for more details. Published census aggregates, which generally do not separate urban and rural population within a given district, are in United States Census Bureau, The Statistics of the Population of the United States . . . (June 1, 1870) . . . (Washington, 1872), 61-63, 261-69. On Nashville's black population after the war, see Benjamin Walter, "Ethnicity and Residential Succession: Nashville, 1850 to 1920," in James F. Blumstein and Benjamin Walter, eds., Growing Metropolis: Aspects of Development in Nashville (Nashville, 1975), 22.

manufacturing had been a notable (if not preeminent) feature of the antebellum economy, though it had been largely confined to two counties (Montgomery and Davidson) and had been dominated by four products: iron, tobacco, cotton cloth, and machinery. But Montgomery County's iron and tobacco industries (which in 1860 had accounted for nearly all the region's output of those two products) were for all intents and purposes wiped out by the war. The number of hands employed in the county's iron works fell from 261 in 1860 to forty-six in 1870, and capital investment fell from \$331,175 to \$9,750; in the tobacco factories, the number of hands dropped from 344 to six, and capital investment from \$785,518 to \$9,000. Davidson County's machinery industry, which had accounted for virtually all machinery production in the region, likewise declined precipitously over the decade: the number of hands fell from 442 to 101, capital investment from \$175,000 to \$130,200. Cloth production, on the other hand, emanating mostly from the southern counties and benefiting from increased cotton cultivation, enjoyed moderate growth: the number of hands rose from 244 to 282, capital investment from \$183,000 to \$203,010. Those "industries" in the heartland which experienced substantial growth from 1860 to 1870 (notably flour and lumber mills) were rural enterprises of small scale, tied closely to their local communities—adjuncts of agriculture rather than hubs of industrialization.¹⁷

¹⁷United States Census Bureau, The Statistics of Wealth and Industry of the United States . . . (June 1, 1870) . . . (Washington, 1872), 569-70, 732-35; United States Census Bureau, Manufactures of the United States in 1860 . . . (Washington, 1865), 560-78; Clarksville Chronicle, Mar. 13, May 22, 1869. The region's considerable industrial growth

Agriculture, not industry or commerce, was of course the heart of Middle Tennessee's economy; and it was toward agriculture that all eyes turned in 1865 to diagnose the true extent of the region's injuries and to judge the outlook for recovery. Despite the devastation of the heartland's farms—the fences and barns in ashes, the fields stripped or abandoned, the herds and flocks slaughtered wholesale—optimism abounded among the agrarian folk in the months after Appomattox. Uncertainty and Yankee soldiers had caused most of the desolation, but peace would banish both and agriculture would rebound—or so many believed. "In the country the farming business is going on with renewed energy," one exuberant observer wrote from a village in Lincoln County in March; "I have rented out all my land. I have got the most of my pasture land that was thrown out by the Armies refenced." Enthusiasm was unabated as the 1866 planting season began: "There seems

over the decade as implied in these census aggregates (the number of hands employed in all industries rose from 4,326 to 6,863, capital investment from \$4,595,488 to \$5,134,567) is accounted for in great part by flour and lumber milling and similar small-scale, rural production, and by manufactories of various kinds (including carriage-making and printing shops) in Davidson, the only county where "true" industries (i.e., those not tied to local rural communities) were prominent after 1861. None of those postwar industries in Davidson, however, emulated the size and importance of the four major antebellum industries. The average number of hands per manufacturing establishment in the region as a whole declined between 1860 and 1870 (from 6.24 to 4.15), as did the average capital investment (from \$6,631 to \$3,108), suggesting that the many new manufactories arising after the war were small-scale operations. Postwar boosterism promoting industrialization in Middle Tennessee seems to have had few results. See Constantine G. Belissary, "The Rise of the Industrial Spirit in Tennessee, 1865-1885," JSH, XIX (May 1953), 193-215.

to be a new spirit here in farming," he wrote in February; "every body seems to be exerting themselves to make large crops. . . ."18

The farmers' faith went unrewarded, however. Though buildings and fences were quickly rebuilt and fields replanted, disappointing harvests after 1865 proved the visions of bountiful crops to be mere chimeras. Nature cruelly added its own punishment in the postwar years to the scourging that the region's farms had endured from 1862 to 1865. Crop disease, storms, and floods ravaged many of the heartland's fields and turned optimism to pessimism, and sometimes to despair. The same Lincoln County man who saw such bright prospects for agriculture in early 1866 wrote the following June to chronicle the intervening natural disasters, concluding that "upon the whole the crops are more unpromising than I ever knew." As 1866 ended the editor of the Fayetteville Observer reviewed the year's events and judged three the most momentous: "pestilence, famine, and Radical misrule." The following spring a man in the same town observed that

The long continued wet, cold spell has set our farmers back and they begin to speak discouragingly. . . . They feel very sensibly the effect of two short crops following the close of the war and another short crop will well nigh bankrupt the country.

By the end of that year, as the Pulaski Citizen reported, the "unprecedented failure of every kind of cultivation" had resulted in "the

¹⁸Lucius Bright to Elizabeth Elliot, Mar. 5, 1865, Feb. 9, 1866, Collins D. Elliott Papers (TSLA). See also James R. Bright to Charles Bright, Nov. 20, 1865, Douglass-Maney Papers; L. C. Ewell to Campbell Brown, June 4, 1865, Polk-Brown-Ewell Papers; Campbell Brown to L. C. Ewell, Aug. 31, 1865, *ibid.*; Shelbyville American Union, Aug. 5, 26, 1865.

increasing poverty, desolation and de[s]peration of the [rural] people and especially of the negroes," some of whom were "on the verge of starvation."¹⁹

Natural calamities were not the only, or even the primary, cause of the agricultural depression which struck the heartland after 1865, however. For one thing, these years saw a significant fragmenting of large farms and, consequently, diminished agricultural efficiency. Immediately after the war agricultural prices were high. The larger farmers were able to hire laborers (white and black) for cash and employ them in gangs as they had employed their slaves and hired help before the war. Prices crashed after 1865, however. Farmers were left with little cash and also felt compelled to spread their risk. The result was the share-wage system, by which workers were paid with shares of the crops harvested. Many farmhands, however, preferring the quasi-independence of tenantry to rigorous gang work, successfully insisted on dividing off small tenant farms to cultivate on their own, paying the owner in cash or, more often, crop shares. As the years passed such renting and sharecropping of small holdings became quite common. In 1860 the heartland had contained fewer than 19,000 farms, averaging 100 improved acres apiece; two out of ten farms that year were rented (sharecropping was rare at that time). By 1870 there were nearly 30,000 farms, averaging seventy-one improved acres; four out of ten

¹⁹Lucius Bright to Elizabeth Elliot, June 10, 1866, Elliott Papers; Fayetteville Observer, Dec. 20, 1866; James R. Bright to Charles Bright, Mar. 29, 1867, Douglass-Maney Papers; Pulaski Citizen, Dec. 13, 1867.

of those farms were rented or sharecropped. The number of very large farms (500 or more acres, improved and unimproved) declined over the decade from 412 to 186. The number of small farms (under fifty acres, improved and unimproved) increased from 7,482 to 17,224. Another notable feature of the decentralization of agriculture was the rise of the country store as the local supplier of the small tenant farms, replacing the large furnishing and supply houses in the towns which had served the big farmers before the war.²⁰

Astute contemporary observers recognized that share-wages and tenancy reduced agricultural yields while perniciously deteriorating farm land. The laborer who was paid with share-wages, as one commentator remarked, was inclined to work only from planting time through the harvest, then would "spend his time during the fall and winter months to no profit to himself or employer." Thus, "Fences rotted down, [and] noxious weeds and shrubs grew without limitation over the farm. . . ." The annual renter or sharecropper, another writer noted, likewise neglected the maintenance and improvement of his small plot:

He does not know when he goes on a place whether he is to reap the advantage of any improvement he might be disposed

²⁰Killebrew, Introduction to Resources, 350-51, 631, 742, 824, 835-36, 841-42, 908, 1,007; Lincoln County News, Feb. 10, July 7, 1866; Fayetteville Observer, Dec. 26, 1867, Feb. 24, 1870; Campbell Brown to L. C. Ewell, Aug. 31, 1865, Polk-Brown-Ewell Papers; Report of Moses C. West, n.d. (Feb., 1866), Narrative Reports of Operations and Conditions, Records of the Assistant Commissioner for the State of Tennessee, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Land, 1865-1869, RG 105 (NA) (hereinafter cited as FB Records); Report of M. Walsh, Nov. 4, 1867, *ibid.*; Matthews Journal, Nov. 13, 1865; Pulaski Citizen, Apr. 17, 1868; Thomas D. Clark, "The Country Store in Post-Civil War Tennessee," ETHSP, No. 17 (1945), 3-21.

The corn and livestock economy which formed the nucleus of Middle Tennessee's agriculture was sorely damaged by the war and did not fully recover by 1870. Corn was easily replanted, of course, but stolen or slaughtered livestock took many years to replace, and skilled stock handlers became very scarce after blacks began leaving the farms. Agricultural census statistics are striking. In 1870 the total value of all livestock in the heartland was 18 percent lower than in 1860. (Maury County in particular—the state's leading livestock producer before the war—experienced a grievous decline of 40 percent.) The total number of horses in the region was 16 percent lower, mules and jackasses 30 percent lower, milch cows 2 percent lower, oxen 64 percent lower, all other cattle 14 percent lower, sheep 2 percent higher, and swine 36 percent lower. There being fewer animals to feed and fewer fields to plant, corn production declined 20 percent over the decade. Thus, the rich surplus of grain and animals which the farmers of the antebellum heartland had traditionally sold south at considerable profit disappeared almost entirely after the war.²³

L. C. Ewell, Sept. 3, 1865, Polk-Brown-Ewell Papers; Campbell Brown to R. S. Ewell, Aug. 20, 1866, *ibid.*; Killebrew, Introduction to Resources, 824, 841-42. Roger L. Ransom and Richard Sutch, One Kind of Freedom: The Economic Consequences of Emancipation (New York, 1977), 44-55, discusses the economic effects of similar black behavior in the cotton South. On the movement of whites into farm work, see Chapters XII and XIV of the present study. Improved acreage in the region declined only 4 percent from 1860 to 1870, but contemporary sources indicate that many of those acres, though fenced and cleared, were left uncultivated after the war. See, e.g., Clarksville Chronicle, Mar. 13, 1869.

²³Killebrew, Introduction to Resources, 841-42; Report of S. B. Barr, May 3, 1866, Narrative Reports, FB Records; United States Census Bureau, Agriculture of the United States in 1860 . . . (Washington, 1864), 132-39; Stats. of Wealth 1870, 242-49.

The decimation of the corn and livestock economy left most farmers in a quandary, for they knew no other kind of agriculture. High cotton prices in 1865, however (the result of pent-up Northern and European demand), encouraged many to try their hand at that staple, which had not been plentiful in the region before the war. Too, cotton culture did not demand the skill that livestock raising required, and thus laborers were more easily found. Observer after observer remarked the switch to cotton in Middle Tennessee in 1865 and thereafter. Cultivation of the crop spread into counties where it had been little seen before the war, including Bedford, Davidson, Marshall, Williamson, and Wilson. In the latter, one contemporary estimated, farmers in 1866 planted ten times as much cotton as in 1860. Some landlords refused to rent to tenants unless they agreed to plant cotton. But Middle Tennessee was not prime cotton land, and the cotton was grown more often in small plots than in broad fields; and, too, the fiber's price plummeted after 1865. Thus, few fortunes were made in cotton in the heartland. This fact, together with the soil-depleting effects of cotton-growing, led some heartlanders to crusade against further reliance on cotton, and, consequently, production of the fiber probably peaked before 1870. Output that year was only about 11 percent above that of 1860, although the proportion of farms which grew cotton that year was two and a half times greater than in 1860 (46 vs. 18 percent, considering only farms in the major cotton-growing

counties). Nevertheless, in some districts cotton remained king. As late as January 1870 the Columbia Herald reported that farmers around Santa Fe, in Maury County, were "going to put in all the cotton they can manage."²⁴

The movement to cotton and the unremitting labor problems affected the region's other important staple, tobacco. Production of the weed in Middle Tennessee dropped 38 percent between 1860 and 1870, most of that reduction being in counties which substantially increased their cotton production. In Williamson County in particular, the second largest tobacco producer in 1860, output fell an incredible 97 percent. But even in the three northern counties (Montgomery, Robertson, and Sumner) where cotton could hardly grow and where tobacco had long reigned supreme, production of the weed declined 9 percent.²⁵

The prospects for Middle Tennessee's agrarian folk in the postwar years were not altogether gloomy. Certainly by 1870 agriculture had come a long way from the utter desolation of 1865. Furthermore, many

²⁴Killebrew, Introduction to Resources, 841-42; Stats. of Wealth 1870, 242-49; Report of John Seage, May 2, 1866, Narrative Reports, FB Records; Report of J. H. Gregory, May 3, 1866, ibid.; Report of S. B. Barr, May 3, 1866, ibid.; Report of Moses C. West, May 8, 1866, ibid.; Fayetteville Observer, Dec. 26, 1867; Trowbridge, Picture of the Desolated States, 280; Lucius Bright to Elizabeth Elliot, Feb. 9, 1866, Elliott Papers; Shelbyville Republican, Nov. 6, 1868; Pulaski Citizen, Apr. 5, Nov. 29, Dec. 13, 1867, Apr. 17, 1868; Columbia Herald, Jan. 21, 1870.

²⁵Stats. of Wealth 1870, 242-49; Agr. of U.S. 1860, 132-37.

prewar agricultural societies and fairs revived after the war and new ones sprang up across the region, offering farmers the opportunity of education and improvement. Modern labor-saving machinery—mule-driven separator threshers, Woods and McCormick reapers, and so on—made their appearance in these years and were eagerly adopted by those farmers who could afford them. Yet no Middle Tennessean in 1870 could rightfully have denied that the decade just ended had been one of agricultural decline rather than progress. Wartime destruction, the end of slavery and its replacement by a less productive labor system, crop failures, and soil depletion had all sapped the strength of Middle Tennessee's nurturing heart. Vibrant and robust in 1860, the region's agriculture entered the 1870s languid and frail.²⁶

The derangement of agriculture reverberated throughout the whole of the region's postwar economy and society, for hardly a man or woman in Middle Tennessee did not share directly or indirectly in the fortunes of the farmer and the land. No matter how the towns seemed to bustle with commerce, their prosperity rested fundamentally on the shoulders of agriculture, shoulders now bruised, weakened, disjointed. The physical reconstruction of both town and countryside had progressed remarkably, of course. The editor of the Fayetteville Observer

²⁶Agricultural societies and fairs are noted in Fayetteville Observer, May 23, 1867; Pulaski Citizen, May 10, June 28, 1867, Oct. 16, 1868. The introduction of new machinery is indicated in Lebanon Record, July 3, 1869; John Jordan, "My Recollections," John Leland Jordan Papers (TSLA).

justifiably boasted near the end of the decade that "If a traveler had passed through this county in 1865, and again in 1869, he would hardly recognize it as the same." But he admitted in the same breath that the people as a whole had never regained their antebellum affluence; and on another occasion he took note of the spread of poverty since 1861: ". . . families that cannot look back to the time when, before the war, they were not well housed, well fed, well clad," he wrote, "are now squalid with privation. . . ." The broad prosperity which had distinguished the antebellum heartland, and which had indeed been a cornerstone of its society, was not resurrected from its wartime grave.²⁷

War and Reconstruction transformed Middle Tennessee society in other ways as well. Thus, the apparent continuity of the region's institutions—the speedily revived courts, schools, and churches—was in some respects deceptive, for those institutions functioned in a new social context. It remains to delineate more fully the social world of the postbellum heartland.

In 1867 a Northern woman took a train from Nashville to Chattanooga. She passed through the towns and countryside of Davidson, Rutherford, and Bedford counties and left a colorful account of her journey.

²⁷Fayetteville Observer, Nov. 12, 1868, Aug. 5, 1869. See also *ibid.*, Dec. 21, 1865, May 7, 1868; Clarksville Weekly Chronicle, Oct. 13, 1865. The average value of real and personal property holdings per white family in Middle Tennessee declined from \$8,957 in 1860 to \$4,763 in 1870—this in a decade of considerable inflation nationally. For further discussion of postwar poverty, see Chapter XIV.

and Bedford counties and left a colorful account of her journey.

Poverty and stagnation impressed her most deeply. She saw

. . . lands rich in promise and possibility, but wretched and squalid. . . . the Station-villages show a huddle of dirty white frame houses, small, disorderly, mean. . . . Groups of unkempt, unshorn, unwashed men lounge on the stoops; men and village are dirty-white together.

But this is the better class of houses. By far the larger number on the road . . . are huts, cabins. . . . One shudders to think of human beings living in such houses, and content to live there. . . . Black and white live side by side . . . looking even more wretched and squalid than their houses. One door is adusk with swart faces . . . and a few feet away another hovel overflows with tow-heads. The whites seem by far the most pitiable. They have a gray, earthy look, as if the Lord God had formed them of the dust of the ground . . . but had hardly yet breathed into their nostrils the breath of life.²⁸

Like similar accounts by other Northern visitors in the South in those years, this woman's often trenchant observations were distorted by prejudices and stereotypes, and by ignorance. Riding through the villages, she could see little more than stoops and faces. Had she only stepped off the train at one of the stops, entered some of those hovels, and conversed a while with the inhabitants, she might have come away with a profounder understanding of those people. She might have sensed the deep divisions between the two races which the juxtaposition of their equally humble cabins obscured. She might have come to appreciate the bonds that united black with black and white with white—bonds subtler and more powerful than mere shared skin color, whether swart or dirty-white. She might, indeed, have ultimately come to

²⁸Gail Hamilton (pseudonym for Mary Abigail Dodge), Wool-gathering (Boston, 1868), 207-10.

understand that the common wretchedness she saw before her disguised the coexistence of two very different peoples in one land. Those two peoples are the subjects of the chapters which follow.

CHAPTER XI

ISAIAH'S TIME: RACE RELATIONS AND BLACK SOCIETY,

1865-1870

On March 20, 1865, the black population of Nashville turned out en masse to celebrate the formal abolition of slavery in Tennessee by constitutional amendment. The awesome magnitude and dignity of the occasion impressed many witnesses. "Towards noon," a Union officer wrote,

an immense procession of colored people marched through the principle Sts of the City. . . . The procession was composed of both sexes and all ages—on foot and riding in carriages, hacks and vehicles of all kinds[.] Two fine Brass Bands were with them[.] Business and labor generally was suspended among the colored people and the principle thorough-fares of the City were black with Darkies dressed in their best go to meetin' clothes during a considerable part of the day—They were generally very orderly and well behaved.¹

The jubilation of the freedmen was justified, to be sure. However, as many of them recognized, their celebration marked not only the consummation of a recent triumph, but the inauguration of a wholly new struggle. The black people of the heartland were determined, now that their shackles had been broken, to raise themselves up as a people, and to do so on their own terms. Others, however, were just as determined that they themselves would guide the freedmen's fate. To a great

¹Frank A. Handy Diaries, Mar. 20, 1865 (Duke).

extent, the black experience of the succeeding five years would be shaped by that bitter clash of wills.

Among those others, the most formidable were the native whites. By the war's end, virtually all white Middle Tennesseans bowed to the reality of black freedom, but few granted much beyond that single concession. Almost to a man they resolved that blacks, though no longer slaves, must remain powerless, poor, legally inferior, and submissive—beasts of burden, hewers of wood, and drawers of water for the conquered but still superior Southern white race. "We would not raise the negro to a social level with the white man," the Pulaski Citizen announced in its first postwar issue; "We believe social equality a humbug and an impossibility." The Lincoln County News reminded its readers that

The area of usefulness which nature has fitted Sambo for, is a very limited one. As a field hand, with some white man to do the thinking for him, he is useful; as a house servant to a degree he may be made serviceable; as a leading working man, a "boss," he is, and ever was a failure.

The Clarksville Weekly Chronicle likewise consigned the black man to eternal servility, insisting that "The God of nature never made him the equal of the white man."²

²Pulaski Citizen, Jan. 5, 1866; Lincoln County News, Aug. 6, 1870; Clarksville Weekly Chronicle, May 18, 1866. See also Fayetteville Observer, Jan. 31, 1867; Murfreesboro Monitor, Sept. 9, 1865; Clarksville Chronicle, Aug. 18, 1865; Pulaski Citizen, Mar. 9, 1866; Report of John Laurence, Feb. 28, 1866, Narrative Reports of Operations and Conditions, Records of the Assistant Commissioner for the State of Tennessee, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Land, 1865-1869, RG 105 (NA) (hereinafter cited as FB Records). On postwar white racial thought in the South, see Lawrence J. Friedman, The White Savage: Racial Fantasies in the Postbellum South (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1970), v-vii, 19-36.

Whites bristled at every assertion of black independence. The freedmen's demands for social privileges particularly rankled. "It may be an unreasonable prejudice," the editor of the Fayetteville Observer confessed sarcastically in 1868, "but we are prejudiced against the view that [blacks] are fit companions for us at the table, in the domestic circle, in the theatre and concert room, and so on." The freedmen's campaign for political rights likewise provoked the scorn of whites. Another editor declared in 1866 that "ours is a white man's government, so intended by our fathers, the framers of our Constitution. . . ." One white spokesman poked ridicule at the idea of black suffrage by likening it to another equally unthinkable proposition: "We would prefer to see women vote, at once," he wrote, "to bestowing the right of suffrage upon the colored people, and we should look on either as the accomplishment of one of those absurd notions that haunt only effete and morbid imaginations." Blacks who bought land, furthermore, or who sought education, or who wore an army uniform, or who stepped forward to lead their people, or who dared to look the white man in the eye and speak to him as man to man—all such were anathema to the intransigent native whites, who vowed not to rest until blacks were again subjugated. "The people of the country will never be on good terms with the negroes," a Freedmen's Bureau agent reported in 1868, "until they have got them in their power."³

³Fayetteville Observer, Oct. 1, 1868, Aug. 16, 1866; Lincoln County News, Feb. 10, 1866; Report of George E. Judd, Feb. 1, 1868, Narrative Reports, FB Records. White opposition in general toward the freed blacks is further illustrated in "Consolidated Report of Outrages, State of Tennessee, September, 1866," Reports of Outrages, Riots and Murders,

A corollary of the whites' utter denial of black equality was their insistence on treating the freedmen as highhandedly and brutally as they had treated slaves. "The [white] people do all they can to degrade them," another Bureau agent wrote, "and keep them down to what they see fit to call their proper place." Whites assaulted blacks for trivial causes, or none at all, and when challenged by Federal authorities claimed the right to do so. Moreover, flagrant sexual abuse of black women by white men continued, leading one visiting Northerner to declare that "the mulatto girl has as little protection against white ruffianism now as she had while a slave." When blacks were accused of heinous crimes, whites assumed the right to dispatch the culprits without benefit of formal justice, just as they had before the war. In 1868, for example, after a group of whites lynched a black man accused of raping a white woman, the Fayetteville Observer nonchalantly affirmed that such retribution was sometimes necessary for the "safety of society," and defended the perpetrators as "instruments of Divine vengeance in carrying out His holy and immutable decrees." Whites wantonly assailed

ibid.; Report of R. Caldwell, Feb. 28, 1866, Narrative Reports, ibid. For further instances of white hostility toward black political rights in particular, see Murfreesboro Monitor, Oct. 7, 1865. Opposition to the renting or purchase of land by blacks is noted in "List of Outrages perpetrated by the whites upon the Freedmen in the State of Tennessee from April 1865 to March 1866," Reports of Outrages, FB Records; Report of John Laurence, Feb. 28, 1866, Narrative Reports, ibid. Black troops are denounced in Clarksville Chronicle, Sept. 8, 1865; Nimrod Porter Journal, Oct. 22, 1865 (SHC). Animosity toward black education, and especially toward black teachers, is noted in Report of M. Walsh, Nov. 1, 1866, Narrative Reports, FB Records; B. H. White to John Eaton, Jan. 18, May 2, 1868, John Eaton Correspondence (TSLA); Report of J. A. Edmonson, Jan. 4, 1869, in John Eaton, Jr., First Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction for the State of Tennessee . . . (Nashville, 1869), CL.

not only blacks, but whites who sided with them. "The system of slavery has brutalized the [white] people," a Freedmen's Bureau agent remarked in 1866,

until they feel as if they must kill the negro if he dares to speak in opposition to them. And in fact they act as if they would like to kill any man who hints that the negro has the same rights that they have.

A Pulaski newspaper warned white renegades bluntly in 1868: "The line is drawn—you must be a white man or a nigger. No middle ground."⁴

A third tenet of white racial dogma which survived the war concerned the Negro character. Forgetting or ignoring the wartime explosion of black self-assertion which had shattered slavery, whites persisted in their inveterate belief that most blacks were meek, passive, and contented with inferior status unless stirred up by inside or outside agitators. "Bad niggers" were still around to instigate mischief, of course; and the loathsome abolitionists of the old days had disappeared only to be replaced by equally pernicious Radical Republicans. Thus, white heartlanders easily found scapegoats for their unremitting problems

⁴Report of J. K. Lewis, n.d. (August 1866), Reports of Outrages, FB Records; Report of M. Walsh, Feb. 18, 1867, Narrative Reports, *ibid.*; *Lebanon Record*, Sept. 19, 1868; *Fayetteville Observer*, June 18, 25, 1868; Report of J. K. Lewis, Aug. 28, 1866, Reports of Outrages, FB Records; *Pulaski Citizen*, May 1, 1868. On the condoning of white violence, see also *ibid.*, July 3, 1868; and *Lincoln County News*, June 20, 1868. Coercion of whites sympathetic to the freedmen is further noted in Report of J. P. McKee, n.d., Eaton, *First Report*, CXXXV. The sexual abuse of black women is documented in Report of John Seage, Jan., 1866, Reports of Outrages, FB Records. For two extreme cases—one of a black held in virtual slavery after the war, and another of a white who refused to acknowledge the end of slavery, continued to whip blacks, and even claimed two as property on his 1867 tax return—see J. T. Trowbridge, *A Picture of the Desolated States; and the Work of Restoration, 1865-1868* (Hartford, Connecticut, 1868), 341; and Report of M. Walsh, Apr. 8, 1867, Reports of Outrages, FB Records.

with the freedmen. "The white men from the North are at the bottom of the whole trouble," one heartlander declared in 1868;

If bad men get a hold of [the freedman] and fill his mind with all sorts of ideas as to his rights, and induce him to look upon his old masters as so many monsters who should be killed at sight, what can you expect of him?

And yet many whites continued to believe also, in the curiously paradoxical Southern manner, that these same docile blacks were addicted to theft, rape, arson, and conspiratorial rebellion—the old, familiar phantasms of the slave South.⁵

One crucial component of the ideology of slavery did not abide, however, and that was paternalism. The shock of slavery's rapid dissolution and the slaves' peremptory rejection of their masters had demolished the paternalistic ethos to which most slaveholders had in greater or lesser degree subscribed. A few traces did linger after the war: it was not unknown for whites to care generously for aged or orphaned ex-slaves, for example, or to remember faithful blacks in their wills. But as black people as a whole continued to seek autonomy, even the most altruistic whites renounced paternalistic obligations, abandoned their role as protective lord or indulgent father, and became the freedmen's indifferent boss. "The negro is now free," the Fayetteville

⁵Fayetteville Observer, Oct. 15, 1868. See also *ibid.*, Aug. 13, 1868, Dec. 23, 1869, Feb. 10, 1870; Pulaski Citizen, Dec. 13, 1867, Jan. 31, 1868; A. R. Wynne to Andrew Johnson, Sept. 8, 1865, Andrew Johnson Papers (LC); A. O. P. Nicholson to Andrew Johnson, July 24, 1868, *ibid.*; Columbia Herald, July 30, 1869; Dan T. Carter, "The Anatomy of Fear: The Christmas Day Insurrection Scare of 1865," JSH, XLII (Aug., 1976), 345-64.

Observer stated in 1866 after reporting rumors that some needy blacks had applied to their old masters for succor, "and his former owner will not be likely to again assume the responsibility of [his] maintenance and protection." A Wilson County resident who since the war had provided for a blind black man and two black orphans went before the county court in 1868 to ask that he "be relieved from the care and expense of all of said paupers"; the court thereupon turned the adult over to the Poor House and bound the children out as apprentices. While supervising the signing of contracts between planters and black workers in Sumner County in 1866, a Freedmen's Bureau agent lamented the reluctance of the employers to consent to provisions requiring them to support whole families. The whites, he said, deemed black children unprofitable and

troublesome as well as expensive. I have had great difficulty persuading the farmers & others to take families & have been mortified and deeply grieved to learn how little sympathy & kind feeling was felt for this unfortunate class of people; self interest seems to be the ruling passion.⁶

⁶Fayetteville Observer, Aug. 2, 1866; Wilson County, Tennessee, County Court Clerk's Office, County Court Minute Books, May 4, 1868, Vol. 1867-1870, p. 241 (TSLA); Report of T. C. Trimble, Feb. 28, 1866, Narrative Reports, FB Records. See also Report of John Seage, Jan., 1866, Reports of Outrages, *ibid.* Instances of continued paternalism are in Petition to Maury County Court, Feb. 23, 1867, Slave Scrapbook, Box 20, Jill K. Garrett Collection (TSLA); George P. Rawick, ed., The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography (41 vols. to date, Westport, Connecticut, 1972-), Ser. One, Vol. VII (Okla.), 306-8, and Ser. Two, Vol. XI (Mo.), 373-75; Wilson County Court Minutes, Oct. 7, 1867, Vol. 1867-1870, p. 119; Williamson County, Tennessee, County Court Clerk's Office, Minutes, Mar., 1866, Vol. XX, 57-58 (TSLA). On the decline of paternalism and rise of employer-employee relations across the South, and postwar planter-freedmen relations in general, see James L. Roark, Masters without Slaves: Southern Planters in the Civil War and Reconstruction (New York, 1977), 111-55.

Despite the stinginess, the insouciance, or the downright malignity of some employers, however, relations between ex-slaveowners and ex-slaves were not altogether rancorous. In fact, as a number of contemporaries pointed out, former masters were considerably more likely than other native whites to deal decently with the freedmen. Some insisted that this was so because of the ex-slaveholders' deep understanding of the Negroes and their humanitarian (if no longer paternalistic) concern for them. "They need our friendship now," one newspaper editor proclaimed in 1866; "We know them better than any others can, and when left to their own impulses they naturally rely upon their former masters." The Pulaski Citizen likewise noted that freedmen generally got along best "with their old masters, who are, after all, their best friends." More objective observers understood that such bonhomie on the part of whites of the "better sort" owed less to their empathy or benevolence than to their urgent need for farm hands and servants. Not only were many of the white gentry willing to extend the hand of amity and fairness to the blacks in order to get them to work, but they were ready to make tangible concessions. For example, some planters, seeing that schools were a powerful magnet to the freedmen, abandoned their opposition to black education and even built schoolhouses on their land to attract workers. "In justice to many of these leading rebels," a Northern missionary wrote from Franklin in 1867, "let me here say, that . . . their views and policies have changed since I have been here, especially those in relation to Freedmen Schools. . . ." That man failed to discern the underlying motives of those "leading rebels," but the

editor of the Columbia Herald stated the matter plainly in 1870:

"Where there is a colored school in a neighborhood," he wrote, "there is no difficulty in obtaining plenty [of] laborers." In their desperate search for labor, many planters went so far as to swallow their pride and seek the help of the Freedmen's Bureau; some, in fact, came to rely on it. "Many of the best farmers have been to me," a Bureau agent wrote from Williamson County in 1866, "saying they did not know what they should do if the power of enforcing contracts was taken from the [Bureau] Superintendent of the County."⁷

⁷Columbia Herald, May 12, 1866, May 20, 1870; Pulaski Citizen, Jan. 18, 1867; E. H. Truman to Samuel Hunt, American Missionary Association, Tennessee Records (Amistad Research Center, Dillard University, New Orleans); Report of George Judd, May 31, 1866, Narrative Reports, FB Records. For further evidence of good relations between blacks and upper-class whites, and expressions of good will toward blacks by such whites, see Report of R. Caldwell, Apr. 4, 1866, *ibid.*; Joseph B. Killebrew Autobiography, I, 172-75 (SHC); Murfreesboro Monitor, Sept. 9, 1865; Pulaski Citizen, Jan. 5, 1866. Favorable attitudes of elites toward black schools (attitudes which were not in every case motivated solely by self-interest) are documented in Trowbridge, Picture of the Desolated States, 289; Columbia Herald, May 6, 1870; Pulaski Citizen, Mar. 30, 1866; Killebrew Autobiography, I, 186-87; Fayetteville Observer, Dec. 21, 1865; Report of M. Walsh, Oct. 3, 1866, Reports of Outrages, FB Records; Report of George Judd, Jan., 1868, Monthly Reports from Subassistant Commissioners and Agents, Records of the Superintendent of Education for the State of Tennessee, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Land, 1865-1870, RG 105 (NA) (hereinafter cited as FB Education Records); Report of J. K. Nelson, Feb., 1868, *ibid.*; Report of McQuiddy, Mar., 1868, *ibid.* Upper-class cooperation with, and reliance on, the Freedmen's Bureau, and white concern in general with putting blacks to work, are shown in Clarksville Chronicle, July 28, Aug. 11, 1865; Clarksville Weekly Chronicle, Sept. 22, Oct. 20, 1865; Fayetteville Observer, Dec. 21, 1865, Mar. 7, 1867; Murfreesboro Monitor, Sept. 9, 1865; Trowbridge, Picture of the Desolated States, 287; Campbell Brown to Mrs. R. S. Ewell, Aug. 31, Sept. 3, 1865, Polk-Brown-Ewell Papers (SHC); Report of William J. Bryan, Mar. 1, 1866, Narrative Reports, FB Records; Report of James M. Tracy, June 1, 1866, *ibid.*; Report of D. D. Holman, June 14, 1866, *ibid.*; Report of M. Walsh, Nov. 1, 1866, *ibid.*

No such harmony characterized relations between blacks and poor whites. Lower-class hostility toward the freedmen and their few white advocates during Reconstruction was venomous and violent. One Freedmen's Bureau agent declared flatly in 1868 that "The poor whites are the freedmens worst enemy." Another agent agreed, noting that there was "a large number of low degraded and brutal whites, who prefer to sit around grogeries and abuse freedmen to earning an honest living." A third contrasted the cooperativeness of white elites with the virulent antagonism of the plebeians: "All the animosity and hatred of the Bureau and its officers," he said "seems to be among those who have the least at stake." The most spiteful antipathy was reserved for black schools and teachers. "Among the uneducated whites," an agent wrote in 1866, "the prejudice against the education of the negro is extremely bitter"; and another in Franklin remarked that "Those who seem to be the most opposed to the negroes having an education are those who have the least themselves." Poor-white racism was vividly personified by a man whom a Northerner met on a train heading into Murfreesboro in late 1865: "an ignorant brute," the scandalized Yankee wrote,

with his shirt bosom streaked with tobacco drizzle, who was saying in a loud, fierce tone, that "we'd better kill off the balance of the niggers," for he had "no use for 'em now they were free."⁸

⁸Report of George Judd, Feb., 1868, Monthly Reports, FB Education Records; Report of M. Walsh, Apr. 8, 1867, Reports of Outrages, FB Records; Report of George Judd, May 31, 1866, Narrative Reports, *ibid.*; Report of John Laurence, Feb. 28, 1866, *ibid.*; Report of George Judd, Mar. 31, 1866, *ibid.*; Trowbridge, Picture of the Desolated States, 272. See also "Consolidated Report of Outrages, State of Tennessee, September, 1866," Reports of Outrages, FB Records; Report of M. Walsh, Oct. 3, 1866, *ibid.*; Report of R. Caldwell, Apr. 4, 1866, Narrative Reports,

Such hostility was nothing new, of course. Its roots were in the antebellum period, when slaves frequently endured brutal violence at the hands of lower-class whites. But Reconstruction aggravated that traditional enmity (which was, moreover, mutual). For one thing, the educational and economic progress of the freedmen forcibly reminded poor whites of their own ignorance, penury, and powerlessness. A Bureau agent in Lincoln County unwittingly identified a prime cause of racial troubles when he reported that the condition of the blacks in his district was "as good as that of the poor class of white persons and perhaps better in many instances." Furthermore, Radical rule and the disfranchisement of ex-Rebels embittered the white masses, who took out their frustrations on the most obvious reminder of their own political impotence—the freedmen, who by 1867 had won the franchise and become a powerful force in Tennessee politics. Many observers in Middle Tennessee noted how white antagonism toward blacks waxed and waned in response to political news from Nashville and Washington. Beyond these, however, the major sources of intensified racial discord in the postwar heartland were the increasing physical proximity and the growing economic interrelationship of blacks and poor whites. The thousands of freedmen moving into villages and towns rubbed shoulders

ibid.; Report of M. Walsh, Dec. 15, 1866, Jan. 16, 1867, *ibid.*; E. H. Truman to Samuel Hunt, June 28, 1866, American Missionary Association, Tennessee Records; F. Ayer to M. E. Strieby, Oct. 2, 1865, *ibid.*; Edward P. Smith to M. E. Strieby, Oct. 11, 1865, *ibid.*; E. M. Mears to John Ogden, Oct. 14, 1865, *ibid.*; Report of E. A. Easter, Feb. 12, 1866, *ibid.*; Report of George Judd, Jan., Mar., Apr., 1868, Monthly Reports, FB Education Records; Report of McQuiddy, Mar., 1868, *ibid.*

with white residents and competed with them for unskilled work. Many a white laborer must have fumed bitterly in 1865 and later as blacks took up residence all around him and then took his job at lower pay. Conflict burgeoned in the countryside as well. Some white tenant farmers sublet plots of land to blacks, or hired blacks as farm hands. The results were incessant bickering, mutual accusations of cheating and negligence, and frequent clashes, all on a scale unknown before the war, when contacts between slaves and poor whites were more limited.⁹

With few dissenters the native white community—aristocrats as well as plebeians, old unionists as well as ex-Rebels, planters who dealt kindly with blacks as well as thugs who brutalized them—agreed that the black man must remain, if no longer the white man's slave, at the very least his submissive servant. To secure the utter subordination of the freedmen, whites in the postwar era resorted to every weapon and artifice at their command; and they did so with a single-minded determination that rivaled or surpassed their aggressive efforts to retain their slaves in the months following the Union invasion of 1862. Acknowledging only that blacks could no longer be legally bought, sold, or whipped, whites resolutely set about devising substitute methods of control.

⁹Report of Alfred Bearden, June 30, 1866, Narrative Reports, FB Records. The influence of national and state politics on race relations is noted in Report of M. Walsh, Mar. 1, Nov. 4, 1867, Jan. 8, 1868, *ibid.*; Report of J. W. Celray, Sept. 10, 1868, *ibid.*; Report of S. Barr, Feb., 1866, *ibid.* For evidence of economic conflicts between blacks and poor whites, see Report of M. Walsh, Dec. 15, 1866, Jan. 16, Oct. 7, Dec. 7, 1867, *ibid.*

Native whites generally maintained a firm grip on the county courthouses during Reconstruction, and they used those institutions as instruments of racial repression. Though forced to honor the letter of postwar state law establishing black legal rights, many judges and justices of the peace subverted the spirit of the law by willfully resolving every interracial case to the black's disadvantage. "The idea of negroes getting justice before the magistrates of this county is perfectly absurd," an indignant Freedmen's Bureau agent wrote from Giles in 1866; "They will hear the testimony of the blacks but will give it no weight unless it happens to suit their purposes."¹⁰

Traditional administrative and judicial powers of the courts were dusted off and polished up in the postwar years, and then were brought to bear against the freedmen. One of the most important of these powers was apprenticing. The county-supervised indenturing of free orphans had been infrequent in the antebellum period, because white families usually had some property with which an orphan could be supported. But the number of apprenticeship agreements multiplied after the war, and the vast majority bound a black orphan to a white adult (who was often, on the evidence of surnames, the child's ex-master). To the minds of most magistrates, undoubtedly, apprenticeship was not a calculated method of racial subjugation but merely a practical solution to a serious

¹⁰Report of J. K. Lewis for Aug., 1866, Reports of Outrages, *ibid.* See also Report of M. Walsh, Jan. 16, Oct. 7, 1867, Narrative Reports, *ibid.*; Report of Fred S. Palmers, June 13, 1866, Reports of Officers and Agents, *ibid.*; Theodore B. Wilson, The Black Codes of the South (University, Alabama, 1965), 111-13.

problem, for numbers of young blacks were wandering homelessly in the region at the end of the war. With that judgment, moreover, the Freedmen's Bureau itself concurred. Some black children were in fact bound out not to whites, but to other blacks. Furthermore, the law required (and the justices generally insisted) that black apprentices receive the same benefits that white apprentices always had, that is, humane treatment, a small amount of property at the end of their service, and a basic education in the three R's. But the young freedmen's apprenticeship bonds also enjoined strict obedience to the master, often in language noticeably sterner than that customarily used when apprenticing whites. When, for example, ten-year-old Harriet Louisa was bound out to a Marshall County white man in July 1865, the court decreed that she "shall obey the lawful commands and faithfully serve the said Thomas Hardison, and be in all respects subject to his authority and control. . . ." Whatever its intent, the ultimate effect of the apprenticeship system was to subject considerable numbers of freed black youngsters to the direct command and supervision of whites.¹¹

¹¹Marshall County, Tennessee, County Court Clerk, Minutes, County Court, July 1865, Vol. L. 153-54 (TSLA). Other examples are abundant in the county court records. See, e.g., Bedford County, Tennessee, County Court Clerk's Office, County Court Minutes, Nov., 1865, Vol. A, 393, Sept., 1866, Vol. B, 120-21 (TSLA); Lincoln County, Tennessee, County Court Clerk's Office, Minutes, Sept., 1866, Vol. A, 467-68, Feb., 1869, Vol. B, 202-5 (TSLA). For examples of blacks bound to black masters, see Davidson County, Tennessee, County Court Clerk's Office, County Court Minutes, May 25, 1865, Bk. I, 502 (TSLA); Giles County, Tennessee, County Court Clerk's Office, County Court Minutes, Feb. 1, 1869, Vol. II, 103 (TSLA). The Freedmen's Bureau's advocacy of the apprenticing of blacks, as well as the Bureau's subsequent limited supervision of the system, are evidenced in Report of R. Caldwell, Feb. 28, 1866, Narrative Reports, FB Records; Report of M. Walsh, Dec. 15, 1866, *ibid.*; Alfred Bearden to Joseph G. Carrigan, Oct. 23, 1865, Tennessee Legislative Petitions, 1866 (TSLA).

A second traditional legal instrument which assumed a new role after the war was imprisonment. Few slaves in the antebellum era ever saw the inside of a jail, for the punishment of their miscreancy was customarily the master's prerogative. Emancipation, however, forced local government and law to step in; and they did so with a vengeance. Granted, the courts and law officers did face a veritable deluge of black crime after the war, particularly in the urban black communities, and something had to be done with the numerous black lawbreakers. The Columbia Herald took note in 1869 of the "frequent and alarming shedding of colored blood by negroes. . . . Indeed, the heading, 'A Negro Killed,' might be left standing in our columns with a fair prospect of being used each week." But jails became more than just a place of legal custody for black felons: they became also an agent of the social control of the black race. Authorities invoked vagrancy laws, for example, against urban blacks reluctant to sign work contracts with white employers, and they frequently imprisoned blacks for other "crimes" for which no white man ever served time. A Davidson County Freedmen's Bureau agent complained in 1867 that

every petty magistrate seems to want to run a big court and hence freedmen are committed to jail on the most frivolous grounds and are compelled to lie there until they become lousy, dirty and demoralized.

"Uppitiness" toward whites was a common excuse for incarceration. The Herald reported with some satisfaction in 1870, for example, that a certain Miles Stokes, "whose skin is the color of the Fifteenth Amendment," had received a sentence of six months in prison for the high crime of insulting some white ladies. Thus, the heartland's jails filled up with

black convicts in the postwar years. When census takers had made their rounds in 1860 they found probably fewer than twenty prisoners in jail in the whole region (excluding Davidson County), undoubtedly all or nearly all of them white men. In 1870 there were ninety-one prisoners, of whom sixty-four were black.¹²

Labor contracts, which had come into use even before the war ended, offered a third means of legally controlling the freedmen. By 1866 nearly all black workers (in the rural areas at least) were earning their wages or crop shares under formal, written agreements. These ostensibly guaranteed the faithful performance of obligations by both employer and employee, and they were welcomed by blacks and whites alike and required by the Freedmen's Bureau, which for a time supervised their signing and enforcement. But many employers took advantage of the freedmen's ignorance to force bad terms on them. As black workers gained experience and became more wary, some whites resorted to outright fraud—refusing to pay up at the end of the agreed-upon term, for example, or deliberately miscounting the laborer's portion of the crop, or making work conditions so unbearable after the harvest that the

¹²Columbia Herald, Oct. 29, 1869, Apr. 29, 1870; Pulaski Citizen, Jan. 18, 1867; Report of M. Walsh, Apr. 8, 1867, Reports of Outrages, FB Records; United States Census Bureau, Eighth Census, 1860, Manuscript Returns of Social Statistics, Tennessee (NA); United States Census Bureau, Ninth Census, 1870, Manuscript Returns of Social Statistics, Tennessee (NA). See also Fayetteville Observer, Nov. 30, 1865; Pulaski Citizen, Aug. 10, 1866; Leon F. Litwack, Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery (New York, 1979), 366-71. Davidson County is omitted from these statistics because the 1870 census figures provided for it include the state penitentiary. Census takers failed to report prisoners in two other counties in 1860, but the total for the remaining ten counties is twelve prisoners. The 1860 census did not specify the race of prisoners.

freedman would leave in discouragement before getting paid. A Bureau agent in Giles County accused farmers there of quickly selling their harvested crops and then telling their black employees "to whistle for their pay." Another agent estimated in 1867 that across the region fully one-third of all black contract workers had in one way or another been "mulct out of their years labor or had to settle on very disadvantageous terms." Before long it became obvious that even with the Bureau's superintendence the contract system was something less than a mutually advantageous two-way street. Employers were often slow to honor their own obligations but always quick to hold the blacks to theirs. "The whites demand the enforcement of contracts when they are aggrieved," an agent wrote from Columbia in 1866, "but repudiate the Bureau when they are the aggressors." A few months later the same man praised the fidelity of black workers while castigating white employers: "The freedmen are generally industrious and struggle under great disadvantage to perform their part," he wrote; "If they could be met in the same spirit much good would result therefrom." Unfortunately that spirit did not animate all whites, and through the Reconstruction period blacks remained as much the victims as the beneficiaries of the contract system.¹³

¹³Report of S. B. Barr, May 3, 1866, Narrative Reports, FB Records; Report of M. Walsh, Dec. 15, 1866, *ibid.*; Report of D. D. Holman for June 1866, *ibid.*; Report of J. H. Gregory, July 10, 1866, *ibid.*; Report of M. Walsh, Apr. 8, 1867, Reports of Outrages, *ibid.*; Report of John Seage, Jan., 1866, *ibid.*; Report of J. R. Lewis, Aug. 28, 1866, *ibid.* Other accounts of white chicanery are in Report of George Judd, May 3, 1866, Narrative Reports, *ibid.*; Report of M. Walsh, Jan. 16,

Social as well as legal instruments availed the white community in its postwar crusade to bring the freedmen to heel. In particular, whites attempted to control blacks through the authority of the churches. White churchmen tended their black brethren closely in these years, as they had done during past periods of fear and uncertainty over slaves. When representatives of Middle Tennessee Presbyterian churches met in Murfreesboro in 1867, for example, they resolved to establish special black Sunday schools and decreed that every minister must preach to the freedmen at least once a month. That same year the elders of Zion Presbyterian Church in Maury County began a Sunday school for black members and held grave discussions with the freedmen concerning their relationship to the church. They furthermore updated the church's black membership rolls and, as the session minutes recorded, "set on foot [measures] to reclaim if possible those [blacks] who have backslidden and gone back to the world." The Columbia Herald urged churches moreover to take up the task of educating and "training . . . young negroes and fitting them for the duties and responsibilities

Oct. 7, Nov. 4, Dec. 7, 1867, ibid.; Report of George Judd, July 9, 1868, ibid.; Campbell Brown to Mrs. R. S. Ewell, Aug. 31, Sept. 3, 1865, Polk-Brown-Ewell Papers; Trowbridge, Picture of the Desolated States, 287. For an example of white advocacy of labor contracts, and a sample contract, see Clarksville Chronicle, Sept. 1, 1865. See also Litwack, Been in the Storm So Long, 408-25. The subordination of freedmen across the South through state laws regulating contracts and black employment is detailed in William Cohen, "Negro Involuntary Servitude in the South, 1865-1940: A Preliminary Analysis," JSH, XLII (Feb., 1976), 31-60.

that now devolve on them," and thus counteract the "pernicious and dangerous influence" of Yankee teachers.¹⁴

Despite the earnest efforts of white church leaders, however, harmony was conspicuously absent in the interracial churches of the heartland after 1865. Black worshippers in increasing numbers grew restive under white control, and ultimately most withdrew to form separate churches. Whites fumed at this loss of mastery and blamed the usual "evil influences." But they soon recognized that they were helpless to prevent the black exodus and they proceeded in a practical way to make the best of a bad situation. Reckoning that the moral authority of black churches over their members was better than no moral authority at all, the white community eventually came to support those churches. Whites in Franklin, annoyed by black children running around unrestrained on Sundays, openly gave thanks when the town's freedmen organized a Sunday school in 1866. In Fayetteville whites helped blacks put up a church building in 1869; and the following year the Montgomery County magistrates went so far as to turn their courthouse over to the town's black Baptists "for the purpose of giving a supper for the benefit of their Church."¹⁵

¹⁴First Presbyterian Church, Clarksville, Montgomery County, Records, Session Minutes, Vol. II, Apr. 17, 1867 (TSLA); Zion Presbyterian Church, Maury County, Records, Session Minutes, Apr. 8, July 8, 1867 (TSLA); Columbia Herald, May 12, 1866. See also Lincoln County News, July 13, 1867; Edward P. Smith to M. E. Strieby, July 21, 1865, American Missionary Association, Tennessee Records.

¹⁵E. H. Truman to Samuel Hunt, June 28, 1866, *ibid.*; Lincoln County News, Feb. 20, 1869; Montgomery County, Tennessee, County Court Clerk's Office, County Court Minutes, Apr. 4, 1870, Vol. XXVII, 251 (TSLA). See also Report of M. Walsh, Nov. 4, 1867, Narrative Reports, FB Records;

Even as they aggressively wielded every device of racial subjugation at their disposal, however, whites knew that their coercive power was vitiated by their fundamental economic dependence on free black labor. This awareness led to much discussion of ways to reduce that dependence. Some spokesmen advised farmers to plant more grass and less cotton so that they might get by with fewer black farm hands. Others urged whites in town and country to invest in labor-saving machinery. The editor of the Fayetteville Observer, for example, commended to his readers the newfangled Doty's Washing Machine and Universal Wringer, which he judged an absolute necessity "Under our uncertain system of labor—or, rather, our system that is certain to be unsatisfactory. . . ."

Eventually such sentiments culminated in a ludicrous campaign to replace black workers with imported foreigners (Germans and Chinese were most often mentioned). Clarksville even spawned a formal citizens' association to encourage immigration. The Observer exhorted farmers in 1868 to "bestir yourselves" to bring in Europeans: "We want no more black labor—we must obtain the white." The Columbia Herald warned blacks that if they continued to misbehave and to repudiate white authority

Columbia Herald, Feb. 25, 1870; Fayetteville Observer, May 16, 1867. The initial white opposition to separate black churches is illustrated in Pulaski Citizen, Mar. 30, 1866; D. Little, History of the Presbytery of Columbia, Tennessee (Columbia, Tennessee, 1928), 31. On the reaction of white churchmen across the South to the black withdrawal, see H. Shelton Smith, In His Image, But . . . : Racism in Southern Religion, 1780-1910 (Durham, North Carolina, 1972), 208-44; John L. Eighmy, Churches in Cultural Captivity: A History of the Social Attitudes of Southern Baptists (Knoxville, 1972), 31-33.

"They may expect that their former masters . . . will turn them over to the tender mercies of their friends across the Ohio and try John Chinaman awhile."¹⁶

Most whites, however, were realistic enough to see that immigration schemes were folly, and that black labor was there to stay. Their solution was not to make labor less black, but less free—thus, the apprenticeship and contract systems. As whites gained economic power over the freedmen they used that power as a club against those who dared to step out of line, particularly those who voted the wrong way. Quietly at first, but before long blatantly, whites threatened and harassed their black workers who sided with the Radicals. They fired black farm hands, evicted black tenants, boycotted black tradesmen. "[W]e are glad to say," the Clarksville Chronicle remarked after the August 1867 state election, ". . . that many of the Radical darkies in town waked up this morning without a job." A Northern newspaper correspondent who toured the heartland in 1868 reported that "planters repeatedly told me . . . that if their 'croppers' . . . did not vote just as they told them, they would drive them off the place. . . ." A Montgomery County farmer admitted frankly that on election day he handed his black workers Conservative tickets, accompanied them to the

¹⁶Fayetteville Observer, Oct. 24, 1867, Feb. 27, 1868, Dec. 15, 1870; Pulaski Citizen, Oct. 11, 1867; Columbia Herald, July 30, 1869. See also Fayetteville Observer, Jan. 24, 1867, Mar. 26, 1868; Lincoln County News, July 20, 1867; Report of M. Walsh, Nov. 4, 1867, Narrative Reports, FB Records. Similar immigration movements appeared all over the South in this period; see Rowland T. Berthoff, "Southern Attitudes toward Immigration, 1865-1914," JSH, XVII (Aug., 1951), 328-29; Litwack, Been in the Storm So Long, 351-53.

polls, and stood by while they voted. Whites in Pulaski blacklisted a Negro barber who was active in Radical politics, leaving him with a mere handful of white Radical customers. The editor of the Lincoln County News spoke for most native whites when he warned in 1867 that "It is a bold presumption upon our patience and interest" for the freedmen to vote Radical and yet assume that whites "will continue to countenance and employ them."¹⁷

When legal, social, and economic sanctions failed to stifle black assertiveness, white threats turned more sinister. "The negroes of this State have done all in their power," the Fayetteville Observer declared in 1867,

. . . to forfeit the good opinion of the white race, and, as a consequence, their day of trouble is just dawning. . . .
They will have their reward.

Another newspaper ominously prophesied that blacks who espoused Radicalism would "create an antagonistic element in our midst that sooner or later will grow into a bloody conflict between the races, and the fate of the Indians will assuredly be theirs." One white Middle Tennessean—an old unionist at that—put it more bluntly in 1866:

¹⁷Clarksville Chronicle, quoted in Fayetteville Observer, Aug. 15, 1867; Lebanon Record, Sept. 19, 1868; Killebrew Autobiography, I, 191-92; Report of M. Walsh, Sept. 6, 1867, Narrative Reports, FB Records; Lincoln County News, May 4, 1867. See also Pulaski Citizen, Nov. 20, 1868; Fayetteville Observer, July 11, 1867; Shelbyville Republican, Nov. 6, 1868; Report of M. Walsh, Aug. 6, Oct. 7, 1867, Narrative Reports, FB Records; "Special Report of colored laborers discharged from employment . . . on account of voting for certain candidates in the election of August 1st 1867," Subdistrict of Nashville, Miscellaneous Reports, 1866-67, *ibid.* (This source documents in detail over 200 cases of blacks fired by employers in six Middle Tennessee counties.)

if Federal troops were withdrawn, he avowed, "the buzzards can't eat up the niggers as fast as we'll kill 'em."¹⁸

With increasing frequency there came reports of violence against blacks. A freedmen's church and school were burned in Shelbyville in the fall of 1865, and at least two other schoolhouses in Columbia met the same fate. In Clarksville that year white youths exchanged blows and gunfire with black troops during a Christmas day clash. In the summer of 1867 armed whites in Franklin attacked a group of black political marchers, likewise armed, and the resulting melee swelled into a huge, bloody shootout between the town's Radicals and Conservatives. Similar incidents multiplied around the region.¹⁹

Random white violence persisted through the whole Reconstruction era, but by 1867 it was overshadowed by the rise of massive, organized violence, through the agency of the infamous Ku Klux Klan. Middle Tennessee—specifically, Pulaski—holds the dubious distinction of being the birthplace of the Klan, which spread terrorism across the South in those years. With its clandestine meetings and secret oaths,

¹⁸Fayetteville Observer, Aug. 15, 1867; Lincoln County News, July 20, 1867; Testimony of R. W. Barnard, Feb. 5, 1866, United States Congress, Joint Committee on Reconstruction, Sub-Committee on Tennessee—Report (House Reports 30, 39 Cong., 1 sess., Serial 1273), 120-21. See also Fayetteville Observer, June 25, 1868.

¹⁹S. P. Anderson to John Ogden, Oct. 3, 1865, American Missionary Association, Tennessee Records; E. M. Mears to John Ogden, Oct. 14, 1865, *ibid.*; Clarksville Weekly Chronicle, Dec. 29, 1865; Report of M. Walsh, July 15, 1867, Reports of Outrages, FB Records. See also Report of John Seage, Jan., 1866, *ibid.*; "List of Outrages perpetrated by the whites upon the Freedmen in the State of Tennessee from April 1865 to March 1866," *ibid.*; Report of Fred S. Palmer, July 6, 1866, *ibid.*; Fayetteville Observer, Jan. 3, 1867; Pulaski Citizen, July 10, 1868.

its ritual and regalia, the Klan won the loyalty of thousands of white men; with its high-flown rhetoric of white supremacy and anti-Radicalism it captured considerable popular support; and with its frequent resort to the gun and the whip it visited fear, mayhem, and death upon "uppity" blacks, white Radicals, and anyone else who piqued its wrath.²⁰

The first Klan incidents cropped up in 1867, when blacks gained the franchise and political excitement in the region intensified. These earliest manifestations were ostentatious (but generally non-violent) processions of silent, hooded horsemen, intended to scare black and white Radicals away from the polls. When that stratagem failed, the Klansmen went for their guns. In large or small bands they roamed the countryside—sometimes in broad daylight—dragging their black and white victims from their homes and beating or murdering them on the spot. "Every turnpike and crossroad is nightly patrolled by the Klan," a Northerner wrote from Nashville in 1868; "Peaceful and inoffensive white men, as well as negroes, have been seized at night by these disguised bands and outraged in the most cruel manner." Near Shelbyville, for example, Klansmen broke into the cabin of a white man whose crime was being "an associate of negroes and . . . a professor in a negro school," whipped him, and ordered him out of town. Another

²⁰ Allen Trelease, White Terror: The Ku Klux Klan Conspiracy and Southern Reconstruction (New York, 1971), 3-5, and passim. See also Stanley F. Horn, Invisible Empire: The Story of the Ku Klux Klan, 1866-1871 (Boston, 1939), passim; and Thomas B. Alexander, "Kukluxism in Tennessee, 1865-1869," THQ, VIII (Sept., 1949), 195-219. Evidence of popular support for the Klan in Middle Tennessee is in Fayetteville Observer, June 25, 1868; Pulaski Citizen, Aug. 2, 1867; Report of M. Walsh, Feb. 29, 1868, Narrative Reports, FB Records.

gang in Maury County attacked several members of a black family and cruelly scourged them with stirrup straps and buckles because one was a "big-feeling nigger" active in Radical politics.²¹

It was lynching, however, which became the hallmark of the Klan, the symbol of its purpose and its power. Over and over again, in a ghastly ritual which would become even more familiar to subsequent generations of Middle Tennesseans and all Southerners, black men accused of arson or (more often) the rape of a white woman were taken from jail by disguised gangs and shot or hanged in a public spectacle. In the early morning of June 30, 1868, for example, a well-organized group of about 100 men surrounded the Pulaski jail and forcibly removed a freedman awaiting trial on charges of raping a white woman and her daughter. Two hours later the town omnibus ran over the black's dead body, which lay face down on Main Street, as the newspaper reported, "literally riddled with bullets." No one, moreover, of whatever race or even sex, was safe from the vengeance of the white South's ignoble champions. "The Ku Klucks Can hung a negro woman yesterday," Nimrod

²¹Trelease, White Terror, 9-29; Lebanon Record, Sept. 19, 1868; Pulaski Citizen, July 10, 1868; Alrutheus Taylor, The Negro in Tennessee, 1865-1880 (Washington, 1941), 61. See also Fayetteville Observer, Sept. 10, 1868; Sumner County Republican, Aug. 8, 1868; Shelbyville Republican, Oct. 23, 1868; "List of Murders in Counties of Maury and Marshall Tenn. from July 1st 1867 to July 1st 1868," Aug. 12, 1868, Reports of Outrages, FB Records; Special Report of W. P. Carlin (1868), *ibid.*; Report of M. Walsh, Sept. 6, 1867, Narrative Reports, *ibid.*; Report of George Judd, Feb. 1, May 1, June 9, Nov. 30, 1868, *ibid.*; Register of Outrages, Oct., 1865, to July 1868, *ibid.* Nonviolent Klan demonstrations are noted in Fayetteville Observer, Mar. 12, June 11, 1868; Pulaski Citizen, June 7, July 26, 1867. A Klan-like organization operated in Sumner County as early as 1866; see Report of J. R. Lewis, Aug. 28, 1866, Reports of Outrages, FB Records; Report of M. Walsh, Nov. 29, 1866, *ibid.*

Porter noted in his diary in April 1868; "she had beat up a white woman This is 4 they have hung 2 whites & 2 blacks in the course of a month or so." Lethal violence surged to an awesome, bloody apogee during that spring, summer, and fall of 1868, as the national elections neared and popular agitation grew white-hot. "The general tenor of all the reports of Agents in this Sub Dist[ri]ct," wrote a Freedmen's Bureau supervisor in Nashville, "is terror and oppression to the Freedmen and violence and contempt for law on [the] part of the whites." By July, as blacks in growing numbers resisted white attacks, many people were convinced that all-out war between the races was imminent.²²

More so than any other instrument of racial subjugation in the postwar heartland, the white campaign of violence achieved its ugly purpose. It was not wholly successful, however, for in the towns where the freedmen congregated under the protection of the army, the Freedmen's Bureau, and on occasion the Radical state militia, blacks to a large extent defied white thuggery and worked, attended school, paraded, and voted as they pleased. But in the rural areas, outside the sanctuary of the urban communities and beyond the reach of their white friends, blacks were often at the mercy of native-white terror. Some observers who commented on the progress of black schools in the

²²Pulaski Citizen, July 3, 24, 1868; Porter Journal, Apr. 23, 1868; Report of J. B. Coons, Apr. 6, 1868, Narrative Reports, FB Records; Report of J. W. Gelray, Sept. 10, 1868, *ibid.* Other lynchings are documented in E. H. Truman to M. E. Strieby, Aug. 3, 1868, American Missionary Association, Tennessee Records; Fayetteville Observer, Apr. 16, June 18, 1868; Lebanon Record, Sept. 26, 1868; Pulaski Citizen, July 17, 1868; Lincoln County News, June 20, 1868; Alexander, "Kukluxism in Tennessee," 211.

towns, for example, noted that few schools could be established in the countryside for fear of white retaliation. On election days Klansmen patrolled the rural precincts and in some places prevented the casting of a single Radical ballot, despite the presence of large numbers of black voters. Blacks on the farms were informed peremptorily that whites would countenance no such bold claims to equality and independence as urban blacks asserted; those who flouted these commandments too flagrantly were often beaten, murdered, or sent fleeing to the towns. The results were apparent to all: as a white Maury countian said in the fall of 1868, urban blacks were troublemakers but those on the farms "look up to us with the same deference as they did when bound to us as slaves." This was hyperbole, of course, for even rural blacks had long since cast off their chains, rejected paternalism, and seized many of freedom's rewards. But the remark nevertheless contained a grain of truth. Even at the height of Radical dominion and black power in postwar Middle Tennessee, native whites ruled the countryside.²³

²³Fayetteville Observer, Oct. 15, 1868. The dearth of rural schools for blacks is noted in Report of George Judd, Mar. 31, 1866, Narrative Reports, FB Records; Report of George Judd for Mar., 1868, Monthly Reports, FB Education Records. Interference with black voters in the countryside is illustrated in Trelease, White Terror, 35, 175-76; Shelbyville Republican, Nov. 6, 1868; Fayetteville Observer, Aug. 15, 1867; Report of M. Walsh, Aug. 6, 1867, Narrative Reports, FB Records; Alexander, "Kukluxism in Tennessee," 212, 214. Terrorism against rural blacks resulting in their flight or submission is evidenced in Report of M. Walsh, Jan. 16, Feb. 18, 1867, Narrative Reports, FB Records; Report of George Judd, July 9, Aug. 6, 1868, *ibid.*; "Consolidated Report of Outrages, State of Tennessee, September, 1866," Reports of Outrages, *ibid.*; Fayetteville Observer, Jan. 21, 1869; Porter Journal, June 1, 1868; Trelease, White Terror, 30, 175-76. Radical efforts to suppress the Klan—including an anti-Klan legislative act in 1868, the

The postbellum heartland accommodated (besides the intransigent natives) three other groups of whites, each with its own ideas about the freedmen's rightful destiny. Each group was small but to some degree influential. One of these was the Radicals, a mixed bag of Northern newcomers and native Middle Tennesseans, most of the latter being former unionists. The Radicals' common point of reference was the administration of civil governor William G. Brownlow in Nashville, which succeeded Andrew Johnson's military governorship in April 1865; and their common goal with respect to the freedmen was to organize them, secure their political rights, lead them to the polls, and make sure that they voted correctly and in sufficient numbers to keep the Radical party in power. For the most part Radicals confined their activities to the towns, where they could live and work in comparative safety. They nevertheless endured—sometimes with admirable nobility—the animosity, the threats, and not infrequently the physical assaults of the native white community. Their nobility did not in most cases, however, comprehend a broad, liberal vision of the social and economic elevation of the freedmen.²⁴

infiltration of the Klan by a state agent, and Governor Brownlow's declaration of martial law in several Middle and West Tennessee counties in 1869—are discussed in Thomas B. Alexander, Political Reconstruction in Tennessee (Nashville, 1950), 176-98. For an excellent, brief analysis of how Southern blacks were subjugated after the Civil War not only by violence, but by law, social custom, and economic pressures which culminated ultimately in peonage, see Pete Daniel, "The Metamorphosis of Slavery, 1865-1900," JAH, LXVI (June 1979), 88-99.

²⁴A notable exception to the rule that white Radicals had little interest in the freedmen's advancement was William A. Peffer of Clarksville. See Peter H. Argersinger, "The Conservative as Radical: A Reconstruction Dilemma," THQ, XXXIV (Summer, 1975), 168-87. Examples

A different spirit moved the region's Northern missionaries. These were idealistic reformers—many of them women, most of them former abolitionists—who came to the heartland during or after the war under the sponsorship of humanitarian agencies. They worked hard to fill hungry black bellies with food, but their true mission was to imbue the freedman's character with rectitude and his mind with learning. In the manner of many nineteenth-century liberals, the missionaries presumed that if the freedman could only be provided with the formal schooling and moral training denied him as a slave, he would be able to raise himself up in the world. As a committee of Northern Methodists in Murfreesboro affirmed in 1866,

the more ignorant and degraded men are, the worse members of society they are, and the more troublesome do they become. So will it be with these children of oppression, unless they are elevated and refined by culture.

That the self-advancement of the race might depend not only on the sacred qualities of virtue and knowledge but on the profane powers of the ballot and the purse did not enter into the thinking of the missionaries. Their zeal was for moral reform, and they generally shunned politics. Their aspirations for the freedmen were, moreover, highly culture-bound. Fundamentally, they hoped to make the heartland's blacks over in their own Northern, middle-class image, that is, to teach them (among other things) to stop smoking and drinking and swearing,

of Radical-led political activities are in Pulaski Citizen, Jan. 10, 1868, May 7, 1869; Report of M. Walsh, Sept. 6, 1867, Narrative Reports, FB Records. Native white hostility to Radicals is documented in Chapter XII.

and to adopt a solemn, "dignified" Christianity in place of the frenetic emotionalism which characterized black religion. The missionaries, too, braved the hostility of native whites; but since their limited goals did not directly challenge white power, they suffered considerably less abuse than the Radicals.²⁵

The smallest group of all, yet in some ways the most important, was made up of the Freedmen's Bureau agents. Established by Congress in 1865 to oversee freedmen's affairs in the South, the Bureau was the only agency of Federal authority on which the heartland's blacks could rely after the army withdrew in 1866. Considering its accomplishments, the Bureau in Middle Tennessee was an astonishingly diminutive operation. There were never more than thirteen field agents (eventually fewer), none with so much as a clerk to assist him. Agents had legal authority to use the courts, and at first had army force behind them; but justice for the freedmen was hard to come by in the local courts, and the army was soon gone. Most agents perforce mediated difficulties between blacks and whites on a personal basis, relying on suasion to

²⁵Manuscript journal of the Tennessee Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, Vol. I, vi, 2-8 (TSLA). The teaching and preaching of the missionaries, their crusades against intemperance, tobacco, and exuberant worship, and their unpopularity among native whites, are illustrated in Edward P. Smith to M. E. Strieby, Oct. 11, 1865, American Missionary Association, Tennessee Records; E. M. Mears to John Ogden, Oct. 14, 1865, *ibid.*; Report of C. A. S. Crosby, May 1, 1866, *ibid.*; S. S. Potter to John Ogden, June 25, 1866, *ibid.*; E. H. Truman to M. E. Strieby, Aug. 3, 1868, *ibid.* Henry L. Swint, The Northern Teacher in the South, 1862-1870 (Nashville, 1941), is a general survey.

coax both parties. In 1867, for example, the Robertson County agent admonished a white man whose black employee had complained of being cheated of her wages:

Now these things must not be and shall not be. You must settle with this woman. I prefer having these things done in a friendly, upright manner, and will be much obliged if you will settle with her like a man.

Not long after, however, the same agent sympathetically counseled another white man whose black farm hand had walked off the job:

. . . . I wish you would talk to him as I would could I see him and advise him that if he wishes to establish his character as a good hand he had better go to work and behave himself. . . . Sometimes a little kind advice will do more good than harsh treatment but if he [insists on quitting] do not pay him one cent. . . .²⁶

Thus, each Freedmen's Bureau office tended to assume the character of the individual county agent who ran it, and these agents were a motley group. Some were Northern-born Radicals who mobilized the blacks, stood up for them against white employers, and won the enmity of native whites. Others, however, were Conservatives (some of them longtime residents of the community) who sided with the whites and won their support while denigrating the freedmen and endeavoring to keep them

²⁶"List of Civilian Employees in Nashville Subdistrict . . . 1867," Subdistrict of Nashville, Miscellaneous Reports, FB Records; James Stickney to W. J. Dunn, Feb. 23, 1867, Springfield Office, Letters Sent, *ibid.*; James Stickney to W. A. Buntin, Mar. 2, 1867, *ibid.* General studies of the Freedmen's Bureau in Tennessee and the South are George R. Bentley, History of the Freedmen's Bureau (Philadelphia, 1955); William S. McFeely, Yankee Stepfather: General O. O. Howard and the Freedmen (New York, 1970); Weymouth T. Jordan, "The Freedmen's Bureau in Tennessee," ETHSP, No. 11 (1939), 47-61; Paul D. Phillips, "White Reaction to the Freedmen's Bureau in Tennessee," THQ, XXV (Spring, 1966), 50-62; Paul D. Phillips, "A History of the Freedmen's Bureau in Tennessee" (Ph.D. diss., Vanderbilt University, 1964).

under white control. Blacks in Lincoln County, for example, were doubtless put on their guard when Fayetteville's Conservative newspaper lauded the local Bureau agent as "honest and faithful," and the county court formally resolved that he was "the right man for the place." The eclectic nature of the Bureau, whose representatives ranged from tolerant to bigoted and from broadly reformist to narrowly bureaucratic, explains the diversity of opinions about the agency voiced by native whites across the region: if the Freedmen's Bureau was not everywhere welcomed by whites, neither was it universally despised.²⁷

The influence of the Bureau dwindled rapidly after reaching its peak in 1865-66. At first its agents were empowered to provision and shelter needy blacks, regulate labor contracts and apprenticeship agreements, resolve interracial disputes in their own informal courts, coordinate educational efforts for blacks, and in general exercise broad authority over all matters concerning the freedmen. One by one, however, these powers were revoked and put into the hands of local authorities, and the Bureau ceased to be anything more than a general advisory body to the freedmen. Under such circumstances even the most activist and well-intentioned agent had to compromise or back off from confrontations

²⁷Fayetteville Observer, June 14, 1866; Lincoln County Court Minutes, Oct., 1865, Vol. A, 166. The conservatism of some agents is illustrated in Report of J. Cobb, May 12, 1866, Narrative Reports, FB Records; Report of H. W. Barr, Apr., 1867, Springfield Office, Letters Sent, *ibid.* Bureau activism, on the other hand, is evidenced in Report of J. R. Lewis, Aug. 28, 1866, Reports of Outrages, *ibid.*; Report of M. Walsh, Dec. 15, 1866, Narrative Reports, *ibid.*; Pulaski Citizen, Aug. 30, Sept. 6, 1867. Popular opposition to certain Bureau agents is noted in Report of George Judd, Apr. 30, 1866, July 9, 1868, Narrative Reports, FB Records.

altogether, leaving the freedmen at the mercy of obstinate whites. The Bureau achieved commendable success in its early years, to be sure, especially in promoting black education and limiting fraudulent practices against black employees. Overall, nevertheless, given the conservatism of some of its agents and the eventual powerlessness of the agency as a whole, the Bureau was not a potent instrument of black advancement in Middle Tennessee.²⁸

The most powerful instrument, and the most progressive vision of the future, were to be found within the freedmen themselves. To the black men and women of the heartland, emancipation was more than just a passage from slavery to freedom. Indeed, they reckoned it the dawning of a wholly new epoch in their history. They endowed the experience of emancipation with mystical import, and they sought to define it with metaphors drawn from their Christian faith. The chatty editor of the Columbia Herald offhandedly passed along a bit of gossip in 1869 which

²⁸Examples of the Bureau's broad powers over contracts and other matters in the early period of Reconstruction are in Fayetteville Observer, Jan. 4, 1866; Trowbridge, Picture of the Desolated States, 339-41. One agent's comment on his loss of power is in Report of M. Walsh, Nov. 1, 1866, Narrative Reports, FB Records. The lack of justice for blacks in local courts after the closing of the Bureau's courts is noted in Report of D. D. Holman, June 1866, *ibid.*; Report M. Walsh, Aug. 6, Oct. 7, 1867, *ibid.* See also Bobby Lee Lovett, "The Negro in Tennessee, 1861-1866: A Socio-Military History of the Civil War Era" (Ph.D. diss., University of Arkansas, 1978), 174-91. The failure of the Bureau in every state to achieve lasting legal or economic security for the freedmen is discussed in Donald G. Nieman, To Set the Law in Motion: The Freedmen's Bureau and the Legal Rights of Blacks, 1865-1868 (Millwood, New York, 1979); James Oakes, "A Failure of Vision: The Collapse of the Freedmen's Bureau Courts," Civil War History, XXV (Mar., 1979), 66-76; Claude F. Oubre, Forty Acres and a Mule: The Freedmen's Bureau and Black Land Ownership (Baton Rouge, 1978); McFeely, Yankee Stepfather, *passim*.

could have given reflective readers considerable insight into the meaning of emancipation in the black mind: "The negroes of this county," he wrote, "when referring to the period of their slavery, call it 'Paul's Time,' and when speaking of the present, say, 'Isaiah's Time.'"²⁹

The freedmen hailed Isaiah's Time with festivals of joyous thanksgiving and celebration. "There is one continual excitement from day to day with the negroes," Nimrod Porter wrote in August 1865, "there meetings & schools so much so the negroes seem to be half crazy. . . ." But they also consecrated Isaiah's Time, resolving that in this new age they would forge beyond mere legal freedom and break all the shackles of their heritage, raising themselves up individually and collectively and becoming a born-again nation. "[W]e want our colored race to be a people," a black speaker earnestly told the freedmen of Giles County in 1866, "we want our colored race to be able to do their own business. I want our colored race [to] rise and come up to the top of the Hill . . . let us not be pilgrims and hirelings all our days, we must come out and make men of ourselves."³⁰

To achieve that ultimate purpose the freedmen adopted a strategy which was bold and tactics which were practical. They seized every

²⁹Columbia Herald, Oct. 29, 1869. Lawrence W. Levine, Black Culture and Black Consciousness: Afro-American Folk Thought from Slavery to Freedom (New York, 1978), 43-44, 50-52, shows that blacks across the South associated the Pauline epistles with slavery while cherishing the Old Testament as the Scripture of liberation.

³⁰Porter Journal, Aug. 24, 1865; Pulaski Citizen, Sept. 14, 1866.

opportunity for advancement, but compromised realistically when their path was blocked. They challenged their enemies when they had any chance of victory, but skillfully retreated when they had none. They accepted aid from others who were helpful, rejected it when they became meddlesome, but mostly relied on themselves. All along they did not merely react to events, but moved forward affirmatively to execute their strategy.³¹

That audacious strategy was nothing less than to build an independent black society. Although paternalism was dead—a war casualty, spurned now by ex-masters and ex-slaves alike—other manifestations of the antebellum heartland's organic biracial society lingered past Appomattox. Between 1865 and 1870, however, Middle Tennessee blacks moved to divorce themselves in every respect from whites and to fructify the nascent black communities which had germinated in the days of slavery. Their success at doing so within the suffocating context of postwar political, economic, and social oppression was, next to self-emancipation, their greatest triumph of the decade.

The promise of emancipation was most unequivocally fulfilled in the fruition of the black family. Slavery had by no means obliterated

³¹The active participation of the freedmen in the postwar struggle for their advancement is the theme of nearly all recent works on blacks in this period. These studies stand as a rebuke to the once-fashionable portrayal of blacks as passive characters in Reconstruction. See, for example, Edward Magdol, A Right to the Land: Essays on the Freedmen's Community (Westport, Connecticut, 1977); Peter Kolchin, First Freedom: The Responses of Alabama's Blacks to Emancipation and Reconstruction (Westport, Connecticut, 1972); and especially Leon F. Litwack's comprehensive and magisterial Been in the Storm So Long.

the black family, but it had fettered it and rendered it a provisional and dependent thing, an institution unrecognized by law, liable at any time to separation, and subsumed ideologically (at least in the white mind) within the broader patriarchal family headed by the master. As freedmen, Middle Tennessee blacks immediately set about to establish their families on a firm and independent foundation. Reunions of separated family members were among the most touching scenes of Reconstruction, and were anxiously sought by the freedmen. Slave marriages were deemed valid under common law after the war, but blacks insisted on formal ceremonies, and a flood of weddings ensued. In July 1865, for example, the Bedford County court issued 422 marriage licenses, of which 406 were to blacks; in Rutherford County that September, 431 black couples were married in a single week. Not a few black men legally legitimated children whom they had fathered under slavery. The freedmen insisted further on adopting surnames, and they declined to refer to themselves as the former slave of so-and-so, a practice which whites continued for years after the war. The most conspicuous emblem of the autonomous black family, however, was the detached, single-family cabin. Blacks continued after the war to abandon slave quarters and masters' back rooms, and in great numbers they moved into homes of their own. Black women withdrew from white families' fields and kitchens and nurseries and busied themselves managing their own households, planting their own gardens, and raising their own children. By 1870 the freedmen of Middle Tennessee had achieved very nearly full familial independence: in 1860 only 2 percent of the

region's blacks had (by virtue of their free status) dwelled apart from whites; a decade later the figure was 88 percent.³²

The freedmen rejected too the embrace of the white church. Though they had long shared in the biracial Christian fellowship that the heartland's churches proffered, blacks understood that those churches were instruments of white dominion. In the first months of peace the celebration of deliverance brought the freedmen together in large, revivalistic, ecumenical gatherings, led sometimes by Northern missionaries but often by their own preachers. Their religious zeal did not subside in the succeeding years, but their holistic worship fragmented. Black churches sprang up everywhere, competing with one another for the devotion of the black faithful. "Morality & religion is taking deep hold in the minds of the freedmen," a Bureau agent reported in 1867;

³²Black marriages are mentioned in Shelbyville American Union, Aug. 5, 1865; Murfreesboro Monitor, Sept. 9, 1865; Fayetteville Observer, Dec. 7, 1865, Jan. 18, 1866; Leona Taylor Aiken, Donelson, Tennessee: Its History and Landmarks (Nashville, 1968), 24. On family reunions see Report of C. A. S. Crosby, May 1, 1866, American Missionary Association, Tennessee Records. Legitimation of children is documented in Bedford County Court Minutes, Aug., 1865, Vol. A, 349; Rutherford County, Tennessee, County Court Clerk's Office, Minute Books, Oct., 1869, Bk. FF, 279 (TSLA). The choosing of surnames is illustrated in Rawick, American Slave, Supplement, Ser. Two, Vol. IX (Tex.), Pt. 8, p. 3,844. Instances of blacks referred to as former slaves of certain masters are in Fayetteville Observer, Jan. 3, 1867; Giles County, Tennessee, Circuit Court, Minutes, Civil and Criminal, Aug. 9, 1865, Vol. 1865-66, n.p. (TSLA). The movement of blacks to separate family housing is noted in Pulaski Citizen, Mar. 30, 1866; Campbell Brown to Mrs. R. S. Ewell, Aug. 31, 1865, Polk-Brown-Ewell Papers. On the withdrawal of women from field work, see Report of George Judd, May 3, 1866, Narrative Reports, FB Records. See also Lovett, "Negro in Tennessee," 154-60. Herbert G. Gutman, The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925 (New York, 1976), 363-431, discusses the black family during Reconstruction and documents the strength of family and kinship ties among freedmen everywhere in the South. See also Litwack, Been in the Storm So Long, 229-37, 244-51.

all through 1866 a black brother's request to preach separately to black members; when they finally denied it, the freedmen began to depart. The fathers of Wilson Creek Primitive Baptist Church of Williamson County struggled earnestly to keep their large black congregation intact after the war, but the blacks nevertheless drifted away. In 1869 the church session

Resolved that only those of our colored members who give their attendance at our monthly meetings be regarded as members of this church, namely Neptune Pettus, Linny Hyde, Sarie Hyde, & Louisa Hyde,—all others are hereby excluded.

The Cool Springs Primitive Baptist Church in the same county failed to retain any of its black worshippers: in September 1869 the elders moved to "exclude all of our Black Bretherin and Sisters for a Breach of Church Covenant in not attending Meting. . . ." Whether painful or not, however, the withdrawal of the freedmen from white churches was very nearly complete. The white Methodist churches in the districts surrounding Nashville, Lebanon, Murfreesboro, Columbia, and Clarksville, for example, which before the war had had thousands of black members, found themselves in 1866 with just 786; four years later the total was fifty-one.³⁴

³⁴Mount Moriah Primitive Baptist Church, Fayetteville, Lincoln County, Records, Session Minutes, Vol. I, Mar., 1866, ff., Vol. II, May 1865, Jan., Oct., 1866 (TSLA); Wilson Creek Primitive Baptist Church, Williamson County, Records, Session Minutes, July 1868, Apr., 1869 (TSLA); John Jordan, "My Recollections," John L. Jordan Papers (TSLA); Cool Springs Primitive Baptist Church, Peytons ville, Williamson County, Records, Session Minutes, Sept., 1869 (TSLA); Journal of Conferences, Methodist Churches in Middle Tennessee District, Records, 1866-1870 (TSLA). See also Zion Presbyterian Church, Maury County, Session Minutes, Apr. 5, May 28, July 5, 1870. For an example of a

The freedmen's self-imposed exile from the interracial communion of the white churches did not, of course, leave them drifting aimlessly, for their own churches offered a safe and welcome anchorage. The new black churches exercised all the functions of the old biracial churches, uplifting the faithful, correcting the wayward, providing a nucleus of community. Like the white churches they were social arbiter and social adhesive—but in an all-black world.³⁵

That world came to life with the birth of autonomous black communities. Just as they abandoned the white family and the white church which had simultaneously assimilated and subordinated them, so the freedmen seceded from the rural community which had deemed them at once partners and helots. Thousands of blacks headed for the towns, propelled there by the persistence of white power and violence in the countryside after 1865 and drawn there by the lure of the preexisting black subcommunities (which had been mightily reinforced by the wartime influx of contrabands). To the black newcomer fresh from the plantation, the towns were as unfamiliar and intoxicating as the experience of freedom itself. One newspaper editor remarked that the freedmen found "something novel and fascinating in city life, " while another observed that "Many of them seem to think that the whole of human happiness consists in 'keeping house' in town. . . ." But to the

church from which black members were "dismissed" (i.e., granted formal permission to join a black church, rather than being expelled) see Fall Creek Baptist Church, Lebanon, Wilson County, Records, Session Minutes, Oct., 1867, Sept., 1868 (TSLA).

³⁵Lovett, "Negro in Tennessee," 160-65; Litwack, Been in the Storm So Long, 462-71.

black men and women of the postwar heartland the towns were not just a place of safety, fellowship, and excitement, but a symbol of the potentiality of black self-realization in Isaiah's Time.³⁶

The urban blacks often congregated in separate settlements, shantytowns centered around a black church, school, or saloon ("Macedonia," on the outskirts of Columbia, and "Hell's Half Acre" in Nashville were two of the best known). These were self-contained communities nestled in the broader, more impersonal urban context, and safe inside them the freedmen celebrated their liberty and struggled to raise their people up. For their shelter and their nurturance the urban communities did exact a stiff price, however, in the form of crime, poverty, crowding, and disease. There were not enough jobs to go around, not enough decent housing. Drunkenness, theft, and murder were commonplace. In Columbia, as Nimrod Porter wrote in the winter of 1866, there was "a verry greate scuffle with the blacks to get houses & places to live they are in a pitiful condition & many of them almost starving & naked. . . ." A Freedmen's Bureau agent reported about the same time that

There are to day many women & children in and around Gallatin, who are in a destitute condition, having no means & no employment, but ekeing out a miserable existence, as best they can. Many have been taken down with small pox and other diseases & have suffered and died. . . .

³⁶Columbia Herald, May 20, 1870; Fayetteville Observer, Mar. 7, 1867. See also "Consolidated Report of Outrages, State of Tennessee, September, 1866," Reports of Outrages, FB Records; Report of J. K. Lewis for Aug., 1866, *ibid.*; Litwack, Been in the Storm So Long, 310-16.

Nevertheless, the towns remained for the freedmen shining beacons on a hill, beckoning the hopeful and illuminating the advancement of the race.³⁷

Difficult as it was to escape the presence and influence of whites in the rural areas, freedmen there also succeeded in bringing forth a black community. Most of the tens of thousands who left the farms did not migrate to towns, but took up skilled or unskilled work in villages. (By 1870 fully 19 percent of all freedmen lived in villages, and the region's village population as a whole was 48 percent black; in 1860 only 1 percent of all slaves had lived in villages, and the village

³⁷William S. Fleming, A Historical Sketch of Maury County . . . (Columbia, Tennessee, 1876), 57; Benjamin Walter, "Ethnicity and Residential Succession: Nashville, 1850 to 1920," in James F. Blumstein and Benjamin Walter, eds., Growing Metropolis: Aspects of Development in Nashville (Nashville, 1975), 22; Porter Journal, Jan. 4, 1866; Report of T. C. Trimble, Feb. 28, 1866, Narrative Reports, FB Records; Lovett, "Negro in Tennessee," 169-72. On urban living conditions see also Clarks-ville Weekly Chronicle, Oct. 20, 1865; Columbia Herald, Oct. 29, 1869; Gallatin Examiner, Oct. 21, 1865; Fayetteville Observer, Sept. 1, 1870; Report of J. Cobb, Feb. 28, 1866, Narrative Reports, FB Records; Report of M. Walsh, Nov. 1, 1866, Jan. 16, 1867, *ibid.*; Report of George Judd, June 9, 1868, *ibid.*; Report of John Seage, Aug. 31, 1865, *ibid.*; Report of M. Walsh, Oct. 22, 1866, Reports of Outrages, *ibid.* Epidemics of smallpox and cholera swept the heartland's towns in this period and took many lives, especially in the crowded black communities. See Fayetteville Observer, Oct. 11, 1866; William F. Cooper to W. D. Cooper, Oct. 10, 1866, Cooper Family Papers (TSLA); Sumner County, Tennessee, County Court Clerk's Office, County Court Minutes, June, Nov., 1865, Vol. 1858-66, pp. 403, 534-35 (TSLA). Saloons, street celebrations, political and temperance societies, and other symbols of the black urban community are noted in Columbia Herald, May 27, 1870; Sumner County Republican, July 4, 1868; Pulaski Citizen, Aug. 10, 1866, Jan. 10, 1868; Report of M. Walsh, Feb. 18, 1867, Jan. 18, 1868, Narrative Reports, FB Records; Porter Journal, July 4, 30, 1865, July 4, 1866, Apr. 20, July 4, 1867. Howard N. Rabinowitz, Race Relations in the Urban South, 1865-1890 (New York, 1978), deals with the postwar black experience in Nashville and other Southern cities.

population as a whole had been 5 percent black. Chapter XIII has details.) Some of these did not go to existing settlements but clustered in new all-black hamlets (such as Big Springs and "Mt. Africa" in Maury County), which appeared all over the heartland's countryside in the postwar years. Even those rural freedmen who did not stake out such territorial communities, but lived in isolated cabins on their employer's land, managed to sustain spiritual and social communities through their church functions and other gatherings. The freedmen of Maury County, for example, continued and elaborated the old tradition of the "June Meeting," which brought blacks from all over the county together in a day-long festival; and they devised new informal institutions of communal labor and leisure, like the "cotton-picking," which were separate from the biracial corn-shuckings and barn-raisings they had attended as slaves. Black barbecues and hoedowns and camp meetings soon became familiar features of the Middle Tennessee countryside, exuberant symbols of rural black communalism. "[T]here is a picknick among the blacks to day down at the creek," Nimrod Porter wrote in the spring of 1867; "I suppose there will be several thousand blacks there, considerable to do, there are about 3 days in the week they have a gathering some where."³⁸

By 1870 the freedmen of the heartland, rural and urban alike, lived in a black world within a world. As slaves they had enjoyed

³⁸Columbia Herald, Oct. 15, 1869, Feb. 25, June 10, July 29, 1870; Alice S. King, "Intra-County Shift in Negro Population in Maury County, Tennessee, 1860-1870" (M.A. thesis, George Peabody College, 1968), *passim*; Lincoln County News, July 7, 1866; Matthews Journal, July 8, Aug. 26, 1865; Porter Journal, May 25, 26, Nov. 8, 15, 1867, Nov. 6, 7, 1868, June 6, 1869.

a certain separateness in towns and on the larger farms, to be sure, but it was an unconsummated autonomy, for it was stifled by the enforced biracialism of antebellum life. Emancipation permitted them to fulfill their yearning for independence, however, and they brought their budding society to full bloom. Though they continued of course to rub shoulders daily with their white neighbors, and to pick the white man's cotton and live under his government, the freedmen defined themselves after 1865 through their discrete black communities. Those communities assumed all the responsibilities of the antebellum biracial communities—disciplining the errant, caring for the helpless, gathering all within their custody and sustaining them from the cradle to the grave. In Rutherford County in 1866, for example, black farm workers caught one of their fellows stealing, convicted him in an informal trial, whipped him, and ordered him off the farm. In Pulaski self-appointed black vigilantes punished a freedman accused of abusing his mother, and also apprehended and whipped a black prostitute. In the towns, moreover, where its independence was most fully realized, the black community as a whole was able to bring its powerful moral authority to bear against blacks who voted Conservative, branding them pariahs. The generosity of the black communities in ministering to their needy constituents was frequently remarked by observers in these years. Newspapers noted that freedmen in Nashville and Pulaski, for example, had formed their own associations for poor relief, while others in Callatin has organized a burial society. A Freedmen's Bureau agent wrote in 1868 that the blacks in his district manifested a notably selfless

spirit of charity, aiding the destitute among them in a way that "their more fortunate Brethren might well emulate." Census statistics on pauperism further suggest the beneficence and self-sufficiency of postwar black society: across the region in 1870 the number of black indigents forced to turn to local government for help was hardly over 100. The profound sense of community which animated the freedmen was picturesquely embodied in the preamble to the constitution of the aforementioned Pulaski relief association:

We, the Colored Citizens of Pulaski, have united ourselves in an association to be known as the "Christian Aid Society." . . . And we trust never to see its desolation until the sun is blown out, the stars disappear and the moon puts on her robe of blood.³⁹

As they came together to establish communities apart from the white world, the freedmen also moved to secure the present and future autonomy of those communities. Among the chief means they adopted to achieve that goal was the pursuit of education. Literate and broadly educated black men and women would, they knew, constitute a strong society capable of self-advancement rather than a weak and dependent appendage of white society. The enthusiasm of the freedmen for schools in the postwar years was nothing short of overwhelming, especially when contrasted with the apathy of the white masses. Indeed, it often influenced their most important decisions, such as where to live and with whom to

³⁹Murfreesboro Monitor, quoted in Fayetteville Observer, Mar. 29, 1866; Pulaski Citizen, Jan. 5, 1866, Aug. 28, Nov. 6, 1868, Oct. 22, 1869; Trowbridge, Picture of the Desolated States, 287; Gallatin Examiner, Oct. 21, 1865; Report of M. Walsh, Feb. 6, 1868, Narrative Reports, FB Records; Report of C. A. S. Crosby, May 1, 1866, American Missionary Association, Tennessee Records; Ninth Census Social Statistics; Lovett, "Negro in Tennessee," 127-34.

contract. Blacks generally endeavored to move to towns and rural communities which had schools and to avoid those which had none, and they dickered with employers to get them to build schools on their farms. Northern humanitarians and Freedmen's Bureau agents cooperated to establish black schools, which by 1866 numbered dozens in the region. As some of those agents admitted, however, the bulk of the effort and much of the funding for those schools came from the freedmen themselves. Many black parents went to night classes and insisted that their children attend regular classes as often as possible. "Let us go to work and educate our children," a black leader told his people in 1866, "and bring them up like Gentlemen and Ladies." When the new public school system went into operation in the latter part of the decade, the freedmen wholeheartedly supported it. A state official in Nashville reported in 1869 that "The earnestness and zeal of the colored people in acquiring knowledge, and their quiet and orderly deportment, have elicited the praise of all." By the fall of that year there were 229 black public schools in the heartland (many employing black teachers), with a total enrollment of nearly 11,000 pupils.⁴⁰

⁴⁰Pulaski Citizen, Aug. 17, Sept. 14, 1866; Henry Lee Swint, "Reports from Educational Agents of the Freedmen's Bureau in Tennessee, 1865-1870," THQ, I (1942), 56, 58, 68; Eaton, First Report, XXXVIII, XLI, CXLIV, CXLVII, CLXXXV. See also Trowbridge, Picture of the Desolated States, 288-89; Sumner County Republican, July 4, 1868; Columbia Herald, Feb. 25, May 6, 20, 1870; F. Ayer to M. E. Strieby, Oct. 2, 1865, American Missionary Association, Tennessee Records; Report of E. A. Easter, Feb. 12, 1866, *ibid.*; Report of C. A. S. Crosby, May 1, 1866, *ibid.*; E. H. Truman to Samuel Hunt, June 28, 1866, *ibid.*; Report of M. A. Parker, Apr. 8, 1867, *ibid.*; Report of M. Walsh, Nov. 1, 1866, Nov. 4, Dec. 7, 1867, Narrative Reports, FB Records; Report of George Judd, June 9, 1868, *ibid.*; Report of McQuiddy, Oct. 31, 1868, *ibid.*; R. W. Humphreys to John Eaton, Mar. 24, 1868, Eaton Correspondence;

The freedmen took steps furthermore to win economic independence. This was an arduous struggle, for despite the war's revolutionary upheavals, land and wealth remained firmly in the grip of the white community. Nevertheless, the freedmen made progress. A few, especially ex-soldiers who received Federal veterans' bounties, purchased their own homes and small farms. Others started small businesses to serve the urban black communities, or, utilizing skills learned as slaves, took up a trade in town or village and did business with whites and blacks alike. Davidson County, for example, boasted eleven black merchants and restaurateurs by 1869. Even before that date the town of Pulaski (Giles County) alone had four black dry goods and grocery stores, three black restaurants, and one black saloon; among the blacks in that town were, moreover, ten carpenters, eleven blacksmiths, two wagon makers, and ten bricklayers and plasterers. All told, Pulaski's freedmen in 1867 owned property worth \$27,000. Even the great majority of blacks not fortunate enough to own a farm or business or practice a trade achieved a measure of economic power, however, for their strong arms and backs were a commodity much in demand in the postwar years—especially in the rural areas, plagued by chronic labor shortages. With experience, black workers grew canner about trading away that precious commodity. They learned to shop around for the best terms, highest wages, and most reasonable employers, and they sometimes forced

Lovett, "Negro in Tennessee," 144-54. The pursuit of education by freedmen across the South is discussed in William Preston Vaughn, Schools for All: The Blacks and Public Education in the South, 1865-1877 (Lexington, 1974); Litwack, Been in the Storm So Long, 472-76.

white bosses to compete among themselves for black labor. As the 1867 planting season neared, one Bureau agent reported that black farm laborers were becoming "shrewder in making bargains and more economical with their hard earnings." Another asserted that the freedmen were doing well making contracts since "They have learned by hard experience to look out for themselves"; and he put his finger on the crux of the matter when he noted furthermore (as did a number of other agents) that white employers "have to treat [blacks] well to get them to work for them." Such leverage permitted blacks in many cases (depending on local circumstances) to defy whites who tried to coerce them with threats of dismissal. Thus, even the poorest black farm hand or servant came to see that, despite the great economic disappointments of Reconstruction, emancipation had brought with it tangible economic rewards.⁴¹

The most exciting and potentially most telling weapon in the freedmen's battle for autonomy, however, was politics. For two years—from 1867, when they gained the franchise, to 1869, when Conservatives recaptured control of the state government—the freedmen (by virtue of the disfranchisement of ex-Rebels), held the balance of political

⁴¹Report of M. Walsh, Dec. 15, 1866, Jan. 16, Feb. 18, Aug. 6, Sept. 6, Oct. 7, 1867, Feb. 6, 1868, Narrative Reports, FB Records; Report of Charles Simpson, Sept. 2, 1868, *ibid.*; King, "Intra-County Shift in Negro Population," 64; Davidson County Court Minutes, Feb. 1, 1869, Bk. K, 44-53; Pulaski Citizen, Mar. 30, Aug. 17, Dec. 14, 1866, Aug. 14, 1868; Taylor, Negro in Tennessee, 155, 165. See also Report of R. Caldwell, Apr. 4, 1866, Narrative Reports, FB Records; Report of James M. Tracy, June 1, 1866, *ibid.*; Report of McQuiddy, Oct. 31, 1868, *ibid.*; Report of George Judd, Nov. 30, Dec. 31, 1868, Mar. 31, 1869; Report of M. Walsh, Oct. 22, 1866, Reports of Outrages, *ibid.*; Lincoln County News, June 13, 1868.

power in Middle Tennessee. (In Giles County, for example, of 2,600 registered voters in 1867, 2,050 were black.) They supported the Radical party with the understanding that its white leaders would advance black interests, and with their widespread grassroots participation they ensured that the Radicals reigned for as long as possible.

The freedmen's exuberant politicking was the most vivid manifestation of black freedom and black power in the postwar heartland. The Montgomery County Bureau agent, for example, wrote in the summer of 1867 that blacks there were completely absorbed by politics, had talked of nothing else for weeks, and were eagerly learning the ins and outs of the game. In the face of massive white hostility and violence, Middle Tennessee freedmen boldly organized political clubs, paraded in support of their candidates, and lined up by the thousands at the ballot boxes. They were most militant in the towns, where their concentrated numbers gave them more safety, but even in the countryside some actively campaigned under the very noses of their angry white neighbors and employers. A few blacks won local political offices (a state legislative act of 1868 gave them the right to do so)—especially in Nashville, where blacks held a number of city posts. As their power grew, the freedmen were treated to the spectacle of white Conservatives courting their votes with barbecues, speeches, and grand promises. But they knew their friends from their enemies and, except in those rural parts

where they were intimidated by rampant white violence, the freedmen of the heartland remained solidly in the Radical camp.⁴²

The establishment and advancement of an independent black society in postwar Middle Tennessee demanded more than simply bringing black families together in black churches and black communities, more than just exercising the power of the written word, the purse, and the franchise. It demanded also the resolute defense of that society against the attempts of outsiders—whether allies or adversaries of the freedmen—to dominate it. Recognizing that the leadership proffered by their white friends, no matter how well-intentioned, was not necessarily in their best interests, the freedmen declined to follow blindly, or in some cases to follow at all. They played politics astutely, sustaining the Radical party but refusing to be used unfairly or taken for granted. In return for their support the freedmen demanded and won specific state legislation securing black civil and political rights; and in a general way, through their vigorous political activities, they constantly reminded the Radical leaders of their presence, their

⁴²Pulaski Citizen, July 26, 1867; Report of M. Walsh, Aug. 6, Sept. 6, 1867, Narrative Reports, FB Records; Report of George Judd, Nov. 30, 1868, *ibid.*; Stanley F. Rose, "Nashville and Its Leadership Elite, 1861-1869" (M.A. thesis, University of Virginia, 1965), 46, 68; Lovett, "Negro in Tennessee," 191-206; Alexander, Political Reconstruction, 122-62. Other examples of black political activity are in Report of M. Walsh, Apr. 8, July 15, 1867, Reports of Outrages, FB Records; Columbia Herald, Feb. 18, 1870; Lincoln County News, June 1, 1867; Pulaski Citizen, Sept 14, 1866, May 17, Aug. 30, 1867, Jan. 10, 1868, May 7, 1869; Taylor, Negro in Tennessee, 47-55. The wooing of black votes by Conservatives is documented in Columbia Herald, July 30, 1869; Fayetteville Observer, July 11, 1867; Pulaski Citizen, Apr. 5, July 26, 1867; Shelbyville Republican, Oct. 23, 1868. A few blacks, even in towns, did vote with the Conservatives. See Fayetteville Observer, Aug. 8, 15, 1867; Porter Journal, Apr. 21, 1867.

strength, and their aspirations. They likewise availed themselves of the aid of sympathetic Freedmen's Bureau agents, but they defied the unsympathetic and for the most part came to depend on themselves in making contracts, caring for the indigent, and obtaining an education. As one disapproving and uncomprehending agent wrote in 1868, "Unfortunately there is a disposition gaining ground among the freedmen to manage their own affairs entirely independent of the whites. . . . The course they are taking drive[s] off many whites who would be glad to give them good advice, and work for their interest." Furthermore, the freedmen ignored the pleas of Northern missionaries to adopt a more sedate style of worship under white aegis. They abandoned the Northerners' somber churches and turned to their own fervent ministers and rousing religious meetings. "The African Methodists are going to sweep the field," a disgruntled missionary reported from Nashville in 1865; ". . . the Methodist brothers north cannot hold the churches they have organized, against the tide towards Africa—The ebony preacher who promises perfect independence from white control & direction carries the col^d heart at once." Another wrote the following year that blacks had spurned Northern churches in favor of

the old time religion as they fondly call their igno^rent bluster in the pulpit & wild frenzy in the pews. . . . [T]he louder the noise one can make & the more violent his stampede the more richly imbued with the Spirit of Holiness do they conceive him to be. . . . In deed the common pulpit phrase is God has no still born children.

Northern missionaries and Bureau agents alike complained moreover that

their temperance efforts among the freedmen were opposed and undermined by black ministers.⁴³

Leadership tendered by native whites the freedmen of course rejected out of hand. But white force could not be so readily brushed aside. Political and economic pressure, and the intervention of the Freedmen's Bureau, to a limited extent enabled blacks to obtain formal justice in the courts. A Bureau agent noted that magistrates dependent on black votes seemed to lend a more attentive ear to the freedmen's grievances, while lawyers came to respect the freedmen's cash: "As the negro comes to have money at his command," he wrote,

he is able to force matters and to secure his rights, for there are no lawyers, who are not as ready to receive their fee from a negro as from a white man, and they will do their best for them, for their reputation (even among the negroes) is of value to them.

Though some blacks were impatient with court proceedings, many did not hesitate to haul whites before a judge when it appeared that justice was available. Such cases—particularly lawsuits charging whites with contract fraud, bastardy, or holding black children against the will of the parents—were common in the postwar courts.⁴⁴

⁴³Report of George Judd, July 9, 1868, Narrative Reports, FB Records; Report of M. Walsh, July 8, 1867, *ibid.*; Edward P. Smith to M. E. Strieby, July 21, 1865, American Missionary Association, Tennessee Records; S. S. Potter to John Ogden, June 25, 1866, *ibid.*; W. W. Mallery to S. S. Jocelyn, Nov. 26, 1866, *ibid.* Other descriptions of emotional black religious meetings are in Lincoln County News, Dec. 21, 1867; Fayetteville Observer, Mar. 31, 1870.

⁴⁴Report of M. Walsh, Apr. 8, 1867, Reports of Outrages, FB Records; Report of George Judd, June 30, 1866, July 9, Nov. 30, 1868, Narrative Reports, *ibid.*; Report of M. Walsh, Nov. 1, 1866, Feb. 18, 1867, Jan. 8, 1868, *ibid.* Examples of court proceedings brought by blacks against whites are in Cheatham County, Tennessee, County Court Clerk's Office, Court Minute Books, Jan. 6, 1868, Vol. B, 613-14 (TSLA); Davidson County

Where legal recourse was unavailable, blacks resisted in informal ways. When whites insisted that blacks continue to work like slaves, the freedmen declined to cooperate and adopted a work ethic (whites called it laziness) which mimicked that of whites: "when Saturday comes," Nimrod Porter complained in 1868, "all hands is no account." When whites demanded servility, blacks demurred; those who could get away with doing so went on to repudiate deference, look whites straight in the eye, and insist on respectful treatment. The outraged editor of the Fayetteville Observer reported in 1868, for example, that a notorious local black man had been insulting white people and "boasting that 'no d--d white man should run over him,' he 'had been at the bottom, but was now a top rail'. . . ." When whites used apprenticeship to subordinate black children, the young apprentices often grew so unruly that their masters abandoned all attempts to control them. In 1870, for example, the Maury County court set aside at the master's request the indenture of a black apprentice who had become "unmanageable and uncontrollable," and of another who "has frequently ran away and is now and has been for some time past indolent and ungovernable, and will not comply with reasonable requests. . . ." And when whites employed wholesale incarceration as a method of racial subjugation, the freedmen responded by adopting an ethic which attached no ignominy to imprisonment. "It is a noticeable fact," one newspaper editor wrote reprovingly,

Court Minutes, Oct. 8, 1867, Bk. J, 509; Giles County Court Minutes, Mar. 7, Apr. 4, 1870, Vol. II, 326, 357; Montgomery County, Tennessee, Clerk and Master's Office, Minute Books, Apr. 28, 1865, Vol. V, 64-65 (TSLA); Rutherford County Court Minutes, Feb., 1867, Bk. EE, 368; Williamson County, Tennessee, Chancery Court Office, Minutes, Apr., 1866, Vol. J, 246 (TSLA); Wilson County Court Minutes, July 6, 1869, Vol. 1867-1870, p. 461, Sept. 5, 1870, Vol. 1870-1872, 114.

"that numbers of colored men who have been in the Penitentiary, come back and live among their fellows without receiving contumely or social disgrace." Another white remarked further that "one of them returning from this valuable institution is rather lionized, and looked upon by his fellows as one who has seen things, and is referred to as high authority in most cases."⁴⁵

When white coercion turned violent, however, some blacks resolved grimly to load their guns and reply in kind. As armed white terrorism mounted between 1867 and 1869, so did armed black resistance. Many black men began carrying weapons openly, especially when marching in political demonstrations or going to the polls. Whites, trembling at the long-dreaded, nightmarish sight of angry black men with guns, demanded that they be disarmed. Some were; but, as one Freedmen's Bureau agent warned, if whites went too far the freedmen would fight back "and fight hard, too, if they are crowded to it." This was not an idle threat. Many a Klansman bent on mayhem found himself staring into a gun barrel with a determined black face behind it. A Bedford

⁴⁵Porter Journal, May 9, 1868; Fayetteville Observer, Dec. 21, 1865, Aug. 13, 1868; Maury County, Tennessee, County Court Clerk's Office, Minute Books, Jan. 5, May 2, 1870, Vol. XVI, 113, 184 (TSLA); Columbia Herald, Oct. 29, 1869. White comments about altered black work habits are also in Fayetteville Observer, Oct. 24, 1867, Aug. 5, 1869; Pulaski Citizen, Nov. 22, 1867; Porter Journal, July 3, 4, 1865, July 4, Nov. 22, 1866, July 15, 1867, Dec. 27, 29, 1867. Undeferential behavior, including the refusal of black women to submit to sexual abuse, is further documented in Columbia Herald, Dec. 17, 1869, Apr. 29, 1870; Report of John Seage, Jan., 1866, Reports of Outrages, FB Records. Other instances of problems with black apprentices are in Maury County Court Minutes, Aug. 5, 1867, June 1, 1868, Vol. XV, 374, 586; Robertson County, Tennessee, County Court Clerk's Office, County Court Minutes, Feb. 7, 1870, Vol. XVI, 155 (TSLA); Wilson County Court Minutes, Feb. 3, 1868, Vol. 1867-1870, 198; Pulaski Citizen, Mar. 1, 1867. See also Litwack, Been in the Storm So Long, 340-43.

County black woman, for example, told what happened the night the Klan harassed her father for voting Republican in 1868: "My father was a settin' on de bed," she recalled, "I 'member he had a shot gun in his han'. Well, dey broke de do' down, an' then father he shoot, an' dey scattered all ovah de fence." Similar incidents multiplied all over the region, some of them escalating into full-scale battles.⁴⁶

Armed resistance, black power, and indeed the freedmen's most ambitious aspirations, all died abruptly with the Conservative political victory of August 1869. Whites and blacks alike recognized at once the end of the era of shining promise for black society, the passing of Isaiah's Time.⁴⁷

A stillness descended upon Middle Tennessee, a quiet calm that the land had not known in a decade. Whites contentedly toasted their triumph and, like victors of a bitter battle standing over a fallen foe, they sheathed their swords and spoke righteously of their duty to be magnanimous. In September the editor of the Columbia Herald, for example, decried the few continuing instances of Klan violence in the region because, as he explained, white supremacy had been unequivocally

⁴⁶Report of M. Walsh, Sept. 6, 1867, Narrative Reports, FB Records; Rawick, American Slave, Supplement, Ser. Two, Vol. IV (Tex.), Pt. 3, pp. 955-56. For other evidence of armed freedmen and shoot-outs between blacks and whites, see A. O. P. Nicholson to Andrew Johnson, July 24, 1868, Johnson Papers; Fayetteville Observer, Aug. 8, 1867, Mar. 12, Apr. 2, June 25, Sept. 10, 1868; Lebanon Record, Sept. 26, 1868; Lincoln County News, June 29, July 13, 1867, Sept. 12, 1868; Pulaski Citizen, July 6, 1866, Aug. 2, 30, 1867, Jan. 10, July 24, 1868; Trelease, White Terror, 30-31.

⁴⁷The Conservative triumph of 1869 is described and explained in Alexander, Political Reconstruction, 199-225.

reestablished, civil law should now succeed extralegal coercion, and blacks need no longer suffer for their past "mistakes": "Treat them kind[ly] and Christianly," he urged with benign grace, "and never like pagans."⁴⁸

Blacks acknowledged their defeat on the battlefield and ended their overt defiance. Many whites, however, blindly misinterpreted the sudden quiescence of the freedmen. "The negro is working better and is more contented now than at any time since his liberation from slavery," the Herald announced in 1870;

The truth of the matter is that the negroes work better and grow prosperous . . . in the proportion that they come immediately under the direction and control of Southern whites. . . . Slavery brought our negroes from a state of barbarism, and if freedom improves them, they will one day thank God for the mysterious providence which placed them in contact with the Southern people.⁴⁹

The truth was otherwise, of course. The silence of the black communities after 1869 was a silence of grief and bitterness rather than one of contentment. The freedmen had come to understand intuitively that politics was their last, best hope for real power, and thus

⁴⁸Columbia Herald, Sept. 3, 1869. Indications of the return of peace to the region are in *ibid.*, Dec. 24, 1869, Apr. 1, 1870. Other protests concerning continuing violence against blacks—which suggest that such violence lost its social legitimacy after the restoration of Conservative control—are in *ibid.*, Aug. 12, 1869; and Fayetteville Observer, Nov. 24, 1870. The Ku Klux Klan disbanded itself by September 1869. See Pulaski Citizen, Sept. 17, 1869; Trelease, White Terror, 183-84. On the sanctioning of racial violence across the South in this period, and the relationship of violence to political contests, see G. David Garson and Gail O'Brien, "Collective Violence in the Reconstruction South," in Hugh Davis Graham and Ted Robert Gurr, eds., Violence in America: Historical and Comparative Perspectives (Beverly Hills, California, 1979), 243-60.

⁴⁹Columbia Herald, May 13, 1870.

absolute autonomy. They had taken great strides in educating themselves, to be sure, but by the end of the decade only a small proportion of black children was attending school and only one black family head out of five was even minimally literate. The path to independence by way of formal schooling was obviously a long one, laden with obstructions, perhaps impassable. Similarly, although the freedmen's economic progress was great in the postwar years, as a class they remained poor and dependent. By 1870 only 6 percent of black families owned any land, and only 10 percent had property of any kind worth more than \$300; the average wealth of black families was a mere \$113 (that of white families, by contrast, was \$4,763). Blacks as a whole owned but 1 percent of the region's total wealth. Only six black family heads out of 100 in that year had a skilled trade, and even fewer had a professional occupation or farmed their own land. The great majority of black workers in 1870, as in 1860, toiled in white people's fields and homes. Furthermore, although some frantic whites interpreted the gun-toting defiance of the freedmen as a bid for conquest, it was in truth only a defensive safeguard, a shield against white violence. Armed rebellion against the determined white majority would obviously have been hopeless. That left politics as the only potential avenue to full independence, and that road was now almost completely blocked.⁵⁰

⁵⁰See Lincoln County News, Jan. 26, 1867, for evidence of how black hopes were related to Reconstruction politics. On the failure of Tennessee blacks to secure land, see Lovett, "Negro in Tennessee," 166-68. The postwar economic retardation of Southern blacks as a class is analyzed in Jay Mandle, The Roots of Black Poverty: The Southern Plantation Economy after the Civil War (Durham, North Carolina, 1978),

Some blacks, resigned to political defeat and subordinate status, turned their hopes and their zeal inward. A black woman who lectured to a large audience of freedmen in Columbia in November 1869 urged them, according to the Herald, to "become more virtuous than they had been in the past. She impressed upon them that poverty was nothing so long as they are virtuous and try to learn." Others saw no alternative but to leave the heartland. This was a drastic, wrenching decision, for the freedmen's roots ran deep. In this land they had come of age as individuals and as a people, and to tear themselves from it would be difficult and painful. Nevertheless, many did so. Within a matter of weeks after the 1869 election, blacks by the hundreds in Maury County were making preparations to emigrate to Florida or the Southwest. A newspaper later reported that during 1870 at least a thousand Rutherford County freedmen had moved on. Periodic black exoduses from the region continued through the 1870s.⁵¹

Most Middle Tennessee blacks remained, however, with their shattered dreams. But their cause was not altogether lost. They had been repulsed from their farthest point of advance, to be sure, but not all the way back to their point of departure, for they had prepared a fallback

9-35; and Roger L. Ransom and Richard Sutch, One Kind of Freedom: The Economic Consequences of Emancipation (New York, 1977), passim. Although their political power was greatly diminished by the return of ex-Rebels to the ballot boxes in 1869, Tennessee blacks continued to vote in relatively large numbers throughout the 1870s and 1880s, resulting in repeated access to public office in those decades. By 1890, however, black franchise was greatly curtailed by new legislative enactments. See Joseph H. Cartwright, The Triumph of Jim Crow: Tennessee Race Relations in the 1880s (Knoxville, 1976), passim.

⁵¹Columbia Herald, Aug. 12, 20, Nov. 19, 1869, Mar. 11, 1870; Taylor, Negro in Tennessee, 108-24

position to which they retired in a skillful retrograde movement. They withdrew behind the battlements of the impregnable black fortress which they had constructed in the postemancipation years. This was a world unto itself, with its own self-sustaining and self-regulating families and communities, its own leaders; its own religious faith, its own moral standards, its own heroes and villains, its own myths and celebrations, its own self-definition. Within the tragic context of their legal, political, economic, and social subjugation, the freedmen of the heartland seized and triumphantly held an enclave of autonomous black culture and ideology.

CHAPTER XII

REUNION, REDEMPTION, AND SANCTIFICATION:

WHITE SOCIETY, 1865-1870

The mood of white Middle Tennesseans at the end of the Civil War was a curious amalgam of grief and joy, resignation and hope. There was sorrow for the Lost Cause and the passing of the old world: "I feel some times as if I was just merging into a new life," a Montgomery County woman wrote in July 1865; "At first I felt as if I could not bear [defeat]. And it is hard enough now." But there was rejoicing for the end of slaughter and destruction: a war-weary Williamson County man declared with a profound sense of relief that "at length we have a partial peace, God be praised, and long, very long, may it continue. All wars are follies. . . ." There was widespread resignation to Northern victory and Federal supremacy: Andrew Johnson's son in Nashville noticed

A great many returned rebels in the City—as a general thing the mass are behaving themselves very well—but there are Some exceptions—especially when they get to drinking.

But there was also abundant hope that the heartland's trial by fire had appeased a wrathful God and purified an accursed people: in November Brother Watson of the Wilson Creek Primitive Baptist Church of Williamson County preached consolingly to his congregation from the fortieth chapter of Isaiah: "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is

accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins."¹

The mood of white society was also one of determination. Heartlanders were intent, first of all, on rapidly rebuilding their devastated land and restoring normality to their disrupted lives and livelihoods. The Clarksville Chronicle echoed that sentiment in July 1865: "We want to see people resuming their former avocations," it announced;

we want to see business reviving and the channels of trade re-opened. We want to see discord superceded by peace, and demoralization corrected by honest industry. We want to see Judges superceeding Commandants of Posts, and the soldier giving place to the citizen.

Beyond that, however, two salient concerns aroused whites to resolute commitment. One was their impotence, their subjugation by outsiders and their loss of mastery over their own destiny. The other was the ravaged condition of their social edifice, demolished by the war and swallowed up by depravity, violence, and anomie.²

Among the causes of wartime social chaos none had been more telling than the assault on the aristocracy. Exiled, impoverished, and humiliated by the avenging Northern army, the heartland's ruling class

¹Lucy C. Bailey to brother, July 7, 1865, Lucy Catherine Bailey Papers (TSLA); John S. Claybrooke to Mrs. William C. Dawson, July 24, 1866, Claybrooke and Overton Papers (TSLA); Robert Johnson to Andrew Johnson, May 31, 1865, Andrew Johnson Papers (LC); Wilson Creek Primitive Baptist Church, Williamson County, Records, Minutes of Sermons, Nov., 1865 (TSLA). See also J. O. Shackelford to Andrew Johnson, May 28, 1865, Johnson Papers; James L. Scudder to Johnson, July 7, 1865, *ibid.*; Gideon Pillow to Johnson, Sept. 5, 1865, *ibid.*; Testimony of William Spence, Feb. 2, 1866, United States Congress, Joint Committee on Reconstruction, Sub-committee on Tennessee—Report (House Report 30, 39 Cong., 1 sess., Serial 1273), 117.

²Clarksville Chronicle, July 14, 1865.

by 1865 lay prostrate amid the battered remains of Middle Tennessee society. But when the war ended the body was resurrected and made whole again, and the aristocracy resumed its wonted place at the head of white society.

Three facts explain the remarkable resurgence of patriarchal power and authority in postwar Middle Tennessee. First, the economic foundation of upper-class ascendancy endured. Aristocrats lost fortunes between 1862 and 1865 in slaves, crops, Confederate bonds, and other personal property, to be sure; and most faced continued privation after Appomattox. A Fayetteville lawyer, for example, wrote in November 1865 that he and his wife "find living pretty expensive—every thing is high and no prospect of cheapening. . . . I think I have done very well but Priscilla thinks it rather hard living as we do not have butter potatoes &c all the time." A Davidson County planter confided sadly to a friend in 1866 that

The results of the war have been disastrous to me in all points of view The loss of my three boys is of course irreparable but thinking that there may be yet a few years of work in me and having still some children left to educate and set out I should be very well pleased to spend a few years in the culture of cotton. . . . Unfortunately I have scarcely any thing to begin on.

But land and acquired skills had not gone up in smoke or run away like other property. Professional men retained their learning and talent, and (though some waited months for seized plantations to be returned by Federal authorities) planters retained their expansive fields. Thus, most elites were able to regain a good portion of their lost riches. The same lawyer who complained of high prices and scarcity, for example, simultaneously reported that "The practice of Law is very good. John

[his partner] and myself are employed nearly all our time." The great patriarch William G. Harding likewise restored his fabled Belle Meade plantation to its old glory and productivity within a few years of the war's end. Though the Civil War annihilated much wealth in Middle Tennessee, it precipitated no fundamental redistribution of that which remained. The heartland's plutocracy in 1870, though considerably poorer in dollars, monopolized the region's wealth in no less a proportion than in 1860.³

Aristocratic hegemony was not simply a matter of land and money and knowledge, however. It required also an ideology to justify it. That ideology survived the war intact. No sooner did Yankee pillaging and punishment cease than the humbled patriarchs of the heartland rose to their feet, the exiled returned home, and the aristocracy as a whole reasserted its customary social authority. With the exception of slaveholding and officeholding, patricians soon restored all the tangible and intangible tokens of their antebellum predominance: their fine homes and gracious manners, their private academies and classical erudition, their genteel soirees and medieval tournaments. They continued above all to assume the right (and the duty) to command in a world of

³James R. Bright to brother, Nov. 20, 1865, Douglass-Maney Family Papers (TSLA); George D. Crosthwait to Robert Caruthers, Sept. 13, 1866, Robert Looney Caruthers Papers (SHC); Herschel Gower, "Belle Meade: Queen of Tennessee Plantations," in Elinor Miller and Eugene D. Genovese, eds., Plantation, Town, and County: Studies in the Local History of American Slave Society (Urbana, Illinois, 1974), 219. See also L. C. Ewell to Campbell Brown, June 4, 1865, Polk-Brown-Ewell Papers (SHC); Campbell Brown to Mrs. R. S. Ewell, Aug. 31, 1865, *ibid.* Quantitative data on patterns of white wealth-holding in the region in 1870 are presented in Chapter XIV.

God-given inequality among men, to be imperious yet protective lords to their obedient white lieges, stern yet caring patresfamilias of the family of white society. They could maintain that assumption because, although poor and politically impotent by the standards of 1860, they reigned over a society which was itself impoverished and emasculate—one-eyed rulers in a kingdom of the purblind.⁴

⁴The persistence of aristocratic social practices is indicated in John Jordan, "My Recollections," John L. Jordan Papers (TSLA); *Pulaski Citizen*, Oct. 18, Nov. 15, 1867, Apr. 3, 1868.

The postwar fate of the Old South's elite has provoked considerable debate. Among older historians, Roger W. Shugg emphasized the survival of the plantation and of planter domination in Louisiana, while William B. Hesseltine showed that high-ranking Confederates continued to play leading roles after the war. W. J. Cash conceded that many planters were ruined but believed nevertheless that the aristocratic ideal remained strong in Southern thought; and, furthermore, he insisted that even if a new, nonagrarian ruling class did emerge in the postwar South it was composed of the sons of the old planter aristocracy, and thus social continuity was maintained. On the other hand, Clement Eaton asserted that not only was the old aristocracy's esprit completely destroyed by the war, but its economic and political power as well. Most influential was C. Vann Woodward, who posited the rise of an urban, pro-business elite which replaced the planters, won over the masses with racist rhetoric, and then proceeded to rule in its own interest.

More recent historians argue on the same terms, but their conclusions are not always so boldly unqualified. Jonathan M. Wiener documents the postwar persistence not only of wealth and power but of traditional ideology among Alabama's planter class; nevertheless, his analysis shows that the role of that elite changed after the war as it took over the functions of the merchant class. James L. Roark notes a loss of wealth and identity among the South's planters after 1865, but does not go so far as to say they were replaced by a new ruling class. Jay Mandle and Harold D. Woodman are more unequivocal but are in opposite camps. Mandle argues that the plantation as an economic, social, and ideological institution survived the Civil War, and thus perpetuated the power of the planter class. Woodman maintains that even if Southern planters persisted they evolved into bourgeois employers as the South slowly became more modern and capitalistic.

The evidence for Middle Tennessee suggests that perhaps both sides are correct in some ways. Clearly, the economic and political power of the heartland's antebellum elites (who were not all planters) was

Third, and most importantly, the common people continued to sanction the traditional class structure, to accept patriarchal dominion and noblesse oblige and to proffer their fealty in return. Unlike the blacks, whose accommodation to antebellum paternalism had been enforced by the whip and who had rejected that ethic as soon as the whip was snatched from their master's hand, the plain folk of Middle Tennessee had internalized paternalistic values and compliantly reconciled themselves to the hierarchical world supposedly decreed by nature. When the Civil War had offered the white masses the same revolutionary opportunity it had offered blacks, the whites declined to seize it. Despite the persistence of the uglier aspects of elitism—aristocratic hauteur and hostility to poor-white education, for example—the white commoners of the heartland emerged from the Civil War in 1865 as firmly

revived in the postwar period, as was their class esprit. But their old social relations and ideological hegemony survived only with respect to the white masses, who continued to share the aristocracy's premodern, paternalistic social ethos. The freedmen for their part rejected that ethos; and their relationship with the ruling class became an impersonal, capitalistic, employer-employee relation, such as Woodman describes.

See Roger W. Shugg, Origin of Class Struggle in Louisiana . . . (Baton Rouge, 1968 [1939]), 235-76; William B. Hesseltine, Confederate Leaders in the New South (Baton Rouge, 1950), *passim*; W. J. Cash, The Mind of the South (New York, 1969 [1941]), 110-15, 127-29; Clement Eaton, The Waning of the Old South Civilization, 1860-1880's (Athens, Georgia, 1968), 139-40; C. Vann Woodward, Origins of the New South, 1877-1913 (1877-1913) (Baton Rouge, 1951), *passim*; Jonathan M. Wiener, Social Origins of the New South: Alabama, 1860-1885 (Baton Rouge, 1978), *passim*; James L. Roark, Masters without Slaves: Southern Planters in the Civil War and Reconstruction (New York, 1977), 156-209; Jay Mandle, The Roots of Black Poverty: The Southern Plantation Economy after the Civil War (Durham, North Carolina, 1978), *passim*; Harold D. Woodman, "Sequel to Slavery: The New History Views the Postbellum South," JSH, XLIII (Nov., 1977), 523-54.

committed to their inveterate class ideology as they had been the day the Rebel cannons opened fire on Fort Sumter.⁵

Few heartlanders below the rank of the highborn, however, had leisure in the postwar years to ponder weighty questions of class and ideology. The necessity of making a living in hard times preoccupied most. Even those of substantial means could not always rest easily. James P. Brownlow, for example, a young Giles County Confederate soldier whose father had been a well-to-do land- and slaveowner, came home penniless in 1865. Borrowing some money, he attended an auction of surplus Federal army property, bought a few mules, horses, and wagons, took them back to Giles, and sold them for a profit. Subsequently

⁵Deference to the aristocracy is documented in Report of George Judd, Aug. 6, 1868, Narrative Reports, Records of the Assistant Commissioner for the State of Tennessee, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Land, 1865-1869, RG 105 (NA) (hereinafter cited as FB Records); E. H. Truman to Samuel Hunt, June 28, 1866, American Missionary Association, Tennessee Records (Amistad Research Center, Dillard University, New Orleans). For evidence of aristocratic opposition to public education, see Report of N. G. Alexander, Jan. 5, 1869, in John Eaton, Jr., First Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction for the State of Tennessee . . . (Nashville, 1869), CL; Fayetteville Observer, Dec. 17, 1868.

Spokesmen for the "New South," who advocated remaking the Southern economy and society in the image of the industrializing, bourgeois North, were as vocal in Middle Tennessee as they were everywhere else in the postwar South. Their numbers were few, however, and their rhetoric did not persuade the mass of heartlanders, who remained loyal to their traditional agrarian ethic and aristocratic class structure. Examples of New South advocacy are in Clarksville Chronicle, Jan. 29, 1869; Clarksville Weekly Chronicle, Sept. 29, Nov. 10, Dec. 1, 22, 1865; Pulaski Citizen, Feb. 22, 1867. See also Sarah M. Howell, "The Editorials of Arthur S. Colyar, Nashville Prophet of the New South," THQ, XXVII (Fall, 1968), 262-76; C. G. Belissary, "Tennessee and Immigration, 1865-1880," THQ, VII (Sept., 1948), 229-48; Timothy C. Jacobson, "Joseph Buckner Killebrew: Agrarianism in the New South," THQ, XXXIII (Summer, 1974), 157-74; Samuel B. Smith, "Joseph Buckner Killebrew and the New South Movement in Tennessee," ETHSP, No. 37 (1965), 5-22; Paul Gaston, The New South Creed: A Study in Southern Mythmaking (New York, 1970), passim.

he took over half his father's farm, but had to move into a dilapidated log house because his sister occupied their old home. In 1867, still struggling, Brownlow sold part of the farm and started a store in a nearby village. Eventually he gave up and emigrated to Texas. Many other heartlanders of the middling sort likewise sweated to restore their once comfortable standard of living. Nimrod Porter, who had lost thousands of dollars in slaves and other valuable property during the war, labored unceasingly in the months after Appomattox, though he was seventy-three years old. "Faerwell to the year 1865," he wrote in his journal on New Year's day, 1866; ". . . We are in some better condition now than we were the 1st day of Jany last but realy We have nothing to brag of, hardly able to live."⁶

The tribulations of the poor, however, were the harshest and most relentless. Even in the best of times before the war, propertyless whites in town and country alike had partaken only meagerly of the heartland's prosperity. They had, moreover, suffered grievously during the war, and now they faced the task of making their way in a devastated land which had little wealth to share and many new (black) claimants to that wealth. Some whites received Freedmen's Bureau aid right along with blacks immediately after the war; in fact, the supervisor of the Bureau in Tennessee asserted in late 1865 that his agents had distributed more free rations to needy whites than to

⁶James P. Brownlow Autobiography, 1-4, 30-34, James P. Brownlow Papers (TSLA); Nimrod Porter Journal, Jan. 1, 1866 (SHC). See also Jesse Cox Diary, entry dated Jan. 1, 1865, but, as internal evidence indicates, written later that spring (TSLA).

blacks that year. But like the freedmen, too, poor whites ultimately had to rely on themselves. Their postwar travail is poignantly illustrated in a letter written by an impoverished Giles County man in 1870:

I had a hard time in the war I Sureved four years I come home without a doller and sick and hoard nothing at home mi farther and mother was both ded no won to help me nor pittey mey mi sister was not able to help me much. . . . I went to work as soon as I got able to work and work hard to try to make aliving without eney thar help and by the help of God I have made aliving ever sence and God being mi helper I will try to make aliving.⁷

The response of lower-class whites to the two central facts of the region's economy—poverty and emancipation—constituted one of the most momentous developments within the white community of the postbellum heartland. As freedmen left the farms and poured into towns seeking work at any wages, they took many jobs away from whites. (Urban whites in some numbers were already idle, moreover, due to the decline of industry.) That pressure, conjoined with the concomitant labor vacuum in the countryside, propelled white workers by the thousands to the farms, where they hired on as hands or contracted to work as tenants. Furthermore, large numbers of Southern white immigrants came to the heartland in 1865 and afterward (particularly East Tennesseans of secessionist sympathy, driven from their homes in that region's continuing civil war), and they too passed through the towns crowded with blacks and proceeded to the farms, where they were welcomed by farmers desperate

⁷J. T. Trowbridge, A Picture of the Desolated States; and the Work of Restoration, 1865-1868 (Hartford, Connecticut, 1868), 287; Clarks-ville Weekly Chronicle, Nov. 16, 1866; Report of M. Walsh, Oct. 22, 1866, Apr. 8, 1867, Reports of Outrages, FB Records; T. B. Williams to sister, Nov. 27, 1870, T. B. Williams Letter (TSLA).

for labor. A Lincoln County farm owner wrote in 1865, for example, that

The Negroes we had . . . are all gone except 2 old men and one old woman, in their place we have a small white family, the Mother Son & daughter so we are still able to get along pretty comfortably.

Early the next year he reported that

I have ingaged a [white] girl to assist Mary Winn and we get along better in house matters than when we had Harriet [a former slave] and all her crew. I have rented out my land hired two young men to make fences and repair the farm and get more done than I would with double that number of negroes.

Nimrod Porter, who had customarily employed slave labor on his farm before the war, hired a white man for ten dollars a month in November 1865, and three months afterward hired another "at \$15 per month, he pays his own board lives in the office, has a verry young & pretty wife says he is a pretty good Blacksmith." A year later Porter noted in his journal that "There was 2 young [white] men here last night by the name of Bryant from Tuskaloosy [Alabama] they were hunting homes to live & crop it with some one." Late in 1868 he took in another man who

came last night at dark asked to stay all night . . . he was a foot had no horse he was an Irish man 3 years from Island he was made welcome he is permitted to stay until other agreement is made. . . .

The next day Porter observed with satisfaction that "our little Irish man Garay is helping get wood feed &c seems like he is willing to do any thing he can. . . ." ⁸

⁸Lucius Bright to Elizabeth Elliot, Mar. 5, 1865, Feb. 9, 1866, Collins D. Elliott Papers (TSLA); Porter Journal, Nov. 19, 1865,

As migrating black and white families passed one another on the roads leading to and from the heartland's farms, white society was transfigured. In 1860, about 7,300 white families (21 percent of the whole) had lived in towns, and about 23,400 (67 percent) on farms. By 1870 only 6,300 (15 percent) remained in towns, but 31,300 (74 percent) resided on farms. (The number and proportion of families in villages remained more or less constant.) The number of skilled workers among white family heads declined substantially over the decade, from 5,200 to 3,800 (15 to 9 percent); that of unskilled laborers fell even more precipitously, from 2,800 to 1,700 (8 to 4 percent). The number of landless agricultural workers (both hired hands and tenants), on the other hand, swelled from 6,600 to 12,700 (19 to 30 percent). This pronounced agrarianization of Middle Tennessee's white society after the Civil War stands in striking contradistinction to the broad trend toward urbanization in nineteenth-century America—a trend often conceded the inexorability of historical law.⁹

The postwar transformation of the heartland's social landscape strained the customarily harmonious relations between white propertied and propertyless classes. Some commentators expressed fears of class conflict between labor and capital. No such outright warfare ensued,

Feb. 13, 14, 1866, Mar. 23, 1867, Nov. 10, 11, 1868. See also Fayetteville Observer, Feb. 27, 1868. The movement of East Tennesseans in particular to the heartland's farms is documented in Pulaski Citizen, Mar. 17, 1866; Campbell Brown to Mrs. R. S. Ewell, Sept. 3, 1865, Polk-Brown-Ewell Papers; Brown to R. S. Ewell, Aug. 20, 1866, *ibid.*; Hiram Bogle to O. P. Temple, Aug. 26, 1866, O. P. Temple Papers (Special Collections, University of Tennessee Library, Knoxville).

⁹These figures are based on the sample data presented in more detail in Chapter XIV.

but the new relationship between poor yet proud white laborers—many of them unused to the drudgery of farm work—and middle- or upper-class white farm owners—most of them accustomed to bossing their field hands quite literally like slavedrivers—generated great friction and sparked many an angry confrontation. Samuel Henderson, a Williamson County planter, bickered constantly with his employee R. M. Freeman in 1867 and 1868; during one altercation Henderson "frailed him well with my stick the first white man I ever struck in my life." Former slaveowner Joseph B. Killebrew of Montgomery County engaged several members of a poor-white family to sharecrop his plantation, but he soon grew disgusted with them and eventually dismissed them all. Not only were they shiftless and ignorant about tobacco cultivation, but, as the patrician Killebrew remarked disdainfully, "They were very stupid, the old man being a real halleluiah preacher without any education whatever." In April 1866, only two months after hiring the new farm hand with the "young & pretty wife," Nimrod Porter complained in his journal that

Andrew Harris seems to be verry loving with his young wife they have not been in the habit of gitting up until after sun up then . . . it is 2 or 3 hours after sun up before they git out to work. I have called him up this morning & told him to go to work he obeyed ruluctantly he has to rise earlyer after this or we will not agree.

Harris's work habits did not improve, however, and on July 5 Porter fired him:

. . . made him settle up . . . made him give up my new axe
 he feloniously carried off . . . he said his wife took it
 she behaved like a bitch & he like a cowardly rogue. . . .¹⁰

The new postwar economic forces of fission which thus threatened to split white classes apart were powerful, but there remained old social forces of fusion which were stronger yet and which kept the classes stoutly joined. One was race. Slavery was gone, but racism lived on to unite all whites—farm owner and farm hand, aristocrat and plebeian—in the determination to keep their land the white man's domain and to slap down any "uppity" black who defied them. The other force was ruralism. The same country roads which brought poor whites from towns or other regions and into conflict with rural landowners also brought them within the broad, unifying embrace and informal collectivism of the rural community, which had speedily revived after the suppression of wartime chaos. Tenant and landlord might wrangle day in and day out about oversleeping or pilfered tools, but they also worked side by side late into the night at hog-killing time, celebrated and drank together after the harvest, rode to town to fetch the doctor when the other fell ill, and joined hands in prayer and fellowship every Sunday. No less than its traditional dimension of hierarchy, which ranked each member according to his status, white society after the Civil War restored—and even extended—its traditional dimension of community, which linked

¹⁰Samuel Henderson Diary, Jan. 25, 1867, Mar. 10, 16, 1868 (TSLA); Joseph Buckner Killebrew Autobiography, I, 172-73 (SHC); Porter Journal, Apr. 26, July 5, 1866. Comments on the potential conflict of labor and capital are in Fayetteville Observer, Feb. 24, 1870; Pulaski Citizen, Oct. 5, 1866.

rural folk of every rank in a partnership of faith and mutual dependence.¹¹

Confident that white society was once again firmly reunited following its wartime disintegration, whites took up the task of redeeming that society from its bondage. They perceived the regime of the Radicals and their allies as a kind of imperial rule by outsiders, a yoke of tyranny on the shoulders of a subject people. Their hatred of their oppressors was implacable, their denunciations of them bitter, their fear of them substantial. Nimrod Porter noted in the summer of 1865

a verry greate feeling agt the authorities [whose] course is much regretted they are overbearing insulting & imposing to the citizens [who] are oblige to beare it I dare not even complain what will be the result god only knows.

He further declared that the object of these despots seemed to be "to stay here . . . & live high & assoon authority & drink good liquer and dominion over the citizens generally (they are despised by all)." Porter also shared the belief of many whites that Radical rule was a conspiracy, a plot by a ruthless cabal which kept itself in power by insidious means.

¹¹Jordan, "My Recollections," gives a good impression of the persistence of traditional rural life after the Civil War. On the unification of Southern whites by racism, see Kenneth M. Stampp, The Era of Reconstruction, 1865-1877 (New York, 1965), 163, 197-98; Carl Degler, Place over Time: The Continuity of Southern Distinctiveness (Baton Rouge, 1977), *passim*. This interpretation has recently been challenged by Armstead Robinson, who points to instances of biracial lower-class political movements which challenged aristocratic hegemony in the Reconstruction South. See Armstead Robinson, "Beyond the Realm of Social Consensus: New Meanings of Reconstruction for American History," Journal of American History, LXVIII (Sept., 1981), 276-97. Manifestly, no such movements appeared in Middle Tennessee.

"I have noticed a man (lawyer) staying about Town," he wrote in 1866;

. . . I dont like his appearance he has nothing to say mutch to any body, he reads the papers verry much particularly the Radicle ones . . . just such a looking man as I would figer out to be a spy & reporter [i.e., informer]. . . .

Two years later, when an itinerant book salesman visited Porter's home and gave him some religious tracts, Porter again grew suspicious: "I have no dout he was a reporter for the Radicles."¹²

White heartlanders struggled grimly to reclaim their native land from the outsiders. They fought them with ballots and they fought them with guns. The political battle was not easily or quickly won, but in the meantime whites did achieve a satisfying victory in another arena. Unable to drive the alien intruders from their land, white Middle Tennesseans banished them from their social world. They refused to fraternize or even shake hands with Radical politicians, activist Freedmen's Bureau agents, or Northern missionaries, and in some cases declined to rent them rooms or trade with them in any way. In 1867, for example, the Pulaski Bureau agent had to take up quarters in his office with his wife and children after local whites decided he was inciting the freedmen and agreed not to board him any longer. A Nashville missionary told a colleague in the North in late 1865 that

From the citizens [here] the less you expect the lighter will be yr disappointment. . . . If you do Miss'y or

¹²Porter Journal, July 9, 25, 1865, Apr. 5, 1866, May 9, 1868. See also *ibid.*, July 31, Aug. 26, 1865, Apr. 20, 1867; *Pulaski Citizen*, Sept. 13, 1867; *Sumner County Republican*, July 11, 1868. The Conservative campaign to overthrow Radical rule in Nashville is detailed in Gary L. Kornell, "Reconstruction in Nashville, 1867-1869," *THQ*, XXX (Fall, 1971), 277-87.

educational work in this country yr teachers & preachers must come prepared . . . to depend on themselves for every means of living.

Public revilement by white spokesmen served further to stigmatize the outsiders. The editor of the Pulaski Citizen abandoned his customary primness when he urged whites in 1867 to shun the Radicals: ". . . we would," he wrote,

as soon invite the vilest, slimyest, nastiest, filthiest, most poisonous and treacherous reptile that crawls upon the earth to a place at our table. . . .

The Giles County deputy sheriff reached even greater heights (or depths) of vituperation. On leaving office in 1868 he addressed native Radicals directly in a newspaper advertisement, characterizing them as

filth, more disgusting than the putrifying carcass of a Yankee-Government horse, that has died with the glanders. A corroded harridan, after a prostitution of forty years, is a purer theme for moral contemplation than you, and a bastard tick at the root of a bull's tail presents a more beautiful aspect to the mental vision.

The ultimate effect of such figurative branding and public ostracism was not only to isolate the outsiders socially, but to reinforce the ideological unity of native whites by confirming their sense of legitimacy and common purpose.¹³

As it formed ranks to oppose the foe, the white community enlisted a few new recruits and cashiered some old veterans. There were among

¹³Report of M. Walsh, Oct. 7, Dec. 7, 1867, Narrative Reports, FB Records; Report of Joseph W. Gelray, Oct. 1, 1868, *ibid.*; Edward P. Smith to M. E. Strieby, Oct. 11, 1865, American Missionary Association, Tennessee Records; Report of E. A. Easter, Feb. 12, 1866, *ibid.*; Pulaski Citizen, Aug. 30, Sept. 13, 1867, Jan. 31, Nov. 20, 1868. See also Fayetteville Observer, May 2, 1867; Sumner County Republican, July 4, 1868.

the Northern newcomers some whose political persuasion accorded with that of native whites, and they were made welcome. One, in fact, a former Union officer, ran for office in 1867 as a Conservative candidate in Marshall County. Conversely, native whites who appeared overly friendly to the Radicals or the freedmen were summarily drummed out of the corps. A Williamson County minister, for instance, was blackballed by fellow clergymen in 1866 for performing marriage services for blacks; and in 1867 white Maury countians boycotted and shunned a physician who had treated black patients. The white community was even more wrathful and unforgiving, however, toward native unionists. Whether Radical or Conservative, heartlanders who had maintained their loyalty to the Union during the war were still pariahs after Appomattox. A Federal general reported in 1866 that white Middle Tennesseans "are more unfriendly to Union men, natives of the state of Tennessee, or of the south, who have been in the Union army, than they are to men of northern birth." A Bedford County unionist who had suffered cruel persecution by his neighbors during the war wrote angrily in 1867 that the

strong hostile feeling with rebels against the Union party is as strong now as at any other time, . . . and were it posable for them to ever get in power again (which they cannot) they would have the same tyrannical disposition that they did exhibit in 1861. . . .¹⁴

¹⁴Lincoln County News, May 11, 1867; Report of Charles Johnson, June 1, 1866, Reports of Officers and Agents, FB Records; Report of M. Walsh, Sept. 16, 1867, *ibid.*; Testimony of George H. Thomas, Jan. 29, 1866, U. S. Congress, Joint Committee on Reconstruction, Tennessee Report, 109; William Taylor to Enon Primitive Baptist Church, Aug. 18, 1867, Enon Primitive Baptist Church, Unionville, Bedford County, Records, Church Letters (TSLA). Expressions of good will toward

As they battled resolutely for their society's redemption, white Middle Tennesseans also prayed earnestly for its sanctification. A deep-rooted and troubling conviction haunted them in 1865 and after, a belief that their people were not only tyrannized by enemies without, but enthralled by wickedness within. Though the communal and hierarchical corpus of society was rapidly healing its wounds, the war-wracked moral and spiritual essence of society remained, to the heartlanders' minds, sullied and depraved. The editor of the Pulaski Citizen, for example, reported a religious meeting at a nearby village in 1866 and expressed the hope that it would "widen and deepen until its influence reaches this sin-cursed town and community." Concerned elders of the First Presbyterian Church of Clarksville resolved in 1867

That whereas during the last few years, while a state of war existed in the country many things were done and many were omitted which at other times would not have been allowed, on the part of the members of the church[,] it is deemed wise and proper that now a stricter and more consistent deportment should be demanded.

"acceptable" Northerners may be found in Fayetteville Observer, Mar. 5, 1868; Pulaski Citizen, Apr. 30, June 11, 1869. Lawrence N. Powell, New Masters: Northern Planters during the Civil War and Reconstruction (New Haven, Connecticut, 1980), 135-45, shows that such amicable relations between natives and Yankees were not uncommon elsewhere in the South, too. Other evidence of postwar hostility to unionists in Middle Tennessee is in Brownlow Autobiography, 32; Trowbridge, Picture of the Desolated States, 274, 285; Report of M. Walsh, Dec. 15, 1866, Feb. 18, 1867, Narrative Reports, FB Records. That hostility was returned in kind. See, for example, T. B. Williams to sister, Nov. 27, 1870, Williams Letter; F. Ayer to M. E. Strieby, Oct. 2, 1865, American Missionary Association, Tennessee Records; Pulaski Citizen, Mar. 30, 1866; Porter Journal, Aug. 3, 1865. At least one unionist, however (a Nashville man), denied being persecuted during Reconstruction. See Gail Hamilton (pseudonym for Mary Abigail Dodge), Wool-gathering (Boston, 1868), 204-5.

Likewise perturbed, the fathers of Zion Presbyterian Church in Maury County proclaimed that

Whereas, During the terrible conflicts which have passed over the country in consequence of the late national troubles, religion has been and still is, at a very low ebb, and the conduct of many professors has been such, as to justify the declaration, "the Master has been wounded in the house of his friends. . . ." Therefor resolved, that, as a Session we humble ourselves before God . . . and recommend to the members of the Church, to unite with us, in observing . . . a day of fasting and prayer in consequence of the low State of religion in our midst. Peradventure, God may hear, and answer our prayers, and revive his work among us, and especially in our own hearts.¹⁵

Considerable evidence was at hand to confirm the heartlanders' judgment that their society was morally decadent. Ruined churches with empty pews offered mute but convincing testimony, at least to the devout. But believer and skeptic alike were persuaded by an even more conspicuous symptom of degeneracy: crime. The wartime flood waters of crime had receded as order was restored in 1865, but they stubbornly remained beyond their antebellum confines, not far below the high-water mark. "We hear of thefts in all parts of the country," the Gallatin Examiner reported in the fall of 1865; and another newspaper noted about that time that no less than eighteen murders had occurred in and around Nashville in seven weeks, a fact the editor deemed "horrible to contemplate." Crime plagued town and countryside alike. The Fayetteville public square, for example, became a dangerous place after dark, when,

¹⁵Pulaski Citizen, Aug. 10, 1866; First Presbyterian Church, Clarksville, Montgomery County, Records, Session Minutes, Apr. 17, 1867 (TSLA); Zion Presbyterian Church, Columbia, Maury County, Records, Session Minutes, Aug. 22, 1865 (TSLA). See also Tennessee Legislative Petitions, 1865, No. 12 (TSLA).

as the Observer's editor complained, "Riot seems to reign." Meanwhile in a village in Giles County agitated citizens held a public meeting to deal with "The crime of horse stealing [which] has become so common and of such frequent occurrence in our vicinity. . . ." Nimrod Porter's journal entry for the last day of 1866 summed up his impression of the whole year: ". . . stealing, robing, & taking every thing that can be got hold of has been the order of the day & night."¹⁶

The persistence of crime in the postbellum heartland suggests that the reconstitution of community in the countryside and the restitution of fully effective formal authority in the towns were less complete, or at least slower, than they appeared on the surface. In the rural areas wartime chaos had destroyed the traditional, informal instruments of communal control over individual conduct and had fostered a pervasive anomie which stripped antisocial behavior of its illegitimacy. Despite the speedy restoration of relative safety and order in 1865, the rural community could not immediately reassert sovereignty over every individual. In the woods and on the back roads there skulked a few diehards who refused to return to the reopened churches, did not care a damn what their neighbors said about them, and intended to continue the thievery and mayhem to which they had grown accustomed since 1862.

¹⁶Gallatin Examiner, Oct. 21, 1865; Fayetteville Observer, Dec. 21, 1865, Apr. 4, 1867, Feb. 20, 27, 1868; Porter Journal, Dec. 31, 1866. For further evidence of postwar crime, see Clarksville Weekly Chronicle, Feb. 16, 1866, Mar. 1, 1867; Pulaski Citizen, Jan. 18, 25, Nov. 29, Dec. 20, 1867; Report of M. Walsh, Feb. 18, 1867, Narrative Reports, FB Records; Porter Journal, June 17, 1865, May 25, 1867; Thomas B. Alexander, "Neither Peace Nor War: Conditions in Tennessee in 1865," ETHSP, No. 21 (1949), 35-39.

Wartime social degeneration manifested itself even in the towns (where authority had perhaps been weakened but not destroyed), in the form of an urban crime wave that continued after 1865. Moreover, even among the vast majority of heartlanders who came back within the pale of community or government, one vestige of wartime amorality remained: the sufferance of, and frequent resort to, personal violence. "Our late war made life cheap," the Columbia Herald remarked in 1870 in an editorial on recent killings;

Before the "unpleasantness" between the States, a murder committed in our county sent a thrill of horror throughout its length and breadth. . . . But now, alas! what a change has come over the spirit of our dreams!

Much of the heartland's postwar violence, as a number of observers noted, grew out of the sort of feuds and quarrels which in antebellum days had often been resolved peacefully by mutual agreement or community intervention. "Middle Tennessee is disturbed by personal animosities and hatreds," a Federal officer told a Congressional committee investigating Reconstruction violence, "much more than it is by the disloyalty of persons towards the government. . . ." When an election-day gathering in rural Maury County in 1869 erupted into a brawl among whites, the Herald explained that "The fuss did not have its origins in politics . . . but was caused entirely by too much bust-head [i.e., whiskey] and by old family feuds." Though the shredded fabric of the heartland's white society was quickly rewoven and made whole again after the war,

the persistence of crime and violence indicated that not every stray thread was in place.¹⁷

Many Middle Tennesseans were convinced, however, at least at first, that social explanations of postwar turpitude and lawlessness were beside the point. To them, the spiritual nature of such troubles seemed self-evident. They saw their land stained with impiety and iniquity and reckoned that it could be purged only by faith and rectitude. And they presumed furthermore that their sinfulness had provoked God's wrath and brought down upon them divine punishment in the form of poverty, pestilence, and blight. Within a few months of the war's end the believers sparked a religious movement which proceeded to sweep the region, "a general awakening among God's people, throughout the land," as one newspaper characterized it. The spirit waxed ardent as the months and years passed: "[T]he people of God are becoming more prayerful and more engaged in his cause," another newspaper declared in 1868, "and more of the world are uneasy in their guilt. . . ." The burgeoning revivalism won the souls of Middle Tennesseans in numbers

¹⁷ Columbia Herald, Aug. 12, 1869, Jan. 7, 1870; Testimony of George H. Thomas, Jan. 29, 1866, U. S. Congress, Joint Committee on Reconstruction, Tennessee Report, 109. Other examples of violent feuds are in Fayetteville Observer, Oct. 8, 1868; Pulaski Citizen, Feb. 21, 1868. For an example of a larcenous band of rural social outcasts, see Porter Journal, May 23, 24, June 30, 1867. Though the crime problem certainly had its roots in wartime social disorganization, it was aggravated by the postwar economic depression. See, for example, Pulaski Citizen, Dec. 13, 1867. Richard Maxwell Brown, "Historical Patterns of American Violence," in Hugh Davis Graham and Ted Robert Gurr, eds., Violence in America: Historical and Comparative Perspectives (Beverly Hills, California, 1979), 22-24, shows that the Civil War experience left a legacy of increased violence across the South.

unmatched in previous decades (and it sometimes joined hands with the similarly flourishing temperance movement in the region, which aimed to purify the body while the churches purified the heart). The faithful of McKay Cumberland Presbyterian Church of Williamson County, for example, came together in the fall of 1867 for a revival which lasted a week and saved forty-three souls: "Preaching in the main," the church scribe recorded,

was characterized by a holy unction, the impress of which was soon apparent, both on the Church and world. . . . Husbands, wives, parents and children, were together crying for mercy. . . . This meeting was a decided victory, which diffused new life into the Church.¹⁸

The journal of Jeremiah W. Cullom, an itinerant Methodist preacher of Montgomery County, vividly captures the excitement and exultation which invariably seized such gatherings. On September 3, 1867, Cullom opened a revival and afterward reported that "the power came down on the Christians. Oh such a good meeting. This has been the best season for me that I have had on the circuit. I love everybody." The next day his work continued:

Oh such Divine Power! At prayer meeting this morning a melting influence came down on us. A number of the hardest

¹⁸Murfreesboro Monitor, Sept. 9, 1865; Shelbyville American Union, Sept. 30, 1865; Shelbyville Republican, Oct. 16, 1866; Pulaski Citizen, Aug. 3, 10, 31, Sept. 14, 1866, Feb. 21, Mar. 13, 20, 1868; McKay Cumberland Presbyterian Church, Williamson County, Records, Session Minutes, n.d. (c. Feb., 1868) (TSLA). See also Columbia Herald, June 17, 1870; Fayetteville Observer, May 17, Aug. 23, 1866, July 11, 1867, Aug. 26, 1869; Lincoln County News, June 29, 1867; Historical Records Survey, Tennessee, Presbyterian Church Records, Tennessee (2 vols., Nashville, 1937-41), II, Lincoln County, History of Presbyterian Church, Petersburg, 2. The temperance movement and its relation to revivalism are noted in Fayetteville Observer, Jan. 10, 1867; Pulaski Citizen, Feb. 8, 1867, Feb. 21, Mar. 20, 1868.

sinners came to the altar. At night between thirty and forty mourners came forward, and numbers of others in the congregation were broken down. The people of God looked on in amazement. In fact we felt bewildered and scarcely knew what to do.

"When will we ever forget this night," he wrote two days later;

I am free to say that I think I never saw the like before. We had some of the most clear and startling conversions I ever witnessed, and the whole community seems under the Divine influence. . . . Lord of the harvest, let no pride of man nor rage of devils interrupt thy work here, but may it go on so that the past shall only be as a drop before the plentiful shower. . . . I must make a note of one conversion which took place tonight. John Rodgers, a man in the prime of life and of fine sense has been a mourner for two or three days. He was carried off from the church last night apparently deranged. His shrieks were heard afar as he was conducted home, and tonight he was in such a helpless condition he had to be brought to church and lifted bodily into the altar. . . . [Q]uick as a lightning flash he was converted and shouted at the top of his voice "Glory to God." He is so happy he seems hardly able to stay on the ground. Glory to God say I, and let all the people say amen!¹⁹

While with one hand the churches strove to ignite the inner fire of Christian zeal in everyone across the land, with the other they purged and chastened their own sin-drenched flocks. With renewed energy and determination, elders scrutinized the behavior of church members for signs of irreligion or profligacy which might offend God or threaten the purity and unity of the congregation; and they furthermore exhorted every worshipper to do likewise, and to shun the ungodly. "Now I beseech you Brethren," wrote the clerk of Hannah's Gap Baptist Church of Lincoln County in 1868,

¹⁹Jeremiah W. Cullom Diary, Sept. 3, 4, 5, 6, 12, 1867 (TSLA).

mark them which cause division and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have lerned and avoid them for they that ar such serve not our Lord Jesus Crist but there own belly and by good words and fair speeches deceive the harts of the simple. . . .

In 1866 the fathers of McKay Cumberland Presbyterian Church affirmed that

members who indulge in dancing intoxication profane language & such irregularitys bring a reproach on religion therefore Resolved unanimously that such offences will be promptly investigated. . . . A motion prevailed making it the duty of each member of this Sesion to report at each meeting all things worthy of notice which had come to his ears.

The repentant wrongdoer could usually expect no worse than a public admonishment, but for the obdurate or flagrant sinner the punishment was spiritual exile. When, for example, evidence proved that Sister Susan Walker of the Robertson Fork Church of Christ of Marshall County had been "keeping a disorderly house" as charged by the session in 1867, "The Brethren agreed to withdraw from her. She is therefore a member among us no longer." Of particular concern to the faithful was the intrusion of "worldliness" into the immaculate and insular sodality of the congregation, for the outside world was seen now as more godless and depraved than ever before. Thus, when Sister Ann Redman of Poplar Grove Cumberland Presbyterian Church in Williamson County confessed in 1867 that she doubted her faith and had "frequently engaged in dancing," the church elders were distressed equally by her unbelief and by "her devotion to the maxims and pleasures of the world," and the subsequently "excommunicated [her] from the fellowship of the . . . Church."²⁰

²⁰Hannah's Gap Baptist Church of Christ, Lincoln County, Records, Session Minutes, I, July 1868 (TSLA); McKay Cumberland Presbyterian

Outside the churches, too, whites who fell from grace endured castigation and ostracism. At this point the two discrete crusades—one to sanctify white society, the other to redeem it—converged, for the defilement of the community by unregenerate constituents and the oppression of it by despotic outsiders had come to be seen in white eyes as two sides of the same odious coin. The coalescence of sanctification and redemption in the white mind was most saliently manifested in the mayhem of the Ku Klux Klan. The same robed nightriders who threatened, whipped, and murdered Radical activists and defiant blacks likewise chastised morally delinquent native whites. In 1868, for example, hundreds of Klansmen appeared at the home of a disreputable Rutherford County white man, accused by neighbors of abusing his little daughter, and ordered him out of town. That same year another large

Church, Williamson County, Session Minutes, Dec. 12, 1866, June 8, 1867; Robertson Fork Church of Christ, Marshall County, Records, Session Minutes, Oct., Nov., 1867 (TSLA); Poplar Grove Cumberland Presbyterian Church, College Grove, Williamson County, Records, Session Minutes, Sept. 21, Nov. 24, 1867 (TSLA). Other examples of church discipline in this period are plentiful. See, for example, Presbyterian Church, Lewisburg, Marshall County, Records, Session Minutes, Feb. 10, 1870 (TSLA); Fall Creek Baptist Church, Lebanon, Wilson County, Records, Session Minutes, Feb., Oct., 1866 (TSLA); First Presbyterian Church, Gallatin, Summer County, Records, Session Minutes, Oct. 15, 1866, Mar. 31, Dec. 28, 1867, Jan. 14, Mar. 30, Apr. 11, 1868, Apr. 6, June 9, Nov. 2, 10, 1870 (TSLA); Wilson Creek Primitive Baptist Church, Williamson County, Session Minutes, Aug., Sept., 1866. On dancing and other "worldliness" in particular, see McCains Cumberland Presbyterian Church, McCains, Maury County, Records, Session Minutes, July 7, 1866 (TSLA); Mt. Olivet Baptist Church, Mt. Juliet, Wilson County, Records, Session Minutes, II, Dec., 1869, June 1870 (TSLA); Union Baptist Church, Wilson County, Records, Session Minutes, Nov., 1867 (in 1896 record book) (TSLA); Bethlehem Baptist Church, Robertson County, Records, Session Minutes, I, Jan., Feb., 1866 (TSLA); Mount Lebanon Missionary Baptist Church, Marshall County, Records, Session Minutes, Jan., Feb., 1867 (TSLA).

band of Klansmen visited a Murfreesboro man who had allegedly deserted his wife for a black woman, and forced him to return home. Masked men entered the house of a Pulaski white woman who had been "living in open and flagrant lewdness with negroes," according to the newspaper's account, shaved her head, tarred her, and whipped her bare back. Nimrod Porter went into Columbia one day in March 1868 and

saw a [white] man in the market house dead he had been taken out of Jail last night & carried . . . south of the Town . . . & there hung until he was dead . . . this man killed a man near Francis 3 or 4 days ago and robbed him.²¹

It would be a distortion to insist that the postwar Klansmen were merely the wartime guerrillas redivivus, but it is instructive to consider the strong points of similarity between the two groups. Both appeared in response to an unprecedented crisis which they believed imperiled the very existence of their society. Both comprised men who lived in the community and were harbored by it, and both waged a covert but lethal war against their enemies. Both acted to defend the community

²¹Report of J. K. Nelson, May 15, 1868, Reports of Outrages, FB Records; Pulaski Citizen, June 26, July 10, 1868; Porter Journal, Mar. 4, 1868. Other examples are in Lincoln County News, Sept. 5, 1868 (which notes the murder of a Klansman by his own fellows because he stole a mule); *ibid.*, Sept. 26, 1868, and Fayetteville Observer, Sept. 24, 1868 (which document the murder of a man by the Klan because of his activities as a bandit during the war); Thomas B. Alexander, "Kukluxism in Tennessee, 1865-1869," THQ, VIII (Sept., 1949), 211 (which describes the lynching of a white horse thief); and Pulaski Citizen, June 21, 1867 (which records the expulsion of a Klansman from the organization for drunkenness and disobedience). Public condemnation of miscegenation was frequent in these years, and it encouraged acts of Klan retribution such as the two cited here. Accusations of miscegenation were often used to discredit enemies. See, for example, First Presbyterian Church, Gallatin, Session Minutes, Feb. 9, Mar. 2, 1867; Lincoln County News, June 20, 1868; Pulaski Citizen, Sept. 13, Dec. 20, 1867, Jan. 31, 1868.

not only against outside aggressors (whether Yankee soldiers or Radicals) but against those within who threatened communal integrity (whether collaborationists and runaway slaves or horse thieves and philandering husbands). And, ultimately, both degenerated from disciplined and obeisant (though brutal) instruments of white society's will into gangs of larcenous and ungovernable hooligans without social purpose or sanction.²²

Unlike the guerrillas, however, the Klansmen saw at least one of their aims achieved, for with the Conservative political triumph of 1869 white society was freed from its captivity. Joyfully white heartlanders could proclaim the fulfillment of Biblical prophecy, citing the Lord's promise to Jeremiah that he would restore the people of Israel after their subjugation: "And their nobles shall be of themselves, and their governor shall proceed from the midst of them. . . ." When Conservatives confirmed their supremacy the following year with the ratification of the new state constitution, they exulted in their victory and announced with self-satisfaction a new era of harmony: as the Columbia Herald declared,

The issues out of which grew animosities between the different peoples of our commonwealth are settled, and

²²The eventual degeneration of the Klan and its loss of social legitimacy are evidenced in Leona Taylor Aiken, Donelson, Tennessee: Its History and Landmarks (Nashville, 1968), 25; Report of George Judd, May 1, 1868, Narrative Reports, FB Records; Report of J. McMullen, Aug. 1, 1868, *ibid.*; Columbia Herald, July 23, 1869; Fayetteville Observer, Sept. 9, 1869, Jan. 27, Nov. 24, Dec. 22, 1870; Pulaski Citizen, July 3, 1868; Allen Trelease, White Terror: The Ku Klux Klan Conspiracy and Southern Reconstruction (New York, 1971), 183-84, 279.

disposed of forever, never to be resuscitated. The disfranchised citizens are enfranchised, and "the State is [at] peace."²³

Thus, within a mere four years after Appomattox, white Middle Tennesseans had accomplished much that they had set out to do. They had rebuilt their ruined farms and villages and towns, reknit their unraveled society, rekindled their slackened piety, and recaptured their conquered homeland. Nevertheless, they remained a troubled people, for crime, poverty, and pestilence still afflicted them, and they feared that they were yet unpurified in the eyes of their Creator.

Those plagues were not lifted, but before the decade's end the white people of the heartland had moved decisively toward delivering themselves from the profound sense of guilt, corruption, and unworthiness which the plagues had aroused. The solution which they found was not political, economic, or even religious. It was instead social and ideological, for it involved nothing less than a revolution in their conception of society.

Increasingly in 1865 and after, whites blamed all of their calamities on the freedmen. Were fields barren and the economy feeble? Then they were so, whites insisted, because of the indolence and self-indulgence of the freed blacks, who frolicked while white men and women toiled. Did deadly smallpox and cholera blight the towns? It was so

²³Jeremiah 30:21; Columbia Herald, Apr. 1, 1870. On the Conservative political victory of 1869 and the constitutional convention of 1870, see James C. Parker, "Tennessee Gubernatorial Elections, I. 1869—The Victory of the Conservatives," THQ, XXXIII (Spring, 1974), 34-61; Roger L. Hart, Redeemers, Bourbons, and Populists: Tennessee, 1870-1896 (Baton Rouge, 1975), 1-12; Thomas B. Alexander, Political Reconstruction in Tennessee (Nashville, 1950), 199-225.

because lazy blacks crowded into filthy urban tenements and shantytowns where such diseases thrived. Was God angered by the murder, theft, and licentiousness which inundated the land? Blacks were the perpetrators; and such were the fruits of emancipation.²⁴

That such imputations could assuage white guilt bespeaks the fundamentally different image of society which whites were gradually adopting in the postwar years. Before the war, whites had embraced blacks as constituents of their families and churches and communities, subordinate but integral members of the metaphorical household of society. In such a household the guilt of one was the guilt of all. After emancipation, however, when blacks renounced their membership and withdrew to their own familial, religious, and communal institutions, whites simultaneously read the intractable freedmen out of their social world: as one newspaper advised whites in 1867, "Do not harbor the enemy in your house." Thus, in the minds of whites their formerly biracial community became a uniracial community, their once integrated social household, an all-white household whose erstwhile black co-occupants had moved out to separate quarters. By attributing all their troubles to the freedmen's depravity, therefore, whites could

²⁴Evidence that whites blamed blacks for economic problems is in Report of M. Walsh, Nov. 4, 1867, Narrative Reports, FB Records; Fayetteville Observer, Oct. 24, 1867; Pulaski Citizen, Nov. 22, 1867. Blacks are identified as the cause of the smallpox epidemic in Sumner County, Tennessee, County Court Clerk's Office, County Court Minutes, June 1865, Vol. 1858-66, p. 403 (TSLA). Crime and immorality are attributed to the freedmen in Pulaski Citizen, Dec. 13, 1867; Columbia Herald, Oct. 29, 1869, Jan. 7, 1870; Report of M. Walsh, Feb. 29, 1868, Narrative Reports, FB Records; A. R. Wynne to Andrew Johnson, Sept. 8, 1865, Johnson Papers.

banish the responsibility for such afflictions from their hearth, and could again stand immaculate before their Judge. It is perhaps illustrative of this evolving sense of purgation that as the year 1870 ended and the new year began, Elder Fain of the Wilson Creek Primitive Baptist Church of Williamson County was inspired to preach to his white brethren from Romans 6:22: ". . . now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life." In such convictions lay not only the moral origins of white self-complacency, but perhaps the ideological seeds of Jim Crowism.²⁵

By 1870 Middle Tennessee encompassed two societies, one black and one white, societies increasingly insular, increasingly distinct. Like brothers who had grown up together but then gone their separate ways, blacks and whites would never forget their kinship and shared experiences, but they would never again be intimate companions. Their lives, inextricably entwined in the days of their youth, took divergent paths in adulthood and their contacts grew less frequent, more perfunctory. The black man continued to work with the white man, of course, but at sundown he returned to his own black family, perhaps in a black village or urban settlement, and on Sunday he hearkened to the words of a black preacher. When he did right he sought only the praise of his black peers, and when he did wrong he acknowledged only their rebuke. Likewise,

²⁵Fayetteville Observer, Aug. 15, 1867; Wilson Creek Primitive Baptist Church, Williamson County, Minutes of Sermons, Jan., 1871 (on the desertion of this church by its black members after the war, see Chapter XI).

the white man continued to oversee his black laborers, but he went home to a white family and prayed in a white church. And more and more he came to view the black people around him not as neighbors ready to share the labor and leisure of communal life, nor as fellow Christians seeking salvation, nor as innocent children in need of guidance, but as strangers—and surpassingly outlandish and troublesome strangers at that.

Himself the white man deemed righteous, comfortable, and safe, for he had built a new social edifice on the ruins of the old. It was a patchwork affair, to be sure: he had used the old foundation stones which remained—race, hierarchy, and ruralism—but had to make do without those which had been destroyed—namely, slavery and prosperity. It was furthermore a smaller structure than its predecessor, for it accommodated only one people now, not two; and it was old-fashioned and a little shabby, for it held fast to the archaic class ideology and traditional agrarian ethic of days gone by without retaining the national prominence and agricultural splendor which it had boasted in those days. Nevertheless, it was a sturdy edifice, buttressed by intensified white racial solidarity and by broadened rural communalism among whites. Its builder gazed upon it and was pleased; and to succeeding generations he proudly recounted how in the years after Appomattox he had redeemed it from its villainous expropriators and sanctified it in the eyes of the Lord.

CHAPTER XIII

ONE LAND, TWO PEOPLES: WHITE AND BLACK MIDDLE

TENNESSEANS IN 1870

Far more so than in 1860, white and black heartlanders in 1870 inhabited different worlds. The physical and cultural separation of the races delineated in the previous chapters is further attested by the statistical data presented in this one. The nine tables below, based on the 1870 manuscript census returns of population (see Appendix A), portray Middle Tennesseans as a whole. In this respect they differ from the 1860 tables analyzed in Chapter IV, which excluded slaves. With one exception the following tables are crosstabulations employing race as the independent variable; in other words, they explicitly contrast the socioeconomic characteristics of white and black families.

Table XIII-1 shows to what extent blacks had by 1870 become a people of town and village while whites remained farmers. Four black families out of ten (39 percent) lived in a town or village, a remarkable fact considering that less than one slave in ten had done so a decade earlier (compare Table IV-3, page 112). This 1870 figure is, moreover, undoubtedly much reduced from that of 1865, prior to the Freedmen's Bureau's partially successful efforts to put contrabands in the towns back to work on the farms. Only one white family in four (26 percent) lived in a town or village, down from the 1860 proportion of one in three. It is interesting to note too that nonfarm blacks (i.e., those who neither lived nor worked on farms—see Appendix A for definitions)

Table XIII-1
Race of Family Head by Residence, 1870
(Total Population)

Residence	Families Categorized by Race of Head (% of Each Category Shown)		N	% of Total Fams.
	White	Black		
Town	15	20	203	17
Village	11	19	166	14
Farm	74	61	831	69
N	784	416		
% of Total Fams.	65	35		

$\chi^2 = 21.9$ with 2 d.f., signif. = .0000

C = .13382

N = 1,200

were about equally divided between towns and villages (20 and 19 percent, respectively), while nonfarm whites were more concentrated in towns (15 percent, vs. 11 percent in villages). Especially is this noteworthy when it is recalled that in 1860 only about one slave in a hundred was a villager. The freedmen, it seems, were not so much fleeing to the towns after emancipation as they were fleeing from the farms. (Extrapolating from this and Table IV-3, page 112, indicates that of the approximately 8,900 black families who permanently left the farms during and after the Civil War, 5,000—56 percent—went to villages and 3,900—44 percent—to towns.) In a more meaningful sense, however, black and white heartlanders alike remained in 1870 substantially rural, i.e., farm and village folk, intimately tied to the soil whether or not they actually plowed and planted it. Eight black families out of ten lived in the countryside, and an even greater proportion of whites (85 percent) did so—indeed, a larger proportion of whites than in 1860 (79 percent).

Table XIII-2 documents the postwar poverty of the freedmen. Though they comprised 35 percent of all families in the region, blacks owned a minuscule 1 percent of all wealth (real and personal property combined). Only one black family out of a hundred was among the top three deciles of families ranked by wealth; almost half (45 percent) of white families were in those deciles. Nearly eight black families out of ten (78 percent) fell within the bottom four deciles, meaning that they held property worth less than \$110. Only one white family out of five (21 percent) was in that poorest rank. The mean wealth of white families was \$4,763, that of black families a mere \$113. It is

Table XIII-2
Race of Family Head by Wealth, 1870
(Total Population)

Wealth Rank (Deciles)	Families Categorized by Race of Head (% of Each Category Shown)	
	White	Black
1	15	0
2	16	1
3	14	0
4	14	4
5	13	7
6	7	10
7-10	21	78
N	784	416
% of Total Fams.	65	35
Mean Wealth (\$)	4,763	113
% of Total Wealth	99	1

$\chi^2 = 431.0$ with 6 d.f., signif. = .0

C = .51408

N = 1,200

no exaggeration to say that Middle Tennessee blacks in 1870 were substantially propertyless. Of course, only by comparison with the freedmen were whites affluent: the mean wealth of white families in 1860 was \$8,957.¹

The distribution of wealth in the population as a whole is shown in Table XIII-3. Not surprisingly, considering the penury of the black third of the population and of many whites as well, wealth was extremely concentrated. Two-tenths of all families held 90 percent of the region's wealth, whereas one out of three families (34 percent) held none at all. The huge gap between the means of the top two deciles implies that even within these highest ranks property was distributed quite unequally; indeed, one-tenth of all families owned 77 percent of all wealth. The sizable difference between the sample mean and median (\$3,151 vs. \$300) further suggests that much property was in the hands of a few, while many families were destitute or nearly so.²

Table XIII-4 describes a relationship between race and occupation nearly as strong statistically as that between race and wealth. In general, professionals and landed farmers were greatly under-represented among blacks, and minor professionals and skilled workers somewhat

¹The lower limit in dollar value of each 1870 wealth decile is as follows: first decile, \$6,200; second, \$2,500; third, \$1,250; fourth, \$600; fifth, \$300; sixth, \$110; seventh through tenth, zero.

²If personal property is examined separately (table not shown) it is seen that the top decile (lower limit \$1,500) of personal property holders owned 75 percent of all personal property, while 37 percent of families held none. Mean personal property holding was \$915, median \$200.

A similar discrete analysis of real property distribution reveals that the top decile (lower limit \$4,500) held 81 percent of all real

Table XIII-3
Breakdown of Wealth by Wealth Ranks, 1870
(Total Population)

Wealth	Families Ranked by Wealth (Deciles)						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7-10
Mean Wealth (\$)	24,108	3,875	1,746	834	405	188	14
% of Total Wealth	77	13	5	3	1	0	0
Cumulative % of Total Wealth	77	90	95	98	99	100	100

Sample Mean = \$3,151

N = 1,200

Sample Median = \$300

Proportion of families with zero wealth = 34 percent.

Table XIII-4

Race of Family Head by Occupation of Family Head, 1870
(Total Population)

Occupation of Head	Families Categorized by Race of Head (% of Each Category Shown)		N	% of Total Fams.
	White	Black		
Professional	8	1	65	5
Landed Farmer	40	2	321	27
Minor Prof.	3	1	27	2
Skilled Worker	9	6	95	8
Unskilled Laborer	4	20	115	10
Landless Agr. Worker	30	58	473	39
None	7	12	103	9
N	783	416		
% of Total Fams.	65	35		

$\chi^2 = 316.1$ with 6 d.f., signif. = .0

C = .45679

N = 1,199

less so, while unskilled laborers and landless agricultural workers were considerably over-represented. These last two humble occupations accounted for 78 percent of all black family heads, but only 34 percent of whites. No more than three black family heads out of a hundred attained the rank of professional or landed farmer, but nearly half (48 percent) of whites did so. White society's more agrarian orientation is again indicated by the fact that 70 percent of white family heads had agricultural occupations (i.e., landed farmer or landless agricultural worker—overseers had disappeared by this date), as compared to 60 percent of blacks. Within that combined agricultural category, furthermore, four of seven whites worked their own land, but only one black out of thirty did so.

A weak but perceptible relationship between race and age is outlined in Table XIII-5. What connection exists between the two variables is due mostly to the small proportion of black family heads sixty or older (8 percent) as compared to that of whites (15 percent), a factor which contributed to the higher average age of white family heads (forty-three, vs. forty for blacks). These statistics suggest—but do not prove—that blacks had a shorter average life span than whites; or, alternately, that elderly blacks more often relinquished their status as family heads than did elderly whites. There were no other significant differences in age structure between white and black family heads: in

property, while 63 percent of families held none. Mean real property holding was \$2,237, median zero.

If only those families owning real estate are analyzed it is seen that the top decile (lower limit \$12,000) held 61 percent of all real property. The mean real property holding for this group was \$6,086, the median \$1,999.

Table XIII-5
Race of Family Head by Age of Family Head, 1870
(Total Population)

Age of Head	Families Categorized by Race of Head (% of Each Category Shown)		N	% of Total Fams.
	White	Black		
0-29	21	24	265	22
30-39	25	26	304	25
40-49	21	21	250	21
50-59	18	21	227	19
60+	15	8	154	13
N	784	416		
% of Total Fams.	65	35		
Mean Age	43	40		

$\chi^2 = 14.8$ with 4 d.f., signif. = .0052

C = .11027

N = 1,200

no age rank besides the oldest did the proportion of either vary more than two percentage points from that of the whole population.

Table XIII-6 attests the absence of any important relationship between race and family structure. Statistically speaking, there were simply no major differences between black and white families in 1870, at least at this level of analysis (Chapter XV discusses more subtle differences). This fact is in itself important, so the table is presented here despite its lack of statistical significance. Contrary to the dual stereotypes of the matriarchal black family and the extended Southern white family, black families were overall really no more likely than white (21 vs. 20 percent) to be headed by a single person, while white families were hardly more likely than black (42 vs. 40 percent) to embrace members beyond a spouse and nuclear children. Whites did have a slightly higher average number of children (2.8, vs. 2.5 for blacks—more remarkable if it is recalled from Table XIII-5 above that a somewhat greater proportion of black than white family heads was in the prime childbearing age groups); and whites furthermore had a considerably larger average total of children, relatives, and boarders (4.0, vs. 3.4 for blacks). These facts imply—but in no way prove—that the freedmen experienced a higher infant death rate, or perhaps that they deliberately limited the number of children, because of poverty; and that whites, while overall no more likely than blacks to take in relatives or other boarders, may have been able to support a larger number of them in any given extended family because of their greater affluence compared to blacks.

Table XIII-6
Race of Family Head by Family Structure, 1870
(Total Population)

Family Structure	Families Categorized by Race of Head (% of Each Category Shown)		N	% of Total Fams.
	White	Black		
Single-nuclear	10	12	128	11
Couple-nuclear	48	48	573	48
Single-extended	10	9	118	10
Couple-extended	32	31	381	32
N	784	416		
% of Total Fams.	65	35		
Mean No. Children	2.8	2.5		
Mean No. Children and Boarders	4.0	3.4		

$\chi^2 = 0.9$ with 3 d.f., signif. = .8187

C = .02779

N = 1,200

Table XIII-7 further impugns the myth of the black matriarchy. Only a small difference separated the proportions of female-headed black and white families (15 vs. 13 percent), and the crosstabulation is devoid of statistical significance.

The greater homogeneity of black as compared to white society is illustrated in Table XIII-8. Nine percent of white family heads were born outside the South, whereas all black family heads were born within the South. Tennessee natives, however, constituted an identical proportion (69 percent) of heads of each race.

Table XIII-9 evinces at once both the tragic degradation of the freedmen and the remarkable strides they had taken since the war. The blacks' enthusiastic educational efforts had born fruit: fully one black family head out of five was literate by 1870, whereas under slavery illiteracy had been almost universal; and it may be surmised that the proportion was even greater among black children, who had more opportunities for schooling. And yet, as a people black heartlanders remained overwhelmingly illiterate, adding to the burdens of poverty and powerlessness that of ignorance. Among white family heads, on the other hand, illiteracy was not unknown (12 percent), but certainly untypical.

It is revealing—even strikingly so—to look back over the foregoing statistics from a broader perspective, ignoring for a moment the contrasting categories of race and focusing instead on what the tables show of Middle Tennessee society as a whole in 1870. One sees an overwhelmingly rural and agrarian people, nearly two-thirds of them without land of their own, half of them with worldly possessions worth

Table XIII-7

Race of Family Head by Sex of Family Head, 1870
(Total Population)

Sex of Head	Families Categorized by Race of Head (% of Each Category Shown)		N	% of Total Fams.
	White	Black		
Male	87	85	1,035	86
Female	13	15	165	14
N	784	416		
% of Total Fams.	65	35		

$\chi^2 = 0.9$ with 1 d.f., signif. = .3505

C = .02948

N = 1,200

Table XIII-8

Race of Family Head by Place of Birth of Family Head, 1870
(Total Population)

Place of Birth of Head	Families Categorized by Race of Head (% of Each Category Shown)		N	% of Total Fams.
	White	Black		
Tennessee	69	69	824	69
Upper South	16	19	205	17
Lower South	6	12	96	8
New England	1	0	8	1
Middle Atlantic	1	0	12	1
Northwest	1	0	9	1
Ireland	3	0	24	2
Great Britain	1	0	5	0
Continental Europe	2	0	13	1
N	782	414		
% of Total Fams.	65	35		

$\chi^2 = 47.7$ with 8 d.f., signif. = .0000

C = .19591

N = 1,196

Table XIII-9

Race of Family Head by Literacy of Family Head, 1870
(Total Population)

Literacy of Head	Families Categorized by Race of Head (% of Each Category Shown)		N	% of Total Fams.
	White	Black		
Literate	88	20	777	65
Illiterate	12	80	423	35
N	784	416		
% of Total Fams.	65	35		

$\chi^2 = 550.9$ with 1 d.f., signif. = .0

C = .56196

N = 1,200

less than \$300, fully one-third of them absolutely propertyless. One sees not a prosperous and elevated society of middle-class freeholders, but a poor, ignorant, bottom-heavy society, more than one-third of its adult members illiterate, half of it made up of the families of unskilled laborers and landless farm workers comprising a vast under-class of hewers of wood and drawers of water.

The people of the Middle Tennessee heartland would have scoffed at such a portrait of themselves. The intrusive reality of race rendered them incapable of standing back and examining their society through a single lens. While the historian must exercise his prerogative to view his subjects from angles they themselves could not or would not choose, he must also respect their wishes and see them through their own eyes. The two chapters which follow analyze white society and black society as distinct entities, in the same way that heartlanders themselves had by 1870 come to view their world.

CHAPTER XIV

THE NEW WORLD AND THE OLD: WHITES IN 1870

The visible scars of war in Middle Tennessee had healed by 1870. New fences and barns stood where the ashes of the old had lain in 1865, and fields were once again green with clover and corn. The rough-hewn pews of the country churches were crowded now on Sundays, and the graves of the war dead nearby were becoming indistinguishable from those of generations past, as grass covered the raw earth and time weathered the clean headstones. But beneath the surface of this world changes had been wrought which rendered the heartland's white society in 1870 an entity in many ways quite unlike that which had stood at the threshold of the new decade in 1860. The tables which follow help to evaluate the nature and extent of those changes.

Table XIV-1 examines the relationship between residence and wealth of white families in 1870, and should be compared with Table IV-1, page 108. The first fact to be noted is that, in stark contrast to the broad trend of nineteenth-century American society, whites in Middle Tennessee became less urban and more agrarian in the decade 1860-70. The proportion of urbanites declined from 21 to 15 percent, while that of farm families rose from 67 to 74 percent. The proportion of villagers changed little. The statistical correlation of residence and wealth shown here is significantly lower than that of 1860, due primarily to the dwindling prosperity of farm families and the corresponding relative improvement in the economic status of villagers and townsfolk. Hard-hit

Table XIV-1
Residence by Wealth, 1870 (White Only)

Wealth Rank (Deciles)	Families Ranked by Residence (% of Each Rank Shown)		
	Town	Village	Farm
1	14	2	8
2	9	3	12
3	10	7	10
4	10	7	11
5	7	5	12
6	6	14	10
7	4	9	10
8	9	16	9
9+10	31	37	17
N	120	87	577
% of Total Fams.	15	11	74
Mean Wealth (\$)	8,640	1,252	4,487
% of Total Wealth	28	3	69

$\chi^2 = 52.1$ with 16 d.f., signif. = .0000

C = .24955

N = 784

by the loss of slaves and by falling land values, farm families saw their mean wealth decline from \$11,126 to \$4,487 and their share of all wealth from 80 to 69 percent. Villagers and townspeople, less dependent on land and slaves, fared better. Urbanites in fact increased their mean wealth and greatly improved their share of wealth (from 18 to 28 percent), despite their shrinking proportion of the whole population. Moreover, townsfolk in 1870 were more concentrated in the upper wealth rank than in 1860 (11 vs. 14 percent), and less concentrated in the lowest rank, i.e., the poorest fifth of the population (40 vs. 31 percent). The concentration of villagers in the four poorest deciles declined, while it generally increased in the middling ranks. Farm folk became less concentrated in the top four deciles (especially the first) over the decade, while they increased (from 6 to 17 percent) their concentration among the poor (bottom two deciles). In absolute terms, of course, all townsfolk were not better off. Their augmented concentration in the upper wealth ranks must be seen in the context of the declining prosperity of society as a whole: in 1860 it took \$25,537 to be in the top wealth decile, for example, in 1870 only \$10,169. Families in the poorest fifth in 1870, however, had property holdings nearly equivalent to those of their counterparts in 1860 (below \$150 in 1860, below \$120 in 1870). Thus, the reduced concentration of town and village families in the poorest rank implies a decrease in the actual numbers of propertyless or nearly propertyless urban and village families; and likewise, the increasing proportion of poor farm families implies a growth in their real numbers. What all this suggests is that

on the whole those families leaving the towns and villages after 1860 were poor, as were those going to the farms.¹

Despite these undeniably significant changes, however, in a broad sense white society retained its 1860 pattern with respect to residence and wealth. Agrarian families in 1870 still dominated the region's wealth (though not to the extent they had before); and they were still strongly concentrated in the middling wealth ranks, and less concentrated in the poor rank than were either villagers or urbanites. Villagers, their relative economic improvement notwithstanding, remained the poorest of the three groups. Furthermore, extremes of wealth still characterized the towns, where families of middling wealth were generally under-represented and rich and poor families were over-represented, just as in 1860.

Table XIV-2 shows a relationship of undiminished strength between residence and occupation (compare Table IV-2, page 110), and documents important changes in the white occupational structures of town, village, and farm since 1860. Overall, professionals, landed farmers, minor professionals, and family heads without occupation represented about the same proportions of the population that they had in 1860. But other groups were conspicuously altered: overseers disappeared; the proportion of skilled workers declined from 14 to 9 percent and that of

¹Even using the 1860 definition of a town, urbanites declined from 21 to 17 percent of the total population by 1870. The proportions of farm families in the two years are unambiguously comparable because farm status is defined not by district population but by occupation and farm operation (see Appendix A). Cutoff points for 1870 wealth deciles are given in note 3 below.

Table XIV-2

Residence by Occupation of Family Head, 1870 (White Only)

Occupation of Head	Families Ranked by Residence (% of Each Rank Shown)			N	% of Total Fams.
	Town	Village	Farm		
Professional	29	16	2	63	8
Landed Farmer	0	0	54	311	40
Minor Prof.	16	1	1	23	3
Skilled Worker	29	28	2	70	9
Unskilled Laborer	9	17	1	31	4
Landless Agr. Worker	0	0	40	232	30
None	17	38	0	53	7
N	119	87	577		
% of Total Fams.	15	11	74		

 $\chi^2 = 730.4$ with 12 d.f., signif. = .0

C = .69471

N = 783

unskilled laborers from 8 to 4 percent; and the proportion of landless agricultural workers grew from 19 percent to 30 percent. Agricultural occupations, which had accounted for 62 percent of family heads in 1860, comprised 70 percent in 1870, even though overseers were gone and the percentage of landed farmers had declined slightly. Within towns the proportion of professionals and of minor professionals increased significantly (from 19 to 29 percent, and from 4 to 16 percent, respectively), while that of skilled workers and especially of unskilled laborers declined (from 35 to 29, and from 25 to 9 percent, respectively). In villages, too, the proportion of professionals grew (from 8 to 16 percent), as did that of family heads without occupation (from 30 to 38 percent); that of minor professionals, skilled workers, and unskilled laborers, on the other hand, fell (from 4 to 1, 31 to 28, and 25 to 17 percent, respectively). Among farm families the proportion of professionals and of landed farmers declined (from 4 to 2, and from 63 to 54 percent, respectively), while that of landless agricultural workers rose (from 29 to 40 percent); other groups remained insignificantly represented among farm folk. (This proportional analysis obscures important changes in absolute numbers, which are elucidated below.)

Table XIV-3 examines the relationship between residence and family structure (compare Table IV-4, page 114). Comparisons over the decade are difficult here, because slaves are not counted as boarders in the 1860 sample, but freedmen are counted as such in the 1870 sample. Thus, the overall proportion of extended families appears to have risen over the decade (from 31 to 42 percent), with most of the increase being

Table XIV-3
Residence by Family Structure, 1870 (White Only)

Family Structure	Families Ranked by Residence (% of Each Rank Shown)			N	% of Total Fams.
	Town	Village	Farm		
Single-nuclear	13	26	7	79	10
Couple-nuclear	38	38	51	375	48
Single-extended	13	9	10	79	10
Couple-extended	36	26	32	251	32
N	120	87	577		
% of Total Fams.	15	11	74		
Mean No. Child.	2.3	2.3	3.0		
Mean No. Child. and Boarders	4.3	3.1	4.1		

$\chi^2 = 37.3$ with 6 d.f., signif. = .0000

C = .21298

N = 784

in the couple-extended rather than single-extended category. If slaves were counted as boarders for the 1860 analysis, however, the overall proportions for that year would be as follows: single-nuclear, 9 percent; couple-nuclear, 38 percent; single-extended, 12 percent; couple-extended, 41 percent. Thus, from this perspective the proportion of extended families declined over the decade (from 53 to 42 percent) as blacks left white families—most of the decrease being in the couple-extended category, and most of the corresponding increase being in couple-nuclear.

Comparing the two tables as they are, however, with the understanding that the increase in extended families is due to different methods of tabulation, yields the general impression that white family structure retained many of its old features and the relationship between residence and family structure changed hardly at all. The overall proportion of single-headed families was no higher in 1870 than in 1860, despite the many women widowed during the war. The average number of children for each residence category was almost unchanged, meaning that the increase in the average total of children, relatives, and boarders was due to the latter (specifically, black boarders, who were not counted in 1860). It is interesting to note, however, that town families were the largest on the average in 1870, although in 1860 they were considerably smaller than farm families. Town families in fact had an average of two boarders in 1870, while farm and village families had less than one. Other correlations retained their 1860 pattern: village families were still the least likely to be couple-extended and the most likely to be single-nuclear; farm families still had the largest number of children on the

average, and were still the most likely to be couple-headed, especially couple-nuclear; town families were still the most likely to be extended. The overall proportion of couple-nuclear families, moreover, still greatly exceeded the proportion of each of the other three categories.

Table XIV-4, which crosstabulates residence and sex of the family head, indicates that the war had not altered the overall proportion of female-headed families. That proportion was in fact slightly lower in 1870 (13 percent) than in 1860 (15 percent—compare Table IV-5, page 116). The distribution of female-headed families among the three residence categories changed little except in towns, where the proportion declined from 20 to 17 percent. Comparing this table with Table XIV-3 to derive the proportion of families headed by single males indicates almost no change since 1860: single family heads overall were still twice as likely to be women as men (13 vs. 7 percent; in 1860, 15 vs. 6 percent), and in villages five times as likely (29 vs. 6 percent; in 1860, 28 vs. 7 percent). An important difference from 1860 is perceptible, however, when this table is compared with Table XIV-2, page 610. Unlike 1860, when the proportion of urban family heads without occupation (16 percent) was lower than the proportion of urban female family heads (20 percent), proving that many of the latter were employed, the corresponding proportions in 1870 were identical (17 percent), suggesting that some urban women were put out of work by 1870 and perhaps emigrated from the towns. The proportion of village family heads without occupation remained, as in 1860, higher than the proportion of village female family heads,

Table XIV-4
Residence by Sex of Family Head, 1870 (White Only)

Sex of Head	Families Ranked by Residence (% of Each Rank Shown)			N	% of Total Fams.
	Town	Village	Farm		
Male	83	71	90	682	87
Female	17	29	10	102	13
N	120	87	577		
% of Total Fams.	15	11	74		

$\chi^2 = 25.4$ with 2 d.f., signif. = .0000

C = .17724

N = 784

implying that women in villages (where, as in 1860, they were proportionally more common than elsewhere) still lacked opportunities for employment.

Table XIV-5 shows the proportion of urban and rural white families which included black boarders. If compared with Table IV-3, page 112, (residence by slaveholding in 1860) it illustrates cogently the postwar physical separation of blacks and whites in the countryside. In 1860, 43 percent of white farm families lived with at least one black; in 1870, only 16 percent. The proportion of white village families residing with blacks (9 percent) remained small and unchanged over the decade. The percentage of white townfolk living with blacks actually increased, however (from 24 to 28), as the relative prosperity of white urbanites and the surplus of black labor in the towns allowed many whites there to hire servants, and urban housing shortages kept some of those servants in their employers' homes. A comparison with Tables IV-4, page 114, and XIV-3, page 612, (residence by family structure in 1860 and 1870) shows that the average number of blacks per family in each residence category in 1870 equalled or very nearly equalled the 1860-70 increase in average number of boarders for that residence category, implying that the enumeration of black boarders (who were not counted in the 1860 family structure analysis) accounts for the apparent increase in white family size over the decade.

Residence and family head's place of birth are correlated in Table XIV-6, which should be compared with Table IV-6, page 118. The statistical relationship is fairly strong, as in 1860, due mainly to the over-representation of non-Southerners among townfolk. The

Table XIV-5
 Residence by Black Boarder Class, 1870 (White Only)

Black Boarder Class	Families Ranked by Residence (% of Each Rank Shown)			N	% of Total Fams.
	Town	Village	Farm		
No Black Boarders	72	91	84	649	83
Black Boarders	28	9	16	135	17
N	120	87	577		
% of Total Fams.	15	11	74		
Mean No. Black Boarders	0.7	0.2	0.3		

$\chi^2 = 14.8$ with 2 d.f., signif. = .0006

C = .13620

N = 784

Table XIV-6

Residence by Place of Birth of Family Head, 1870 (White Only)

Place of Birth of Head	Families Ranked by Residence (% of Each Rank Shown)			N	% of Total Fams.
	Town	Village	Farm		
Tennessee	47	62	75	539	69
Upper South	13	22	16	126	16
Lower South	5	6	6	47	6
New England	3	2	1	8	1
Middle Atlantic	7	0	1	11	1
Northwest	4	2	0	9	1
Ireland	11	3	1	24	3
Great Britain	3	1	0	5	1
Continental Europe	8	1	1	13	2
N	119	87	576		
% of Total Fams.	15	11	74		

 $\chi^2 = 138.6$ with 16 d.f., signif. = .0000

C = .38806

N = 782

proportion of non-Southerners in the population as a whole was unchanged between 1860 and 1870 (9 percent), indicating that Middle Tennessee experienced no demographically appreciable influx of "carpetbaggers" after the war. The Irish remained the largest non-Southern element in the population. The towns retained and even augmented their heterogeneity: 36 percent of urban family heads in 1870 were born outside the South (in 1860, 33 percent). Thus, it is evident that immigrants continued to come to the heartland's towns in the 1860s at a rate at least equal to that of the 1850s. The only remarkable change over the decade 1860-70 was the increase of Tennessee natives (58 percent of family heads in 1860, 69 percent in 1870) at the expense of non-Tennessee Southerners (33 percent in 1860, 22 percent in 1870). This was due to the aging of the population, as older family heads—the overwhelming majority of them natives of Virginia or the Carolinas (see Table IV-38, page 188)—died off and younger people born in Tennessee replaced them.²

Taken together, the foregoing tables contrasting the white families of town, village, and farm in 1870 attest and underscore this central point: the most significant social phenomena of the postwar heartland were, along with emancipation itself, the withdrawal of rural blacks from white families and the abandonment of farm labor by great numbers of the freedmen. These three facts were at the root of nearly every important change documented by these tables. As blacks left the farms

²Crosstabulations of 1870 data on whites revealed (as in the 1860 analysis) no appreciable relationship between residence and age of the family head (significance of $X^2 = .2074$, $C = .11711$), or between residence and literacy of the family head (significance of $X^2 = .0988$, $C = .07662$).

and took up unskilled and some skilled jobs in towns, white workers (including women) were forced out, while the consequent vacuum of labor in the countryside drew many whites into farm work. This rendered white society even more agrarian in 1870 than it had been on the eve of the war and reinforced both the impoverishment of agrarian families as a whole and the redistribution of wealth between town and country which emancipation had engendered. Moreover, the withdrawal of rural blacks to their own homes made a rarity of that intimate, familial, interracial association which had characterized the antebellum heartland, and helped to lay the foundation for the postwar rise of a dual society divided by race, two worlds in a single land. The most

The most conspicuous feature of Middle Tennessee's wartime experience, remarked without fail by residents and outside observers alike, had been the widespread loss and destruction of property. Buildings and equipment had gone up in smoke, cattle and corn had been carried off in vast quantities by Northern soldiers, slaves by the tens of thousands had liberated themselves. But the immediate postwar years witnessed the remarkably rapid restitution of many of those tangible elements of wealth (slaves excepted), and of course the rich soil endured. The eleven tables below help to assess the net effect of war and reconstruction on the heartland's wealth and the distribution of property among the white people of the region.

In the antebellum heartland broad prosperity and great concentration of wealth had coexisted. As Table XIV-7 shows, wartime destruction and emancipation decimated the former but left the latter intact (compare

Table XIV-7

Breakdown of Wealth by Wealth Ranks, 1870 (White Only)

Wealth	Families Ranked by Wealth (Deciles)								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9+10
Mean Wealth (\$)	34,003	6,817	3,491	2,075	1,231	717	438	221	17
% of Total Wealth	68	15	7	5	3	1	1	0	0
Cumulative % of Total Wealth	68	83	90	95	98	99	100	100	100

Sample Mean = \$4,763

N = 784

Sample Median = \$901

(Proportion of families with zero wealth = 17 percent)

Table IV-7, page 124). The mean wealth of all white families declined over the decade by 47 percent (from \$8,957 to \$4,763) and the median by 40 percent (from \$1,500 to \$901)—this in an era of substantial inflation. Furthermore, there were more propertyless families in 1870 than in 1860 (17 vs. 13 percent). But the loss of so much wealth did not result in a more egalitarian distribution of that which remained. The richest tenth of families in fact increased its share of all wealth from 65 to 68 percent; the poorer half retained its minuscule 2 percent. While all ranks grew poorer, some suffered more than others. The mean wealth of the bottom three ranks, for instance, declined very little, and that of the richest tenth fell at a rate somewhat less than that of the population as a whole. But families in deciles two and three experienced precipitous declines in their mean wealth, and the gap between the mean wealth of the first and second deciles grew wider (in 1860 the top decile's mean was less than four times that of the second decile; in 1870 it was five times). Thus, Middle Tennessee's poorest three-tenths of families were hardly poorer in 1870 in either relative or absolute terms than in 1860; families in the middling ranks (deciles four through seven) experienced an absolute wealth decline about equal to that of the whole population, but no relative decline (they held 9 percent of all wealth in 1860, 10 percent in 1870); upper-middle-class families (those in deciles two and three) sustained considerable absolute and relative losses (their share of wealth fell from 26 to 22 percent); and the

rich (top decile) lost wealth in dollars but improved their relative status.³

Personal property, considered separately in Table XIV-8, suffered huge declines over the decade (compare Table IV-8, page 126). This was probably a result of the loss of slaves more than anything else. The median personal property holding fell by one-third (from \$600 to \$401), while the mean fell by more than two-thirds (from \$4,904 to \$1,364)—a discrepancy which reflects the great losses of the few large slaveholders. Looking at each personal property rank it can be seen that, as with overall wealth, families in deciles two and three endured the greatest relative and absolute losses. The top decile retained its two-thirds monopoly of personal property (though it took only \$2,250 to be in that decile, as opposed to \$12,500 in 1860), while families among the bottom half increased their share from 2 to 5 percent and (having had little to lose in 1860) saw relatively slight mean declines. Thus, personal property as a whole in 1870, while still highly concentrated, was slightly less so than in 1860; and it was less concentrated than overall wealth in 1870—the reverse of the relationship existing in 1860.⁴

³The lower limit in dollar value of each wealth decile is as follows: first decile, \$10,169; second, \$4,550; third, \$2,515; fourth, \$1,600; fifth, \$901; sixth, \$507; seventh, \$320; eighth, \$120; ninth and tenth, zero.

⁴The lower limit in dollar value of each personal property decile is as follows: first decile, \$2,250; second, \$1,025; third, \$800; fourth, \$507; fifth, \$401; sixth, \$300; seventh, \$200; eighth, \$50; ninth and tenth, zero.

Table XIV-8

Breakdown of Personal Property by Personal Property Ranks,
1870 (White Only)

Personal Property	Families Ranked by Personal Property (Deciles)								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9+10
Mean Personal Property (\$)	10,217	1,610	939	621	495	345	213	115	0
% of Total Personal Property	67	13	7	4	4	3	1	1	0
Cum. % of Total Personal Prop.	67	80	87	91	95	98	99	100	100

Sample Mean = \$1,364

N = 784

Sample Median = \$401

(Proportion of families with zero pers. prop. = 20 percent

Real property distribution met a very different fate (compare Tables XIV-9 and IV-9, page 127). The land endured, even if slavery did not, and the average real property holding fell only 16 percent, from \$4,053 to \$3,399. This decline probably reflected depressed postwar land values rather than any overall loss of real estate. The proportion of families without real property grew slightly (from 43 to 47 percent), but the median holding fell precipitously (from \$699 to \$301, or 57 percent). All this suggests, and a look at the other statistics shows, that a pronounced redistribution of real property occurred within the context of a more or less unchanged total amount of real estate—just the opposite of the experience of personal property, which saw only slight redistribution within the context of a huge absolute decline. The upper rank of real property holders increased its share from 66 to 73 percent, at the expense of nearly all other ranks, particularly the second and third. Thus, the ownership of real property in 1870 was more concentrated than that of overall wealth, which had not been the case in 1860. The mean real property holding of that top decile declined hardly at all, while that of all other ranks fell substantially. Since it took considerably less real property to attain the top rank in 1870 than in 1860 (\$7,200 vs. \$10,050), the very largest landowners must have increased their holdings in absolute terms over the decade, in order for the mean holding of that rank to have remained so nearly unchanged.⁵

⁵The lower limit in dollar value of each real property decile is as follows: first decile, \$7,200; second, \$3,330; third, \$1,900; fourth, \$1,000; fifth, \$342; sixth through tenth, zero.

Table XIV-9
Breakdown of Real Property by Real Property Ranks,
1870 (White Only)

Real Property	Families Ranked by Real Property (Deciles)					
	1	2	3	4	5	6-10
Mean Real Property (\$)	25,174	4,831	2,378	1,257	603	16
% of Total Real Property	73	14	7	4	2	0
Cum. % of Total Real Prop.	73	87	94	98	100	100

Sample Mean = \$3,399

N = 784

Sample Median = \$301

(Proportion of families with zero real prop. = 47 percent)

This hypothesis is corroborated by Table XIV-10, which shows the distribution of real property after excluding the 47 percent of families who held none (compare Table IV-10, page 128). Here again the sample median declined relatively more than did the mean, and the upper rank substantially increased its share of the whole (from 52 to 61 percent, at the expense primarily of the second and third ranks); moreover, the mean real property holding of that upper rank declined not at all. Thus, the expanded proportion of landless families noted in the last table was not alone responsible for the increased concentration of real property holding: the very richest landholders were simply getting richer. That fact—rather than the (relatively unchanged) distribution of personal property—accounted for the higher concentration of overall wealth in 1870 documented in Table XIV-7, page 621, while personal property contributed far more than real property to the drastic decline in mean overall wealth.⁶

Table XIV-11 crosstabulates wealth and residence (from a perspective opposite that of Table XIV-1, page 607) and should be compared with Table IV-11, page 128. Fundamental changes from 1860 are evident. Among the rich (top decile), farmers were no longer over-represented as in 1860; townspeople slightly increased their representation among the rich (from 21 to 23 percent), even as their representation in the whole

⁶The lower limit in dollar value of each real property decile, excluding families without real property, is as follows: first decile, \$12,000; second, \$6,500; third, \$4,200; fourth, \$3,000; fifth, \$2,001; sixth, \$1,520; seventh, \$1,100; eighth, \$825; ninth and tenth, \$100.

Table XIV-10

Breakdown of Real Property by Real Property Ranks, 1870
 (White Only) (Families without Real
 Property Excluded)

Real Property	Landowning Families Ranked by Real Property (Deciles)								
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9-10
Mean Real Property (\$)	37,231	8,687	5,256	3,540	2,525	1,939	1,374	978	470
% of Total Real Prop.	61	13	8	6	2	3	2	2	2
Cum. % of Total Real Prop.	61	74	82	88	90	93	95	97	100

Sample Mean = \$6,391

N = 417

Sample Median = \$2,001

Table XIV-11
Wealth by Residence, 1870 (White Only)

Residence	Families Ranked by Wealth (Deciles) (% of Each Rank Shown)									N	% of Total Fams.
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9+10		
Town	23	14	16	15	10	9	7	14	22	120	15
Village	3	4	8	7	5	16	11	18	19	87	11
Farm	75	83	75	78	85	75	82	68	58	577	74

$\chi^2 = 52.1$ with 16 d.f., signif. = .0000

C = .24955

N = 784

population declined; villagers remained much under-represented in that upper decile. In ranks two through four, townspeople and villagers substantially boosted their representation at the expense of farmers, who increased their own representation in ranks five through eight at the expense of the others. The most notable redistribution was among the poor (deciles nine and ten). In 1860 only one poor family in five (21 percent) had lived on a farm; in 1870 nearly six of ten (58 percent) did so. Villagers declined from 34 to 19 percent of poor families, townspeople from 46 to 22 percent. Farmers did remain under-represented among the poor, and townspeople and villagers remained over-represented, but white poverty in 1870 was a predominantly agrarian phenomenon—in striking contrast to 1860, when one-third of the poor lived in villages and nearly half in towns. Two points of continuity need to be emphasized, however. First, the rich remained overwhelmingly farmers. Urban elites no more dominated the heartland's upper echelon of property holders in 1870 than they had in 1860. Simply because poverty became agrarianized did not mean affluence became urbanized. Second, despite the relative decline in urban poverty since 1860, extremes of wealth continued to mark urban society: townspeople were heavily over-represented only among the very richest and the very poorest Middle Tennessee families.

The agrarianization of poverty is further documented in Table XIV-12, which crosstabulates wealth and occupation and boasts the same strong statistical correlation that Table IV-12, page 130, showed for 1860. Landless agricultural workers accounted for one-fourth (24 percent) of the poor in 1860; ten years later they accounted for well over half

Table XIV-12
Wealth by Occupation of Family Head, 1870 (White Only)

Occupation of Head	Families Ranked by Wealth (Deciles) (% of Each Rank Shown)										N	% of Total Fams.
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9+10			
Professional	27	12	14	11	5	4	0	3	3	63	8	
Landed Farmer	65	77	73	74	59	36	11	4	1	311	40	
Minor Prof.	0	4	3	4	3	3	4	4	3	23	3	
Skilled Worker	3	7	6	5	10	16	11	14	9	70	9	
Unskilled Laborer	0	0	0	2	1	1	4	12	9	31	4	
Landless Agr. Worker	0	0	1	1	20	37	64	60	56	232	30	
None	5	0	4	4	3	4	6	4	19	53	7	

$\chi^2 = 533.0$ with 48 d.f., signif. = .0000

C = .63639

N = 783

(56 percent). On the other hand, skilled workers and unskilled laborers (who generally lived in towns and villages) declined greatly as a proportion of the poor, the skilled from 21 to 9 percent, the unskilled from 29 to 9 percent. Thus, those two groups together, comprising half of the poor in 1860, comprised less than one-fifth in 1870. Of course, these two occupations declined as a proportion of the whole population, and thus a decline in their representation in each wealth rank would be expected; but not to the degree evidenced here among the poor. The skilled, in fact, who were heavily over-represented among the poor in 1860, were evenly represented in 1870. The unskilled remained considerably over-represented in that lowest wealth rank, but not nearly to the same extent as in 1860. The representation of other occupations among the poor did not change enough to merit comment. In fact, the distribution of other occupations among all wealth ranks remained remarkably stable over the decade. Professionals and family heads without occupation (who were mostly in towns and villages) did somewhat increase their representation among the rich, mainly at the expense of landed farmers. Nevertheless, landed farmers continued to dominate the wealthiest rank, as in 1860. Given their declining proportion of the whole population, skilled workers improved their representation among the wealthier half of families (though they were still generally under-represented there), suggesting that those who left that occupation were among the less affluent. Unskilled laborers, on the other hand, seem to have reduced their representation in the poorest rank only to increase it in the next poorest (decile eight,

the only other rank in which the unskilled were over-represented). Landless agricultural workers pretty much lost what little representation above decile five they had had in 1860, especially considering their greatly augmented proportion of families as a whole. This suggests that the few well-to-do landless farm workers (probably tenants) of 1860 disappeared, while people who entered that occupation after 1860 were generally among the least prosperous.

The first notable fact about Table XIV-13, which crosstabulates wealth and age, is the decline since 1860 in the overall proportion of family heads in their thirties, from 28 to 25 percent (compare Table IV-14, page 133). Most probably this reflects Civil War deaths among that age cohort, whose members were of prime military age (twenty-one to thirty) in 1861. In many cases, though not all, a deceased soldier was succeeded as family head by a younger or older widow; or the widow remarried a younger or older man; or the family simply broke up. Any of these events would have resulted in the demographic loss of a family head in that age group, and the consequence was a noticeable dip in the overall proportion of the cohort hardest hit by war casualties. In a general way, however, the relationship between wealth and age documented in the 1860 table persisted in 1870. That is, wealthier family heads tended to be older, poorer ones younger. The only important difference in 1870 was in the poorest wealth rank, in which the oldest family heads were now about evenly represented (though considerably under-represented a decade earlier) and the youngest family heads were substantially more over-represented than before. Together, the youngest and oldest made

Table XIV-13
Wealth by Age of Family Head, 1870 (White Only)

Age of Head	Families Ranked by Wealth (Deciles) (% of Each Rank Shown)										N	% of Total Fams.
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9+10			
0-29	7	9	10	17	9	26	32	31	35	165	21	
30-39	21	19	26	27	28	30	29	35	19	197	25	
40-49	19	32	22	23	23	22	16	14	18	162	21	
50-59	24	27	22	13	26	15	14	12	13	139	18	
60+	29	14	21	21	15	7	10	8	16	121	15	
Mean Age	50	47	48	44	45	38	39	37	40			

$\chi^2 = 101.7$ with 32 d.f., signif. = .0000

C = .33889

N = 784

up 38 percent of poor family heads in 1860, but 51 percent in 1870. One possible explanation is that, although families in every age group were hurt economically by the war, the oldest were perhaps least able to recoup their losses through their labor, while the youngest (many of them newly married couples) could not expect the same financial assistance from their hard-pressed parents which in antebellum days might have been freely rendered, in the form of a plot of land or a little money or a slave or two.

Table XIV-14 reveals a relationship between wealth and family structure somewhat stronger than that in 1860 (compare Table IV-15, page 134). As in the antebellum period, rich families remained the most likely to be couple-extended and among the least likely to be couple-nuclear or single-nuclear. Unlike 1860, however, the rich in 1870 (along with families in deciles two and three) were far likelier than others to be single-extended, suggesting possibly that rich and well-to-do Civil War widows as a whole did not remarry as often as those of lesser means. The declining average number of children in two of those top three wealth ranks may have been due both to the absence of childbearing among the widows and to the fact that, though still well-off on a relative scale, those families were poorer in absolute terms than in 1860 and could not afford to support grown children in the antebellum manner. But the average total of children, relatives, and boarders for the top three deciles remained, as in 1860, higher than that for others, and in fact was considerably higher than the corresponding figures for 1860. (This is due primarily to the

Table XIV-14
Wealth by Family Structure, 1870 (White Only)

Family Structure	Families Ranked by Wealth (Deciles) (% of Each Rank Shown)									N	% of Total Fams.
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9+10		
Single-nuclear	4	3	12	10	9	12	12	9	15	79	10
Couple-nuclear	33	41	32	42	56	53	56	69	48	375	48
Single-extended	19	15	15	8	10	1	3	4	13	79	10
Couple-extended	44	42	41	40	25	34	29	18	24	251	32
Mean No. Child.	2.6	3.7	2.8	2.9	2.9	3.4	3.0	2.5	2.2		
Mean No. Child. and Boarders	5.3	5.9	4.4	4.0	3.7	4.2	3.6	2.9	3.1		

$\chi^2 = 72.9$ with 24 d.f., signif. = .0000

C = .29177

N = 784

inclusion of blacks as boarders in the 1870 sample: if slaves were counted as boarders in the 1860 table, the average total of relatives and boarders for the top three deciles would show a great decrease over the decade. The inclusion of blacks as boarders accounts also for the increased proportion of couple-extended families in deciles two and three, and, furthermore, the overall sample increase in extended families is due almost wholly to the increases in the top three deciles.) As in 1860, poor families remained the most likely overall to be single-headed, mainly because of the large over-representation of single-nuclear among the poor. The average number of children and average total of children, relatives, and boarders among poor families, and in fact among all families below decile three, remained close to the corresponding 1860 figures.

In contrast to those of 1860, the 1870 census data evince a relationship between wealth and sex, albeit a weak one (see Table XIV-15). Again, it should be noted that female-headed families were overall no more common in 1870 than in 1860. The statistical correlation in the latter year is more than anything else due to the over-representation of women among poor family heads, of whom 21 percent were female. The displacement of women workers in the towns (see Table XIV-4, page 615) and the lack of opportunities for female employment in the countryside no doubt contributed to this result.

Table XIV-16 indicates the proportion of families in each wealth decile which included black boarders. It should be compared with the crosstabulation of wealth and slaveholding in Table IV-13, page 132.

Table XIV-15
Wealth by Sex of Family Head, 1870 (White Only)

Sex of Head	Families Ranked by Wealth (Deciles)									N	% of Total Fams.
	(% of Each Rank Shown)										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9+10		
Male	88	93	86	88	85	92	90	91	79	682	87
Female	12	7	14	12	15	8	10	9	21	102	13

$\chi^2 = 15.8$ with 8 d.f., signif. = .0452

C = .14060

N = 784

Table XIV-16
Wealth by Black Boarder Class, 1870 (White Only)

Black Boarder Class	Families Ranked by Wealth (Deciles) (% of Each Rank Shown)										N	% of Total Fams.
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9+10			
No Black Boarders	56	70	78	83	89	90	88	94	90	649	83	
Black Boarders	44	30	22	17	11	11	12	7	10	135	17	
Mean No. Black Boarders	1.4	.7	.4	.3	.1	.2	.2	.1	.3			

$\chi^2 = 65.1$ with 8 d.f., signif. = .0000

C = .27694

N = 784

Immediately apparent is the decline of the biracial patriarchal family among the rich and well-to-do. In 1860, 95 percent of families in the first and second wealth deciles, and 71 percent of those in the third, had slaves in their households. In 1870 only 44, 30, and 22 percent, respectively, had freedmen (usually servants) in their households, though these wealthier families still remained more likely than others to include blacks. It is interesting to note, however, that poorer families were more likely to include blacks in 1870 than they had been in 1860 (although the proportion that did so was not large). Only 2 percent of families in the bottom four wealth deciles in 1860 had slaves, but in 1870 those families lived with black boarders in proportions ranging from 7 to 12 percent. Since the great majority of these less affluent families was surely unable to employ servants (except tenant farmers, who occasionally hired black farmhands), this suggests that some—no doubt in the crowded towns—took in black roomers out of economic necessity. A comparison of this table with Tables IV-15, page 134, and XIV-14, page 636, showing wealth by family structure in 1860 and 1870, implies that the inclusion of blacks as boarders in the latter year's sample accounts in large measure for the increased average total of children, relatives, and boarders among families in the top three wealth deciles.

Literacy was only very slightly more widespread among white family heads in 1870 than in 1860, and its representation among wealth deciles followed a similar pattern in both years (compare Tables XIV-17 and IV-17, page 138). Poor family heads, though they somewhat improved

Table XIV-17
Wealth by Literacy of Family Head, 1870 (White Only)

Literacy of Head	Families Ranked by Wealth (Deciles)										N	% of Total Fams.
	(% of Each Rank Shown)											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9+10			
Literate	99	93	97	92	93	92	86	81	77	693	88	
Illiterate	1	7	3	8	8	8	14	20	23	91	12	

$\chi^2 = 43.3$ with 8 d.f., signif. = .0000

C = .22908

N = 784

their literacy rate over the decade, were in 1870 still far more likely to be illiterate (23 percent) than were heads as a whole (12 percent). The rich, as before, were far less likely (1 percent).⁷

The Civil War and postbellum years, traumatic as they were, had not altered the fundamental facts that great extremes of wealth existed in Middle Tennessee's white society and that great social differences divided rich, middling, and poor heartlanders. An economic elite of families headed by older, male, landowning farmers and urban professionals continued as in 1860 to monopolize real and personal wealth in the region, while at the bottom of society's scale a wretched underclass persisted, many of its family heads young, many of them female, many of them illiterate, all of them desperately poor. Each of the three classes, however, experienced profound changes over the decade which rendered them in some ways different entities from those of 1860. The rich heartlanders' mastery, while persisting over land and money, did not persist over slaves, and the characteristically large, biracial, patriarchal families of the 1860 rich represented only a minority of that class by 1870. Town and village artisans and small farmers continued to dominate the middle class and to control a share of wealth equal to that of 1860, but in absolute terms they had relinquished the prosperity they enjoyed in 1860, their few slaves now gone, their land and skills devalued in a depressed economy, their

⁷Wealth and place of birth of the family head did not manifest statistical significance in the 1870 sample (significance of $X^2 = .1076$, $C = .30171$), unlike the 1860 sample.

wealth in dollars slashed by half. The poor, for their part, were hardly poorer than in 1860, but they had become substantially a population of landless farmers, far different from the town and village workers who had accounted for half the poor before the war. Thus, while class distinctions persisted in the postwar heartland, the classes themselves were transfigured.

Occupation was no less important a determinant of a Middle Tennessean's social locus in 1870 than in 1860. The eight tables which follow indicate furthermore that the power of occupation as a statistically explanatory variable was hardly diminished over the decade. But they reveal at the same time important changes in the occupational structure of white heartlanders and in the relationship of occupation to other social characteristics.

Table XIV-18, showing occupation by residence, documents significant social changes and will be dealt with at some length (compare Table IV-18, page 146). Professionals were slightly more concentrated in towns in 1870 than in 1860 (56 vs. 54 percent), also more concentrated in villages (22 vs. 14 percent), and less concentrated on farms (22 vs. 32 percent)—shifts especially noteworthy considering the reduced overall proportion of urban families and increased proportion of farm families. Minor professionals became far more concentrated in towns over the decade (83 percent in 1870, vs. 50 percent in 1860), and considerably less concentrated in villages and on farms. The proportion of skilled workers in towns declined somewhat (49 percent in 1870, down from 55 percent in 1860), while that on farms and especially in

Table XIV-18
Occupation of Family Head by Residence, 1870 (White Only)

Residence	Families Ranked by Occupation of Head (% of Each Rank Shown)							% of Total Fams.
	Prof.	Landed Farmer	Minor Prof.	Skilled Worker	Unsk. Laborer	Landless Ag. Wkr.	None	
Town	56	0	83	49	36	0	38	15
Village	22	0	4	34	48	0	62	11
Farm	22	100	13	17	16	100	0	74
N	63	311	23	70	31	232	53	
% of Total Fams.	8	40	3	9	4	30	7	

$\chi^2 = 730.4$ with 12 d.f., signif. = .0

C = .69471

N = 783

villages rose. Unskilled laborers became notably less urban (36 percent in 1870, vs. 63 percent in 1860) and considerably more rural (in villages, 48 vs. 38 percent; on farms, 16 vs. 0 percent). Family heads without occupation likewise became less concentrated in towns over the decade (38 percent in 1870, vs. 46 percent in 1860) and consequently more concentrated in villages (62 vs. 54 percent). In general it should be noted that whereas in 1860 four of the five nonagricultural occupations were at least 50 percent urban, by 1870 only two (professional and minor professional) were so.

Simply analyzing proportional changes in the various categories, however, masks significant facts which can only be uncovered by examining changes in absolute numbers of family heads in each category. (These numbers have been extrapolated from the sample data, and are rounded estimates only.) From 1860 to 1870 the total number of white families in Middle Tennessee rose 22 percent, from 34,850 to 42,500. The number of professionals grew at an even greater rate (39 percent), from 2,450 to 3,400. Most of that numerical increase occurred in the towns, where the number of professionals rose from 1,300 to 1,900, or 46 percent. Professionals in villages grew in number from 350 to 750, or 114 percent; those on farms declined slightly in number, from 800 to 750, or 6 percent. Thus, the very small proportional increase of urban professionals indicated in Table XIV-18 disguises a large growth in their real number. The proportional increase of village professionals similarly obscures the true dimensions of their numerical increase, while the considerable proportional decline in farm professionals hides

the fact that their number fell only slightly. In general, it seems that the substantial number of new professionals since 1860 preferred villages and especially towns to farms, while a few of those who had been on farms in 1860 relinquished professional pursuits or moved away.

Landed farmers saw no decline in absolute number. Their slight proportional decrease must be viewed in the context of a growing white population. Their number in fact rose over the decade from 14,550 to 16,850, or 16 percent. Overseers disappeared altogether, as noted earlier. Furthermore, the 1860-70 numerical growth of landless agricultural workers was even more remarkable than their proportional change suggests: their number increased from 6,500 to 12,600, or 94 percent.

The number of minor professionals likewise nearly doubled, from 650 to 1,250 (a 93 percent increase), though it remained relatively small. Like that of professionals, the number of minor professionals multiplied in the towns (from 300 to 1,050, or 250 percent); but it declined in villages (from 200 to fifty, or 75 percent) and remained unchanged on farms (150).

The proportional redistribution of skilled workers shown in Table XIV-18 conceals the fact that their number declined overall and within every residence category, especially town. In 1860, 5,000 family heads plied a skilled trade; in 1870, only 3,800 did so, a decline of 24 percent. In towns their number fell from 2,750 to 1,850, or 33 percent; in villages from 1,450 to 1,300, or 10 percent; on farms from 800 to 650, or 19 percent.

Unskilled laborers, too, declined substantially in absolute number, from 2,600 in 1860 to 1,700 in 1870 (down 35 percent). Only on the farms did their number show an increase, from zero to 300. In towns it fell from 1,600 to 600, or 63 percent; in villages from 1,000 to 800, or 20 percent.

Family heads without occupation increased in number over the decade at a rate somewhat less than that of the population as a whole, from 2,450 to 2,900, or 18 percent. The number in towns showed no growth, however (1,100 in both census years). The increase came entirely in the villages, where the number rose from 1,350 to 1,800, or 33 percent.

The strong relationship between occupation and wealth in antebellum Middle Tennessee persisted in 1870 (compare Tables XIV-19 and IV-19, page 148), but the contours of that relationship were modified. Professionals and landed farmers continued to dominate the region's wealth, but the predominance of the latter slipped in favor of the former. Hurt more than any other group by the loss of slaves, landed farmers saw their share of wealth decline from 71 to 59 percent, while that of professionals rose from 19 to 26 percent. The mean wealth of landed farmers fell by 53 percent, that of professionals by 39 percent. All occupational groups (except the no-occupation category) saw substantial declines in their mean wealth, however, and thus the relative wealth of professionals and landed farmers was still very great. Those two groups remained concentrated in the upper ranks of wealth to roughly the same extent as in 1860, and together they dominated wealth to nearly the same degree as before. Both the minor professional

Table XIV-19
Occupation of Family Head by Wealth, 1870 (White Only)

Wealth Rank (Deciles)	Families Ranked by Occupation of Head (% of Each Rank Shown)						
	Prof.	Landed Farmer	Minor Prof.	Skilled Worker	Unsk. Laborer	Landless Ag. Wkr.	None
1	32	16	0	3	0	0	8
2	16	20	13	9	0	0	0
3	16	17	9	6	0	0	6
4	14	20	13	6	7	0	6
5	6	15	9	11	3	7	4
6	5	9	9	17	3	12	6
7	0	3	13	11	10	20	8
8	3	1	13	16	29	20	6
9+10	8	0	22	21	48	40	59
N	63	311	23	70	31	232	53
% of Total Fam.	8	40	3	9	4	30	7
Mean Wealth (\$)	15,323	7,081	1,942	1,536	329	332	6,177
% of Total Wealth	26	59	1	3	0	2	9

$\chi^2 = 533.0$ with 48 d.f., signif. = .0000

C = .63639

N = 783

and no-occupation categories displayed distribution patterns similar on the whole to those of 1860, that is, they were primarily concentrated in the poorer half of the population (in the case of the no-occupation group, concentrated heavily among the very poor) but could be found in nearly every wealth rank. (The large—44 percent—increase over the decade in the mean wealth of the no-occupation group is difficult to explain. It may be due to sampling error, i.e., the inclusion of one or two extremely wealthy and unrepresentative cases which exaggerate the group mean.) Skilled workers, too, were still present in every rank, but their mean wealth declined somewhat less than that of the population as a whole (35 vs. 47 percent) and their distribution among wealth ranks shifted upward: in 1860, 28 percent of the skilled were among the richer half of families, in 1870, 35 percent; moreover, the concentration of skilled workers in the very poorest rank fell from 29 to 21 percent over the decade. This suggests (as did Table XIV-12, page 631) that those who left that occupation between 1860 and 1870 tended to be the least prosperous. Similarly, the unskilled experienced a below-average decline in mean wealth (27 percent), and saw their concentration in the top half of wealth ranks increase from 2 to 10 percent and their concentration in the poorest rank fall from 76 to 48 percent. Again, the poorest seem to have been the ones leaving that occupation; but those left were by no means affluent, for the concentration of the unskilled in the next poorest (eighth) rank grew from 9 to 29 percent. Landless agricultural workers as a class were the hardest hit economically. They suffered the greatest decline in

mean wealth (58 percent) of any group, saw their concentration in the wealthier half of families fall from 12 to 7 percent (none above the fifth decile in 1870, unlike 1860), and saw their concentration among the poor rise from 25 to 40 percent. Manifestly, the vast numbers entering the landless agricultural class after the Civil War were on the whole among the poorest heartlanders, and that calling had become to an even greater degree than in 1860 a poor man's occupation.

The moderately strong relationship between occupation and age weakened only a little between 1860 and 1870 (compare Tables XIV-20 and IV-21, page 152), but the details of the relationship underwent interesting changes. As a group, professionals aged. Men in their thirties and forties were over-represented among professionals in 1860, but in 1870 men in their forties and fifties were over-represented and the mean age of professionals was two years higher than before. The proportion of professionals under age forty declined over the decade from 52 to 41 percent. Thus, the increased number of professionals after the Civil War was not on the whole due to an influx of young family heads, but of middle-aged ones. The age structure of landed farmers, on the other hand, was pretty much unaltered (no rank experienced a change of more than two percentage points over the decade); the mean age of landed farmers remained forty-seven, still the highest of any group save no-occupation. The growing number of minor professionals noted earlier was apparently due in great part to young people entering that work. The proportion of minor professionals under age forty grew over the decade from 61 to 69 percent, while the proportion

Table XIV-20

Occupation of Family Head by Age of Family Head, 1870 (White Only)

Age of Head	Families Ranked by Occupation of Head (% of Each Rank Shown)							% of Total Fams.
	Prof.	Landed Farmer	Minor Prof.	Skilled Worker	Unsk. Laborer	Landless Agr. Wkr.	None	N
0-29	16	13	30	13	32	35	13	164
30-39	25	21	39	34	26	25	28	197
40-49	27	22	9	24	26	18	15	162
50-59	22	22	17	16	10	13	15	139
60+	10	22	4	13	7	9	28	121
N	63	311	23	70	31	232	53	
% of Total Fams.	8	40	3	9	4	30	7	
Mean Age	43	47	37	42	37	38	48	

 $\chi^2 = 84.6$ with 24 d.f., signif. = .0000 C = .31220 N = 783

of all other age ranks declined and the mean age of this occupational group fell from thirty-nine to thirty-seven. Conversely, it seems that the young were leaving skilled trades. The proportion of the skilled under forty fell notably, from 65 to 47 percent, and the average age of the skilled rose from thirty-eight to forty-two, rendering that occupation no longer the young man's calling it had been in 1860. A similar, although less dramatic, aging of the unskilled took place. Though still young in 1870 (with 58 percent of their number under forty), the unskilled experienced a noticeable increase over the decade in the proportion of their members forty and over (from 36 to 43 percent) and an increase of one year in their average age. It can be surmised here, too, that the substantial numbers leaving that occupation during or after the Civil War were mostly young, and that new family heads were not entering that occupation as they had before the war. Landless agricultural workers were slightly older in 1870 than in 1860. Their average age increased by a year and the proportion of those forty and over grew from 36 to 40 percent. This is significant, however, in the context of the vastly increased number of landless agricultural workers. Obviously, those entering that occupation after 1860 were not just the young, but included a fair number of older family heads. Nevertheless, this remained, as before the war, for the most part a young man's occupation. Next to that of skilled workers, the most remarkable redistribution of an occupation among age ranks was manifested by the no-occupation group, which was composed overwhelmingly of women, probably most of them widows.

Whereas in 1860 only 25 percent of family heads without occupation were under forty, in 1870 the figure was 41 percent. Those in their thirties in particular, who were considerably under-represented before the war, were over-represented in 1870. The proportion in all three older age ranks fell, especially in the forty to forty-nine rank. Almost certainly this shift reflects the large number of younger wives widowed during the war. But since the absolute number of persons in this occupational group did not increase greatly over the decade, and the overall proportion of female family heads did not grow, these statistics suggest that older widows—especially those in their forties—were remarrying at a greater rate than before the war. It is important to note, too, that the no-occupation category—the only one not dominated by men—was the only one (with the single exception of minor professional) which did not experience a decline in the proportion of its members aged thirty to thirty-nine. Surely Civil War deaths among those men of prime military age in 1861-65 helped to account for these declines, and no doubt contributed to the increased average age of the professional, skilled, unskilled, and landless agricultural classes.

Table XIV-21 shows a relationship of undiminished strength between occupation and family structure (compare Table IV-22, page 153). Professionals evidence a marked increase over the decade in the proportion of couple-extended families (from 39 to 64 percent) at the expense of couple-nuclear, making them in 1870 (unlike 1860) by far the most likely of all groups to be couple-extended. This increase was considerably beyond what might be expected given the proportional growth of couple-extended in the whole population (much of that due, as noted

Table XIV-21
Occupation of Family Head by Family Structure, 1870 (White Only)

Family Structure	Families Ranked by Occupation of Head (% of Each Rank Shown)							% of Total Fams.
	Prof.	Landed Farmer	Minor Prof.	Skilled Worker	Unsk. Laborer	Landless Ag. Wkr.	None	
Single-nuclear	2	9	4	4	13	4	59	79
Couple-nuclear	27	42	48	60	58	64	13	375
Single-extended	8	14	4	6	3	5	26	78
Couple-extended	64	35	44	30	26	27	2	251
N	63	311	23	70	31	232	53	
% of Total Fams.	8	40	3	9	4	30	7	
Mean No. Child.	2.1	3.1	2.1	2.7	2.4	3.0	2.2	
Mean Child., Boarders	4.6	4.4	4.4	3.7	3.3	3.6	3.2	

$\chi^2 = 242.9$ with 18 d.f., signif. = .0 C = .48656 N = 783

earlier, to the inclusion of blacks as boarders in the 1870 sample). Professionals also took the lead in the average total of children, relatives, and boarders (a lead they had not held in 1860), even though their average number of children declined (perhaps due to the aging of this occupational group). It may be that professionals, with their comparative affluence (see Table XIV-19, page 647), could better afford to take in relatives and hire servants, and, being primarily urban, often kept their servants in their homes (see Table XIV-5, page 617). Among landed farmers, too, couple-nuclear lost its predominance; but in this case the proportion of single- as well as couple-extended concurrently increased, because women continued to be well-represented in that occupation (see Table XIV-22). This increase in extended families among landed farmers is hardly greater than might be predicted given the overall increase of such families, however, and the average total of children, relatives, and boarders among landed farmers did not rise greatly. Among minor professionals the most important change was the decline in single-headed families (both nuclear and extended) in favor of couple-headed. Undoubtedly this was due mainly to the decreasing proportion of women in that occupation (see Table XIV-22). The ratio of nuclear to extended families did not change significantly in this occupation, nor did the average number of children or the average total of children, relatives, and boarders. But since minor professionals (who were overwhelmingly urban) did have black boarders in significant numbers (see below) they presumably had fewer white boarders than in 1860. Skilled workers showed little change in family structure over the decade, and remained predominantly couple-nuclear. The slight increase of couple-extended among the skilled is accounted for by the addition of black boarders.

Table XIV-22
Occupation of Family Head by Sex of Family Head, 1870 (White Only)

Sex of Head	Families Ranked by Occupation of Head (% of Each Rank Shown)							% of Total Fams.
	Prof.	Landed Farmer	Minor Prof.	Skilled Worker	Unsk. Laborer	Landless Ag. Wkr.	None	
Male	100	87	96	100	100	94	19	682 87
Female	0	14	4	0	0	7	81	101 13
N	63	311	23	70	31	232	53	
% of Total Fams.	8	40	3	9	4	30	7	

$\chi^2 = 254.1$ with 6 d.f., signif. = .0 C = .49495 N = 783

Unskilled laborers experienced an overall decline in single-headed families, from 21 to 16 percent, in part at least because women were leaving that occupation (see below). But the decline was wholly among the single-extended, because in fact the proportion of single-nuclear increased. The proportion of couple-nuclear among the unskilled remained the same over the decade, but that of couple-extended grew. Because of the decline in single-extended, however, the overall proportion of extended families among the unskilled declined a little, from 32 to 29 percent. Nevertheless, the average number of children and average total of children, relatives, and boarders in the families of the unskilled increased. The families of landless agricultural workers remained predominantly couple-nuclear and saw little change from their antebellum ratios of single- to couple-headed and nuclear to extended, save for a slightly greater tendency to be couple-headed and extended. The landless retained also their large average number of children and small average total of children, relatives, and boarders. Families headed by persons without occupation (who were nearly all women) remained mostly single-nuclear, and their ratios of single- to couple-headed and nuclear to extended did not change significantly. But their average number of children declined somewhat, even as their average total of children, relatives, and boarders grew.

Important modifications in the proportion of females in the various occupations are documented in Table XIV-22 (compare Table IV-23, page 154). Some facts were unchanged, however: women remained, as in 1860, vastly over-represented among those without occupation, evenly represented among landed farmers, and completely unrepresented among

professionals and skilled workers. But female representation among minor professionals declined greatly over the decade (from 11 to 4 percent) and disappeared altogether among the unskilled, an occupation in which women had been well represented in 1860. Women in unskilled positions were thus leaving that work at an even greater rate than men. At the same time the proportion of women in landless agricultural work increased, from 5 to 7 percent. This last statistic masks a large numerical growth, from 350 to 900—an increase of over 150 percent in the number of female landless agricultural family heads. Extrapolating further from the 1860 and 1870 tables indicates that the proportion of female family heads who had some kind of occupation did not really change from 1860 to 1870 (58 vs. 59 percent). But the proportion holding nonagricultural jobs, which in 1860 was 9 percent, fell by 1870 to 1 percent. Even more so than men, working women were tied to the land in 1870.

Table XIV-23 further attests the previously discussed decline of familial association between whites and blacks (compare Table IV-20, page 150). The proportion of families with black boarders declined over the decade (by comparison with the respective proportions of slaveholders) in three occupational categories: among professionals, from 59 to 41 percent; among landed farmers, from 55 to 19 percent; and among those without occupation, from 20 to 9 percent. The proportions of minor professionals, unskilled workers, and landless agricultural workers who boarded blacks remained more or less unchanged, while among the unskilled the proportion increased considerably (from 5 to 13

Table XIV-23
Occupation of Family Head by Black Boarder Class, 1870 (White Only)

Black Boarder Class	Families Ranked by Occupation of Head (% of Each Rank Shown)						% of Total Fams.
	Prof.	Landed Farmer	Minor Prof.	Skilled Worker	Unsk. Laborer	Landless Agr. Wkr.	
No Black Boarders	59	81	70	86	87	91	83
Black Boarders	41	19	30	14	13	10	17
N	63	311	23	70	31	232	53
% of Total Fams.	8	40	3	9	4	30	7
Mean No. Black Boarders	1.1	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.3

$\chi^2 = 42.3$ with 6 d.f., signif. = .0000 C = .22651 N = 783

percent) but remained small. The families which most often included black boarders (i.e., those of professionals and minor professionals) were also the most urban (see Table XIV-18, page 643), suggesting once again that crowding in the towns forced blacks there to live with whites to a greater extent than did blacks in the countryside.

The strong relationship between occupation and place of birth in the antebellum period was still present in 1870 (compare Tables XIV-24 and IV-24, page 157). The representation of non-Southerners among the occupational groups changed little, except for a decline in the proportion of Irish among the unskilled and an increase in their proportion among minor professionals. Non-Southerners overall remained, as before, most common in those same two occupations and in the professional and skilled classes. Every occupation manifested an increase in the proportion of Tennessee natives (except landless agricultural work, in which that proportion was very high in 1860 and unchanged in 1870). The proportion of non-Tennessee Upper South natives, on the other hand, declined in every category but one (professional). These two trends reflect the maturing of the population as a whole, as older families disappeared and new families, headed by young people born in Tennessee, were created.

As in 1860, family heads in higher-status occupations in 1870 tended to be more literate than others (compare Tables XIV-25 and IV-25, page 159). The only notable change over the decade in the relationship between literacy and occupation was the diminished proportion of illiterates among the unskilled (33 percent in 1860, 19 percent

Table XIV-24

Occupation of Family Head by Place of Birth of Family Head, 1870 (White Only)

Place of Birth of Head	Families Ranked by Occupation of Head (% of Each Rank Shown)								% of Total Fams.
	Prof.	Landed Farmer	Minor Prof.	Skilled Worker	Unsk. Laborer	Landless Ag. Wkr.	None	N	
Tennessee	51	74	59	56	65	77	51	539	69
Upper South	24	17	0	16	7	13	26	126	16
Lower South	5	6	5	3	3	7	11	47	6
New England	3	1	5	1	0	0	2	8	1
Middle Atlantic	3	0	9	3	10	0	2	11	1
Northwest	2	1	0	6	3	0	0	8	1
Ireland	6	1	14	7	10	2	2	24	3
Great Britain	2	0	0	4	0	0	2	5	1
Continental Europe	5	1	9	4	3	0	4	13	2
N	63	311	22	70	31	231	53		
% of Total Fams.	8	40	3	9	4	30	7		

 $\chi^2 = 155.2$ with 48 d.f., signif. = .0000

C = .40711

N = 783

Table XIV-25
Occupation of Family Head by Literacy of Family Head, 1870 (White Only)

Literacy of Head	Families Ranked by Occupation of Head (% of Each Rank Shown)						% of Total Fams.
	Prof.	Landed Farmer	Minor Prof.	Skilled Worker	Unsk. Laborer	Landless Ag. Wkr.	
Literate	97	92	91	96	81	82	88
Illiterate	3	8	9	4	19	18	12
N	63	311	23	70	31	232	53
% of Total Fams.	8	40	3	9	4	30	7

$\chi^2 = 25.8$ with 6 d.f., signif. = .0002 C = .17872 N = 783

in 1870), which may be related to the declining proportion of Irish in that occupation.

What the preceding tables show in the broadest sense is that no occupational class escaped the consequences of three transforming facts of life in the postwar heartland: emancipation, black emigration from the farms, and hard times. These phenomena, separately and conjointly, provoked or at least influenced every important change discussed here, from the diminished numbers and decreased urbanism of the skilled and unskilled to the declining economic preponderance of the landed farmers, and from the disappearance of the overseers to the burgeoning of the landless agricultural class. If some occupations underwent a more radical metamorphosis than others, still none was left untouched.

Age was still an important correlative in 1870, as two of the foregoing tables implied. The five tables which follow further elucidate the significance of this variable by examining Middle Tennessee families from the perspective of the family head's age. There will be no attempt here to follow age cohorts over time, but simply to compare each age rank in 1870 with its counterpart in 1860.

Table XIV-26 crosstabulates age and wealth, and manifests a statistical relationship nearly as strong as that in 1860 (compare Table IV-33, page 180). The general pattern of a decade earlier was present also in 1870. That is, families with older heads tended to have more wealth on the average and to be more concentrated in the upper wealth ranks than families with younger heads. All age groups suffered a considerable decline in mean wealth, but these losses were

Table XIV-26

Age of Family Head by Wealth, 1870 (White Only)

(Deciles)	Families Ranked by Age of Head (% of Each Rank Shown)				
	0-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+
1	3	8	9	13	18
2	4	8	16	16	9
3	4	10	10	12	12
4	9	11	12	8	14
5	4	11	11	15	10
6	12	12	11	8	4
7	14	11	7	7	6
8	15	14	7	7	5
9+10	35	16	18	15	22
N	165	197	162	139	121
% of Total Fams.	21	25	21	18	15
Mean Wealth (\$)	1,220	3,465	4,544	8,119	8,149
% of Total Wealth	5	18	20	30	26

 $\chi^2 = 101.7$ with 32 d.f., signif. = .0000

C = .33889

N = 784

more or less evenly distributed and thus each age rank retained approximately the same share of total wealth that its counterpart had held in 1860. The exception was families with heads in their thirties, whose share of wealth declined from 21 to 18 percent. This reflects the declining overall proportion of families in that age rank (from 28 to 25 percent), which, as noted earlier, was undoubtedly related to the large number of Civil War deaths among men that age. The considerably diminished proportion of family heads aged thirty to thirty-nine among the poor (21 percent in 1860, 16 percent in 1870) further suggests—though by no means proves—that casualties may have been heaviest among the poor. Aside from these, two other points merit comment. One is the increased concentration of families with the youngest heads in the poor category (from 28 to 35 percent). The other is an even more sizable growth in the concentration of families with the oldest heads in that same category (from 12 to 22 percent, in spite of that age group's slightly higher proportion of total wealth compared to 1860). As previously discussed, the postwar economic problems which afflicted Middle Tennessee may have hit the youngest and oldest family heads harder than others—the former because they could no longer count on financial help from parents, the latter because they were too old to recoup their wartime losses, as younger people could, by the sweat of their brows.

The occupational structure of each age rank is shown in Table XIV-27, which makes evident some important changes since 1860 (compare Table IV-34, page 181). Most notable is the increased proportion of

Table XIV-27

Age of Family Head by Occupation of Family Head, 1870
(White Only)

Occupation of Head	Families Ranked by Age of Head (% of Each Rank Shown)					N	% of Total Fams.
	0-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+		
Professional	6	8	11	10	5	63	8
Landed Farmer	24	34	43	49	56	311	40
Minor Prof.	4	5	1	3	1	23	3
Skilled Worker	6	12	11	8	7	70	9
Unskilled Laborer	6	4	5	2	2	31	4
Landless Agr. Worker	49	30	25	22	17	232	30
None	4	8	5	6	12	53	7
N	164	197	162	139	121		
% of Total Fams.	21	25	21	18	16		

$\chi^2 = 84.6$ with 24 d.f., signif. = .0000

C = .31220

N = 783

family heads who were landless agricultural workers, not only in the population as a whole, but within every age rank. Among family heads sixty and older that proportion nearly doubled (from 9 to 17 percent), while the proportions of professionals, minor professionals, skilled workers, and unskilled laborers in that age group remained unchanged and the proportions of landed farmers and heads without occupation declined (from 61 to 56 percent, and from 15 to 12 percent, respectively). Family heads in their fifties likewise experienced a doubling of the proportion of landless agricultural workers among them (from 11 to 22 percent), but saw also an increase in the proportion of professionals (from 4 to 10 percent); the representation of minor professionals, skilled workers, and heads without occupation in this age rank remained at about its 1860 level, but that of landed farmers and especially unskilled laborers declined (from 59 to 49, and from 7 to 2 percent, respectively). A smaller but nonetheless substantial increase occurred in the proportion of landless agricultural workers among family heads in their forties (from 17 to 25 percent); all other occupations in that age rank retained very nearly their 1860 proportions, except the no-occupation group, whose representation declined (from 9 to 5 percent). Among family heads in their thirties the proportion of landless agricultural workers also rose considerably (from 18 to 30 percent), as did the proportions of minor professionals (from 2 to 5 percent) and heads without occupation (from 5 to 8 percent); professionals and landed farmers maintained about the same representation in this age rank that they had had in 1860, but skilled workers and unskilled

laborers were noticeably less common than before (their proportions fell from 20 to 12, and from 8 to 4 percent, respectively). The proportion of landless agricultural workers among family heads in their twenties grew during the decade (from 34 to 49 percent), as did that of heads without occupation (from 2 to 4 percent), while that of professionals, landed farmers, and minor professionals changed little; two occupations in this age rank saw huge proportional declines, however: skilled workers (from 18 to 6 percent) and unskilled laborers (from 13 to 6 percent).

The data in this table show clearly how statistics of the population as a whole may conceal important changes within subgroups. The very slight increase in the overall proportion of professionals, for example, represents an impressive gain among heads in their fifties, but little or no change among other age groups. The small decrease in the overall proportion of landed farmers obscures the fact that among heads fifty and older landed farmers were considerably less common in 1870 than in 1860, but among those under fifty they were no less common than before. Similarly, the unchanged proportion of heads without occupation in the population as a whole disguises that occupational group's considerable proportional increase among heads under forty and corresponding decrease among those forty and over. The overall proportional growth of landless agricultural workers, on the other hand, was shared to some degree by every age group, as was (with one exception) the overall proportional decline of unskilled laborers. But the reduced representation of skilled workers in the population

as a whole affected younger age ranks more than older ones, suggesting that older, more established artisans held on to their jobs after the war while younger men left that occupation, or at least did not enter it at a rate comparable to that of their 1860 counterparts.

It is important to note, too, that the proportion of heads pursuing agricultural occupations increased over the decade in every age rank. Especially was this true for family heads in their twenties and thirties, who, despite the disappearance of overseers, were substantially more agrarian in 1870 (73 and 64 percent, respectively) than in 1860 (59 and 56 percent). Thus, the land reclaimed the young in postwar Middle Tennessee.

Table XIV-28 shows that the relationship of the family head's age to family structure changed very little (compare Table IV-36, page 185). Couple-nuclear remained the most common family type in all age ranks, although (as in 1860) its proportion declined up through the age ranks while that of single-headed families (nuclear and extended) increased. As in 1860, too, the proportion of couple-extended families in 1870 remained fairly stable through the age ranks. The mean number of children for each age rank likewise approximated the 1860 pattern, as did the mean total of children, relatives, and boarders. One point of contrast with the earlier data demands notice, however. This is the increased proportion of single-headed families among those with heads in their thirties (from 14 percent in 1860 to 20 percent in 1870), and the concurrent decrease among those with heads in their forties (from 26 to 17 percent)—all within the context of a more or less

Table XIV-28

Age of Family Head by Family Structure, 1870 (White Only)

Family Structure	Families Ranked by Age of Head (% of Each Rank Shown)					N	% of Total Fams.	Mean Age
	0-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+			
Single-nuclear	5	11	9	14	13	79	10	47
Couple-nuclear	58	49	53	39	36	375	48	40
Single-extended	6	9	8	12	20	79	10	51
Couple-extended	32	32	30	36	31	251	32	43
N	165	197	162	139	121			
% of Total Fams.	21	25	21	18	15			
Mean No. Child.	1.3	3.0	4.2	3.6	1.9			
Mean No. Child. and Boarders	2.0	4.0	5.5	5.0	3.6			

 $\chi^2 = 34.6$ with 12 d.f., signif. = .0005

C = .20563

N = 784

unchanged proportion of single-headed families in the population as a whole (21 percent in 1860, 20 percent in 1870). This implies, as suggested earlier, that the large number of war widows among women who were in their thirties in 1870 was counterbalanced by an increased rate of remarriage among women who were in their forties, the explanation of which is uncertain.

A related correlation is shown in Table XIV-29, which should be compared with Table IV-37, page 187. Here again, unvarying overall statistics mask considerable changes within age ranks. The proportion of family heads who were female was more or less the same in 1860 and 1870 (14 vs. 13 percent). But the proportion of women among family heads under forty increased (from 3 to 6 percent among those in their twenties, and from 10 to 12 percent among those in their thirties), while their proportion among those in their forties and fifties and those sixty and over decreased (from 17 to 11, 19 to 18, and 28 to 21 percent, respectively). The mean age of female family heads, moreover, declined by one year. This testifies further to the substantial number of Civil War deaths among men who would have been under forty in 1870 (which no doubt contributed to the slight increase in the mean age of male family heads), and to the (admittedly perplexing) increased rate of remarrying among female family heads forty and older.

Age and place of birth continued to correlate highly in 1870, as they had in 1860 (compare Tables XIV-30 and IV-38, page 188). The most significant changes over the decade were (as noted earlier) the increased proportion of Tennessee natives in the population and the

Table XIV-29

Age of Family Head by Sex of Family Head, 1870 (White Only)

Sex of Head	Families Ranked by Age of Head (% of Each Rank Shown)					N	% of Total Fams.	Mean Age
	0-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+			
Male	94	88	89	82	79	682	87	42
Female	6	12	11	18	21	102	13	49
N	165	197	162	139	121			
% of Total Fams.	21	25	21	18	15			

 $\chi^2 = 17.0$ with 4 d.f., signif. = .002

C = .14558

N = 784

Table XIV-30

Age of Family Head by Place of Birth of Family Head, 1870
(White Only)

Place of Birth of Head	Families Ranked by Age of Head (% of Each Rank Shown)					N	% of Total Fams.	Mean Age
	0-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+			
Tennessee	85	81	64	65	39	539	69	40
Upper South	4	6	14	17	52	126	16	56
Lower South	6	3	8	9	5	47	6	46
New England	0	1	1	1	3	8	1	56
Middle Atlantic	2	3	0	1	0	11	1	35
Northwest	2	2	1	0	0	9	1	35
Ireland	1	4	7	3	1	24	3	42
Great Britain	0	0	1	2	0	5	1	47
Continental Europe	0	2	4	1	1	13	2	45
N	164	197	162	138	121			
% of Total Fams.	21	25	21	18	16			

$\chi^2 = 207.5$ with 32 d.f., signif. = .0000

C = .45792

N = 782

decreased proportion of non-Tennessee Upper South natives, both due to the aging of the population. This is apparent in all age ranks, but especially in the oldest two, where the proportion of Tennessee natives grew from 39 to 65 percent and from 12 to 39 percent, respectively. While there was little change in the overall proportion of non-Southerners (8 percent in 1860, 9 percent in 1870), there was a notable decrease within the youngest age rank (from 9 to 5 percent) and a concurrent increase among family heads in their forties (from 9 to 14 percent). This latter fact may be due in part to the aging of the Irish population, which had been well represented among men in their thirties in 1860, while the former fact may reflect the hard times and decreased economic opportunities which characterized postwar Middle Tennessee, and which may have discouraged young Northern and European immigrants from coming to the heartland as they had in the boom times before the war.⁸

Thus, young and old alike were touched by the manifold transfiguration of Middle Tennessee's white society between 1860 and 1870, just as town and country folk, plutocrats and paupers, planters and laborers were all in their different ways touched. But if there was vast change in that era there was also profound continuity. Without question, the end of slavery and prosperity in one way or another fundamentally altered the life of every white man and women in the

⁸As in 1860, there was in 1870 no appreciable relationship between age and residence (significance of $X^2 = .2074$, $C = .11711$), or between age and literacy of the family head (significance of $X^2 = .3836$, $C = .07273$). There was, furthermore, no relationship in 1870 between age and black boarder class (significance of $X^2 = .6361$, $C = .05692$).

heartland. But when those men and women looked around them in 1870 they beheld a world that in important ways strongly resembled the one in which they had grown up, its constituents still bound closely to the soil, its society still marked by stark distinctions of wealth and status. No one in Middle Tennessee in 1870 could justly insist that the ancien régime had endured, but neither could anyone maintain that a wholly new world had supplanted it.

CHAPTER XV

THE HARVEST OF FREEDOM: BLACKS IN 1870

To even the most casual observer in postwar Middle Tennessee it was apparent that the black society which emancipation had delivered forth was at once akin to and profoundly different from the white society which had been its womb. One had only to pass through the teeming black villages and urban communities, or glance inside the new black churches and farmhands' cabins, to understand that the freedmen had adopted some of their ex-masters' ways but renounced others. The impressionistic written accounts which such witnesses sometimes provided can be supplemented by quantitative census data which compare and contrast the structural patterns of black and white society. The seven tables which follow survey the heartland's black families of 1870 in a manner comparable to that used in the previous chapter to analyze white families.

Table XV-1 examines the correlation between residence and occupation among blacks, and should be compared with Table XIV-2, page 610. (Here and in other tables involving black occupations, C values are artificially inflated to an extent by the very small number of cases in the first three occupational categories.) The contrast between black and white residence structure and between black and white occupational structure was explored in Chapter XIII; here it is the comparative relationship between residence and occupation which is the focus of interest. Urban blacks, far more so than urban whites,

Table XV-1

Residence by Occupation of Family Head, 1870 (Black Only)

Occupation of Head	Families Ranked by Residence (% of Each Rank Shown)			N	% of Total Fams.
	Town	Village	Farm		
Professional	1	1	0	2	1
Landed Farmer	0	0	4	10	2
Minor Prof.	2	3	0	4	1
Skilled Worker	15	13	1	25	6
Unskilled Laborer	59	44	0	84	20
Landless Agr. Worker	0	0	95	241	58
None	23	39	0	50	12
N	83	79	254		
% of Total Fams.	20	19	61		

 $\chi^2 = 418.5$ with 12 d.f., signif. = .0

C = .70815

N = 416

were concentrated in the category of unskilled laborer, an occupation which accounted for six black urban family heads out of ten (59 percent) but only one white urban family head out of ten (9 percent). The proportion of urban heads without occupation was somewhat higher for blacks (23 percent) than for whites (17 percent), but in the higher-ranking occupations urban blacks were far less common than urban whites: only 15 percent of those blacks were skilled workers (compared to 29 percent of whites), only 2 percent were minor professionals (16 percent of whites), and but 1 percent were professionals (29 percent of whites). Village blacks were likewise overwhelmingly concentrated in lower-ranking occupations, in contrast to their white counterparts. Whereas 17 percent of village whites were professionals or minor professionals and 28 percent were skilled workers, only 4 percent and 13 percent, respectively, of village blacks followed those pursuits. Conversely, 44 percent of village blacks were unskilled laborers, but only 17 percent of village whites. The proportion of heads without occupation, however, was nearly identical among blacks and whites in the villages (39 vs. 38 percent). Blacks on the farm were nearly all landless agricultural workers (95 percent), unlike their white counterparts (40 percent). Farmers who owned their own land comprised a minuscule 4 percent of farm blacks, though they constituted a majority (54 percent) of farm whites. Thus, not only was the mass of blacks as a whole consigned to the lowliest occupations in the heartland, but within each sphere of residential work (or none) was the lot of most freedmen, who remained—as in slavery times—the drudges of town, village, and rural neighborhood

alike. Despite the general degradation of blacks, however, the freedmen of town and village, 18 and 17 percent of whom, respectively, held occupations above the rank of unskilled laborer, were conspicuously better off than those on the farm, of whom only 5 percent could boast such status.

Residence and family structure are crosstabulated in Table XV-2 and manifest a considerably stronger statistical relationship than that for whites (compare Table XIV-3, page 612). Clearly, the general resemblance of black and white family structure discussed in Chapter XIII disguises differences within each residence category. In the towns, although couple-nuclear families were equally prevalent among blacks and whites (37 and 38 percent, respectively), and extended families nearly so (43 vs. 49 percent), single-headed families were considerably more common among the blacks (37 percent vs. 26 percent among whites). Moreover, the mean number of children mean total of children, relatives, and boarders among urban black families were much smaller than those among urban whites. A somewhat similar pattern obtained in the villages, where blacks and whites had more or less equal proportions of couple-nuclear families (37 and 38 percent) and extended families (33 and 35 percent), but unequal proportions of single-headed families (48 percent among blacks, 35 percent among whites). It should be pointed out, however, that within the combined extended family category, single-extended predominated among village blacks, while couple-extended greatly predominated among village whites. The mean number of children and mean total of children, relatives, and boarders were nearly identical

Table XV-2

Residence by Family Structure, 1870 (Black Only)

Family Structure	Families Ranked by Residence (% of Each Rank Shown)			N	% of Total Fams.
	Town	Village	Farm		
Single-nuclear	21	30	3	49	12
Couple-nuclear	37	37	54	198	48
Single-extended	16	18	5	39	9
Couple-extended	27	15	38	130	31
N	83	79	254		
% of Total Fams.	20	19	61		
Mean No. Child.	1.3	2.5	2.9		
Mean No. Children, Boarders	2.4	3.1	3.8		

 $\chi^2 = 76.6$ with 6 d.f., signif. = .0000

C = .39444

N = 416

for village blacks and whites, however. Among farm families racial differences in family structure were less apparent than elsewhere. The proportion of couple-nuclear families among farm blacks (54 percent) approximated that among farm whites (51 percent), as did the proportion of extended families (43 vs. 42 percent). The mean number of children and mean total of children, relatives, and boarders, furthermore, were more or less the same for black and white farm families. But, as one point of dissimilarity, single-headed families were much less common among farm blacks (8 percent) than among farm whites (17 percent). Thus, the major structural differences between postwar black and white families categorized by residence were the higher proportion of single town and village family heads among blacks, and the higher proportion of single farm family heads among whites.

The explanation for this disparity is clarified by Table XV-3, which links residence and sex of the family head and exhibits a far stronger statistical correlation than that for whites (compare Table XIV-4, page 615). Here again, superficial similarities between black and white families obscure differences brought to light when the variable of residence is introduced. Immediately apparent is the substantial over-representation of female-headed families among town and village blacks, and their corresponding under-representation among farm blacks—a relationship which prevailed also among whites, but to a much lesser degree. Single women headed 30 percent of black urban families and 42 percent of black village families, but among whites single women headed only 17 and 29 percent of such families, respectively. Female-headed families were, on the other hand, almost unknown among farm

Table XV-3

Residence by Sex of Family Head, 1870 (Black Only)

Sex of Head	Families Ranked by Residence (% of Each Rank Shown)			N	% of Total Fams.
	Town	Village	Farm		
Male	70	58	98	353	85
Female	30	42	2	63	15
N	83	79	254		
% of Total Fams.	20	19	61		

 $\chi^2 = 92.4$ with 2 d.f., signif. = .0000

C = .42629

N = 416

blacks (2 percent), though fairly well represented among farm whites (10 percent). This suggests that in the countryside black female family heads—unable to secure farms of their own and unwilling to labor on white farms—went to the towns and villages looking for work in considerably greater proportion than did white female family heads, many of whom were widows who had inherited a farm. (Some simple subtraction between this table and the last, and between Tables XIV-4, page 615, and XIV-3, page 612, reveals that in towns black female heads outnumbered black single male heads by a ratio of 30:7, whereas the corresponding ratio for whites was only 17:9; similarly, in villages the black ratio was 42:6, the white 29:6.) Many of these black women, in the towns at least, may have been young, never married, and childless (as opposed to white female heads, most of whom were probably widows), thus explaining the smaller mean number of children among urban blacks than among urban whites, as noted above. The prevalence of black female heads in the towns and villages certainly helps account for the disappearance of white female unskilled laborers, discussed in Chapter XIV: as a comparison of this table with Table XV-1, page 676, shows, many of those black women must have been employed, because their proportions were higher than the corresponding proportions of black family heads without occupation (30 vs. 23 percent in the towns, 42 vs. 39 percent in villages), which was not the case among town and village whites (compare Tables XIV-4, page 615, and XIV-2, page 610).¹

¹Crosstabulation of black residence and literacy revealed (as among whites) no relationship (significance of $X^2 = .5851$, $C = .05070$). No crosstabulations involving place of birth will be presented because,

No tables on black wealth-holding are provided in this chapter, simply because blacks as a whole were so poor (see Table XIII-2, page 593) that no meaningful categories of wealth could be devised. This is not to say that there were no relatively affluent blacks, only that they were very few and their wealth (by the standards of the population as a whole) very limited. Just one black family in ten had real and personal property (combined) worth more than \$300 (seven white families out of ten, by contrast, held that much wealth). Moreover, 94 percent of black families owned no real estate and 67 percent owned no property of any kind (among whites the corresponding figures were 47 and 17 percent). Even among the most prosperous decile of blacks, the mean wealth per family was only \$843; among the richest decile of whites it was \$34,003.

Occupation, on the other hand, was an important determinant of black social structure. Table XV-4 crosstabulates occupation and residence (from a perspective opposite that of Table XV-1, page 676), and should be compared with Table XIV-18, page 643. (Since the numbers of professionals, landed farmers, and minor professionals are so small in the sample, those categories will not be analyzed here or below; skilled workers will be analyzed, but their number in the sample is not large and generalizations concerning them are uncertain.) Among skilled blacks 12 percent lived on farms, a figure somewhat below that for whites (17 percent). Among the black unskilled, however, none

as Table XIII-8, page 603, indicated, no black family heads were born outside the South.

Table XV-4
Occupation of Family Head by Residence, 1870 (Black Only)

Residence	Families Ranked by Occupation of Head (% of Each Rank Shown)							% of Total Fams.
	Prof.	Landed Farmer	Minor Prof.	Skilled Worker	Unsk. Laborer	Landless Ag. Wkr.	None	
Town	50	0	50	48	58	0	38	83 20
Village	50	0	50	40	42	0	62	79 19
Farm	0	100	0	12	0	100	0	254 61
N	2	10	4	25	84	241	50	
% of Total Fams.	1	2	1	6	20	58	12	

$\chi^2 = 418.5$ with 12 d.f., signif. = .0

C = .70815

N = 416

did so—a situation parallel to that of the white unskilled before the war (see Table IV-18, page 146) but not after, when 16 percent of such whites lived on farms. Furthermore, nonfarm skilled and unskilled blacks showed a noticeable preference for town over village life, compared to their white counterparts. Though nonfarm blacks as a whole were almost equally divided between towns and villages (20 vs. 19 percent), skilled and unskilled blacks in particular were both concentrated in towns more than villages (48 vs. 40 percent among the skilled, 58 vs. 42 percent among the unskilled). Nonfarm white skilled workers did concentrate in towns more than villages (49 vs. 34 percent), but no more so than the overall proportions of town and village whites (15 vs. 11 percent) would imply, while nonfarm white unskilled laborers were substantially more concentrated in villages than in towns (48 vs. 36 percent). Black family heads without occupation, on the other hand, concentrated heavily in villages (62 percent), though not so heavily as their white counterparts (also 62 percent) if the smaller overall proportion of villagers among whites is considered. No doubt the cultural attractiveness of the black communities in the towns drew working blacks there, while the crowding and destitution in those urban settlements made village life preferable to those who could not work.

Table XV-5 illustrates the family structure of each occupational category, and should be compared with Table XIV-21, page 653. Interesting racial differences are discernible. Among black skilled workers, single-headed families were absent, though they comprised 10 percent

Table XV-5

Occupation of Family Head by Family Structure, 1870 (Black Only)

Family Structure	Families Ranked by Occupation of Head (% of Each Rank Shown)							% of Total Fams.
	Prof.	Landed Farmer	Minor Prof.	Skilled Worker	Unsk. Laborer	Landless Ag. Wkr.	None	
Single-nuclear	0	0	25	0	18	3	50	49 12
Couple-nuclear	50	60	25	52	51	54	10	198 48
Single-extended	50	0	0	0	11	5	34	39 9
Couple-extended	0	40	50	48	20	38	6	130 31
N	2	10	4	25	84	241	50	
% of Total Fams.	1	2	1	6	20	58	12	
Mean No. Child.	2.0	3.6	0.8	2.2	1.8	2.8	2.2	
Mean No. Child., Boards	4.5	4.3	1.3	2.8	2.5	3.8	3.3	

 $\chi^2 = 167.3$ with 18 d.f., signif. = .0

C = .53558

N = 416

of the white skilled. The proportion of extended families among the black skilled exceeded that among the white skilled, however (48 vs. 36 percent), despite the lack of single-extended among the blacks. Curiously, though, the mean number of relatives and boarders was low among skilled blacks, suggesting that few of those extended families took in more than one relative or boarder (perhaps because so many skilled families were in the towns, where cramped quarters were the rule). Among the unskilled, the most noticeable racial disparity is in the proportion of single-headed families (29 percent among blacks, 16 percent among whites), a reflection of the prevalence of black women in that occupation (see below). The smaller mean number of children among the black than among the white unskilled intimates furthermore that perhaps many of those women were young and childless. Among landless agricultural workers, black heads were no more likely than whites to be single (8 vs. 9 percent), but they were more likely to have extended families (43 vs. 32 percent). Similarly, black family heads without occupation were single no more often than whites (84 vs. 85 percent), but did more often have extended families (40 vs. 28 percent). Thus, the overall proportional equivalence of extended families among blacks and whites masks the fact that in the lower-ranking occupations such families were considerably more common among blacks than among whites, whose low extended family figures were balanced by high figures among white professionals, landed farmers, and minor professionals.

Table XV-6 shows the proportions of males and females in each occupational category (compare Table XIV-22, page 655). Two points

Table XV-6
Occupation of Family Head by Sex of Family Head, 1870 (Black Only)

Sex of Head	Families Ranked by Occupation of Head (% of Each Rank Shown)								% of Total Fams.	
	Prof.	Farmer	Landed	(% of Each Rank Shown)				None		
				Minor Prof.	Skilled Worker	Unsk. Laborer	Landless Ag. Wkr.			
Male	100	100	100	100	100	79	98	20	353	85
Female	0	0	0	0	0	21	2	80	63	15
N	2	10	10	4	25	84	241	50		
% of Total Fams.	1	2	2	1	6	20	58	12		

$\chi^2 = 205.6$ with 6 d.f., signif. = .0

C = .57511

N = 416

stand out. The first is the very slight representation of black women among landless agricultural workers (2 percent, as compared to 7 percent for white women). Since black women as a rule refused to work as farm laborers after the war, and since few blacks could buy or even rent farms of their own (see Chapter XVI), few black female family heads remained on the farms. Instead they took up unskilled work in towns and villages, and, as the table shows, by 1870 they comprised one-fifth (21 percent) of the whole black unskilled labor force, whereas white female family heads had altogether vanished from that occupation after 1860. Black women dominated the no-occupation category, however, in the same proportion as did white women (80 vs. 81 percent).

A perceptible, though not strong, relationship is evident between occupation and literacy in Table XV-7 (compare Table XIV-25, page 661). Though blacks overall were far less likely to be literate than whites (20 vs. 88 percent), the pattern of the black relationship mimicked that of the white. Black skilled workers were considerably more literate (40 percent) than were unskilled laborers (19 percent), landless agricultural workers (19 percent), or heads without occupation (8 percent). It may be that the skilled thus tended to be better educated than others because they had more leisure time in which to go to school, and because they had a greater need for literacy—an invaluable aid in managing their own shops.

Age showed no correlation with any of the other variables presented here—a striking fact considering the importance of age in the white social structure. Residence and literacy, of course, manifested no

Table XV-7
Occupation of Family Head by Literacy of Family Head, 1870 (Black Only)

Literacy of Head	Families Ranked by Occupation of Head (% of Each Rank Shown)							% of Total Fams.
	Prof.	Landed Farmer	Minor Prof.	Skilled Worker	Unsk. Laborer	Landless Ag. Wkr.	None	
Literate	50	50	75	40	19	19	8	84
Illiterate	50	50	25	60	81	81	92	332
N	2	10	4	25	84	241	50	
% of Total Fams.	1	2	1	6	20	58	12	

$\chi^2 = 25.2$ with 6 d.f., signif. = .0003

C = .23892

N = 416

relationship with age among whites either, so the absence of such a relationship among blacks is not surprising. The lack of correlation between age and occupation among blacks is understandable too, for ignorance, poverty, and discrimination permanently relegated the vast majority of the freedmen to menial labor, denying them the opportunity to work their way up the occupational ladder as they matured—an opportunity which many whites were able to seize. More difficult to explain is the absence of a relationship between age and family structure and between age and sex. Among whites the (admittedly weak) connection between age and family structure (see Table XIV-28, page 669) reflects mostly the increasing proportion of single-headed families through the age ranks from youngest to oldest. It may be that black widows and widowers, propertyless and without hope of inheritance, felt (for financial reasons) more compelled to remarry than did their white counterparts, who generally had some property. This would render older black family heads no more likely to be single than younger heads, and would thus preclude any statistical relationship between age and family structure. By the same token, any black widow who remarried abdicated her status as a family head and reduced the proportion of female family heads in her age rank (which was most often an older rank), thus erasing sexual differences among the age ranks and ruling out any statistical correlation between age and sex of the family head. This implies furthermore that, since the overall proportions of female heads among blacks and whites were nearly identical, in the younger age ranks black female heads must have been proportionally

more common than white, as was hinted in connection with Tables XV-3, page 681, and XV-5, page 686.²

The data presented in this chapter suggest that postwar black society's underlying structure may have been as distinct from that of white society as were its culture and ideology. Even those aspects of black social structure which seem at first glance to mimic white society most closely—family structure and sex ratio, for example—can be seen on closer inspection to assume a quite different pattern within the context of black society. Perhaps the basic impression conveyed by these tables, however, is of the relative equality and "classlessness" which characterized black society, by contrast with the inequality and hierarchy prevailing in the white world. There was no resplendent black plutocracy, no powerful black occupational elite of professionals and planters, no exalted black gerontocracy monopolizing property and position—none of the various forms of hegemony of the few over the many which marked white society and infused it with a profoundly rank-conscious tone. Black society was no monolith, to be sure, for it brought forth its own leadership class. But unlike white patricians, black leaders were men of the people, poor and uneducated and unrefined, most of them accustomed to working with their hands just as their

²Statistics for the crosstabulation of age and other variables are as follows: for age by residence, significance of $X^2 = .9286$, $C = .08587$; for age by occupation, significance of $X^2 = .8263$, $C = .20095$; for age by family structure, significance of $X^2 = .4973$, $C = .16312$; for age by sex, significance of $X^2 = .6874$, $C = .07357$; for age by literacy, significance of $X^2 = .4599$, $C = .09288$.

followers did. This was an equality of poverty and oppression, certainly, but it was an equality which nonetheless must have helped unify black society. The harvest of black freedom was a meager one in material terms, but it was shared with an equitableness that white society would never know.

CHAPTER XVI

THE NEW FACE OF THE LAND: FARMS IN 1870

The rich soil of Middle Tennessee seemed immortal. Through war and storm and flood in the 1860s it endured, and in 1870 it offered itself as generously to the farmers of the heartland as it had a decade earlier. But the beneficiaries of that sumptuous gift were a different people by 1870, embracing new constituents, possessed of new opportunities, yet bound by new constraints; thus, they could not enjoy it and exploit it on the same terms as before. The tables which follow help to clarify how the years of devastation, emancipation, and reconstruction had affected the heartland's agriculture.

Table XVI-1 shows the distribution of improved acreage, farm value, corn production, and livestock value among improved acreage ranks; and it documents cogently the impoverishment and fragmentation of Middle Tennessee's farms after the Civil War, as discussed in Chapter X (compare Table V-1, page 195). Immediately apparent is the sizable decline in mean and median improved acreage. This was a result of the huge (over 50 percent) increase in the number of farms, with no corresponding increase in the region's total acreage—in fact, as Chapter X noted, a small decrease. Mean farm size fell from 100 to seventy-one improved acres over the decade (down 29 percent), median farm size from sixty-five to forty-one (37 percent). The decline was shared by all ranks: among the largest half-decile of farms, for example, mean acreage dwindled from 549 to 394 (of course, it took only 230

Table XVI-1
Breakdown of Improved Acreage, Farm Value, Corn Production, and Livestock Value
by Improved Acreage Ranks, 1870

Variables	Farms Ranked by Improved Acreage (Deciles)										Sample Mean	Sample Median		
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10			N	
Mean Improved Acreage	394	194	119	79	61	49	38	28	20	14	8	540	71	41
% of Total Improved Acreage	29	13	17	10	9	7	6	4	3	2	1			
Cum. % of Total Improved Acreage	29	42	59	69	78	85	91	95	98	100	100			
Mean Farm Value (\$)	20,637	8,741	5,686	3,297	2,180	1,841	1,275	1,152	547	740	469	428	3,764	1,501
% of Total Farm Value	36	14	19	9	7	5	3	3	1	1	1			
Cum. % of Total Farm Value	36	50	69	78	85	90	93	96	97	98	100			
Mean Corn Prod. (bu.)	1,215	934	650	594	440	479	316	294	237	184	93	540	434	273
% of Total Corn Prod.	15	10	16	12	11	11	8	8	5	4	2			
Cum. % of Total Corn Prod.	15	25	41	53	64	75	83	91	96	100	100			
Mean Livestock Value (\$)	2,005	1,434	1,069	711	618	480	379	402	258	195	194	540	603	400
% of Total Livestock Value	17	11	18	10	11	8	7	8	4	3	3			
Cum. % of Total Livestock Value	17	28	46	56	67	75	82	90	94	97	100			

improved acres to attain that rank in 1870, as opposed to 317 in 1860). Decentralization did not, however, result in a more egalitarian distribution of overall acreage. The top half-decile of farms in fact enlarged its share of total acreage (from 25 to 29 percent), while farms in deciles six through ten saw their combined share reduced (from 17 to 15 percent). (The farm value statistics shown here are highly suspect, because a number of census takers in 1870 apparently included the value of tenant farms within the landlord's farm value, no matter how much acreage the landlord himself actually worked. Many tenant farms had to be dropped from the tabulation of farm value for this reason, thus distorting the mean and median and skewing the distribution in favor of the larger farms. Figures on farm value are given here and below for the reader's information, but will not be analyzed.)¹

Agricultural output likewise sustained large declines. Mean corn production per farm fell during the decade from 766 to 434 bushels, and the median from 501 to 273 (this was in the context of an overall decrease of 20 percent in the region's output of corn, as noted in Chapter X). The distribution of corn production—which was not in 1870 or 1860 as unequal as that of acreage—shifted slightly in favor of the bigger holdings: the largest half-decile of farms in 1870 accounted for 15 percent of corn production (in 1860, 14 percent) and deciles six through ten, 25 percent (in 1860, 29 percent). Mean livestock value fell from \$1,113 to \$603, and the median from \$621 to \$400 (the region's

¹The lower limit in acres of each improved acreage decile is as follows: first half, 230; second half, 160; second, 100; third, sixty-eight; fourth, fifty-five; fifth, forty-one; sixth, thirty-one; seventh, twenty-five; eighth, twenty; ninth, eleven; tenth, one.

total livestock value decreased by 18 percent in this period). The distribution of livestock value was somewhat more equitable in 1870 than in 1860, however, suggesting that the large stock raisers had been hurt most by wartime losses: the share held by the top half-decile of farms declined from 18 to 17 percent, while that held by deciles six through ten grew from 21 to 25 percent. (This is implied, too, by the fact that the mean livestock value for that top acreage rank decreased considerably more—56 percent—than did the overall mean—46 percent.)

Table XVI-2 crosstabulates improved acreage (with deciles here grouped into three categories) and district land value, and should be compared with Table V-3, page 199. Farms in each district class—rich, middling, and poor—saw a considerable decline in mean acreage after 1860, though that decline ranged from 25 percent for rich-district farms, to 28 percent for middling-district, and to 41 percent for poor-district. But the overall pattern manifest in the 1860 table is reproduced here. That is, rich-district farms were over-represented among large farms, middling-district farms were over-represented among medium farms, and poor-district farms were over-represented among small farms. The statistical correlation is not strong, however, because farms of every size could be found in every type of district. More interesting is the increased overall proportion of rich-district farms and the increased share of total acreage held by rich-district farms. In 1860 such farms accounted for 22 percent of all farms and 27 percent of all acreage; in 1870 they accounted for 32 percent of all farms and 40 percent of all acreage. The corresponding figures for both middling- and poor-district farms declined over the decade. This suggests two things: first, that the overall increase in

Table XVI-2
Improved Acreage by District Land Value, 1870

District Land Value	Farms Ranked by Improved Acreage (Deciles) (% of Each Rank Shown)			N	% of Total Farms	Mean Impr. Acres	% of Total Impr. Acres
	1-3 (Large)	4-7 (Medium)	8-10 (Small)				
Rich (\$15+/acre)	42	28	29	142	32	85	40
Middling (\$10-15/ acre)	38	41	39	174	39	67	39
Poor (\$0-10/acre)	20	31	32	126	29	50	21

$\chi^2 = 9.2$ with 4 d.f., signif. = .0557

C = .14298

N = 442

the number of farms in the region—due mainly to the spread of tenantry—was not distributed evenly among the three types of districts, but was instead concentrated in rich districts (where, in 1860, farms had been largest on the average); and, furthermore, that the negligible change in the region's total improved acreage (a 4 percent decrease, as noted in Chapter X) disguised a considerable redistribution of acreage shares among the three types of districts. In rich districts farmers as a whole considerably expanded their improved acreage after the war, while those in middling and poor districts abandoned a good amount of theirs.

Improved acreage and tenure class are correlated in Table XVI-3 (compare Table V-4, page 202). Tenant farms are here divided into two categories on the basis of the operator's race. (Blacks made up only a tiny proportion of farm owners, so no separate category of black owners is provided.) The extent to which tenantry had proliferated in the region is made plain in this table. In 1860 tenants accounted for just 22 percent of all farms and constituted a majority of farm operators only in the lowest decile of farm size. But by 1870 tenants (black and white combined) operated 40 percent of all farms and constituted a majority in four of the lowest five deciles. (Farms in every rank in 1870 were, of course, smaller than their antebellum counterparts.) When expressed in absolute numbers (extrapolated from the table) the growth of tenantry is even more impressive. While the number of owner-operated farms increased from 15,300 to 17,700, or by 16 percent, over the decade, the number of black tenant farms

Table XVI-3
Improved Acreage by Tenure Class, 1870

Tenure Class	Farms Ranked by Improved Acreage (% of Each Rank Shown)											N	% of Total Farms
	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Owner-operated	93	96	89	79	75	71	45	52	36	28	24	320	59
Wh. Tenant- operated	7	4	9	19	23	15	41	37	46	45	53	159	29
Bl. Tenant- operated	0	0	2	2	2	14	14	11	18	28	24	61	11

$\chi^2 = 142.0$ with 20 d.f., signif. = .0000

C = .45628

N = 540

increased from near zero to 3,300, and the number of white tenant farms from 4,300 to 8,700, or by 102 percent. As regards the relationship between farm size and tenure class, however, in a general sense the pattern of 1860 persisted: white tenant farms were not unknown in the higher acreage ranks, but were much under-represented there and heavily over-represented in the lower ranks. But even more so than white tenants, black tenants were relegated to the smallest farms. Black tenant farms were altogether absent from the largest decile of farms and were substantially over-represented among the three smallest deciles.

Significantly, there was in 1870 no longer any demonstrable correlation between farm size and farm land value per acre (significance of $X^2 = .2735$), though in 1860 the relationship had been moderately strong (see Table V-5, page 203). The tendency of the large (usually slaveowning) farms to be better improved and maintained than smaller farms had contributed to the 1860 pattern. After the war, however, operators of large farms—crippled by labor shortages and unable to extort heavy toil from their hired hands as they had from their slaves—were no longer capable of keeping up their estates as in antebellum days. Consequently, the average value per acre of the large farms tended to dwindle to about the same level as that of the smaller farms around them.

Table XVI-4 links farm size with number of crops grown. It manifests an even stronger relationship than that of 1860 (compare Table V-6, page 206), though the overall pattern was unchanged—i.e.,

Table XVI-4

Improved Acreage by Number of Crops, 1870

Number of Crops	Farms Ranked by Improved Acreage (Deciles) (% of Each Rank Shown)											N	% of Total Farms
	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
6	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
5	7	4	5	0	2	0	2	2	0	0	0	9	2
4	36	40	27	25	21	12	14	11	8	10	2	90	17
3	39	44	41	46	44	46	39	40	24	22	11	192	36
2	14	12	18	21	28	35	29	32	46	47	26	158	29
1	0	0	7	6	4	4	13	11	18	14	46	66	12
0	0	0	2	2	2	4	4	3	4	8	16	24	4
Mean													
Number	3.5	3.4	3.0	2.9	2.8	2.6	2.5	2.5	2.1	2.1	1.4		
Crops													

$$\chi^2 = 196.9 \text{ with } 60 \text{ d.f., signif.} = .0000$$

$$C = .51689$$

$$N = 540$$

smaller farms still generally grew fewer types of crops than larger ones. Farms on the whole were somewhat more diversified in 1870 than in 1860: the proportion growing three or more different kinds of crops, for example, increased from 45 to 55 percent. But the largest farms accounted for the greater share of this diversification. Farms in the two top half-deciles boosted their mean number of crops from 3.2 to 3.5 and from 3.0 to 3.4, respectively, while farms in every other rank saw for the most part little or no change in their mean.

A quite different phenomenon is evidenced by Table XVI-5, which crosstabulates farm size and number of types of animals on the farm (compare Table V-7, page 207). Crops were quickly replanted after the ravages of war had ceased, but missing livestock could not be easily replaced, and skilled stock handlers were in short supply after emancipation. The result was a considerable decline in livestock diversification, among farms as a whole and within each size rank. In 1860, 20 percent of farms had raised all seven types of animals and only 11 percent had raised fewer than four. By 1870, however, only 4 percent raised all seven and 27 percent raised fewer than four. While the contours of the relationship apparent in 1860 were still present in 1870—i.e., larger farms were more diversified than smaller ones—it is clear that farms of every size were substantially less diversified than their antebellum counterparts.

The proportion of farms in each acreage rank which grew cotton in 1870 is shown in Table XVI-6 (compare Table V-8, page 209; both consider only those farms in the major cotton-growing counties). The most

Table XVI-5
Improved Acreage by Number of Types of Animals, 1870

Number of Types of Animals	Farms Ranked by Improved Acreage (Deciles) (% of Each Rank Shown)										% of Total Farms		
	1 ₂	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		N	
7	11	24	9	10	0	2	0	3	0	0	0	22	4
6	57	40	39	31	35	29	11	15	4	4	4	119	22
5	25	20	32	38	30	31	21	23	18	18	9	130	24
4	4	12	14	17	28	19	41	32	32	24	20	128	24
3	4	4	2	2	7	10	18	16	22	16	29	68	13
2	0	0	4	2	0	4	4	5	14	26	27	45	8
1	0	0	0	0	0	4	5	3	8	10	7	20	4
0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	3	2	4	4	8	2
Mean Number of Types of Animals	5.7	5.7	5.3	5.3	4.9	4.6	4.0	4.1	3.4	3.1	3.0		

$\chi^2 = 264.0$ with 70 d.f., signif. = .0000

C = .57305

N = 540

Table XVI-6
Improved Acreage by Cotton Culture Class, 1870

Cotton Culture Class	Farms Ranked by Improved Acreage (Deciles) (% of Each Rank Shown)										N	% of Total Farms	Mean Improved Acreage	
	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9				10
No Cotton	22	38	45	57	58	51	58	63	56	48	79	195	55	54
Cotton	78	63	55	43	42	49	42	37	44	53	21	163	46	89

$\chi^2 = 21.0$ with 10 d.f., signif. = .0209

C = .23557

N = 358

important fact here indicated was the huge increase since 1860 in the overall proportion of farms growing cotton, a phenomenon discussed in Chapter X. Whereas in 1860 less than one-fifth (18 percent) of farms raised cotton, in 1870 nearly half (46 percent) did so. This accounted in great part, no doubt, for the improved crop diversification evidenced in Table XVI-4, page 702. The increase is apparent in every size rank, but is most striking in the lower ranks. Among farms in the bottom decile, for example, the proportion growing cotton rose from 5 to 21 percent over the decade, and in the ninth decile from 11 to 53 percent. Large farms continued to be more likely than small farms to raise cotton (78 percent of those in the top half-decile did so), but the moderately strong statistical relationship between these two variables manifest in the 1860 table is reduced to a weak relationship in the 1870 table. In 1860 farms in the top rank, for example, had been twelve times likelier to grow cotton than those in the lowest rank, but by 1870 they were less than four times likelier. It should be recalled from Chapter X, however, that the region's total production of cotton was only 11 percent higher in 1870 than in 1860, indicating that even though the cultivation of the fiber became more widespread after the war, it was probably most often grown in small amounts as a supplemental crop.²

Table XVI-7 crosstabulates tenure class and race, and shows clearly the degree to which blacks in the postwar heartland were

²As in 1860, there was no statistical relationship between improved acreage and tobacco culture class (significance of $\chi^2 = .5582$, $C = .12611$).

Table XVI-7
Tenure Class by Race of Farm Operator, 1870

Race of Farm Operator	Farms Ranked by Tenure Class (% of Each Rank Shown)		N	% of Total Farms
	Owner-Operated	Tenant-Operated		
White	98	72	475	88
Black	2	28	67	12
N	321	221		
% of Total Farms	59	41		

$\chi^2 = 77.6$ with 1 d.f., signif. = .0000

C = .35864

N = 542

excluded from farm operation and particularly from farm ownership. Though they comprised approximately 30 percent of the heartland's agrarian population in 1870, the freedmen managed only 12 percent of the region's farms. Furthermore, nearly all who operated farms did so as renters or sharecroppers, for blacks constituted a mere 2 percent of farm owners. Extrapolating from this and Tables XIV-2, page 610, and XV-1, page 676, indicates that black farm operators represented only 26 percent of those black family heads who worked on farms, whereas white farm operators represented 82 percent of similarly situated white family heads. Thus, a large majority—indeed, three-fourths—of agrarian black family heads worked as farmhands on someone else's land, while less than one agrarian white family head out of five resorted to such labor.

Table XVI-8 correlates tenure status and farm size, like Table XVI-3, page 700, but here from the opposite perspective (compare Table V-17, page 229). As in 1860, owner-operated farms were concentrated in the upper acreage ranks while tenant farms were concentrated in the lower ranks—particularly black tenant farms, 44 percent of which were among the smallest fifth of all farms. The table suggests, too, the extent to which owner-operated farms had been subdivided to create tenant farms: the mean acreage of owner-operated farms declined from 113 to ninety-seven over the decade and their percentage of all acreage fell from 89 to 81, while the percentage of acreage in tenant farms rose accordingly, from 11 to 19 percent. Considering that the overall proportion of tenant farms nearly doubled in this period, however, from 22 to 40 percent, the eight-percentage-point increase in

Table XVI-8
Tenure Class by Improved Acreage, 1870

Improved Acreage (Deciles)	Farms Ranked by Tenure Class (% of Each Rank Shown)		
	Owner- Operated	White Tenant- Operated	Black Tenant- Operated
$\frac{1}{2}$	8	1	0
$\frac{1}{2}$	8	1	0
2	16	3	2
3	12	6	2
4	13	8	2
5	12	5	12
6	8	15	13
7	10	15	12
8	6	15	15
9	4	15	23
10	4	18	21
N	320	159	61
% of Total Farms	59	29	11
Mean Improved Acreage	97	36	26
% of Total Improved Acreage	81	15	4

$\chi^2 = 142.0$ with 20 d.f., signif. = .0000

C = .45628

N = 540

their share of acreage is not impressive. Manifestly (as the mean acreage statistics also indicate) the new postwar tenant farms were considerably smaller on the average than antebellum tenant farms, which themselves had been small. This was especially true of black tenant farms, which represented 11 percent of all farms in 1870 and yet comprised only 4 percent of all acreage. Not only were few blacks able to rent or sharecrop farms of their own, but those farms were so small (twenty-six improved acres, on the average) as to render them virtually inconsequential within the context of Middle Tennessee agriculture as a whole. Before the Civil War tenantry in the heartland had embraced a relative few, who were not for the most part indigent. After the war it embraced many, large numbers of whom—especially blacks—eked out a living at the barest level of subsistence.

That conclusion is reinforced by Table XVI-9, which breaks down farm value, corn production, and livestock value by tenure class (compare Table V-19, page 232). (For reasons mentioned in connection with Table XVI-1, page 695, statistics on farm value here are unreliable and will not be analyzed.) In 1860 the average tenant raised 509 bushels of corn and held livestock worth \$570; in 1870 the average white tenant raised 323 bushels of corn and held livestock worth \$389, the average black tenant 208 bushels and \$169. Tenants as a whole did increase their share of corn production (from 15 to 27 percent), but that increase was really no greater than might be expected, given their augmented share of acreage. Tenants' improved share of livestock value, on the other hand (from 11 to 22 percent) was slightly in excess of their gain in acreage.

Table XVI-9
Breakdown of Farm Value, Corn Production, and Livestock Value
by Tenure Class, 1870

Variables	Farms Ranked by Tenure Class				N	Sample Mean	Sample Median
	Owner- Operated	White Tenant- Operated	Black Tenant- Operated				
N	321	160	61				
% of Total Farms	59	30	11				
Mean Farm Value (\$)	4,602	1,523	1,210	428	3,764	1,501	
% of Total Farm Value	90	8	2				
Mean Corn Prod. (bu.)	533	323	208	540	434	273	
% of Total Corn Prod.	73	22	5				
Mean Livestock Value (\$)	793	389	169	540	603	400	
% of Total Livestock Value	78	19	3				

Tenure class and district land value manifest a relationship (albeit weak) in Table XVI-10, though they did not in the 1860 analysis. (The overall proportions of owners and tenants given in this table differ slightly from those in the tables above and below, because a number of cases had to be dropped due to lack of information on district land values in certain counties.) The correlation apparent here is due almost entirely to the high concentration of black tenant farms in rich districts (46 percent) and their correspondingly low concentration in poor districts (13 percent), which in turn is related to the differential distribution of slaves among rich and poor districts in the antebellum period (see Table V-11, page 217). Very simply, blacks were more often tenants in rich than in poor districts because more of them lived in rich districts, where large slaveholdings had been most common before the war. Beyond this, it is interesting to note that owners and white tenants showed no significant differences in their distribution among rich, middling, and poor districts, just as in 1860. This means that the proliferation of white tenantry in the postwar years was not concentrated in any one type of district, but occurred at the same rate in rich, middling, and poor alike. Thus, the increased proportion of all farms accounted for by rich districts, indicated above in Table XVI-2, page 698, is attributable specifically to the spread of black tenantry in those rich districts.

A similarly weak but perceptible relationship is evident between tenure class and farm land value per acre, as shown in Table XVI-11, page 714. (Here again, overall proportions of owners and tenants vary

Table XVI-10
Tenure Class by District Land Value, 1870

District Land Value	Farms Ranked by Tenure Class (% of Each Rank Shown)			N	% of Total Farms
	Owner- Operated	White Tenant- Operated	Black Tenant- Operated		
Rich (\$15+/acre)	31	29	46	142	32
Middling (\$10-15/acre)	39	39	41	174	39
Poor (\$0-10/acre)	31	32	13	128	29
N	246	142	56		
% of Total Farms	55	32	13		

$\chi^2 = 10.4$ with 4 d.f., signif. = .0348 C = .15097 N = 444

Table XVI-11

Tenure Class by Farm Land Value per Acre, 1870

Farm Land Value per Acre (Deciles)	Farms Ranked by Tenure Class (% of Each Rank Shown)			N	% of Total Farms
	Owner- Operated	White Tenant- Operated	Black Tenant- Operated		
Rich (1-3)	33	23	12	127	30
Middling (4-7)	38	35	44	160	37
Poor (8-10)	29	43	44	141	33
N	314	89	25		
% of Total Farms	73	21	6		
Mean Farm Land Value per Acre (\$)	46	44	33		

 $\chi^2 = 10.7$ with 4 d.f., signif. = .0307

C = .15588

N = 428

from those given elsewhere, in this instance because a number of cases—almost all of them tenants—had to be eliminated from the analysis due to lack of information on farm value.) As in 1860 (compare Table V-20, page 233), owners were concentrated more than tenants on rich farms (i.e., those in the top three deciles of farms ranked by value per acre): 33 percent of owners were in that rank, but only 23 percent of white tenants and 12 percent of black tenants. Conversely, tenants were more concentrated than owners on the poor farms (those in the bottom three deciles): 29 percent of owners, 43 percent of white tenants, and 44 percent of black tenants were in that rank. These disparities are especially remarkable since, as the previous table showed, owners and white tenants were equally concentrated in rich and in poor districts, while black tenants were concentrated more than the others in rich districts. This implies that the unequal distribution apparent in this table probably was due not to differences in inherent soil quality (although it may be that tenants were on poorer land within their districts), but to the varying degrees of attention to maintenance and improvement which characterized farm operators in the three tenure classes. As contemporary observers recognized (see Chapter X), tenancy discouraged diligent upkeep of farms, since the tenant never knew how long he would be around to reap the benefits of any improvements he might make.

Table XVI-12 shows that while owner-operated and tenant farms alike became on the whole more diversified after the war (compare Table V-21, page 234), the general pattern evident in 1860—i.e., that

Table XVI-12
Tenure Class by Number of Crops, 1870

Number of Crops	Farms Ranked by Tenure Class (% of Each Rank Shown)			N	% of Total Farms
	Owner- Operated	White Tenant- Operated	Black Tenant- Operated		
6	0	0	0	1	0
5	2	1	0	9	2
4	22	9	10	90	17
3	38	35	25	192	35
2	26	31	41	158	29
1	8	19	18	66	12
0	4	5	7	26	5
N	321	160	61		
% of Total Farms	59	30	11		
Mean No. Crops	2.7	2.3	2.1		

$\chi^2 = 35.1$ with 12 d.f., signif. = .0004

C = .24667

N = 542

owners tended to raise more kinds of crops than did tenants—reappeared in 1870. In the antebellum period 50 percent of owners and 27 percent of tenants grew three or more crops. By 1870, 62 percent of owners, 45 percent of white tenants, and 35 percent of black tenants did so.

Table XVI-13 similarly evidences the persistent inferiority of tenant farms (compare Table V-22, page 236), and especially of black tenant farms. As noted in connection with Table XVI-5, page 704, farms overall in 1870 tended to raise fewer kinds of animals than in 1860, because of wartime livestock losses. Nevertheless, owner-operated farms remained considerably more diversified in this respect than tenant farms. Two-thirds (67 percent) of farm owners held five or more kinds of animals in 1870, a degree of diversification matched by only 32 percent of white tenants and 12 percent of black tenants. Almost half (44 percent) of black tenants, on the other hand, held two or fewer kinds of animals, while only 19 percent of white tenants and 6 percent of farm owners held so few.

A comparison of Tables XVI-14 and V-23, page 237, reveals that cotton cultivation increased tremendously over the decade among all three tenure classes, suggesting an explanation for the enhanced crop diversification noted in Table XVI-12, page 716. (Once again, the overall proportions for the tenure classes shown here vary from those given in other tables, in this case because all farms outside the major cotton-growing counties have been excised from the tabulation.) The 1860 pattern with respect to tenure class and cotton cultivation was, moreover, modified over the decade. Owners, who in 1860 had been twice as likely as tenants to grow cotton (20 vs. 10 percent), were in 1870

Table XVI-13

Tenure Class by Number of Types of Animals, 1870

Number of Types of Animals	Farms Ranked by Tenure Class (% of Each Rank Shown)			N	% of Total Farms
	Owner- Operated	White Tenant- Operated	Black Tenant- Operated		
7	7	1	0	22	4
6	31	11	2	119	22
5	29	20	10	130	24
4	18	38	15	128	24
3	10	12	30	68	13
2	4	12	21	45	8
1	1	6	15	20	4
0	1	1	8	10	2
N	321	160	61		
% of Total Farms	59	30	11		
Mean No. Types of Animals	4.9	3.9	2.6		

 $\chi^2 = 155.3$ with 14 d.f., signif. = .0

C = .47190

N = 542

Table XVI-14
Tenure Class by Cotton Culture Class, 1870

Cotton Culture Class	Farms Ranked by Tenure Class (% of Each Rank Shown)			N	% of Total Farms
	Owner-Operated	White Tenant-Operated	Black Tenant-Operated		
No Cotton	54	63	37	195	55
Cotton	46	37	64	163	46
N	185	121	52		
% of Total Farms	52	34	15		

$\chi^2 = 10.1$ with 2 d.f., signif. = .0063 C = .16603 N = 358

only a little more likely to do so than white tenants (46 vs. 37 percent) and considerably less likely than black tenants (64 percent of whom raised cotton). The striking difference in the cotton cultivation rates of white and black tenants implies that the latter as a class either preferred for some reason to grow cotton or, what is more probable, were more easily coerced than white tenants by landlords anxious to reap the benefits of a cash crop even if it meant forgoing to some extent a food crop.³

In 1870 Middle Tennessee's farms were on the whole smaller, poorer, less productive, and less well-tended than in 1860. This much is made plain by the sample data analyzed above and by the aggregate census data and narrative evidence discussed in Chapter X. If those farms were a little more diversified in terms of crops, it was no doubt due to the postwar spread of cotton cultivation, which was not an unmixed blessing. While wartime losses may account in some small part for this agricultural retrogression, its true source was emancipation, which freed blacks from arduous and exploitative slave labor, permitted many freedmen to leave the farms altogether, engendered chronic rural labor shortages, and gave rise to a comparatively wasteful and inefficient tenancy system.

A second conclusion which emerges from the evidence presented here is that the freedmen of the heartland shared very meagerly in whatever bounty the region's farms still proffered after the war. They enjoyed far greater rewards than they had enjoyed as slaves, certainly,

³As in 1860, there was no significant correlation between tenure class and tobacco cultivation (significance of $X^2 = .0621$, $C = .10093$).

for even the lowliest black farmhand had some liberty to work when and for whom he chose, and could demand a share of his boss's profits. But only a minority of agrarian blacks managed to procure the more ample rewards and quasi-independence of tenantry, and those who did were generally consigned to the most paltry parcels of land. Moreover, of course, hardly any blacks were able to secure the real autonomy and larger rewards of farm ownership.

If the decade of war and emancipation had brought manifold changes to the heartland's agriculture, it had nevertheless left it untouched in a fundamental way. Agriculture in antebellum Middle Tennessee had been dominated not by the sort of great plantations which held sway over the Deep South, nor by the kind of small subsistence farms and tenant plots which prevailed in the highlands, but by owner-operated family farms of middling size which required a few extra hands—not gangs of them—and which produced a modest surplus for the market. And thus did Middle Tennessee agriculture remain in 1870 (though its surplus was considerably diminished). Tenantry spread far and wide in the heartland after 1865, to be sure, but it must be understood that tenantry was more important as a social than as an economic fact. Tenants represented one black farm family out of four and nearly three white farm families out of ten, but together those black and white tenants cultivated less than one acre of five in the region, and their holdings generally comprised the poorest land. Postwar Middle Tennessee agriculture thus escaped the fate of agriculture both in the Deep South, where a large share of acreage was taken over by tenants, and in the

highland South, which remained a region of subsistence farms. The heartland was a third agricultural South in 1870 as it had been in 1860, its face weathered by hard experience and changing circumstances, but not unrecognizable—a land transfigured but not transformed.

CHAPTER XVII

CONCLUSION

The story of white and black Middle Tennesseans during their passage from the old world to the new is fraught with ironies. These ironies derive from the stark discrepancy between the inveterate convictions of whites and the newly-revealed truths of the 1860s. White heartlanders stood optimistically at the threshold of the new decade in 1860, certain that the future would only enhance the luster of their prosperous and sublime society. The ensuing years brought instead not only the destruction of their prosperity but the virtual obliteration of their social edifice and its underpinnings of community, hierarchy, and slavery. The national preeminence of their land was likewise one of the war's many victims, and Middle Tennesseans found themselves after 1865 in the unfamiliar backwaters of American political and economic life.

The travail of their society begot further ironies. Convinced of their unchallengeable moral and physical mastery over their black slaves, and of the slaves' docility and contentment in bondage, whites watched dumbfounded and helpless after 1862 as their bondsmen fled in droves. After Appomattox, stubbornly confident (despite the evidence of black assertiveness) that they could restore the harmonious household of society and keep the two races together under one ideological and communal roof, whites soon saw their house divided by the social and cultural exodus of the freedmen—a second self-emancipation following

on the heels of the first. Thus did the supposedly passive black people of the heartland seize the moment and transform their world, while their formerly all-powerful ex-masters grudgingly conceded their own impotence.

A final irony is evident in the divergent paths that black society and white society pursued after their parting. Freedmen by the thousands abandoned the farms and agrarian life to take up residence in the towns, which became the heart of the flourishing black culture of the postwar years. They moreover renounced paternalism and servility, insisted on dealing with whites as employees and citizens rather than as subjects, and within their own society eschewed rigid class distinctions. While the heartland's blacks (whom whites deemed incapable of advancement) were thus moving toward modernity, whites themselves (by their own reckoning, the avatars of progress) took a step backward. Many left the towns in order to escape the black influx; they subsequently took up work on the farms where they were needed, and surrendered themselves to the traditionalism of the rural communities. More so than ever, the countryside in 1870 was the heart of white society. Furthermore, white patricians and plain folk alike preserved and reaffirmed their strict class identity and their archaic ethos of paternalism.

The repeated collisions of reality and illusion failed to shake white society from its complacent certitude. As they entered the 1870s, whites were as much as ever inclined to grant the freedmen nothing and themselves everything. If they were less sanguine about the future than they had been a decade earlier, they were no less convinced of the

unworthiness of the blacks and the legitimacy of their own fossilized social system and stale ideology. The freedmen, for their part, gathered in their new homes and churches and communities, rejected the white world and its gospel of racial and class inequality, stoically endured their legal and economic subjugation, and prayed hopefully for brighter days ahead. The Civil War in Middle Tennessee—more precisely, black initiative unleashed by the war—had liberated black society and pointed it toward the future, only to immure white society and point it toward the past.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

SAMPLING AND QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE MANUSCRIPT

CENSUS RETURNS OF 1860 AND 1870

The "rediscovery" of the nineteenth century manuscript census returns by Frank L. Owsley and his students in the 1940s revolutionized the study of Southern history. Since then a number of other historians have tapped these rich sources, using ever more sophisticated methods. In the present study I have relied much on the census returns from Middle Tennessee for 1860 and 1870, and a word about the collection and analysis of their bountiful contents is due the reader.

No other source comes close to providing the vast amount of social and economic data on all the people of nineteenth century Middle Tennessee that the census returns offer. For every free family they could find in 1860 and 1870, census takers completed a population schedule listing name, sex, age, race, occupation, real and personal wealth, place of birth, and other facts about each family member; an agricultural schedule eliciting details on the acreage, crops, equipment, and livestock of those who operated farms; and (in 1860) a slave schedule describing each slave owned. Most of the information is quantified or readily quantifiable, and when properly aggregated and analyzed grants a certain voice to the dead, so that even the traditionally mute common folk may "speak" of their historical experience.¹

¹The Middle Tennessee census schedules employed for this study were, for 1860, Schedule I (Free Inhabitants), Schedule II (Slaves),

For a historian to compile this information for every person in any sizeable region, however—including the Middle Tennessee heartland with its 300,000 inhabitants—would obviously be a hopelessly herculean labor. But the statistician has come to the historian's aid by devising techniques which permit conclusions about a whole population based on the analysis of a small (but rigorously selected) sample of that population.²

The omnipresent public opinion poll has widely propagated the notion of sampling but probably few people know much of its theory and practice. To the surprise of most, the accuracy of a sample has nothing to do with the proportion of the whole population that it represents. What matters is the absolute number of "cases" (i.e., elements of the population) in the sample. Whether the population (or "universe") under study numbers 1,000 or 1,000,000, the researcher can draw from it a sample of around 300 and be 95 percent certain that the characteristics of that sample will closely parallel those of the population. (Statisticians, like weather forecasters, are notorious hedgers—they speak always of probabilities, never of certainties.) That is to say, if 100 such samples were drawn, on the average only five would vary unacceptably

and Schedule IV (Productions of Agriculture); and for 1870, Schedule I (Inhabitants) and Schedule III (Productions of Agriculture). I used microfilm copies in the Main Library, The University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

²The best sources for information on sampling techniques are Charles M. Dollar and Richard J. Jensen, Historian's Guide to Statistics: Quantitative Analysis and Historical Research (New York, 1971), 11-15; Hubert Blalock, Social Statistics (New York, 1972), 509-30; and R. Christian Johnson, "A Procedure for Sampling the Manuscript Census Schedules," Journal of Interdisciplinary History, VIII (Winter, 1978), 515-30.

from the population (that is, if the researcher can tolerate a small deviation). Enlarging the sample beyond 300 will raise the probability and shrink the deviation. Thus, if a sample of 300 or more families were properly drawn from the 35,000 in the 1860 Middle Tennessee population schedules, and the data on these families tabulated, the probability is very high that all the quantifiable properties of the sampled families—average age of the head of the family, median wealth level and farm size, ratio of slaveowners to nonslaveowners, or any other statistic for any other "variable" (statistical argot for a measurable characteristic)—would very nearly match the properties of the whole population.

That the sample be "properly drawn" is the sine qua non of statistical sampling. Unless the sample is "unbiased," that is, unless every element in the population has an equal chance of being selected for the sample, distortions may be introduced which will invalidate generalizations made from the sample about the population. As a simple example, suppose a researcher adopted a short-cut sampling method of taking every person from the census rolls whose last name begins with "M." Undoubtedly, persons of Scottish descent would be over-represented in such a sample (as compared to their true proportion in the population) and they might as a group have possessed distinctive characteristics—for instance, greater than average wealth—which would skew the sample. The best method of securing an unbiased sample, and the method I have used, is to assign consecutive numbers to every element of the population, then draw random numbers (in the quantity required for the desired

sample size) from a random number table and match these with the numbered elements of the population. This will yield a truly random sample which, if sufficiently large, will approximate the attributes of the whole population.³

For this study I drew from the 1860 population schedules for the thirteen Middle Tennessee heartland counties a random sample of 1,000 families, and from the 1870 schedules another random sample of 1,200 families. I then searched the 1860 and 1870 agriculture and 1860 slave schedules for information on these same families. For each I recorded the values of a number of variables—mostly personal and family characteristics, but also "ecological" variables such as district population and average land values. I coded all these data onto 8,800 IBM cards which I then submitted to the astonishingly fast and flawless ministration of the computer, using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program.⁴

I made both samples large in order to enhance their reliability (a random sample of 1,000 cases has a better than 99 percent probability

³Rand Corporation, A Million Random Digits (New York, 1955), is the vade mecum for all in need of random numbers. The sampling procedure described here is the same used and described in Randolph B. Campbell and Richard G. Lowe, Wealth and Power in Antebellum Texas (College Station, Texas, and London, 1977).

⁴Norman H. Nie, et al., SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (second ed., New York, 1975); United States Census Bureau, The Statistics of the Population of the United States . . . (June 1, 1870) . . . (Washington, 1872), 261-69; Tennessee Comptroller of the Treasury, 1857 Tax Aggregates (Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville) is the source for district average land values for 1860 and 1870, since there is none available closer to either date.

of being within 5 percent of the universe's characteristics) and to ensure that important subgroups of the population—e.g., black families in 1870 and farm operators in 1860 and 1870—would have sufficient representation in the sample to permit their discrete analysis at the 95 percent "confidence level." I chose the family rather than the individual as the unit of analysis both because the numbering and arrangement of the population (which facilitate sampling) are by family in the census schedules, and because in the historical context the family is the most meaningful element, the basic social unit. Sampling individuals would mean including many children as subjects, whereas they are most appropriately considered as part of the family. Of course, making the family the unit of study still permits the analysis of one important class of individuals—heads of families—since a random sample of families will perforce yield a random sample of heads of families. (Census takers always listed the head of the family first.)

A few simple comparisons will illustrate how well these samples mimic the population, where aggregate population figures are available from published sources. The total number of individuals represented in the 1860 sample of 1,000 families is 5,507; thus, the average size of each family in the sample is 5.51 persons. From the published 1860 census reports can be computed the true average family size for the whole free population of the Middle Tennessee heartland: it turns out to be 5.52—the sample average is off by less than 0.2 percent. The 1870 sample has an average family size of 5.53, only slightly larger than the 5.47 calculated from 1870 aggregate data for the whole population. The proportion of black individuals in the 1870 sample is 36.9

percent, in the whole 1870 population 37.1 percent. The average value of personal property per family in the region in 1860, derived from the aggregate census reports, is \$5,024; the 1860 sample average is \$4,904, or just 2.4 percent low. The 1860 aggregates indicate a ratio of 56.4 farms for every 100 families in Middle Tennessee. If the 1860 sample is accurate, it should include about 564 farms: the number in the sample is indeed 564—a perfect correlation between sample and universe. The 1870 aggregates show 46.2 farms for every 100 families, which should yield 555 farms in the 1870 sample of 1,200 families: the number in sample is 543, or only 2.2 percent below that expected.⁵

These close parallels between aspects of the sample and the population which can be compared impart confidence that the sample will match the population in all its characteristics. It is the discovery of the unknown characteristics of the population—i.e., those for which only raw, unaggregated data exist—which is of most interest here and which is of course the purpose of the sampling. For all their assiduous

⁵United States Census Bureau, Population of the United States in 1860 . . . (Washington, 1864), 466-67; United States Census Bureau, Statistics of the United States (Including Mortality, Property, &c.) in 1860 . . . (Washington, 1866), 312, 348; United States Census Bureau, Agriculture of the United States in 1860 . . . (Washington, 1864), 215; Stats. of Pop. 1870, 61-62; United States Census Bureau, The Statistics of Wealth and Industry of the United States . . . (June 1, 1870) . . . (Washington, 1872), 242, 246, 362. The total number of families in the heartland in 1870 (65,021) is from my tabulations of manuscript data, since it was not given in the published aggregates; nor were figures on wealthholding for 1870. The number of farms given here is that determined by the Census Bureau using their definition of a farm; I have used a different definition when analyzing farms in the text.

fact-gathering, the census takers and compilers of 1860 and 1870 did not have our modern passion for statistics. Nor did they explicitly ask all the questions we would like them to have asked. Therefore I have manipulated the census data, using certain reasonable but admittedly arguable assumptions, in order to carry the data beyond their nineteenth century limitations and make them useful to us.

Some of this manipulation is more or less unexceptionable. In a few cases, for instance, census takers (who were paid per farm recorded) listed separate farms for two members of the same family. Such farms were undoubtedly operated as one and I have so treated them. Similarly, I have combined data on individual wealth and slaveholding where more than one member of a family was listed with such property. This accounts in part for the discrepancy between the number of slaveholders per 100 families in the heartland, taken from published aggregate sources and used for regional comparisons in Chapter I, and the smaller percentage of slaveholding families in the sample, given in Chapter IV. But this discrepancy arises mainly because many "slaveholders" counted in the aggregates—taken from the slave schedules—were in fact estates, trusts, or institutions which do not appear in the population schedules and have not been counted as families in the sample. The figures for slaveholding based on the sample are therefore conservative: they do not include slaves owned by estates or trusts, slaves of which a family might have had current use and prospective ownership.⁶

⁶Census takers' instructions required counting hotels, boarding houses, and similar institutions as one family, but only three such "families" appear in each of my samples and so no appreciable distortion

More problematical is defining "rural" and "urban" Middle Tennesseans in 1860 and 1870. The distinction, while recognized by contemporaries, did not preoccupy them as it does modern students of society. In all thirteen counties in the region in 1870, and all but three in 1860, the census takers did note the civil district in which each family lived and did compile separate civil district population totals (a county might encompass anywhere from eight to twenty-five districts). They did not specify towns, however, and since towns were almost never coterminous with districts few town populations can be specifically calculated and in any given district the town and country families cannot be distinguished. There is, moreover, no general agreement on just what constituted a "town" in the nineteenth century South.

The best that can be done therefore is to compare the published population totals of districts containing known "towns"—i.e., the county seats and any other places referred to in contemporary sources as towns—with those of known rural districts, and then designate an arbitrary minimum "urban" and maximum "rural" population. For 1860 a cut-off point of 1,500 defines as urban seventeen districts with known towns (total population 55,615) and only five districts which were probably just populous rural districts (total population 7,827). It

results. My statistics on total family wealth and slaveholdings will be generally comparable to those in other studies which deal only with heads of families, because almost every family's property was listed under the head's name alone. A preliminary computer check showed that over 94 percent of all wealth in the 1860 sample, and over 93 percent of all slaves, were listed under the head of the family.

defines as rural over 180 districts (total population 173,658), only four of which could be considered small towns (total population 4,892). After separating out those families in the sample who lived in rural districts as thus defined, or who lived in urban districts but operated a farm or were headed by a person with an agricultural occupation—farmer, overseer, or farm laborer—the remainder is an approximate but useable list of "urban" families. (Families in the three counties not reporting district totals in 1860 have been left out of this count.) General population growth in Middle Tennessee brought many rural districts above the 1,500 level after 1860, so I have set the rural-urban cut-off point for the 1870 analysis at 2,000. This designates twenty-one urban districts encompassing nineteen known towns (population 82,018) and only two populous rural districts (population 4,295), while excluding eight districts with very small towns (population 13,172).⁷

As a rough check on the validity of the cut-off point for 1860, a preliminary computer analysis of the sample showed that the families in districts of population under 1,500 included over 90 percent of all those whose heads had agricultural occupations and would therefore clearly have been rural. Unavoidably, the arbitrariness of the definition means that some truly rural families in the sample are included in the "town" category as analyzed in Chapter IV and elsewhere, and a few small-town urbanites in the "village" category. But these are likely not enough to affect the analysis seriously. "Farm" families,

⁷Stats. of Pop. 1870, 261-69.

the third category delineated, are easily identifiable by occupation or farm operation whether they were in rural or urban districts.

Family structure is another question that intrigues historians but was substantially ignored by the Census Bureau in 1860 and 1870. Not until 1880 did the Bureau ask the relationship of each family member to the head of the family. But some conclusions about families in the earlier censuses can be ventured based on age, sex, race, surname, and the ordering of individuals within families. (Instructions required census takers to list the head of the family first and spouse—if present—next, followed by their children in descending order of age, followed by all others.)⁸

In general my method has been to apply a "reasonableness" test to the data available, assuming when in doubt that the family in question was "nuclear," i.e., a husband and wife with children but with no other relatives or boarders in their household. Thus, I have assumed that a male family head followed in the schedules by a female of marriageable age (fourteen or older) with the same surname and race comprised a married couple, unless their ages are widely disparate and a subsequent list of children implies that the female was merely the oldest of them. Manifestly, this method will sometimes count as married a single man living with his sister or daughter or brother's widow. But I believe such cases to be few, as I will explain below. Since census takers never considered married women with spouses present as

⁸Instructions to census takers are reprinted in Carroll D. Wright and William C. Hunt, History and Growth of the United States Census . . . (Washington, 1900), 148-62, 235-38; and Lee Soltow, Patterns of Wealth-holding in Wisconsin since 1850 (Madison, 1971), 141-45.

heads of families, I have counted all female family heads as single. All persons following the family head or spouse in descending age order, of the same race and surname as the head and spouse and at least fourteen years younger than either, I have counted as nuclear children—unless "reasonableness" is thereby violated (e.g., if the ostensible parents were very aged and the children very young). All persons following these, of whatever age, race, or surname, I have counted as boarders. I gave up an early attempt to use surnames to distinguish nonnuclear relatives from boarders, because any "boarder" might well have been a relative with a different surname.

The wary reader might fairly insist that too broad a leap of faith is required to accept conclusions about family structure based on such tenuous evidence. Fortunately, however, because of the fortuitous disobedience of instructions by one census taker we can partially test the assumptions used here. In most of District Ten (and a few others) in Rutherford County in 1870 the census taker identified all married couples, and in some cases widows and widowers, though instructions required identifying only persons married within the last year. Of the 207 families in District Ten for whom he provided this information, in only one case would my assumptions incorrectly classify a married couple as unmarried, and in only twelve cases (at most—assuming the census taker never failed to mark any married couples) would these assumptions classify unmarried persons as married. This is an accuracy rate of at least 94 percent and, if this district is typical, there is reason for some confidence in the tabulations of family structure presented in the text. (These same census returns prove too

the unreliability of the age difference between man and woman as an indication of marital status: older men often had very young wives, while a few wives had husbands considerably younger than themselves.)

The 1860 and 1870 census data are thus sufficient to divide Middle Tennessee families into four broad categories: single-headed nuclear families, single-headed extended families (i.e., those with nonnuclear relatives or boarders), couple-headed nuclear families, and couple-headed extended families. This framework will be generally useful to historians of the family but will disappoint those who demand the fine-tuned distinctions among "extended," "augmented," and "multiple" families which the post-1870 census data permit.⁹

Analyzing occupations, too, requires imposing modern constructions on historical data. Several historians have devised occupational categories for their nineteenth century subjects, but most of these schemata complement urban studies—where differentiating among types of professionals or artisans or laborers is useful—rather than the study of rural areas like Middle Tennessee where most people worked on farms. The best analytical approach to occupations in the rural nineteenth century South is that of Frank J. Huffman, Jr., in his dissertation on Clarke County, Georgia. I have unblushingly adopted in toto his eight-category breakdown: professional, landed farmer,

⁹Useful guides to the analysis of family structure using the 1860 and 1870 censuses are Lutz K. Berkner, "The Use and Misuse of Census Data for the Historical Analysis of Family Structure," Journal of Interdisciplinary History, V (Spring, 1975), 721-38; and Paul J. Lammermeier, "The Urban Black Family of the Nineteenth Century: A Study of Black Family Structure in the Ohio Valley, 1850-1880," Journal of Marriage and the Family, XXXV (Aug., 1973), 440-55.

minor professional, skilled worker, overseer, unskilled laborer, landless agricultural worker, and no occupation. These categories would have seemed reasonable to a Middle Tennessean of the 1860s, though the implicit hierarchical prestige-ranking was probably not the rigid article of faith for people then that it is for many social analysts now.¹⁰

Nearly all occupations I found in the census manuscripts fit unambiguously into one or the other of these categories (the reader may consult Appendix B to judge this for himself). Many family heads, most of them women, had no occupation listed, or a nonremunerative domestic one. I have assigned them to the no occupation category unless they had a farm, in which case they are designated landed farmers (if their families had any real property) or landless agricultural workers. Dual occupations (generally farmer and professional or farmer and artisan) are more troublesome; I have simply counted the occupation given first. I have not analyzed the occupations of female spouses because virtually all were domestic and nonremunerative.

Farms, unlike slaves, were always listed under the name of a person (almost always the family head) who was also in the population schedules. If we count as one farm those few cases in which two members of the same family had separately listed farms, the random sample of families yields a (smaller) random sample of farms, since each farm in the agricultural schedules has an equal chance of being picked. This

¹⁰Frank J. Huffman, Jr., "Old South, New South: Continuity and Change in a Georgia County, 1850-1880" (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1974).

permits the separate analysis of Middle Tennessee farms presented in Chapters V and XVI. These chapters investigate farm operators and their farms, not "farmers." Many persons not calling themselves farmers had farms, while some listed as farmers had no farms (see Chapter II for details).

The data in the agricultural schedules are quantified and unequivocal: number of improved acres, number of cows, bushels of corn produced, etc. But the Census Bureau's definition of a farm—requiring a minimum of three acres of land, whether improved or unimproved—was too generous. I have analyzed only farms with at least one acre of improved land, since no "farm" without improved land could have had any significant agricultural production. Farms thus dropped from analysis constitute about 6 percent of the sample of farms.

Improved acreage is the most accurate gauge of the size and value of a farm. For this reason I have size-ranked farms by improved (rather than total) acreage in Chapters V and XVI. Unimproved acreage (that is, uncleared land—generally woodland), no matter how extensive, represents only potential production and was generally ignored in appraising a farm. A preliminary computer check showed that the reported "cash value of farm" for nearly half of the farms in both samples is merely the improved acreage of the farm multiplied by an even multiple of five dollars—ten, fifteen, twenty, or twenty-five dollars, and so on—representing the farmer's estimate of the value per acre of his improved land. Since this was apparently so common a practice, I have computed the land value per acre for every farm by dividing cash value by improved acreage.

(Buildings, like unimproved land, seem to have been a negligible factor in assessing the value of farms.)¹¹

Until 1880 the Census Bureau did not require the specification of tenant farmers. In the 1860 and 1870 schedules farms were listed under the name of the "operator," whether owner or tenant. I have assumed, however, that a farm operator who owned no real estate (and whose family owned none) was a tenant. This method is not foolproof, of course, since a farmer might have rented a farm and yet owned real estate elsewhere. But the assumption can be tested because in a few districts the census taker exceeded instructions by marking tenant-operated farms in the agricultural schedules. Forty-six such farms appear in the 1860 sample, of which forty-four are identifiable as tenant farms using my assumption. Ninety-three tenant farms in the 1870 sample were marked, of which my assumption identifies eighty-nine. This represents an accuracy rate of 96 percent for both samples.¹²

A more important question than the proper sampling and manipulation of the census data is the fundamental reliability of those data. How accurate are these facts and figures? Any careful researcher is immediately put on guard by the frequent appearance of round numbers in

¹¹Gavin Wright, "Economic Democracy and the Concentration of Agricultural Wealth," in William N. Parker, ed., The Structure of the Cotton Economy of the Antebellum South (Washington, 1970), agrees—on the basis of a complex regression analysis—that the "cash value of farm" was based mainly on improved acreage.

¹²Blanche Henry Clarke, The Tennessee Yeomen, 1840-1860 (Nashville, 1942), 32, says that there were squatters in Tennessee in 1860 in areas of low population and plentiful public land. Since that description does not apply to the heartland, I have assumed that all landless farm operators were tenants. Huffman, "Old South, New South," confirms the validity of this assumption.

the age, wealth, and agricultural columns of the census manuscripts. (One Davidson County census taker's wry notation in the margin of the 1860 slave schedules drolly illustrates the frustrating inexactness of enumeration: next to the entry describing a 110-year-old slave he wrote, "Thinks he is much older, Indeed he thinks he recolects seeing the corn stalks deposited in the Trees by Noah^s flood.") This is not really a cause for concern, however. Estimation is to be expected of a minimally educated, rural society unaccustomed to meticulous record-keeping. Errors due to such estimation or to inadvertent mistranscription by census takers should, in any event, average out in a large sample.¹³

More serious is the possibility that systematic errors might grossly bias the census reports. This has inspired several historians to evaluate rigorously the accuracy of the 1860 and 1870 censuses. They award generally high ratings to both, with two reservations: possible under-counting of the poor in both years and under-reporting of property in 1870. (The Census Bureau in fact dropped the real and personal property questions after 1870 because of alleged widespread under-reporting that year.)¹⁴

Under-counting of the less wealthy (and thus less visible) populace may indeed have occurred in Nashville and other large towns in the

¹³Schedule II (Slaves), 1860, Davidson County, Tennessee, District Twenty, p. 18.

¹⁴Campbell and Lowe, *Wealth and Power in Antebellum Texas*, 22-24; Roger L. Ransom and Richard Sutch, *One Kind of Freedom: The Economic Consequences of Emancipation* (New York, 1977), 294-95, 371n.; Wright, "Economic Democracy," 95-97; Huffman, "Old South, New South," 144-46.

heartland where transients could elude the most diligent census taker. But the great majority of Middle Tennesseans lived on farms or in villages where a man knew all his neighbors (one of whom was the census taker) and strangers were conspicuous. Few could have dodged the count in these localities. Those in the big towns who did could represent only a tiny fraction of the population, not enough to distort noticeably the overall enumeration.

Under-reporting of property in 1870 was common in the South but seems to have been related to the fear of whites in certain regions that Radical Republican state governments would use the wealth data to assess higher taxes. Such a fear could not have troubled Middle Tennesseans in the summer of 1870 because their state had by then returned to conservative control. There is no convincing reason, therefore, to challenge the overall reliability of the census data analyzed in this study.¹⁵

My analysis has employed a few basic statistical procedures requiring some explanation. The tables in the text, all derived from the 1860 and 1870 census samples, are of two types. Breakdowns, such as Table IV-7, page 124, show the average (or mean) quantity and overall proportion of one uncategorized variable held or produced by various categories of Middle Tennessee families and farms (based on the same or another variable). Thus, Table IV-7 shows the mean wealth and percentage of total wealth held by each tenth of Middle Tennessee

¹⁵Ransom and Sutch, One Kind of Freedom, 294-95, 371n.

families ranked by wealth. Similarly, Table V-19, page 232, shows the mean corn production and percentage of total corn production for owner-operated and tenant-operated farms. Included also in the breakdowns are the overall sample mean of the uncategorized variable and its overall median. (The median is the point below which half the cases in the sample fall. It is often a more useful statistic than the mean, which can be grossly inflated by a few large values. Note in Table IV-7, page 124, for example, the great disparity between the mean and median wealth figures, due to the presence of a few very rich families.)¹⁶

Each table gives also the total number of cases ("N") considered in that particular analysis. This number rarely equals the size of the whole sample because census takers did not always record every item of requested information for every family and farm. I have omitted cases with such "missing values" for any variable from all tabulations of that variable. Thus, in Table IV-8, page 126, for example, information on personal property holding was not provided for one of the 1,000 families in the sample, and so $N = 999$.

Most of the tables, however, are crosstabulations—also called contingency tables or joint frequency distributions—a basic tool of statistical analysis. These can give greater insight into the relationship between two variables than can breakdowns, but they require that both variables be categorized.

In analyzing crosstabulations statisticians distinguish between "dependent" and "independent" variables. In a loose sense, the dependent

¹⁶The best guides for historians using quantitative methods are Edward Shorter, The Historian and the Computer: A Practical Guide (New

variable is the "result" we wish to explain, and the independent variable is the "causative factor" used to explain the distribution of the dependent variable. Depending on the researcher's approach, any given variable can be seen as dependent or independent. In Chapter IV, for example, I have focused on five independent variables (residence, wealth, occupation, slaveholding, and age) whose "explanatory" power I consider to be greatest. These are successively crosstabulated with a number of dependent variables (including these same five, plus family structure and a few others) in order to show the influence of each independent variable on the dependent variables.

It seems reasonable that the age of the head of a family might influence, explain, or even "cause" his wealth or occupation or family structure, for instance, but not vice versa. This would appear to make nonsense, therefore, out of a table such as IV-21, page 152, which shows occupation "causing" age. Thus, it is perhaps intuitively more agreeable to think of each crosstabulation in this study as a description of various categories of families or farms (defined by the independent variable), and to think of the distinctive relationship of each category to the dependent variable as a convenient measure for describing and comparing the categories. The five independent variables analyzed in Chapter IV, then, merely represent five different ways of looking at, or categorizing, Middle Tennessee families in 1860, and the various dependent variables are useful descriptive themes.

Each crosstabulation shows the percentage of cases in a particular category of the independent variable which fall into a given category of

York, 1971); Roderick Floud, Introduction to Quantitative Methods for Historians (Princeton, New Jersey, 1973); and Dollar and Jensen, Historian's Guide to Statistics.

the dependent variable. Thus, Table IV-1, page 108, shows that 40 percent of town families in 1860 were among the poorest 20 percent of all families, while only 6 percent of farm families were in that same low category of wealth. The numbers always refer to percentage of the particular category of the independent variable (which is always displayed across the top of the table—in Table IV-1 residence is the independent variable) and they always total 100 (with allowances for rounding) when read down the columns. At the periphery of the cross-tabulations I have given, where necessary, separate frequency distributions (in both absolute numbers and percentages) for the dependent and independent variables, and discrete means for each category.

Such a hodgepodge of numbers may at first seem hopelessly confusing. But familiarity will breed understanding and a little practice will allow the reader to skim quickly over each table, readily picking out its significant points. Let us use Table IV-3, page 112, showing residence by slaveholding, as an example. The best way to begin is to look to the far upper right corner of this table, which shows the overall percentage of families in the sample holding twenty or more slaves: it is 3 percent. Then, moving leftward in the same row, compare the 3 percent figure with each figure encountered under the various categories of residence, to see if it is higher, lower, or the same. The figure in the farm category is higher (5 percent), while in the village and town categories it is lower (0 percent). This means that 5 percent of the farm families owned twenty or more slaves, but none of the village or town families did. Since 3 percent of families overall owned this many slaves, we may say that large slaveholders

were over-represented among farm families and under-represented among others; or, alternately, that farm families were more concentrated than others in the rank of large slaveholders. Repeating this procedure for each horizontal row in the crosstabulation will yield a general impression of the relationship between the two variables. (Where a variable is categorized by deciles or other percentages I have given no separate frequency distribution for it in the margins, since the percentage of the whole which each category contains is self-evident.)

It is very helpful to supplement such cursory inspection with some statistical tests which more rigorously assess the relationship between two crosstabulated variables. The size of a random sample alone is enough to give us confidence that measures of any of the sample's variables are close to those of the population's. But it is not enough to assure us that an observed relationship between two variables of a sample reflects a true relationship in the population. For this we need a "test of statistical significance," which applies a simple formula (given in any statistics text) to compare observed counts with the counts to be expected if there were no relationship between the variables. This yields a number (χ^2 , pronounced "chi-square") which is used to judge whether the observed relationship in the sample cross-tabulation mirrors a true relationship in the population, or is merely the result of chance. The larger the table the greater will be χ^2 , so the "significance" of any χ^2 value (i.e., the probability of obtaining a χ^2 that high if there is really no relationship between the variables) must be calculated, taking into account "degrees of freedom" (d.f.), a number based on the size of the table.

The significance is always given as a decimal. Thus, in Table IV-31, page 173, for example, the significance of X^2 is .0035, meaning that on the average only thirty-five samples out of 10,000 of this size will yield so high a X^2 value if the relationship implied in the sample crosstabulation does not really exist in the population. As a general rule, statisticians reject as too likely to be random any sample correlation whose X^2 significance is greater than .05. For most of the tables in this study it is considerably lower, and thus we may have confidence in the actual existence of the observed relationships.

When the number of cases in the sample is small it is difficult to get a X^2 of acceptable significance even if the true relationship between the variables is quite strong. When there are many cases X^2 will be of acceptable significance even if there is only a very weak relationship. So X^2 tells us whether the sample size is large enough to justify a conclusion that there is some relationship between two variables, but it does not indicate the strength of that relationship. For that we require a "measure of association." Statisticians have devised various measures of association for use with tables of different types. One of the most useful is Pearson's contingency coefficient (designated "C"), which is based on X^2 .

The minimum possible value of C is zero, indicating that there is no relationship at all between the variables. The maximum value (indicating a perfect relationship—i.e., every case in a given category of the dependent variable is in a specific category of the independent variable, and vice versa) depends on the table size—for a table of two rows by two columns it is .707, but it approaches 1.0 as the table size

increases. To adopt the statistician's conceptual viewpoint, the higher the value of C for a given table, the better is that independent variable as an "explanation" of the distribution of the dependent variable.

The researcher must decide what minimum value of C he will accept as indicating an appreciable relationship, taking into account that a low C on a small table will be equivalent to a higher C on a larger table. Though C values for tables of different sizes are thus not strictly comparable, they are nevertheless helpful in deciding whether an observed relationship is strong, after χ^2 has been evaluated to see the probability that there is a relationship at all. (It is possible to have a high C value for a sample contingency table when in fact there is no real association between the variables, so the significance of χ^2 must be checked first, always.) There is no hard and fast rule, but very generally C values of .25 or higher on a large table of historical data, or somewhat less on a small table, denote a relationship strong enough to demand the historian's attention.¹⁷

The fundamental point to keep in mind is that no single approach to the tables can properly explicate them: the reader must employ χ^2 , C , and his own careful examination of each table. By itself χ^2 indicates only the probability that there is a relationship; C only that the relationship is relatively strong or weak; but the tables themselves must be scrutinized for the direction of the relationship. The high C value

¹⁷For justification of the use of C despite its drawbacks (not all of which I have discussed) see Dollar and Jensen, Historian's Guide to Statistics, 80-82; and David R. Goldfield, Urban Growth in the Age of Sectionalism: Virginia, 1847-1861 (Baton Rouge and London, 1977), 68, 88.

for Table IV-33, page 180, for example, might mean either that wealth tends strongly to increase or strongly to decrease as one goes up the age ranks, or perhaps even that the relationship is a complex nonlinear one. In fact, as only a perusal of the table itself can reveal, the general trend of wealth is upward with age.

For all its elegant formulas, tidy tables, and precise numbers, the quantitative analysis of historical data is essentially as ambiguous, subjective, and messy as more traditional historical interpretation. Its objectivity is undermined first of all by the inevitably incomplete and error-ridden data with which the historian is forced to work. Unlike the pollster, the historian cannot interview his subjects and can rarely check his data against other sources. And second, the results of the analysis are influenced strongly, not to say decisively, by the way the historian has arranged and categorized his data, which is in turn determined by his subjective sense of what is appropriate. No amount of "scientific" deduction can tell the historian of the antebellum South whether, for example, he should divide slaveholders into two categories or ten, or even whether slaveholding is a meaningful variable. To make such decisions he must simply depend on his educated feeling for what is right. Out of the literally thousands of tables that the computer might have generated for this study, a few dozen had to be culled and interpreted which seem most cogently to depict Middle Tennesseans in 1860 and 1870. No two historians would have done this in quite the same way, and that is at once the delight and the frustration of "doing" history.

APPENDIX B

OCCUPATIONS OF FAMILY HEADS IN THE 1860 AND 1870

CENSUS SAMPLES

Professional

Agent for iron works	Minister, Old School Presbyterian
Attorney General	Missionary Baptist minister
Banker	Old School Presbyterian clergy
Baptist clergyman	Physician
Book merchant	Preacher, Methodist
Botanic doctor	Principal, Fisk University
Broker	Professor in college
Builder [i.e., contractor]	Professor of Languages in Cumberland
Chancery Court clerk	University
Circuit Court clerk	Professor of Music
Clergyman	Real estate agent
Confectionery store [owner?]	Retail grocer
Corn merchant	Retail liquor [dealer]
Cumberland Presbyterian minister	Retail merchant
Dentist	Retired merchant
Doctor	Secretary, insurance company
Druggist	Shoe merchant
Dry goods merchant	Tobacco merchant
Episcopal clergyman	Tobacconist
Fancy goods dealer	Town register
Foundry [owner]	Trader
Grocer	Trader in real estate
Grocery merchant	
Horse doctor	<u>Landed Farmer</u>
Hotel keeper	
Indian doctor	Farm hand
Judge, Chancery Court, State	Farm laborer
Justice of the Peace	Farmer
Lawyer	Farming
Magistrate	Works on farm
Mail contractor	
Marketer	<u>Minor Professional</u>
M.D.	
Merchant	Assistant clothier
Methodist clergyman	Bar keeper
Methodist minister	Bartender
Methodist Episcopal clergyman	Boarding house keeper
Minister	Book agent

Minor Professional (cont'd)

Clerk
 Clerk at express office
 Clerk at hotel
 Clerk at woodyard
 Clerk—dry goods
 Collector
 Constable
 Freight agent
 Huckster
 Ice cream saloon [employee]
 Keeper of poor
 Keeping boarding house
 Keeps news stand
 Keeps stable
 Landlord Kingston Springs
 [boarding house?]
 Livery and sale stable keeper
 Peddler
 Postmaster
 Railroad clerk
 Railroad contractor
 [i.e., agent]
 Saloon keeper
 Schoolteacher
 Teacher
 Teacher, common school
 Teaches school
 Tippling house keeper
 U.S. gauger

Skilled Worker

Barber
 Bell hanger
 Blacksmith
 Boot and shoe maker
 Bootmaker
 Brass molder
 Brick maker
 Brickmason
 Builder [i.e., carpenter]
 Butcher
 Cabinet maker
 Carpenter
 Carriage maker
 Carriage trimmer
 Chair maker

Coach maker
 Coach smith
 Confectioner
 Cooper
 Daguerrotypist
 Engine builder
 Engineer
 Engineer (steamboat)
 Foreman in sawmill
 Foundry man
 Gunsmith
 Hatter
 House carpenter
 Master machinist
 Master mason
 Matrass maker
 Mechanic
 Miller
 Millwright
 Moulder
 Painter
 Piano tuner
 Plasterer
 Printer
 Railroad engineer
 River pilot
 Rock mason
 Saddler
 Sawyer
 Shoemaker
 Spirits rectifier
 Stiller [i.e., distiller]
 Stone cutter
 Stone mason
 Surgical instrument maker
 Tailor
 Tanner
 Tinner
 Wagon maker
 Watchmaker
 Wheelwright
 Wood carver
 Wood turner
 Works at shoemaker's trade

Overseer

Overseer
 Superintendent on farm

Unskilled Laborer

Attending sawmill
 Boatman
 Carder
 Common laborer
 Cook
 Day laborer
 Domestic servant
 Domestic service
 Dray driver
 Drives hack
 Driving team
 Factory operator [i.e., worker]
 Gate keeper
 Hackman
 Hod carrier
 Keeping toll gate
 Laborer
 Labors in wool machine
 Nurse
 Omnibus driver
 Ore screener
 Porter in railroad depot
 Porter in store
 Railroad hand
 Railroad laborer
 Runs express [i.e., messenger]
 Seamstress
 Servant
 Steamboat hand
 Teamster
 Toll gate keeper
 Waggoner
 Washer
 Washerwoman
 Washes and irons
 Well digger
 Whitewasher
 Wood chopper
 Wood carder
 Working in carding factory
 Working on timber
 Works for carpenter

Works in blacksmith shop
 Works in brickyard
 Works in cotton mill
 Works in ore bank
 Works in sawmill

Landless Agricultural Worker

Farm hand
 Farm laborer
 Farmer
 Farmer—rents
 Farming
 Hired farming
 Laborer on farm
 Retired farmer
 Tenant
 Works on farm

No Occupation

[Blank entry]
 Gentleman
 Keeping house
 Lady
 No occupation
 Rents house
 Sewing
 Spinning
 Unknown
 Weaving

Unclassifiable

Loose occupation
 Prostitute

APPENDIX C

HOUSEHOLD INVENTORY OF A TYPICAL MIDDLE

TENNESSEE FARMER, 1860

Below is reproduced the inventory of the household effects of John Phillips, a Pennsylvania-born Bedford County farmer who died in 1857 at the age of about eighty-three. The census returns show that in 1850 Phillips owned and lived on a 300-acre farm in District Twenty with his wife Elizabeth and daughter Mary, six other free persons, and one slave. He may be regarded as a typical farmer of the antebellum heartland, and this inventory illustrates the comfortable but by no means luxurious existence that the region afforded most of its free agrarian folk before the Civil War. (Sources: Bedford County, Tennessee, Clerk and Master's Office, Minutes, May 1860, pp. 320-24 [Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville]; manuscript census returns of population, slaves, and agriculture, Bedford County, Tennessee, 1850.)

1 Bible	1 writing desk
9 books	1 pair of andirons
1 lot of books	2 shotguns
1 table and cloths	1 gourd and some powder
1 small table	1 bottle of pain killer
7 chairs	1 pocketbook
2 beds and furniture	1 rat trap
1 bedstead and furniture	3 steel traps
1 cupboard	1 slate
1 bookcase	1 reel
1 chest	3 lots of sundries
1 candlestand	1 pair of cotton cards
1 looking glass	1 flax wheel
1 long clock	1 loom
1 clock	1 set of tumblers

1 large dish
 2 lots of dishes
 2 pitchers
 1 molasses can
 1 ladle
 1 jar
 1 lot of bottles
 1 kettle
 1 pot
 1 lot of pots
 1 keg
 3 baskets
 1 bucket
 1 tub
 1 tray
 2 lots of [kitchen] articles
 1 iron rack
 1 pot rack
 1 pickling stand
 1 crout [kraut?] stand
 1 meat trough
 1 skillet and lid
 1 oven and lid
 1 keg of vinegar
 9½ bushels of salt
 1 lot of salt
 1 sausage
 33 pounds of lard
 2 barrels of soap
 17 plugs of tobacco
 4 plows
 1 Diamond plow
 1 set of plow gear
 1 wheat sieve
 1 wheat fan
 1 wheel barrow
 1 hatchet and sheepskin
 1 hatchet and auger
 4 axes
 1 chopping axe
 1 hand saw
 1 crosscut saw
 1 foot adze
 1 straw cutter
 1 mowing scythe
 1 scythe
 1 pruning knife
 1 auger and drawing knife
 1 mattock

1 hoe
 1 hoe and 1 fork
 1 pitchfork
 1 hammer
 1 plane
 1 frow
 2 iron wedges
 1 lot of tools
 1 log chain
 1 pair of steel yards
 1 half-bushel measure
 4 empty barrels
 2 meal sacks
 1 bucket
 1 bucket and nails
 1 lot of hoop iron
 1 box of iron
 1 yoke
 1 small yoke
 2 singletrees
 1 set of ox bows
 1 pair of plow lines
 1 side saddle
 1 man's saddle
 1 pair of saddle bags
 1 bridle
 1 girth
 1 set of hames
 1 pair of gear
 1 ox cart
 2 pairs of sheep shears
 1 curry comb
 2 bee stands
 29 head of hogs
 48 head of sheep
 1 white cow and calf
 1 white cow and calf
 1 heifer
 1 bull
 1 white steer
 1 yoke of oxen
 1 gray mare
 1 bay horse
 1 sorrel colt
 1 gray mule
 1 iron-gray mule
 1 yearling mule
 1 lot of leather
 800 shingles

1 lot of flax
72 pounds of wool
100 pounds of soap
141 pounds of bacon
29½ bushels of potatoes
35½ bushels of wheat
4,885 binds of oats
1 lot of corn
4 barrels of refuse corn
177 barrels of corn

VITA

Stephen Vaughan Ash was born November 22, 1948, in El Centro, California. After secondary education in California and Pennsylvania, he attended Gettysburg College and received the Bachelor of Arts degree in History in 1970. Following a period of employment with the Social Security Administration in Washington, D.C., he entered the graduate program of The University of Tennessee, Knoxville. In 1974 he was awarded the Master of Arts degree in History. He has been a teaching assistant in the History Department and one of the most steadfast patrons of Sam and Andy's Restaurant. He received the Doctor of Philosophy degree with a major in History in 1983.