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Irish Immigrants in the Rural U.S. Slave South

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Declaration for PhD Thesis

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own work and that I have not obtained a degree from this university, or elsewhere, on the basis of this work. I have read, and adhered to, the University's policy on plagiarism, as detailed at: http://www.nuigalway.ie/plagiarism/.

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Abstract

This dissertation investigates the Irish immigrant experience in the rural areas of the U.S. slave South before the American Civil War. Specifically, it focuses on the analysis of the Irish immigrants' involvement with Catholicism and slavery in the U.S. southern states of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Mississippi, and Louisiana. What follows therefore, is an in-depth investigation of the historical, moral and practical acceptance of US slavery by Irish immigrants and of how the latter adjusted and profited from the antebellum slave economy. This thesis contains four chapters.

Chapter one provides a historical survey of the colonial roots of Irish slaveholders in the antebellum US South. This demonstrates that their experience with rural antebellum slavery was an integral part of Irish engagement with Atlantic slavery. Chapter two outlines the moral acceptance of slavery by Irish immigrants by focusing on the development of the Catholic Church in the antebellum South. Using the case study of Irish Catholic immigrants, this chapter investigates how Irish Catholics identified with their adopted states and the South's values and interests, while maintaining their own religious identity.

The third chapter examines Irish antebellum slave-ownership. The opportunities for Irish immigrants to acquire slave property varied according to boom and bust cycles in the slave economy. The profits extracted from slavery elevated some Irishmen amongst the wealthiest individuals in the nineteenth-century industrial world. The final Chapter assesses the lives of Irish immigrants who did not own slaves, but laboured in the rural antebellum US South. This chapter examines the role of non-slaveholding immigrants and the impact they had on rural southern society. Life at the lower level of society was full of multiple types of biracial level interactions and this work focuses and analyses in detail the complexity of interactions between Irish and slave labourers.

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Archives:

AAHC: Archives of All Hallows College, Dublin, Ireland.
AANO: Archives of the Archdiocese of New Orleans, Louisiana.
ACDJ: Archives of the Catholic Diocese of Jackson, Mississippi.
DCA: Diocese of Charleston Archives, South Carolina.
DDA: Dublin Diocesan Archive, Ireland.
DU: David M. Rubenstein Rare Books and Manuscripts Library, Duke
         University, Durham, North Carolina.
GHS: Georgia Historical Society, Savannah, Georgia.
HNOC: Historic New Orleans Collection, Williams Research Center, New
         Orleans, Louisiana.
LLMVC: Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, Louisiana
         State University   Libraries, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.
MDAH: Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Jackson,
         Mississippi.
NLI: National Library of Ireland, Dublin, Ireland.
OADS: Office of Archives Catholic Diocese of Savannah, Georgia.
PRONI: Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, Belfast, Northern
         Ireland.
SCHS: South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston, South Carolina.
SCL: South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina,
         Columbia, South Carolina.
SHC: Southern Historical Collection, Wilson Library, University of
         North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina.
TU: Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University, New
         Orleans, Louisiana.

Journals:

AHR: *The American Historical Review.*
GHQ: *Georgia Historical Quarterly.*
JAIHS: *The Journal of the American Irish Historical Society.*
JAH: *Journal of American History.*
JER: *Journal of the Early Republic.*
JLHA: *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical
           Association.*
JSH: *Journal of Southern History.*
SCHM: *The South Carolina Historical Magazine.*
WMQ: *The William and Mary Quarterly*

Introduction

This thesis offers a new perspective on the study of the Irish in the US and the history of US slavery through a full and detailed analysis of the rural lives of Catholic and Protestant Irish immigrants in the US southern states. An Irish Catholic slaveholding family, whose plantation *Tara* was named after the ancient seat of the high Kings of Ireland, is at the heart of the most successful and popular stories romanticizing the Old South, Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind* (1936).[1] Yet to date, no scholarly monograph on Irish slaveholders in the antebellum US South exists. Therefore the central focus of this doctoral thesis examines an understudied part of the Irish story in America by exploring the rural Irish immigrant experience with US slavery, prior to the outbreak of the American Civil War (1861-1865). It focuses specifically on five southern states, Louisiana, Mississippi, Georgia, South Carolina and North Carolina. The antebellum South was never socially, politically or economically a homogenous monolith. However, all these states were impacted by the spread of short-staple cotton production. The cultivation of cotton spread from upcountry Carolina and northward from Natchez eventually overlapping into the adjoining states within a generation. During the antebellum period cotton production dominated the vast "cotton belt" from eastern North Carolina to the Gulf of Mexico and strengthened the connection between slavery and economic development. Together, these states show an underpinning common experience among Irish immigrants which this thesis argues can be taken as representative of the overall Irish immigrant experience in the US South. By comparing the experiences of Irish immigrants and especially slaveholders affiliated to these sample slave states, this study sheds new light on a little studied area of antebellum history, of the aforementioned US southern states and the US South as a whole.

The Irish, who came to the American South during the nineteenth-century, entered a society in which the economic and political order were

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[1] Geraldine, Higgins, "Tara, the O'Haras, and the Irish *Gone With the Wind*," *Southern Cultures*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (Spring, 2011), 30-49.

both based on the firm commitment to the institution of slavery. The master-slave relationship provided a model for all social relations. Most southerners agreed with the sentiment of Thomas Jefferson, who wrote in his *Notes on the State of Virginia*, that African American slaves "whether originally a distinct race, or made distinct by time and circumstances, are inferior to whites in the endowments both of body and mind."[2] Irish immigrants accepted southerners' attempts to preserve racial slavery, by arguing that white supremacy was the keystone of society. This acceptance was lamented by American Abolitionists. For example, the abolitionist paper *The Liberator* on the 11th August 1854, stated, "Passage to the United States seems to produce the same effect upon the exile of Erin as the eating of the forbidden fruit did upon Adam and Eve. In the morning they were pure, loving and innocent, in the evening guilty."[3] By then, cotton grown on US slave based plantations had become "the launching pad for the broader Industrial Revolution," generating unprecedented profit.[4] The US produced 55 million pounds of cotton in 1802. By 1860, as a result of global demand and slavery's expansion, the US produced 2,241 million pounds, worth $249,000,000.[5] For the Irish who established themselves in the South, slavery was therefore crucial to their hopes of prosperity. Slavery granted them membership in the "ruling race." The slave economy of the US South afforded Irish immigrants more opportunities of economic advancement than in Ireland, and their white skin and acceptance of slavery automatically elevated them from the bottom tier of southern society.[6]

Slavery was the most important financial institution of the antebellum American Republic. To fully comprehend the true nature of the Irish immigrant experience in the US South, this thesis examines thoroughly the interaction of Irish immigrants with the institution of slavery. To date, no in-depth textual analysis of Irish slaveholders in the US has been undertaken. This study takes account for a relatively small community of

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[2] Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, (London, 1999), [1785], 150-151.
[3] Cited in Will Kaufman, *The Civil War in American Culture*, (Edinburgh, 2006), 137.
[4] Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton: A Global History*, (New York, 2015), xiv.
[5] Robin Blackburn, *The American Crucible: Slavery, Emancipation and Human Rights*, (London, 2011), 166.
[6] David T. Gleeson, *The Irish in the South, 1815-1877*, (Chapel Hill, 2001), 121.

Irish southern settlers and slaveholders. By 1860, the eleven slave states that seceded to form the Confederate States of America had an Irish born population of 84,763 or five percent of the 1860 Irish-born population in the US.[7]

<p align="center">Table 1. Irish Population of the South</p>

State	Irish Population in 1850	Irish Population in 1860	Total Foreign-born Population 1860	% Irish of total Foreign-born Population 1860	Irish % of Total Population 1860	Irish % of Total White Population 1860
Georgia	3,202	6,586	11,671	56.4	0.62	1.11
Louisiana	24,266	28,207	81,029	34.8	3.98	7.89
Mississippi	1,928	3,893	8,558	45.4	0.49	1.10
North Carolina	567	899	3,299	26.9	0.09	0.14
South Carolina	4,051	4,996	9,986	49.1	0.71	1.70

Sources: Gleeson, *The Irish in the South*, 26-27; James M. Woods, *A History of the Catholic Church in the American South, 1513-1900,* (Gainesville, 2011), 283.

Throughout this work, the term "Irish" is used in an inclusive manner to encompass persons born in Ireland regardless of their religious convictions. In the nineteenth century, most individuals who identified with Ireland as their homeland referred to themselves simply as Irish, and contemporary accounts tend not to distinguish between Irish and Scots-Irish.[8] Traditional assumptions about Irish immigrants in the US maintain

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[7] David T. Gleeson, *The Green and the Gray: The Irish in the Confederate States of America*, (Chapel Hill, 2013), 7-8.

[8] For more on the debate between Irish and Scots-Irish see David T. Gleeson, "Smaller Differences: 'Scotch Irish' and 'Real Irish' in the Nineteenth-century American South," *New Hibernia Review*, Vol. 2, No. 2, (Summer, 2006), 68-91; Michael P. Carroll, "How the Irish Became Protestant in America," *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (Winter, 2006), 25-54. See also David Noel Doyle, "Scots Irish or Scotch-Irish," in J. J. Lee & Marion R. Casey, (eds.), *Making The Irish American: History and Heritage of the Irish in the United States*, (New York, 2006), 151-170; Patrick Griffin, *The People with No Name: Ireland's Ulster Scots, American's Scots Irish, and the Creation of a British Atlantic World, 1689-1764*, (Princeton, 2001); Kerby A. Miller,

that they carried a prejudice against farming. Agriculture was deemed to be the source of their "poverty, unemployment, famine, unrewarding labor, eviction and a dismal future. They needed a job with cash wages as speedily as possible, having little or no capital, and their want urged them to concentrate in the larger cities and towns."[9] The perception was that the South was too rural and that the slave system curtailed labour opportunities. Moreover the South was believed to be a bastion of Protestantism, a place where Catholic immigrants were not welcomed.

Such considerations led historians such as Ray Allen Billington, in *The Protestant Crusade* (1938), to conclude that the slave states did not experience the impact of immigration; both "Germans and the Irish avoided the states below the Mason-Dixon line—the Irish because sparse settlement and lack of industrial opportunity deterred them, the Germans because they hesitated to compete with slave labor."[10] More contemporary historians also accepted this conclusion. For example, Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men* (1970), stated that "immigrants of all political affiliations demonstrated their preference for life in a free labor society by refusing to settle in the South."[11] In reality, many exceptions existed; one striking example was to be found in Talliaferro County, Georgia. In 1850, about fifty Irish families settled in the county, "all from county Tipperary – Burkes, Keilings, Keatings, Hyneses, Harts, Mahers, &c." Having experienced life in the northern states, these settlers did "not 'hang about the cities,'" and these "Irishmen in the South raise[d] corn, cotton, and stock." Indeed, one prominent Irish resident of South Carolina believed that the Palmetto state was "'probably the most Irish of any of the States of the Union.' 'Irish family names abound in every rank and condition of life; and

"'Scotch-Irish,' 'Black Irish,' and 'Real Irish': Emigrants and Identities in the Old South," in Andy Bielenberg (ed.), *The Irish Diaspora*, (New York, 2000); "'Scotch-Irish' Myths and 'Irish' Identities in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century America" in Charles Fanning, (ed.), *New Perspectives on The Irish Diaspora*, (Carbondale IL., 2000), 75-92.
[9] George Potter, *To the Golden Door: The Story of The Irish in Ireland and America*, (Boston, 1960), 170-171.
[10] Ray Allen Billington, *The Protestant Crusade: A Study of the Origins of American Nativism*, (New York, 1938), 241.
[11] Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War*, (New York, 1970), 236.

there are few men, natives of the State, in whose veins there does not run more or less of Irish blood.'"[12]

Oscar Handlin's *Boston's Immigrants* (1941) has been credited with initiating the study of immigrant history in the US. In his work, Irish immigrants were depicted as defenceless victims who maintained "a deep-rooted pessimism about the world and man's role in it." Hardlin developed the theme of severe social dislocation and passive response among Irish immigrants who did not assimilate easily or quickly to life in his other major study, *The Uprooted* (1951). [13] Handlin's work was criticised for its exaggerated portrayal of depressing immigrant life and for ignoring the more positive and assertive aspects of the lives of Irish immigrants who had settled in the US.[14] Despite this criticism, Handlin's central argument of alienation and disintegration continued to gain traction. For example Leonard Dinnerstein et al., in *Natives and Strangers: A Multicultural History of America* (1996), a book with a mission to give a voice to the "forgotten people" of American history, declares that "the Irish unlike the restless Americans who sought new frontiers to conquer, accepted their station in life…resigned themselves to whatever fate had set out for them."[15] Such statements ignore the historical reality of the assertive, calculating, and ruthless Irish slaveholders in the South.

Since the publication of *Boston's Immigrants*, the study of immigration and Irish immigrants has flourished, including national and regional studies.[16] However, most of these works have predominantly

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[12] John Francis Maguire, *The Irish in America*, (New York, 1868), 253-257.

[13] Oscar Handlin, *Boston's Immigrants 1790-1865: A Study in Acculturation*, (Cambridge MA., 1941); *The Uprooted: The Epic Story of the Great Migrations That Made the American People*, (Boston, 1951), 247.

[14] Rudolph Vecoli "Contadini in Chicago: A Critique of *The Uprooted*," *JAH*, Vol. 53, No. 3, (Dec., 1964), 404-417; John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860-1925*, (New York, 1970); *Send These to Me: Jews and Other Immigrants in Urban America*, (New York, 1975); Lynn Lees & John Moddell, "The Irish Countryman Urbanized: A Comparative Perspective on the Famine Migration," *Journal of Urban History*, Vol. 3, No. 4 (Aug., 1977), 391-408; John E. Bondar, *The Transplanted: A History of Immigrants in Urban America*, (Bloomington, IN., 1985).

[15] Leonard Dinnerstein, Rodger L. Nicholas & David M. Reimers, *Natives and Strangers: A Multicultural History of Americans*, (New York, 1996), 94-95; See also Kerby A. Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America*, (New York, 1985).

[16] For example see Carl Wittke, *The Irish in America*, (Baton Rouge, 1956); Potter, *The Golden Door*; Nathan Glazer & Daniel Patrick Moynihan, *Beyond The Melting Pot: The*

focused on and drawn their material from the Northeast Coast and New England, assuming that places like New York, Boston and Philadelphia accurately represent the Irish experience for the entire US. To believe that the Irish experience with southern slavery was historically negligible due to the larger presence of Irish immigrants in places like New York City would be incorrect. The Irish were central to the history of American immigration in the nineteenth century and comparative research into the Irish diaspora has emerged as a prime subject for historical inquiry.[17]

Despite the dominant trends, a few older studies of Irish immigrants in the South exist. In 1909, Caroline E. MacGill's article "Immigration in the Southern States, 1783-1865," was the first work to consider immigration in the South.[18] However, it was Michael J. O'Brien, an antiquarian and historiographer of the American Irish Historical Society who first argued that Irish immigrants had long identified with the South from the dawn of its colonial history. Keen to expose the "Scotch-Irish Myth" and demonstrate

Negroes, Puerto Ricans, Jews, Italians and Irish of New York City, (Cambridge, MA., 1963); Stephen Thernstorm, *Poverty and Progress: Social Mobility in a Nineteenth-Century City*, (Cambridge, MA., 1964); Lawrence McCaffrey, *The Irish Diaspora in America*, (Bloomington, IN., 1965); Edward M. Levine, *The Irish and Irish Politicians: A Study of Cultural and Social Alienation*, (Notre Dame, IN., 1966); Dennis Clark, *The Irish in Philadelphia. Ten Generations of Urban Experience*, (Philadelphia, 1973); Stephen Thernstorm, *The Other Bostonians: Poverty and Progress in the American Metropolis, 1880-1970*, (Cambridge, MA., 1973); Kathleen Conzen, *Immigrant Milwaukee, 1836-1860: Accommodation and Community in a Frontier City*, (Cambridge, MA., 1976); David N. Doyle, "The Regional Bibliography of Irish America, 1800-1930: A Review and Addendum," *Irish Historical Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 91 (May, 1983), 254-283; Lawrence McCaffrey, Ellen Skerrett, Michael Funchion & Charles Fanning, *The Irish in Chicago*, (Urbana, IL., 1987); David N. Doyle, "The Irish as Urban Pioneers in the United States, 1850-1870," *Journal of American Ethnic History*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (1991), 36-59; Ronald H. Bayor & Timothy J. Meagher, (eds.), *The New York Irish*, (Baltimore, 1996); James Matthew Gallman, *Receiving Erin's Children: Philadelphia, Liverpool and the Irish Famine Migration, 1845-1855*, (Chapel Hill, 2000); Mary C. Kelly, *The Shamrock and the Lily: The New York Irish and the Creation of a Transatlantic Identity 1845-1921*, (New York, 2005).

[17] Kevin Kenny, "Diaspora and Comparison: The Global Irish as a Case Study," *JAH*, Vol. 90, No. 1 (Jun., 2003), 134-162. See also Donald Harman Akenson, *Ireland, Sweden, and the Great European Migration, 1815-1914*, (Liverpool, 2011); Matthew Gallman, *Receiving Erin's Children*; Malcolm Campbell, "Immigrants on the Land: A Comparative Study of Irish Rural Settlement in Nineteenth-Century Minnesota and New South Wales," in Andy Bielenberg, (ed.), *The Irish Diaspora*, (London, 2000), 176-194; Akenson, *The Irish Diaspora: A Primer*, (Belfast, 1997); Campbell, "The Other Immigrants: Comparing the Irish in Australia and the United States," *Journal of American Ethnic History*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (Spring, 1995), 3-22; David Noel Doyle, "The Irish in Australia and the United States: Some Comparisons," *Irish Economic and Social History*, No. XVI (1989), 73-94;

[18] Caroline E. MacGill, "Immigration in the Southern States, 1783-1865," in J. C. Ballagh, (ed.), *The South in the Building of the Nation*, (Richmond, 1909).

that Irish Catholics were prominent in the affairs of the colonies and the early American Republic, O'Brien published many short articles in *The Journal of the American Irish Historical Society* in the early twentieth century.[19] Building on O'Brien's work, Michael Kenny, published an important article "The Irish in 'The South'" (1933), which stressed the significance of understanding the Irish involvement in the French and Spanish North American colonies and challenged histories that "withheld the significance" of "the Irish contribution to the southern section of the United States."[20] The rallying cries of O'Brien and Kenny, however, were not heeded until years later.

In the 1940s, historians Ella Lonn and Herbert Weaver acknowledged the potential of studying Irish immigrants in the nineteenth-century US South. Lonn investigated the importance of foreign born participants in the Confederate war effort during the American Civil War. It was the first work to challenge the traditional concept of a homogenous "Anglo-Saxon" South, overwhelmed by immigrant participation in the Union army.[21] Studies by Weaver considered the importance of "foreigners" in the cities and towns of the antebellum US South. Weaver's work set a precedent for future scholars to focus their research on Irish immigrants in the urban South, and therefore studies of urban settings have dominated the field.[22] Earl F. Niehaus's *The Irish in New Orleans, 1800-1860* (1965) became the first detailed scholarly monograph of an Irish community in the Antebellum South. Niehaus adhered to the familiar themes of desolation and

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[19] Michael J. O'Brien, "Some Early Murphys in North Carolina," *JAIHS*, Vol. X (1911), 137-144; "North Carolina. Some Early MacCarthys, McGuires, Ryans, Fitzpatricks, O'Quinns, Sullivans, Burkes and Learys," *JAIHS*, Vol. XII (1913), 161-167; "South Carolina, Newberry-Some Accounts of the Irish Settlers and Revolutionary Soldiers," *JAIHS*, Vol. XII (1913), 167-175; "The O'Briens in the Colony of Georgia," *JAIHS*, Vol. XIV (1915), 193-200; "Some Early Murphys in North Carolina," *JAIHS*, Vol. XIV (1915), 260-266; "Early Irish Families in Virginia," *JAIHS*, Vol. XV (1916), 366-371; "The 'Scotch-Irish' Myth," *JAIHS*, Vol. XXIV, (1925), 142-153; "The Irish in Charleston, South Carolina," *JAIHS*, Vol. XXV (1926), 134-146; "'Limerick Plantation'- Berkeley County, South Carolina," *JAIHS*, Vol. XXV (1926), 211-213.
[20] Michael Kenny, "The Irish in 'The South'," *An Irish Quarterly Review*, Vol. 22, No. 85 (Mar., 1933), 89-100.
[21] Ella Lonn, *Foreigners in the Confederacy*, (Chapel Hill, 1940).
[22] Herbert Weaver, "Foreigners in the Ante-Bellum Towns of the Lower South," *JSH*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (Feb., 1947), 62-73: "Foreigners in Ante-Bellum Savannah," *GHQ*, Vol. 37, No. 1 (Mar., 1953), 1-17; "Foreigners in Antebellum Mississippi," *Journal of Mississippi History,* Vol. 16, No. 1 (July, 1954), 151-163.

alienation by first generation immigrants. As in many early twentieth century studies, he used ethnic characterisation to justify his subjects' actions. For instance, he stated that, the "propensity for fighting was an elemental force, a compulsion. Many an ardent Patrick fought." Niehaus acknowledged that, in their economic pursuits, many Irish immigrants used slaves and some "rose from lowly poor to merchant prince to distinguished plantation master." However, he failed to examine in detail Irish plantation owners or Irish immigrants who laboured on Louisiana's plantations.[23] As the largest port city and entry point for the South's Irish immigrants, New Orleans has subsequently become the subject of some important doctoral dissertations.[24]

New Orleans was a unique city but more recent scholarship has examined the Irish in other southern cities. As well scholars have also examined the urban South as a microcosm of US southern social relations. Urban case studies have revealed an uneasy tension among free white labourers in a slave society, and the Irish immigrants' experience was central to this problem, especially after the 1840s. For example, Christopher Silver's 1979 essay "A New Look at Old South Urbanization," evaluated how Irish workers threatened to upset traditional work relations in the city of Charleston and demonstrated the high levels of transiency among Irish workers. Ira Berlin and Herbert Gutman's 1983 article, "Urban Workingmen in the Antebellum American South," established the importance of white immigrants in the economic order of Richmond, Charleston, Mobile, Lynchburg and Baton Rouge.[25] Berlin and Gutman successfully demonstrated that immigration, urbanisation and class

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[23] Earl E. Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans, 1800- 1860*, (Baton Rouge: 1965), 31, 144-145.

[24] Frederick Marcel Splestoser, "Back Door to the Land of Plenty: New Orleans as an Immigrant Port, 1820-1860," (Ph.D. diss., Louisiana State University, 1978); Patrick Brennan, "Fever and Fists. Forging an Irish Legacy in New Orleans," (Ph.D diss., University of Missouri-Columbia, 2003); Laura D. Kelley, "Erin's Enterprise: Immigration By Appropriation: The Irish in Antebellum New Orleans," (PhD diss., Tulane University, 2004).

[25] Christopher Silver, "A New Look at Old South Urbanization: The Irish Worker in Charleston, South Carolina, 1840-1860," in Samuel H Hines & George W. Hopkins, (eds.), *South Atlantic Urban Studies Volume 3*, (Columbia, 1979); Ira Berlin & Herbert G. Gutman, "Natives and Immigrants, Freemen and Slaves: Urban Workingmen in the Antebellum American South," *AHR*, Vol. 88, No. 5 (Dec., 1983), 1178-1200.

formation were integral processes that occurred not just in the antebellum North, but also in the antebellum South. They acknowledged that class, as well as race, were of major significance. Many further works have elaborated on the economic and political experiences of the urban Irish in the antebellum South, but they have specifically neglected to a greater or lesser extent Irish slave ownership.[26]

One of the most controversial debates regarding the Irish presence in the South resulted from the works of Grady McWhiney, particularly *Cracker Culture: Celtic Ways in the Old South* (1988).[27] McWhiney proposed that the pervasive culture of the southern states prior to the American Civil War had been formed by immigrants from the "Celtic" regions of the British and Irish Isles. This thesis viewed the Civil War as an inevitable cultural clash between a Celtic South and an Anglo North. Indeed one supporter of this thesis believed that "if one wants to see the remnants of the old culture of Cuchulain, as filtered through the 'wild Irish' of Colonial times, one might as well visit Appalachia."[28] McWhiney's Celtic South has been subjected to serious criticism. McWhiney's broad use of the

[26] Jay Rubin, "Black Nativism: The European Immigrant in the Negro Thought, 1830-1860," *Phylon (1960-)*, Vol. 39, No. 3 (3rd Qtr., 1978), 193-202; Fred Siegel, "Artisans and Immigrants in the Politics of Late Antebellum Georgia," *Civil War History*, Vol. 27, No. 3 (Sep., 1981), 221-230; Harriet E. Amos, "'Birds of Passage' In A Cotton Port: Northerners and Foreigners Among The Urban Leaders of Mobile, 1820-1860," in Orville Vernon Burton & Robert C. McMath, (eds.), *Class, Conflict & Consensus: Antebellum Southern Community Studies*, (Westport, CT., 1982); Edward M. Shoemaker, "Strangers to Citizens: The Irish Immigrant Community in Savannah, 1837-1861," (PhD. diss., Emory University, 1990); Tyler Anbinder, *Nativism and Slavery: The KnowNothings and the Politics of the 1850s.* (New York, 1992); Brian Edward Crowson, "Southern Port City Politics and the Know-Nothing Party in the 1850s," (PhD diss., University of Tennessee, 1994); Thomas Paul Thigpen, "Aristocracy of the Heart: Irish Catholic Lay Leadership in Savannah, Georgia, 1820-1870," (PhD diss., Emory University, 1995); Dennis C. Rousey, "Friends and Foes of Slavery: Foreigners and Northerners in the Old South," *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 35, No. 2 (Winter, 2001), 373-396; David T. Gleeson & Brendan J. Buttimer, "'We are Irish Everywhere': Irish Immigrant Networks in Charleston, South Carolina, and Savannah, Georgia," *Immigrants & Minorities: Historical Studies in Ethnicity, Migration and Diaspora*, Vol. 23, Iss. 2-3 (2005), 183-205; Dee Dee Joyce, "Charleston's Irish Labourers and Their Move into the Confederacy," *Irish Studies Review*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (2010), 185-197.
[27] Grady McWhiney, *Cracker Culture: Celtic Ways in the Old South*, (Tuscaloosa, AL., 1988). See also McWhiney & Forrest McDonald, "The Antebellum Southern Herdsman: A Reinterpretation," *JSH,* Vol. 41, No. 2 (May, 1975), 147-166; McWhiney & Perry D. Jamieson, *Attack and Die: Civil War Military Tactics and the Southern Heritage*, (Tuscaloosa, AL., 1982).
[28] Leroy V. Eid, "The Colonial Scotch-Irish: A View Accepted Too Readily," *Éire-Ireland*, Vol. 21, No. 4 (Winter, 1986), 104-105.

term "Celtic" to categorise Irish, Welsh, Scots, Scots-Irish and even those from northern England as a distinct homogenous cultural group, fails.[29] Dennis Clark dismissed the Celtic South thesis, declaring that the "imputation of some wild élan to the South, linked by the most illusory supposition to the Celts of pre-Roman Europe, is a historical confection surpassing that of the magnolia-drenched plantation fantasies of cheap Southern novels."[30] McWhiney's arguments did not examine the Irish immigration experience of the nineteenth century and made practically no reference to slavery.

In recent years the historiography has been particularly enriched by the works of David T. Gleeson, who has highlighted the significance of the Irish in the history of the US South.[31] Gleeson's *The Irish in the South 1815-1877* (2001) remains the leading work in the field, it consolidates the prevailing view that Irish immigrants were "urban pioneers of the Old South." Understanding the Irish experience in the South is essential to the comprehension of both Irish-American history and southern history. Gleeson has noted that, "by examining a distinctive minority who had to figure out how to fit into a foreign and strange society, we can learn much about the society itself." To establish a congenial home, Irish immigrants accepted the "American paradox of espousing freedom while simultaneously endorsing second-class treatment for another ethnic group."[32] *The Irish in the South* also provides the most comprehensive study to date on Irish slave-ownership in the antebellum US. Even though the discussion of this important topic only takes a chapter within the book. Gleeson's examination of Irish slaveholders mostly provides a springboard for the understanding of the volatile politics of the 1850s, rather than analysing in detail the complex evolutionary nature of antebellum US Slavery and the daily reality of Irish slaveholders and labourers in the rural

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[29] Rowland Berthoff, "Celtic Mist over the South," *JSH*, Vol. 52, No. 4 (Nov., 1986), 523-546; Kieran Quinlan, *Strange Kin: Ireland and the American South*, (Baton Rouge, 2005); 39-44.
[30] Dennis Clark, *Hibernia America: The Irish and Regional Cultures*, (Westport, CT., 1986), 106.
[31] Gleeson, *Irish in the South*; (ed.), *The Irish in the Atlantic World*, (Columbia, SC., 2010); *The Green and the Gray*.
[32] Gleeson, *Irish in the South*, 3, 9 & 37.

South. In turn, the toxic combination of slavery and politics is comprehensively analysed in Angela F. Murphy's *American Slavery, Irish Freedom* (2010). Murphy focuses specifically on the impact of the Irish Repeal Movement and its complex relationship with the American Abolitionist movement. In sum, Irish southerners upheld their identity as US citizens and placed the importance of the institution of slavery above Daniel O'Connell's antislavery cries from across the Atlantic.[33] Other recent works on the Irish in the South have developed and built on the cultural heritage and sympathies as well as the literary connections between Ireland and the US South, but they too have failed to provide a systematic treatment of Irish slave-owners.[34]

Nini Rodgers's pioneering *Ireland, Slavery and Anti-Slavery: 1612-1865* (2007) revealed that Irish migrants were willing to accept slavery in British, American, French, Spanish, Dutch, Portuguese and even Danish territories. This work identifies the role the Irish played in the development of Atlantic slavery, as well as the impact of the profits of slave produced commodities on the domestic, political, and economic spheres of pre and post Act of Union Ireland. Rodgers demonstrates that the "assembling of this transatlantic jigsaw puzzle reveals that black slavery had a dramatic impact both on the Irish who emigrated across the Atlantic and upon the economy at home."[35] Rodgers's work included also a chapter on three powerful eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Irish slave holding dynasties in the U.S.: the Catholic Carrolls of Maryland, the Presbyterian Calhouns of South Carolina and the Anglican Butlers who held plantations in Georgia and South Carolina. These families became American political powerhouses due to their commitment to slavery.[36] However, Irish slaveholders in the rural antebellum US South were not the focus of Rodgers's study.

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[33] Angela F. Murphy, *American Slavery, Irish Freedom: Abolition, Immigrant Citizenship, and the Transatlantic Movement For Irish Repeal*, (Baton Rouge, 2010). See also Christine Kinealy, *Daniel O'Connell and the Anti-Slavery Movement: 'The Saddest People the Sun Sees'*, (London, 2011).
[34] Quinlan, *Strange Kin*; Bryan Albin Giemza, (ed.), *Rethinking the Irish in the American South: Beyond Rounders and Reelers*, (Jackson, 2013); *Irish Catholic Writers and the Invention of the American South*, (Baton Rouge, 2013).
[35] Nini Rodgers, *Ireland, Slavery and Anti Slavery, 1612-1865*, (New York, 2007), 2.
[36] Ibid, 197-229.

This doctoral thesis therefore moves away from the standard historiographies of Irish immigration in America and in the US South and focuses on the centrality of slavery in the nineteenth century Irish immigration experience in the rural antebellum US South. By investigating the complex encounter with slavery, this thesis intends to add a new chapter to the stories of both the Irish in the Atlantic World and US slavery. No field in American history has produced a larger body of scholarship or undergone such constant substantial revisions as American slavery. The varying works of Edward E. Baptist, Sven Beckert, Enrico Dal Lago, David Brion Davis, Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, Eugene D. Genovese, Peter Kolchin, Dale Tomich, and many other scholars have influenced the foundation and core conceptions of slavery in this work.[37] The numerous historical studies of US slavery have taken many forms and have explored diverse themes, yet none have focused on antebellum foreign born slaveholders, let alone Irish slaveholders. References to Irish immigrants appear only briefly in the work of various scholars of slavery, but these references usually serve to underpin a broader theme.[38] The research at the heart of the present work brings together the brief and fragmented references to Irish slaveholders in order to forge a new pathway that delivers a clearer and more comprehensive understanding of this important but neglected topic.

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[37] Edward E. Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism*, (New York, 2014); Beckert, *Empire of Cotton;* Enrico Dal Lago, *American Slavery, Atlantic Slavery, and Beyond: The U.S. "Peculiar Institution" in International Perspective. U.S. History in International Perspective*, (London, 2012); *Agrarian Elites: American Slaveholders and Southern Italian Landowners, 1815-1861*, (Baton Rouge, 2005); David Brion Davis, *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World*, (New York, 2006); Elizabeth Fox-Genovese & Eugene D. Genovese, *Fatal Self-Deception: Slaveholding Paternalism in the Old South*, (New York, 2011); *Slavery in White and Black: Class and Race in the Southern Slaveholders' New World Order.* (New York, 2008); *The Fruits of Merchant Capital:* Slavery and bourgeois Property in the Rise and Expansion of Capitalism, (New York, 1983); Eugene D. Genovese, *The Slaveholders' Dilemma: Freedom and Progress in Southern Conservative Thought, 1820-1860.* (Columbia, SC., 1992); *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made*, (New York, 1976), [1974]; Peter Kolchin, *American Slavery, 1619-1877*, (London, 1995), [1993]; Dale W. Tomich, *Through the Prism of Slavery: Labor, Capital and World Economy*, (New York, 2004).

[38] For example both Eugene D. Genovese and Richard Follet in their works cite the papers of Irish sugar planter Maunsel White. See Fox-Genovese & Genovese, *Fatal Self-Deception*, 36, Richard Follet *The Sugar Masters: Plantations and Slaves in Louisiana's Cane World, 1820-1860*, (Baton Rouge, 2007), [2005], 34, 43, 87, 96, 107, 147 & 172-178.

The methodological approach of this dissertation is not confined to any particular methodology of comparative or transnational history. It follows a "soft" or "loose-constructionist" approach to comparative history rather than the rigid "compare and contrast" approach that demands equal time and attention to one or more comparative subjects.[39] This study recognises the widespread regional variations, emphasises the importance of considering change over time, and understands the diversity and interconnectedness of the experiences faced by the Irish in the South. The most important scholarly work on interregional comparisons is Peter Kolchin's *A Sphinx on the American Land*.[40] Kolchin argues that there has never been one South or archetypal southerner. Internal distinctions, whether geographical, class, religious or racial, ultimately raise the question of whether we can properly speak of a single South. The southern states of the US were not a uniform block and differed in many areas, including the nature of slavery and the types of staple crops grown. At the same time the Irish in the US were a transnational variable, producing many different outcomes in the regions they settled in.

By comparing and examining sources from Louisiana, Mississippi, Georgia, South Carolina and North Carolina, this work contributes to Kolchin's idea of "many Souths" by illustrating the different experiences of Irish immigrant slaveholders and labourers in the rural South. Irish immigrants owned and laboured not only on cotton plantations, but also on sugar plantations in Louisiana, on rice plantations in South Carolina and in

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[39]Peter Kolchin, "Comparative Perspectives on Emancipation in the U.S. South: Reconstruction, Radicalism and Russia," *The Journal of the Civil War Era*, Vol. 2, No. 2 (June, 2012), 203-232; Dal Lago, *American Slavery, Atlantic Slavery,*1-16; Enrico Dal Lago & Constantina Katsari, "The Study of Ancient and Modern Slave Systems: Setting an Agenda for Comparison," in Dal Lago& Katsari, (eds.), *Slave Systems: Ancient and Modern*, (New York, 2008), 3-31. See also Heinz-Gerhard Haupt & Jurgen Kocka, (eds.), *Comparative History and the Quest for Transnationality*, (New York, 2009); Stanley Engerman, *Slavery, Emancipation, and Freedom: Comparative Perspectives*, (Baton Rouge, 2007); Laird Bergard, *The Comparative Histories of Slavery in Cuba, Brazil and the United States*, (New York, 2007); Michael Werner & Benedicte Zimmermann, "Beyond Comparison: Histoire Croisée and the Challenge of Reflexivity," *History and Theory*, Vol. 45, No. 1 (Feb., 2006), 30-50; Deborah Cohen & Maura O'Connor, (eds.), *Comparison and History: Europe in Cross-National Perspective*, (London, 2004); David Thelen, "The Nation and Beyond: Transnational Perspectives on United States History," *JAH*, Vol. 86, No. 3 (Dec., 1999), 965-975.
[40] Peter Kolchin, *A Sphinx on the American Land: The Nineteenth-Century South in Comparative Perspective*, (Baton Rouge, 2003).

North Carolina's production of naval stores- tar, pitch and turpentine. Moreover, comparison casts into relief, facets of the Irish experiences that many have taken for granted. The analysis of the southern states selected for this study not only brings out similarities and differences in the Irish experience in relation to slavery, but also provides a perfect methodological lens through which to investigate the wide variety of primary sources relating to the Irish in the antebellum US South.

Thus, this thesis intends to both fill the current historiographical lacuna and make an original contribution to critical scholarship of the Irish in the US South by demonstrating the importance of slave-ownership by Irish immigrants outside the urban centres of the slave states. This work will provide an in-depth analysis of the relationship between Irish immigrants and the institution of slavery in the rural antebellum US South. Slave ownership provided opportunities for Irish immigrants; this thesis is among the first works to study the important economic niche created by a group of foreign-born southern slaveholders during the antebellum period. The profits from slavery attracted many speculators. Irish immigrants who invested in the "peculiar institution" did so with the intention to reap handsome returns. The examination of the Irish relationship with American slavery provides a fresh lens through which to scrutinise the South's peculiar institution.

In order to uncover primary material left by Irish immigrants, extensive research was undertaken in libraries and archives across Ireland and the US since the sources for this study have proven particularly wide-ranging and comprehensive. The material relating to the Irish in the South is scattered, though reflecting the nature of the migrants' settlement. Most collections contain limited, but important material on the lives of Irish immigrants in the rural US South. Three collections stood out for their valuable contribution to this study. The Southern Historical Collection, at the University of North Carolina, in Chapel Hill, home to one of the largest repositories of historical material relating to southern history revealed significant material relating to this thesis topic including the Maunsel White

papers 1802-1912.[41] Many collections of native southerners also contained unique primary sources concerning Irish immigrants. For example, the Samuel Jordan Wheeler Collection contained the 1825 diary of Thomas O'Dwyer, an Irish Catholic immigrant, physician, and slave-owner in Hertford County, N.C.[42]

The Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collections, at Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, is another premier repository of historical documents relating to the antebellum US South. It contains the largest accumulation of primary materials on Louisiana and the lower Mississippi Valley in existence, with many important papers of individual Irish immigrants and families. These records date from the French and Spanish colonial regimes to the outbreak of the American Civil War. For example, the personal and business papers of Antonio Patrick Walsh document a successful colonial military career in Louisiana and later papers show Walsh's life as a cotton plantation owner in West Feliciana Parish, Louisiana. This collection comprises of receipts from merchants; bills of sale for the purchase and sale of slaves; details of travel to Dublin, Ireland, to visit family; letters concerning cotton growing, and documents related to debts owed to and by Walsh.[43] In Ireland, the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) holds an important collection of material relating to Irish settlement in the South. In 2007, PRONI published *Ulster and Slavery, The Story from the Archives*, a detailed index of the material in that relates to Irish involvement in Atlantic slavery. Although primarily focused on slavery in the British West Indies, it includes numerous unique documents, such as diaries, journals, letters and correspondence relating to Irish immigrants in the antebellum US South. For instance, the diaries of Hugh Quin and J.B. Hamilton contain important first impressions of their contact with the institution of slavery and life in the South.[44]

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[41] Maunsel White Papers, #2234, SHC
[42] Diary of Dr. Thomas O'Dwyer, in Samuel Jordan Wheeler and Other Diaries #766, SHC.
[43] Antonio Patrick Walsh Papers, Mss 887, 1208, LLMVC.
[44] Journal of Hugh Quin, Quin Papers, T2874/,1 PRONI; Extracts from the Diary Kept by J. B Hamilton, D1518/1/5, PRONI.

The study of Irish immigrants presents similar challenges to those for scholars studying poor whites in the antebellum South. Sources surviving from Irish immigrants are scarce, making it difficult to build a true portrait of the Irish rural experience.[45] To overcome restrictions and gaps in source material, further supplementary sources were utilised, such as newspapers, journals, censuses, travel accounts, slave narratives, and contemporary American accounts of Irish immigrants. Many of these sources were heavily influenced by anti-Irish perceptions of Irish immigrants and Catholics at the time.[46] David Gleeson has highlighted how older studies on the Irish in the South depended on non-Irish primary materials, and this overreliance led "to faulty conclusions" by some scholars.[47] Nonetheless, these sources when analysed critically with an awareness of the historical context in which they were written, are valuable. Some will find the language cited in this study upsetting and offensive. All sources were reviewed to ensure that the Irish in the rural South were the subjects and not the objects of this research, thus, allowing them to reveal their own story. In doing this, the thesis endeavours to provide a richer depiction and more intimate portrait of Irish immigrants in the rural US plantation society, and their experiences. What follows therefore, is an in-depth investigation of the historical, moral and practical acceptance of US slavery by Irish immigrants and of how the latter adjusted and profited from the antebellum slave economy.

The thesis is structured as follows. **<u>Chapter One</u>** of this thesis provides a historical survey of the colonial roots of Irish slaveholders in the antebellum US. The colonial Irish had an impact on the antebellum Irish and set a precedent for those who settled in the nineteenth-century US South. This chapter focuses on the historical background of Irish involvement in the Atlantic slave system as a part of the British, French and Spanish

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[45] For example see Charles C. Bolton, *Poor Whites of the Antebellum South: Tenants and Laborers in Central North Carolina and Northeast Mississippi*, (Durham, 1994), 1-10.

[46] For more on the demeaning stereotype of the nineteenth-century Irish see Dale T. Knobel, *Paddy and The Republic: Ethnicity and Nationality in Antebellum America*, (Middletown, CT., 1986); Ashley Barckett, "Bumbling Biddies and Drunken Pats: Anti-Irish Humor in Antebellum New Orleans," (M.A. Thesis, University of New Orleans, 2008).

[47] Gleeson, *Irish in the South*, 6.

Empires during the seventeenth and eighteenth-centuries, demonstrating that the Irish experience with rural antebellum slavery was not an anomaly, but an integral part of the Irish engagement with Atlantic slavery. **Chapter Two** outlines the moral acceptance of slavery by Irish immigrants by focusing on the development of the Catholic Church in the antebellum South. Using the case study of Irish Catholic immigrants, this chapter investigates how Irish Catholics identified with their adopted southern states values and interests and yet maintained their own religious identity. The Catholic Church was predominantly an urban institution and this caused great difficulty for rural dwelling Catholics. The Catholic hierarchy were committed to slavery, which they perceived as a reflection of the eternal order. The Catholic Church in the slave states had to adapt and accept both American republicanism and American slavery. The development of Catholic thought and teachings on the issue of slavery fed into the Christian defence of American slavery. Understanding the development of the antebellum Church helps to clarify why Irish immigrants strove to profit from slavery with little moral objection.

Chapter Three examines Irish antebellum slave-ownership. American slavery was an aggressive and expansive institution. Driven by the demand for ever larger profits, the institution of slavery evolved to meet the demands of the industrial world. The opportunities for Irish immigrants to acquire slave property varied according to boom and bust cycles in the slave economy. Most Irish slaveholders did not become large planters and they worked side by side with their slaves in the fields and workshops. Those who did become large planters though fitted with ease into the slaveholding hierarchy. This chapter shows that Irish planters were just as cruel as their American counterparts in dominating their enslaved workforce. The profits extracted from slavery elevated some Irishmen amongst the wealthiest individuals in the nineteenth-century industrial world. However, slavery also condemned Irish immigrants to a difficult existence. **Chapter Four** assesses the lives of Irish immigrants who did not own slaves, but laboured in the rural antebellum US South. Class distinction played a crucial role in the shaping of southern society and Irish labourers

held a lowly position. Employment on southern plantations and work on internal improvement projects of canal, levee and railroad constructions drew thousands of Irish immigrants into the interior of the rural South. This chapter examines the role of non-slaveholding immigrants and the impact they had on rural southern society. Life at the lower level of society was full of multiple types of biracial level interactions and this work focuses and analyses in detail the complexity of interactions between Irish and slave labourers. Finally, the **<u>Conclusion</u>** consolidates the key findings of the research undertaken for this doctoral thesis.

CHAPTER 1

Established Patterns: Irish Migration and New World Slavery

The legacy of colonial Irish settlers had an impact on Irish slaveholders in the antebellum US South. This chapter connects the history of Irish immigration and American slavery; exploring the patterns and precedents established for Irish slaveholders during the colonial period in the Caribbean and the American South. Irish slaveholders in America were an integral part of the Irish slaveholding diaspora that spanned centuries. This chapter aims to show that throughout the history of slavery in the Atlantic world, Irish families as many other European families, invested in slavery as an acceptable institution and a respectable means of production. New World slavery dramatically altered the development of European history.[1] European success in the New World was based upon unpaid and coerced labour. The wealth and profit created by slavery in the Americas acted as the midwife to a new economic and social order. Within this context Irish migrants of all religious persuasions found themselves as winners and losers in the creation of the world's first "system of multinational production for what emerged as a mass market" for slave produced commodities.[2]

Slavery in the North American colonies was not a static institution. American slavery had to adapt to various external and internal influences. Political, economical, environmental factors as well as individual efforts changed and shaped the emerging Goliath of American slavery. From its founding colonial roots Irish immigrants helped forge the bonds of racial slavery. From the commodity frontiers of the plantation zones to the capital

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[1] Eric Jones, *The European Miracle: Environments, Economies and Geopolitics in the History of Europe and Asia*, (Cambridge, 1981); James Morris Blaut, *The Colonizer's Model of the World: Geographical Diffusionism and Eurocentric History*, (New York, 1993), 179-214; Robin Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery: From the Baroque to the Modern, 1492-1800*, (London, 1997), 371-395 & 509-562.
[2] David Brion Davis, *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World*, (New York, 2006), 2.

cities of European empires, Irish migrants sought to improve their fortunes.[3] Whether working side by side with African slaves in the tobacco fields of Virginia, or owning a sugar plantation in the Caribbean, the Irish were present in every aspect of European colonisation and its corollary slavery in the emerging Atlantic world. Irish slaveholders in the antebellum period were not a historical aberration. The settlement of Irish immigrants in colonial North America established near two centuries of Irish slaveholders and their families. They were a small but enduring feature of American slavery.

This chapter aims to reach a deeper understanding of the socio-political and economic factors that resulted in the emergence of Irish slaveholders throughout the New World. Irish immigrants played an integral role in the establishment of European colonial empires and their slave economies throughout the New World. The significance of Irish slaveholding in the states of Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, and South Carolina emerges clearly in the context of the complex and entangled history of colonization and immigration and its connections with New World slavery. Therefore, this chapter examines the rise of British colonial power in the seventeenth-century Atlantic World and the implications this had for Ireland. Moreover, to fully comprehend the phenomenon of Irish slaveholding in North America, this chapter also investigates briefly the corresponding experience of the Irish in Caribbean colonies. The success of the British sugar islands provided the incentive for the settlement of the Carolinas and Irish involvement in the establishment of these colonies. The second section of this chapter outlines the dynamic development of the eighteenth century British slave trade and acknowledges the role Ireland played in its development. Section three explores how the expansion of slavery in the Carolinas and Georgia created a demand for

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[3] Bernard Bailyn, *Introduction: Europeans on the Move, 1500-1800*, in Nicholas Canny, (ed.), *Europeans on the Move: Studies on European Migration 1500-1800*, (Oxford, 1994), 2. For more on commodity frontiers see Jason W. Moore, "Sugar and the Expansion of the Early Modern World-Economy: Commodity Frontiers, Ecological Transformation, and Industrialization*," Review (Fernand Braudel Center)*, Vol. 23, No. 3 (2000), 409-433.

white settlers. The influence of eighteenth century Irish migrants is discussed. Section four then analyses the correlating development of eighteenth century colonial Louisiana and the role the Irish played in the French and Spanish empires. The final section examines the role the Irish played in the South during the American Revolution and details the final years of Spanish Louisiana prior to its purchase by the United States in 1803.

i.   Irish Colonial Roots in the Seventeenth-Century British Atlantic World

The Irish constituted the largest group of white immigrants in the seventeenth century Caribbean; it was a highly structured migration involving both potential planters as well as indentured servants.[4] In the West Indies, members of old noble Irish families tried to recover their losses on the islands and provide an avenue for younger sons to establish themselves as planters and merchants. The Irish seeking their fortune in Europe's overseas empires were colonists without an empire of their own. Nicholas Canny has demonstrated how the Elizabethan conquests and plantations in Ireland provided a laboratory for English colonial enterprises in the New World.[5] Thus from the beginning Ireland was brought into the English colonial Atlantic system. Irish mercantile families exploited the new opportunities provided by Ireland's integration into the British Empire. Irish interests found new avenues in the emerging European colonies of the New World, from Newfoundland's fishing enterprises to the sugar plantations of the Caribbean. The expansion of European power in the Caribbean opened new trade routes and markets. Direct and indirect contact between Ireland and the American colonies grew as a result, although it remained peripheral. The first commercial exchanges between Ireland and the Americas involved

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[4] Louis M. Cullen, "The Irish Diaspora of the 17th and 18th Century," in Nicholas Canny, (ed.), *Europeans on the Move: Studies on European Migration 1500-1800*, (Oxford, 1994), 113-126; Donald Harman Akenson, *If The Irish Ran the World: Montserrat, 1630-1730*, (Liverpool, 1997), 14-16.

[5] Nicholas Canny, *Making Ireland British, 1580-1650* (New York, 2001); *Kingdom and Colony: Ireland in the Atlantic World, 1560-1800*, (Baltimore, 1988).

the migration of indentured servants. Emigration facilities became an integral part of the expansion of New World trade with Ireland.

Most ships sailing from Ireland to the Americas during the seventeenth century carried indentured servants. At this time thousands of Irish paupers and vagabonds along with military and political prisoners were forcefully transported to work in England's newly emerging colonies. Indentured servitude made its first appearance in colonial Virginia in 1620, a labour arrangement adopted widely in the English colonies, where merchants organised the sale of indentured servants to planters upon their arrival. Between 1620 and 1775, some 300,000 volunteer indentured servants crossed the Atlantic to the English colonies. This accounted for two thirds of migrants from England, Scotland and Ireland to the New World during this period.[6] Those who volunteered received the cost of their passage and maintenance on plantations in return for up to seven years of contracted labour.[7] The colonies became a solution for dealing with vagrants, petty criminals, prostitutes and Quakers. English officials saw the forced transportation of the troublesome elements of Irish society as a viable solution and as early as 1607 English statesmen hoped the newly founded colony of Virginia would help solve their Irish troubles. An unknown contemporary English official noted that in "Ireland there are certain kinde of swordmen called kerne...they might be drawne from thence, and

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[6] Don Jordan & Michael Walsh, *White Cargo: The Forgotten History of Britain's White Slaves in America.* (New York, 2008), 11-14. For more on the development of Colonial Virginia see: Audrey Horning, *Ireland in the Virginian Sea: Colonialism in the British Atlantic*, (Chapel Hill, 2013); April Lee Hatfield, *Atlantic Virginia: Intercolonial Relations in the Seventeenth Century*, (Philadelphia, 2004); Anthony S. Parent Jr., *Foul Means: The Formation of a Slave Society in Virginia, 1600-1740*, (Chapel Hill, 2003); Edmund Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia*, (New York, 1975); Wesley Frank Craven, *White, Red, and Black: The Seventeenth-Century Virginian*, (Charlottesville, VA., 1971).
[7] Hilary McD Beckles, "A 'riotous and unruly lot': Irish Indentured Servants and Freemen in the English West-Indies, 1644-1713," *WMQ*, Vol. 47, No. 4, (Oct., 1990), 505-506. For more on indentured servitude see: Peter Wilson Coldham, *Emigrants in Chains: A Social History of Forced Emigration to the Americas, 1607-1776*, (Baltimore, 1992); David Galenson, *White Servitude in Colonial America: An Economic Analysis*, (Cambridge, 1981).

impolyed to ye planting of Virginia." By 1620, Irish political prisoners were transported to Virginia.[8]

In 1636, Captain Thomas Anthony was instructed to acquire Irish indentured servants for the colony of Virginia. When he arrived in Kinsale, he discovered that a Dutch merchant ship had just left with 140 young servants and that another Dutch ship was in port acquiring more servants.[9] Most servants tried to reach settlements with good prospects once their tenure of labour was complete but not all indentures could chose their destination. Many found themselves in the colonies not by their own voluntary action or the coercion of the state; rather they were deceived and kidnapped by gangs and merchants in Irish port towns.[10] Indentured servants provided a cheap work force for the production of cash-crops and provided the blue print for the emerging slave economies of the Americas. By the 1650s, the verb "barbadoed" had gained currency in Ireland, and the period 1652-1657 saw a new, aggressive period of forced transportation to the colonies. Those criminally convicted in Ireland soon found themselves on a ship for the American colonies.[11] Don Jordon and Michael Walsh have noted that a two-way trade in people developed, that the "native Irish could be deported to feed the voracious labour market in America while making room in Ireland for planters from England...it was a nice piece of serendipity for nascent imperial capitalism."[12] In 1669, it was reported that the Irish population in the West-Indies numbered at twelve thousand.[13] Louis Cullen has noted that, even before 1641, the number of Irish in the Caribbean was significant, and the high mortality rate on the islands presupposes a substantial annual flow of Irish migration and transportation that maintained a strong Irish presence.[14]

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[8] *"Endorsed : An advise for Ireland. 19 Deceb. 1607"* cited in Aubrey Gwynn, "Documents relating to the Irish in the West Indies," *Analecta Hibernica*, No.4 (Oct., 1932), 157-159.
[9] Akenson, *The Irish Ran the World*, 55.
[10] Jordan & Walsh, *White Cargo*, 127-134.
[11] Nini Rodgers, *Ireland, Slavery and Anti Slavery: 1612-1865*, (New York, 2007), 45-46.
[12] Jordan & Walsh, *White Cargo*, 146-147.
[13] John Silke, "The Irish abroad 1534-1691," in T. W. Moody, F. X. Martin, & F. J. Byrne, (eds.), *A New History of Ireland: Early modern Ireland, 1534-1691*, (Oxford, 1991), 603.
[14] Cullen, *Irish Diaspora*, 126.

In Barbados, the English planter elite enjoyed total hegemony over the colony and Irish servants and freemen suffered day-to-day discrimination and punishment.[15] In 1667, English adventurer John Scott visited Barbados and observed on the sugar plantations the "Irish at worke [*sic*] in the parching sun wth [*sic*], out shirt, shoe or stocking, weh [*sic*] theire [*sic*] Negroes have bin [*sic*] at worke [*sic*] at theire [*sic*] respective trades, in a good condition." In 1668, Christopher Jefferson, a planter in St. Christopher, believed Irish servants were "the worst, many of them being good for nothing but mischief."[16] Planters tried to maximise the labour of their indentured servants, due to the limited period of time on indentured contracts. This guaranteed a punitive mortality rate among indentured servants. In 1676, the Governor of Barbados Sir Jonathan Atkins reported to the Lords of Trade that they grew "weary of" Irish servants "for they prove commonly very Idle and they do find by Experience that they can keepe three Blacks who worke better, cheaper than they can keepe one white man."[17] By the end of the seventeenth century, the age of indentured servitude was eclipsed by the rising leviathan of American slavery. Some Irish families managed to exploit the new slave system and become planters themselves, especially on the island of Montserrat and later St. Croix.[18]

In 1633, Fr. Andrew White on route to Maryland with Lord Baltimore, recorded that "Montserrat" was "a noble plantation of Irish Catholique, whome the Virginians would not suffer to live with them because of their religion."[19] Settled in the 1630s by Irish colonists who had been sent from St Kitts by Governor Thomas Warner, Montserrat became the destination for Irish servants, labourers, merchants and ambitious planters of all religious persuasions, but predominantly Catholics.

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[15] Russell R. Menard, *Sweet Negotiations: Sugar, Slavery, and Plantation Agriculture in Early Barbados*, (Charlottesville, VA, 2006); Hilary McD Beckles, *White Servitude and Black Slavery in Barbados, 1627-1715*, (Knoxville, 1989); Richard S. Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624-1713*, (Chapel Hill, 1972).

[16] "Some Observations on the Island Barbados (a. 1667)," & "William Lord Willoughby to the Privy Council. Barbados. Dec. 16, 1667," cited in Gywnn, "Irish in the West-Indies", 250 & 267.

[17] "Sir Jonathan Atkins to the Lords of Trade, August 15, 1676," cited in ibid, 269.

[18] Akenson, *Ran the World*; Orla Power, "Irish Planters, Atlantic Merchants: The developments of St. Croix, Danish West Indies 1750 to 1766," (PhD diss., NUIG, 2011).

[19] "Father Andrew White Diary, 1634" cited in Gywnn, "Irish in the West-Indies", 184.

Montserrat became known as "the Irish island" and by 1678, 1,845 persons of Irish ethnicity resided on the island, representing nearly seventy percent of the island's white population. Key to their success on Montserrat and the Americas was the frequent willingness "to change sides, whether in religion or in politics, depending upon their own self-interest and their consciences, items that frequently were negotiable."[20] Catholics with economic and political connections found that remaining loyal to the English crown in the New World could reap large rewards. On Montserrat, the solidarity of the landowning class was vital in overcoming sectarian divisions. The interests of Irish planters dominated the island and their economic success was attributed to their capability "to be hard and effective slave masters."[21]

Catholicism in the West Indies never faced the full extent of the Penal laws established in Ireland. Successful Catholic planters in Montserrat took the necessary Protestant oaths to enjoy wealth and status in public, as they maintained their religious beliefs in private. The religious status of Irish settlers in the New World was "flexible and equivocal." "Rather than professing either a Catholic or Protestant faith, many Irish planters adhered to both-either at separate times or, in some cases, simultaneously."[22] The adoption of Protestant forms was a well calculated move that allowed Irish families to enjoy full political privileges in the colonies. Often the head of the family conformed to the established church for the public eye. In the colonies the numbers of eligible marriageable prospects of the same socio-economic standing were limited and mixed religious marriages between wealthy families occurred frequently. The social class of a person was a crucial mark of distinction in the colonies and those with the correct economic and cultural capital could integrate impeccably into the upper echelons of colonial society. Control over the plantations took priority over religious divisions.

The wealth and social status obtained by owning a successful plantation in the New World attracted, and offered redemption for, Irish

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[20] Akenson, *Ran the World,* 88.
[21] Ibid, 75-76 & 119; Rodgers, *Slavery and Anti* Slavery, 27-54.
[22] Brian, "How Irish Is Montserrat?" Part 2, *Irish Roots*, No. 2 (1994), 16.

families. By 1640, planters on the island of St. Christopher began cultivating sugar cane, and Barbados quickly followed suit. By 1644, roller mills were constructed on both islands for the mass production of sugar.[23] Markets in Europe developed an unending craving for sugar, guaranteeing spectacular prices for plantation owners. Sugar was an elite crop, only those with access to substantial credit could establish plantations. Work on the sugar plantations was brutal and intensive as planters aimed to meet the growing market demands of the "Sugar Revolution."[24] Work on a sugar plantation became a death sentence for many indentured servants and slaves alike, and during 1640s-1650s the islands of the Caribbean underwent a demographic revolution with the rapid increase of the African slave population. This transformed the islands from societies with slaves (in which slavery co-existed with other forms of economic and labour systems) to slave societies (in which slavery stood as the main economic mode of production). The majority of the total population of slave societies were slaves. For example, by 1670 Barbados had a population over 50,000 with 30,000 African slaves.[25] Thus the expanding sugar frontiers of the European empires provided opportunities for enterprising Irish immigrants. For instance, the fortunes of the Blake family of Galway city were decimated by Cromwellian land confiscation, forcing the two brothers Henry and John Blake to sail for the Caribbean. In 1673, Henry established himself in Montserrat and reported to his eldest brother Thomas Blake "that my living here was to recruit my great losses whereby I should be enabled to pay my debts at home." Two years later, Henry's father, John Blake wrote from Mullaghmore, Co. Galway, thanking him for the assistance he was sending from Montserrat; "And in my greatest need and want you have supplied me;

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[23] Jordan & Walsh, *White* Cargo, 177-180.

[24] Ina Baghdiantz McCabe, *A History of Global Consumption 1500-1800*, (New York, 2015); John McCusker & Russell R. Menard, "The Sugar Industry in the Seventeenth Century: A New Perspective on the Barbadian 'Sugar Revolution,'" in Stuart Schwartz, (ed.), *Tropical Babylon's: Sugar and the Making of the Atlantic World, 1450-1680*, (Chapel Hill, 2004); Barry W. Higman, "The Sugar Revolution," *Economic History Review*, Vol. 53, No. 2 (May, 2000), 213-238; Sidney Wilfred Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*, (New York, 1985).

[25] Richard S. Dunn, "The English Sugar Islands and the Founding of South Carolina," *SCHM*, Vol. 72, No. 2 (Apr., 1971), 82.

God be thanked the he hath enabled you to relieve me."[26] Remittance from the Americas became an enduring feature of the Irish immigration experience.

The Blake family correspondence represent the oldest surviving Irish emigrant letters from the Americas and offer an insight into the complex web of family connection which proved crucial for Irish immigrants' survival and success in the New World.[27] Through the work of enslaved "negers," the Blake's were able to amass great wealth.[28] Within the space of a decade, Henry Blake had made enough money from his Montserrat plantation that he sold it to his brother John and returned home purchasing an estate in Lehinch, Co. Mayo in 1678 and a second estate in Renvyle, Co. Galway in 1680.[29] The exponential growth of the sugar islands provided a highly profitable market for Irish salted provisions such as beef, pork, fish and butter along with demand for other goods such as hides and tallow. Ireland dominated the provisioning trade to the West Indies until the 1720s and Irish beef was the largest single West Indian import in the seventeenth century.[30] Irish domination of the Caribbean trade faced increasing competition from the rising English colonies of mainland North America.

The North American mainland colonies proved an attractive destination for many immigrants. Unlike the Caribbean, these colonies had cheap and plentiful land, an endemic labour shortage and better chances for social and economic mobility. Many of the small landholders and free labourers on the sugar islands left for the mainland colonies. More restrictive penal laws and codes were enforced there, with the exception of Pennsylvania. Nonetheless, these penal laws did not deter Catholic immigrants. In 1688, Charles Carroll arrived in Maryland and made a vast fortune from money lending and by purchasing land and slaves. When Carroll died in 1720, he was one of Maryland's most powerful men. He

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[26] Cited in Martin J. Blake, *Blake Family Records 1600 to 1700: A Chronological Catalogue with Notes, Appendices and the Genealogies of many branches of the Blake family*, (London, 1905), 107-111.
[27] Rodgers, *Slavery and Anti Slavery*, 51.
[28] Blake, *Blake Family Records*, 113.
[29] Akenson, *Ran the World*, 69-70.
[30] Thomas M. Truxes, *Irish American Trade 1660-1783*, (Cambridge, 2004), 4.

owned forty thousand acres and one hundred and twelve slaves. Charles Carroll established one of the largest Catholic slaveholding dynasties in what later became the US and his grandson Charles Carroll of Carrollton was the sole Roman Catholic signatory of the Declaration of Independence in 1776.[31]

English colonisation of the Carolinas began when Charles II awarded eight aristocratic supporters, led by Ashley Cooper, the Earl of Shaftesbury, charters in 1663 and 1665, granting them a vast territory that stretched northward to modern day Virginia - North Carolina border and southward into Florida.[32] Charles II granted the Proprietors of Carolina extraordinary powers, most notably the "Bishop of Durham" clause, which gave them the power to make war and peace, create towns and ports, grant titles of honour, collect taxes and duties and maintain a standing army.[33] In promoting the colony, it was advertised as a salubrious place with rich and rewarding soil.[34] Ashley Cooper and his personal secretary John Locke drafted the first of five versions of the Fundamental Constitution of Carolina. Although the colonists of the Carolinas refused to ratify this constitution, a number of its provisions were implemented in an ad hoc manner.[35]

The Fundamental Constitution was more than just a framework for government, it was also a document designed to attract settlers. The initial charter for the Carolina Colony in 1669 stipulated that "toleration shall be granted to heathens, Jews and other dissenters from the purity of the Christian religion" and that anyone who "believed in God and worshiped publicaly [*sic*] could be a freeman."[36] It was not until 1697 that an act for making aliens free was passed which stated "that all Christians which now

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[31] Ronald Hoffman, *Princes of Ireland, Planters of Maryland: A Carroll Saga, 1500-1782*, (Chapel Hill, 2000), 69-77.

[32] Patrick Melvin, "Captain Florence O'Sullivan and the Origins of South Carolina," *SCHM*, Vol. 76, No. 4, (Oct., 1975), 237.

[33] Walter Edgar, *South Carolina a History*, (Columbia, 1998), 39.

[34] H. Roy Merrens & George D. Terry, "Dying in Paradise: Malaria, Mortality and the Perceptual Environment in Colonial South Carolina," *JSH*, Vol. 50, No.5, (Nov., 1984), 536.

[35] Edgar, *South Carolina*, 42.

[36] James M. Woods, A *History of the Catholic Church in the American South, 1513-1900*, (Gainesville, FL., 2011), 119.

are or hereafter may be in that Province (Papists only excepted) shall enjoy the full free and undisturbed liberty of their conscience."[37] The Proprietors wanted to replicate the profitable plantation society of the Caribbean colonies in the Carolinas. The Carolinas from their inception were destined to be slave societies.[38] The Irish story in the Carolinas began with the fleet of three ships that sailed from England in August 1669.

In 1669, Joseph West was appointed Governor of Carolina and Commander–in Chief of the expedition to establish the colony. West was ordered to sail with his fleet to Ireland to secure servants for the colony. When they reached Kinsale, West made contact with Robert Southwell and Thomas Gookin "for the procuring of his servants." However, Southwell reported his failure to secure servants:

> for the thing at present seems new and foreign to them, and they have been so terrified with the ill practice of sending them to the Caribbee islands, where they were sold as slaves, that as yet they will hardly give credence to any other usage.[39]

Not only did he fail to obtain new servants, some servants onboard from England jumped ship when they had the chance in Ireland. Captain Florence O'Sullivan, an Irish soldier of fortune, was appointed deputy to one of the Proprietors, Sir Peter Colleton. O'Sullivan was also appointed Surveyor General of Carolina.[40] The Proprietors of Carolina promised all free settlers over sixteen years old 150 acres of land and an additional 100 acres for every able-bodied man servant they brought with them.[41] Planters from Barbados played a significant role in the establishment of slavery in the

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[37] Richard C. Madden, *Catholics in South Carolina a Record*, (London, 1985), 8.

[38] S. Max Edelson, *Plantation Enterprise in Colonial South Carolina*, (Cambridge, MA., 2006); Betty Wood, *Slavery in Colonial America 1619-1776*, (Lanham, MD., 2005); Peter Coclanis, *The Shadow of a Dream: Economic Life and Death in the South Carolina Lowcountry, 1670-1920,* (New York, 1989); Jack P. Greene, "Colonial South Carolina and the Caribbean Connection," *SCHM*, Vol. 88, No. 4 (Oct., 1987), 192-210; Russell R. Menard, "The Africanization of the Lowcountry Labor Force, 1670-1730," in Winthrop D. Jordan & Sheila L. Skemp, (eds.), *Race and Family in the Colonial South*, (Jackson, MS., 1987); Agnes Leland Baldwin, *First Settlers of South Carolina, 1670-1700*, (Easley, SC., 1985); Ira Berlin, "Time, Space, and the Evolution of Afro-American Society on British Mainland North America," *AHR*, Vol. 85, No. 1 (1980), 44-78; Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion*, (New York, 1974).

[39] Quoted in Melvin, "Florence O'Sullivan", 237.

[40] Quoted in Ibid, 238.

[41] Walter J. Fraser Jr., *Charleston! Charleston! The History of a Southern City*, (Columbia, SC., 1991), 3.

Carolinas. By 1670, Barbados was the richest, most highly developed, most populated and congested English colony in the New World. The success of Barbados created the problem of overpopulation on the tiny island.[42] With all the prime land taken, the sugar lords of Barbados needed fresh avenues for expansion and establishing their children. One settler who is often mistaken as a son of Barbados was James Moore, Sr.[43] James Moore was the son of Ruairí Ó Mórdha, a native Irish nobleman and an organiser of the 1641 Irish Rebellion.[44] James Moore was appointed Governor of the province of Carolina in 1700, and later served as Attorney General and Chief Justice of the court system. His son of the same name also became Governor in 1719.[45] The connections with the Caribbean islands influenced the Carolina colony for generations. The Colony adopted the lifestyle and institutions of the Caribbean slave societies combining "old-world elegance and frontier boisterousness."[46]

By April 1670, the ship *Carolina* landed in what became Charleston harbour. The two other ships in the expedition were lost in treacherous tropical storms. From the very dawn of its history, the Irish have been identified with Charleston. Captain O'Sullivan was the colony's Surveyor General, Joseph Dalton became its first Land Register and Michael Moran was elected to the colony's assembly in 1670. In 1684, Richard Kylle, was appointed the first Irish born Governor of the colony but he died that same year.[47] Early land warrants in South Carolina show not only Irish servants, but also some substantial landholders. Christopher Kelly, Thurloe Duffee and Daniel Kellory all held five hundred acre plots. Thomas O'Grady and four others settled on three hundred and fifty acres in 1683, whereas Brian

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[42] Dunn, " English Sugar Islands," 82.

[43] Kinloch Bull, "Barbadian Settlers in Early Carolina: Historiographical Notes," *SCHM*, Vol. 96, No. 4, (Oct., 1995), 336.

[44] In 1641 the former and remaining Irish nobles rebelled, capitalising on the turmoil between the Presbyterians of Scotland and King Charles I, in an attempt to regain their traditional lands and standing in Irish society. For more see Micheál Ó Siochrú & Jane Ohlmeyer, (eds.), *Ireland: 1641 Contexts and Reactions*, (Manchester, 2013).

[45] Donald M. Williams, *Shamrocks and Pluff Mud: A Glimpse of the Irish in the Southern City of Charleston, South Carolina*, (Lexington, 2005), 2.

[46] Fraser, *Charleston!*, 5.

[47] Michael J. O'Brien, "The Irish in Charleston, South Carolina," *JAIHS*, Vol. XXV (1926), 134-146

Kelly owned three hundred acres in "Coleton" County.[48] Captain O'Sullivan became a large landowner, legislator, Indian fighter and very unpopular. John Locke in his *Carolina Memoranda* described him as:

> Dissentious, troublesome; bound to the peace and good behaviour; exactor of unreasonable fees; no able surveyor; knavish....disliked; unfit; ignorant in surveying; of no understanding...Ill natured bugger of children..., a very ill man.[49]

Despite the criticism, O'Sullivan retained his office in the colonial government and remained a militia officer. As Surveyor General, he was granted 2,340 acres of land on an island that still bears his name and from 1682-83 he was commissioner of public accounts.[50]

The initial problem for those aspiring to create a plantation economy in the Carolinas was to find a suitable and profitable crop to export. In the 1730s rice emerged as the main export of the colony after decades of experiments with indigo and silk.[51] Prior to this, trade in animal skins, Indian slaves and cattle were the main economic activities. From the beginning, Charleston was threatened by Spanish Florida. In 1704, James Moore Sr., conducted a brutal military campaign against the Spanish and Indians in north-western Florida. When he withdrew, he succeeded in taking one thousand Indians as slaves and helped to extend English control of the trade in Indian slaves.[52] The Spanish proved a menacing foe; however, Spanish attempts to dislodge the settlers of Charleston failed. Irish settlers in the Carolinas with a Catholic background kept their religion to themselves. For most Carolina colonists, Catholicism was synonymous with the Spanish enemy. In 1673, Don Nicolas Ponce De Leon, in an official report to Spain stated that "The best available reports have come from an Irishman who fled

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[48] Dennis Clark, *Hibernia America: The Irish and Regional Culture*, (Westport, CT, 1986), 4.

[49] Cited in Melvin, "Florence O'Sullivan," 24.

[50] Ibid, 14-15.

[51] Andrea Feeser, *Red, White, and Black Make Blue: Indigo in the Fabric of Colonial South Carolina Life*, (Athens, GA., 2013); Ben Marsh, "Silk Hopes in Colonial South Carolina," *JSH*, Vol. 78, No. 4 (Nov., 2012), 807-854; S. Max Edelson, *Plantation Enterprise in Colonial South Carolina*, (Cambridge MA., 2006); Daniel C. Littlefield, *Rice and Slaves: Ethnicity and the Slave Trade in Colonial South Carolina*, (Baton Rouge, 1981).

[52] Fraser, *Charleston!*, 24; Alan Gallay, "South Carolina's Entrance into the Indian Slave Trade," in Alan Gallay, (ed.), *Indian Slavery in Colonial America*, (Lincoln, NE., 2009), 109-146.

from that town."[53] At least four of the original 1670 colonists, James Fleming, Thomas Whitty, Hugh Jordan and Charles Miller abandoned the colony and presented themselves to the Spanish at St. Augustine.[54] One of Captain O'Sullivan's white servants, Bryan Fitzpatrick ran away to Spanish Florida where he served in the Spanish navy.[55]

The position of Irish Catholics in the Carolinas and throughout the British Empire was precarious. The death of Charles II in 1685 changed political circumstances dramatically and unexpectedly in favour of Catholicism with the accession of a Catholic monarch, James II to the English throne.[56] More important was the hope of restoring property and landholdings lost by Irish Catholics families as a result of the Cromwellian confiscations.[57] The birth of a son to James in 1688 resulted in a coup against the king. He was replaced by his Protestant Dutch son in-law, William III. This bloodless revolution in England saw Irish Jacobites mobilise in their thousands for James ensuring that the "Glorious Revolution" would be a bloody affair in Ireland. The War of the Two Kings raged in Ireland until Williamite victory was assured in 1691. Penal laws were reinforced and draconian measures were taken to ensure that Irish Catholics would not challenge the Anglican status quo. The seventeenth century ended as it had begun, with the victory of English Protestant forces in Ireland and the fleeing of Catholics of status to Europe. Through emigration, many Irish Catholic families in the seventeenth century managed to survive and carve out fortunes for themselves as a result of colonial slavery. This experience continued into the eighteenth century and for some, slavery played a pivotal role in their lives.

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[53] Cited in José Miguel Gallardo, "The Spaniards and the English Settlement in Charles Town," *SCHM*, Vol. 37. No. 2 (Apr., 1936), 58.
[54] Madden, *Catholics in South Carolina*, 7.
[55] Melvin, "Florence O'Sullivan," 248.
[56] Éamonn Ó Ciardha, *Ireland and the Jacobite Cause, 1685-1766: A Fatal Attachment*, (Dublin, 2004), 28.
[57] Micheál Ó Siochrú, *God's Executioner: Oliver Cromwell and the Conquest of Ireland*, (London, 2008), 221-250.

ii.   Eighteenth-Century Slavery in the British Atlantic World

The changing demographic dynamics of the British colonies, evolving from societies with slaves to slave societies changed the views colonial authorities had about Irish Catholics. Catholics were no longer simply branded as traitors by the time the colonial white population was dwarfed by the increasing black slave population. The shortage of white manpower in many colonies resulted in the British officials' relying on the Irish, whom they had "formerly believed to be untrustworthy and perfidious…Irish Catholics would slowly become absorbed into the developing racial hierarchy on the islands as privileged members of the white community."[58] Irish trading firms and their agents could be found throughout the New World and Europe dealing in colonial goods. In Bridgetown, Barbados on 1st February 1766 for example, Anthony Lynch & Sons had advertised in the *Barbados Mercury* their sale of "Two hundred and seventy choice Whidah and Popo Slaves, imported Ship Squirrel, Richard Chadwick, Commander from Whidah."[59] Ireland, though, for the greater part of the eighteenth century was banned by the British government from taking part in the slave trade.

In 1671, the Royal African Company (RAC) was established and only its members could trade in slaves. Irish Catholic William Ronan worked for a decade in West Africa 1687-97 for the RAC and became the chairman of the committee of merchants at Cape Castle, in present day Ghana.[60] By the 1720s, the RAC was unable to meet the demand for slaves and the trade was opened to individual traders and companies, but these rights were not extended to Irish ports. This did not stop some Irish merchants from pursuing wealth promised by slaving. For example in May 1716, records show two Dublin ships, the *Sylva* and *Sophia*, purchasing slaves off

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[58] Kristen Block, & Jenny Shaw, "Subjects Without An Empire: The Irish in the Early Modern Caribbean," *Past and Present*, No. 210, (Feb., 2011), 50

[59] Cited in Thomas M. Truxes, *London's Irish Merchant Community and North Atlantic Commerce in the Mid Eighteenth Century*, in David Dickson, Jan Parmentier & Jane Oblmeyer, (eds.), *Irish and Scottish Mercantile Networks in Europe and Overseas in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries,* (Gent, 2006), 285 & 308.

[60] Nini Rodgers, "The Irish and the Atlantic Slave Trade," *History Ireland*, Vol.15, No. 3 (May/June 2007), 17.

Gambia, and in July 1718, a Limerick ship, the *Prosperity*, was recorded as having transported ninety six slaves to Barbados.[61]

In Ireland and Britain, products and by-products of slave labour transformed the way individuals socialised and relaxed. Sugar, tobacco, rum and other goods paved the way for new spaces of consumption and interaction such as tobacco shops and coffee houses. The increasing cosmopolitan population of Britain sought not just exotic goods, but servants as well. Through active social networks, this fashion was transmitted to the elite families of Ireland. The market for African labour at home was predominantly urban and largely a luxury.[62] Philip McEvansoneya remarks that black slaves in Ireland "were human commodities in an age that indulged its appetites for the colours, tastes, textures of the world beyond Europe, the expanding world of imperial possession."[63] Black domestic slaves reflected the wealth and status of their masters more than the ubiquitous local servants.[64] In 1783, the *Dublin Journal* criticised the "preposterous Predilection for Exotics," which led employers to prefer "sooty-bottomed foreigners" to Irish servants, even though the latter might be "ever so eligibly recommended for Decency, Temperance and Expertness as a Servant."[65] W. A. Heart has calculated the number of black persons in Ireland during the eighteenth century to have ranged from two to three thousand and highlighted how the black population of Ireland was concentrated in Dublin, which had "with the exception of London, the largest black population of any eighteenth century European city."[66]

Returning Irish merchants and absentee planters often brought back a slave or two with them, as in the case of Michael Carolan, a Catholic who

[61] Nigel Tattersfield, *The Forgotten Trade*, (London, 1998), 349.
[62] Catherine Molineux, *Faces of Perfect Ebony: Encountering Atlantic Slavery in Imperial Britain*, (London, 2012), 7-9; Susan Dwyer Amussen, *Caribbean Exchanges: Slavery and the Transformation of English Society, 1640-1700*, (Chapel Hill, 2007).
[63] Philip McEvansoneya, "The Black Figure in Angelica Kauffman's Earl of Ely Family Group Portrait," *History Ireland*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (March/April 2012), 27.
[64] James Walvin, *Black Ivory: A History of British Slavery*, (Washington, 1994), 11.
[65] W. A. Hart, "Africans in Eighteenth Century Ireland," *Irish Historical Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 124 (May 2002), 21.
[66] Ibid, 22.

returned from South Carolina to Carrickmacross, County Monaghan. Michael had brought a slave girl with him to attend his wife, which caused a sensation in the locality. Michael's father, James Carolan insisted that the slave be sold and published the following advertisement in the *Dublin Mercury* on 14th August 1768:

> A neat beautiful black negro girl just brought from Carolina, aged eleven or twelve years, who understands and speaks English , very fit to wait on a lady, to be disposed of; applications to be made to James Carolan Carrickmacross or Mr. Gavan, Bridge-St Dublin.[67]

The newspapers of eighteenth century Ireland are peppered with references and advertisements for the sales of black slaves, or for the apprehension of a runaway. For example, the *Cork Journal* on 15th March 1762 advertised: "To be sold for account of D.F a black Negro boy aged about 14 years, remarkably free from vice and a very handy willing servant." On 14th September the *Belfast Newsletter* reported a: "Run away from the service of Mrs Fullerton of Carrickfregus on Sunday last, a negro slave boy."[68] Catherine Molineux notes that Britons at home called enslaved Africans servants, and this can be seen as a linguistic and visual slip that "reflected the fact that bondage in Britain visually resembled other more common forms of servitude."[69] This also applied to slaveholding families in Ireland where African slavery existed.

In 1779, free trade was granted to Ireland, removing the restrictions that circumscribed Ireland's trading activities in the New World. Free trade opened up the possibilities of participation of Irish ports in Atlantic slaving enterprises. In 1784, Limerick was the first port in Ireland to develop a detailed plan for active participation in the slave trade. The plan aimed to have six ships sail annually for the Slave and Guinea coasts of West Africa, outfitted at £3,500 each.[70] Similarly, in Belfast, the Presbyterian merchant Waddell Cunningham of Greg, Cunningham and Co., one of the most successful shipping firms in New York and owner of the substantial

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[67] Denis Carolan Rushe, *History of Monaghan for two hundred years: 1660-1860*, (Dublin, 1921), 71-72.
[68] Cited in Hart, "Africans in Ireland," 24.
[69] Molineux, *Faces of Ebony*, 8.
[70] Rodgers, *Slavery and Anti* Slavery, 112-113.

"Belfast" plantation on Dominica believed that the Belfast merchant community should engage directly in the slave trade instead of just provisioning it. Cunningham, who had once advertised for the sale "a Negro boy, about eleven years old" in the *Belfast Newsletter*, failed to establish the Belfast slaving industry.[71] By the 1780s greater opportunities to turn a quick profit were available from investing in rapidly industrialising Britain. This coincided with the rise of an anti-slavery campaign that made "a once-respectable trade reprehensible."[72] Although the slaving enterprise of Ireland failed, many did work for and partake in the slaving enterprises of Bristol, Liverpool and other English port towns.

Eighteenth century Britain was the world's largest slave trader.[73] Bristol was Britain's leading slaving port for the first half of the eighteenth century and a constant Irish presence featured in the Bristol slaving industry. John Teague and Co., for example, organised five slaving voyages from 1724-1727 with Irish captain William Barry, who made nine trips to Africa for Bristol slaving firms. Another active Irish captain in Bristol was Michael Callaghan, who made six slaving voyages. Four of these amounted to a total cargo of 1036 slaves, whereas on another voyage, he was recorded in merchant capacity as Callaghan and Co., with a cargo of 280 slaves. Even as Bristol's hold on the slave trade began to decline in the latter part of the eighteenth century, Irish captains accounted for six out of the forty nine Bristol slave ship captains from 1785-1794.[74]

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[71] Bill Rolston, "'A Lying Old Scoundrel'. Waddel Cunningham & Belfast's Role in the Slave Trade," *History Ireland*, Vol. II, No. I (Spring 2003), 24-27.

[72] Rodgers, "Irish Atlantic Slave Trade", 23.

[73] Joyce Chaplin, "The British Atlantic" in Nicholas Canny and Philip D. Morgan, (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of the Atlantic World: 1450-1850*, (Oxford, 2011); David Eltis & David Richardson, *Atlas of the Transatlantic Slave Trade*, (New Haven, CT., 2010); Kenneth Morgan, *Slavery and the British Empire: From Africa to America,* (New York, 2007); *Slavery, Atlantic Trade and the British Economy 1600-1800*, (Cambridge, 2000); David Richardson, "The British Empire and the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1600-1800," in Peter J. Marshall, (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire, Vol.7: The Eighteenth Century*, (Oxford, 1998); Patrick Manning, (ed.), *An Expanding World. Volume 15: Slave Trades, 1500-1800; Globalization of Forced Labour*, (Hampshire, 1996).

[74] Rodgers, *Slavery and Anti Slavery*, 96-98.

Chapter 1

From the 1740s, Liverpool became Britain's largest slaving port. By 1771, David Touhy, an Irish Catholic, was a successful Liverpool slaver. He informed Stephen Fagan in Cork that he had "been in the African trade for many years in which I have made a pretty fortune."[75] Albeit not every Irish person who worked in the slave trade made vast fortunes, the trade did provide employment opportunities, especially as crew members of the slaving ships. Irish men accounted for 15.2% of the non-officer crewmembers on Liverpool slaving ships from 1798-1807 and 8.7% of the officers during the same period.[76] In 1762, Andrew Erwin for example, informed his "Honered [*sic*] Parents" back in Derry that, "This Day I agreed wt [*sic*] a ship bound for the Coast of Guiney the Name is the Charlott Capt Davis she carries only 200 slaves." He informed them that he would have access to a "Privelage [*sic*] slave that is I pay the first cost for one & I get the next choice after the capt when we come to sell them."[77] A year later, Andrew wrote home stating that for the next voyage he was to receive the wage of four pounds and four shillings per month and "a Prize slave upon an average of one shilling str, per head for all the slaves sold."[78] Life on board a slave ship could be perilous for crew members with the threat of revolt by the captive cargo but diseases accounted for most fatalities. For the African slaves, the voyage was just the beginning of the horrors that awaited them in the Americas.[79]

Trade in colonial goods and the provisioning industry in Ireland encouraged and spurred on urban growth. Eighteenth century Dublin underwent rapid expansion and became the second largest city in the British

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[75] Ibid.

[76] Stephen D. Benhrendt, "Human Capital in the British Slave Trade," in David Richardson, Suzanne Schwarz & Anthony Tibbles, (eds.), *Liverpool and Transatlantic Slavery*, (Liverpool, 2007) , 81.

[77] Andrew Erwin letter to Parents, 31 August 1762, Irwin/Erwin Family Documents, T3607/3/1, PRONI.

[78] Andrew Erwin letter to Parents, 10 November 1763, Irwin/Erwin Family Documents,T3627/2/3, PRONI

[79] Stephen R. Berr, *A Path in the Mighty Waters: Shipboard Life and Atlantic Crossings to the New World*, (New Haven, 2015); Emma Christopher, *Slave Ship Sailors and Their Captive Cargoes, 1730-1807*, (New York, 2006); David Richardson, "Shipboard Revolts, African Authority, and the Atlantic Slave Trade," *WMQ*, Vol. 58, No. 1 (Jan., 2001), 69-92; Maggie Montesinos Sale, *The Slumbering Volcano: American Slave Ship Revolts and the Production of Rebellious Masculinity*, (Durham, NC., 1997).

Isles.[80] The demands of the provisioning trade turned Ireland into the largest slaughter yard in Western Europe. Linen emerged as the key industrial activity in eighteenth century Ireland and was dependent on the imports of flaxseed. By the 1740s, North America was Ireland's principal source of flaxseed. Returning westbound, flaxseed ships carried large numbers of passengers, convicts and indentured servants to the ports of the Middle Colonies in one of Irish history's great overseas migrations.[81] Beginning in the early 1700s, approximately 100,000 to 200,000 migrants left Ireland for the American mainland before the outbreak of the American Revolution.[82] David Doyle argues that one-fifth of the white population of the southern states in 1790 had come from Ireland or were of Irish descent. Doyle found that a third of these migrants had been or were Catholics.[83]

Most Catholics in North America found themselves in places that were openly hostile, and by the time of the American Revolution, many were worshipping in the nearest local Protestant church. In 1781, The *Faulkner's Dublin Journal* reported on the state of religion in mainland North America:

> The people of New England and the Northern Provinces are in general formalists and fanatics, hypocritical Sabbath-day saints who think religion consists in a mechanical attendance upon sermons. From New York to the extent of the Middle Provinces, they are less rigid and more liberal. In Philadelphia, there is much decency and appearance of Religion, and from thence to the extremities of Florida, no religion at all.[84]

Irish Catholics did not leave for the British colonies in North America in considerable numbers until the second half of the eighteenth century.[85] In 1746, the Jacobite cause received its death knell at the battle of Culloden.

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[80] Mary E. Daly, *"Dublin in the 19th Century Irish Economy,"* in P. Butel & L. M. Cullen, (eds.), *Cities and Merchants: French and Irish Perspectives on Urban Development, 1500-1900: Proceedings of the fourth Franco-Irish Seminar of Social and Economic Historians, Volume 1984*, (Dublin, 1986), 56.

[81] Truxes, *Irish American Trade*, 5.

[82] Patrick Griffin, "Irish Migration to the Colonial South. A Plea for a Forgotten Topic," in Bryan Albin Giemza, (ed.), *Rethinking the Irish in the American South: Beyond Rounders and Reelers*, (Jackson, 2013), 52.

[83] David Noel Doyle, *Ireland, Irishmen and Revolutionary America: 1760-1820*, (Dublin, 1981), 51-76.

[84] Cited in Maurice R. O'Connell, *Irish Politics and Social Conflict in the Age of the American Revolution*, (Philadelphia, 2007), 31.

[85] Maureen Wall, "Catholics in Economic Life," in Louis M. Cullen, (ed.), *The Formation of the Irish Economy* (Cork, 1976), [1969], 37-38.

With Hanoverian power assured in Britain, the number of ordinary rank and file Irish recruits in the French army began to noticeably decline as North America increasingly became the destination of choice for Irish immigrants. The fall-off of Irish enlistment in the French army "synchronise[d] in timing and source of outflow" of Irish Catholics' to the North America colonies.[86]

iii. Irish Settlers and Slavery in the Eighteenth-Century Carolinas and Georgia

In 1704, South Carolina passed an act requiring all members of the legislature to swear that their personal religious views were in conformity with the Church of England. This act also banned Catholics from worshipping in the colony. By 1717, Catholics were denied the right to vote.[87] The desire to punish Catholics after the Jacobite-Williamite War resulted in the enactment of strict penal laws in the British colonies. According to Kerby Miller, approximately 100,000 Irish Catholics left for the English colonies of the New World during the eighteenth century. They tended to be convicts, indentured servants or in the service of the British navy and armed forces. Miller argues that these migrants were rootless in terms of family and culture as they generally arrived in the colonies as individuals. They were dispersed throughout the British North American Empire and as a necessity they spoke English and privately practiced their Catholicism.[88] David Gleeson notes that eighteenth century immigrants discovered that Catholicism barely existed in North America and "migrants who wanted any religious solace had to become Protestant."[89] An Anglican minister in colonial South Carolina was pleased to report the limited presence of Catholics in the colony: "Some are suspect to be such in our neighbourhood but they come to Church and Behave themselves well there."[90]

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[86] Cullen, *Irish Diaspora*, 129.
[87] Woods, *the Catholic* Church, 120.
[88] Kerby A. Miller, *Emigrants and Exiles: Ireland and the Irish Exodus to North America*, (Oxford, 1998), 137-147.
[89] David T. Gleeson, *The Irish in the South, 1815*-1877, (Chapel Hill, 2001), 12.
[90] Cited in Madden, *Catholics in South Carolina*, 9.

Chapter 1

In 1716, an act for the purpose of encouraging white servants to migrate to the colony stated that "there hath been imported into this Province, several native Irish servants that are Papist, and persons taken from Newgate and other prisons, convicted of capital crimes, to the great prejudice and detriment of the Province" and the new legislature required "all merchants or masters of vessels" to swear under oath and "declare that to the best of their knowledge, none of the servants by them imported be either what is commonly called native Irish or persons of Known scandalous character or Roman Catholics."[91] Irish Catholic servants were viewed as problematic, especially if they maintained Jacobite sympathies. For instance, in 1717, one Irishman named Kelley was accused of freeing several Indian slaves and fleeing to the Catawbas. Later that year, the "Act for Better Governing and Regulating White Servants" was passed by the colonial assembly. The act imposed extra service time for any absence and allowed severe corporal punishment for minor offences.[92] Nevertheless, the desire for skilled craftsmen and servants was unquenchable in colonial North America and "while carefully confining Irish Catholic immigration, the planters of the southern and Caribbean colonies were inclined by various factors to leave the door ajar to it."[93] In 1720, Carolina was removed from the authority of the Lord Proprietors and became a royal colony. In 1729, the colony of Carolina was divided into North and South Carolina.[94]

Unique among the North American colonies, Carolina, like the Caribbean islands, had a population with more black slaves than whites, creating a need for more white settlers. In 1716, the first organised venture of migration from Ireland to the Carolinas took place when five hundred Protestants were encouraged by generous land grants to settle in the Yamassee lands. Three years later, however, the Proprietors decided to abandon their attempt to settle this area, with the consequence that Irish

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[91] Cited in Edward McCrady, *The History of South Carolina Under the Proprietary Government, 1670-1719*, (New York, 1897), 556-557.
[92] Steven J. Oatis, *A Colonial Complex: South Carolina's Frontier in the Era of the Yamasee War, 1680-1720*, (Lincoln, NE., 2004), 169.
[93] Doyle, *Revolutionary America*, 63.
[94] Madden, *Catholics in South Carolina*, 10.

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settlers lost their title to the land.[95] Individuals and families arrived on their own account hoping to make a profit from cheap land. In 1707, three Irish men, John Gough, Dominick Arthur and Michael Mahon purchased the Cypress Barony of thirteen thousand acres in Berkeley County. Mahon, a native of County Limerick, called his three thousand five hundred acres Limerick Plantation and the adjoining area became known as Irishtown for a number of years.[96] In 1746, a settlement populated mostly with Irish Protestants, called Williamsburg, in honour of King William of Orange, was inaugurated and had a population of 650.[97]

By 1729, the British Board of Trades advocated the further extension of South Carolina southward, below the Savannah River, as a defensive manoeuvre against Spanish ambitions. At the same time, James Edward Oglethorpe, a member of parliament in London, investigated the conditions of England's debtor prisons and recommended the release of thousands of prisoners to form a new colony.[98] By 1730, Oglethorpe, John Viscount Percival, James Vernon and others formed a corporation that became known as the Trustees of Georgia. By June 1732, the trustees received the blessing of King George II to establish the colony. The colony embraced all the territory lying between the Savannah and Altamaha Rivers and was named in honour of the King.[99] Control of the colony was granted to the trustee for twenty-one years, after which it was to revert back to the control of the Crown. Grants of land to individual settlers were not to exceed five hundred acres. This was to ensure that Georgia would not develop into a colony of large plantations and "fit the design of the province as a frontier outpost capable of defending itself."[100] New settlers arriving, at the expense of the Trustees had to agree to an indentured servitude of three years to the colony, this included the planting of mulberry trees for the cultivation of silkworms

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[95] Arthur Mitchell, *The History of The Hibernian Society of Charleston, South Carolina, 1799-1986*, (Charleston, 1982), 3.

[96] Arthur Mitchell, *South Carolina Irish*, (Charleston, 2011), 18.

[97] Mitchell, *The Hibernian Society* , 3.

[98] Buddy Sullivan, *Georgia A State History*, (Charleston, 2003), 16.

[99] Jarvis Keiley, *Georgia*, in *The Catholic Encyclopaedia. Volume VI. An International work of Reference on the Constitution, Doctrine, Discipline and the History of the Catholic Church*, (New York, 1909), 461.

[100] Phinizy Spalding, "Part One. Colonial Period," in Kenneth Coleman, (ed.), *A History of Georgia*, (Athens, 1991), [1977], 17.

and planting no more than fifty acres for their own use. Slave-ownership was banned in the colony, it was feared that slaves would revolt or flee to Spanish Florida. A ban was also placed on liquor. Freedom of worship was granted to all prospective colonists "except Papists."[101]

In the English colonies in North America, Catholicism and slavery were feared as a lethal concoction. The Stono Rebellion of 9th September 1739, the largest slave rebellion in colonial North America, occurred along the Stono River near Charleston, when approximately sixty Angolan slaves killed over fifty whites.[102] The slaves were reported to be planning an escape to St. Augustine in Catholic Spanish Florida. Significantly, the slaves who led the rebellion were from Catholic Portuguese Angola and Kongo; both had been infiltrated by Portuguese Catholic missionaries and had developed syncretistic Christian cultures. In 1711, the Rev. Francis Le Jau, an Anglican missionary, reported that many of the slaves in the Goose Creek area of South Carolina held "papist tenants," such as praying to the saints.[103] The importance of the Catholic element of the Stono rebellion is confirmed by Mark M. Smith who demonstrated how the timing of the revolt focused around the feast day of the birth of the Virgin Mary, the 8th September, and that the use of the colour white in the slaves' banners corresponded to the colour associated with the iconography of the Virgin Mary in Kongolese Catholicism.[104] In the immediate aftermath of the rebellion, fearful whites in the colony acted to ensure that slave revolts would not occur again. They introduced a duty on slave imports, which all but stopped the trade for a decade. The period after Stono saw a movement by colonial authorities to repress or eliminate African cultural retentions, which were now looked upon with suspicion by planters and missionaries alike. The New Negro Act of 1740 outlawed missionaries teaching slaves

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[101] Keiley, *Georgia*, 461.

[102] Peter H.Wood, "Anatomy of a Revolt", in Mark M Smith, (ed.), *Stono: Documenting and Interpreting a Southern Slave Revolt*, (Columbia, 2005); John K. Thornton, "African Dimensions of the Stono Rebellion", *AHR*, Vol. 96, No.4, (1991), 1101-1113; Darold D. Wax, "'The Great Risque We Run': The Aftermath Of Slave Rebellion At Stono, South Carolina, 1739-1745," *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 67, No. 2, (1982), 136-147.

[103] Woods, *the Catholic Church*, 134-135.

[104] Mark M. Smith, "Remembering Mary, Shaping Revolt: Reconsidering the Stono Rebellion," *JSH*, Vol. 67, No. 3 (August, 2001), 513-534.

how to read and write.[105] Catholicism in the colonies became associated with fears of slave rebellion among South Carolina's white population.

Irish Catholics were not welcomed as prospective settlers. Nonetheless, the colony of Georgia from its inception desperately needed white settlers. In December 1733, a shipload of Irish convicts was received in the recently established Savannah settlement on condition that the passengers commit themselves to the defence of the colony.[106] Georgia, as a frontier settlement against the Spanish was unattractive, but did justify its defensive existence when war broke out in 1739 between Britain and Spain. Georgia was a poor colony and the various restrictions, "coupled with envious observations" of their prosperous slave owning, rum drinking, Carolinian neighbours, led to resentment among Georgia's colonists. Over time, the Trustees were forced to relax their restrictions on property ownership and in 1742 the ban on rum was lifted. In 1750, the prohibition on slave importation was removed. The legal right to own slaves transformed Georgia into a rice and indigo producing plantation economy.[107]

In 1752, Georgia became a royal colony and the decade that followed was one of significant growth. By 1754, John Reynolds was appointed the first Royal Governor of Georgia and he was succeeded in 1757 by the County Monaghan born slave trader, Henry Ellis. The Irish governor reported to London that he found "the people here exceedingly dissatisfied with each other and an almost universal discontent arising from the late proceedings and persons in power." Ellis during his three years as governor solidified the royal colonial government and in 1758 the Anglican Church became the established church of the colony.[108] The late 1750s and 1760s was a period of agricultural and commercial expansion in Georgia; between 1763 and 1777, exports from the colony increased from £27,000 to

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[105] Smith, *Documenting a Revolt*, 20-27.
[106] Edward M. Shoemaker, *Georgia*, in Michael Glazier, (ed.), *The Encyclopaedia of the Irish in America*, (Notre Dame, 1999), 356-357.
[107] Sullivan, *Georgia A History*, 20-25.
[108] Cited in Sullivan, *Georgia A History*, 24-28; Edward J. Cashin, *Governor Henry Ellis and the Transformation of British North America*, (Athens, GA., 1994), 33-47.

£121,000.[109] The emerging planters of Georgia adopted the South Carolina method of tide flow rice cultivation, utilizing the lower reaches of the fresh water rivers and altering tides from the Atlantic for the irrigation of their rice crop. One of the men who petitioned for the introduction of slavery in the colony was John Rae, an Irish entrepreneur in Augusta, originally from County Down.[110]

In 1734, John Rae, an Anglican, moved to Georgia, where he started working on a pontoon boat carrying goods from Georgia to Charleston. Rae formed a commercial partnership with Patrick Brown, a substantial storekeeper and Indian trader with whom he served as collector and assessor for the district of Augusta and Halifax. They organised a consortium of trading companies, creating a monopoly over the Indian trade in the colony. In 1753, Thomas Bosomworth noted that "the powerful company at Augusta seems to look upon the whole trade of the Creek Nation as their undoubted Right."[111] In the 1740s, Armagh born George Galphin joined the Augusta-based trade firm of Brown, Rea, and Company. In the 1760s, Galphin and his partner Rea sponsored two different resettlement projects to bring Irish immigrants into South Carolina and Georgia. The Georgia settlement consisted of a 50,000-acre tract named Queensborough. Land near the settlement site became part of the new capital, Louisville, after the Revolution.[112] Their ambition was to populate the settlement with Irish Protestants from Ulster. Rae began a massive promotional campaign, including a letter he wrote from his plantation mansion "Rae's Hall" to his brother Mathew. It was published in the *Belfast News-Letter* in 1765:

> we have greater plenty of good Eating and Drinking: For I bless God for it I keep
> as plentiful a Table as most Gentlemen in Ireland, with good Punch, Wine and

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[109] Keiley, *Georgia*, 461.

[110] George Fenwick Jones, "Portrait of an Irish Entrepreneur in Colonial Augusta, 1708-1772," *GHQ*, Vol. 83, No. 3 (Fall, 1999), 428. For more on rice cultivation see Judith A. Carney, *Black Rice: The African Origins of Rice Cultivation in the Americas*, (Cambridge, Ma., 2002); William Dusinberre, *Them Dark Days: Slavery in the American Rice Swamps*, (New York, 1996); Betty Wood, *Slavery in Colonial Georgia, 1730-1775*, (Athens, GA., 1984); Littlefield, *Rice and Slaves*.

[111] Jones, "Irish Entrepreneur," 432-434.

[112] http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/george-galphin-ca-1700-1780 , accessed on the 06/09/2013.

Beer. If any person that comes here can bring Money to purchase a slave or two, they may live very easy and well.[113]

By 1768, 107 Belfast immigrants had arrived, and Rea orchestrated the passage of seven more ships before the outbreak of the American Revolution. By 1770, it was estimated that 270 immigrant families occupied Queensborough and its' surrounding hinterlands.

Ulster dominated the first waves of Irish emigration to North America; it was the first part of rural Ireland to feel the full effects of being tied to the British colonial network and the rise of urban industrialisation. In many parts of Ulster and northern Connaught, the manufacturing of linen had replaced farming as the main economic activity for many households. By 1788, Irish linen accounted for over 70 percent of all Irish exports.[114] The demand for Irish linen fell as cotton emerged as the fabric of choice in Britain. Cheap land grants in the American colonies were open to Protestant settlers, and this proved to be another strong incentive for Irish Presbyterians to cross the Atlantic and start life anew. After the American Revolution and the relaxation of hostile legislation towards Catholics, the United States became a much more attractive place for Irish immigrants looking for economic and political asylum. Those who left during the eighteenth century did so for reasons that would become all too familiar in the nineteenth century. Jay P. Dolan noted that the main reason for emigration was economic. "The first sizable migration to the North American colonies began in 1718 and ended in 1729, as a result of a series of crop failures."[115] Famine was a regular occurrence in Ireland during the 1700s. About eighty percent of those who left Ireland between 1717 and 1729 came to North America as free passengers. However, when famine plagued Ireland in the 1740s a fresh wave of Irish emigration left for mainland North America; this time the vast majority were indentured servants. The newspapers of North America were littered with runaway

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[113] Cited in Kerby A. Miller, Arnold Schrier, Bruce Boling & David N. Doyle, (eds.), *Irish Immigrants in the Land of Canaan: Letters and Memoirs from Colonial and Revolutionary America*, (New York, 2003), 72.
[114] Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh, *Ireland Before the Famine*, (Dublin, 1972), 2-3.
[115] Jay P. Dolan, *The Irish Americans A History*, (New York, 2008), 6.

notices, and most of these were described as "Irish."[116] For example, the 27th July 1734, *South Carolina Gazette* commented on a runaway Irish servant:

> An Irish Mungrel, lately Run away,
> When R_ge thought to shew him English play,
> But Teague, it seems, did not think fit to stay.[117]

The eighteenth century saw great improvements and developments in shipping, and the cost of passage from Ireland to North America halved between the 1720s and the 1770s. The term for indentured servants contracted also fell from 4-7 years to 2-4 years during this period.[118]

Most of the mainland American colonies used incentives to attract immigrants. South Carolina launched several bounty schemes directed at Protestants in Ireland during the 1760s. The Bounty Act of 1761, provided a way to make a handsome profit by transporting poor Protestants to South Carolina. Some of those arriving turned out to be Catholic and many claimed they had been kidnapped. During the period of the Bounty Act, 1761-1768, as many as four thousand settlers were shipped to South Carolina. Of these, nearly three-quarters were Irish immigrants.[119] Slave trader Henry Laurens denounced the poor and cruel conditions in which some merchants delivered Irish settlers to the colony. In 1768, he declared:

> I never saw an instance of cruelty in ten or twelve years experience in that branch equal to the cruelty exercised upon the poor Irish...Self Interest prompted the Baptized Heathen in first case to take care of the wretched slaves for Market, but no other care was taken of those poor Protestant Christians from Ireland but to deliver as many as possible alive on shoar upon the cheapest terms.[120]

Heavy emigration from Ireland to North America occurred in the years before the outbreak of the American Revolution. In 1780, *The Freeman's Journal* in Dublin estimated that from 1772-75 over one thousand Irish immigrants had arrived in Charleston.[121]

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[116] Griffin, "Irish Migration to the South," 58.
[117] Cited in Warren B. Smith, *White Servitude in Colonial South Carolina*, (Columbia, 1961), 86.
[118] Cullen, *Irish Diaspora*, 146.
[119] Edgar, *South Carolina*, 58-59.
[120] Cited in Mitchell, *Carolina Irish*, 25.
[121] Mitchell, *The Hibernian* Society, 5.

Figure 1: Advertisement for immigration to Charleston, *Belfast Newsletter* 6th Jan., 1767.

Charleston was the principal city of the Southern colonies and the city benefitted greatly from the region's increasing prosperity in the third quarter of the eighteenth century. From 1740 to 1775 the city's population increased from four thousand to twelve thousand. By the end of the colonial period, Charleston was the fourth largest city in North America. South Carolina's share of the total value of exports from the mainland colonies to England grew from less than four percent at the turn of the seventeenth century to just under twenty nine percent by 1770.[122] The swamps of South Carolina proved to be the goldmines of the colony. The rice plantations around Charleston were a plantation world par excellence.[123] A 1773 commentator on Irish servants in the rice swamps believed that the "Irish are considered welcome Guests as they are generally industrious, and in the low and marsh country have a Value in being what others deride them for-Bog Trotters."[124] David Ramsay in his 1785, *History of South Carolina* remarked:

> But of all other countries, none has furnished the province with so many inhabitants as Ireland. Scarce a ship sailed from any of its ports for Charleston that was not crowded with men, women and children.[125]

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[122] Coclanis, *The Shadow of A Dream*, 80.

[123] Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth Century Chesapeake and Low Country*, (Chapel Hill, 1998), 28-29.

[124] Cited in Mitchell, *Carolina Irish*, 25-26. For more on rice production see Edelson, *Plantation Enterprise*, 92-126.

[125] Cited in Smith, *White Servitude*, 51.

In 1790, immigrants from Ireland represented 11.7 percent of the South Carolina white population.[126]

The wealth of South Carolina was a result of the sweat, blood and tears of forced labour and South Carolina imported the highest volume of slaves among the North American mainland colonies. African slaves were the real engine of the South Carolina economy and slaves comprised the majority of the colony's population by 1708, accounting for seventy percent of the entire population by 1740. By 1769, rice and indigo were the fourth and fifth most valuable export commodities of the British North American Empire.[127] Ownership of slaves had social and political significance. Being a master of slaves automatically granted the slaveholder membership in the ruling class. An examination from 1766 to 1775 of slaveholders in Charleston shows that only 23 percent of decedent's estates did not include at least one slave. The 1774 mean aggregate wealth per inventoried estate in Charleston was £2,337 pounds sterling, dwarfing the averages for other cities. For instance, Philadelphia averaged at £396 and Boston £312.[128] The successful slave society of the southern colonies did not emerge like Athena, fully grown and armed, but gradually and unevenly the plantation economies of South Carolina and Georgia emerged from the dank swamps.[129] Land had to be cleared, natives to be dealt with and slaves to be controlled in order for any economic development to take place. The fate of rice production rested on the fickle nature of global demand for agricultural exports. Despite their enticing advertisements, the colonies were no paradise, and they proved to be an early grave for countless numbers of settlers and slaves. This was especially true from June to October, when the mosquitoes and disease reigned supreme over the rice producing low country. Yet, despite the horrific epidemiological devastations, South

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[126] Edgar, *South Carolina*, 51.

[127] Kenneth Morgan, "Slave Sales in Colonial Charleston," *The English Historical Review*, Vol. 113, No. 453 (Sep., 1998), 905 & 907.

[128] Robert Olwell, *Masters, Slaves & Subjects: The Culture of Power in the South Carolina Low Country 1740-1790*, (New York, 1998), 33-45.

[129] Coclanis, *Shadow of A Dream*, 49; for more on the plantation revolution in South Carolina and Georgia see Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America*, (Cambridge, MA., 1998), 142-176.

Carolina was among the fastest growing areas in North America during the eighteenth century.[130]

iv. Irish Settlers and Slavery in Eighteenth-Century French and Spanish Louisiana

Irish Catholic emigration throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was dominated by military service. From 1585 to 1818, it is estimated that over half a million Irishmen fought and served in the Irish Brigades of Spain and France alone.[131] Many had lost their lands and were channelled into military and naval service. The first significant number of Irish men who travelled to the New World served in the Spanish garrison in Florida in the 1560s.[132] Others took advantage of opportunities for trade and settlement in the French and Spanish Empires.[133] Following the Treaty of Limerick in 1691, about nineteen thousand Irish soldiers left for France. During the lifetimes of James II and his son James III, the Stuart cause continued to attract waves of Irish immigrants to join the French army. The Jacobite court remained a generous patron for Irish Catholics and clergy.[134] Prince Charles's expedition to Scotland in 1745 would have been impossible without Irish support. The *Duteillay*, on which the Young Pretender sailed to Scotland, was owned by Anthony Walsh, who operated in Nantes and Walter Ruthledge in Dunkirk supplied the *Elisabeth* which accompanied the *Duteillay*. The Irish banking firm of Waters & Sons in Paris advanced 180,000 livres for the expedition. Indeed, four of the "Seven men of Moidart," were Irish.[135] During the eighteenth-century, the Irish regiments in France and Spain offered five hundred commissions at any

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[130] Edgar, *South Carolina*, 81; Edelson, *Plantation Enterprise*.

[131] Mark McLaughlin, *The Wild Geese: The Irish Brigades of France and Spain*, (Oxford, 1980), 13-23.

[132] Woods, *Catholic Church*, 21.

[133] Rodgers, *Slavery and Anti Slavery*, 27-35; Rafael Fernández Moya, "The Irish Presence in the History and Place Names of Cuba," *Irish Migration Studies of Latin America,* Vol. 5, No. 3, (November, 2007), 189.

[134] Ó Ciardha, *Ireland and the Jacobite Cause*, 22-30.

[135] When Prince Charles landed on the Scottish mainland at Moidart, he was not accompanied by an invading army but seven supporters, who became known as the "Seven Men of Moidart". The four Irishmen were Sir Thomas Sheridan, Rev. George Kelly, Sir John MacDonnell & John William O'Sullivan. See J.G. Simms, "The Irish on the Continent 1691-1800," in T. W. Moody & W.E. Vaughan, (eds.), *A New History of Ireland, Volume IV: Eighteenth-Century Ireland 1691-1800*, (Oxford, 1986), 634-637.

time to Irishmen, and others found success in the service of other European powers.[136]

The Penal laws in Ireland had closed all avenues for Catholics to hold positions in government, the armed services and legal professions, and restrictions on land ownership and inheritance saw the Catholic ownership of land in Ireland decline to 5 percent.[137] These laws forced a wave of Irish Catholic merchants to leave for the European continent. Irish merchants capitalised on networks and relations established by their seventeenth-century counterparts. For example, Luc O'Shiels left Ireland in 1689, aged twelve, and his family settled in Nantes. By 1706, through trade with the West-Indies and involvement in the triangular slave trade, O'Shiel became one of the wealthiest merchants in Nantes.[138] The city of Nantes dominated the French slave trade, accounting for more the 1400 slaving expeditions, earning it the infamous epithet "City of Slavers."[139] In Nantes, merchant families of Irish origins were active in the French slave trade. Most of these families organised less than five slaving expeditions each. However, others such as the Rirdan brothers Etienne and Laurent, sent out eleven expeditions between 1734-1749, purchasing over three thousand slaves.[140] Antony Walsh became the fifth most successful African slaver in French history by organising some forty expeditions, purchasing over 12,000 slaves for export.[141] Anthony's father, Philip had transported James II to France after the battle of the Boyne in 1690. In 1748, Anthony launched the *Sociéte d'Angole*, the first private joint-stock company in France devoted to trading slaves. With financial backing from Parisian bankers Tourton and Baur and financier Pâris de Montmartel, the required capital of two million livres was raised, of which Walsh paid 250,000 livres out of his own pocket. The company met with only limited success with some 26 ships dispatched

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[136] Cullen, *Irish* Diaspora, 134-135.

[137] Wall, *Catholics in Economic Life*, 37.

[138] Mary Lyons & Thomas O'Connor, *Strangers to Citizens: The Irish in Europe 1600-1800*, (Castuera, 2008), 103.

[139] Robert Louis Stein, *The French Slave Trade In the Eighteenth Century: An Old Regime Business*, (Madison, 1979), 55; David Geggus, "The French Slave Trade: An Overview," *WMQ*, Vol. 58, No. 1 (Jan., 2001), 119-138; Christoper L. Miller, *The French Atlantic Triangle: Literature and Culture of the Slave Trade*, (Durham, NC., 2008), 62-82.

[140] Rodgers, *Slavery and Anti* Slavery, 112 & 344.

[141] Ibid, 107-111.

across the Atlantic and by 1753, the company had disbanded.[142] In 1753, Antony Walsh was ennobled by King Louis XV of France and he retired from the slave trade to take up residence on his plantations in Saint Domingue.[143]

The profits from the French sugar islands lagged behind those of England until the 1730s when the French sugar islands and slave trade boomed. The 1730s marked the beginning of the "Golden Age" of Saint Domingue, whose production of coffee and sugar eclipsed the output of all the other Caribbean islands.[144] Irish merchants in France used their wealth to invest in and establish plantations in Saint Domingue. The Walshes were among the *grand blancs* of Saint Domingue (the planters, merchants and wealthy maritime agents), as were other Irish families such as the O'Sheil's, O'Gorman's, Rourke's, Butler's, Plunket's, Stapleton's and Macnamara's.[145] The rapidly expanding economy of the French colonies also offered opportunities for men of modest means as a class of *petit blancs*, engaged in skilled and artisan craft work, as legal men, overseers and smallholders. It was possible for a few to acquire the capital needed to start off as overseers before becoming planters. For example, the Danish island of Saint-Croix, an island dominated by Westmeath born planter Nicholas Tuite, had only twelve Irish plantation owners, but more than a hundred Irish overseers.[146] Throughout the Americas, Irish interests in colonial plantations were founded and guarded jealously by many. One such case was that of Victor Martin O'Gorman of County Clare. O'Gorman started his career in the Irish Brigade of France, and he became the aide-de-camp to Count d'Argout, Governor General to the French colonies in America, a position which enabled O'Gorman to acquire a substantial

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[142] Stein, *French Slave Trade*, 28.

[143] Rodgers, *Slavery and Anti* Slavery, 111.

[144] Stein, *French Slave* Trade,22-23; Laurent Dubois, "Slavery in the French Caribbean, 1635-1804," in David Eltis & Stanley Engerman, (eds.), *Cambridge World History of Slavery, Vol. 3, AD 1420-AD 1804*, (Cambridge, 2011); John Garrigus, *Before Haiti: Race and Citizenship in French Saint-Domingue*, (New York, 2006); David Geggus, "Sugar and Coffee Cultivation in Saint Domingue and the Shaping of the Slave Labor Force," in Ira Berlin and Philip D. Morgan, (eds.), *Cultivation and Culture: Labor and the Shaping of Slave Life in the Americas*, (Charlottesville, VA., 1993).

[145] Nini Rodgers, "The Irish in the Caribbean 1641-1837 An Overview," *Irish Migration Studies in Latin America*,Vol. 5, No. 3 (2007), 150.

[146] Cullen, *Irish* Diaspora, 136; Power, "Irish Planters, Atlantic Merchants".

plantation in Saint Domingue. When the Haitian Revolutionary War (1791-1804) broke out on the island, O'Gorman fought against the rebelling slaves, leading a unit known as O'Gorman's *Chasseurs Noirs* (black hunters).[147] Saint Domingue was the premier plantation economy in the Atlantic World, and the eventual success of the rebelling slaves, who carried out a "triple revolution- against 'slavery, colonialism and racial oppression,'" transformed the Atlantic institution of slavery and new commodity frontiers emerged to fill the void left in the wake of the Haitian Revolution.[148] Prior to the Haitian Revolution, French authorities and ambitious Irish sugar prospectors focused on the profitable staple producing islands rather than on the settler colonies of mainland North America. However, profit was also to be found in the colony of Louisiana.

Louisiana was a colony that encompassed a vast geographic territory covering close to one-third of present day US. It was not until the 1690s that the French made determined efforts to populate the territory. By 1709, the settlements of Mobile and Biloxi had been established. In replicating the governance structures of the Carolinas, Antoine Crozat, the Marquis de Chatel, was granted the Louisiana colony by royal charter from Louis XIV in 1712. In 1713, the first Governor of the territory was appointed and instructed to promote the growth of tobacco and indigo. The early Louisiana economy was dependent on fur trappings and the export of cypress timber; the fortunes of the Caribbean islands had eluded Louisiana. The death of Louis XIV in 1715 left the French empire under the control of the regency of Philip, Duke of Orleans, on behalf of the five year old Louis XV. By then, Louisiana had cost the proprietary government over one million livres

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[147] Rodgers, "The Irish Caribbean," 153-154; For more on the Haitian Revolution see: Jeremy Popkin, *You Are All Free: The Haitian Revolution and the Abolition of Slavery*, (New York, 2011); David P. Greggus, "The Haitian Revolution in Atlantic Perspective," in Nicholas Canny and Philip D. Morgan, (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of the Atlantic World: 1450-1850*, (Oxford, 2011); Ashli White, *Encountering Revolution: Haiti and the Making of the Early Republic*, (Baltimore, 2010); Robin Blackburn, "Haiti, Slavery, and the Age of Democratic Revolutions," *WMQ*, Vol. 63, No. 4 (Oct., 2006), 643-674; Laurent Bubois, *Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution*, (Cambridge, MA., 2004).
[148] Enrico Dal Lago, *American Slavery, Atlantic Slavery, and Beyond: The U.S. "Peculiar Institution" in International Perspective. U.S. History in International Perspective*, (London, 2012), 58-61; Robin, Blackburn, *The American Crucible: Slavery, Emancipation and Human Rights*, (London, 2011), 206.

making it impossible to find a new proprietor for the colony. The government awarded the responsibility of the colony to a joint-stock company, the *Compagnie d'Occident* under the control of John Law, a Scottish economist. In 1716, Law organised the Banque Générale of France and the government soon declared the currency issued by the Bank as the legal tender of France. This worked well initially, but two years on the bank had to be recapitalised and turned into a larger institution, *Banque Royale* of France. Law used the bank's assets to develop the Louisiana colony and created the *Compagnie des Indes* which in 1719 absorbed the *Compagnie d'Occident*.[149]

In 1718, the city of New Orleans, named in honour of the Duc d'Orleans was established on the high ground, rising from the Gulf of Mexico near the mouth of the Mississippi. The "Crescent City" became the Capital of the Louisiana Colony.[150] The Irish contingency, in the city in the early years, was very limited. In 1719, Bernard Cantillon, scion of a Kerry family, had a number of Irishmen indentured for Louisiana.[151] Bernard's financiers included his brother Richard Cantillon, the cunning banking millionaire who wrote the influential *Essai sur la nature du commerce en general* (1755).[152] By 1719, the company imported African slaves to create a plantation economy. The promotion of Louisiana created a frenzy of stock speculation in France, which became known as the "Mississippi Bubble." As stock prices rose astronomically from 500 to 18,000 livres and the expenses in Louisiana increased, the *Compagnie des Indes* could no longer pay dividends on the thousands of shares it had sold, ending in disaster in 1720 with the failure of the *Banque Royale* and the collapse of the

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[149] Daniel H. Usner Jr., "Colonial Projects and Frontier Practices: The First Century of New Orleans History," in Jay Giltin, Barbara Berglund & Adam Arenson, (eds.), *Frontier Cities: Encounters at the Crossroads of Empire*, (Philadelphia, 2013), 27-46; Shannon Lee Dawdy, *Building the Devil's Empire: French Colonial New Orleans*, (Chicago, 2008); Joan B. Garvey & Mary Lou Widmer, *Louisiana The First 300 Years,* (New Orleans, 2007), [2001], 8-13 & 46-49; Mathé Allain, *"Not Worth a Straw": French Colonial Policy and the Early Years of Louisiana*, (Lafayette, LA., 1988); John G. Clark, *New Orleans 1718-1812: An Economic History*, (Baton Rouge, 1970).
[150] Thomas N. Ingersoll, *Mammon and Manon in Early New Orleans: The First Slave Society in the Deep South, 1718-1819*, (Knoxville, 1999), 3-10.
[151] Cullen, *Irish Diaspora*, 126-130.
[152] Antoin E. Murphy, *Richard Cantillon: Entrepreneur and Economist*, (Oxford, 1988), [1986], 1-9.

Compagine des Indes stock. The enormous debts of the company and bank were consolidated and taken over by the state and in 1731 Louisiana became a royal colony.[153] Many were ruined by the bursting of the Mississippi bubble, such as the Irish banking brothers John and Remy Carol.[154] Poor administration, insufficient troops and supplies, bungling policies dealing with the native tribes and a disappointing inflow of immigrants plagued Louisiana.[155] The colony would never fulfil its economic potential under French rule, however, the economic future of Louisiana was forged in 1751, when the Jesuits began growing sugar cane that had been sent to them by Jesuit slaveholders in Cuba.[156]

Colonial French rule in Louisiana came to an end at the close of the Seven Years War in 1763. France was forced to cede all of New France in North America to Britain in order to retain its sugar interest in the Caribbean. France also signed over the entire Louisiana colony to Spain. By 1768, the anti-Spanish feelings of the Louisiana colonists reached crisis levels after two years of ineffective and poor governance by the new Spanish Governor Antonio de Ulloa and resulted in his expulsion and a revolt. An incensed Charles III of Spain was determined to restore Spanish authority over the colony and entrusted Irish-born General Alexander O'Reilly to retake Louisiana. The War of Spanish Succession revitalised the tradition of employing Irish units in the Spanish army. Throughout the eighteenth century, thousands of Irishmen served in the armies of Spain.[157] Crucial to the rise of the Irish to power in the Spanish Court was the success of Richard "Ricardo" Wall y Devereaux, who served as Secretary of State, the chief minister for the King during the second government of Ferdinand

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[153] Glyndwr Williams, *The Expansion of Europe in the Eighteenth Century: Overseas Rivalry, Discovery, and Exploitation*, (New York, 1967), 52-58; Pierre Heinrich, *Louisiana under the Company of the Indies, 1717-1731*, (WPA trans, by H. D. de Sinclair, Baton Rouge, *1940*), 111-166.
[154] Murphy, *Richard Cantillon*, 208.
[155] James D. Clayton, *Antebellum Natchez*, (Baton Rouge, 1968), 12.
[156] Garvey &Widmer, *The First 300 Years*, 33.
[157] Simms, *The Irish on the Continent*, 638-639; Óscar Recio Morales, *Ireland and the Spanish Empire, 1600-1825*, (Dublin, 2010), 184-185.

VI, 1746-59. Wall ensured the promotion of Irishmen, such as Ambrose O'Higgins and Alexander "Alejandro" O'Reilly.[158]

O'Reilly was born in Baltrasna, County Meath, in 1722, and began his military career at the age of eleven as a cadet in the Hibernia regiment. He rose to become the chief reformer of the Spanish army in the eighteenth century. O'Reilly put his reforms into practice in Puerto Rico and Cuba.[159] On his return from Cuba, O'Reilly was appointed Inspector General of the Infantry of Spain. The revolt in Louisiana forced O'Reilly's return to the Americas, with a fleet of 21 ships and 2,056 soldiers to retake the colony.[160] This was an imposing military force, considering that the population of New Orleans was just over three thousand. O'Reilly's expedition went unopposed and the rising was soon crushed with the prompt execution of its ringleaders.

O'Reilly only remained in Louisiana for seven months but as Governor General he initiated a series of reforms that transformed the colony. The Spanish code of law that had been successful in the Caribbean, *Recopilacion de las leyes de los Reinos de Indies*, became known as the *Code O'Reilly* in Louisiana. Under the new Spanish laws, enslaved persons had the right to own and dispose of property and to buy their own and their family members' freedom.[161] In Louisiana, O'Reilly oversaw the abolition of Indian slavery in the Louisiana territory.[162] The Spanish codes also provided for the appointment of priests and the financial support of the Catholic Church by the government. O'Reilly was responsible for dividing Louisiana into twenty-one parishes, which are still the basis for Louisiana's civil administration. To integrate New Orleans into the Spanish colonial economy, O'Reilly enlisted the help of Cuban merchants, including Irish

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[158] Morales, *Ireland and the Spanish Empire*, 235.
[159] Ibid, 242-245; Moya, "The Irish Presence in Cuba," 189-192; Theresa A. Singleton, "Slavery and Spatial dialectics on a Cuban coffee plantation," *World Archaeology*, Vol. 33, No. 1 (2001), 98-144.
[160] Morales, *Ireland and the Spanish Empire,* 237
[161] Jane Landers, "Felipe Edimboro Sues for Manumission, Don Fransico Xavier Sández Contests," in Richard Boyer & Geoffrey Spurling, (eds.), *Colonial Lives: Documents on Latin American History 1550-1850*, (Oxford, 2000), 249.
[162] Garvey &Widmer, *The First 300 Years*, 44-45.

born Oliver Pollock. Trade was encouraged and custom and import duties were reduced.[163]

Irish merchants enjoyed the privileges granted to them by the Spanish authorities, but they did not rule out their rights of vassalage of the British crown when it was to their advantage. They did not hesitate to act as intermediaries for English firms in the Spanish market, exploiting their legal privileges.[164] By 1777, Pollock was a well-established merchant in New Orleans and slave-trading was one of his commercial activities. In 1788, Pollock financed a shipment of *bozales* slaves from Martinique, selling 73 slaves that year and a further 33 the following year.[165] As in the seventeenth century, a number of Irish merchants made fortunes by exploiting opportunities available in the Spanish empire.

v.   From the American Revolution to the Louisiana Purchase

At least 150,000 people from Ulster and another 50,000 from the southern provinces of Ireland arrived in the thirteen North American colonies prior to the American Revolution.[166] This Irish migration is often solely considered an Irish Presbyterian affair; however, recent scholarship now recognises that thousands of these people were of Irish Anglican and Irish Catholic heritage. In the British North American colonies, Irish Catholics arrived generally as indentured servants, convicts or soldiers. It was a predominately male migration, and David Gleeson has noted that these Irish settlers disappeared into the colonies majority population, and, if they married, "it was usually to a Protestant. Many converted because there was no structural Catholic Church outside of Quebec in British North America."[167] The outbreak of hostilities between Britain and the American

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[163] Douglas B. Chambers, "Slave Trade Merchants of Spanish New Orleans, 1763-1803: Clarifying the Colonial Slave Trade to Louisiana in Atlantic Perspective," in William Boelhower, (ed.), *New Orleans in the Atlantic World: Between Land and Sea*, (New York, 2013), 184.

[164] Morales, *Ireland and the Spanish Empire*, 258-259; Maria Del Carmen Lario, "*The Irish Traders of Eighteenth Century Cádiz*," in Dickson, Parmentier & Oblmeyer, (eds.), *Irish and Scottish Mercantile Networks*, 211-230.

[165] Chambers, "Slave Merchants of New Orleans", 184-185.

[166] Miller et al., (eds.) *Irish in the Land of Canaan*, 7.

[167] David T. Gleeson, "The Irish Atlantic?," in Gleeson, (ed.), *The Irish in the Atlantic World*, (Columbia, SC., 2010), 4.

colonists was deplored by some Irish settlers, whereas many others were unrestrained in their support for Independence.

The Carolinas and Georgia were among the bloodiest theatres of the American Revolution. South Carolina saw more battles than any other of the thirteen new states and two-thirds of all Continental fatalities occurred in the Palmetto state. Several of the southern Patriot leaders were Irishmen. These included prominent families such as the Rutledges, Lynches, O'Neals and Burkes in the Carolinas. Of the four South Carolina signatories of the Declaration of Independence two were of Irish stock; Edward Rutledge and Tomas Lynch Jr., who was the grandson of Thomas Lynch (1675-1738), a member of the colonial Assembly of South Carolina who had left Connaught as a young boy.[168] Another Irishman who played an important role in the Revolution was Galway born Dr. Thomas Burke, who by 1781 had become Governor of North Carolina where he was responsible for rallying opposition against the British until his death in 1783. On 16th March 1778, the importance of the Irish contribution to the southern colonists war efforts was highlighted when the first Regiment of South Carolina of the Continental forces was notified that "tomorrow being St. Patrick's Day such Non-Commissioned officers and soldiers as are Natives to the kingdom of Ireland are to be Excused Duty and the paymaster will pay them tomorrow the pay due to them."[169]

Aedanus Burke also played an important role in the Carolinas during the Revolutionary period. Born in County Galway in 1743, Burke was educated in Europe at the elite Jesuit institution of St. Omer, before he migrated to Virginia in 1769, where he studied law. Burke served in the American Army and he reached the rank of major of militia. He was present at the British surrender of Yorktown in 1781, where he captured runaway slaves "I Saved several Negroes for some of S[o]. Carol[a], friends wch [*sic*] the

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[168] Mitchell, *Carolina Irish*, 27; Ed Southern, (ed.), *Voices of the American Revolution in the Carolinas*, (Winston-Salem, NC., 2009); David K. Wilson, *The Southern Strategy: Britain's Conquest of South Carolina and Georgia, 1775-1780*, (Columbia, SC., 2005); Jerome J. Nadelhaft, *The Disorders of War: The Revolution in South Carolina*, (Orono, ME., 1981).
[169] "An Order Book of the 1st. Regt., S. C. Line, Continental Establishment (Continued)," *SCHM*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (Apr., 1907), 75.

British had at York. There was one of yours, but he went on board a vessel & cd. [*sic*] not find him. I have one of Jn°. Izard's with me."[170] Burke was elected a member of the Jacksonborough Assembly in January 1782. Nominally, Burke became a Protestant in South Carolina to take his political office. His public career in South Carolina spanned a period of twenty four years from 1778 to 1802. Burke was one of the three commissioners charged in the 1780s with responsibility to review the state's laws and propose revisions in compliance with the state's new status of Independence.[171]

In 1789, Burke was elected as an anti-Federalist to the First Congress of the United States. It was not long before the issue of slavery was raised at Congress in 1790.[172] On February 11th & 12th, three memorials from Quaker groups demanded that Congress clarify the ambiguity in the Constitution regarding slavery and the slave trade. Burke was among the first to aggressively denounce the petitions, warning that the "rights of the Southern States ought not to be threatened, and their property endangered, to please people who would be unaffected by the consequences."[173] He contended that the abolitionist petitions "prayed for unconstitutional measures." Opposing the "business totally," Burke was certain that commitment of the petitions by the Senate for further review would "sound an alarm, and blow the trumpet of sedition in the Southern States."[174] Similar defences of slavery were made by Irish slaveholders in the antebellum period where like Burke they emerged as advocates for "the protection of property, the order, and the tranquillity of the state to which I belong."[175]

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[170] Aeds. Burke to Arthur Middleton, 18th, Nov., 1781 cited in Arthur Middleton & Joseph W. Barnwell, "Correspondence of Hon. Arthur Middleton, Signer of the Declaration of Independence," *SCHM*, Vol. 26, No. 4 (Oct., 1925), 190.

[171] John C. Meleney, *The Public Life of Aedanus Burke: Revolutionary Republican in Post-Revolution South Carolina*, (Columbia, SC., 1984), 4 & 181-191.

[172] Howard A. Ohline, "Slavery, Economics, and Congressional Politics, 1790," *JSH*, Vol. 46, No. 3 (Aug., 1980), 335-360.

[173] *Annals of Congress 1790*, 1227

[174] *Annals of Congress 1790*, 1241

[175] Cited in Meleney, *Life of Aedanus Burke*, 188.

Chapter 1

The Revolutionary War in South Carolina at times represented a bitter civil war. Noting "the inveterate hatred & spirit of Vengeance" one Irish revolutionary informed Arthur Middleton, a South Carolina signatory of the US Declaration of Independence that "I wish I could give you a proper Idea of the distressed situation of this country, & temper of the people; & this I assure you has undergone a great & serious revolution since you were here."[176] Irishmen played their part on both Patriot and Loyalist sides during the revolution. For example, Samuel Butler, an Irish speaker who was christened and raised in the city of Cork, helped the British in New York to raise a Loyalist Irish regiment. Butler identified as an Irishman and yet he was an African American, who had been born in Charleston and taken to Ireland in infancy.[177] In Georgia, the Irish colonists in Queensborough proved to be staunch loyalists and the settlement did not survive the war. John Rae died in 1789 but his son and his two-half brothers became lieutenant colonels in Georgia's revolutionary force. During the Revolutionary war, George Galphin sided with the colonists, and the Continental Congress named him one of five Indian commissioners. In this role, he tried to enlist the Creeks and prevent the British from fully utilizing the Lower Creeks in their war effort. Continental Congress delegate Henry Laurens, credited Galphin with securing both South Carolina and Georgia for the colonists.[178]

American victory against the British would have been unlikely without the support of France and Spain. Irish troops in European armies contributed to American Independence. In 1778, France and Britain declared war, and for the first time the Irish brigade served outside Europe.[179] Two Irish regiments participated in the theatre of the American

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[176] Aeds. Burke to Arthur Middleton, 25th Jan., 1782 cited in Middleton & Barnwell, "Correspondence of Arthur Middleton," 192. For more on the Revolutionary War see Edward G. Gray & Jane Kamensky, *The Oxford Handbook of the American Revolution*, (New York, 2013); Gordon S. Wood, *The American Revolution: A History*, (New York, 2002).

[177] Quinlan, Kieran, *Strange Kin: Ireland and the American South*, (Baton Rouge, 2005), 27; Robert Stansbury Lambert, *South Carolina Loyalists in the American Revolution*, (Columbia, SC., 1987).

[178] http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/george-galphin-ca-1700-1780 , accessed on the 06/09/2013.

[179] Rodgers, "The Irish Caribbean," 152.

Revolutionary War led by General Arthur Dillon and Comte de Antonie de Walsh-Serrant. Some 434 Irish soldiers in Count Arthur Dillon's Regiment fought at the Siege of Savannah in 1779. After the American Revolution erupted, Spanish Louisiana played a pivotal role in the war by serving as a rebel supply depot, when Spain declared war on Britain in 1779. From Europe, Spain dispatched its Hibernia regiment which took part in the Spanish assault at Pensacola, Florida, in 1781.[180] Spain, unlike France, never formally became an ally of the rebelling American colonists as the Spanish elite were wary of the implications of colonial revolts and its implication for the Spanish colonies.

Spanish Louisiana's role in the Revolution began in 1776 when Captain George Gibson of Virginia arrived in New Orleans requesting aid and supplies. Gibson found an ally in Irish merchant Oliver Pollock, who pressured the Governor Luis de Unzanga to approve Gibson's request. Thus began a steady flow of supplies to the armies of the rebelling colonists by way of the Mississippi and Ohio rivers.[181] Pollock was appointed the official commercial agent of the American Continental Congress for Spanish Louisiana. He was the main supply agent for rebel military operations in the trans-Appalachian areas of the Western-frontier. In 1777, Don Bernardo de Gálvez was appointed Governor of Louisiana. Pollock served with Gálvez in his Gulf Coast engagements against the British at Baton Rouge, Mobile and Pensacola. By May 1781, the British had lost all their West Florida territory to Spain.[182] The American Revolution for Pollock occasioned bankruptcy, the US Congress never repaid him completely for the crucial assistance he provided. Posthumously Pollock has received recognition as an Unknown Patriot.[183] During the American Revolution, British aggression caused many Catholic immigrants at Fort Pitts in

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[180] McLaughlin, *The Wild Geese*, 17-23 & 30.

[181] Bennet H. Wall & John C. Rodrigue, (eds.), *Louisiana A History*, (Wheeling, IL., 2008), [1976], 78-79.

[182] Garvey & Widmer, *The First 300 Years*, 49-52; James W. Raab, *Spain, Britain and the American Revolution in Florida, 1763-1783*, (Jefferson, NC., 2008), 166-183; Thomas E. Chávez, *Spain and the Independence of the United States: An Intrinsic Gift*, (Albuquerque, 2002).

[183] Earl F. Niehaus, *Louisiana*, in Michael Glazier, (ed.), *The Encyclopaedia of the Irish*, 540-54.

Pennsylvania to seek refuge in Louisiana. In June 1780, Edward Murphy, a native of Navan and sixty other Irish and German refugees settled in the areas around Opelousas Post, Attakapas, and New Iberia. Murphy enlisted in the militia at Opelousas Post as a fusilier. After the war, he established a warehouse at the Rapids on the Red River. Murphy and his business partners, William Barr, Samuel Devenport and Luther Smith, became Spain's official traders to numerous native tribes in north and east Texas. Murphy's Catholicism, his loyalty to Spain and his literacy in English, Spanish and French resulted in his appointment as syndic of the Cóte Tustin district of Natchitoches. He invested in land, slavery and tobacco cultivation, and by the time of his death, Murphy's estate was valued at $108,238, including 3500 acres of land, real estate in Paris and twenty-five slaves. [184]

The US was viewed by Irish migrants as an asylum of liberty; a country with low taxes, cheap land and religious freedom, but Spanish Louisiana offered Irish Catholics the opportunity to become successful landowners, planters and merchants. Settlement in Louisiana increased during the Spanish colonial period. Spanish officials instituted the empresario system, by which recipients pledged themselves to settle their families upon land granted to them. Grants comprising up to five thousand acres were offered to high ranking military personnel. Many citizens received grants of one thousand acres, with additional grants of fifty acres for every child or slave brought to settle on the land.[185] Two Hispanicised Irishmen, Carlos Bourke and Remigio O'Hara, in their petition for lands, stressed that they and their Irish relatives were good Catholics, who were "more worthy of His Majesty's generosity than the sectarians of Calvin, Luther, Quakers, Methodists and Deists etc. That seek to settle in that country and who, in addition to being infidels are prone to rebel against the monarchy."[186] One Irish immigrant to establish a planting fortune in the

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[184] David, La Vere, "Edward Murphy: Irish Entrepreneur in Spanish Natchitoches," *JLHA*, Vol. 32, No. 4 (Autumn, 1991), 371-377.
[185] Allie Bayne Windham Webb, (ed.), *Mistress of Evergreen Plantation: Rachel O'Connor's Legacy of Letters, 1823-1845*, (Albany, 1983), xiii-xv.
[186] Cited in Cecile Vidal, *Louisiana: Crossroads of the Atlantic World*, (Philadelphia, 2014), 232.

Feliciana country of Louisiana was Hercules O'Connor, who acquired land and slaves, married a widow, Rachel Swayze Bell, and took active part in the business activities of the area. Their Evergreen plantation amounted to more than a thousand acres and produced cotton for the New Orleans market.[187]

Colonel Daniel Clark made his fortune in the upriver trade along the Mississippi. Clark's operations were based in New Orleans and he invested his profits in plantations. Clark was "among the aristocracy of colonial New Orleans," and he had his Sligo born nephew of the same name join his trading firm. By 1786, Clark Jr. was selling large consignments of slaves imported from Jamaica, including the shipment of 156 slaves on the *Nueva Orleans* of whom 74 were reported as sick with "epilepsy, leprosy or insanity."[188] Daniel Clark became a partner in the firm a year later and he accumulated a fortune through property speculation after the New Orleans fire of 1788. Politically, Clark served as the Consul of the United States in New Orleans and as a representative to the ninth and tenth United States Congress. His reputation was tainted by rumours of involvement in the Burr conspiracy.[189]

During the 1780s, thousands of American colonists poured into the Western settlements of Kentucky, Cumberland, and the Holston River. There they soon realised that they were at the economic mercy of whoever held control of New Orleans. This was the beginning of American awareness of the vital economic importance of controlling the Mississippi river, much to the alarm of the Spanish.[190] To retain control of Louisiana, the Spanish tried to increase the colony's loyal population. Before Esteban Miró became Governor in 1782, Spanish immigration laws had allowed only European Catholics to settle in the colony. Few settlers had arrived at

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[187] Windham Webb, *Mistress of* Evergreen, xiv-xxiv.

[188] Chambers, "Slave Merchants of Spanish New Orleans," 185.

[189] After leaving office at the end of his term, Aaron Burr, the Vice President of the US (1801-1805), plotted with General James Wilkinson, Jonathan Dayton, and others to create a new empire encompassing the Mississippi Valley, Mexico and the American West. The nebulous scheme disintegrated and Burr was indicted for treason in 1807. See Niehaus, "Louisiana," 540-54; R. Kent Newmyer, *The Treason of Aaron Burr: Law, Politics, and the Character Wars of the New Nation*, (Cambridge, 2012), 37 & 193.

[190] Garvey & Widmer, *The First 300 Years*, 46.

their own expense, and in the late 1770s and early 1780s the Spanish government introduced several thousand Acadians, Canary Islanders and Malagueños to Louisiana in an effort to bolster up the population. The prohibitive costs of transporting the settlers ended this practice.[191] In an attempt to halt the expansion of American colonists, the Spanish closed the Mississippi river to all non-Spanish traffic, but this failed to stem the flood from upriver. In 1787, the Spanish eventually allowed American settlers to enter Louisiana and West Florida, rather than risking possible invasion. The laws of the colony stated that one had to be loyal not only to the Spanish monarch but also to the Pope. This was a great source of grievance. As the colony was being populated by Protestants, the Spanish began to recruit, train and commission a cadre of English speaking Irish priests to establish parishes and try to win over the Protestant colonists to the official religion of Spanish Louisiana.[192]

In 1787, four Irish priests arrived from Spain. Until the end of Spanish rule in the Louisiana colony, twenty Irish priests arrived and served throughout the territory. These priests were instructed to teach the Catholic doctrine, Spanish and baptize any willing American converts. Spanish colonial authorities denied public expression of Protestant religion in the colony, hoping this would turn the settlers towards Catholicism. The priests faced bitter and stiff opposition in the legalisation and documentation of the sacraments. This was particularly true with Protestant marriages, as they refused to be married by the Catholic Church. For the Spanish authorities, these marriages outside the church were not legal and this wreaked havoc regarding property rights and inheritance.[193] The missionaries were continuously overwhelmed by the number of Protestant colonists, and in the end the Spanish government issued a Royal Order in 1792 recognising Protestant marriages. The mission of these priests was both unrealistic and unattainable.

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[191] Gilbert Din, "Proposals and Plans for Colonization in Spanish Louisiana, 1787-1790," *JLHA*, Vol. II, No. 3 (Summer, 1970), 197-198.
[192] Charles E. Nolan, "Mississippi in Spanish Florida and Louisiana," in Glazier, (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of the* Irish, 614-615.
[193] Ibid.

Chapter 1

Attempts and proposals to bring Irish settlers to Louisiana were
made. One of the earliest was by Irishman, Agustin Macarty, who served as
an officer in the French army during the American Revolutionary War. In
1787, Macarty petitioned the Governor of Louisiana for permission to bring
two to three thousand Irish Catholic settlers from within the United States to
Louisiana. He also requested land and supplies for the settlers, benefits
which had been granted previously to the Arcadians and Canary Islanders.
Governor Miró endorsed the project; however, it took two years for Madrid
to respond with an official reply, rejecting the proposal due to the cost it
entailed.[194] Louisiana was no longer a concern of Spain after the signing of
the Treaty of San Ildefonso in 1800, where Charles IV retroceded Louisiana
back to France and Napoleon Bonaparte. France had re-established political
control of New Orleans and the Louisiana territory on 30th November 1803
and by 20th December of that same year, the colony was sold to Thomas
Jefferson and the United States for fifteen million dollars.[195] The Louisiana
Purchase secured US hegemony in the Mississippi Valley and its rich
alluvial lands, which proved integral to the emerging plantation, based
Cotton Kingdom.

The colonial Irish had a clear impact on the antebellum Irish in the
US South. Investigation of these colonial roots helps explain why Irishmen
in the antebellum US South strove to exploit and profit from slavery.
However, as has been demonstrated the Irish impacted the development of
slavery not just in the US but in the Atlantic World. This chapter weaves
together and connects the fragmented aspects of the relationship between
the history of Irish immigration and slavery, exploring patterns and
precedents established by colonial Irish slaveholders. Irish settlers in
colonial North America established wealthy Irish slaveholding families.
These colonial immigrants established ties to the institution of slavery and
provided models for their arriving countrymen. In 1835, Irish actor Tyrone
Power dined with an old Irishman in New Orleans "who had passed some

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[194] Din, "Plans for Colonization," 199-200.
[195] Paul E. Hoffman, (ed.), *The Louisiana Purchase and its Peoples: Perspectives from the
New Orleans Conference*, (Lafayette, 2004); Peter J. Kastor, *The Nation's Crucible: The
Louisiana Purchase and the Creation of America* (New Haven, 2004).

sixty years in Louisiana, yet preserved his brogue…as though the time had been spent on the hills of Wicklow." The old Irish General had "arrived here under the Spanish government…and spoke of all the changes."[196] The material benefits of slavery became imperative as the institution evolved and developed throughout the colonial period to increasing profit margins. The establishment of wealthy slaveholding Irish dynasties in the US South ensured that Irish families profited from the cotton booms of the nineteenth century. Investment in slavery was deemed economically prudent and the institution was avidly defended and morally justified by the various Christian churches in the US, including the Catholic Church.

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[196] Tyrone Power, *Impressions of America During the Years 1833, 1834 and 1835. Volume 2*, (London, 1836), 180.

CHAPTER 2

Irish Catholics in the Antebellum US Slave States

From the middle decades of the nineteenth century onwards, Catholics in the slave states of the US were predominantly immigrants. They were challenged in maintaining their religious identity as they assimilated into an overwhelmingly Evangelical Protestant culture. Thomas Paul Thigpen states that "Catholics had to learn how to become Southerners as well as Americans. Their task was to forge religious, national, and regional elements into a 'triune' identity as Southern American Catholics."[1] This concept provides the structure for this chapter. It examines how Irish Catholic immigrants forged an American identity for their Church in the antebellum US South; how they practiced and exercised their own identity as Catholics; and how they adapted to the regional cultures to develop a distinctive southern identity. Michael Pasquier highlights the idea of a "lived religion" to describe the unsettled, unscripted and unofficial actions taken by the Catholic clergy in the antebellum South "as they attempted to create a settled, scripted and official Catholic way of life." European priests found that in many cases it was best to bend the "rigors of ultramontane thinking to make sense of local circumstances in American missions."[2] Slavery was the dominat force in shaping southern social relations and southern Bishops such as John England of Charleston, understood that the success and growth of the Church rested on its firm commitment to the prevailing social order. Southerners scrutinized the Catholic Church's dealings with slavery; they would not tolerate any interference with the South's racial order. In creating a triune identity, Irish Catholics lived and socialised with southern Protestants in "a middle ground," a space of negotiation and assimilation; the acceptance of slavery was essential to this progress. The middle ground in the South was a place and a style of cultural

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[1] Thomas Paul Thigpen, "Aristocracy of the Heart: Irish Catholic Lay Leadership in Savannah, Georgia, 1820-1870", (PhD diss., Emory University, 1995), i.
[2] Michael Pasquier, *Fathers on the Frontier: French Missionaries and the Roman Catholic Priesthood in the Unites States, 1789-1870*, (New York, 2010), 7 & 17.

interaction, which allowed Irish immigrants to make sense of and accommodate their differences into a common southern meaning.[3]

To begin with, this chapter explores how the Catholic Church had to adapt to be accepted in the recently established American Republic. Some Catholics looked to fashion the Church in a manner which accommodated American republicanism. The development of the trustee controversies in New Orleans and Charleston are at the heart of the first section of the chapter. The majority of antebellum Catholics lived in urban centres, but the difficulties of the urban Church impacted on the development of the rural Church. An examination of the trustee controversies of Charleston and New Orleans uncovers the difficulties in the development of the Catholic Church and its struggle to be accepted by American society. The complications of the urban Church compounded the problem of Church resources, which made it a more difficult challenge to maintain a Catholic identity in the rural South. This chapter shows that numerous factors influenced the practice of southern frontier Catholicism and its development. Most importantly this chapter deals in detail with how the Church became regionally distinct in its acceptance of slavery. The Catholic hierarchy were committed to slavery, and development of southern Catholic thought and teachings on slavery fed into the Christian defence of slavery. Understanding the development of the antebellum Catholic Church helps clarify the acceptance of slavery by Irish immigrants who demonstrated little moral objection. This chapter focuses on the various aspects that formed their triune identity, where aspects of identity had to be fluid in order to be moulded into the southern social norm. The analysis of the religious identity of Catholics in five southern slave states, thus casts new light on a historical topic where "the weight of an apparent Protestant evangelical destiny simply overwhelms the narrative of Southern religious history."[4] The Catholic Church's acceptance and

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[3] Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815*, (New York, 1991), 51. See also Daniel H. Usner, Jr., *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley Before 1783* (Chapel Hill, 1992), 6; Usner, Jr., "The Frontier Exchange Economy of the Lower Mississippi Valley in the Eighteenth Century," *WMQ*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (April 1987), 165-192.

[4] Jon F. Sensbach, "*Before the Bible Belt: Indians, Africans, and the New Synthesis of Eighteenth Century Southern Religious History*," in Beth Barton Schweiger & Donald

adaptation to the southern way of life provided an example for Irish Catholics to follow in a new land. Understanding the Irish Catholic experience thus helps to reach a greater understanding of the religious and ethnic minorities in the antebellum US South as a whole.

i.   Identifying the Catholic Church with American Republicanism

The newly independent US was a slaveholding republic. The newly founded nation could not survive without the southern states and from the start elite slaveholders and their allies dominated the national government. Racism and slavery flourished and "was deeply woven into a national fabric that had begun to stretch across America."[5] The lives of Catholics changed dramatically after the success of the American Revolutionary War. Most Catholics supported independence and many died for the cause, transforming Papists into Patriots in the eyes of their fellow rebels.[6] The entire political landscape was transformed by the ideals of the revolution. The growth and acceptance of equality and individuality resulted in the emergence of a new religious tolerance that relieved Catholics of old legal restrictions and penalties from the colonial period. In 1791, the First Amendment to the US constitution ensured minority faiths had the free practice of religion. The spirit of tolerance led by Thomas Jefferson and James Madison in Virginia set a pattern for states to remove their civil restriction on Catholics. Georgia and South Carolina followed suit by removing religious tests for their officeholders. However, not all states would follow. North Carolina held fast to less tolerant ways. In its 1776 Constitution, Article XXXII stated, "That no person who shall deny the being of God, or the Truth of the Protestant Religion...Shall be capable of

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Mathews, (eds.), *Religion in the American South: Protestants and Others in History and Culture*, (Chapel Hill, 2004), 7.

[5] Adam Rothman, *Slave Country: American Expansion and the Origins of the Deep South*, (Cambridge MA., 2005), 1-9.

[6] Maura Jane Farrelly, *Papist Patriots: The Making of an American Catholic Identity*, (Oxford, 2012), 3-19, 219-257.

holding any Office or Place of Trust or Profit in the Civil Department within, this State." This article remained on the books until 1833.[7]

      The creation of a new independent Republic resulted in a new American Catholic Church, ending the weak and indifferent supervision of the Catholic Vicar Apostolic in London.[8] Responsibility for the American Church fell under the jurisdiction of the Sacred Congregation de Propaganda Fide, a department responsible for the spread of Catholicism and the regulation of ecclesiastical affairs in non-Catholic countries.[9] On 9th June, 1784, Cardinal Antonelli, Prefect of Propaganda Fide, wrote to Fr. John Carroll of Maryland, the third son of Daniel Carroll, a settler from Ireland, informing him that he had been appointed "Superior of the Mission in the thirteen United States."[10] On 1st March, 1785, Carroll furnished Cardinal Antonelli with the first American report to the Propaganda. The report revealed a poor and scattered church. According to the report, 15,800 Catholics resided in Maryland (3000 were slaves), 7,000 in Pennsylvania, less than two hundred in Virginia and 1,500 in New York. No mention was made of Catholic numbers in any other state.

      The report noted nineteen priests in Maryland and five in Pennsylvania. The Church was made extremely poor "by want of priests, by the distance of congregations from each other and by the difficulty of travelling."[11] The issue of church property caused endless problems for the American hierarchy throughout the antebellum period and its roots lay in the fact that:

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[7] James M. Woods, *A History of the Catholic Church in the American South, 1513-1900*, (Gainesville, FL., 2011), 154-158; William F. Powers, *Tar Heel Catholics: A History of Catholicism in North Carolina*, (New York, 2003), 141-144; Ray Allen Billington, *The Protestant Crusade: A Study of the Origins of American Nativism*, (New York, 1938), 20-23.

[8] Jay P. Dolan, *The American Catholic Experience: A History from Colonial Times to the Present*, (New York, 1985), 104.

[9] "sacra congregatio christiano nomini propagando". http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12456a.htm. Accessed 26/09/2014.

[10] Richard Henry Clarke, *Lives of the Deceased Bishops of the Catholic Church in the United States. Volume One*, (New York, 1872), 33; L. Card. Antonelli to Very Rev. Sir, 9 Jun., 1784, cited in John Tracy Ellis, (ed.), *Documents of American Catholic History*, (Milwaukee, 1956), 147-149.

[11]Report for the Eminent Cardinal Antonelli Concerning the State of Religion in the United States of America, 1 Mar., 1785, cited ibid, 151-154.

the property by which the priests are supported, is held in the names of individuals and transferred by the will to devisees. This course was rendered necessary when the Catholic religion was cramped here by laws and no remedy has yet been found for this difficulty.[12]

By 12th March, 1788, Carroll, along with Frs. Robert Molyneaux and John Ashton petitioned Pope Pius VI for the creation of a US diocese and to allow the priests of the US to elect the new bishop. The Pope agreed to their petition and allowed the clergy of the US to decide the city where the new See would be created.[13] Jay P. Dolan has highlighted how Carroll and the American clergy wanted a bishop, who by "virtue of his office would be dependent on the Pope alone and only in matters spiritual."[14] The future of the American Church was decided on the Jesuit Whitemarsh slaveholding plantation on 8th May, 1789, when twenty six priests unanimously selected Baltimore as the See of the first US Diocese and Fr. Carroll was elected as its first bishop.[15] These arrangements where accepted by Rome and the diocese was formally established on 6th November, 1789.[16] The boundaries and responsibilities of the new diocese encompassed the boundaries of the US.

Catholic lay members in the US attempted "to adapt the European Catholic Church to American culture by identifying the Church with American Republicanism." Although the clergymen of the early Republic supported the political reality of their new nation, the republican enthusiasm of the emerging Catholic hierarchy waned with the increasing responsibility of trying to guide the weak but expanding Church.[17] The violent and traumatic upheavals of the French Revolution served to dissipate the American clergy's enthusiasm for republicanism even further. The shift of the hierarchy towards a more conservative and traditional role led to clashes with those lay members who fervently adopted the spirit of republicanism.

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[12] Ibid.

[13] Woods, *Catholic Church*, 160-161.

[14] Dolan, *American Catholic Experience*, 106.

[15] Ibid.

[16] The Brief *Ex hac apostolicae of Pope Pius* VI Erecting the Diocese of Baltimore and Appointing John Carroll as the First Bishop, 6 Nov., 1789, cited in Ellis, *Documents of Catholic History*, 167-171.

[17] Dolan, *American Catholic Experience*, 110-118. For more on American Republicanism see Gordon S. Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution*, (New York, 1993); *Empire of Liberty: A History of the Early Republic, 1789-1815*, (New York, 2009).

In the founding years, America's Catholics became "accustomed to the republican idea that ordinary people such as themselves were the source of power in civil society" and they believed they were entitled to some governing power within their own local church.[18] Catholics of the early Republic submitted to the church hierarchy, but not readily.

The Catholic Church in the antebellum US South was financially poor and structurally weak. The cities and towns of the antebellum US South were of significant importance in the development of Catholicism in the South. Irish immigrants, especially after the Great Famine, preferred to settle in urban areas in the US. By 1860, over 70% of the Irish living in Louisiana and South Carolina lived in New Orleans and Charleston.[19] Some historians of religion in the antebellum South, such as Donald Mathews, have chosen not to examine the impact of the Catholic Church, as they believed "it plays little part in this history, for Catholics were rare in the South, and to this day their community there is dwarfed by a Baptist-Methodist-Presbyterian Church of Christ culture with an Episcopalian underlay."[20] However, Catholics may have been a small minority, but they were an active and visible minority, especially in the urban South. By 1860, southern towns with a white population over 2,100 had at least one Catholic Church. Catholics, Jews, Episcopalians and Lutherans accounted for 44.5% of Church accommodations in the urban South by 1860, but only 7.7% in the rural South.[21] Cities were marked by greater diversity, religious toleration, but also religious indifference.

The clergy did not dictate the development or plan the spread of the church throughout the nation. In the South, Irish Catholics made an impact on the nature of the emerging Catholic Church. Catholic settlers spread throughout the Republic and purchased property, built the churches and

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[18] James M. O'Toole, *The Faithful: A History of Catholicism in America*, (Cambridge, 2008), 59.

[19] David T. Gleeson, *The Green and the Gray: The Irish in the Confederate States of America*, (Chapel Hill, 2013), 7.

[20] Donald G. Mathews, *Religion in the Old South*, (Chicago, 1977), xi.

[21] Dennis C. Rousey, "Catholics in the Old South: Their Population, Institutional Development and Relations with Protestants," *US Catholic Historian*, Vol. 24, No. 4 (Fall, 2006), 7; Rousey, "Aliens in the WASP Nest: Ethnocultural Diversity in the Antebellum Urban South," *JAH*, Vol. 79, No.1 (Jun., 1992), 152-164.

formed religious associations. They also elected representatives from their parish to take legal responsibility for their church property. These representatives, known as "trustees," took control of all temporal concerns of their church. The church had no state support and was dependent on contributions. The weak nature of the American Church left many Catholics without the service of a priest. The reality of the early American Church provided no alternative to the trustee system. The Catholic trustees were heavily influenced by the model of parish arrangement of other American Protestant denominations.[22] Elections took place to select the trustee board, but only pew renters were entitled to vote. This resulted in the wealthier members of the congregation controlling church affairs. For the most part, the trustee system worked and served the best interest of the parishioners. Trouble, however, occurred in parishes where priests and trustees clashed.[23] Trustee controversy raged throughout the antebellum period in different parts of the Republic, to varying degrees of severity. An examination of trustee controversies in Charleston and New Orleans reveals Irish Catholics as key protagonists. Both examples reveal the centrality of Irish Catholics in shaping the US southern Antebellum Catholic Church from its urban beginnings.

ii.   The Charleston Schism

Had the laity in the early Republic not seized the initiative to ride the wave of religious tolerance and republicanism, the Catholic Church in the US would have been stillborn outside Maryland. The spirit of Revolution was infectious and was felt in the Carolinas and Georgia. In Charleston, the *City Gazette*, on 31st July, 1788, carried a notice advertising that "a number

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[22] Jay P. Dolan, *In Search of an American Catholicism: A History of Religion and Culture in Tension*, (New York, 2002), 29-31.

[23] John Carroll to Gentlemen (St. Peter's Trustees, New York), 25 Jan., 1786, & Jacob Cline, George Lechler, Sen., Adam Premir *et al* to Right Reverend Carroll, 24 Nov., 1787, cited in Ellis, (ed.), *Documents of Catholic History,* 155-158 & 164-166; Maura Jane Farrelly, "American Slavery, American Freedom, American Catholicism," *Early American Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, Vol. 10. No. 1 (Winter, 2012), 74-75; Luca Condignola, Roman Catholic Conservatism in a North Atlantic World 1760-1829," *WMQ*, Vol. 64, No. 4 (Oct., 2007), 750-756; Patrick Carey, "The Laity's Understanding of the Trustee System, 1785-1855," *The Catholic Historical Review*, Vol. 64. No. 3 (Jul., 1978), 357-376; Carey, "Republicanism within American Catholicism, 1785-1860," *JER*, Vol. 3, No. 4 (1983), 413-437.

of gentlemen of the Roman Catholic religion are desirous of establishing a solid and permanent congregation," and they hoped to elect four church wardens. A year later, on 24th August 1789, an old Methodist house on Hazel Street was purchased at public auction by Daniel O'Hara, William McDonald, Charles Crowley, Luke Breen and Daniel Carroll "in trust for the Roman Catholic Community of the City of Charleston."[24] This was the beginning of St. Mary's Catholic Church in Charleston and a board of trustees was elected to manage the church's affairs.[25] Charleston lay at the periphery of the Diocese of Baltimore; six hundred miles from the nearest priest and the unfavourable climate and poor transportation networks made it an unattractive destination for clergy. In 1793, Dublin born priest Simon Felix Gallagher was appointed by Bishop Carroll to St. Mary's.[26] Gallagher became one of the most prominent and divisive Irishmen in the city. He served as the President of the College of Charleston (1800-1802), (1809-1810) and chairman of the Charleston Board of School Commissioners in 1811.[27] Gallagher was also elected President of the Hibernian Society (1801-1803).

As early as 1795, Baltimore received reports of Gallagher's excessive drinking and his acceptance of a duel and his questionable relationship with a married woman. Displeased by the public nature of Gallagher's indiscretions, Bishop Carroll attempted to remove him in 1801 by ordering him to yield his place to Fr. Angadreme LeMercier, a French priest residing in Savannah.[28] The stunning success of the slave revolution in Saint-Domingue (1791-1804), resulted in an influx of refugees to Charleston, Savannah, and New Orleans.[29] Around five hundred Catholic

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[24] Cited in Richard C. Madden, *Catholics in South Carolina a Record*, (London, 1985), 20.
[25] John D., "South Carolina Catholics before Roman Discipline, 1670-1820," *Oxford Journal of State and Church*, Vol. 45, No. 4 (2003), 800-801.
[26] Thomas F. Hopkins, *St. Mary's Church, Charleston, S.C. The First Catholic Church in the Original Diocese of Charleston. An Historic Sketch of the Church, From its Beginning to the Present Time*, in *Year Book of the City of Charleston 1897*, (Charleston, 1897), 443.
[27] Arthur Mitchell, *The History of The Hibernian Society of Charleston, South Carolina, 1799-1986*, (Charleston, 1982), 18; J. H. Easterby, *A History of the College of Charleston Founded 1770*, (Charleston, 1935), 37.
[28] Woods, *Catholic Church*, 170.
[29] Doris T. Kadisk, (ed.), *Slavery in the Caribbean Francophone World: Distant Voices, Forgotten Arts, Forged Identities*, (London, 2000), 1; Jane G. Landers, *Atlantic Creoles in the Age of Revolution*, (Cambridge, MA., 2010).

refugees settled in Charleston and they held fast to their Francophone culture and language. Ethnic tensions developed within the Catholic Church, the language sermons were preached in became a contentious issue. Fr. LeMercier was not well received by the trustees of St. Mary's, who believed they alone had the authority to decide the pastor of their Church. Gallagher and the trustees sided together to denounce the legitimacy of Fr. LeMercier, who arrived in 1803. Carroll did not change his position and the trustees threatened to tear down the Church rather than have LeMercier preside in it.[30] LeMercier's death in 1806 ended the issue, and Carroll, severely lacking in priests, was forced to accept Gallagher as the only priest in Charleston.

Many Catholics in Charleston believed that the clergy and the hierarchy were responsible for spiritual affairs whereas the laity were responsible for temporal affairs; among the latter was the selection of parish priests. At a vestry meeting on 26th March, 1810, a resolution was accepted "to draw up new rules for the future government of said church" which denied Gallagher the right to be present or vote at vestry meetings.[31] Gallagher informed his parishioners that their actions were "an insult to the priesthood, an usurpation of power in a vestry repugnant to the principles and disciplines of the Catholic Church."[32] Gallagher found himself turning to his former enemy, the now Archbishop Carroll of Baltimore for help against his former allies. Carroll sided with Gallagher, citing official norms of Church discipline as the reason why Gallagher should be obeyed. Dubious about Gallagher, the Archbishop sent French priest Fr. Joseph Picot de Clorivière in 1812 to assist Gallagher. A former officer in the Royal Army of France, de Clorivière was a fervent supporter of the Bourbon monarchy who fled France after a failed plot on the life of Napoleon Bonaparte. De Clorivière was not popular, especially among the Irish.[33] After Napoleon's downfall, he returned to France to attend to family business, and in his absence Gallagher invited Irish priest Robert Browne in

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[30] Madden, *Catholics in South Carolina*, 26.
[31] Agatha Aimar Simmons, *Brief History of St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church Charleston, South Carolina*, (Charleston, 1961), 10.
[32] Cited in Hopkins, *St. Mary's Church*, 452.
[33] Madden, *Catholics in South Carolina*, 27-28.

Augusta to help him in Charleston. Gallagher's invitation was approved by the trustees but not by Archbishop Leonard Neale, who had succeeded Carroll after he passed away on 3rd December 1815.[34]

Browne was ordered by Neale to return to Georgia and de Clorivière was appointed pastor of St. Mary's on his return from France. The appointment was not welcomed by the trustees who refused to accept this "embarrassing foreigner" as their priest.[35] Neale did not tolerate open opposition to his authority. He withdrew the faculties of Gallagher and Browne on 28th February 1816 and re-appointed de Clorivière as pastor. Gallagher re-allied with the Trustees, barred de Clorivière from using St. Mary's, and Browne travelled to Rome to appeal their case before the Propaganda Fide.[36] Archbishop Neale branded Gallagher "a Deluded Priest" informing him that he had no right to draw Rome into the matter.[37] On 18th April 1816, Neale made his position clear in his *Declaration of the Archbishop of Baltimore for the Catholics of Charleston, South Carolina*. The laity were informed that the Irish priests and the Church of St. Mary's were placed under interdict, which rendered "their celebration of Holy Mass, administration of the Sacraments and performances of Pastoral Duty sacrilegious, and their Absolutions perfectly null or of no effect." The Archbishop warned that those who supported the rebellious Irish priest were "involved in the same ruinous state with them. If you belong to Christ you will listen to the voice of his church. If you refuse to do so, you will enter on the road to perdition."[38] The Catholic Church in Charleston was in a state of open schism.

Father Jeremiah Joseph O'Connell recalled that the schism was a result of the attempts of the Irish and French "to assume control of its [St. Mary's] affairs, to the exclusion of the other."[39] In Charleston, the Irish

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[34] Clarke, *Lives of the Deceased Bishops*, 116-138.
[35] Basil, "Roman Discipline," 802.
[36] J. P. De Clorivière, *Further Documents showing the Causes of the Distressed State of the Roman Catholic Congregation in the City of Charleston*, (Charleston, 1818), 9; Pasquier, *Fathers on the Frontier*, 144-147.
[37] Cited in De Clorivière, *Further Documents*, 10-13.
[38] Cited in Ibid, 13-14.
[39] Jeremiah Joseph O'Connell, *Catholicity in the Carolinas and Georgia: Leaves of Its History, AD 1820-AD 1878*, (New York, 1879), 143-144.

community embraced the emerging sense of southern localism and challenged the right of a Baltimore prelate to interfere in their Church. The French aristocratic manner of de Clorivière and his supporters intensified the antagonisms between the disputing factions. In 1817, the Irish trustees informed the Archbishop that they had left Ireland to enjoy religious freedom; a freedom threatened by being forced to accept a pastor not of their choosing.[40] They viewed de Clorivière as a "puppet" and at "the end of the wire that moved" him, was Baltimore.[41] De Clorivière refused to leave Charleston and stayed in the city, holding services in the homes of his supporters. Gallagher's confidence weakened with de Clorivière's determination and he began correspondence with Neale looking for personal reconciliation.[42] However, everything was thrown into further confusion in October 1816, when the Propaganda Fide, after considering the earlier petitions from Charleston, ordered Archbishop Neale to repeal the suspension of Gallagher and criticised his management of Charleston.[43] Neale was astonished by this judgement and vigorously argued against the Propaganda's decision in a sixteen page rebuttal. The US hierarchy supported their Archbishop as did the leading French priests in the US. They in turn petitioned Rome. They were appalled by the challenge to the Archbishop's authority and believed that the Propaganda had been misled and had not given proper consideration to Neale's position.[44] As a result, Rome reversed its decision but Neale died in 1817 before receiving the news.

Archbishop Neale was succeeded by Frenchman Ambrose Maréchal, who continued Neale's policy, maintaining the interdict against the rebellious flock. Deeply conservative, Maréchal believed he was resisting an Irish takeover of the American Church.[45] The Charleston trustees would not yield and continued to petition Rome. They informed the Pope that they were opposed to "The Baltimore Junto [*sic*]" which represented "a

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[40] Carey, "Republicanism within American Catholicism," 417 & 423.
[41] *To J. P de Cloriviere By The Vestry of the Roman Catholic Church of Charleston*, 14 Oct. 1818, DCA.
[42] Basil, "Roman Discipline," 804.
[43] Cited in *To de Cloriviere By The Vestry.*
[44] Pasquier, *Fathers on the Frontier*, 145-146.
[45] Basil, "Roman Discipline," 804.

barbarous system, better adapted to the political institutions of Africa and Asia than to these of the free republic of America."[46] Maréchal on the other hand firmly believed that the ills of the American Church were linked to the Irish. In his 1818 report to the Propaganda, he stated that the roots of the Church's problems in the US resulted from "priests from Ireland who are given over to drunkenness or ambition," and since the Irish laity considered drunkenness "only a slight imperfection, they strenuously defend their profligate pastors."[47] He implored that Rome ignore the pleas of rebellious "Jacobin" trustees.[48]

By the end of 1818, Maréchal prudently removed de Clorivière to Georgetown and appointed two Jesuits priests to Charleston, American born Benedict Fenwick and Kilkenny born James Wallace. Their task was made easier when Gallagher, who became increasingly alienated, publicly relented. Fenwick succeeded in bringing the trustees together to vote for changes in their rules in order to include a place for the pastor. This resulted in the removal of the interdict on St. Mary's in 1819. The divide and conquer approach succeeded against a sacrament starved congregation. However, Browne travelled again to the Vatican and with the support of Irish officials in Rome petitioned for the creation of a new diocese which would incorporate the two Carolinas and Georgia.[49] The continuous reports of trouble convinced officials in Rome that the large and understaffed diocese of Baltimore could not successfully maintain order and the best way to resolve the situation was to establish new dioceses. In 1820, the Diocese of Charleston and the Diocese of Richmond were carved out of the Diocese of Baltimore. To Archbishop Maréchal's displeasure, Pope Pius VII, under the sway of Irish clerics in Rome, appointed two Irishmen to the new Sees. John England was appointed Bishop of Charleston and Patrick Kelly Bishop of Redmond.[50]

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[46] Cited in Pasquier, *Fathers on the Frontier*, 146.
[47] Archbishop Maréchal's Report to Propaganda, 16 Oct., 1818, cited in Ellis, (ed.), *Documents of Catholic History*, 216-217.
[48] Cited in ibid, 223.
[49] Basil, "Roman Discipline," 805-806.
[50] David T. Gleeson, *The Irish in the South, 1815-1877*, (Chapel Hill, 2001), 76-77.

John England was born on 23rd September 1786, in Cork, and was ordained a priest on 10th October 1808. In Ireland, he was a constant advocate of the sovereignty of the people and the need for political reform. His elevation was viewed by the Irish hierarchy as a means of removing an outspoken priest.[51] Bishop England was more than just a Catholic prelate, he also established himself as a premiere southern intellectual, who demonstrated genuine civic concern and earned the respect of the Southern elite and literati. England supported classical education, denounced duelling, founded libraries, temperance societies and other benevolent organisations.[52] He also founded St. John the Baptist Seminary in Charleston and America's first Catholic newspaper, *The United States Catholic Miscellany*, in 1822. The *Miscellany* became the doctrinal voice of the Church in the US during his lifetime. England embraced American democratic values and became a naturalised citizen in 1826. As the first Bishop of Charleston, he was an advocate of a liberal constitutional American Catholic tradition. His firm beliefs and writings on the importance of the separation of Church and State led him to become the first Catholic clergyman to address the United States Congress.[53]

Bishop England was also a defender of the ecclesiastical hierarchy and believed that the best way to prevent troubles from the trustees was to have church property held legally by the bishop.[54] England abolished the practice of renting pews in the diocese, removing the financial clout of the trustees, who had used their control of church finances as leverage against the clergy. Although the move was financially detrimental to the Church's finances, England followed through with it. The renting of pews created a "galling distinction" between the wealthy and poor, where both, according to England, should be on "a footing of equality before their common

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[51] R. Frank Saunders & George A. Rogers, "Bishop John England of Charleston: Catholic Spokesman and Southern Intellectual, 1820-1842," *JER*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (Autumn, 1993), 306.

[52] Woods, *Catholic Church*, 250.

[53] David C. R. Heisser, *England, John*, in *Walter* B. Edgar, (ed.), *The South Carolina Encyclopedia*, (Columbia, SC., 2006), 303-304; Saunders, & Rogers, "Catholic Spokesman".

[54] John England, *Diurnal of the Right Rev. John England D. D., First Bishop of Charleston, S.C.: From 1820 to 1823*, (Philadelphia, 1895), 46.

maker."[55] He believed relying on the "voluntary contributions of a religious people" would make priests more attentive.[56] In Charleston, the Bishop bypassed the trustees of St. Mary's by purchasing land at the corner of Broad Street to build a cathedral for the diocese. On 19th May 1822, a wooden framed building was dedicated to the patronage of St. Finbar, the patron saint of the city and diocese of Cork.

The Bishop did not give up on St. Mary's, although he held a dim view of the trustees referring to them as "ignorant and irreligious" as well as "Infidels."[57] He held meetings with the trustees discussing how their charter was "inconsistent with the principles of Catholicity."[58] To successfully put an end to the trustee strife, England drafted a constitution for the diocese in 1826. *The Constitution of the Roman Catholic Churches of the States of North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia*, attempted to reconcile Catholicism with American democracy. It was the first and only constitution for a diocese in the US. The constitution maintained the power of the bishop but with an elected vestry in each parish to take care of the churches' financial and physical needs. The vestries were to elect delegates to an annual diocesan convention, where lay delegates and clerical delegates would deliberate and pass resolutions with the approval of the Bishop for the improvement and benefit of all members of the diocese.[59] England's constitutional approach was successful in promoting unity in his diocese and support for the clergy. However, subsequent bishops ignored England's democratic vision.

In a report to the Cardinal Prefect of the Propaganda, England explained how he had spent years studying the customs and laws of the US before he could satisfactorily draw up his constitution. As a result of the constitution, England believed that the clergy were:

> entirely free; and on the other hand the laity are empowered to cooperate but not to
> dominate; and while on one hand great security and satisfaction are given in regard

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[55] Ibid.
[56] Ibid, 48.
[57] Ibid, 50.
[58] Ibid, 43-45.
[59] Saunders, and Rogers, "Catholic Spokesman," 304 & 310; Woods, *Catholic Church in the American South*, 250.

> to the employment of church funds and the preservation of church property, on the other the rights of the Holy See are maintained in all their integrity and force.[60]

The trustee controversy in Charleston shaped the development of what became the diocese of Charleston giving it a unique place in US Catholicism. South Carolina was a state dominated by the aristocratic low country planter elite.[61] Yet, in such a place emerged the most republican form of Catholicism in the US. The defiance of the laity shaped the Church at a local level into something distinct; the fight was about church control. Irish lay people and clergymen were involved from the beginning in the struggling forces that established and shaped the Catholic Church in the two Carolina's and Georgia.

iii.   The New Orleans Schism

From 1783 to 1803, the Louisiana colony was the centrepiece of the Spanish holdings in North America, with New Orleans as its capital. As mentioned earlier, however, its inhabitants remained "French in tastes, views, preferences and even in religious matters."[62] On 25th April 1793, the Diocese of Louisiana and the Two Floridas was established by Pope Pius VI. Cuban born Luis Ignacio Maria de Peñalver y Cárdenas was appointed the first bishop of the enormous new diocese.[63] By 1st November 1795, the new bishop reported on the situation in Louisiana and was disheartened to find that his fellow Catholics "do not listen to, or if they do, they disregard, all exhortations to maintain in its orthodoxy the Catholic faith." Peñalver was not only worried to find just a "slight spark of faith" in the diocese, but he also felt uneasy for "Rebellion is in their hearts, and their minds are imbued with the maxims of democracy."[64] In 1799, he reported that his situation was not helped by "The emigration from the western parts of the United States and the toleration of our government," who allowed into the

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[60] Cited in "Papers Relating to the Church in America from the Portfolio of the Irish College at Rome," *Records of the American Historical Society of Philadelphia*, Vol. 8, Iss. 3 (1897), 319.

[61] Robert Olwell, *Masters, Slaves & Subjects: The Culture of Power in the South Carolina Low Country 1740-1790*, (New York, 1998), 283.

[62] Roger Baudier, *The Catholic Church in Louisiana*, (New Orleans, 1939), 176.

[63] Woods, *Catholic Church*, 190-191.

[64] Luís Ignacio Maria de Peñalver y Cardenas, Religious Conditions in Louisiana, 1 Nov., 1795, cited in Ellis, (ed.), *Documents of Catholic History*, 181-183.

colony "a gang of adventurers who have no religion and acknowledge no God."[65] Since Peñalver was unhappy in his office, Pope Pius VII, on 20th July 1801, appointed him Archbishop of Guatemala City, and on 3rd November 1801, the bishop departed. The Diocese of Louisiana and the Two Floridas became "sede vacante."[66]

Spanish born Padre Francisco Porró y Reinado was selected as the next bishop of Louisiana. Concern was raised about the uncertainty over the retransferring of the Louisiana territory back to France.[67] Bishop Porró never occupied the diocese and the Church in Louisiana was thrown into ecclesiastical disarray as confusion reigned over who had legitimate control in the diocese. In 1794, King Charles IV had appointed two canonries for the Diocese of Louisiana and the Two Floridas. The two canons of the cathedral of St. Louis were Frs. Francisco Perez Guerro and Thomas Hassett, a native of County Waterford. However, by November, 1801, Guerro was complaining that Hassett, along with Irish priest Patrick Walsh, the former Vicar-General of the dioceses under Peñalver, acted as if they had full powers.[68]

France re-established political control of New Orleans and the Louisiana territory in November 1803, but by December, the colony was turned over to the US after the Louisiana Purchase. Three days after Louisiana became a territory of the US, Hassett wrote to Bishop Carroll in Baltimore detailing the confusion in the dioceses, which would "very soon fall under your Lordships." Carroll was informed that Louisiana consisted of 21 parishes and that Irish priests under the patronage of the King of Spain enjoyed a salary of $40, a month, whereas Spanish and French priests received $30. The diocese was on the brink of ecclesiastical chaos. Of the 26 priests serving under Spanish jurisdiction only four had expressed an

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[65] Cited in Robert D. Bush, *The Louisiana Purchase: A Global Context*, (New York, 2014), 14.
[66] Woods, *Catholic Church*, 194.
[67] Baudier, *Church in Louisiana*, 249-250.
[68] Charles Edward O'Neill, "A Bishop for Louisiana," in Glenn R. Conrad, (ed.), *Cross, Crozier and Crucible: A Volume Celebrating the Bicentennial of a Catholic Diocese in Louisiana*, (Lafayette, 1993), 105; O'Neill, "'A Quarter Marked by Sundry Peculiarities': New Orleans, Lay Trustees and Pére Antoine," *The Catholic Historical Review*, Vol. 76, No. 2 (Apr., 1990), 237.

intention to stay on as a result of the French transfer, and "whether many more than the same number will remain under the United States, God only knows." Hassett highly recommended Patrick Walsh, a man of "unwearied zeal in the service of God."[69] Hassett died four months later and was shortly followed to the grave by Fr. Guerro.

The Louisiana Catholic population had little enthusiasm for becoming a territory of the US.[70] At the time of the purchase, French speaking Catholics were the predominant part of Louisiana's population.[71] The divergent cultural legacies of colonial Louisiana and the New American republic with its fragile identity, balancing an "experimental republican government with a constellation of normative values rooted in its British colonial past," prevented any easy amalgamation of the people of Louisiana into the US.[72] Federal officials were dubious about the loyalties of Louisiana inhabitants and statehood was deferred until 1812. This greatly annoyed the locals who "champed at the bit for the privilege and power of home rule" during the intervening years.[73] William Claiborne of Virginia was appointed Governor of the Territory of New Orleans and wielded near dictatorial powers over a people whose language he could not speak and whose religion and customs were alien to him. Claiborne found dealing with Louisiana's diversity to be his "principle difficulty."[74] From 1804 to 1808, Sligo born Daniel Clark served as a territorial delegate to the US Congress for the Territory of Orleans. Clark argued for the immediate admission of

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[69] Cited in Francis Guy, "Catholicism In Arkansas", *The Guardian*, 13 Feb.1937, Newspapers Archive of Arkansas Catholic.
http://arc.stparchive.com/Archive/ARC/ARC02131937p03.php. Accessed 07/10/2014.
[70] Cited in Annabelle M. Melville, "John Carroll and Louisiana, 1803-1815," *The Catholic Historical Review,* Vol. 64, No. 3 (Jul., 1978), 400; Drewe McCoy, *The Elusive Republic: Political Economy in Jeffersonian America*, (Chapel Hill, 1980); Peter J. Kastor, *The Nation's Crucible: The Louisiana Purchase and the Creation of America*, (New Haven, 2004).
[71] Sarah Russell, "Ethnicity, Commerce and Community on Lower Louisiana Plantation Frontier, 1803-1828," *Louisiana History: JLHA*, Vol. 14, No.4 (Autumn, 1999), 389.
[72] Emily Clarke, *Masterless Mistresses: The New Orleans Ursulines and the Development of a New World Society, 1727-1834*, (Chapel Hill, 2007), 222.
[73] Clarke, *Masterless Mistresses*, 229-230; George Dargo, *Jefferson's Louisiana: Politics and the Clash of Legal Traditions*, (Cambridge, 1975), 11.
[74] Gordon S. Wood, *Empire of Liberty: A History of the Early Republic, 1789-1815*, (New York, 2009), 372-373.

Louisiana as a state and for the removal of restrictions on the importation of slaves into the region.[75]

After the death of the two canons of the cathedral in 1804, the chain of ecclesiastical authority was uncertain. Fr. Patrick Walsh claimed authority for himself and was recognised by Governor Claiborne as head of the church in the territory.[76] However, by 1805, the Catholic Church in New Orleans was in a state of schism. On Sunday, March 5th 1805, Francisco Antonio Ildefonso Moreno y Arze de Sedilla, better known as Pére Antoine, the pastor of St. Louis Cathedral, was forced to stop mid-way through mass and leave the altar and write a letter of resignation. Pére Antoine was compelled to quit the altar due to the berating of his two assistants during mass.[77] Walsh readily accepted Antoine's resignation and promptly proceeded to name himself pastor of the cathedral. However, Antoine had second thoughts and withdrew his resignation. This was unacceptable to Walsh, who suspended him as pastor of St. Louis. Three of the city's priests sided with Walsh and two sided with Antoine, but most importantly the laity supported their pastor.[78] On 14th March 1805, a mass meeting was held in the cathedral. A crowd of reputedly four thousand chose Antoine as their pastor.[79]

Emily Clarke argues that this assertion of popular will by the Catholics of New Orleans was a statement of "their readiness for American citizenship," that they "aligned themselves ideologically with the new regime."[80] It is true that the Creoles of New Orleans did not find the ideals of the American republic repugnant; however, it is better to view "the election" as a vanguard action for the preservation of Creole culture and its dominance in society.[81] Walsh was perceived to have been overly keen to

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[75] Elizabeth Alexander, "Clark, Daniel (1766-1813)," in Junius P. Rodriguez, *The Louisiana Purchase: A Historical and Geographical Encyclopedia*, (Santa Barbara, CA., 2002), 71-72; Peter J. Kastor, "Motives of Peculiar Urgency: Local Diplomacy in Louisiana, 1803-1821)," *WMQ*, Vol. 58, No.4 (Oct., 2001), 819-848.

[76] Baudier, *Church in Louisiana*, 251-253.

[77] Woods, *Catholic Church*, 175-177.

[78] O'Neill, "Sundry Peculiarities," 238.

[79] Clarke, *Masterless Mistresses*, 230-231; Baudier, *Church in Louisiana*, 256-257.

[80] Clarke, *Masterless Mistresses*, 230-232.

[81] The term Creole has a broad range of meaning in Louisiana. It was traditionally used to distinguish upper class whites of French or Spanish origins from more recent settlers.

accept the American takeover, as demonstrated by his friendly acquaintance with the unpopular Governor Claiborne.[82] By 16th March 1805, Nicolas Maria Vidal, a colonial judge, informed former Spanish Governor Calvo de la Puerta Y O'Farrill, Marquis de Casa Calvo, of his disapproval of Walsh. Walsh had provoked the ire of the Spaniard for he believed that the Irishman did not have "the most cherished prerogative" of Louisianans at heart and the laity believed the duty of their clergy was to be "the staunchest defenders and most ardent advocate of our religious ceremonies."[83] Creole Catholics had gone from being the majority to a distinct minority in the US. Fearing the loss of status and power, a siege mentality developed among the Creole elite, and they entrenched themselves to try and maintain their prestige. Walsh was not the priest to champion their cause.

Walsh proclaimed the Ursuline convent chapel as the only legitimate parish church in the city and placed the whole cathedral under an ecclesiastical interdict: all sacraments performed there would be null and void. The schism of 1805 in New Orleans demonstrates the complexity of the society and Church in New Orleans. Here, a "Spanish friar was elected as pastor at New Orleans by French Catholics, in defiance of an Irish priest who was trained within the Spanish Empire yet now living in a overwhelming Protestant Republic."[84] Both sides began to make appeals to Rome, Baltimore and Havana. Antoine and the Marguillers (the trustees of the Cathedral) maintained that Walsh in his claims as Vicar-General was in transgression of canonical law. They ignored Walsh's actions as they firmly believed that he had no legitimate authority.[85] Walsh received a severe blow to his claims when the Propaganda Fide informed him that he did not have any legitimate authority in the diocese and that he was under the authority of

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[82] Dundar Rowland, (ed.), *Official Letter Books of W.C. C. Claiborne 1801-1816*, Volume 2, (Jackson MS, 1917), 232 & 240.

[83] Cited in *An exhaustive account in French of Pére Antoine compiled by Marquis de Casa Calve.* Antonio de Sedella Collection, 1778-1816, TU.

[84] Woods, *Catholic Church*, 175-177.

[85] Antonio de Sedella Collection, 1778-1816, TU.

Bishop Carroll in Baltimore.[86] Walsh eventually passed away on 22nd August 1806.[87]

The Marguillers of New Orleans made an attempt to enlist the Emperor of France, Napoleon Bonaparte to intervene in the diocese's affairs.[88] Archbishop Carroll was forced to take action and on 29th December 1806; he officially appointed Frenchman Jean-Baptiste Oliver Vicar-General of the Diocese of Louisiana and the Two Floridas. The trustees wrote to Carroll asking him to remove Oliver and to confer the title of Vicar-General to "Pére Antoine de Sedella." The backing of Antoine by Bishop Carroll would ensure the faithful of New Orleans's blessing to, "your authority and will submit to it with satisfaction and docility." The trustees believed that, since they were now a part of the US, which "authorizes us to accept or reject the nomination of the ministers necessary to us," they challenged Carroll, and if he ignored their wishes, they would address Rome "in order that our congregation be elevated directly to the Apostolic See."[89] The trustees did petition Rome but their appeal was ignored and the New Orleans schism continued.

By 1810, the seventy year old Oliver wished to be relieved of his duties. Carroll sent Fr. Louis Sibourd to assist the failing Oliver. Sibourd had been stationed previously in New York and, unlike Oliver, he could correspond in English. It was hoped that Sibourd's experience would bring the Irish Catholics of New Orleans to side with the Church hierarchy against the trustees. Sibourd found that the Irish repeatedly promised to attend his services, if preached in English, but they never kept their promise. Only one Irishman presented himself to Sibourd to make his Easter duty. Sibourd was annoyed by the Irish community and felt that they deserved no attention from Baltimore.[90] In Louisiana, Irish settlers found an already established

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[86] O'Neill, "Sundry Peculiarities," 246.
[87] Woods, *Catholic Church*, 196.
[88] Melville, "John Carroll and Louisiana," 411.
[89] Castillon (President) and Caisserguer (Secretary) to Bishop John Carroll of Baltimore, 6 Mar., 1807, in Antonio de Sedella Collection, 1778-1816, TU.
[90] Sibourd to Carroll, 12 Jun., 1811, cited in Melville, "John Carroll and Louisiana," 422.

Latin Catholic community.[91] Louisiana, unlike any of the thirteen original states in the US, had a long history of Catholic trustees.[92] The Irish settlers accepted the established practice and did not challenge the Marguillers' position. It was only with the increase in numbers of Irish immigrants in later years that Irish Catholics were viewed as a threat by New Orleans Creole Catholic society.

In 1836, John Houston, a recent immigrant, informed his mother back home in Larne, Co. Antrim, that: "No person in the old country can have any idea of the immense trade and business in this city without seeing it. I have no doubt but in some time it will be the largest city in America or perhaps the world."[93] From 1834-1844, the city was the most active port in the US and by 1850, it was second only to New York as an entrepôt for foreign immigrants.[94] In 1850, New Orleans's population stood at 116,375 making it the largest city in the South and the fifth largest in the US.[95] The economic possibilities of New Orleans overshadowed the health hazards. Thomas Clark, an Irish immigrant, leaving New Orleans for St. Louis, hoped to return later that year for "There is no place in all of the states so good for making money as New Orleans."[96] The increasing numbers of immigrants, especially Irish and German Catholics, changed the dynamic of the city and the Catholic Church.

Since the Louisiana Purchase, the Creole population had engaged in a long "war of cultural and social exclusivism to preserve their Creole culture and to brace their slipping political numbers." Foreign Catholic immigrants threatened to eclipse the Creoles position in the political sphere, as well as the Church. Immigrants' desires for their own separate ethnic churches "broke Catholic unity, a chief source of Creole power in the

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[91] Dennis Clark, "The South's Irish Catholics: A Case of Cultural Confinement," in Randall Miller, & Jon Wakelyn, *Catholics in the Old South*, (Macon, 1999), 205.
[92] O'Neill, "Sundry Peculiarities," 254-259.
[93] J. N. Houston to Mrs Houston, 8 Mar., 1836, Linn / McKean Papers, T2581/7, PRONI.
[94] Gleeson, *Irish in the South,* 27-28.
[95] Robert C. Reinders, *End of an Era: New Orleans, 1850-1860*, (Gretna La., 1998), 7. For more on the economy of New Orleans see Scott P. Marler, *The Merchants' Capital: New Orleans and the Political Economy of the Nineteenth-Century South*, (Cambridge, 2013), 15-118; Lawrence N. Powell, *The Accidental City: Improvising New Orleans*, (Cambridge, MA., 2012).
[96] Thomas Clark to Mother, 7 Apr., 1819, D3127/3, PRONI.

city."[97] Many of the arriving immigrants had different expectations of the Church.[98] In 1817, Hugh Quin, a recent immigrant from Portaferry, Co. Down, believed that "New Orleans cannot boast much of piety." He was outraged by "young, imprudent American clerks," who would "strut up and down with their hats on during divine service their hands in their pockets and gazing or staring every female" and that they were "so wicked as to nail the ladies gowns to the floor whilst they are on their knees praying to their God."[99] In the cathedral, Quin found that the priest "did not understand me & that there was no priest in that church" who could speak English. Quinn was not the typical immigrant, for he was able to address the priest in Latin and have his confession heard promptly. In the cathedral, he saw "a Spanish Capuchin Friar named Antoine, the Incumbent of this Cathedral" celebrate mass. Quin noted that the old priest was highly respected among the people of New Orleans and that his greatest claim to respect came from the fact that "he had baptized and joined in marriage the most of the inhabitants of N. Orleans."[100] For newly arrived immigrants, not being able to attend a church where they were understood created animosity. In a city where Catholics were a majority, Irish Catholics believed they had a right to a Church where "God spoke English."[101]

Irish Catholics had always been present in New Orleans, but they were not as zealously attached to their faith as those who later arrived as the antebellum period drew to a close. In the nineteenth century, Catholicism in Ireland underwent a dramatic transformation with the Devotional Revolution. Between 1823 and 1845, a new popular pride in Catholicism began to emerge in Ireland as a result of the political agitation of Daniel O'Connell's Catholic Association and Father Mathew's temperance crusade. The support of the people gave Irish Catholicism its "peculiar

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[97] Randall M. Miller, "A Church in Cultural Captivity: Some Speculations on Catholic Identity in the Old South," in Miller & Wakelyn, (eds.), *Catholics in the Old South*, 34-37.
[98] Journal of Hugh Quin, 4 Dec., 1817, Quin Papers, T2874/1, PRONI.
[99] Ibid.
[100] 5 Dec., 1817, ibid.
[101] Cited in Earl F. Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans, 1800-1860*, (Baton Rouge, 1965), 99.

character as deeply emotional, non-intellectual and democratic force."[102] The Irish Church fell in line with developments of the Church throughout post Napoleonic Europe, which witnessed the emergence of a more assertive conservative Ultramontanism, and a traditional model of Catholicism focusing on sin and submissiveness to the Church hierarchy.[103]

The catastrophic disaster of the Great Famine drove more people towards the Church.[104] Paul Cullen, Archbishop of Armagh and later Archbishop of Dublin, was central to the reorganisation of the Church in Ireland. During Cullen's tenure (1849-1878) the Church was transformed from the "old system of the days of Persecution, the catacombs and the caves" to a model of Roman efficiency.[105] The Church in Ireland was homogenised, resulting in the widespread decline of old religious and folk customs. These were replaced by Church approved devotions.[106] A distinct form of Catholicism emerged out of Ireland by the 1850s and it differed greatly from that practiced in Louisiana. The dramatic increase of Catholic immigration from the 1840s onward transformed the US Church into an immigrant institution in line with the Romanisation of the Church as a whole. In New Orleans, the established Catholic population was not receptive to these developments.

Creole Catholicism during the colonial period had been heavily influenced by the ideas of Gallicanism and Voltairianism, which stressed independence from Rome and scepticism of the hierarchy.[107] In comparison to the recently arrived Irish, the Creole population displayed little attachment to their religion. Alice O'Regan informed her sister Ellen back

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[102] George D. Boyce, *Nineteenth Century Ireland: The Search for Stability*, (Dublin, 2005), 15; Emmet Larkin, "The Devotional Revolution In Ireland 1850-75," *AHR*, Vol. 77, No. 3 (Jun., 1972), 636-639; Inglis, Tom, *Moral Monopoly: The Rise and Fall of the Catholic Church in Modern Ireland*, (Dublin, 1998), [1987], 104.

[103] Dolan, *In Search of an American Catholicism*, 36-38 & 43-35.

[104] Larkin, "The Devotional Revolution," 638-645.

[105] Gleeson, *Irish in the* South, 84-85. Larkin, "The Devotional Revolution," 638-645. For more on Cullen see Dáire Keogh & Albert McDonnell, (eds.), *Cardinal Paul Cullen and his World*, (Dublin, 2011).

[106] R. V. Comerford, "Ireland 1850-70: Post-famine and mid Victorian Ireland," in W.E. Vaughan, (ed.), *A New History of Ireland, Vol. V: Ireland under the Union, 1801-70*, (New York, 2010), [1989], 386-387

[107] Michael Doorley, "Irish Catholics and French Creoles: Ethnic Struggles within the Catholic Church in New Orleans 1835-1920," *The Catholic Historical Review*, Vol. 87, No. 1 (Jan., 2001), 38.

in Ireland that the Creoles "are all Catholics but such Catholics, they go to balls theatres operas, everywhere on Sundays."[108] Alice was attending "one of the first schools here, Madame Derone." Alice informed her sister that two Irish teachers were employed at the school:

> the later calls herself American the former English, it would never do in a Creole school to say you were Irish, there is something in the very sound of the word connected in their ideas with vulgarity, it often amuses me to hear the way they speak about my country people, little they know how near they have one of the despised race.[109]

Thomas J. Semmes, a Catholic from Maryland, in 1855, believed that, among the urban Creole population of New Orleans, the men were "generally infidels, tho' the women are pious Catholics."[110] Irish immigrant Arthur Brown found New Orleans a "horrible place" where the people "laugh at religion."[111] Religious indifference was not uncommon among Creole males, who believed religion was the responsibility of women and children.[112] The Creole population was not afraid to challenge the Church hierarchy. Creole newspapers often attacked the American Church for being reactionary and too submissive to Rome, and they distrusted the Irish, who, as the *Semi-Creole Weekly* declared on 21st February, 1855, were "bound with the iron shackles of an odious spiritual tyranny."[113] Future Bishop Antoine Blanc confessed that he battled "more with Catholic infidels than with Protestant."[114]

The appointment of William Louis DuBourg as Bishop of Louisiana, in 1815, failed to overturn the will of the Maguillers and their chosen pastor. DuBourg found conditions so unfavourable that he relocated to his residence in the city of St. Louis by 1817.[115] In 1820, DuBourg returned to New Orleans, but never overcame the Maguillers of St. Louis Cathedral. By

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[108] Alice O'Regan to Ellen O'Regan, 10 Jun., 1853, O'Regan Family Papers, MSS590, HNOC.
[109] Ibid.
[110] Cited in Reinders, *End of an Era*, 114.
[111] Alicia Brown to Dr. Hamilton, 2 Feb., 1835, Hamilton Papers 3, DDA.
[112] Emily Clark & Virginia Mecham Gould, "The Feminine Face of Afro-Catholicism in New Orleans, 1727-1852," *WMQ*, Vol. 59, No. 2 (Apr., 2002), 409-448.
[113] Cited in Doorley, "Irish Catholics and French Creoles," 38.
[114] Cited in John T. McGreevy's, *Catholicism and American Freedom: A History*, (New York, 2003), 30.
[115] Clarke, *Lives of the Deceased Bishops*, 224-225.

1826, he resigned his post and returned to France.[116] That same year, the vast Diocese of Louisiana and the Two Floridas was divided in two, creating the Diocese of New Orleans and the Diocese of St. Louis.[117] On 22nd January 1829, Pére Antoine passed away, aged 81. After Antoine's death, the Holy See appointed a young Belgian Vincentian missionary named Leo Raymound de Neckere who suffered from poor health and died of yellow fever in 1833.[118] Before his death, Bishop de Neckere dedicated the new Roman Catholic Church of St. Patrick's in April of 1833 and appointed Irish priest Fr. Adam Kindelon as its pastor.[119] St. Patrick's was the first parish organised in the city that was separate from St. Louis Cathedral. This break from the cathedral demonstrated the prevalence of an assertive, growing Irish community, resolved to have the church look after their own needs. An alliance with the newly appointed fifth Bishop of New Orleans, Antoine Blanc, proved a fruitful relationship.

In 1842, the death of Abbé Louis Moni, the accepted pastor of the cathedral by the Marguillers since 1829, brought the latter into open conflict with the bishop. Blanc appointed Etienne Rousselon as the new pastor of the cathedral but the Marguillers declared the bishop's appointment null and void. Blanc retaliated by issuing a pastoral letter condemning their actions as schismatical.[120] The Marguillers responded by publishing in the *Courier de la Louisiane* and the *L'Abeille de la Nouvelle-Orléans* that they, as US citizens, were sovereign and had inherited the right of presentation which had been previously held by the King of Spain and was now transferred to the elected trustees of the cathedral.[121] The situation became serious when the Council of the First Municipality of the City on 31st October 1842 passed an ordinance which made it "unlawful to carry and expose in any of the Catholic Churches of this municipality any corpse, under the penalty of

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[116] Pasquier, *Fathers on the Frontier*, 80-82.
[117] Woods, *Catholic Church*, 222-223.
[118] Ibid, 227.
[119] Niehaus, *Irish New Orleans*, 99.
[120]Burns J. Edgar, "Antoine Blanc: Louisiana's Joshua in the Land of Promise," in Gleen R. Conrad, (ed.), *Cross, Croziers and Crucible*, 133; Antoine Blanc, *Pastoral Letter of the Right Reverend Doctor Blanc, Relative to the Attempts Made to Establish a Schism in St. Louis*, (New Orleans, 1842).
[121] Edgar, *Louisiana's Joshua*, 128-129.

a fine of fifty dollars," and was only lawful for priests to perform funeral rites in "the obituary chapel, situated in Rampart Street," which was an adjunct of the cathedral, under the control of the trustees.[122] The Creole elite dominated both the board of trustees and city council. The "Dead Corpse Ordinance," enacted under the guise of hygienic reasons, placed all funeral services in the hands of the Marguillers. In response, Blanc removed all clergy from the Cathedral, allowing only one priest, Fr. Lesne, to remain at the chapel to bless bodies but not to perform the traditional obsequies. The ordinance was overruled in December, but no clergy returned to the cathedral.[123]

The *Mississippi Free Trader and Natchez Gazette* informed its readers that the "Wardens and the Bishop" still "continue a paper warfare relative to the right of administering" the cathedral: "A proposition, we observe, is made by the wardens to refer it to the courts of the country for final adjudication."[124] The Marguillers sued the bishop for $20,000 in damages for dereliction of duty and libel and slander and appeared before the Louisiana State Supreme Court.[125] The actions of the Marguillers began to alienate them from their supporters, and outraged the supporters of the bishop. Blanc believed it "evident for all of us that this is a fight to the death of infidelity against Religion."[126] On 10th November 1843, Blanc received an address "in the name of the St. Patrick's Total Abstinence Society, American Irish Catholics numbering fifteen hundred and sixty," who pledged their support for the bishop "as obedient members of the church to sustain you in the exercise of your rightful episcopal jurisdiction in your Diocese." The Irish supporters had no time for those who "hold the

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[122] Permoli v Municipality No.1 of the City of New Orleans. 44. U.S. 589 (1845): https://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/44/589/case.html. Accessed 14/10/14.
[123] Edgar, *Louisiana's Joshua,* 130.
[124] *Mississippi Free Trader and Natchez Daily Gazette*, 18 Nov., 1843.
[125] Michael McConnell, "Permoli v First Municipality of New Orleans," in Paul Finkelman, (ed.), *Religion and American Law: An Encyclopaedia*, (New York, 2000), 360.
[126] Cited in Michael Pasquier, "When Catholic Worlds Collide: French Missionaries and Ecclesiastical Politics in Louisiana, 1803-1843," in Owne White & J. P. Daughton, (eds.), *In God's Empire: French Missionaries and the Modern World*, (New York, 2012), 41.

doctrines of the church in contempt."[127] Blanc appreciated the support of the
Irish and he recognised the importance of Irish Catholics for the future of
the Church in New Orleans. Blanc and the Irish community shared a vision
"of Church expansion into the social and educational concerns of its
parishioners." The Creole population neither "expected nor demanded such
services from the Church and resented that the Irish did so."[128] The
Louisiana Supreme Court judged in favour of Blanc, late in 1844, declaring
that the bishop had "exclusive authority to regulate the public affairs and
clergy of the church parishes in his jurisdiction."[129] The court's ruling
proved a decisive victory for Blanc as it broke the resolve of the sacrament
starved supporters of the Marguillers. By the end of 1844, a new body of
Marguillers supportive of the bishop were elected. On 19th July 1850, Pope
Pius IX elevated the Diocese of New Orleans to the status of Archbishopric,
and Antoine Blanc was elevated as the first Archbishop of New Orleans on
16th February 1851.[130] For the remainder of the antebellum period, the
trustees of St. Louis did not trouble Blanc.

The trustee controversies in Charleston and New Orleans reveal how
Irish communities struggled to secure their place within the Church in
American society and also demonstrated the evolution of the Irish
Catholics' attitude towards Church authority. The elevation of Bishop John
England in Charleston can be viewed as a victory for the Irish community;
from 1820 to 1880, 71 of the 101 priests who served in the Diocese of
Charleston were Irish or of Irish heritage. Irish influence also grew in New
Orleans throughout the antebellum period. The city had only one Irish priest
in 1835, but by 1855 nine Irish priests were ministering in the city.[131] In
Charleston and Savannah, the Irish dominated the Church hierarchy. The
Irish in New Orleans, however, arrived in a city where Catholicism was

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[127] John Pryer, John C. Lawlor, N. Fitzsimmons, Salvester Quinn, D. J. O'Callaghan & J. P.
Kerwin to Bishop Blanc, 10 Nov., 1843, Bishop Blanc Papers University of Notre Dame
Collection, AANO.
[128] Laura D. Kelley, *Erin's Enterprise: Immigration By Appropriation: The Irish in
Antebellum New Orleans*, (PhD diss., Tulane University, 2004), 228- 229.
[129] Carl A. Brasseaux, *Acadian to Cajun: Transformation of a People*, (Jackson, 1992), 36;
McConnell, *Permoli v First Municipality*, 360.
[130] Woods, *Catholic Church*, 263-264.
[131] Gleeson, *Irish in the South*, 82.

controlled by the Creole community.[132] Despite their large number, Irish immigrants never displaced the power and influence of the French and Creole leaders. A comparison of the Catholic Church in the cities of Charleston and New Orleans, thus, reveals a deep tension between Irish and French Catholics and shows how the Irish failed to gain full hegemony over the Catholic Church in the South.

Ethnic divisiveness was apparent among the clergy, especially in Louisiana, and the attitude of the clergy was often influenced by perceptions of class difference. Many of Charleston's and New Orleans's Irish Catholics were at the bottom of the socio-economic ladder. French and Creole Catholics in both cities wielded influence disproportionate to their actual number. French priests reared and trained in the tradition of French absolutism had little sympathy for the Irish, especially those who tried to make the Church more compatible with republican values.[133] Irish Catholics wanted more than "a Gladiatorial frothy display of high flowing language" and preferred attentive English speaking priests.[134] Many French clergymen resented the Irish and their poverty, and Irish priests were not always welcomed in places without a strong Irish congregation.[135] A distinct crucible of Irish–French interaction and confrontation was the Diocesan Seminary of St. Vincent de Paul, which had been established in 1838 in Planttenville, Louisiana.[136] Here, Irish students often clashed with their French superiors. For example, Blanc received reports from Fr. Masnou informing him that a "young Irishman who recently came to the seminary does not have the vocation for the Ecclesiastical state." The young Irishman acted strangely and "worse, he is not docile."[137] In 1851, Masnou voiced his opposition to the seminary enrolling more Irish students, admitting that "it is

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[132]Kelley, *Erin's Enterprise*, 226.

[133] Gleeson, *Irish in the South*, 76.

[134] Catholics of St. Patricks to Right Rev. Antoine Blanc, 17 Aug., 1843, Bishop Blanc Papers, University Notre Dame Collection, AANO.

[135] Rev. J. B. Babonneau to Bishop Blanc, 25 Nov., 1852, Blanc (Most Rev) Antoine: Translations of Administrative Records, 1851-1860, AANO; Rec. C. Chambost to Bishop Blanc, 25 Nov., 1855, Blanc (Most Rev) Antoine: Translations of Administrative Records, 1851-1860, AANO.

[136]Marck S. Raphael, *History of Notre Dame Seminary*, (New Orleans, 1997), 22-24.

[137] G. Masnou P.C.M to Bishop Blanc, Undated, Blanc (Most Rev) Antoine: Translations of Administrative Records, 1851-1860, AANO.

very difficult to sympathize with them. I have no complaint about those whom we have, but as for my part I should want to have nothing to do with them."[138]

English journalist Harriet Martineau in the 1830s noted that the Catholic population in the US was democratic in politics, that their religion was "modified by the spirit of the time in America," and that the Catholics posed no threat to the nation as they were "not a set of men who can be priest-ridden to any fatal extent."[139] The increase in the number of Irish Catholics and Irish priests worried both French and native born Catholics. They feared an Irish takeover of the Church, which they believed would destroy the institution by introducing "nationalist tribalism into it."[140] In 1860, discussing the passing of Archbishop Blanc, Fr.Chalon, in Belle Fontaine, Alabama, advised his friend and Vicar-General of New Orleans Fr. Rousellon that, "If they give us an Irish Archbishop, let us flee, my dear one, let us flee, let us abandon all to his policies."[141] Irish clergymen for their part were unhappy about the disproportionate power French clergymen enjoyed in America. Bishop England was among those unhappy since "they appoint French Bishops in New York, where almost all are Irish; in Bradstown, where there are not ten French; in Mobile where the French is unintelligible and useless." England used the same line of argument that had been deployed against the Irish. England firmly believed that, unlike the French, the Irish "easily amalgamated with Americans."[142] In their attempts to live in a Catholic Church compatible with American society, Irish Catholics faced some of their sternest opponents in their Creole and French co-religionists, who held conflicting beliefs about what the Church should be. However, for rural southern Catholics the difficulties of the urban church where theoretical in comparison with the practical and logistical difficulties in the countryside.

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[138] G. Masnou P.C.M to Bishop Blanc, 15 Jan., 1851, Blanc (Most Rev) Antoine: Translations of Administrative Records, 1851-1860, AANO.
[139] Harriet Martineau, *Society in America. Volume II*, (New York, 1837), 323.
[140] Miller, *Church in Cultural Captivity*, 28.
[141] Rev. G. Chalon to Rev Rousellon, 9 Jul., 1860, Rousselon Papers Translations, AANO.
[142] Bishop England to Dr. M. O'Connor, 25, Feb., 1835, cited in "Papers Relating to the Church in America. From the Portfolio of the Irish College at Rome," *Records of the American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia.* Vol. 8, Iss. 2 (1897), 200-201.

iv.   I have Kept the Faith[143]

For many Irish Catholic immigrants in the US South, the Catholic Church provided a much welcomed familiarity in a strange new land. On his arrival to New Orleans, Hugh Quinn was delighted once more to have "the happiniss [*sic*] of hearing Mass. How happy is a Catholic in every Country! The same Mass the same sacraments. I actually felt at home once more."[144] Religion proved a comfort to many in the antebellum US South, and the Catholic Church helped Irish immigrants to maintain a core element of self-identity.[145] The Church proved to be a social as well as a religious centre. New England school teacher Emily Burke observed in Savannah how many of the Irish "attend mass daily, and high mass as often as it occurs. Many will rise early, and take a long walk in the morning for the purpose of crossing themselves with holy water."[146] Many Irish Catholic immigrants' attachment to their faith grew deeper in a land that many found alien.

The Catholic Church strove to integrate into Southern society so that its members were not marginalised. Bishops were continuously faced with the problem of being short of priests to administer their dioceses. Bishop John England found his diocese of Charleston to be "the most extensive and most poor" of the entire US.[147] The Diocese of Charleston in 1820 embraced an area of 127,500 square miles and England found upon his arrival "five priests, of whom only three had jurisdiction."[148] In a report to the Cardinal Prefect of the Propaganda, England acknowledged that any Catholic who arrived before American independence could scarcely find a priest, and as a result their descendents "together with their families, are lost to the Church,

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[143] The headstone of "John Fagan born in Co. Wicklow June 24 1820 and died June 23 1884," in Joseph Maire Dogny, *Historical Notes on St. Michael's Parish, Paulding Mississippi*, (1932), ACDJ.

[144] Journal of Hugh Quin, 4 Dec., 1817, Quin Papers, T2874/1, PRONI.

[145] Edward M. Shoemaker, "Strangers to Citizens: The Irish Immigrant Community in Savannah, 1837-1861, (PhD. diss., Emory University, 1990), 206.

[146] Emily P. Burke, *Reminiscences of Georgia*, (Oberlin, OH., 1850), 33.

[147] Cited in "Papers Relating to the Church," Vol. 8, Iss. 3, 314.

[148] John England, *Address To the Convention of the Diocese Held at the Cathedral at Charleston. November 1839*, in Sebastian G. Messmer, (ed.), *The Works of the Right Reverend John England, First Bishop of Charleston*, Vol. 7, (Cleveland, 1908), 252.

and belong to the various sects whose members are four times more numerous than those who now profess the Catholic religion." The poverty of the Church drove many "who wished to maintain a certain dignified position in society" to abandon the church.[149]

Irish immigrants of various denominations found comfort and refuge in religion from the hardships of reality. Michael O'Regan, as he prepared to embark for New Orleans in 1842, consoled his mother, "Religion is now your only consolation- it is what keeps my mind at ease."[150] Many immigrants relied on the comfort of religion as a means to overcome the sense of isolation. Patrick Murphy, for example, was an immigrant and building contractor in Natchez, Mississippi. He kept detailed diaries of his experiences, revealing a man who felt isolated, depressed and homesick. Murphy dreamed of being on board "a ship sailing home" only to wake up alone: "it is miserable to live in such a world."[151] On 9th October, 1858, Murphy travelled to Port Gibson for mass for the first time since January 1854.[152] Murphy became more attentive to religious practice but his mind would remain troubled and "loaded with anguish,...God have pity on me holy virgan [*sic*] pray for me."[153] Many Irish immigrants found themselves without access to their denominations' churches in the South. John Connolly was the overseer at Woodlands Plantation in Cass County, Georgia. Connolly informed his employer that his marriage "shall be celebrated by a priest & not until then, I consider a magistrates marriage very binding but I will in the name of God wait until the nuptial knot is bound by a Catholic Priest."[154] The distance between laity and clergy was identified by Fr. James Hason: "Our Greatest difficulty in Georgia is that the Catholics are much scattered. This causes a great deal of travelling."[155] Irish priest Bernard O'Reilly, in Macon, Georgia, was taken aback by "the apathy and

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[149] Cited in "Papers Relating to the Church," Vol. 8, Iss. 3 (1897), 321.
[150] Michael O'Regan to Dearest & Fondest Mother, 19 Jun., 1842, O'Regan Family Papers, Mss590, HNOC.
[151] Patrick Murphy, 4 Apr., 1858, Patrick Murphy Papers, Mss309, LLMVC.
[152] Patrick Murphy, 9 Oct., 1858, Patrick Murphy Papers, Mss309, LLMVC.
[153] Patrick Murphy, Sunday 31 Jul., 1859, Patrick Murphy Papers, Mss309, LLMVC. .
[154] John Connolly to Godfrey Barnsley, 2 Jul., 1844, George Scarborough Barnsley Papers, 1837-1918, #1521, SHC.
[155] James Hason to Father Woodlock, 16 May 1860, cited in *Annals of All Hallows College. For the Year 1860.* (Dublin, 1860), 25.

indifference which possess some people once they are removed from the influence of religion." He realised the difficulty faced by those Catholics who wished to practice their faith: "Sunday comes, and there is no church, no priest, no sacrifice."[156] The tyranny of distance and the lack of clergymen were a constant problem for churches in the rural South. When the Diocese of Natchez was established in 1837, only two priests operated in all of Mississippi.[157] The Mother Superior of the Daughters of the Cross mission to Louisiana, Sister Mary Hyacinth Le Conniat, believed that not all rural Catholics were "idolaters and heretics," but that they were "simply indifferent." She noted that many people lived a life without religion.[158]

Employment opportunities on internal improvement projects such as canal and railroad construction attracted thousands of Irish Catholics into the rural heartlands of the South. In 1852, for instance, Fr. J. Frérabras notified Bishop Blanc of the construction of a railroad which was under contract by a Catholic, Mr. Crump. The line being built was between Port Gibson and Grand Gulf, and Crump planned to "employ about 150 Irishmen." Frérabras hoped "therefore, that a goodly number of Catholic families will come at this time to settle...it will not be inappropriate that I be present, at or at a short distance from the construction area in event of illness or accident."[159] Irish labourers were employed to undertake strenuous and hazardous construction jobs. In 1854, for example, Michael Conner was buried in Savannah after being killed working on a railroad; he had been "only 3 weeks in [the] US."[160]

Toiling under the unforgiving southern sun and climate, Irish labourers and their families were anxious to have the services of a priest. Fr. Charles Chambost, in Jackson, Louisiana, was "kept very busy about two chantiers [French for construction sites] of Irishmen [,] one at fifteen miles from Jackson and the other at twenty five. Everyone of them has wanted to

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[156] Bernard O'Reilly to Fr. Woodlock, 9 Sep., 1857, cited in *Ninth Report of All Hallows College, Drumcondra, Dublin*, (Dublin, 1858), 53.

[157] James J. Pilliar, *The Catholic Church in Mississippi, 1837-65*, (New Orleans, 1964), 1-2.

[158] Sr. Dorothea O. McCants, *They Came to Louisiana: Letters of a Catholic Mission 1854-1882*, (Baton Rouge, 1970), 39 & 44.

[159] J. Frérabras to Monseigneur Blanc, 22 Dec., 1852, Blanc (Most Rev) Antoine: Translations of Administrative Records, 1851-1860, AANO.

[160] 14 Jan., 1854, Records of Catholic Cemetery, OADS.

perform his jubele [*sic*], so I have been bound to visit them several times."[161] In 1857, Fr. R. P. O'Neill travelled twice to Bayou Sara, "where a number of Irish labourers made their Easter." He discovered on his travels through rural Louisiana a number of Catholics who were "much dissatisfied having, no opportunity of receiving the sacraments."[162] In Baton Rouge, Fr. Peter McLaughlin requested pastoral leave from his parish in order to travel and "hear confessions indiscriminately among all Leveers & Ditchers." McLaughlin discovered that to hear confessions "in one shanty & not in another, injures me. People are suspicious," but he believed that "good work could be done among the poor Irish on Plantations were a priest to attend them in good faith."[163] On large construction projects, immigrant Catholic labourers had a better chance of being visited by a priest. In South Carolina, the arrival of "five hundred people of all ages" on the Stump Mountain railroad made the construction site "numerically the most important point" of Fr. Jeremiah Joseph O'Connell's entire mission. O'Connell immediately set about organising a resident priest for Stump Mountain.[164] However, those working on small projects in the rural South were often isolated from all contact with the Catholic Church.

Most people in antebellum US South attended the church nearest to them, even if they did not belong to that church. The major Christian denominations in the antebellum South were the Methodists and Baptists. During the early decades of the nineteenth century, a massive outpouring of evangelical religious enthusiasm overtook the US.[165] Many Irish immigrants, regardless of their background, were swept up in the

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[161] C. Chambost to Archbishop Blanc, 12 Feb., 1851, Bishop Blanc Papers University of Notre Dame Collection, AANO.

[162] R. P O'Neill to Archbishop Blanc, 1 Apr., 1857, Blanc (Most Rev) Antoine: Translations of Administrative Records, 1851-1860, AANO.

[163] Peter McLaughlin to Archbishop Blanc, 1 Apr., 1859, Bishop Blanc Papers, University of Notre Dame Collection, AANO.

[164] O'Connell, *Catholicity in the Carolinas*, 341-342.

[165] Wood, *Empire of Liberty*, 576-619; Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848*, (New York, 2009), [2007], 164-202; Donald G. Mathews, "The Second Great Awakening as an Organizing Process, 1789-1830: An Hypothesis," *American Quarterly*, Vol. 21, No.1 (Spring, 1969), 23-43. See also Mark A. Noll, *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* (Oxford, 2002); Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven, 1989); T. Scott Miyakawa, *Protestants and Pioneers: Individualism and Conformity of the American Frontier* (Chicago, 1964).

emotionalism of evangelical revivalism. Methodists and Baptists adopted an anti-aristocratic bias and gave individuals greater control over their religious lives, which led people to reject traditional distinctions that had set apart the clergy and laity.[166] For many Irish immigrants, Catholicism and Presbyterianism were more a lingering memory of home than an attractive faith. Evangelical preaching proved attractive, since it rejected "the appeal to reason and restrained sensibilities for a direct, psychological assault on sin and the equally direct and much more comforting offer of personal salvation."[167] Attending Evangelical services helped ease the assimilation of immigrants into the local community.

A key attraction was the emergence of camp meetings throughout the South. These religious meetings could last for several days, making it worthwhile for isolated rural inhabitants to attend. At these meetings, certain participants, under the power of God, in displays of what came to be called "acrobatic Christianity," and fallen sinners could raise cries of anguish "Jesus! Jesus!," or "Oh! I am a sinner!" as they awaited salvation from the heavens.[168] In 1827, Juliana Margaret Courtney Conner travelled to visit her husband's Irish father, James Conner, at his plantation in Mecklenburg county in North Carolina, where a camp meeting occurred nearby with "persons from 20 to 30 miles encamped" for the gathering. Juliana attended the meeting: "A feeling of devotion I will candidly confess, was not my motive for attending." She was intrigued by the performance of the preacher, though she found the content of the sermon to be "nonsense." The sole aim of the preacher was "to make the people groan, and the intonation, rise and fall of his voice and almost crying manner produced what words alone had failed to effect." Juliana had "various fears for their

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[166] Michael P. Carroll, "How the Irish Became Protestant in America," *Religion and American Culture: A Journal of Interpretation*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (Winter 2006), 43-44; Edward R. Crowther, "Holy Honor: Sacred and Secular in the Old South," *JSH*, Vol. 58, No.4 (Nov., 1992), 626. See also Robert H. Abzug, *Cosmos Crumbling: American Reform and the Religious Imagination*, (New York, 1994); Jon Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People*, (Cambridge, MA., 1990).
[167] Mathews, *Religion in the Old South*, xvi.
[168] Bruce Jr. Dickson, "Religion, Society and Culture in the Old South: A Comparative View," *American Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No.4 (Oct., 1974), 400-401 see also Ellen Eslinger, *Citizens of Zion: The Social Origins of Camp Meeting Revivalism* (Knoxville, 1999); Charles A. Johnson, *The Frontier Camp Meeting* (Dallas, 1955).

lungs if not their souls." Camp meetings were not just places of religious worship; they provided a place for people to conduct business: "the candidates electioneered and the belles and beaux displayed their beauty and gallantry."[169]

It is important to stress that the revivalism of the Second Great Awakening did not carry all in its path and the evangelical church struggled for many decades to prosper among white southerners.[170] Only one in four adults was a member of a church in the southern states by 1860.[171] In the antebellum US South, some people were devout Christians; others were indifferent, while many found themselves somewhere in-between. John Houston discovered in New Orleans that on Sundays, the "Churches are open," but so were "the theatres the cockpits the gaming houses."[172] Maine-born Joseph Holt Ingraham learned in New Orleans that "the Sabbath was made for man-not man for the Sabbath," and that "religion was bestowed upon man, not to lessen, but to augment his happiness."[173] Throughout the antebellum US South, a sense of ecumenism prevailed and people often attended the religious services of many different denominations.

Many churches, especially in rural areas, often lacked regular clergymen and welcomed travelling preachers to avail of their church building. People of different denominations attended the same church and the values of different denominations were exposed to a greater part of the community. Bishop John England often preached in court houses and was invited to preach in various Protestant churches. England's promotion of religious tolerance made him popular throughout his diocese. He had learned in Ireland that "by sectarian hatred were the hopes of a nation destroyed." England stressed that "Persecution makes hypocrites; to hate a person even for infidelity is a crime against charity, and to grasp the sword

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[169] Juliana Margaret Courtney Conner Diary #174-7, SHC.

[170] Christine Leigh Heyrman, *Southern Cross: The Beginning of the Bible Belt*, (New York, 1997), 5-6.

[171] Edward R. Crowther, "Holy Honor: Sacred and Secular in the Old South," *JSH*, Vol. 58, No. 4 (Nov., 1992), 624.

[172] J. N Houston to Mrs Houston, Larne, 8 Mar., 1836, J. N Houston Collection, T2581 17, PRONI.

[173] Joseph Holt Ingraham, *The South-West By a Yankee*. Volume One, (New York, 1968), [1835], 219-220.

and punish for unbelief is to usurp the seat of the judging Son of Man."[174]
The small number of Catholics made it easier for them to be tolerated. In
Savannah, Fr. P. F. Hooke was delighted to find "very little prejudice"
manifested towards him and he found that the clergy were able "to wear our
clerical dress with as much impunity as you can in the city of Dublin."[175]
Yet, anti-Catholic sentiments were held by many southerners against a
religion deemed "stagnant and death dealing in an age of enlightenment and
progress- aside from the great stream of Christian civilization and social
elevation."[176]

After his initial arrival in Charleston, Bishop England quickly
embarked on a tour of his vast diocese. By 12th July, he had reached
Murfreesboro in Hertford County, North Carolina, where he found three
Catholics, "two of whom were in the habit of attending the meetings of the
Methodists and Baptists."[177] One of these Catholics was a native of
Clonmel, Co. Tipperary, Dr. Thomas O'Dwyer. O'Dwyer regularly attended
Methodist, Baptist and Quaker services, and he was active in the local Bible
society. Despite being an isolated Catholic, O'Dwyer maintained his
Catholic faith. On 19th March, Mr Daug, a member of the Bible society,
visited O'Dwyer. They discussed matters of religion and the Irish doctor
was asked on what he founded his hopes of salvation. O'Dwyer informed
his guest that his hopes were founded on:

> a belief in Christ as our Redeemer and in attending to the religious duties of the
> Roman Catholic Society in which myself and ancestry have been educated, the
> orthodoxy of which I have no reason to doubt and that I have only to regret I am
> not a better Roman Catholic. Still I hope I shall not be a bigoted one, as I pray that
> all who are sincerely seeking the truth will find it and be saved ultimately.[178]

Having informed his guest of his religious position, he lent him a couple of
copies of the *Catholic Miscellany,* the official newspaper of the Diocese of

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[174] John England, "Address on Epochs of Irish History. Delivered Before the Hibernian
Society of the City of Savannah, In the Church of St. John The Baptist, In that City on the
Festival of St. Patrick, March 17, 1824," in Messmer, *Works of John England.* Vol. 7, 421.
[175] P. F Hooke to Father Potter, Savannah, Feast of the Immaculate Conception, cited in
Ninth Report of All Hallows, 61.
[176] Rev. John T Wheat to his wife, 22 Jun., 1859, cited in James W. Patton, "Facets of the
South in the 1850s," *JSH*, Vol. 23, No.1 (Feb., 1957), 12.
[177] England, John, *Diurnal*, 27.
[178] 1825 Diary of Dr. Thomas O'Dwyer, in Samuel Jordan Wheeler and Other Diaries,
#766, SHC.

Charleston. Through Catholic newspapers, O'Dwyer was informed of ongoing developments in the US Catholic Church as well as events back home in Ireland.

O'Dwyer never felt that he was compromising his faith; attending different religious preachers provided the doctor with a social outlet through which he interacted with the community of Murfreesboro. It would have been easy for him to convert to a different Christian faith. This was the choice made by many, one which worried the hierarchy. Many appealing and attractive alternatives were available for Irish immigrants. *The Charleston Mercury,* in 1860, carried the following advertisement: "The Irish Society, Established A.D. 1818, for the purpose of Promoting the Scriptural Education of the Native Irish, chiefly through the Medium of their own language" was hosting charity sermons in the Episcopal Churches of St. Paul and St. Michael.[179] Isolation broke the will of many, as Fr. Bernard O'Reilly reported from Georgia, "While their neighbours are going in little fashionable groups to church, the poor Catholics are forgotten looking and many, not having the fortitude...yield and go off with the crowd."[180]

It is important to state that many of those who immigrated during and immediately after the famine were not devout Catholics.[181] Many carried ill feelings towards the Church and were not afraid to criticise the Church and its clergy. John Maginnis, in New Orleans, for example, had nothing but "my wholesale denunciations" for "the clerical stipendiaries[*sic*] of the British crown, who lent their influence to crush the rising spirit of freedom in Ireland."[182] Many Irish nationalists were bitter towards the Irish Catholic hierarchy for their role in undermining the Young Irelanders revolt in 1848. *The Daily Orleanian*, among other papers, stressed that Irish Catholics were

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[179] *The Charleston Mercury,* 2 Jun., 1860.
[180] Bernard O'Reilly to Fr. Woodlock, 9 Sep., 1857, cited in *Ninth Report of All Hallows College*, 53.
[181] Kerby A. Miller, *Ireland and Irish America: Culture, Class, and Transatlantic Migration*, (Dublin, 2008), 83; Larkin, "The Devotional Revolution," 625-652; Michael P.Carroll, *American Catholics in the Protestant Imagination: Rethinking the Academic Study of Religion*, (Baltimore, 2007), 27-61.
[182] John Maginnis letter, 18 Jul., 1849, McKowen (John) Papers, Mss1353, LLMVC.

not mere "vassals to priestly authority."[183] The main obligation defining a
practicing Catholic in pre-famine Ireland was not regular attendance of mass
on Sundays and obligatory holy days, but fulfilling one's Easter duty. This
involved annually going to confession and receiving communion between
Ash Wednesday and Ascension Thursday.[184] It is not surprising, then, that
many Irish Catholic immigrants attended and partook in services of the
varying Protestant denominations in the South during the antebellum period.
Some Protestants also attended and helped build Catholic Churches in the
southern states.

Many priests in the South were surprised to find Protestants
attending mass. Father Pitrat at Milken Bend, Madison Parish, Louisiana,
informed Bishop Blanc how "the Protestants, who in spite of the bad roads
come to the mass and to my instructions and lectures."[185] Given the isolated
and rural nature of the Church outside the cities of the South, Protestants
often formed the majority of the congregation for visiting priests. Many
attended Catholic places of worship out of curiosity, but also as a social
outing. Religion in the antebellum South was not just a means of faith but
also a source of entertainment. Religious debates and religious services
offered diversions to people, especially in rural areas. On Sundays, scattered
neighbours had the chance to gather, gossip, trade, court, as well as
worship.[186] Catholicism offered something novel, and many found various
aspects of Catholicism appealing. Theodore Clapp, a Presbyterian and later
Unitarian minister, often attended High Mass in New Orleans and believed
that "there is not on earth another ceremony so august, solemn, and
impressive." Those used to such displays, he feared, must view Protestant
worship as "unedifying and even irreverent."[187] Madame Baptise of the
Ursuline convent in Columbia, South Carolina, informed her brother, the

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[183] *The Daily Orleanian*, 8 Apr., 1852, cited in Niehaus, *Irish in New Orleans*, 108.
[184] Emmet Larkin, *The Pastoral Role of the Roman Catholic Church in Pre-Famine Ireland, 1750-1850*, (Dublin, 2006), 4.
[185] Fr. Pitrat to Archbishop Blanc, 18 Feb., 1850, Bishop Blanc Papers University of Notre Dame Collection, AANO.
[186] E. Brooks Holifield, "Theology as Entertainment: Oral Debate in American Religion," *Church History*, Vol. 67, No. 3 (Sep., 1998), 499-520.
[187] Cited in Andrew H. Stern, *Southern Crucifix, Southern Cross: Catholic-Protestant Relations in the Old South*, (Tuscaloosa, AL., 2012), 141 & 230.

Bishop of the diocese Patrick Lynch, of the Easter celebrations in the convent in 1859. Their altar had been beautifully arranged, and "we exposed your precious relic for adoration all day Good Friday," which attracted a great many persons "both Catholic and Protestant."[188] Methodist Ella Gertrude Clanton Thomas from Georgia greatly admired the doctrine "which permits one to pray for the repose of the soul of the dead." She had recurring thoughts regarding the Catholic faith, and "I confess it, I almost find myself believing in the intercession of the saints."[189]

In the antebellum US South, Catholics experienced "a frontier Catholicism-with little in the way of comprehensive ecclesiastical authority or material and monetary resources."[190] Catholics often depended on their Protestant neighbours to allow them to practice in their churches. Priests had to adapt to the reality of southern frontier religion. Irish priest Timothy Bermingham was aware of this and conducted camp meetings in the Georgia low country. He described to Dr. Cullen, in the Irish College in Rome, how citizens expressed an anxiety to hear a sermon from a Catholic priest; when no Protestant meeting house could accommodate the gathering ,"they went and cut down small trees-covered them with green branches-erected a stand in the centre from which I was to preach." The "woods were alive with travellers...Generals-Magistrates-Squires-Lawyers & Doctors-every manner of man and woman turned out." Bermingham preached for two hours and "removed, I hope some prejudices." At another neighbourhood an "old Lady declared" that she was happier to have been able to see a Catholic priest than "an elephant."[191] Catholicism added an exotic element into the religious world of the antebellum US South. The Lynch family for many years were the only Catholics in Cheraw County in South Carolina. Fr. O'Connell recalled how the Lynchs once received a

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[188] Madame Baptise to Bishop Lynch, March Easter Saturday, 13D10, Lynch Family Papers, DCA.
[189] Virginia Ingraham Burr, (ed.), *The Secret Eye: The Journal of Ella Gertrude Clanton Thomas, 1848-1889*, (Chapel Hill, 1990), 225-227.
[190] Pasquier, *Fathers on the Frontier*, 87.
[191] Fr. T Bermingham to Dr. Cullen, 31 Dec., 1849, B108 Letters/Savannah Georgia, AAHC.

visitor, a man who had "walked two miles after a camp-meeting, just to see a Papist and whether he had the veritable 'hoofs and horns.'"[192]

Intermarriage between Catholics and Protestants was not uncommon, to the great displeasure of the Catholic hierarchy. The clergy were often in a state of confusion regarding their ability to "perform marriages, inter Catholic et heretics."[193] The rights of Catholics, who had married Protestants, to receive the sacraments also caused confusion. Bishop Blanc found that he was faced with a considerable increase in mixed marriages and that it was among immigrants, especially Irish and German, that mixed marriages most often occurred: "They are more, generally the Catholic girls who marry Protestant husbands, American or German."[194] Marriage proved a successful means for many Irish immigrants to climb the social ladder. Fr. O'Connor noted to Bishop Elder how he married a Mr. Noonan to a wealthy lady of "the Lutheran Sect." "Mr Noonan has sold his business in Canton, and was then on his way to Arkansas to the plantation of his wife where he intends to reside."[195] Intermarriage could also arouse great tensions within families. Irish immigrant Patrick Cantwell, who had settled in Charleston, was horrified that his son Edward wanted to marry outside the Catholic Church, and worse, "the young lady has no fortune."[196] Patrick tried to have the marriage postponed, but was unsuccessful.[197] Edward married his Methodist fiancé and his father lamented his son's decision.[198]

Patrick Cantwell was a devoted Catholic and feared the temptations available in the US. His letters to his son John in New Orleans continually reminded him of the diligence of hard work and the necessity to adhere to

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[192] O'Connell, *Catholicity in the Carolinas*, 129-130.

[193] Fr. Le Corre to Bishop Elder, 11 Sep., 1857, Bishop Elder Letter Book No. 1, 1857, ACDJ.

[194] Bishop Blanc to Cardinal of the Sacred Congregation, 15 Oct., 1854, Blanc (Most Rev) Antoine: Translations of Administrative Records, 1851-1860, AANO.

[195] Fr. J. O'Connor to Bishop Elder, 10 Sep., 1857, Bishop Elder Letter Book No. 1, 1857, ACDJ.

[196] Patrick Cantwell to John P. Cantwell, 11 Sep., 1848, John Lucas Paul Cantwell Papers 1830-1909, SHC.

[197] Patrick Cantwell to John P. Cantwell, 17 Oct., 1848, John Lucas Paul Cantwell Papers1830-1909, SHC.

[198] Patrick Cantwell to John P. Cantwell, 6 Dec., 1848, John Lucas Paul Cantwell Papers 1830-1909, SHC.

the Catholic faith.[199] As a father, Patrick wanted his children to be successful and warned John that he "must not think of love or marriage,...lose not your chance then of promotion, by any rash move."[200] Parental advice on religious matters was common among Irish immigrants of all denominations. Eleanor Elliott Neely was informed by her mother not to worry about the sickly heat of Charleston, for it was "not as hot as the displeasure of an offended God." Eleanor's only hope was to follow "true religion without which there is no real happiness in this world nor in the world to come."[201] Many immigrants sought refuge in prayer and placed the hopes of their families in the hands of God: "May almighty God protect you from harm and danger. May the holy Virgin be your protectory."[202] Irish immigrant families often faced internal fighting over matters of religion and challenges to traditional parental authority.

v. "Provisions of Mercy and Charity of the Poor"

The clergy played an important role in the lives of antebellum Catholics; they did more than just act as spiritual leaders; they often played the role of social workers, educators and health care providers. Especially in urban areas, priests acted as figureheads for recently arrived immigrants. The leadership provided by John England in Charleston strengthened the "veneration for the Religion of my Fathers," wrote Bernard Maguire, who continued: "my pride as an Irishman, my feelings as a Republican strong in the principles of Democracy and equal rights" were strengthened by the respect and renown the Bishop had gained not just in Charleston but throughout the nation.[203] Capable and pious priests made a positive impact. Irish priests in particular, championed the cause of the immigrant community. In many cases, Irish immigrants felt more comfortable bringing

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[199] Patrick Cantwell to John P. Cantwell, 11 Sep., 1848, John Lucas Paul Cantwell Papers 1830-1909, SHC.

[200] Patrick Cantwell to John P. Cantwell, 24 Feb., 1849, John Lucas Paul Cantwell Papers1830-1909, SHC.

[201] Margaret Elliot to Eleanor Elliot Neely, 10 Sep., 1823, Eleanor Elliot Neely Papers, 1823-1838, SCL.

[202] Patrick Cantwell to John P. Cantwell, 25 Oct., 1848, John Lucas Paul Cantwell Papers 1830-1909, SHC.

[203] Bernard Maguire to Bishop England, 3 Sep., 1840, 4K6, Bishop England et al. 1840-1844, DCA.

their grievances to the attention of their priest, rather than directly to the
official authorities.

The priest often acted as a leader and representative figure of the
poor immigrants in the antebellum towns and cities of the South. In New
Orleans, Bishop Blanc received complaints about the actions of the pastor of
St. Patricks Church Fr. Mullon, who alienated "part of his people" and
prejudiced "the minds of protestants." Mullon was a staunch Irish nationalist
and many resented him for "standing forward as the champion of national
predilection & antipathies & by his active co-operation & the unnecessary
frank avowal of his opinions in all places."[204] As the antebellum period
drew to a close, the close relationship between Irish Catholic immigrants
and their priests became an increasingly common feature of the Irish
immigration experience, particularly in urban areas. Papal emissary
Archbishop Gaetano Bedini observed on his 1853 US tour that Irish
immigrants "see in their priests not a simple minister of religion but their
father, their magistrate, their judge, their king, their "papa," their idol."[205]
For the poor, working class Irish families, eking out a hard existence, the aid
and charity provided by the Catholic Church was indispensable.

The Catholic Church received widespread praise for its work with
the poor and the sick. In the South, state governments, for political,
demographic and environmental reasons, were hesitant to build and fund
institutions to tackle social problems such as health care and education. The
idea of poverty as a problem of individual morality dominated the thinking
of the political and upper class of the South and it was up to charities and
philanthropists to try and address pressing social issues.[206] Catholic schools,
hospitals and orphanages helped fill a void in society and most southerners
were willing to support institutions which benefitted society as a whole.[207]
Fr. Hasson, in a letter to All Hallows College, downplayed the risk to health,
hoping to encourage more missionary priests to travel to the slave states. He

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[204] O.A to Bishop Blanc, 1852, Bishop Blanc Papers University of Notre Dame Collection,
AANO.
[205] Cited in Miller, *Ireland and Irish America*, 26.
[206] Barbara L. Bellows, *Benevolence Among Slaveholders: Assisting the Poor in Charleston
1670-1860*, (Baton Rouge, 1993).
[207] Stern, *Southern Crucifix*, 38-68 & 69-108.

found that "The colds, the asthmas, and the fevers of Ireland are decidedly more fatal and more unmanageable than the fevers I have seen in the South."[208] The reality was, however, that Irish immigrants, especially recently arrived immigrants, were highly susceptible to subtropical diseases, particularly yellow fever. Disease was an ever present threat in the antebellum South and outbreaks of yellow fever, cholera, smallpox and typhoid epidemics hung over the South.[209] Yellow fever earned the nickname of "strangers fever," as recent arrivals were much more prone to the disease than those born in the South.[210] Many Americans held similar views to Emily Burke, who believed the high mortality rate among the Irish was a result of their attempts "to drown thoughts of disappointment in the intoxicating cup, go to drinking whiskey which causes the climate fever to set in, from which they seldom recover. Thus ends every year the existences of thousands of these deluded beings."[211] A more scientific reason rested in the fact that Irish immigrants had never been exposed to diseases carried by mosquitoes and had no tolerance or any form of inoculation.[212]

The Catholic clergy, when visiting the sick, found that circumstances often required them to perform the role of doctor, particularly in the more isolated rural settlements.[213] In 1853, for example, New Orleans was struck with one of the worst epidemics and fifteen members of the clergy lost their lives.[214] The following year Savannah was severely hit by an epidemic of yellow fever and Irish Bishop Gartland, struggled to attend to the needs of the city's Catholics.[215] The fever of 1854 was one of the worst to ever hit Savannah, and of the 650 fatalities, 293 were Irish born

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[208] Fr. James Hasson to Father Potter, Feast of the Immaculate Conception, in *Ninth Report of All Hallows*, 56.
[209] Patton, "Facets of the South", 6; Katherine Kemi Bankole, *Slavery and Medicine: Enslavement and Medical Practice in Antebellum Louisiana*, (New York, 1998).
[210] Margaret Humphrey, *Yellow Fever and the South*, (New Brunswick, 1992), 48-49; Jo Ann Carrigan, *Yellow Fever: Scourge of the South*, in Todd L. Savitt, & James Harvey Young, (eds.), *Disease and Distinctiveness in the American South*, (Knoxville, 1991), 55-78.
[211] Burke, *Reminiscences of Georgia*, 9.
[212] Erwin H. Ackernecht, *History and Geography of the Most Important Diseases*, (New York, 1965), 52.
[213] Pasquier, *Fathers on the Frontier*, 62-63.
[214] Reinders, *End of an Era*, 94-96.
[215] Bishop Gartland to Mr. M. A. Frenage, 29 Aug., 1854, RG1-S1-BOX1 Gartland, OADS.

immigrants.[216] Among the dead was Bishop Gartland. Many of the Catholic

clergy were brave and selfless in aiding the sick during epidemics. Increased

immigration throughout the antebellum period put severe pressure on the

South's charitable hospitals and orphan asylums. During epidemic

outbreaks, these institutions were overwhelmed. The charitable actions of

the Catholic Church and their sacrifices made a positive impact on

Protestant society.[217] Few voiced opposition to the creation of Catholic

charitable hospitals. Protestant minister Theodore Clapp believed, that "the

Roman Catholic church is infinitely superior to any Protestant

denominations in its provisions of mercy and charity of the poor."[218] Praise

for Catholic women and their work in hospitals was widespread and this

helped to create a more positive feeling towards Catholic nuns who were

often portrayed as sinister deviants to the normal role expected of Protestant

women and to the ideology of domesticity typical of the patriarchal society

of the antebellum South.[219]

The little red school house typical of the US was not part of the

tradition in the rural South, and Vernon Burton has noted that, "The

southern aristocrat's sense of noblesse oblige did not extend to the education

of the common people."[220] Catholic education made an impact in the slave

states where the availability of schools was limited. By providing schools,

the Church met a need for the general population. In the antebellum South, a

stigma was attached to free schools and Catholic schools offered an

alternative. They charged low tuition fees, as wages were not required for

the nuns and priests. Catholic schools used the fees from wealthy students to

subsidise the fees of the poor. The Church also focused on providing an

education which attracted the children of the planter elite and took great

measures not to alienate potential Protestant students. The convent schools

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[216]Tim Lockley, "'Like a clap of thunder in a clear sky': Differential Morality during Savannah's Yellow Fever Epidemic of 1854," *Social History*, Vol. 37, No. 2 (2012), 166-186.

[217] *Bishop Gartland and Becker Both Pennsylvania Priests*, RG1-S1-BOX1 Gartland, OADS.

[218] Cited in Stern, *Southern Crucifix*, 65.

[219] Mary Ewens, *The Role of the Nun in Nineteenth Century America*, (New York, 1978).

[220] Orville Vernon Burton, *In My Father's House Are Many Mansions: Family & Community in Edgefield South Carolina*, (Chapel Hill, 1985), 80.

of the Ursulines and those of the Sacred Heart offered the traditional French elite style boarding schools for girls and had a reputation for teaching elegant manners and good virtues.[221] Andrew Stern has highlighted how these Catholic schools benefitted from the perception of Catholicism "as a refined, aristocratic religion, and from the esteem of some Protestants for European religious orders."[222] Teaching for the planter elite's children helped to promote a positive view of Catholic education and religion.

During the antebellum period an overheated, oversuspicious, overaggressive, and paranoid style of American politics established its roots.[223] In the years between 1830 and 1860, anti-Catholicism in the US became unprecedentedly violent and vocal. Jon Gjerde argues that the large numbers of Catholic immigrants arriving from post-Napoleonic Europe exposed the contradictions between the Protestant underpinning of the American republic and Americans commitment to religious freedom.[224] Anti-Catholic literature spread like wildfire throughout the US. From 1830 to 1860, some 270 books, 25 newspapers and 13 magazines, and multitudes of pamphlets and almanacs were dedicated to the anti-Catholic crusade.[225] One of the key themes common to this emerging literature was the sexual immorality of Catholicism. Maria Monk's *Awful Disclosures of the Hotel Dieu Nunnery* (1836) was the most popular and successful book in the US prior to the publication of *Uncle's Tom Cabin* in 1852.[226] The behaviour of some priests in the Antebellum South did little for the reputation of Catholicism. In 1859, Mary Stinson requested a priest to come visit her family at Velasco Plantation in Plaquemine Parish, Louisiana, in hopes to

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[221] Joseph G. Mannard, "Maternity… of the Spirit: Nuns and Domesticity in Antebellum America," *US Catholic Historian*, Vol. 5, No. 3/4 (Summer-Fall, 1986), 311.

[222] Stern, *Southern Crucifix*, 94.

[223] Richard Hofstader, *The Paranoid Style in American Politics*, in Hofstader, (ed.), *The Paranoid Style in American Politics and other Essays*, (Cambridge, 1996), 4; David Brion Davis, "Some Themes of Counter-Subversion: An Analysis of Anti-Masonic, Anti-Catholic and Anti-Mormon Literature," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, Vol. 47, No. 2 (Sep., 2. 1960), 205.

[224] Jon Gjrede, *Catholicism and the Shaping of Nineteenth-Century America*, (New York, 2012).

[225] Ray Allen Billington, "Tentative Bibliography of Anti-Catholic Propaganda in the United States (1800-1860)," *Catholic Historical Review*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (January 1933), 492-513; Marie Anne Pagliarini, "The Pure American Woman and the Wicked Catholic Priest: An Analysis of Anti-Catholic Literature in Antebellum America," *Religion and Culture: A Journal of Interpretation.* Vol. 9, No.1 (Winter, 1999), 97-128.

[226] Ibid, 99.

convert her husband to Catholicism. In her request Mary explicitly stated to Bishop Blanc "do not by any means send [an] Irish Priest it would not do." Stinson's husband had "a great dislike for the Irish" and the couple had "no confidence" in their local parish priest. She lamented "our county's shame" that it was "hard to get an American Priest."[227] The US attracted many zealous and pious clergymen, but "others were driven across the Atlantic by disappointment or by censure." Bishop England noted that, "though they rendered occasional services, unfortunately, they too often counterbalanced them by their scandals."[228]

In 1834, physical violence against the Catholic Church erupted with the burning of the Ursuline Convent, in Charlestown, Massachusetts; by a mob encouraged by the anti-Catholic preaching of Unitarian minister Lyman Beecher.[229] A year later, Bishop England of Charleston, South Carolina, armed with "guns and bayonets" from the Irish, "who form one of the voluntary corps in the city militia," defended himself and Church property against a mob who desired to march "to the seminary and give me (I live there) the benefit of Lynch's Law, tear down the buildings and the Church &c."[230] Charleston was a city brewing with tension after the heat of the Nullification crisis of 1832.[231] The British Emancipation Act of 1834 was viewed with disgust by planters and the increased militancy of Northern abolitionists further heightened tensions in the city.[232] The summer of 1835

[227] Mary Stinson to Bishop Blanc, 10 Jun., 1859, Bishop Blanc Papers University of Notre Dame Collection, AANO.
[228] John England, *Propagation of the Faith In the United States* in Messmer, (ed.), *The Works of the Right Reverend John England, First Bishop of Charleston.* Volume IV, (Cleveland, 1908), 284-285; Christopher Stokes, Catholics In Beulahland: The Church's Encounter With Anti-Catholicism, Nativism, And Anti-Abolitionism In the Carolinas and Georgia, 1820-1845, (PhD diss., Rice University. 2001), 67-68.
[229] Jenny Franchot, *Roads to Rome: The Antebellum Protestant Encounter with Catholicism*, (London, 1994), 135-154.
[230] Bishop England to Dr. Cullen, 23 Feb., 1836, in "Papers Relating to the Church," Vol. 8, Iss. 2, 218-222.
[231] Lacy K Ford, *Origins of Southern Radicalism: The South Carolina Upcountry, 1800-1860*, (New York, 1988), 99-144; Joseph Kelly, *America's Longest Siege: Charleston, Slavery and the Slow March Toward Civil War*, (New York, 2013), 170-203; see also William W. Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War: The Nullification Controversy in South Carolina, 1816-1836*, (New York, 1966).
[232] Jannet Duitsman Cornelius, *"When I Can Read My Title Clear": Literacy, Slavery and Religion in the Antebellum South*, (Columbia, 1991), 42-43.

was filled with hysteria after rumours emerged of a conspiracy of an outlaw, John. A. Murrell, to stir up an insurrection among the slaves.

On 29th of July, 1835, the packet ship *Columbia* arrived in Charleston from New York and delivered the mail to the US Post Office. Copies of abolitionist tracts sent by the American Anti-slavery society to prominent residents of the city were discovered. That night hundreds of Charlestonians stormed the post office and burned the abolitionist propaganda. Some denounced the city's Catholic Bishop, who was believed to hold further offensive literature, and they resolved to march to the Catholic seminary.[233] The mob never confronted the Bishop and his armed volunteers; yet, it was conspicuous that the seminary was singled out. In 1833, John England had been appointed to serve as the Papal legate to the Republic of Haiti. England's standing in Charleston society suffered a severe blow for being associated with the freed slaves of Haiti. England was also responsible for recently introducing orders of nuns into South Carolina. The presence of nuns reminded the public of the sacrilegious scandals they had encountered in the popular press. Among the mob of 1835, rumour raged that one of Charleston's nuns was a black woman. In fact, a French order, the Dame de la Retraite, who established a school for the French Catholics of the city, had among them a mulatto woman.[234] Many reluctantly accepted the Catholic presence in Charleston, and a growing opinion maintained that the Catholic Bishop was transgressing the racial order. Any tampering with the fixed and stern race relations was deemed unacceptable.

The Bishop and his volunteers held their defensive lines for days, and on the "second day several of the most respectable citizens of all religions sent to have their names enrolled on our guard."[235] On that same day, England sent a letter to the *Charleston Courier* informing his fellow citizens that he was not a recipient of abolitionist literature and stated:

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[233] Kelly, *America's Longest Siege,* 204; Stokes, Catholics In Beulahland, 1-24.
[234] Kelly, *America's Longest Siege*, 214-217; Cornelius, *When I Can Read My Title*, 42-44.
[235] Bishop England to Dr. Cullen. 23 Feb., 1836, cited in "Papers Relating to the Church," Vol. 8, Iss. 2, 218-222.

> I know no Carolinian who more seriously reprobates the conduct of those men, who by pouring them in upon us, are destroying our peace, and endangering our safety. Nor do I know a single Roman Catholic, clerical or lay, with whom I conversed upon the subject, who is not fully determined to use his best efforts to prevent the mischief of their interference.[236]

In an attempt to restore public order, a "respectable committee of citizens" requested that the Bishop discontinue all Catholic schools for free blacks. The Bishop agreed as long as "they made the same application to those of other religions who had schools."[237]

England moved quickly to recover lost ground and improve his damaged public image. That December, he travelled to the state legislature in Columbia with James Hamilton, Robert Hayne and James Louis Petigru, three of the leading figures in South Carolina politics. All "were firm friends" of the Bishop. England had gone to petition an act of incorporation for the Ursuline convent in Charleston. However, he was denied the privilege to preach before the House of Representatives and found that the politicians were "prejudiced against Convents &c" and that they "wished to show their disapprobation of my going to Hayti." Through his friends, the Bishop was able to make an appearance before the State Senate, where he recounted the "indignity, injustice and persecution heaped upon Catholics, and the manner in which the Carolinians had been deceived respecting them." England beseeched them "as they valued their good name, not to degrade Carolina by placing it by the side of Massachusetts."[238] England succeeded in getting the convent incorporated, but also set in motion the rebuilding of his name as a staunch defender of the social order in the Carolinas. Although southerners could tolerate a religious minority among them, they would not tolerate any interference with the institution of slavery and the South's racial order. Catholics in the South had to tread very carefully regarding slavery if they wanted to be accepted as true southerners.

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[236] *Charleston Courier*, 30 Jul., 1835.
[237] Bishop England to Dr. Cullen, 23 Feb., 1836, "Papers Relating to the Church in America," Vol. 8, Iss. 2, 221.
[238] Ibid, 223- 224.

vi.   In Practice Men are Unequal in Too Many Respects[239]

In discussing the financial difficulties of the *US Catholic Miscellany*, the calculating Bishop Reynolds, successor of John England, informed Monaghan born priest Patrick Lynch that the "world has no heart and we never gain anything by complaining. On the contrary the strong are always supported and the weak cast down, the rich receive gifts and beggar kicks."[240] In the antebellum US South, the planter elite were the undisputed "strong" in society. Hope of success for the Catholic Church or an arriving Irish immigrant rested firmly on a commitment to the "peculiar institution" of slavery, the economic, social and political foundation of the antebellum US South. The Catholic Church and the dominant Protestant Churches of the South mirrored the racial values of society; by accepting slavery, they helped to reinforce the planter's dominance. This, in turn, helped give the Catholic Church a cultural home in the South.

Andrew Stern has demonstrated how a symbiotic relationship developed between the Catholic Church and slave owners. "Southern Protestants supported the institutions-charities, schools and churches - central to Catholicism, and Catholics supported the institution central to the South."[241] It is important to remember that the Catholic Church had older and more established roots in the southern slave states than it had in the North. The rise of the more industrialized North as the centre of American Catholicism only began to occur after the increase of immigration from Europe from the 1840s onward. Even by 1840, Southern dioceses outnumber the North by nine to seven, and, by 1860, the North outnumbered the South by twenty two to fifteen dioceses.[242] Key Catholic institutions developed first in the South. From the beginning, the Catholic Church was a slaveholding church. For example, under Spanish rule, the Catholic Church in Louisiana became the single largest slaveholding institution in the

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[239] Bp. Lynch (undated) Lectures on Society and Poor, Pre-Diocesan and Episcopal Records 1727-1951. 2009. 028 Transfer-Case 1, DCA.

[240] Bishop Reynolds to Patrick N. Lynch, 11 Jun., 1845, 5C4, DCA.

[241] Stern, *Southern Crucifix*, 146.

[242] Andrew Stern, "Southern Harmony: Catholic-Protestant Relations in the Antebellum South," *Religion and Culture: A Journal of Interpretation*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (Summer 2007), 166.

colony.[243] Emily Clarke, in her work on the Ursuline nuns in New Orleans, states that they always participated in the "custom of the country" and by 1770, the nuns' slaveholding placed them among the top six percent slaveholders in the colony.[244] French, Spanish and Irish priests bought and sold slaves with little moral or theological equivocation.[245]

The Catholic Church expressed empathy for the conditions of the slaves, but never demonstrated moral outrage at an institution which created and perpetuated human suffering. The teachings of the Catholic Church emphasised the spiritual equality of all the laity, officially both slave and master were equal in the eyes of God. Members of the clergy upheld slavery and the writings of many reveal that they viewed slaves as part child and part animal. For example, the report of Fr. Hamilton to All Hallows College reveals such a mentality. The Irish priest took "a particular delight in instructing the poor sable Africans" and found that slaves made "very good and practical Catholics," due to their "docility and submission." Hamilton declared about the slaves that as "a class, you would scarcely credit how happy and indifferent they are to the concerns and interests of this life."[246] In 1826 and 1830, Bishop England published in Charleston catechisms to help spread the teachings of Catholicism. Among the questions and answers published by England:

> What are the chief duties of masters to their servants? To lead them to God by word and example; to see that they exact in performing their religious duties; to treat them with justice and humanity; and to correct and reprove when necessary.[247]

Devout Catholics took an interest in the spiritual well-being of their slaves.

Among those who adhered to the Bishop's teaching was Natalie Delage Sumter. Born a member of the French aristocracy, Natalie fled during the French Revolution and in 1802 she married Thomas Sumter Jr., son of Thomas Sumter, a revolutionary hero of South Carolina. In 1839, the

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[243] Jesuit Plantation Survey, 1763, M114, TU.
[244] Clarke, *Masterless Mistresses*, 161-169
[245] Pasquier, *Fathers on the Frontier*, 172.
[246] Father Hamilton to Father Woodlock, 14 Oct., 1856, cited in *Eight Report of All Hallows College, Drumcondra, Dublin*, (Dublin, 1856), 52.
[247] Cited in Thomas Tisdale, *A Lady of the High Hills, Natalie Delage Sumter*, (Columbia, 2001), 129-130.

Church of Our Lady of the Assumption was funded by the Sumter family and built on their Providence Plantation in Sumter County. Despite laws against educating slaves, Natalie conducted catechism classes on Sundays; for instance on 12th July 1840, she had "22 negroes for catechism and spoke to the older negroes."[248] In 1840, Thomas Fullan Hazzard a plantation owner on St. Simons Island, Glynn County, Georgia made an appeal to the editor of the *Catholic Miscellany* for catechisms and prayer books: "Many of the Negroes on St. Simons can read and appear anxious to learn the Doctrine of your most Holy Church."[249] Some non-Catholic slaveholders tolerated a priest amongst their slaves "for they know and feel that he never interferes with slavery."[250]

Priests on their rural missions were dependent on the hospitality and good will of the leading Catholic planters of the South. Irish priest John Barry, for example, became a close acquaintance of Sophia E. Crozon Bauskett, the wife of Col. John Bauskett, a successful lawyer, planter and state legislator in Edgefield County, South Carolina. On one occasion Barry informed Sophia of a planned visit by the Bishop and Fr. O'Neill from Savannah. Barry requested his "dear friend" to "inform the negroes of Col. Pickens and the other Catholics in the vicinity that we will hear confession and celebrate Mass at your place this Tuesday morning."[251] Priests dared only to preach on plantations with the permission of the slaveholder. One former slave from Lafayette Parish, Louisiana, recalled "De priest he never come 'round de quarters, but he go to de big house and tell old Mistus to teach de older ones dere prayers. I ax my aunt and she teach me. But we didn't go to church in slavery."[252]

Antebellum southern baptismal records from areas of Catholic concentration demonstrate a high number of slave baptisms. Randall M. Miller argued that slave baptisms were "common among both Catholics and

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[248] Cited in ibid, 129-137.
[249] Thomas Fullan Hazzard to the editor of the U.S. Catholic Miscellany, 21 Aug., 1840, 4H6, Bishop England et al. 1840-1844, DCA.
[250] Father Hamilton to Father Woodlock cited in *Eight Report of All Hallows.*
[251] John Barry to Mrs S. Bauskett, 13 Mar., 1846, Bauskett Family Papers, 1836-1851, SCL.
[252] Cited in Ann Patton Malone, *Sweet Chariot: Slave Family and Household Structure in Nineteenth-Century Louisiana*, (Chapel Hill, 1992), 247.

Protestants" for they "did not interrupt plantation rhythms" and allowed planters to believe that they were fulfilling their religious obligations.[253] Peter Ryas, a former slave recalled "Us not go to church, but all chillen christen...in St. Martinville Catholic Church."[254] Former Mississippi slave Henri Necaise reflected on how "My master was a Catholic. One thing I can thank dem godly white folks for, dey raise me right. Dey taught me out of God's word 'Our Father which are in heaven,' Everybody ought a know dat prayer." Yet, Henri abandoned Catholicism and "joined de Baptists and was baptized."[255] Having no access to a priest or a church made it difficult for slaves who wished to maintain their Catholic faith.[256] Bishop William Elder of Natchez believed it was the duty of the Catholic slaveholder to "furnish their slaves with opportunities for being well instructed and for practicing their religion." However, he admitted that he could not "enable those masters to do their duty because there are not priests enough...We need a band of travelling missionaries who should attend plantations, and at the same time hunt out Catholics scattered through the country."[257] Due to the cost and sheer scale of the challenge, the southern dioceses never organised a funded evangelical mission for their slave population.

Work amongst slaves was done by individuals and many members of the clergy abdicated their evangelical role amongst the slaves to focus their efforts amongst white Catholics. Father Felix Dicharry in Natchitoches was happy to just hope that slaves, "having been baptized, will find grace in the eye of God, without the help of our ministry. God does not demand the

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[253] Randall M. Miller, "Slaves and Southern Catholicism," in John B. Boles, (ed.), *Masters & Slaves in the House of The Lord: Race and Religion in the American South, 1740-1870*, (Lexington, 1988), 131.

[254] Cited in Malone, *Sweet Chariot*, 248.

[255] *Slave Narratives. A Folk History of Slavery in the United States From Interviews with Former Slaves. Typewritten Records Prepared by the Federal Writers' Project in1936-1938, Volume IX, Mississippi Narratives*, (Washington, 1941), 120-121.

[256] For more on Catholic slaves see Suzanne Krebsbach, "Black Catholics in Antebellum Charleston," *SCHM*, Vol. 108, No. 2 (Apr., 2007), 143-159; Cyprian Davis, *Black Catholics in the United States*, (New York, 1990), 67-97;Gary Wray McDonogh, *Black and Catholic in Savannah, Georgia*, (Knoxville, 1993), 24-45.

[257] William Elder to the Propagation of the Faith, 1858, cited in Kenneth J. Zanca, *American Catholics and Slavery 1789-1866: An Anthology of Primary Documents*, (London, 1994), 235-238

impossible."[258] Ignoring the religious concerns of slaves allowed slaves the space to follow and develop their own churches. Slaves resented efforts to impose the religion of their master upon them. For example, the slaves at widow Foley's plantation in Louisiana declared their devotion to Protestantism in defiance of Mrs Foley's Catholicism and her demands for instruction and communion to occur during the slaves' traditional free time on Sundays.[259] Most slaves were not attracted by the rigidness and discipline of Catholicism. One former slave described Catholicism as "all doings and no feelings in the heart."[260] Slaves were attracted to their own churches, as they provided a sense of communal solidarity and granted them leadership roles. Here, slaves could express themselves freely unlike in the Catholic Church.

Throughout the antebellum period, slaves continued to labour on the plantations of Catholic religious orders. The financial benefit of slave labour overcame what little moral qualms some members of the orders had about the purchasing and selling of human chattel. Sister Mary Hyacinth Le Conniat of the Daughters of the Cross in Louisiana was horrified in November 1855, when for the first time she encountered human beings "sold and bought like the beasts or animals in Europe. How sad this is,..The Bishop proposed that we buy one slave. I showed my repugnance, and he did not insist."[261] However, it did not take long for the hardship of life in rural North Louisiana to convince the French nun of the value of slavery. By March 1856, she informed her brother that, "Through the advice of the Bishop and our pastor we bought a slave. He is a mulatto named Simon, aged forty-five years, the father of eight children."[262] In Louisiana, Maryland, Kentucky and Missouri, Catholic religious orders operated

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[258] Felix Dicharry to the Propagation of the Faith, 26 May, 1852, cited in Zanca, *American Catholics and Slavery*, 172.

[259] Miller, "Slaves and Catholicism," 136

[260] Cited in ibid, 144. For more on slave religion see Curtis J. Evans, *The Burden of Black Religion*, (New York, 2008), 17-64; Margaret Washington Creel, *A Peculiar People: Slave Religion and Community Culture among the Gullahs*, (New York, 1988); Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The Invisible Institution*, (New York, 1978); Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World The Slaves Made*, (New York, 1976), [1974].

[261] Mother Hyacinth to Yves-Maine, 17 Nov., 1855, in McCants, *They Came to Louisiana*, 28.

[262] Mother Hyacinth to Yves-Maine, 24 Mar., 1856, in ibid, 39.

plantations and farms with slave labour throughout the antebellum period. Conditions on Church plantations were no different from those on regular plantations. Randall Miller has argued that Church plantations "bore sober witness to Catholicism's failed mission to blacks."[263] It is important to note that not all Catholic Religious orders held slaves, for example, the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy in Charleston.[264]

New Orleans was a place where slave auctions and Catholic Churches shared the same streets. Michael Pasquier argues that Bishop Du Bourg of Louisiana was culpable "more than any other missionary in the United States" for convincing "religious and diocesan priests of the necessity of slave labor. He purchased slaves on behalf of the Vincentian order in Missouri and perpetuated the practice of priests owning slaves as Bishop of Louisiana."[265] Du Bourg viewed slaves as a safe investment for the Church and used slaves as collateral on loans. Yet, he formed the Christian Doctrine Society of New Orleans in 1818, a group of free black Catholics who worked to improve the temporal and spiritual welfare of the city's black population. The record of Du Bourg reflects the paradox of Catholic accommodation to slavery, which respected the slave as a human being with a soul, but at the same time tolerated the trading of slaves as property - a similar racial attitude to that of their Protestant peers.[266]

Individual priests were often the owners of slaves, generally one or two who assisted them on their travels, and took care of household duties and of the rectory and church property. For example, Irish priest and pastor of St. Patrick's church in New Orleans Ignatius Mullen "solemnly swore that he owns 3 slaves."[267] Slaves not only helped to relieve priests of manual labour but they also bestowed prestige on the priest's social standing. The Rev. A. Théves remarked how Mullen that "good Irishman cuts quite

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[263] Miller, "Slaves and Catholicism," 128.
[264] O'Connell, *Catholicity in the Carolinas*, 64-66.
[265] Pasquier, *Fathers on the Frontier*, 172; Davis, *Black Catholics*, 36-39 & 42-43.
[266] Zanca, *American Catholics and Slavery*, 155-156; Kieran Quinlan, *Strange Kin: Ireland and the American South*, (Baton Rouge, 2005), 51.
[267] St. Patricks to Bishop Blanc, 23 Aug., 1843, Bishop Blanc Papers University of Notre Dame Collection, AANO.

passably a figure here; that is characteristics of the South."[268] Fr. Hamilton informed those back in All Hallows College in Dublin of his experience in the South and declared that he was:

> not an abolitionist exactly, nor do I admire altogether the workings of slavery; but this I can say, that slavery, even with its unpardonable abuses, contributes very largely to the social comfort of the slave.[269]

Many priests arriving to the slave states were warned in advance that they must be acquainted with and respect "the manners and usages of the people" of the South. Newly arrived priests had to "be reminded of the local differences, even for the spiritual guidance of both patrons...free and slave."[270] Catholic values "took for granted an uneven social hierarchy and the need for subordinate members of society to be carefully overseen by the proper authorities." Many believed and promoted the paternalistic claims of defenders of slavery. This helped both clergy and laity to be unquestioning towards the racial order of the slave states.[271]

Thus, the Catholic Church in the antebellum US South was made up of members who were slaveholders. The ownership of slaves by the Church's hierarchy normalised the practice for laity and clergy. The 1860 census reveals that both Archbishop Blanc and Bishop Martin in Louisiana owned two slaves.[272] Bishop England was privately unhappy with the conditions of slaves in his diocese, "a system which perhaps is the greatest moral evil that can desolate any part of the World, still I am content with my lot and my surroundings."[273] The Charleston Bishop appeared content to have a church slave named Castalio, a coachman and factotum accompanying him on his 1831 tour of the diocese.[274] In 1835, Bishop England purchased a man named Joseph for $450 "not as my own private

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[268] Rev. A. Théves to Rev. Rousellon, 13 Jul., 1857, Rousellon Papers, (1857) Translations, ANNO.

[269] Fr. Hamilton to Father Woodlock, 14 Oct., 1856, in *Eight Report of All Hallows*, 53.

[270] Archbishop Blanc to Bishop Elder, 5 Jun., 1857, Bishop Elder Letter Book No. 1, 1857, ACDJ.

[271] Jeffrey Robert Young, *Proslavery Ideology*, in Robert L. Paquette & Mark M. Smith, *The Oxford Handbook of Slavery in the Americas*, (Oxford, 2010), 401.

[272] David C. R. Heisser, "Bishop Lynch's People: Slaveholding by a South Carolina Prelate," *SCHM*, Vol. 102, No. 3 (Jul., 2001), 241.

[273] Report of Bishop England to the Cardinal Prefect of Propaganda, 1833, in "Papers Relating to the Church," Vol. 8, Iss. 2, 328-329.

[274] Heisser, "Bishop Lynch's People," 241.

and individual property" but in trust for the city's Ursuline nuns.[275] An inventory of the personal goods of Bishop England's successor Ignatius A. Reynolds after his death included two slaves, Thorton and Mnna.[276] Among the Southern hierarchy, Monaghan born Patrick Neeson Lynch, the third bishop of Charleston, stood out as a planter, as he himself was the owner of ninety-five slaves. Lynch believed that the conditions of the American slave could "compare favourably with that of the labouring class in any part of the world."[277] The endorsement of slavery by members of the Church hierarchy helped Catholics to be accepted in the region as friends of the South. Randall Miller has commented on the entangled relationship between the clergy and slavery noting that "whatever the individual circumstances of slaveholding, the collective experience bound the church to the master class."[278]

The silence and indifference of the hierarchy allowed southern clergymen to take part in the defence of slavery. One of the first administrative acts taken by Bishop Carroll was to convoke the first National Synod of Baltimore, held from the 7-10th November 1791. It resulted in the publication of the first US national pastoral letter which became the cornerstone of pastoral teaching and guidance for the clergy and laity for thirty years until the First Provincial Council of Baltimore assembled in 1824. This pastoral letter made no reference to slavery.[279] The question of slavery was never addressed by any of the eight Provincial Councils held between 1829 and 1849. Nor was slavery an issue at the First Plenary Council of Baltimore in 1852. The silence adopted by the American prelates succeeded in keeping the Church united at a time when the Methodists, Baptist and Presbyterian Churches of America openly divided

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[275] Cited in David C. R. Heisser, & Stephen J. White, *Patrick N. Lynch, 1817-1882*, (Columbia, SC., 2015), 58-59.

[276] 20 Mar. 1855, Inventory of Goods and Chattels of Right Rev. I. A. Reynolds deceased Bishop of Charleston, M4, 1851-1858, DCA.

[277] David C. R. Heisser, "A Few Words On The Domestic Slavery In the Confederate States of America by Bishop Patrick Lynch. Part Two," *The Avery Review of African American History & Culture*, Vol. III, No. I (Spring, 2000), 104.

[278] Miller, *Slaves and Catholicism*, 128.

[279] Hugh J. Nolan, (ed.) *Pastoral Letters of the United States Catholic Bishops,* vol.1, (Washington, DC., 1983), 22.

along sectional lines over slavery.[280] In the 1830s, a vocal abolitionist minority in the northern churches began agitating, actively demanding that slavery be abolished, as it was deemed an evil sin. To counteract the abolitionists, southern churchmen grounded their pro-slavery arguments in an appeal to scripture and denounced abolitionists as unchristian heretics who were abandoning the plain words of the Bible.[281] The Biblical justifications of both sides produced bitter clashes over interpretations.[282] Ultimately, the denominational schisms and the rise of pro-slavery Christianity resulted in narrowing the gap between the different evangelical sects within the South.[283]

Most churched southerners were associated with an evangelical Protestant denomination. Many of the leading pro-slavery Protestant clergymen were "Gentleman Theologians" whose families were slaveholders.[284] Drew Gilpin Faust has argued that slavery became both in secular and religious discourse the central component of the mission God had designed for the South.[285] Southerner's religion echoed their emphasis of the personal and provincial; traditionally "they took their religion the same way they took their whiskey-straight."[286] Most Southerners believed that Christians had to accept the Bible as "God's revealed truth and to understand that God, not man, defined sin and virtue." They denied that slavery was sinful and argued that all human institutions were open to abuses. Slavery was a social relation ordained by God, "who thereby charged the masters with a heavy responsibility towards those in their

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[280] C. C. Goen, "Broken Churches, Broken Nation: Regional Religion and North-South Alienation in Antebellum America," *Church History*, Vol. 52, No.1 (Mar., 1983), 21-35.

[281] Eugene D. Genovese, *A Consuming Fire: The Fall of the Confederacy in the Mind of the White Christian South*, (London, 2009), [1998], 4.

[282] Mark A. Noll, "The Bible and Slavery," in Randall M. Miller, Harry S. Stout & Charles Wilson (eds.), *Religion and the American Civil War*, (Oxford, 1998), 49; E. Brooks Holifield, *Theology in America: Christian Thought from the Age of the Puritans to the Civil War*, (New Haven, 2003), 494-504; Mitchel Snay, *Gospel of Disunion: Religion and Separation in the Antebellum South*, (Chapel Hill, 1997).

[283] Charles F. Iorns, *The Origins of Proslavery Christianity: White and Black Evangelicals in Colonial and Antebellum Virginia*, (Chapel Hill, 2008), 199.

[284] E. Brooks Holifield, *The Gentleman Theologians: American Theology in Southern Culture, 1795-1860*, (Durham, 1978).

[285] Drew Gilpin Faust, *The Creation of Confederate Nationalism: Ideology and Identity in the American Civil War South*, (Baton Rouge, 1988), 60.

[286] Emory M. Thomas, *The Confederacy as a Revolutionary Experience*, (Columbia, 1991), 19.

custody."[287] Southerners sought salvation from a demanding God who knew them and their frailties intimately. In their belief that God was the omniscient regulator of human affairs, elite slaveholders were adamant that the institution of human bondage was manifestly ordained and divinely sanctioned. Many planters believed that they provided their slaves with paternalistic care from the cradle to the grave and viciously guarded their capital investments in human chattel.[288]

The anti-Catholicism of American abolitionists was a theme seized upon by pro-slavery advocates. Georgian Augustus Baldwin Longstreet, for example, remarked how the abolitionist "shrieks out at slavery, and calls on the Catholic to help him crush it. He shrieks out at Popery, and calls on the slaveholder to help him crush it, then hurls a firebrand into the habitation of the one, and the church of the other."[289] The aggressive campaign against slavery by northern abolitionists coincided with the rise of US anti-Catholic sentiment. Criticism of both slavery and Catholicism were found in the same sources of northern evangelical journals. After the banking failure of 1837 and the economic depression that followed in its wake, anti-Catholic advocates gained significant support among native born workers who related Catholicism to their immigrant workplace competitors. Foreign immigration accelerated rapidly in the 1840s. Poor economic and political circumstances in Ireland and the German states coincided with improvements in oceanic transportation resulting in over one hundred thousand foreigners entering the US for the first time in 1842.[290] In 1820, the recorded annual emigration from Ireland to the US totalled 3,614, whereas, by 1852, this number had escalated to 159,548.[291] Catholicism and slavery were branded as incompatible with the US Republic. Northern evangelicals

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[287]Elizabeth Fox-Genovese & Eugene D. Genovese, "The Divine Sanction of Social Order: Religious Foundations of the Southern Slaveholders World View," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, Vol. 55, No. 2, (Summer, 1987), 222-223.

[288] For more on Paternalism see Eugene D. Genovese & Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *Fatal Self-Deception: Slaveholding Paternalism in the Old South*, (Cambridge, 2011); Dal Lago, *Agrarian Elites*, 150-166; Peter Kolchin, *Unfree Labor: American Slavery and Russian Serfdom*, (Cambridge, MA., 1987), 103-156.

[289] Elizabeth Fox-Genovese & Eugene D. Genovese, *Slavery in White and Black: Class and Race in the Southern Slaveholders' New World Order*, (New York, 2008), 280.

[290] Billington, *The Protestant Crusade*, 193-199.

[291] Jason W. Wallace, *Catholics, Slaveholders, and the Dilemma of American Evangelicalism, 1835-1860*, (Notre Dame, 2010), 15.

compared "the immoral authoritarianism of the Catholic priest to the immoral authoritarianism of the slaveholder. Both were portrayed by the press as brutal, lecherous, and most importantly un-American."[292] Anti-Catholic Americans believed that the Irish could never be true, loyal Americans, due to their allegiance to their native land and the Roman Catholic Church.[293] Catholics found that they and the slaveholders had a common foe in the northern radical evangelical social reformers.

vii.   Catholic Theology Should Never be Tinctured with the Fanaticism of Abolition

The pen of Bishop John England and the *US Catholic Miscellany* provided a protective shield for Catholic immigrants and Southern Catholics against the charges of the abolitionist press which was "destroying our peace, and endangering our safety." Despite personal misgivings about slavery, Bishop England assured the politicians of South Carolina that "I was opposed to the Abolitionists, who were the most bitter enemies also to the Catholics."[294] Catholics throughout the US were wary of abolition and not one prominent American Catholic advocated the immediate abolition of slavery before the Civil War. Catholic intellectuals throughout the globe accepted slavery as a legitimate institution. "This acceptance rested upon the pervasive fear of liberal individualism and social disorder that so shaped Catholic thought during the nineteenth century, along with the anti-Catholicism of many abolitionists."[295]

In December 1839, Pope Gregory XVI issued the apostolic letter *In Supremo Apostolatus* which strongly condemned the slave trade. Gregory argued against Christians motivated by sheer greed and noted how the trade had been condemned by the Holy See.[296] Gregory concluded that:

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[292] Ibid, 4.

[293] Michael Feldberg, *The Turbulent Era: Riot & Disorder in Jacksonian America*, (New York, 1980), 13.

[294] Bishop England to Dr. Cullen, 23 Feb., 1836, cited in "Papers Relating to the Church," Vol. 8, Iss. 2, 218-222.

[295] Cited in McGreevy, *Catholicism and American Freedom*, 51-52.

[296] Quinn, John F, "'Three Cheers for the Abolitionist Pope!': American Reaction to Gregory XVI' Condemnation of Slave Trade, 1840-1860," *Catholic Historical Review*, Vol. 90, No.1, (Jan., 2004), 70.

> We prohibit and strictly forbid any Ecclesiastic or lay person from presuming to defend as permissible this trade in Blacks under no matter what pretext or excuse or from publishing or teaching in any manner whatsoever, in public or privately, opinions contrary to what we have set forth.[297]

In the US, the letter set ablaze numerous debates both within and outside the Catholic community.[298] Pope Gregory and his successor Pope Pius IX were firm opponents of liberalism which was attacking the last vestiges of real political power the Church had in Europe.[299] In America, the writings of the Popes were used to justify prejudice against Catholics. Opponents of the Church in the South interpreted the Pope's letters as attacks on American values, especially slavery. The Democratic Party had been in power since Andrew Jackson's victory in 1828. Martin Van Buren succeeded Jackson. He was only in office for two months when the country was hit by a severe depression.[300] Feeling the pressure of losing control of the White House in the 1840 presidential election, the Democrats, in an attempt to secure the votes of the South, declared that the Whigs and Catholics were secretly united in the cause of abolition. Twelve Democratic members issued a letter titled "To the people of the slaveholding states" warning that a fanatical sect of abolitionists was a growing danger and that Whig candidate William Henry Harrison had "expressed no opinions on the subject on which the South could rely."[301] This was followed up by Secretary of State John Forsyth's letter to his fellow Georgians in which he warned that the Pope Gregory's writings indicated that the Catholic Church was sympathetic to abolitionism. The Secretary of State focused suspicions on Irish immigrants. The exploitation of voters' fears and prejudices by Southern politicians was a well entrenched and enduring political practice.

Catholics throughout the South were unhappy about these attacks, which they believed deliberately misrepresented the Pope's letter. Bishop England of Charleston was outraged and he replied with a series of 18

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[297]Cited in Joel S. Panzer, *The Popes and Slavery*, (New York, 2002), [1996], 97-102.
[298] Quinn, "Three Cheers for the Abolitionist Pope!," 67.
[299] Zanca, *American Catholics and Slavery*, 89-92; See also Frank J. Coppa, *The Modern Papacy Since 1789*, (New York, 1998).
[300] Quinn, "Three Cheers for the Abolitionist Pope!," 75-76.
[301] Ibid; Anthony Gene Carey, *Parties, Slavery, and the Union in Antebellum Georgia*, (Athens, GA., 1997), 49-53. For more on the Irish in southern politics see Gleeson, *Irish in the South*, 94-107.

public letters to Forsyth, published in the *United States Catholic Miscellany,* which not only repudiated Forsyth's arguments, but also set out a systematic treatment of Catholic teachings on slavery. In his first letter, England challenged Forsyth's contention that the Papal letter had been written at the request of the abolitionists and he demanded evidence to prove this accusation. England declared that he had always defended the South against the "assaults upon our planters" and that his dislike for abolitionism was rooted in his experience in Ireland where:

> under the operation of the persecuting code of Britain, I witnessed the yearly display by the anti-slavery society of the preparation and presentation to the Parliament of two petitions, one for abolishing slavery of the negro in the West-Indies, the other for riveting the chains of the white slaves in Ireland.[302]

England highlighted how Forsyth had deliberately misrepresented the Pope as making an attack on the institution of slavery, instead of the slave trade. He argued that the Pope's admonition was only against the international slave trade and he did not have American slaves in mind because they had been born into slavery and never experienced liberty. England noted that "the citizens of Georgia had not reduced any such persons into slavery."[303] The Bishop bemoaned "the fate of Catholics of the United States; they are the shuttlecock for the parties of the republic, -threatened by the myrmidons of General Harrison party's to-day and placed in a false position by Mr Van Buren's secretary of state the next moment." England hoped to demonstrate with his letters that "the Catholics of the South should not be rendered objects of suspicion by their fellow-citizens."[304]

In his following letters, Bishop England put forward a detailed and intense argument that defended Catholics and domestic slavery against the "mischief of interfering abolitionists." With intricate logic, a barrage of references to Church divines and a literal reading of the scriptures, the Bishop helped ally the church with the slave interest of the South. He acknowledged that the Pope's letter was formally read and accepted by the US bishops at the 1840 provincial council, and "if this document

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[302]Cited in Sebastian G. Messmer, (ed.), *The Works of the Right Reverend John England, First Bishop of Charleston.* Volume V, (Cleveland, 1908), 183-185.
[303] Ibid, 185-187
[304] Messmer, (ed.), *Works of the John England.* Vol. V, 188-190.

condemned our domestic slavery as an unlawful and consequently immoral practice, the bishops could not have accepted it without being bound to refuse the sacraments to all who were slaveholders unless they manumitted their slaves."[305] England made extensive use of the Bible to explain moral theology and he employed evidence from patristic and medieval interpretations of biblical texts to justify slavery. Borrowing from St. Augustine, England argued that without the introduction of sin, slavery could not have existed. Augustine, according to England, recognised that "the origin of slavery, as all our infirmities and afflictions, is to be found in sin" and that for a person who believes in the fall of man, "as every Catholic must" abstract speculations were futile. As long as the laws concerning slavery were just then "the peace and good order of society, as well as religious duty, demanded that the laws of the state regulating the conduct of slaves, should be conscientiously observed."[306]

Most antebellum American clergymen, including Bishop England, had been schooled in their seminary training in the theology of St. Thomas Aquinas, known as "Thomism" or "scholasticism." Thomism emphasised reason, natural law and acceptance of human institutions as God's revealed will. England accepted the institution of slavery, and through his letters the Bishop explained in great detail the treatment of slaves in the Old and New Testaments. Yet, he did not make reference to the curse of Ham in Genesis 9, which had provided the cornerstone for many Southern evangelical justifications of slavery. David Brion Davis has argued that "No other passage in the Bible has had such a disastrous influence through human history as Genesis 9:18-27."[307] In the Bible, England could find no condemnation of slavery, and he noted that Christ did not utter one word of

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[305] Ibid, 190.
[306] Wallace, *Dilemma of American Evangelicalism*, 120-121
[307] David Brion Davis, *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise of Slavery in the New World*, (New York, 2006), 64; Snay, *Gospel of Disunion*, 54-57; Genovese, *A Consuming Fire*, 3-5, Robin Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery: From the Baroque to the Modern, 1492-1800*, (London, 1997), 64-76; see also Stephen R. Hayes, *Noah's Curse: The Biblical Justification of American Slavery*, (New York, 2002).

censure against slavery nor did he consider the Christian master obliged to liberate his Christian slaves.[308]

England's arguments for slavery could be applied to justify the exploitation of every class and creed, not just race. His argument moved throughout history and he provided copious examples of how Church and State had worked together to regulate and improve the conditions of slaves in the late Roman Empire and through the Middle Ages.[309] England drew support for his argument from history, the Bible, the canons of the church councils and local synods, as well as Canon law and Roman law to demonstrate how slavery was an acceptable and legitimate institution. He concluded that it was impossible to believe that the Scriptures or the Church would have dealt with slavery without condemning it if it was fundamentally wrong.[310] By 23rd April 1840, England had published his 18th letter, which had taken his defence of slavery up to the beginning of the 11th century. Although only half way through his argument, he was forced to put his pen aside and focus on more pressing diocesan duties before he embarked on a trip to Europe. Upon his return, he took ill and struggled with poor health, until he died in April 1842, leaving his defence of slavery unfinished.[311]

Although incomplete, England's defence demonstrated that the Church's approach to slavery was inseparable from the tradition of the moral theology that guided it from its beginning. Bishop Reynolds, the editor of England's first published works, noted that, as far as the Church was concerned, it was impossible that, "Catholic theology should ever be tinctured with the fanaticism of abolition. Catholics may and do differ in regard to slavery...But our theology is fixed."[312] For England, the Church was unchanging and slavery was part of its tradition. His defence had

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[308]Messmer, (ed.), *Works of the John England.* Vol. V, 207-208.
[309]Wallace, *Dilemma of American Evangelicalism*, 123-124
[310] Davis, *Black Catholics*, 47.
[311] Quinn, "Three Cheers for the Abolitionist Pope!," 79.
[312] Cited in Stern, "Southern Harmony," 173, see also Joseph E. Capizzi, "For What Shall we Repent? Reflections on the American Bishops, Their Teaching, and Slavery in the United States, 1839–1861," *Theological Studies*, Vol. 65, No. 4 (Dec., 2004), 767-791; John T. Noonan Jr., *A Church That Can and Cannot Change: The Development of Catholic Moral Teaching*, (Notre Dame, 2005).

demonstrated how both scripture and Catholic tradition sanctioned slavery, and subsequent arguments made by the American clergy in favour of slavery followed the logic of England's defence. However, on 25th February, 1841, in the *United States Catholic Miscellany*, in the editorial where he announced he would suspend writing his defence, England ended by remarking:

> Whether I am friendly to the existence or continuation of slavery? I am not – but I also see the impossibility of now abolishing it here. When it can and ought to be abolished, is a question for the legislature and not for me.[313]

Through his pen, Bishop England drafted a powerful justification for slavery and won widespread praise and respect throughout the South. On his death, the city of Charleston went into mourning. The editor of the *Charleston Courier* praised the late Bishop: "Of the South, he was a true friend and an able champion, fearlessly throwing the weight of his character, influence and intellect, in favour of her much misunderstood and much reviled institutions."[314] Catholics who followed England upheld an image of society as organic, corporate and hierarchical which coincided neatly with the planter dominated order of the South.

England's defence of slavery appeared at a time when attitudes towards slavery were hardening as a result of increasing attacks by abolitionists. In 1837, John C. Calhoun, one of the leading defenders of slavery, delivered a ground breaking pro-slavery speech in the US Senate which set the tone for the debate on slavery. Calhoun declared that the existing relationship between the slaves and their masters "in the slaveholding States between the two, is, instead of an evil, a good - a positive good."[315] The infiltration of the pulpits, newspapers and schools of the South with the idea that slavery was a "positive good" left little room for any counter arguments.[316] Joseph Kelly argues that the case of Bishop England demonstrates what the "ascendancy of Calhoun's ideology did to

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[313]Messmer, (ed.), *The Works of the John England*, Vol. V, 311.
[314] Quinn, "Three Cheers for the Abolitionist Pope!," 320.
[315] John C. Calhoun "Slavery a Positive Good" Speech to US Senate 1837. http://caho-test.cc.columbia.edu/ps/10157.html, Accessed 10/11/2014.
[316] Fox-Genovese & Genovese, "The Divine Sanction of Social Order," 211-212; Genovese & Fox-Genovese, *Fatal Self-Deception*.

men of conscience in the South," i.e. that sensible men backed slavery.[317] England's defence provided the clergy with a template to justify the Church's position in the South for the remainder of the antebellum period; however, few would go as far as declaring slavery a positive good.

The Catholic Church was aware of it fragile position in a Protestant nation and it went to pains not to become embroiled in the slavery controversy. The clergy remained quiet on the matter and in the South they followed the arguments of Bishop England and Archbishop Francis Patrick Kenrick, who denied that slavery was inherently sinful. The writings of Dublin born, Kenrick along with those of England had the greatest impact on shaping the antebellum Church's attitude towards American slavery. Kenrick led the American Church from 1851-1863 after he was appointed sixth Archbishop of Baltimore.[318] With the increase in seminaries in the US, ecclesiastical authorities desired texts that would meet the needs of the American clergy more adequately than the texts being imported from Europe. Kenrick, one of the leading Catholic scholars of his time, published major theological works: *Theologia Dogmatica* and *Theologia Moralis*. These became the standard texts of the American clergy. He wielded enormous influence, and his thinking on American slavery favoured the status quo and upheld it as a civil institution.[319] Kenrick based his moral theology on slavery on the principles of Roman law, and he established a line of non-interference for the American clergy. More than any other clergyman, he was aware of the vulnerable position Catholics held in American society, especially, after witnessing the violence of the 1844 anti-Catholic riots in Philadelphia.[320] The American hierarchy embraced the spirit of conservatism and viewed slavery as a domestic problem, a political

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[317] Kelly, *America's Longest Siege,* 249; Larry E. Tise, *Proslavery: A History of the Defense of Slavery in America, 1701-1840*, (Athens, GA., 1987), 97-123.
[318] Joseph Brokhage, *Francis Patrick Kenrick's Opinion on Slavery. A Dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the School of Sacred Theology of the Catholic University of America in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Sacred Theology*, (Washington D.C, 1955), 1-2.
[319] Zanca, *American Catholics and Slavery*, 199.
[320] Feldberg, *The Turbulent Era,* 9-32; Gjrede, *Catholicism Shaping Nineteenth-Century America*, 1-20.

but not a religious problem. Thus, the American Catholic Church, through the influence of Irish born Bishops, accepted the conditions of US slavery.

In 1859, Galway born priest Michael Costello visited John Brown at Harper's Ferry in Virginia before his execution. The abolitionist rebel Brown informed the Irishman that he believed the Catholic clergy had cast its lot with the slavocracy of the South and were morally bankrupt for doing so, that as "apologists for slavery, they had violated the laws of nature and of God, and that they were no better than murderers, fornicators, adulterers, and the rest."[321] Indeed, the economic interest of the Church and many of its members were tied to the success of the slave system, and Catholics adopted "the prevailing tenor of opinion in the pre-war South."[322] Catholics and southern Protestants were theologically very different, but they shared "a common conviction: northern evangelical political agitation was the result of a defective Protestant political theory."[323] On 2nd February 1852, Bishop Blanc in New Orleans issued a Pastoral letter on *Slavery and True Freedom*. Blanc stated that true civilization was based on order; that "Would to God that all men were to acquire, by the practice of religion, that true independence, and not be miserably lost in the pursuit of an empty phantom bearing the name of liberty. Then, indeed, they would be free."[324] By adapting their identity to fit into the regional identity of the slave states, Catholics gained greater acceptance in the South than they did in the North. The involvement and attitude of the Catholic Church towards slavery helped ease the acceptance of Irish Catholic immigrants into society.[325]

The Catholic experience in the slave states reveals "how conclusively race obliterated all other distinctions in the Old South."[326] Leading Southern politicians would defend Catholics and Irish immigrants in the 1850s, during the intense anti-immigrant and anti-Catholic campaigns

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[321] Michael Costello to D. Harrinton, 11 Feb., 1860, cited in Kevin Condon, *The Missionary College of All Hallows, 1842-1891*, (Dublin, 1986), 117.
[322] Madeleine Hooke Rice, *American Catholic Opinion in the Slavery Controversy*, (New York, 1944), 143.
[323] Wallace, *Dilemma of American Evangelicalism*, 89.
[324] A Pastoral Letter of Bishop Anthony Blanc of New Orleans on Slavery and True Freedom (1852), cited in Zanca, *American Catholics and Slavery*, 217-218.
[325] Gleeson, *Green and Gray*, 25.
[326] Stern, *Southern Crucifix*, 181.

of the recently formed Know-Nothing Party.[327] Among the southern leaders who defended Catholics was Alexander H. Stevens of Georgia. In May 1855, Stephens wrote a letter on the subject of Know-Nothingism which strongly defended the position of Catholics.[328] Stephens believed that Catholics were not the ones who posed a threat to the Southern way of life. It was the abolitionists and the Know-Nothing Party which were "anti-American, anti-republican" and "at war with the fundamental law of the Union."[329] Later that year, Stephens delivered an address at City Hall in Augusta, announcing his candidacy for re-election to the US Congress. Stephens implored the citizens of Georgia to defeat the abolitionists who were acting "most hostilely, dangerously and unchristianly against us...Let us put them down, even with Catholic aid, if we can."[330]

Antebellum religion had the capacity to unite or divide people depending on the time, place and the inclination of individuals. Those who lived in the southern states faced a "hostile environment, where disease was rampant and poverty and isolation was a reality for most. Whether in the towns or remote countryside, southerners needed the support of their neighbours, both as individuals and as groups."[331] This was true for Irish Catholic immigrants in the rural antebellum South. The relatively small number of Catholics in the slave states and the overriding importance of the defence of slavery allowed Irish Catholics to fit into a regional identity of the South, where they experienced greater religious tolerance than they did in the northern states. Throughout the antebellum period, Catholics in the South had to create and manipulate a triune identity as US southern Catholics. The southern Church in the antebellum period achieved a

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[327] For more on Nativism and Anti-Catholicism see Gjerde, *Catholicism and the Shaping of Nineteenth-Century America*; Wallace, *Dilemma of American Evangelicalism*; John David Bladek, "America for Americans: The Southern Know Nothing Party and the Politics of Nativism, 1854-1856," (PhD. diss., University of Washington, 1998); Dale T. Knobel, *America for the Americans: The Nativist Movement in the United States*, (New York, 1996); Tyler Anbinder, *Nativism and Slavery: The Northern Know Nothings and the Politics of the 1850s*, (New York, 1992).

[328] Alexander H. Stephens to Judge Thomas W, On the Subject OF Know-Nothingism, Stephens, Alexander H. Paper, 1855, M666, TU, 464.

[329] Alexander H. Stephens, Speech At The City Hall In Augusta, On The Occasion Of His Announcing Himself A Candidate for Re-election To Congress In 1855, Stephens, Alexander H. Paper, 1855, M666, TU, 480.

[330] Ibid, 477.

[331] Stern, *Southern Crucifix,* 36-37.

religious distinctiveness and assimilated into society as the clouds of secession gathered over the Union. The creation of the Confederate nation received the blessing of its Catholic prelates, whose triune identity was funnelled into Confederate nationalism. The success and growth of the Catholic Church in the antebellum period had rested on its firm commitment to the prevailing social order. Southerners defined themselves in opposition to northerners and this allowed Catholics to align themselves with southerners in opposition to the abolitionist other. During the American Civil War, the Catholic clergy divided along sectional lines, backing their own adopted states. For those in the slave South, the "separation of the Southern States is un fait accompli."[332]

In the summer of 1861, French born Jean Pierre Augustin Marcellin Verot became the third Bishop of Savannah.[333] Verot, in St. Augustine Florida delivered a *Sermon on Slavery and Abolition,* which was reported widely throughout the Confederacy.[334] Verot publically committed himself to the principles of the Confederacy, for he and all Catholics knew that "the New and Old Testament admit, sanction and authorize slavery, from which we conclude that this state of life is not against the Divine and Positive law."[335] The true ground of equality rested in the belief "that we will be condemned by our Maker only for a guilt voluntarily and freely incurred, or reward in the next life...In these respects a slave is on equal footing with a master."[336] The Church gained admirers among pro-slavery advocates such as George Fitzhugh of Virginia. Fitzhugh supported the conservative nature of the Church and its position towards slavery, and this opinion helped him and his readers form a favourable opinion of the Irish: "Frenchmen and Germans are generally infidels, agrarians and abolitionists. An Irish Infidel,

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[332] Bishop Patrick Lynch to Archbishop John Hughes, 4 Aug., 1861, cited in Zanca, *American Catholics and Slavery*, 242-245. For more on Confederate Nationalism and Catholicism see Gleeson, *Green and Gray*, 150-162; Pasquier, *Fathers on the Frontier*, 167-203. See also George C. Rable, *God's Almost Chosen Peoples: A Religious History of the American Civil War*, (Chapel Hill, 2010).

[333] Mary Jane BeVard, (ed.), *One Faith, One Family, The Diocese of Savannah 1850-2000*, (New York, 2000), 48.

[334] "A Sermon on Slavery and Abolition" by Bishop Verot, cited in Zanca, *American Catholics and Slavery*, 201-209.

[335] Ibid, 204.

[336] Ibid, 205.

or an Irish abolitionist, is scarcely to be found."[337] By defending slavery, the Catholic Church helped place Irish Catholic immigrants on an equal footing with native white southerners.

The Catholic Church's acceptance of, and adaptation to southern slavery upheld a standard for Irish Catholics to follow. This chapter demonstrated that numerous factors influenced the practice of southern Catholicism and its development. The various aspects that formed Irish southern Catholic identity had to be fluid in order to be moulded into the southern social norm. The trustee controversies of Charleston and New Orleans reveal the difficulties in the development of the Catholic Church and its struggle to be accepted by American society. Irish Catholics who experienced rural Catholicism had to adapt to the reality of the southern frontier, they were not outside the main currents of the antebellum southern social experience. Most importantly this chapter has detailed how the Church became regionally distinct in its acceptance of slavery. By weaving a triune identity, Irish Catholics in the antebellum US South consciously exploited and profited from the institution of slavery.

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[337] Cited in Gleeson, *Green and Gray*, 25.

Chapter 3

Irish Slaveholders in the Antebellum US South

The struggles of Catholics in the antebellum US South illustrate the centrality of slavery to the southern social order. Through the influence of their clergymen and preachers Irish immigrants came to accept the conditions of US slavery, by which Isabella Lucy Bird observed, a slave was "a being created in the image of God", but was "yet the *bôna fide* property of his fellow-man."[1] Initially, Irish immigrants had to accept that, in the slave states "tis as customary ... to set up and sell Negroes at auction as it is horses in Ireland."[2] Some Irish immigrants found it an "unnatural sight to see our fellow creatures sold," but discovered that Christian teachings by the various churches in the South morally legitimised the institution of slavery.[3] This chapter shows that traditional historical assertions that the Irish in the antebellum South "would never be large plantation owners, in fact they were unlikely to ever own more than one slave at a time," are not true.[4] Southern society was a place, complained one Irish resident, "where man is worth nothing, except in one sense, which they always compute in pounds, shillings and pence."[5] Wealth was the key to gaining acceptance in all social circles, and slaves were the most visible way for immigrants to showcase their success. Irish immigrants understood the potential of wealth made from slave labour and that slave ownership served as the basis for elevated prestige and respect in southern society.

Slavery in the antebellum US South was not a static institution; it was in a state of constant flux and change, driven by the pursuit of ever larger profits. An examination of the development and evolution of

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[1] Cited in Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, and Eugene D. Genovese, *Slavery in White and Black: Class and Race in the Southern Slaveholders' New World Order,* (New York, 2008), 107.
[2] Henry Neill to Samuel Neill, 1 Apr., 1839, Henry Neill, Louisville, Kentucky Letter, T1796/1, PRONI.
[3] Anne Cleburne to Mother, 28 Dec., 1849, cited in Patrick Brennan, "Fever and Fists: Forging an Irish Legacy in New Orleans," (Ph.D diss., University of Missouri-Columbia, 2003), 100.
[4] Bill Rolston & Michael Owen Shannon, *Encounters: How Racism Came to Ireland*, (Belfast, 2002), 38.
[5] Cited in Thomas Paul Thigpen, "Aristocracy of the Heart: Irish Catholic Lay Leadership in Savannah, Georgia, 1820-1870," (PhD diss., Emory University, 1995), 439.

antebellum slavery provides an essential background for the study and correct understanding of Irish participation in US slavery. The first section of this chapter explores the rise of cotton as the premier commodity in the emerging industrial world and the wealth and speculation that followed its rise until the Panic of 1819. The early years of the cotton boom saw many Irish immigrants undertake the crop's cultivation. Many of those were United Irishmen exiles. The second section examines the restored confidence in cotton and the expansion of slavery into the Southwest. The expanding slave frontier in the 1820s-1840s provided many opportunities for ruthless immigrants to achieve economic advancement. The increase in Irish immigrants working in skilled and middle class occupations resulted in a larger number of Irish slaveholders. The final section of the chapter investigates the final decade of slavery in the South in the 1850s and examines how Irish immigrants who arrived before the final cotton-slave boom were in a position to take advantage of the soaring economy. This chapter shows that Irish immigrants were more than willing to partake in and profit from US slavery. Those who settled in the slave states saw no crime in owning, selling or exploiting slaves. The exiled Young Irelander revolutionary John Mitchel proclaimed about the Irish in the South "for our, part, wish we had a good plantation, well-stocked with healthy negroes, in Alabama."[6]

i.   The Lure of Cotton

The first federal census in 1790 recorded 697,897 slaves in the American republic and this figure increased by seventy percent to 1,191,354 by 1810, just two years after the end of legal slave importations. By 1860, the slave population of the US trebled to 3,953,760.[7] Throughout the Americas, in the nineteenth century, the nature of slavery evolved into an aggressive profit and market oriented mode of production. Dale Tomich has termed this historic transformation the "Second Slavery." Anthony E. Kaye has highlighted that the "Second Slavery" was distinguished by "new commodities, produced in unprecedented quantities, in regions formerly

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[6] William Dillon, *Life of John Mitchel, Vol. 2*, (London, 1888), 43-44.
[7] Peter Kolchin, *American Slavery, 1619-1877*, (London, 1995), [1993], 93.

marginal to the Atlantic economy, in reconfigured polities."[8] Edward Baptist remarks how "the mill of the first slavery's growth stopped turning" when revolution erupted in Saint Domingue in 1791.[9] The end of slavery in Haiti, the most productive and profitable European colony, combined with the economic disruptions of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, created space and opportunities for new crops and regions of slave based agriculture to enter and dominate world markets such as Cuban sugar and Brazilian coffee.[10] In the US, the rise of the "Second Slavery" was "directly linked to developments related to the Industrial Revolution."[11]

The Industrial Revolution, powered by cotton, was as Eric Hobsbawm stated "the most important event in [modern] world history." Cotton was the vanguard of the modern capitalist economy, and its success made other industries possible. The iron industry, railroad networks and later industries would not have emerged without the profits of cotton. Sven Beckert has demonstrated the centrality of cotton to the world economy and its making and remaking of global capitalism. Beckert notes how cotton and slavery expanded "in lockstep, as Great Britain and the United States had become the twin hubs of the emerging empire of cotton."[12] Cotton's identification as the main raw material of the first Industrial Revolution enabled US slaveholders to conquer a subcontinent, "creating from nothing the most

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[8] Dale W. Tomich, *Through the Prism of Slavery: Labor Capital and World Economy*, (Lanham, MD., 2004), 56-71; Anthony E. Kaye, "The Second Slavery: Modernity in the Nineteenth-Century South and the Atlantic World," *JSH, Vol. LXXV*, No.3 (Aug., 2009), 627-650. See also Dale Tomich & Michael Zeuske, "Introduction, The Second Slavery: Mass Slavery, World-Economy and Comparative Microhistories," *Review: A Journal of the Fremand Braudel Center, Binghamton University*, Vol. XXXI, No. 3 (2008), 91-100; Enrico Dal Lago, "Second Slavery, Second Serfdom, and Beyond: The Atlantic Plantation System and Eastern and Southern European Landed Estate System in Comparative Perspective, 1800-60," *Review: A Journal of the Fernand Braudel Center, Binghamton University*, Vol. XXXII, No. 4 (2009), 291-420; Javier Lavina & Michael Zeuske, *The Second Slavery: Mass Slaveries and Modernity in the Americas and the Atlantic Basin*, (Müster, 2014).
[9] Edward E. Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism*, (New York, 2014), 44.
[10] Dale W. Tomich, "Commodity Frontiers, Conjuncture and Crisis: The Remaking of the Caribbean Sugar Industry, 1783-1866," in Javier Lavina & Michael Zeuske (eds.), *The Second Slavery. Mass Slaveries and Modernity in the Americas and in the Atlantic Basin*, (Berlin, 2014), 143-164; Leslie Bethell & José Murilo de Carvalho, "1822-1850," in Leslie Bethell, (ed.), *Brazil: Empire and Republic, 1822-1930*, (New York, 1989), 89-94.
[11] Enrico Dal Lago, *American Slavery, Atlantic Slavery and Beyond: The U.S. "Peculiar Institution" in International Perspective*, (London, 2012), 69.
[12] Eric J. Hobsbawm, The *Age of Revolution: Europe, 1789-1848*, (London, 1977), [1962], 44; Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton: A Global History*, (New York, 2015), 103.

significant staple-commodity stream in the world economy." As a result of the profitability of cotton, planters became the richest class in the antebellum US.[13]

During the colonial period, cotton was the young pretender of the staple kingdom. Rice and tobacco were the main exportable crops of colonial America. Cotton production was limited to the growth of long-staple cotton along the coasts of Georgia and South Carolina. Long stable cotton could not flourish in the southern interior and the short staple varieties were plagued with the difficulty of removing the multiple seeds from the fibre. In 1791, the total recorded cotton crop in the US was two million pounds, which only represented 0.4 percent of the total production worldwide.[14] The development of the British textile industry, driven by steam powered spinning machines, revolutionised the production of cotton cloth. This led to a change in clothing styles, creating an unappeasable demand for cotton products.[15] The invention of the cotton gin in 1793 heralded the beginning of the "Cotton Kingdom."[16] The cotton gin removed the bottleneck in the production of short staple cotton by mechanically and efficiently removing the seeds without damaging the fibre. Cotton production spread like wildfire as millions of acres of land were cleared. Natchez lawyer William Henry Sparks observed "where yesterday the wilderness darkened over the land with her wild forests, to-day the cotton plantation whitened the earth."[17] The expansion of cotton coincided and was associated with the market revolution that occurred within the US. The market revolution resulted in the early industrialisation of the northeast of

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[13] Baptist, *Half Has Never Been Told*, 142-143.

[14] Brian Schoen, *The Fragile Fabric of Union: Cotton, Federal Politics and the Global Origins of the Civil War*, (Baltimore, 2009), 41.

[15] Ibid, 26-31; Douglas Farnie & David Jeremy, (eds.), *The Fibre that Changed the World*: the Cotton Industry in International Perspective, 1600-1990s, (Oxford, 2004).

[16] The invention of the cotton gin has been traditionally associated with Eli Whitney. Angela Lawete has demonstrated that Whitney was one of several mechanics experimenting with cotton rolling gins near Augusta. Angela Lakwete, *Inventing the Cotton Gin: Machine and Myth in Antebellum America*, (Baltimore, 2003), 47-71.

[17] Cited in Joshua D. Rothman, *Flush Times & Fever Dreams: A Story of Capitalism and Slavery in the Age of Jackson*, (London, 2012), 5.

the US and the linking of different regions to a national and international market through the improvement of transportation networks.[18]

During the first half of the nineteenth century, cotton was the world's most widely traded commodity, its importance has been compared by Beckert to that of cheap oil in the modern world economy and the South as "a kind of Saudi Arabia of the early nineteenth century."[19] The Southern slave states emerged as the dominant force in the global cotton market, yielding extraordinary profits. Cotton production jumped to 55 million pounds in 1802 and this escalated to 331 million pounds in 1830. By 1860, US enslavers produced 2,241 million pounds of cotton worth over $249,000,000.[20] Baptist highlights how the returns from cotton "powered the modernization of the rest of the American economy" and created the foundations of modern day American capitalism.[21] Joseph Ingraham, touring Mississippi in 1835, noted how planters sold their cotton crop to commission merchants in Natchez "who turn cotton into gold so readily, that one verily would be inclined to think that the philosopher's stone might be concealed within the bales."[22] By 1860, the eight wealthiest states in the US, "ranked by wealth per white person;" were South Carolina, Mississippi, Louisiana, Georgia, Texas, Alabama, Florida and Connecticut, the most industrialised state in the Union which "profited disproportionately from the gearing of northern factory equipment" to the plantations of the South.[23]

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[18] Harry L. Watson, "Slavery and Development in a Duel Economy: The South and the Market Revolution," in Melvyn Stakes & Stephen Conway, (eds.), *The Market Revolution in America: Social, Political, and Religious Expressions, 1800-1880*, (London, 1996), 44-45: Charles Sellers, *The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America 1815-1846,* (Oxford, 1991), 66 & 407-408.

[19] Beckert, *Empire of Cotton*, 113.

[20] Robin Blackburn, *The American Crucible: Slavery, Emancipation and Human Rights*, (London, 2011), 116-119. For more on cotton's expansion see Walter Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams: Slavery and Empire In the Cotton Kingdom*, (Cambridge MA., 2013), 244-279; Adam Rothman, *Slave Country: American Expansion and the Origins of the Deep South*, (Cambridge MA., 2005), 123-173; Joyce E. Chaplin, *An Anxious Pursuit. Agricultural Innovation and Modernity in the Lower South, 1730-1815*, (Chapel Hill, 1993), 277-355.

[21] Baptist, *Half Has Never Been Told*, xxi.

[22] Joseph Holt Ingraham, *The South-West By a Yankee. Volume Two*, (New York, 1968), [1835], 93.

[23] Baptist, *Half Has Never Been Told*, 350; Robert William Fogel, *Without Consent or Contract: The Rise and Fall of American Slavery*, (London, 1989), 84-92.

It did not take long for the US to enjoy its first cotton boom after the invention of the cotton gin. This boom lasted roughly from 1794 to 1819 and enriched almost all who planted cotton. Wherever the soil was suitable and assured of two hundred frost-free days in the year, short staple cotton appeared. Irish immigrants already in the South were poised to take advantage of the new economic opportunities. In 1799, for example, John Steele arrived in Natchez. His host was "a very hospitable Irishman," who owned eighteen slaves and hoped to produce a fine cotton crop "like the driving of snow as it comes from the gin." At twenty five cents a pound, Steele observed how lucrative the Irishman's crop would be: "If you could draw such a product from your own labour, you would feel yourself amply rewarded, for independent of this, the same people make all his Corn, Potatoes &c., &c., &., in great Abundance."[24] Slavery and cotton were an extremely profitable and toxic combination that attracted a number of Irish immigrants to speculate and settle in the South. In 1817, Hugh Quin arrived in New Orleans where he encountered an Irishman by the name Dougherty, who "many years ago" left County Antrim. Dougherty was a blacksmith by trade and recounted how he emigrated with only:

> 7 guineas in my pocket. In some time I made my way to Natchez, where I wrought hard at my trade, and I confess sometimes drank hard too. Natchez was then in its infancy. Lands were consequently of little value. I procured some lots in the vicinity of that town which I disposed of a few years after to great advantage.

Dougherty established himself near the town of Bayou Sara and possessed "1100 acres of Land & 55 negroes."[25] Tales of great fortunes fuelled speculation in cotton.

The first cotton boom coincided with a wave of 60,000 Irish emigrants going to the US as a result of the violence and political instability during the years of the United Irishmen movement and the failed 1798 Rebellion. The United Irishmen movement was a non-sectarian republican organisation that sought self determination for Ireland or, as the Earl of Clare declared it, a conspiracy of a "deluded peasantry aided by more

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[24] Cited in David J. Libby, *Slavery and Frontier Mississippi*, (Jackson, 2004), 38.
[25] Journal of Hugh Quin, 4 Dec., 1817, Quin Papers, T2874/1, PRONI.

intelligent treason."[26] Each crackdown on the organisation drove a wave of refugees across the Atlantic. The failed Rebellion set in motion the opposite of the United Irishmen's aspirations. Instead of an independent Irish Republic there came the 1801 Act of Union, which created the United Kingdom of Britain and Ireland. It also unleashed a frenzy of sectarian violence and hatred, which the United Irishmen had originally tried to bridge.[27] In the wake of the failed rebellion, thousands of middle class Irish political refugees made their way to the US, where some profited from American cotton and slavery.

In 1804, Thomas Addis Emmet a lawyer by trade and prominent member of the United Irishmen arrived in New York city. His exiled United Irishman comrade Joseph McCormick urged Emmet to join him in Georgia. Emmet had an "insuperable objection" to the "use of slaves, and that the more they abound the stronger are my objections."[28] Emmet's firm belief in the evils of slavery was not universally accepted and "other Irish political exiles managed to accommodate republican principles and American slavery."[29] George Blackburn became Professor of Astronomy and Mathematics at South Carolina College, he and his family came to the US as a result of "the troubles of my nation in 1798 and 1799." Blackburn was unfazed by slavery and he believed that the "negroes" had "no souls."[30] More prominent members of the United Irishmen such as Denis Driscoll, who settled in Augusta, and John Daly Burk who established himself in Petersburg, Virginia, became active journalists for the Jeffersonian cause as

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[26] Cited in R. B. McDowell, *The Age of the United Irishmen: Reform and Reaction 1789-94*, in T. W Moody & W. E. Vaughan, (eds.), *A New History of Ireland: IV Eighteenth Century Ireland 1691-1800*, (Oxford, 1986), 351.

[27] John Killen, (ed.), *The Decade of United Irishmen: Contemporary Accounts 1791-1801*, (Belfast, 1997); Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh, *Ireland Before the Famine*, (Dublin, 1972); Kerby A. Miller, Arnold Schrier, Bruce Boling & David N. Doyle, (eds.), *Irish Immigrants in the Land of Canaan: Letters and Memoirs from Colonial and Revolutionary America*, (New York, 2003), 40-46.

[28] T. A. Emmet to Joseph McCormick, 28 January 1805, cited in Thomas Addis Emmet, *Memoir of Thomas Addis and Robert Emmet Vol. I.*, (New York: 1915), 392-393.

[29] Kerby A. Miller, *Ireland and Irish America: Culture, Class and Transatlantic Migration*, (Dublin, 2008), 139; David A. Wilson, *United Irishmen, United States: Immigrant Radicals in the Early Republic*, (London, 1998), 133-152.

[30] George Blackburn Journal 1813-1844, (34/637/1), SCHS.

well as defenders of southern slavery.[31] Peter Bryan Bruin during his travels in the Mississippi territory encountered many "restless and intriguing Irishmen."[32] Among those to settle in Mississippi as planters were Harman Blennerhassett and Anthony Campbell, a 1798 rebellion exile.[33]

Those who had tried to establish an Irish republic discovered in the US that one man's chains were another man's freedom. David Wilson's work on United Irish exiles in the US illustrates how some remained firm opponents of slavery but many others "including a number of the most militant democrats, supported the institution and became slaveholders themselves. The radical egalitarianism of the United Irishmen would not be extended to African Americans."[34] Irish Catholics who settled in the slave states found that the Catholic Church was a slaveholding church. The financial benefit of slave labour overcame the moral qualms of most Catholics in the South and the Catholic Church along with the dominant Protestant Churches mirrored the racial values of southern society. Catholic slaveholders in the South "neither heard nor read any clear instruction from their hierarchy commanding or recommending general manumission, much less abolition."[35] Many of those who left Ireland in the 1790s and early 1800s were educated and came from middle class families. Those who arrived with capital and material resources quickly enjoyed economic success. Indeed, those who went to the slave states actively chose to go to the South.

Slavery and cotton were compelling reasons to draw United Irishmen exiles into every major southern town. For example, it was the arrival of exiled Irishmen that provided the impetus for the founding of the Hibernian Society of Charleston, South Carolina. The society began with

[31] David T. Gleeson, *The Green and the Gray: The Irish in the Confederate States of America*, (Chapel Hill, 2013), 12; Katharine L. Brown, "United Irishmen in the American South: a re-evaluation," in David A. Wilson & Mark G. Spencer, *Ulster Presbyterians in the Atlantic World: Religion, Politics and Identity*, (Dublin, 2006), 87-103.
[32] Cited in William R. Hamilton, "The Southwestern Frontier 1795-1817: An Essay in Social History," *JSH*, Vol. 10, No. 4 (Nov., 1944), 390.
[33] Wilson, *United Irishmen, United* States, 136; David T. Gleeson, *The Irish in the South, 1815-1877*, (Chapel Hill, 2001), 123.
[34] Ibid, 9.
[35] David C. R. Heisser & Stephen J. White, *Patrick N. Lynch 1817-1882*, (Columbia, SC., 2015), 57.

weekly meetings at the homes of Irish immigrants to aid those arriving to the city. By 17th March 1801, the society adopted its constitution and declared its organisation complete. True to their United Irishmen heritage the society had no religious requirements for membership and the Catholic priest Simon Felix Gallagher was elected as the society's first president.[36] The Hibernian Society attracted the elite of the Irish community and some of the wealthiest and influential members served as presidents. For example, from 1803 to 1805 O'Brien Smith served as president. Smith was born in Ireland in 1756 and was a member of the Anglican Church. He had left for South Carolina before the outbreak of the American Revolution and became a US citizen in 1784.[37] Smith became a successful planter and owned the Duharra plantation in Colleton County, which was possibly named after the barony of Durraha in County Tipperary.[38] George Washington on his 1791 presidential tour of the South recorded in his diary on the 10th of May "lodged at Mr Obrian Smith's Duharra plantation."[39] Smith was among the planter elite of South Carolina and a man of formidable wealth. By 1810, the year of his death, he owned 380 slaves.[40] The Hibernian Society provided a venue for businessmen and aspiring planters to establish contacts and networks. Samuel Patterson and Andrew Smylie, both members of the Hibernian Society, founded a cotton exporting business. One of their business deals in 1811 involved shipping 140 bales of cotton to the port of Derry.[41] Throughout the cities of the South, Hibernian Societies were organised by the elite of the Irish immigrant community. For example, the Hibernian Society of Savannah was established in 1812, the Hibernian

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[36] Arthur Mitchell, *The History of The Hibernian Society of Charleston, South Carolina 1799-1986*, (Charleston, 1982).

[37] Ibid, 18-19.

[38] South Carolina Plantations, http://south-carolina-plantations.com/colleton/duharra.html , accessed on the 20/12/2012.

[39] http://artsandsciences.sc.edu/cege/resources/scmaps/manual/chap1.pdf, accessed on the 19/12/2012. , 35.

[40] Third Census of the United States, 1810, (Colleton County, South Carolina).

[41] New York Historical Society Museum and Library, "Testimony of cotton shipment by Mr. Samuel Patterson", http://cdm128401.cdmhost.com/cdm/compoundobject/collection/p15052coll5/id/23089/rec/14, accessed on the 29/12/2012; Andy Bielenbeg & Peter M. Solar, "The Irish Cotton Industry from the Industrial Revolution to Partition," *Irish Economic and Social History*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (Dec., 2007), 1-28.

Society of New Orleans in 1824, and in Natchez the Mississippi Hibernian Society in 1826.[42]

The well documented case of John O'Raw, a Catholic and United Irishman rebel, shows the effectiveness and helpfulness of the established Irish networks in South Carolina. In 1807, he arrived in Charleston and was greeted by Charles and Henry O'Hara, merchants of the city who organised a job and accommodation for him.[43] O'Raw knew to advance his situation he would have to speculate in slavery. On his initial arrival O'Raw informed his parents how "Alex[r] O'Hara formerly of Belfast was Just come from Africa, he brought with him 4 Negroes for which he got about 1200 Dls & bought a Vessel." However, O'Hara was deceived and lost his vessel. O'Raw had lent O'Hara five guineas "as I thought there was no Risque [*sic*] in lending to him having brought four Slaves with him from Africa I however never Rec[d] a Farthing."[44] Although hurt by his first investment O'Raw eventually owned two slaves and a grocery store on Meeting Street, Charleston.[45]

The first great boom in cotton "widened traditional avenues of upward social mobility," and contemporary observers viewed short-staple cotton as a "blessing for common whites." It created opportunities for Irish immigrants and non-slaveholding whites of the South to acquire slave property. Lacy K. Ford, in his work on the South Carolina Upcountry demonstrates how, in 1800, only 25 percent of all white families belonged to the ranks of slaveholders, but the impact of the boom saw this figure jump to 40 percent of all white families by 1820. [46] Advertisements for slave runaways with names such as "Dublin" and for plantations to be sold called

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[42] Arthur J. O'Hara, *Hibernian Society Savannah, GA. 1812-1912. The Story of a Century*, (Savannah, 1997), [1912]; For more on southern charitable institutions see: https://web.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/SouthernCharitiesProject/soc_state.htm, accessed on the 21/07/2015.

[43] John O'Raw to Byran and Neille O'Raw, 1 Apr., 1809, D3613/1/2, PRONI; Miller et al., (eds.), *Land of* Canaan, 98-101.

[44] Miller, et al., (eds.), *Land of* Canaan, 98-101.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Lacy K. Ford Jr., *Origins of Southern Radicalism: The South Carolina Upcountry, 1800-1860,* (New York, 1988), 12-13; Rachel N. Klein, *Unification of a Slave State: The Rise of the Planter Class in the South Carolina Backcountry, 1760-1808*, (Chapel Hill, 1990).

"Tipperary" reveal the growing presence of Irish slaveholders.[47] Irish immigrants were able to ease their assimilation into southern society by becoming slaveholders. James Oakes proposes that the "ownership of slaves became for many immigrants the single most important symbol of their success in the New World."[48] Some of the largest plantation names in 1860 South Carolina bear witness to their Irish heritage, for example, "Limerick Plantation," "Ormond Hall," "Belfast Plantation," and "Wicklow Plantation."[49] Throughout the antebellum US South, Irish place and plantation names were often the only remaining connection to the original Irish settlers who established them, as in the case of plantations like Ardoyne in Louisiana, Landsdowne in Virginia and Killarney and Sligo in Mississippi.[50]

One ambitious Irishman who entered the ranks of the cotton planters was Antonio (Anthony) Patrick Walsh, a native of Dublin who established himself on his plantation Cecelia Vale in West Feliciana Parish, Louisiana. Walsh was a risk taker and began his career in the armed services of the Kingdom of Spain in colonial Louisiana. He then worked in shipping, serving Spanish commercial interests in the Caribbean as the third commander of the ship *Louisiana.* He became a naturalised citizen of the province of Spanish Louisiana and by November 1800 he was second in command in the Spanish Mississippi fleet on the vessel of war *Diligencia*.[51] Fluent in English, Spanish and French, Walsh enjoyed financial success as a merchant in New Orleans and remained in the territory after it had been acquired by the US. By 1808, Walsh's business activities included slave trading. On the 29th December 1808, he received a letter from Vincent Volte

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[47] *The Georgia Gazette,* 4 Feb., 1790; *The Republican and Savannah Evening Ledger*, 10 Aug., 1809.
[48] James Oakes, *The Ruling Race: A History of American Slaveholders*, (New York, 1998), [1982], 43.
[49] Charmers Gaston Davidson, *The Last Foray: The South Carolina Planters of 1860, a Sociological Study*, (Columbia, 1971), 175, 179, 181 & 221.
[50] Jean L. Cooper, *Records of Ante-bellum Southern Plantations: Locations, Plantations, Surnames and Collections*, (London, 2009), 59, 74 & 87. For a brief example of how Irish settlers influenced a place name in the South see Edwin J. Foscue & Elizabeth Troth, "Sugar Plantations of the Irish Bend District, Louisiana," *Economic Geography*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (Oct., 1936), 373-380.
[51] Certification by Andres Lopez Armesto, Secretary of the Governor of Louisiana and West Florida that A. P Walsh was naturalised in 1789, Antonio Patrick Walsh Papers, Mss 887, 1208, LLMVC.

in Philadelphia requesting a note of credit from Walsh for $4,200 to permit R. I. Oliver in Baltimore to purchase slaves.[52] The following year Walsh travelled to Baltimore and Philadelphia to conduct business. Intent on building up his workforce, Walsh purchased seventeen slaves in Baltimore for the sum of $3,807.5 between 9th of January and 6th of March 1809.[53]

Walsh bought young slaves in their twenties; the oldest slave he purchased was "One Mulatto Male slave named Isaac about thirty three years olds" for whom he paid $240.[54] The youngest slave he purchased was a seven month old baby boy with his 19 year old mother Nil for $350.[55] Walsh had the means and knowledge to circumnavigate the inflated prices of the slave markets of New Orleans and he travelled to the Upper South for cheaper slaves. He was a prime example of the businessmen and enslavers who were driven by the cotton boom in the southern interior and who engineered the massive forced deportation of African Americans through a thriving interstate slave trade. The high prices in the expanding cotton frontiers outstripped the returns on the exhausted plantations of Maryland and other Upper-South slave states. Walter Johnson has noted that the "South" was increasingly seen "as being composed of two interlocking economies: a Deep-South economy that imported slaves and produced a staple crop, and an Upper-South economy that produced and exported slaves-they being joined together by the internal trade."[56] This destructive internal trade dwarfed the transatlantic trade and has become known as "the Second Middle Passage."[57] Many slaves were not familiar with cotton production and struggled to adapt to the demanding regime of the Deep South's cotton plantations. Upper South slaves had a well grounded fear of

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[52] Vincent Volte to A. P. Walsh 29 Dec., 1808, Antonio Patrick Walsh Papers, LLMVC.

[53] See Slave Bills of Sales on the 9, 10, 18, 20 of Jan., 2 of Feb., 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 of March 1809, Antonio Patrick Walsh Papers, LLMVC.

[54] Bill of Sale of Mulatto named Isaac, 2 Mar., 1809, Antonio Patrick Walsh Papers, LLMVC.

[55] Bill of Sale of Negro woman slave and Mulatto male child, 6 Mar., 1809, Antonio Patrick Walsh Papers, LLMVC.

[56] Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams*, 399-404.

[57] Ira Belin, *Generations of Captivity: A History of African-American Slaves*, (Cambridge MA., 2003), 161-244; Baptist, *Half Has Never Been Told*, 3; Jack Trammell, *The Richmond Slave Trade: The Economic Backbone of the Old Dominion*, (Charleston, 2012); Steven Deyle, *Carry Me Back: The Domestic Slave Trade in American Life*, (New York, 2005); Walter Johnson, (ed.), *The Chattel Principle: Internal Slave Trades in the Americas*, (New Haven, 2008).

death in the Deep South. Many of the newly imported slaves succumbed to the sickly climate, and especially Louisiana became synonymous with death due to its ruthless sugar plantations.[58] On 18th June 1809, Walsh recorded that Nil "the mother of the Boy is Dead" and on that same day Sarah aged 21 who was also recently purchased in Baltimore with her "two little girls" also "died at my Plantation."[59] Some members of the clergy asserted that Catholic slaveholders were bound to protect slaves' marital unions and families. Still others like Bishop Lynch of Charleston found the question of slave marriages "very perplexing," due to the slaves having "very loose ideas on the subject, and very little regard for the sanctity of marriage."[60] Some Catholic slaveholders demonstrated concern regarding the breakup of slave families for sale. Most, however, were like Walsh who was not worried about splitting up slave families.

Walsh gradually reduced his merchant activities to focus on cotton production. As a cotton planter, he aimed to plant "as much cotton as the Present Hands of the Plantation can reasonably cultivated, and attended."[61] Walsh employed an overseer, whom he expected "to take great Care of the hands" of the plantation and "to Correct them with Moderation and humanly."[62] Walsh aimed for maximum output and efficiency from his slaves and set detailed rules for his overseer, to ensure that "all the People of the plantation that are fit to work shall do so, conformable to their age, strength and capacity's."[63] A successful crop demanded that "Cotton must be Picked Very Clean."[64] To maximise slave labour, male slaves were made to "saw planks" when the weather would not permit them to work in the fields and female slaves were expected to spin cloth for the plantation.[65]

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[58] Damin Alan Pargas, "In the fields of a Strange Land: Enslaved Newcomers and the Adjustment to Cotton Cultivation in the Antebellum South," *Slavery & Abolition*, Vol. 34, No. 4 (2013), 562-578.

[59] See back page of Bill of Sale of Negro woman slave named Sarah, 2 Feb., 1809 & Bill of Sale of Negro Woman slave and mulatto male child, 6 Mar., 1809, Antonio Patrick Walsh Papers, LLMVC.

[60] Heisser & White, *Patrick N. Lynch*, 67.

[61] Agreement made Between A. P Walsh & Wm Draughton, 1 Jan., 1825, Antonio Patrick Walsh Papers, LLMVC.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Overseers Agreement, May 1823, Antonio Patrick Walsh Papers, LLMVC.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Ibid.

Walsh's plantation rules reveal his ideal vision of total control over his human chattel, whom he would not allow to leave his plantation without a written pass by him.

Slaves on Walsh's plantation received their provisions on Sundays and all food had to be prepared at night and brought to the fields with them as their workday began at sunrise. Such acts Drew Gilpin Faust notes were "plantation management as theatre."[66] The distribution of provisions provided Walsh with an occasion to present himself in a paternalistic role to his slaves, demonstrating his generosity and highlighting the slaves' dependence. Influenced heavily by the works of Marxist thinker Antonio Gramsci, Eugene Genovese explained paternalism as generating an individual relationship between planter and slave, one that created an ideological and cultural "hegemony" of the master over the slaves. For Genovese, "hegemony" was demonstrated in the slaves' acceptance of some of the ideological premises on which slavery was established, even though, through acts of resistance, slaves sought to turn "the dependency relationship to their own advantage."[67] Faust's work on South Carolina planter James Henry Hammond provides one of the best examples of the planter's desire "to establish a system of domination in which he could extract willing obedience from compliant slaves, a system in which he could regard himself as benevolent father rather than cruel autocrat."[68] Planters such as Hammond and Walsh desired total hegemony over their slave workforce but their slaves' assertiveness challenged the abstract hegemonic notions of plantation order and absolute control.

Walsh imposed strict guidelines for the ginning and storage of the crop. He would not suffer anyone to have a fire near the "Gin yard" and his overseer had to maintain "a Tub of water in the gin loft for fear of

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[66] Drew Gilpin Faust, *James Henry Hammond and the Old South: A Design for Mastery*, (Baton Rouge, 1982), 103.
[67] Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World The Slaves Made.* (New York, 1976), [1974], 146: See also Enrico Dal Lago, "'Hegemony' by Another Name," *Reviews in American History*, Vol. 32, No. 3 (Sep., 2006), 332-341.
[68] Faust, *James Henry Hammond*, 101. See also Faust, "Culture, Conflict and Community: The Meaning of Power on an Ante-Bellum Plantation," *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 14. No. 1 (Autumn, 1980), 83-97.

accidents."[69] The concern for the safety of the crop reveals Walsh's concern for potential resistance by disgruntled slaves. Slave resistance could cost the planter not only losses in capital but also occasionally the loss of life. Rachel O'Connor in West Feliciana Parish reported to her nephew:

> A Negro girl contrived some way of putting poison in a sugar dish amongst some sugar that came near killing Mr. A. Doherty, and your Cousin Charlotte, and their two little sons, and 3 or 4 Negroes...The girl that mixed the poison with the sugar is one that Mr. Doherty had lately bought. She is about fourteen years old.[70]

One of the more common forms of resistance faced by planters was slaves running away, especially during the busier periods of cultivation and harvest.[71] For example, Walsh received word from D. Carsten that he was in possession of a runaway slave, Tim, who had claimed to be a freeman but confessed to being a runaway slave of Walsh's "after he had got a hard whipping."[72] However, the day-to-day resistance of slaves was usually carried out by nonviolent dissenters. By working slowly or carelessly, by damaging equipment or mistreating livestock, slaves silently sabotaged the economic interests of their masters.

Walsh invested heavily in slavery. He was offered a five year loan of $48,000 at ten percent annual interest. For collateral, he mortgaged what he called "from 90 to a 100 head of first rate slaves," although some of these slaves he had yet to purchase with the money he was borrowing.[73] Many Irishmen borrowed heavily to become planters. An extreme example is John Kingsbury Elgee, an uncle of Oscar Wilde who immigrated to Louisiana as a lawyer and later became a judge of Rapides Parish. During the cotton boom of the 1850s, he borrowed over $600,000 dollars from a New York financier David D. Withers. To secure this loan, Elgee mortgaged several

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[69] Overseers Agreement, May 1823, Antonio Patrick Walsh Papers, LLMVC.

[70] R. O'Connor to William Weeks, 9th March 1834. Cited in Allie Bayne Windham Webb, (ed.), *Mistress of Evergreen Plantation: Rachel O'Connor's Legacy of Letters 1823-1845.* (Albany, 1983), 135-136.

[71] For more on slave resistance see Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 597-657; John Hope Franklin & Loren Schweinger, *Runaway Slaves: Rebels on the Plantation*, (New York, 2000); Stephanie M. H. Camp, *Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South*, (Chapel Hill, 2004); Walter C. Rucker, *The River Flows On: Black Resistance, Culture and Identity Formation in Early America*, (Baton Rouge, 2006).

[72] D. Carsten to A. P. Walsh, 15 Jun., 1821, Antonio Patrick Walsh Papers, LLMVC.

[73] Undated note, Antonio Patrick Walsh Papers, LLMVC. See Baptist, *Half Has Never Been Told*, 230.

other tracts of land and 515 slaves.[74] The mortgaging of slaves was an essential part of the antebellum US economy. Slaves were used as collateral, in the same way homes are used in the modern day. However, unlike a house, slaves were portable assets and could be transported to areas of high demand to maximise their value. Bonnie Martin has stressed the vast value involved in the mortgaging of human property was the invisible engine of economic growth in the antebellum South. For example, $25.7 million was raised alone in Louisiana in 1859 by purchase-money and equity mortgages on slave property, the equivalent of eleven percent of the total bank capital in the US in 1860.[75]

Most people who purchased slaves did so by taking out a purchase-money mortgage from the seller. This allowed the buyer to make a down payment with the promise to pay the remainder of the price, plus interest in instalments, and use the same slaves they were purchasing as collateral for the loan. This method expanded the potential pool of purchasers and these loans played a vital role in providing credit in areas where the circulation of hard currency was often scarce.[76] In many regards, credit was the true king of the slave South and many enslavers undertook immense debts to expand their holdings and produce more of the then most widely traded product in the world. The largest cotton plantations of the Mississippi Delta were "highly capitalized businesses, indeed among the very largest in North America, and the investments necessary would have been beyond the reach of nearly every northern industrialist."[77] Increasing their slaveholdings "enabled planters to repay debts, take profits, and gain property that could be collateral for even more borrowing."[78] The price of cotton during the antebellum period fluctuated enjoying soaring highs and spectacular lows.

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[74] Michael Wayne, *The Reshaping of Plantation Society: The Natchez District, 1860-1880*, (Baton Rouge, 1983), 66; Helen P. Trimpi, *Crimson Confederates: Harvard Men who Fought for the South*, (Knoxville, 2010), 66-67.

[75] Bonnie Martin, "Slavery's Invisible Engine: Mortgaging Human Property," *JSH*, Vol. LXXVI, No. 4 (Nov., 2010), 856; Beckert, *Empire of Cotton*, 114.

[76] Martin, "Slavery's Invisible Engine," 818 & 822.

[77] Beckert, Empire of Cotton, 113.

[78] Baptist, *Half Has Never Been Told*, 244-245; Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams*, 279.

Both planters and farmers usually purchased their supplies on a year's credit and rarely did they settle their accounts entirely in cash. Steven Hahn has remarked that though "stores in the Cotton Belt generally advertised goods 'for cash or cotton; ' those in the upcountry often announced that 'all kinds of country produce' would be accepted."[79] The indebtedness of planters made it difficult for antebellum businessmen to collect their bills. In Sumter County, South Carolina, Thomas J. Coghlan, an Irish born blacksmith, found it difficult to collect payments due to him: "you have invariably silenced me with the simple words 'wait till I sell my cotton.'" Frustrated, Coghlan in 1849 resolved to place advertisements in the local newspaper noting the rising prices of cotton. Coghlan stated:

> I am convinced from the pleasing aspect of your ancient bills...that this is the time you were waiting for, to dispose your large accumulations of cotton, and at one fell swoop, to write in the Bank of every Blacksmith those electrifying words, which will cause our anvils to discourse most elegant music.[80]

Frederick Olmsted in his travels was informed by a Louisiana sugar planter that the purchasing of a plantation, "whether a sugar or cotton plantation," was "essentially a gambling operation." Success in planting depended "on so many circumstances, that it is as much trusting to good luck as betting on a throw of a dice. If his first crop proves a bad one he must borrow money...If three or four bad crops follow one another, he is ruined."[81] Many Irish immigrants such as Antony Patrick Walsh were willing and happy to gamble on slavery. American slaveholders owned the largest pool of collateral in the US: two million slaves were worth over one billion dollars. Not only was this "almost 20 percent of all the wealth owned by all US citizens, but it was the most liquid part of that wealth."[82] The attraction of the wealth promised by slaveholding was too hard to resist for many.

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[79] Steven Hahn, "The Yeomanry of the Nonplantation South: Upper Piedmont Georgia, 1850-1860," in Orville Vernon Burton & Robert C. McMath, *Class, Conflict and Consensus: Antebellum Southern Community Studies*, (London, 1982), 35.

[80] Cited in Anne King Gregorie, *History of Sumter County South Carolina*, (Sumter, 1954), 98-99.

[81] Frederick Law Olmsted, *The Cotton Kingdom. A Traveller's Observations On Cotton And Slavery In The American Slave States, 1853-1861. Based upon Three Former Volumes of Journeys and Investigations by the Same Arthur*, Arthur M. Schlesinger, (ed.), (New York, 1996), 250.

[82] Baptist, *Half Has Never Been Told*, 245.

Although cotton prices suffered during the War of 1812, US exports rapidly recovered. Total raw cotton exports rose from 17.8 million pounds in 1814 to nearly 83 million pounds in 1815, and they reached a new height of 92.5 million pounds in 1818. The entire nation benefitted from cotton, from New England's shipping to New York's financial sector. Fuelled by cotton profits the New York Stock Exchange opened its door on Wall Street in March 1817.[83] Europe's most powerful bankers, the Rothschilds and Barings, invested heavily in US cotton and increasingly New York and Boston capital was invested in the expansion of cotton agriculture. Beckert argues that credit provided "the magic wand that allowed merchants to recast nature, clear lands, remove native inhabitants, purchase labor, produce crops in indefinite qualities and quantities, and meet the voracious appetites of manufactures and their modern cotton machinery."[84] The post war boom ended in 1819 with a nationwide panic bursting the first speculative cotton bubble. Cotton exports had temporarily outrun the ability of European mills' capacity to absorb it and cotton prices began to fall by late 1818. The value of cotton in American ports declined from 32.5cents a pound in October 1818 to 24 cents by the end of the year and continued to decline down to 14 cents. Insolvency and foreclosures occurred in every section of the US. Unemployment rose and confidence in the banking system disappeared.[85] Charles Sellers describes the Panic of 1819 as "a traumatic awakening to the capitalist reality of boom-and –bust." It was the first time that the American people universally experienced the downward swing of the business cycle.[86]

The *Mobile Gazette & Commercial Advertiser* on 27th April 1819 glumly reported that throughout the South "The flattering hopes of the

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[83] Schoen, *Fragile Fabric of Union*, 102-104.

[84] Beckert, *Empire of Cotton*, 219.

[85] Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848*, (New York, 2009), [2007], 142-147; Daniel Dupre, "The Panic of 1819 and the Political Economy of Sectionalism," in Cathy Matson, (ed.), *The Economy of Early America: Historical Perspectives and New Directions.* (University Parks, PA., 2006), 263-297; Murray Newton Rothbard, *The Panic of 1819: Reactions and Policies*, (New York, 1962), 7-13.

[86] Sellers, *The Market Revolution*, 137; John Lauritz Larson, *The Market Revolution in America: Liberty, and the Eclipse of the Common Good*, (New York, 2010), 39-46; see also Melvyn Stokes & Stephen Conway, (eds.), *The Market Revolution in America: Social, Political, and Religious Expression, 1800-1880*, (Charlottesville, 1996).

planter in obtaining the high prices for his cotton, to which he has been accustomed, will not soon again be realized."[87] One of these planters was Antony Patrick Walsh. Walsh's operations were hit by the falling prices and his debts increased. A letter from his daughter Cecelia in Dublin expressed her hopes that "you would advertise your plantation in January 1823" and that her father would return to Ireland and leave behind "a country which threatens destruction almost daily where no life or property" was safe due to the possibilities of being "assailed by fever and the other in danger of hurricanes or over flowing of rivers."[88] Walsh's reply highlighted his economic woes. His cotton crop had "Rotted last year Very Much and having been sold very Low this Season, makes me Feel very much ... the want of money." Due to the current economic climate, Walsh found that "I can not make enough of money for to Enable me to diminish My Debts with My good and best of friends Mrs Vincent Volte & C° nor with the Banks." Cotton had "Fallen so very Low" that it was impossible for Walsh to find a potential purchaser for his plantation.[89] Walsh's fortunes did not improve, the following year he informed Cecelia that "We have made very bad crops of Corn and Cotton Last year which keeps me in my Difficulties...but the will of God be done."[90] His failings eroded his confidence and kept Walsh "a little Low spirited" and he fatalistically believed that he was stuck in "this Purgatory."[91] Walsh informed his daughter that "my only wish" was to return to Ireland but he remained "so deeply in Debt" due to "the fall in the price of the cottons and the losses I had by my cotton of the year 1819." He believed that all they could do was submit to the "omnipotent Will of God."[92]

Walsh never made it back to Ireland and passed away in 1826. An 1825 statement of Walsh's property reveals that his Cecelia Vale plantation

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[87] Cited in Schoen, *Fragile Fabric of Union*, 105.
[88] Cecelia Leonard to A. P Walsh, 2 Mar., Antonio Patrick Walsh Papers, LLMVC.
[89] A. P. Walsh to Cecelia Leonard, 29 Jun., 1823, Antonio Patrick Walsh Papers, LLMVC.
[90] A. P. Walsh to Cecelia Leonard, 11 Apr., 1824, Antonio Patrick Walsh Papers, LLMVC.
[91] A. P. Walsh to Cecelia Leonard, 29 Jun., 1823; A. P Walsh to Cecelia Leonard, 1st (?) 1823, Antonio Patrick Walsh Papers, LLMVC.
[92] A. P. Walsh to Cecelia Leonard, 30 Jul., 1825, Antonio Patrick Walsh Papers, LLMVC.

contained 2115 acres on which he held 38 slaves.[93] Throughout his entire career, his wife and daughter remained in Ireland. Walsh was a poor communicator, especially during his early career, which often left his estranged family wondering if he was still in the land of the living. Walsh, however, did return to Ireland in 1818 for a few months for Cecelia's wedding but did not appear for most of his life to be troubled by the Atlantic Ocean separating him from his family. An undated letter reveals that Walsh had a "friend," one who loved him "most sincerely." Perhaps troubled by Walsh's thoughts of leaving Louisiana, his friend pleaded that "I feel as if my heart and soul were about separating [;] good God what can I do, how [can I] live without my friend."[94] Another glimpse of evidence to suggest that Walsh engaged in extramarital relations appears at the bottom of the bill of sale of "the said Mulatto girl slave named Peg aged sixteen years or there about," whom he bought in Baltimore in 1809. Walsh penned a note dated 20th March 1818, which was later crossed out but remains partially legible stating "that it is my will that the Girl named Peg...shall be freed and released from slavery."[95]

The fate of Peg is unknown but what she had to undergo or endure to be given such unusual consideration would suggest that perhaps Walsh, living alone on his plantation took advantage of and engaged in sexual relations with Peg. Planters' commonly engaged in sexual relations with slaves. They believed that "Every southern plantation is imperium in imperio [a state within a state]" and that the planter was "armed with magisterial power, by the laws alike of God and man" and effective long term resistance was difficult for slaves like Peg, a sixteen year old separated from her family in Maryland and sold as a stranger to Louisiana.[96] Throughout the antebellum period no southern jurisdiction ever criminalised the sexual assault of black slaves. Paul Finkelman observes that fornication

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[93] Statement of A. P. Walsh's Property in March 1825, Antonio Patrick Walsh Papers, LLMVC.
[94] "Friend" to A. P. Walsh, Undated, Antonio Patrick Walsh Papers, LLMVC.
[95] Bill of Sale of Mulatto girl slave named Peg, 1 Mar., 1809, Antonio Patrick Walsh Papers, LLMVC.
[96] De Bow's Review cited in James O. Breeden, (ed.), *Advice Among Planters: The Ideal in Slave Management in the Old South*, (London, 1980), 58.

with a slave woman "was a misdeed at which the law winked."[97] Although not as common, sexual abuse of male slaves also occurred on the plantations.[98] In Georgia, one raped slave informed Fanny Kemble of the futility of resistance, that the female slaves on the plantation found themselves in a position where "we do anything to get our poor flesh some rest from de whip; when he made me follow him into de bush, what use me tell him no? He have strength to make me." A shocked Kemble recorded the woman's words but wished she could capture "the voice and look of abject misery which they were spoken."[99] Mary Boykin Chesnut famously commented in South Carolina on how:

> ours is a monstrous system, a wrong and an iniquity! Like the patriarchs of old, our men live all in one house with their wives and their concubines; and the mulattoes one sees in every family partly resemble the white children. Any lady is ready to tell you who the father of all the mulatto children in everybody's household but her own.[100]

A noteworthy example is that of James Henry Hammond from South Carolina, who kept two slave women, Sally and Louisa, as his mistresses, and had several children with them. Those slave women had to confront the sexual and emotional demands of their master but also the bitter resentment of Hammond's wife.[101] Hammond became a member of the planter elite through his marriage to Catherine Fitzsimmons, a Charleston heiress, whose father emigrated from Ireland following the American Revolution to inherit property left by an uncle.[102] Outraged by her husband's sexual exploits with slaves and his refusal to sell his mistresses, Catherine departed their Sliver

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[97] Paul Finkelman, "Crimes of Love, Misdemeanors of Passion: The Regulation of Race and Sex in the colonial South," in Catherine Clinton & Michelle Gillespie, (eds.), *The Devil's Lane: Sex and Race in the Early South*, (New York, 1997), 129. See also Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Households: Black and White Women of the Old South*, (Chapel Hill, 1988), 325-326; Thelma Jennings, "'Us Colored Women Had to Go Through A Plenty' Sexual Exploitation of African American Slave Women," *Journal of Women's History*, Vol. 1, No. 3, (Winter, 1990), 45-74.

[98] Aliyyah I. Abdhur-Raham, "'The Strangest Freaks of Despotism': Queer Sexuality in Antebellum African American Slave Narratives," *African American Review*, Vol. 40, No. 2 (Summer 2006), 223-237; Thomas A. Foster, "The Sexual Abuse of Black Men Under American Slavery," *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (Sep., 2011), 445-464.

[99] Fanny Kemble, *Journal of a Residence on a Georgia Plantation in 1838-1839*, John A. Scott, (ed.), (Athens, 1984), 270.

[100] C. Vann Woodward, (ed.), *Mary Chesnut's Civil War*, (New Haven, 1981), 27.

[101] Faust, *James Henry Hammond*, 314-317.

[102] Carol Bleser, (ed.), *Secret and Sacred: The Diaries of James Henry Hammond, a Southern Slaveholder*, (Columbia, 1988), 7-8.

Bluff plantation to join her relatives in Charleston. Hammond never admitted publicly the reason for his wife's separation. Two years after being exposed, Hammond angrily noted in his diary:

> My wife, who paralysed me by her arrogance and violence at the critical moment in 1850 and who has ever since kept me in torment, has, at last, managed to make our domestic difficulties apparent to the world, which of course throws all the blame on me...What a fatal thing it was when I connected myself with that low-Irish family. They have been stupid and purse-proud enough to think they had purchased me. With the usual low-Irish insolence they have cherished the idea that I was an inferior who they had raised. Hence their rage whenever I have done anything to displease them. And finally they have been mean and base enough to expose what families of real pride and proper tone would have concealed.[103]

Born poor, Hammond had always been disliked by his in-laws who viewed him a fortune hunter. Ignoring his own sexual immorality, Hammond believed the roots of his troubles lay with "the vulgar Fitzsimons family, whose low-Irish deceit and hypocrisy can only be compared with their low-Irish pride, selfishness, and utter want of refinement and tone."[104] Hammond believed himself a true southerner unlike his in-laws.

Yet, Irish enslavers similarly to their American counterparts often took advantage of their female slaves.[105] The sexual abuse of slaves ranged from acts of punishment to forced reproduction and concubinage. The rape of slave women often led to an increase in the wealth of the planter. Sexual violence and exploitation "not only characterized slave life but brought it literally into being. As such, the slave was not simply the product of sexual criminality but its very incarnation."[106] Rachel O'Connor, on 26th June 1836, recorded that her slave Bridget had another child. Bridget had now "five living children that were born in less than seven years- and herself only a few months over 22 years old."[107] Female slaves like Bridget through

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[103] 21 May, 1852, cited in Ibid, 254.

[104] 7 Jun., 1852, cited in Ibid, 255. See also Richard Follett, "'Lives of living death': The reproductive lives of slave women in the cane world of Louisiana," *Slavery & Abolition*, Vol. 26, No. 2 (Aug., 2005), 289-304; Liese M. Perrin, "Resisting Reproduction: Reconsidering Slave Contraception in the Old South," *Journal of American* Studies, Vol. 35, No. 2 (Aug., 2001), 255-274.

[105] Even First Lady Michelle Obama's great, great, great grandmother was a slave who had children with a son of an Irish slaveholding family in Georgia. Rachel L. Swarns, *American Tapestry: The Story of the Black, White and Multicultural Ancestors of Michelle Obama*, (New York, 2012).

[106] Abdhur-Raham, "Freaks of Despotism," 228.

[107] R. O'Connor to sister, 26 Jun., 1836, cited in Windham Webb, *Mistress of Evergreen Plantation*, 202.

procreation provided an additional source of revenue for planters. Baptist has argued that the antebellum domestic slave trade should be reconsidered as a "complex of inseparable fetishisms," due to the slave traders "frequent discussions of the rape of light-skinned enslaved women or fancy maids" and their "own relentlessly sexualized vision of the trade."[108] Even when slaves willingly engaged in sexual relations with their masters for strategic reasons, William Wiethoff believes, this still constituted "sexual exploitation because of the gross imbalance of power in the relationships."[109] Masters seldom demonstrated any true affection for their slave women; however, some exceptions can be found.

Thomas Hamilton Dunn was born in Ireland, but by 1850 he had become a citizen of Claiborne County, Mississippi. The forty-one year old was recorded in the federal census as a planter with his personal and real estate valued at $1500. Dunn was single but owned seven male slaves, ranging between the ages of 1 and 65.[110] The Irishman's fortunes prospered during the cotton boom years of the 1850s and by the time of his death, on 5th March 1860, he was able to leave a handsome legacy for his relatives. In his last will and testimony, Dunn left $500 each to his father and sister living in Belfast city, his brother Gavin H. Dunn and his two daughters were bequeathed "one thousand dollars each." The fifth clause of Dunn's will was unusual:

> I give and bequeath to the yellow woman Susan McNial now living with me and her child Thomas, the sum of Eight thousand Dollars, and request that my Exectors will give the said Susan and Child a portion of this legacy left to her, and send her off to Ohio, where her other children live, as soon after my decease as they can do so.[111]

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[108] Edward E. Baptist "'Cuffy' 'Fancy Maids' and 'One-Eyed Men': Rape, Commodification, and the Domestic Slave Trade in the United States," *AHR*, Vol. 106, No. 5 (2001), 1620.

[109] William E. Wiethoff, *Crafting the Overseer's Image*, (Columbia, 2006), 32. For more on the lives of female slaves see Deborah Gray White, *Ar'n't I a Woman?: Female Slaves in the Plantation South*, (New York, 1985); Patricia Morton, (ed.), *Discovering the Women in Slavery: Emancipating Perspectives on the American Past*, (Athens, GA., 1996); Marli Frances Weiner, *Mistresses and Slaves: Plantation Women in South Carolina, 1830-80*, (Urbana IL., 1998).

[110] Seventh Census of the United States, 1850, (Claiborne County, Miss.,); District 1, Seventh Census: Slave Schedule, 1850, (Claiborne County, Miss.,).

[111] Copy of Will of Thomas H. Dunn, Patrick Murphy Papers, LLMVC.

The executors of Dunn's will were two Irish men: Edward Purcell, a young merchant in the town of Rodney in Jefferson County, Mississippi, and Patrick Murphy a construction contractor. Dunn's request caused difficulties for the executors as both Susan and Thomas were "colored persons of the african [*sic*] race" and were the legal property of Thomas Hamilton Dunn. According to the laws of Mississippi, the request was "utterly null and void." Purcell and Murphy "were bound to disregard it entirely and... the Probate Court neither would or could allow them credit for a single dollar" for Susan.[112]

Remarkably, Susan and Thomas reached Ohio, living on a small farm with her children in Highland County. On 13th April 1860, Susan sent a letter to Patrick Murphy thanking him for the letter he sent her on 29th March 1860. Susan reflected how "Mas Thomas" had consulted a lawyer and was aware that "the law would give me nothing." She praised Murphy and reminded him of the great esteem that Dunn had for him. Dunn was unsure about whom he could "Trust [with] my affairs except Murphy for he is one after my own heart. Murphy will do all thats right." Although Susan had made it to a free state, her freedom was not guaranteed. News had reached her that Gavin Dunn was looking for her and "my child, saying that I had taken all the money I could get and ran away before Mas Thomas death and said he would take me and my child back as we were his brothers property."[113] Susan, however, was sure that "my papers was good they are recorded in Port Gibson and here in Hillsborough." In concluding the letter, she asked Murphy to give her thanks to "Mr Purcell" for "sending my things." Susan signed off the letter as Susan Dunn.[114]

Later that year, Murphy received another letter from Susan, who was enduring economic difficulties. She hoped that he would be able to send her

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[112] Copy of Answer of P. Murphy, 5 Mar., 1860, Patrick Murphy Papers, LLMVC.

[113] Susan McNeil to Patrick Murphy, 13 Apr., 1860, Patrick Murphy Papers, LLMVC. The 1850 Fugitive Slave Act forbade state governments from interfering with the recapture of runaway slaves. For more see Don E. Fehrenbacher, *The Slaveholding Republic: An Account of the United States Government's Relations to Slavery*, (Oxford, 2001), 205-253; David G. Smith, *On the Edge of Freedom: The Fugitive Slave Issue in South Central Pennsylvania 1820-1870*, (New York, 2013).

[114] Ibid.

"fifty or a hundred dollars as I stand greatly in need of it. I can not make any money on the farm until fall. Please let me know if you can get that 800 dollars... I have to make a payment on this farm." Susan dreaded that she would lose the farm, and aid from Mississippi was her "only hope." Worried, she reminded Murphy that "I have received but one letter from you yet and none from Mr Purcell, please write."[115] No record remains of any further communication between Patrick and Susan. The 1870 Federal Census reveals that Susan and her children stayed in Highfield County. Susan then owned real estate valued at $2,000 and her personal estate was estimated at $275. Her two eldest sons James and Harry Dunn were both farm labourers. All of her five children were born in Mississippi and Susan herself was born in Virginia. All of her children are recorded as Mulattoes. The census reveals that Susan was illiterate and the author on her behalf remains unknown.[116]

The efforts made by Thomas Dunn to get Susan and her son to Ohio went beyond the normal master-slave relation. It is possible that he was the father of Susan's son who bore his name, if not all her five children. It appears that he travelled to Ohio with Susan. In her first letter to Murphy, Susan reveals that she was with him the day before he died. Years later Susan Dunn was recorded as being a widow.[117] Both executors of Dunn's will were immigrants, who like, Dunn profited from the institution of slavery. Edward Purcell was a successful merchant with real estate valued at $12,000 and his personal estate valued at $10,000. Purcell was also the owner of seven slaves.[118] Murphy worked in construction and specialised in bridge building, he benefitted as a skilled labourer and was able to invest, owning "the ape that nature blessed with human shape."[119] On 22nd

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[115] Susan McNeil to Patrick Murphy, 21 May 1860, Patrick Murphy Papers, LLMVC.
[116] Ninth Census of the United States, 1870, Madison, Highland, Ohio. For more on mixed race relationships in the antbellum South see Peter W. Bardaglio, *Reconstructing the Household: Families, Sex, and the Law in the Nineteenth Century South*, (Chapel Hill, 1995); Elise Virginia Lemire, *"Miscegenation": Making Race in America*, (Philadelphia, 2002).
[117] Tenth Census of the United States, 1880, Madison, Highfield, Ohio.
[118] Eight Census of the United States, 1860, Rodney, Jefferson, Mississippi; Eight Census: Slave Schedule 1860. Rodney, Jefferson, Mississippi.
[119] Untitled Poem, Patrick Murphy Papers, LLMVC.

November 1860 he profited by selling his slave "George for 1500" dollars.[120]

Irish immigrants who spent any extended period in the slave states would have been aware of the potentially lethal consequences of interfering with the institution of slavery. William M. Leary in South Carolina for example witnessed the punishment of a man for allegedly receiving "stolen goods from negroes." The man was stripped "to the pantaloons" by a mob who covered him with the contents of a "barrel of Tar" and "daubed him" with cotton. The mob then drove the man through the streets "applying the cowskin to the cotton every few minutes."[121] Murphy and Purcell undertook great personal risk by just having contact with Susan. This intriguing example of Irish slave-ownership in rural Mississippi shows how complicated the relationship between Irish immigrants and the peculiar institution could be. Irish slaveholders did not always prescribe to southern social norms. The efforts Thomas Dunn undertook to ensure that his children would not suffer the fate of being slaves were unusual. At this time, most planters used and sold their black progeny for profit.[122]

ii.   Going Out West & Flush Times

The wealth generated by cotton was attractive not only to southerners, but also to people from the northern states and foreign immigrants who travelled to seek fresh lands in the expanding southern cotton frontier. Those who made a new life for themselves in the slave states learned, as James Bones was informed by his son, that the business of being a planter "is much the happiest life in this Country."[123] One of the most attractive aspects of short staple cotton was that it could be produced on any size of landholding. Unlike sugar and rice, cotton did not need initial heavy capital

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[120] Diary of Patrick Murphy, 22 Nov., 1860, Diary 1860-1861, Patrick Murphy Papers, LLMVC.

[121] William M. Leary to Daniel O. Leary, 26 Aug., 1828, Henry Calvin Conner Papers, SCL.

[122] Another example of an Irish slaveholder undertaking extraordinary measures to secure the freedom of his slave children is Michael Morris Healy in Georgia. See James M. O'Toole, *Passing for White: Race, Religion and the Healy Family 1820-1920*, (Amherst, 2003), 5-14.

[123] John Bones to James Bones, 24 Jul., 1828, Hughes Family Papers 1790-1910, SHC.

investment for plantation infrastructure. It was a crop that could grow on cheap land and without slaves. Small farmers in the antebellum South practiced a strategy of "safety-first" farming, prioritising the production of subsistence crops such as corn. Cotton, however, could be grown successfully in small quantities without disturbing the production of the main subsistence crops; it proved itself a lucrative supplementary crop.[124] Many farmers integrated cotton as a cash crop into their subsistence farming and "could enter and withdraw from the cotton market with relative ease."[125] Cotton cultivation became the business "of individuals and families who belonged to all social classes."[126]

Irish immigrants who obtained their own land stood to make a tidy profit when cotton prices were high. John O'Raw noted in 1809 how in Newberry, South Carolina, "Johnny Boyd" had "bought 130 Acres of land for 300 Dollars he is very contented & happy he has made a good change he will in a short time be Rich which he never would have been in Ireland."[127] Many who planted a small cotton crop aspired to being planters. James McCann migrated from Muckamore, County Antrim, and settled in Newberry County, South Carolina. On his arrival in 1821, he informed his brother John in New York that "I crop with Mr Barrett but it is my intention as soon as I am able to remove to a country or state where Land is lower than it is here."[128] In just over a year, James informed his brother that he was now renting thirty acres of land in Newberry "I hav [sic] 10 in cotton and 20 in corn."[129] The panic of 1819 hit South Carolina hard and McCann persevered during the economic stagnation of the early 1820s. By 1828 he

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[124] William W. Freeling, *Prelude to Civil War: The Nullification Crisis in South Carolina 1816-1836*, (New York, 1966), 19; Gavin Wright & Howard Kunreuther, "Cotton, Corn and Risk in the Nineteenth Century," *Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 35, No. 3 (Sep., 1975), 526-551; Keumsoo Hong, "The Geography of Time and Labor in the Late Antebellum American Rural South: Fin-de-Servitude, Time Consciousness, Contested Labor, and Plantation Capitalism," *International Review of Social History*, Vol. 46, No. 1 (Apr., 2001), 1-27.
[125] Hahn, *Yeomanry of the* South, 43.
[126] Enrico Dal Lago, *Agrarian Elites: American Slaveholders and Southern Italian Landowners 1815-1861*, (Baton Rouge, 2005), 66.
[127] Miller, et al, *Land of* Canaan, 99.
[128] James McCann to John McCann, 9 Jul., 1821, McCann Family Papers, 1820-1843, SCL. For more on share cropping in the antebellum period see Charles Bolton, *Tenants and Laborers in Central North Carolina and Northeast Mississippi*, (Durham, 1994), 37.
[129] James McCann to John McCann, 22 Aug., 1822, McCann Family Papers, SCL.

told his brother that "I bought the plantation on which I live with the expectation of being able to pay for it by my honest industry, but the two years before this were both bad crop years in addition to which myself and family lost much time by sickness." He cultivated a promising crop, but found that "the low price of these articles will not render it a very valuable" crop. James's economic situation forced him to request financial aid from his brother asking him to lend him one hundred dollars, for "I could not think of Parting with my lands."[130]

By 1845, James McCann was pleased to inform his brother that "we made 15 bales of cotton last year" on his new lands. James and his family had immigrated again and settled thirty miles from Columbus in Lowndes County, Mississippi. McCann had purchased a 200 acre farm in which he had 55 acres cleared. The soil of his new farm pleased him; he remarked how it could "produce almost any thing [*sic*]." However, he was now a widower and his four youngest children lived with him on the farm. The children had to "work very hard to met [*sic*] the payments on my land but I am afraid we will be presed [*sic*] hard yet." He had constructed a cotton gin which "throd [*sic*] me in good del [*sic*] of det [*sic*] besides the det [*sic*] of my land," yet this was necessary for "cotton is the only thing that will bring us any money." The current "low price of cotton" forced James again to turn to his brother for financial assistance to lend him $200.[131]

James McCann and his family were typical small producing farmers. Unlike the "planters whose ownership of slaves was sufficient to render their labor, and that of their families managerial," the McCann family comprised the primary labour force on their farm. Even farmers who managed to own as many as nine slaves still found themselves dependent on family members for labour.[132] One Irish immigrant in the South Carolina back country observed that the "women of this country live the poorest lives

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[130] James McCann to John McCann, 3 Aug., 1828, McCann Family Papers, SCL. It is important to note that McCann referred to his farm as a plantation. The term farmer and planter were often interchangeable and distinctions oftentimes blurred. See Oakes, *The Ruling Race*, 50-52.

[131] James McCann to John McCann, 27 Mar., 1845, McCann Family Papers, SCL.

[132] Stephanie McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Households, Gender Relations & the Political Culture of the Antebellum South Carolina Low Country*, (Oxford, 1995), 48.

of any people in the world. It is directly opposite to Charleston; here they must do everything from cooking to ploughing."[133] James McCann viewed himself as master of his household and took pride in his family's self-sufficiency, "there is not a single article brought to us from the North but we can raise plenty of ourselves."[134] The McCann family decision to leave South Carolina for Mississippi was part of a larger outmigration from the eastern seaboard slave states to newer lands in the southwest.[135] From the beginning of the first cotton boom, cheap lands, and the hope of quick profits lured many to the southwest whereas others found themselves faced with no other choice but to move in times of economic depression, when hardships were compounded by soil exhaustion and erosion in their home states. In 1827, Juliana Margaret Courtney Conner observed that the people of Virginia and North Carolina "possess a great spirit for emigration and adventure- and are always foremost in the ranks of those who go out to our western wilds." Connor noted "so many of them have grants or claims of lands that it becomes matter of necessity or speculation. I cannot conceive of its being choice."[136]

The forced removal of the south-western Native American tribes by the Jackson and Van Buren administrations eliminated resistance to the agricultural colonisation of the southern interior and made available millions of acres of land in western Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi and eastern Louisiana.[137] Irish immigrants and their children formed "part of the country's original populist pantheon of the frontier," including the cotton frontier of the southwest.[138] P. Edward Pearson left to settle in Talladega, Alabama and kept up correspondence with his Irish friend John McMaster, a

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[133] Diary of Thomas Gaffney cited in Wayne Flynt, *Dixie's Forgotten People: The South's Poor Whites.* (Bloomington, IN., 1978), 5-6.

[134] James McCann to John McCann, 3 Aug., 1828, McCann Family Papers, SCL.

[135] Rothman, *Slave Country*, 37-72; James D. Miller, *South by Southwest: Planter Emigration and Identity in the Slave South*, (Charlottesville, 2002).

[136] Juliana Margaret Courtney Conner Diary #174-7, SHC.

[137] Anthony F. Wallace, *The Long, Bitter Trial: Andrew Jackson and the Indians*, (New York, 1993), 3-15 &102-121; Theda Perdue & Michael D. Green, *The Cherokee Nation and the Trail of Tears*, (New York, 2007); Perdue & Green, *The Columbia Guide to American Indians of the Southeast*, (New York, 2001); Francis Paul Prucha, *The Great Father: The United States Government and the American Indians*, (London, 1986); Mary Elizabeth Young, *Redskins, Ruffleshirts and Rednecks: Indian Allotments in Alabama and Mississippi, 1830-1860*, (Norman, 1961).

[138] Dennis Clark, *Hibernia America: The Irish and Regional Cultures*, (London, 1986), 8-9.

merchant in Winnsboro, in South Carolina. Pearson looked forward to his first crop from fresh soil, which was superior to that "in poor old dried up South Carolina." His land could produce "from 30 to 60" bushels of corn "& that with no great cultivation." Not only was the land good for crop and cotton cultivation, but livestock also thrived, "such cattle I know you never saw." Cheap lots were still available but Pearson believed this would not be the case for long. Pearson believed the new settlers were "a mongrel mixture from every state in the Union. Every body [*sic*] here is looking for advantages."[139] Letters by Pearson and others helped spread "Alabama Fever," a belief that anyone who acquired frontier lands and planted cotton would inevitably become rich.[140]

Robert Dickson, the son of Tyrone immigrant William Dickson, contracted this fever and left Spartenburg County, South Carolina, for Dallas County, Alabama. Robert went into business with Green Underwood. Among their business dealings was the importation of slaves to Alabama. Underwood travelled back to South Carolina with the intention of procuring slaves. He informed Dickson to tell John Smyley "that he need not expect me to get a seamstress for him... Negroes are high here fellows $800 to $900 girls $600 to $700."[141] The southern frontier provided opportunities for Irish immigrants and their families. Many landless white families obtained land, and each success story helped convince others to try their luck in the expanding southwest slave region.

The increasing availability of new lands and the rising global demand for cotton in the late 1820s created the conditions for another massive speculative boom in the South. Exports to Britain increased by a factor of ninety-three between 1791 and 1800, by 1802 the US was the single most important supplier of cotton for the British market and exports multiplied seven times by 1820 to reach 167.5 million pounds of cotton.[142]

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[139] P. Edwards Pearson to John McMaster, 28 May 1838, Papers, 1778-1941 of John McMaster and Rachel Buchanan McMaster, SCL.

[140] Baptist, *Half Has Never Been Told*, 96; Daniel Dupre, *Transforming the Cotton Frontier: Madison County, Alabama, 1800-1840*, (Baton Rouge, 1997).

[141] Green Underwood to Robert Dickson, 26 Aug., 1835, The Dickson Family Papers, 1818-1860, SCL.

[142] Beckert, *Empire of Cotton*, 104.

Never before in the history of US slavery was there "a greater demand for field hands than for the clearing away of southern forests, the raising of crude homes and barns and the cultivation of stubborn new grounds."[143] The early and mid 1830s became known as the "Flush Times." The combination of technological and infrastructural improvements coincided with the sale of Native American lands, an increased money supply and "government policies that enable rapidly proliferating state and local banks to unleash a deluge of paper notes and liberal loans" to create unprecedented opportunities along the burgeoning cotton frontier.[144] Nowhere was this giddy excitement of the Flush Times greater than in Mississippi, where a "plantation well stocked with hands" was "the *ne* [*sic*] *plus ultra* of every man's ambition."[145] People and capital poured into the state, with the aim "To sell cotton in order to buy negroes- to make more cotton to buy more negroes, 'ad infinitum.'"[146] By 1835, the federal government sold nearly three million acres, which was more public land than had been sold in the entire US just a few years earlier.[147] The number of banks in Mississippi increased from one in 1829 to thirteen by 1837, and the state's white population nearly doubled when almost 75,000 white settlers arrived between 1830 and 1836. The state's slave population grew even faster. By 1830, over 65,000 slaves were settled in Mississippi; six years later 164,000 slaves resided in the state. By 1837, fifty three percent of Mississippi's total population were slaves making it a black majority state.[148]

The prospect of easy wealth attracted immigrants. In Natchez, the heart of Mississippi's plantation order, one traveller found that "Irish gentlemen of family and fortune have sought and found a home."[149] One Irish immigrant who hoped to take advantage of conditions in Mississippi was Andrew Richey, who settled with his brother in 1834 as merchants in

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[143] Thomas Clark & John D. Guice, *The Old Southwest, 1795-1830: Frontiers in Conflict*, (Albuquerque, 1989), 16.

[144] Rothman, *Flush Times*, 2; Howard Bodenhorn, *A History of Banking in Antebellum America: Financial Markets and Economic Development in an Era of Nation Building*, (Cambridge, 2000).

[145] Ingraham, *The South-West. Volume Two*, *84*.

[146] Ibid, 91.

[147] Rothman, *Flush Times*, 4; Clark & Guice, *The Old Southwest*, 233-253.

[148] Rothman, *Flush Times*, 4-10; Libby, *Frontier Mississippi*, 75-78.

[149] Ingraham, *The South-West. Volume Two*, *50*.

Clinton County. He believed that Mississippi was "a fine state for making money." Andrew informed his parents that "we sell thirty thousand dollars worth of goods this year but they are mostly all on credit and it requires a good while to collect but we have fine profits upwards of 100 percent."[150] Other Irish immigrants settled as farmers including Joseph Tiffin, the first Irishman in Vicksburg to become a naturalised citizen of the US.[151] Small enclaves of Irish settlers were scattered throughout Mississippi, for example at Sulphur Springs in Madison County and Paulding in Jasper County. Here, Irish families such as the Kelly's, O'Rourke's, O'Leary's and Ward's were found. Many had come via Georgia in search of better lands and many families owned dozens of slaves.[152]

Aside from the established planters of Natchez and New Orleans, most slaveholders who engaged in cotton production in the south-western frontier belonged to a newer, self-made upper class. Rodger W. Shugg has argued that instead of a genuine aristocracy of planters, there existed "a plutocracy of nouveaux riches who aspired to become an aristocracy- and only succeeded in legend of later years."[153] James Oakes has argued that small slaveholders and the sons of planters were united by "the goal of purchasing lands and slaves and moving west in pursuit of that goal."[154] Westward migration was the key for upward social mobility in the slave south. However, it is misguided to believe that the prosperity of the south-western frontier resulted in economic success for all white immigrants who settled there. Charles Bolton has successfully demonstrated that, for the most part, poor white emigrants failed to become landowners, not to mention slaveholders. The high prices of cotton and the presence of slavery made these government lands more valuable than other frontiers.

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[150] Andrew Richey Letter, 29 Oct., 1835, D3561/A/6/1/11A, PRONI.

[151] William R. Ferris, "'A Lengthening Chain in the Shape of Memories': The Irish and Southern Culture," *Southern Cultures*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (Spring, 2011), 14; Christoper Morris, *Becoming Southern: The Evolution of a Way of Life, Warren County and Vicksburg, Mississippi, 1770-1860*, (New York, 1995).

[152] David T. Gleeson, "The Mississippi Irish", (M.A. Thesis. Mississippi State University, 1993), 23-37.

[153] Rodger W. Shugg, *Origins of Class Struggle in Louisiana: A Social History of White Farmers and Laborers during Slavery and After, 1840-1875*, (Baton Rouge, 1966), [1939], 38.

[154] Oakes, *The Ruling* Race, 76-88; Rothman, *Slave Country*, 37-72; Miller, *South by Southwest*.

Immigrants faced stiff competition for the best lands from wealthy planters and well organised land speculating companies.[155] Corrupt lawyers manipulated the barely functioning court system for their clients and their own interests, outside the courts surrogates of the land speculators bullied and swindled potential settlers.[156] One South Carolina immigrant remarked how all those in Mississippi were "deranged on the subject of real estate." Banks were unregulated and had no limits on how much money they could print or lend. Another recent arrival was struck by how "Money, or what passed for money" was the "only cheap thing to be had", as slave and property prices rocketed.[157]

By 1834, Mississippi produced 85 million pounds of cotton and this increased to 125 million pounds by 1836. Mississippi now produced nearly a quarter of the total US cotton crop, far more than any other state.[158] However, this spectacular cotton boom could not continue with its remarkable trajectory. In 1836, cotton prices began to fall. Global cotton prices were in freefall until July 1837, triggering an economic depression in the US with wide scale bank failures and foreclosures.[159] Andrew Richey reported back to his parents in Ireland about the "most alarming failure amongst the largest and most influential houses in America...that out of 800 banks scarcely a single one is able to redeem their notes in gold & silver." Andrew believed that the cause of these great troubles was a result of "over trading & over speculation, men getting deep in dept [*sic*]."[160] Only by the mid 1840s did the US economy begin to recover from the Panic of 1837. By 1850, cotton prices had recovered and prospered as the spiking global demand for cotton left "the South flush with wealth and ecstatic about the dependence of the entire industrialized world on an item that only southern

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[155] Bolton, *Poor Whites*, 66-83; Shugg, *Origins of Class Struggle*, 79-85.
[156] Rothman, *Flush Times*, 9.
[157] Cited in Ibid, 6; Baptist, *Half Has Never Been Told*, 269-270.
[158] Rothman, *Flush Times*, 6.
[159] Baptist, *Half Has Never Been Told*, 265-292; John Hebron Moore, *The Emergence of the Cotton Kingdom In the Old Southwest. Mississippi, 1770-1860*, (Baton Rouge, 1988), 18-22; Jessica M. Lepler, *The Many Panics of 1837: People, Politics and the Creation of Transatlantic Financial Crisis*, (New York, 2013); Alasdair Roberts, *America's First Great Depression: Economic Crisis and Political Disorder After the Panic of 1837*, (New York, 2012).
[160] Andrew Richey Letter, September 1837, D3561/A/6/1/15A, PRONI.

slaves could produce with profit."[161] By the late 1850s, US cotton accounted for 77 percent of the 800 million pounds of cotton consumed in Britain and 90 percent of the 192 million pounds consumed in France.[162] People forgot the lesson of 1837 and invested all in a crop which they believed "enveloped the commercial world, and bound the fortunes of American slaves so firmly to human progress, that civilization may also be said to depend upon the continued servitude of blacks in America."[163]

Irish immigrants who had the privilege of receiving an education realised that the expanding frontier society of the slave southwest was in need of educated professionals, especially physicians and lawyers. Due to the "prevalence of sickness and death, and the endless squabbling over land, the opportunities for success" among the professional classes on "the frontier were virtually unlimited in good and bad times."[164] As one disgruntled South Carolina planter remarked, "It is not well to be too near doctors or lawyers" since "in the neighborhood of doctors there is always sickness and the neighborhood of lawyers always quarrelling."[165] Practicing lawyers and doctors were able to move upward socially and economically into the planter class, and as result "no men grow old or gray in their profession if at all successful." Ingraham noted on his travels how the "bar at Natchez is composed with but few exceptions, entirely of young men."[166] The desire to become planters among the professionals created additional opportunities for immigrants to enter the professional ranks.

In the South "Physicians make money much more rapidly than lawyers, and soon retire from practice."[167] Irish doctors were able to create

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[161] Matthew Karp, "King Cotton, Emperor Slavery. Antebellum Slaveholders and the World Economy," in David T. Gleeson & Simon Lewis, (eds.), *The Civil War as Global Conflict: Transnational Meanings of the American Civil War*, (Columbia, SC., 2014), 36.
[162] Beckert, *Empire of Cotton*, 243
[163] De Bow's Review Sep., 1856 cited in Brian Schoen, "The Burdens and Opportunities of Interdependence: The Political Economies of the Planter Class," in L. Diane Barnes, Brian Schoen & Rank Towers, (eds.), *The Old South's Modern Worlds: Slavery, Region, and Nation in the Age of Progress*, (Oxford, 2011), 80.
[164] Oakes, *The Ruling* Race, 61.
[165] Cited in Orville Vernon Burton, *In My Father's House Are Many Mansions: Family & Community in Edgefield, South Carolina*, (Chapel Hill, 1985), 75.
[166] Ingraham, *The South-West. Volume Two*, 84-85.
[167] Ibid, 85-86. For more on southern doctors see Steven M. Stowe, *Doctoring the South: Southern Physicians and Everyday Medicine in the Mid-Nineteenth Century,* (Chapel Hill,

business and social contacts tending to the needs of the elite in southern society. When Michael O'Regan arrived in New Orleans, he became acquainted with Irish sugar planter John Hagan, whose "uncle" was "one of the richest men in the city; the family came from a village on the borders of Lock Neah called Magharafelt." John Hagan's uncle, also named John, was considered "an Irish gentleman" by the Marquis de Lafayétte, whose lands and family business affairs Hagan managed in Louisiana. The Hagans made a fortune in land speculation and one of their lucrative deals involved the selling of Cypress Grove plantation in Mississippi to General Zachery Taylor.[168] Hagan's brother had been "shot through both thighs and scrotum in a duel. The half of one foot mortified;" and the Clare born doctor was invited to care for the injured man for five months on their plantation "about 100 miles up the Mississippi."[169] O'Regan on his arrival found that the:

> people and country are different from ours as the Antipodes, for example an American comes to consult you as a physician and says he feels so and so- you see that nothing is the matter and you tell him so, he puts you down as a humbug and forthwith consults another who humours him and gets the almighty dollar.

The Irish doctor exclaimed "I see the path by which I am to advance myself now."[170]

When Dr. Thomas O'Dwyer established a medical practice in Murfreesboro, North Carolina, he was on call by the planters to look after sick slaves. Moreover, he treated injuries such as those sustained by John Benthall who had been attacked "by his negro girl 13 yrs old" with an axe.[171] By 1825, O'Dwyer had accumulated land and slave property. Although he had only two and a half acres of cotton planted that year, he had his eye on a plot of 400 acres, and he invested in slaves, whom he hired out.[172] O'Dwyer built up his holdings by purchasing skilled slaves such as

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2004); Marli Frances Weiner & Mazie Hough, *Sex, Sickness, and Slavery: Illness in the Antebellum South,* (Urbana, IL., 2012).

[168] Marquies de Lafayétte to John Hagan, 22 Jan., 1834; George Washington Lafayétte to John Hagan, 1 Oct., 1841 & 5 Nov., 1848; Zachary Taylor to John Hagan, 26 May 1841, James Hagan & Family Papers, Mss1485, LLMVC.

[169] Michael O'Regan to John O'Regan, 4 Aug., 1844, O'Regan Family Papers, HNOC.

[170] Michael O'Regan to John O'Regan, 15 Jan., 1844, O'Regan Family Papers, HNOC.

[171] 1 Dec., 1825, Diary of Dr. Thomas O'Dwyer, in Samuel Jordan Wheeler and Other Diaries #766, SHC.

[172] 11th, 21 Apr., & 6 May, 1825, Diary of Dr. Thomas O'Dwyer, SHC.

Bob, who was "a good cooper & turpentine distiller," which in turn allowed the doctor to command higher prices for hiring out his slave property.[173] By 1834, O'Dwyer was the master of fifteen slaves.[174]

Frederick Stanton came from Belfast to Natchez in 1818 as a physician but soon quit the practice to establish a cotton-commission business with ex-attorney Aylette Bucker. They operated commission houses in Natchez, Yazoo City and New Orleans, but lost all in the Panic of 1837. Undeterred, Stanton started investing again in lands and slaves. By 1860, on the eve of his death, Stanton was the sixth largest slaveholder residing in the state of Mississippi and the twenty-first largest slaveholder in the US with 638 slaves who worked in six cotton plantations, over 15,109 acres in Adams County in Mississippi and Concordia Parish in Louisiana. In 1859 Stanton's crop of 3000 cotton bales netted him a gross profit of $122,000.[175] Not all Irish professionals were as successful as Stanton. John Reynolds struggled to establish a medical practice and was advised to "go back to Ireland" by his relative William Reynolds in Columbia, South Carolina.[176]

Law proved to be another attractive option for educated Irish immigrants. Indeed, by 1855, one fifth of all practicing lawyers in New Orleans were of Irish birth.[177] A good lawyer in the antebellum South was one who could sever their clients from their money, believed one Louisiana resident: "d-m them lawyers, I say they are the d---l."[178] However, the road to becoming a successful lawyer-cum-planter was not guaranteed. Irish born

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[173] 26 May, 1825, Diary of Dr. Thomas O'Dwyer, SHC.

[174] William F. Powers, *Tar Heel Catholics: A History of Catholicism in North Carolina*, (New York, 2003), 115.

[175] James D. Clayton, *Antebellum Natchez*, (Baton Rouge, 1968), 156-157; William Kauffman Scarborough, *Masters of The Big House: Elite Slaveholders of The Mid-Nineteenth-Century South*, (Baton Rouge, 2003), 135, 231, 434 & 467.

[176] William Reynolds to John Reynolds, 1 Jul., 1854, Reynolds Family Papers, 1837-1958, SCL.

[177] Earl F. Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, *1800-1860*, (Baton Rouge, 1965), 38.

[178] Richard Davidson to A. P. W., 20 Jun., 1820, Antonio Patrick Walsh Papers, LLMVC. For more on the legal profession in the antebellum South see Bertram Wyatt-Brow, *Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South*, (New York, 1983), 254-271; Christopher Waldrep & Donald G. Nieman, (eds.), *Local Matters: Race, Crime, and Justice in the Nineteenth-Century South*, (Athens, GA., 2001); Laura F. Edwards, *The People and Their Peace: Legal Culture and the Transformation of Inequality in the Post-Revolutionary South*, (Chapel Hill, 2009).

Edward Conigland in North Carolina was tired "of being half lawyer-half farmer."[179] However, some of the wealthiest and most influential Irish planters began their careers practicing law as Alexander Porter and Edward Sparrow did for example. Alexander Porter was born in County Donegal and left Ireland at the age of sixteen after the execution of his father for suspected participation in the United Irishmen's Rebellion of 1798. He settled with his uncle, an established merchant, in Nashville, Tennessee. Porter was admitted to the Tennessee Bar in 1807 and two years later he journeyed down the Mississippi river and established himself in St. Mary's Parish, Louisiana. He went on to enjoy an illustrious legal and political career and his quick mastering of the French language greatly boosted his appeal. Porter served "successively in the Constitutional Convention of 1811-1812, in the lower House of the state legislature, 1816-1818, on the Louisiana Supreme Court Bench, 1821-1833, and as United State Senator 1833-1836."[180] Alongside his legal and political commitments, Porter established himself as a sugar planter on his "Oak Lawn" plantation on Bayou Teche, near the town of Franklin, Louisiana. Oak Lawn plantation consisted of "a fine and fertile tract of land, extending for nearly a mile on either side of the river Teche." By 1838, it was noted that Porter had "brought 2,000 acres into cultivation, and has a stock of about 160 negroes." Charles Daubeny, Professor of Chemistry at Oxford University, was a guest of Porter's on the plantation, and he recorded how Porter "at present lodged in a small cottage," but was "erecting a handsome and commodious mansion."[181]

On the plantation, Daubeny observed that Porter was "like a Feudal Lord amongst his serfs, receiving their congratulations on his return." Spending a week on the plantation left Daubeny of the opinion that Porter treated his slaves "liberally and kindly," yet the Irish planter showed no indications that he regarded his slaves "in the light of morally responsible

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[179] Edward Conigland to Mary Wyatt Ezell, 21 Jul., 1856, Edward Conigland Papers, 1838-1921, # 859, SHC.

[180] Wendell Holmes Stephenson, *Alexander Porter Whig Planter of Old Louisiana*, (Baton Rouge, 1934), 1-13.

[181] Charles Daubeny, *Journal of a Tour Through the United States and in Canada, During the Years 1837-1838*, (Oxford, 1843), 141-143.

beings, or make any efforts to instruct or enlighten them." Porter, like "all slave-holders avoid as much as possible to discuss" the humanity of their slave property.[182] Many enslavers envisioned their plantations as machines, where in order "to operate successfully all of its parts should be uniform and exact and the impelling force regular and steady."[183] Charles Stewart, a slave of Porter's, recalled how his Irish master "wouldn't stand no foolin'" that "Things had to be jes' so, but dar warn't no naggin' nor scoldin'; it was jes' stiddy management."[184] Through steady management, Porter's wealth grew, the *Daily Picayune* reported how Porter's "immediate connection with the agricultural interests of the South and more especially with a branch of industry peculiar to this State [sugar], has been long and intimate."[185] Porter passed away in 1844, and his brother James inherited his estate. In 1849, James made an inventory of the property he inherited, the plantation with its improvements and buildings were appraised at $120,000. The value of his 320 slaves amounted to $90,350.[186]

Edward Sparrow, born in Dublin on the 29th December 1810, was another Irish born lawyer who enjoyed the status of large planter. As a young child, he emigrated with his parents, they settled in Columbus, Ohio. Sparrow attended Kenyon College before he studied law. Having practiced for a short time in Ohio, Sparrow moved to Louisiana in 1831. He became the clerk of court for Concordia Parish and later participated in the US-Mexican War. After the war he returned to become a successful attorney.[187] Men like Sparrow, who climbed the southern social ladder, consolidated their holdings during the last decade of US slavery. By 1860, Sparrow held 277 slaves in his Carroll Parish plantation and 115 slaves in his second plantation in Concordia Parish. With a total of 392 slaves producing cotton,

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[182] Ibid, 144.
[183] "On the Management of Slaves," *Southern Agriculturist*, 6, (June 1833), 281-287.
[184] "My Life as a Slave," *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, Vol. LXIX, (Oct., 1884), 738.
[185] Cited in Stephenson, *Alexander Porter*, 113.
[186] Ibid, 124-125.
[187] Spencer Tucker, (ed.), A*merican Civil War: The Definitive Encyclopaedia and Document Collection. Vol. IV*, (Santa Barbara, 2013), 1841; Clayton E. Jewett, (ed.), *Rise and Fall of the Confederacy: The Memoir of Senator Williamson S. Oldham CSA. Shades of Blue & Gray*, (Columbia, 2011), 14-15.

Sparrow was the 19th largest slaveholder in the state of Louisiana.[188] In 1860, at the age of 49, Sparrow had amassed a fortune in real and personal property valued at $1,248,000, making him one of the wealthiest men not just in Louisiana but in the entire US.[189] Sparrow, like Porter, enjoyed also a political career; he was a delegate at the 1861 Louisiana Secession Convention, where he was an advocate of secession. He was elected as a representative to the Provisional Confederate Congress (1861-1862), where he was involved in drafting the Confederate Constitution. He served as a Confederate Senator for the remainder of the Civil War.[190]

iii.   The Last Foray

The growth of a bourgeoning middle class throughout the slave states afforded Irish immigrants the opportunity to acquire slave property and gain acceptance as respectable southerners. The expansion of slavery created further opportunities for social and economic advancement. The 1850s was the last decade when American slaveholders' profited from their human chattel. The demand for cotton rose once again and remained at a high price, resulting in a long and sustained cotton boom. The willingness of European and northern financial institutes to lend and invest generously in the South revealed their "continued faith in the long-term profitability of slavery."[191] In particular, the cotton crop of 1859 reflected the ever increasing demand for cotton by the industrial world; two billion pounds of clean cotton fibre, equivalent to four million bales, were produced. This equated to seven hundred pounds per slave in the cotton states, or over twenty-two times the rate of output in 1790.[192] Yet, the economic boom of the 1850s unearthed underlying tensions in the political economy of slavery and eventually brought the US to the point of civil war.[193]

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[188] Scarborough, *Masters of The Big* House, 464.
[189] Joseph Karl Menn, *The Large Slaveholders of Louisiana-1860*, (New Orleans, 1988), 79-80.
[190] Tucker, A*merican Civil War*, 1841.
[191] Baptist, *Half Has Never Been Told*, 353
[192] Ibid, 386-387.
[193] Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams*, 14. For more on the rising tensions and emergence of southern nationalism see Paul Quigley, *Shifting Grounds: Nationalism and the American South, 1848-1865*, (New York, 2012), 50-86; William W. Freehling, *The Road to Disunion,*

One consequence of the boom of the 1850s was that the gap between slaveholders and non-slaveholders widened considerably during the 1850s as the prices of slaves soared. The price of an adult male in New Orleans sold for $697 in 1850 rocketed to $1,451 in 1860. One slave sold on the New Orleans market was named Profit, a telling admission by his master.[194] In Sumterville, South Carolina, itinerant slave trader A. J. McElveen apologised to his employer, Z. B. Oakes, a prosperous Charleston broker for failing to "Gather Stock…I Indevour [*sic*] to bye [*sic*] Such negroes that will pay and your advise or Instructions [*sic*] are to bye [*sic*] Such that will pay a profit if I Get but fear, the fact is I cant find negros [*sic*] for Sale that will pay a profit."[195] Rising slave prices, David Gleeson notes, "put slave ownership out of the reach not only for the Irish but also for most other southerners."[196] High prices led to agitation amongst some southerners to repeal the 1808 US ban on the transatlantic slave trade. Among them was John Mitchel, a leading member of the failed Young Ireland movement. Mitchel believed that the reopening of the trade would be beneficial to all white southerners and help maintain "Southern institutions and interests against the North."[197]

The rising slave prices made it difficult for recently arrived Irish immigrants to purchase slaves and become full standing members of the master class. However, the possibility remained for Irish immigrants who were already firmly established as professionals, businessmen and successful tradesmen. James Oakes highlights how statistics vary for the different slave states, but "there is no question that in the 1850s, with the increase in the number of European immigrants entering the South, there

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Volume 1: Secessionists at Bay 1776-1854, (New York, 1990); *The Road to Disunion, Volume 2: Secessionists Triumphant*, *1854-1861*, (New York, 2006); Charles B. Dew, *Apostles of Disunion: Southern Secession Commissioners and the Causes of the Civil War*, (Charlottesville, VA., 2002).

[194] Judith Kelleher Schafar, "New Orleans Slavery in 1850 as Seen in Advertisements," *JSH*, Vol. 47, No. 1 (Feb., 1981), 53; Michael Tadman, *Speculators and Slaves: Masters, Traders and Slaves in the Old South*, (Madison, 1989), 77-79.

[195] A. J. McElveen to Z. B. Oakes, 22 Oct., 1853 cited in Edmund L. Drago, (ed.), *Broken by the War Letters of a Slave Trader*, (Columbia, SC., 1991), 58.

[196] Gleeson, *Irish in the South*, 123.

[197] David T. Gleeson, "Irish American Identity and The Reopening of The Atlantic Slave Trade," in David T. Gleeson, & Simon Lewis, (eds.), *Ambiguous Anniversary: The Bicentennial of the International Slave Trade Bans*, (Columbia, SC., 2012), 176-183; Bryan P. McGovern, *John Mitchel: Irish Nationalist, Southern Secessionist*, (Knoxville, 2009).

was a corresponding, increase in the number of foreign-born slaveholders."[198] Irish born planters enjoyed great wealth in the 1850s and some became elite planters, or members of the "planter aristocracy." Half of the South's 385,000 slaveholders (out of a total white population of about 8 million in 1860), owned one to five slaves; less than two and a half percent of slaveholders ever owned more than fifty slaves.[199] Large plantations were a rarity and their small number illustrates the difficulty of achieving such wealth. Only a few Irish immigrants like Edward Sparrow achieved large planter status and enjoyed wealth and influence that few in American society could imagine.

One planter observed that plantations rarely remained in the hands of a single family for more than a few generations. The "poor and industrious soon succeed the rich and extravagant; and a perpetual interchange is going on between them."[200] The destructive and speculative nature of the slave states' cotton economy ensured that economic and social mobility both upwards and downwards remained possible. The 1860 US Federal Census shows that Irish cotton kings and sugar lords existed throughout the antebellum South. For example John Robert Donnell, from Strabane, County Tyrone was the eighth largest slaveholder in North Carolina, owning 305 slaves. Donnell rose to prominence as a successful lawyer in New Bern.[201] In South Carolina, David Aiken originally from County Antrim owned five plantations in Winnsboro and Fairfield County; he owned 254 slaves. County Derry born William McKenna owned 151 on his cotton Rock House plantation in Lancaster County, whereas Loftus C. Cliford of County Wexford owned 146 slaves on his Pringle Field Plantation in Colleton County.[202] Louisiana was a state were large planters flourished. By 1860, 160,500 slaves, or 48.4 percent of the state's total slave population, resided on plantations with fifty slaves or more. In Louisiana Irish

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[198] Oakes, *The Ruling Race*, 43.

[199] Ibid, 65; Mark M. Smith, *Debating Slavery: Economy and Society in the Antebellum American South*, (Cambridge, 1998), 15.

[200] Edward S. Abdy, *Journal of a Residence and Tour in the United States of North America: For April, 1833 to October, 1834. Volume 2*, (London, 1835), 183.

[201] Donnell Family Papers, 1795-1869, SHC. See also Scarborough, *Masters of The Big House*, 474.

[202] Davidson, *The Last Foray*, 7, 170-171, 185 & 225.

immigrants reached the pinnacle of southern society. James D. Ford and B. G. Davenport of Ireland operated a sugar plantation together with 159 slaves in Assumption Parish. Patrick Doherty enjoyed the status of planter in West Feliciana Parish with 53 slaves and real and personal property valued at $85,500. Philip Maher, a planter in Madison Parish, owned 30 slaves and had a real and personal property valued at $305,000. John B. Murphy became a planter in St. Mary's Parish, where he owned 92 slaves and had personal and real property valued at $200,000.[203]

The large planters of the antebellum US South constructed their plantation empires through various means, "usually several of them in combination." Scarborough details how some "inherited the bulk of their wealth, while others utilized advantageous marriages, capital levied from mercantile and banking enterprises, hard work, aggressive entrepreneurial tactics and good fortune" to achieve their elite status.[204] Elite planters as a class enjoyed close connections that united privileged southerners, and large Irish planters found that their wealth bridged their differences with native-born planters.[205] The Irish planters of Louisiana were self made men and many achieved their wealth through a career in law. William L. Pitts was an Attorney-at-law who owned 153 slaves in Avoyelles Parish. Michael Ryan, also an Attorney-at-law in Rapides Parish, owned 68 slaves with a personal and real estate valued at $177,300. M. Boise in Natchitoches Parish also had a law practice and owned 86 slaves.[206] Many of the elite Irish planters of the 1850s held dual careers. Henry Boyce from County Derry settled in Rapides Parish to practice law and operate a plantation which was partly inherited by his wife Irene Archinard and which he partly purchased. On 9th May 1849 Boyce was appointed a Federal Judge of the Western District of Louisiana. By 1860, he owned an extensive cotton planting operation on 6,000 acres of land with 332 slaves on his Ulster Plantation.[207] Prominent Irish

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[203] Menn, *The Large Slaveholders of* Louisiana, 1-2, 125, 127-128, 228-229, 281-282 & 384-385.
[204] Scarborough, *Masters of The Big House*, 123.
[205] Daniel Kilbride, *An American Aristocracy: Southern Planters in Antebellum Philadelphia*, (Columbia, S.C., 2006).
[206] Menn, *The Large Slaveholders of Louisiana*, 123-135, 296-297, 334-335.
[207] Ibid, 327-297; Glenn R. Conrad, (ed.), *A Dictionary of Louisiana Biography Volume I. A to M*, (New Orleans, 1988), 99-100;

businessmen in New Orleans invested their profits in lands and slaves. Maunsel White and John Burnside were two of the most dominant businessmen in the Crescent City and both of them became sugar planters.

In 1844, Maunsel White recalled how "I left my native country /Ireland/ at an early age having had the misfortune to lose both parents when only six years old." He regretted that "my knowledge of our family is quite limited," but recalled that two of his mother's relations were "Bankers, formally in Limerick," whom he had visited when he was thirteen, the same year "I left for this country."[208] In 1801, White arrived in New Orleans having travelled from Ohio on a flatboat. He commenced work as a clerk and quickly learned the commission business. By 1808, he was operating his own commission enterprise.[209]

During the war of 1812, White commanded a battalion of uniformed volunteer soldiers, the Louisiana Blues and served under Andrew Jackson at the battle of New Orleans. White became acquainted with Jackson and the two became friends. Jackson reminisced that "From the time I first met you at the head of your brave company" he held the Irish man in great esteem, and this confidence continued to grow and "increased with time until now, and you will possess it to my grave."[210] White served as the 7th President of the United States cotton factor in New Orleans, but made his initial fortune in land speculation.[211] He married into the elite Creole family of General Pierre Denis la Ronde, the wealthiest planter in Louisiana at the time. His first wife Elizabeth Céleste de la Ronde died in 1822 and White soon

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http://www.fjc.gov/servlet/nGetInfo?jid=225&cid=999&ctype=na&instate=na Accessed 01/02/2013.

[208] Maunsel White to Robert Maunsell, 34 Jan., 1844, Maunsel White Papers #2234, SHC. Maunsel Bank of the Bank of Limerick was founded by Thomas and Robert Maunsell and their brother in –law, Sir Matthew Blakeston. See: http://www. landedestates.nuigalway.ie/LandedEstates/jsp/estate-show.jsp?id=2285. Accessed 02/02/2015.

[209] Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 10-11.

[210] Andrew Jackson to Maunsel White, 27 Mar., 1845, Andrew Jackson Letters, 1843-1845, TU.

[211] Andrew Jackson to Maunsel White, 28 Feb., 1842; Maunsel White to General Jackson 28th of Jan., 1845 & Maunsel White to General Jackson, 12 Mar., 1845, Maunsel White Papers, SHC; Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 10-11.

married his sister-in-law Héloise de la Ronde.[212] White's commercial endeavours ensured that he was for nearly half a century among the most respectable merchants in New Orleans, that "In the zenith of its prosperity, no house was wider known throughout the valley of Mississippi...The result of this prosperous commerce was the accumulation of an immense estate, reaching, at one period, nearly two million dollars."[213]

Successful merchants in the antebellum South often pursued careers as planters after establishing their urban enterprises. "Sugar planting was the most common attraction for New Orleans merchants thus inclined." This, argues Scott Marler, was due to the sugar lands being "situated close enough to the city to allow them to keep an eye on their interests there."[214] White was one of those to branch into sugar production and his operation centred upon his Deer Range plantation in Plaquemines Parish. In 1858, *De Bow's Review,* the leading agricultural magazine in the antebellum South, reported that Maunsel White was "one of the largest sugar planters of Louisiana. His estate about forty miles below New Orleans, is one of the most beautiful and extensive on the whole Mississippi coast. It is in the highest state of improvement and has upon it about two hundred slaves."[215] During the antebellum period, consumer demand for sugar rapidly grew. By 1831, every American consumed thirteen pounds of sugar each year, and by mid-century per capita consumption surpassed thirty pounds.[216]

The increased demand resulted in a surge of investment in the Louisiana sugar industry. The number of sugar estates doubled from 308 in 1827 to 691 in 1830. Production continued to expand in the 1840s "when Whig tariff support and lean cotton prices stimulated new sugar concerns from the Gulf coast to central Louisiana." By 1853, Louisiana produced a

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[212] "Maunsel White, Merchant of New Orleans," *De Bow's Review*, XIV (Jan., 1853), 85; Stanley C. Arthur, & Campbell Huchet de Kernion, *Old Families of Louisiana*, (Gretna, La., 1998), [1931], 389.

[213] "Maunsel White of Louisiana," *De Bow's Review*, XXV (Oct., 1858), 480.

[214] Scott P. Marler, *The Merchants' Capital: New Orleans and the Political Economy of the Nineteenth-Century South*, (Cambridge, 2013), 64.

[215] "Maunsel White of Louisiana," *De Bow's Review*, XXV, (Oct., 1858), 482.

[216] Richard Follett, "On the Edge of Modernity: Louisiana's Landed Elites in the Nineteenth-Century Sugar Country," in Enrico Dal Lago & Rick Halpern, (eds.), *The American South and the Italian Mezzogiorno: Essays in Comparative History*, (New York, 2002), 78.

quarter of the world's exportable sugar.[217] However, Cuba dominated the global sugar market following the destruction of Saint Domingue slave economy and the decline of the British West-Indies. Cuban sugar planters developed a number of economic rationalisation techniques, which included advances in steam technology, soil improvement and planter management reforms; these provided a role model for the aspirations of Louisiana's sugar enterprises.[218] The planters of southern Louisiana perfected the process of granulating sugar in a climate that demanded careful attention and as much time as possible in the fields to ripen before the arrival of the winter frosts. Louisiana's sugar plantations generated vast wealth and left in their wake a devastating trail of slave deaths. Richard Follett believes that the sugar industry in Louisiana evolved as a hybrid, since the planters "drew upon slaveholding culture of the American South and northern business practices, and it matched the cold-blooded exploitation of the West Indian sugar lords."[219]

In 1817, before Hugh Quin reached New Orleans, he toured the sugar plantations below the city. Quin found sugar cane "6 to 8 feet high from 3½ to 5 inches in circumfrance [*sic*] and was planted in rows from a foot and half to two feet apart." He observed "40 negroes of both sexes" cutting the cane: "Each had a large knife for this purpose with which he looped off the tops and Branches, then cut the cane by the ground which looked something like our kail [*sic*] or cabbage stocks and then threw it behind them. They were then gathered into heaps by little negroes and drawn by a team of oxen to the mill."[220] Quin followed the cart to the sugar mill where he saw "a large wheel, turned by 8 horses, which put 3 large metal cylinders in motion" to crush the cane. Whilst viewing the crushing, he noticed a "large Axe" and enquired with the overseer about its use. The overseer's response made the Irishman's "heart tremble." The axe "was

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[217] Richard Follett, *The Sugar Masters: Plantations and Slaves in Louisiana's Cane World, 1820-1860*, (Baton Rouge, 2007), [2005], 21-22.
[218] Dale Tomich, "The Wealth of Empire: Franciso Arango y Parreño, Political Economy, and the Second Slavery in Cuba," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 45, Iss. 01, (Jan., 2003), 4-28; Reinaldo Funes Monzotes, *From Rainforest to Cane Field in Cuba: An Environmental History since 1492*, (Chapel Hill, 2008), 127-134.
[219] Follett, *The Sugar Masters*, 8.
[220] 1 Dec., 1817, Journal of Hugh Quin, Quin Papers, T2874/, 1 PRONI.

used to cut off the arm of the Negro when drawn in between the cylinders which not infrequently occurs whilst they furnish the cane!! ... could we but know what the poor Negroes endure before we can have a pound of sugar we would not be so cheerful over a cup of Tea."[221] The harvest season on sugar plantations was an intense and frenetic period in which speed was essential to prevent the recently cut cane from deteriorating due to the oxidization that ruined the cane juice. Stability in the labour force was vital. The slave population of Louisiana's sugar plantations rose from 36,000 in 1830 to 125,000 by 1850. Sugar developed into the most industrialised sector of American agriculture. By 1860, eighty percent of Louisiana's sugar planters owned and operated steam-powered sugar mills.[222]

Louisiana sugar production operated on an industrial level. Dublin born William Howard Russell was astonished by the size of some of the sugar plantations:

> If an English agriculturist could see six thousand acres of the finest land in one field, unbroken by hedge or boundary, and covered with the most magnificent crops of tasselling Indian corn and sprouting sugar-cane, as level as a billiard table, he would surely doubt his senses. But here is literally such a sight- six thousand acres, better tilled than the finest patch in all the Lothians, green as Meath pastures.[223]

The impressive lands that Russell described belonged to John Burnside, "formerly of Hillsborough near Belfast."[224] Russell remarked how Burnside had left Ireland "in early youth, poor and unfriended to seek his fortune and indeed scarcely knowing what fortune meant."[225] In 1859, Burnside's plantations produced 3,060 hogsheads, a crop that would have grossed at least $225,000.[226] By 1860 John Burnside owned thirteen plantations in Ascension and Saint James Parish. At the age of fifty, Burnside was the

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[221] Ibid.

[222] Follett, *On the Edge of Modernity*, 76-77. For more on Louisiana sugar plantations see: Joseph R. Razek, "Accounting on the Old Plantation: A Study of the Financial Records of an Ante-bellum Louisiana Sugar Planter," *The Accounting Historians Journal*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (Spring 1985), 17-36; John Alfred Heitmann, The Modernization of the Louisiana Sugar Industry, 1830-1910 (Baton Rouge, 1987); Glenn R. Conrad & Ray F. Lucas, *White Gold: A Brief History of the Louisiana Sugar Industry 1795-1995*, (Lafayette, 1995).

[223] William Howard Russell, *My Diary North and South*, (New York, 1863), 268.

[224] William Fry and Son to Mr. Todd, 16 Aug., 1881, Estate of John Burnside Letter, 1881, TU.

[225] Russell, *My Diary*, 268.

[226] Menn, *The Large Slaveholders*, 112-113.

wealthiest man in Louisiana, having real and personal property valued at $2,600,000 by 1860. On the eve of the Civil War, Burnside was the largest slaveholder in the state of Louisiana and the third largest in the entire US, owning 939 slaves.[227]

Burnside began his career in Monroe County, Virginia, where he worked as a clerk for the Irish merchant Andrew Beirne.[228] Andrew was impressed by Burnside and made him a partner with his son Oliver Beirne. In 1837, they established a mercantile business in New Orleans. Burnside was responsible for looking after the business affairs in New Orleans and Oliver conducted their New York operations.[229] Oliver retired in 1847 to focus on the development of his sugar plantations. Burnside assumed full control of the firm and renamed it John Burnside and Company.[230] The company conducted extensive business throughout the South and made huge profits from advancing credit. For example, in 1853, Judge Donnell in North Carolina learned from William Donnell that he received a loan from his niece Mary Shepard, and it was "John Burnside & Co" that provided the promissory note to Mary for $1529.96 at eight percent interest.[231] Burnside invested in property throughout New Orleans and purchased many shares in various businesses in the city such as the East Pascagoula Hotel company and the New Orleans Opera House Company.[232] By 1852, Burnside began investing in sugar plantations.

In 1858, Burnside made headlines throughout the newspapers of the South after he purchased land in Ascension Parish known as the Houmas holdings, near Donaldsonville.[233] On 15th April 1858, Burnside agreed to pay one million dollars for the "Houmas Plantation" containing, "Twelve Thousand acres" about "seventy miles above the city of New Orleans." Included in the purchase were 550 "slaves for life, attached to and employed

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[227] Scarborough, *Masters of The Big House*, 431.
[228] See Andrew Beirne Family Papers, 1801-1893, TU.
[229] Oliver Beirne to Andrew Beirne, 4 May 1843, Andrew Beirne Family Papers, TU.
[230] Conrad, *Dictionary of Louisiana Biography*, 132-133.
[231] William Donnell to John Robert Donnell, 28 Nov., 1853, Donnell Family Papers, SHC.
[232] Burnside Investments 1859, Houmas Plantations and William Porcher Miles Materials, #2334, SHC.
[233] *The Charleston Mercury*, 12 Feb., 1858.

on the said plantation."[234] The *New Orleans True Delta* declared Houmas to be "the finest property possessed by a single proprietor in America."[235] Later, in May, Burnside expanded his holdings by purchasing for $300,000 the neighbouring plantation of "Orange Grove," which included 150 slaves.[236] Before the year was out Burnside purchased another plantation in the adjacent St. James Parish and by the end of 1858 Burnside became the largest sugar planter in Louisiana. Burnside's spending frenzy in 1858 was carried out "in anticipation of his retirement" from his mercantile business to "enjoy independently, comfortably and satisfactorily, the princely fortune he has acquired in Louisiana."[237] Burnside's plantations produced on average 4,000 hogsheads of sugar and his 1861 crop of 7,652 hogsheads was the largest ever recorded in antebellum Louisiana.[238] Burnside's wealth was known throughout the US. During the American Civil War, one Union soldier was highly impressed by the Irishman's holdings. John Guild informed his mother how Burnsides "estate extends along the river three miles and is cleared and cultivated more than nine miles back from the river. He has 6,000 acres under cultivation this year...there is over a hundred miles of road on his land."[239] Burnside strove to maximise the output and profits of his lands and slaves and treated his plantation business in the same manner as a capitalist factory owner.

Success for planters rested on a profitable crop; however, the question of what was the true economic nature of the antebellum South has consumed and dominated the historiography of US slavery since the 1970s. Two opposing schools of thought have struggled to answer this question. On one side, the writings of Marxist and neo-Marxist scholars have argued that the slave South was born the "bastard-child of merchant capitalism and developed as a non-capitalist society." They believed that the Southern planters were more akin to feudal lords than modern capitalists, that the

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[234] Sale of the Houmas Plant. Mrs Carolina M. Preston to J. Burnside, Houmas Plantations and William Porcher Miles Materials, SHC.
[235] Cited in *De Bow's Review*, 24 (May, 1858), 448.
[236] Sale of Plantation. M.S de Ligandi to John Burnside, 22 May, 1858, Houmas Plantations and William Porcher Miles Materials, SHC.
[237] *The Charleston Mercury*, 12 Feb., 1858.
[238] Scarborough, *Masters of The Big House*, 137.
[239] John H. Guild to Mother, 28 Sep., [1862?], Guild (John H.), Letters, Mss3204, LLMVC.

planters were primarily concerned with status rather than profit. The South, according to this interpretation, was in fundamental opposition to the rising modern industrial society and the ethos of free-labour. Thus the "incipient forces for modernization made... [planters] more determined to defend their traditional view of society, even to the point of breaking the union."[240]

Other historians argue instead that southern planters trumpeted the South's "regionally distinct understanding of modernity and its socioeconomic fruits, not because they believed it rooted in the past but because they believed it suited to the future."[241] The pre-capitalist interpretation was challenged specifically by neoclassical economically orientated historians who contended that the planters of the South were capitalists and that the "southern slave society emerged within rather than apart from the liberal capitalist world." These historians maintained that planters were profit orientated businessmen whose plantations "resembled in complexity and uncertainty the most advanced operations of a northern capitalist."[242] In recent times, historians such as Walter Johnson have successfully argued that "slavery and wage labor...characterized the two poles of this single Atlantic economy."[243] The once irreconcilable opposition between the capitalist and pre-capitalist interpretations of American slavery has moved from absolute positions to "consideration of

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[240] Eugene D. Genovese, & Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *The Fruits of Merchant Capital: Slavery and Bourgeois Property in the Rise and Expansion of Capitalism*, (New York, 1983), 5; Marc Egnal, "Counterpoint: What if Genovese Is Right?: The Premodern Outlook of Southern Planters," in L. Diane Barnes, Brian Schoen & Frank Towers, (eds.), *The Old South's Modern Worlds*, 283. The most influential works that argue that the slave South was non-capitalist in its nature are Eugene D. Genovese, *The Political Economy of Slavery: Studies in the Economy and Society of the Slave South*, (New York, 1965); *The World The Slaveholders Made: Two Essays in Interpretation*, (New York, 1969); *Roll, Jordan, Roll*; Raimondo Luraghi, *The Rise and Fall of the Plantation South*, (New York; 1978); Doughlas R. Egerton, "Markets Without a Market Revolution: Southern Planters and Capitalism," *JER*, Vol. 16, No. 2 , 207-221.

[241] L. Diane Barnes, Brian Schoen & Frank Towers, "Introduction: Reimagining the Old South," in Barnes et al., *The Old South's Modern Worlds*, 17.

[242] James Oakes, *Slavery and Freedom: An Interpretation of the Old South*, (New York, 1990), 79; William Dusinberre, *Them Dark Days: Slavery in the American Rice Swamps*, (New York, 1992), 6; Scarborough, *Masters of The Big House*, 407-426. For more on the South as a capitalist society see Robert W. Fogel & Stanley L. Engerman, *Time on the Cross: The Economics of American Negro Slavery*, (New York, 1974); Robert William Fogel, *Without Consent or Contract: The Rise and Fall of American Slavery*, (New York, 1989); Oakes, *The Ruling Race*; Shearer Davis Bowman, *Masters and Lords: Mid-Nineteenth-Century U.S. Planters and Prussian Junkers*, (New York, 1993).

[243] Walter Johnson, "The Pedestal and the Veil: Rethinking the Capitalism/Slavery Question," *JER*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (Summer, 2004), 299-308.

questions of degree, and the significance of slavery in the transition to the modern capitalist economy."[244]

Mark Smith, in his historiographical overview of this compelling debate, concludes that, even if the "South retained slavery as the basis for its political identity and social and economic relations," it "was none the less modernizing its economic system even as it eschewed the democratic tendencies of nineteenth century liberal capitalism."[245] Most modern historians now accept the fundamentally capitalist nature of the large plantations of the South and that slavery was an integral part of the engine that drove US capitalism.[246] For example, Dale Tomich in discussing technology and slave labour believes that "capitalist modernity and slave labor are constitutive of one another."[247] Scholars supportive of the idea of a "Second Slavery" have demonstrated that antebellum slavery had no fundamental incompatibility with technology and the rising global capitalist economy.[248]

De Bow's Review in 1846 declared that "the seven wonders were works of art. The steam engine of modern days, is however, an infinitely greater wonder than them all."[249] Louisiana's Irish sugar planters experimented and applied steam-power to their advantage. By 1860, the sugar bowl region of Louisiana was the most heavily capitalised region in the US. For example, West Baton Rouge Parish featured more mechanical capital than all of Minnesota in 1860, whereas Ascension Parish almost matched all the combined total of mechanical capital of all the farmers in Oregon.[250] Richard Follett has skilfully chronicled the advent of technological developments on Louisiana's sugar plantations, where the use

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[244] Bill Cooke, "The Denial of Slavery in Management Studies," *Journal of Management Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 8 (Dec., 2003), 1902.
[245] Smith, *Debating Slavery*, 94.
[246] Beckert, *Empire of Cotton*; Baptist, *Half Has Never Been Told*; Follett, *The Sugar Masters*; Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams;* Tom Downey, *Planting A Capitalist South: Masters, Merchants, and Manufactures in the Southern Interior, 1790-1860*, (Baton Rouge, 2006); Gloria Vollmers, "Industrial Slavery in the United States: the North Carolina Turpentine Industry 1849-61," *Accounting, Business & Financial History*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (Nov., 2003), 369-392;
[247] Tomich, *Through the Prism of Slavery*, 93.
[248] Kaye, "The Second Slavery," 627-650.
[249] De Bow's Review, (Sep., 1846) Vol. 2, Iss. 2, 100.
[250] Follett, *The Sugar Masters*, 31.

of "steam-powered sugar mills, drilled gang work, modern assembly-line techniques and disciplined clock-ordered management" contributed to an increasing capitalist slave mode of production.[251] The desire to increase profits resulted in the planters' adoption of more modern methods to extract sugar cane juice.

The famous Irish actor Tyrone Power on his US tour was struck by how "we generally associate with the southern planter ideas of indolence, inertness of disposition, and a love of luxury and idle expense: nothing however, can be less characteristic of these frontier farmers of the swamp and forest: they are hardy' indefatigable, and enterprising."[252] By the 1830s, machinery and steam power were integrated into the production and transportation of southern staple crops. "Everywhere along the black belts, slaves cultivated and harvested crops to the rhythms of machines, gins on cotton plantations and grinders in the sugar mills."[253] The use of the steamboat in the slave south, Walter Johnson argues made it the leading sector in the early industrialisation of the US. A "mere handful of the steamboats docked along the levee of New Orleans on any given day could have run the entire factory complex at Lowell," which historians have traditionally associated with the beginning of American industrialisation.[254] These ships came "groaning down" the Mississippi, looking "like a huge cotton-bale on fire" and became the primary means of transportation in the Mississippi Valley.[255] Irish planters who applied steam-powered machinery on their plantations discovered that their output rose exponentially.

In fact, the willingness of Irish sugar planters to experiment with steam-powered innovations helped to industrialise Louisiana's sugar bowl region. R. L Allen, when visiting the sugar plantation of Alexander Porter,

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[251] Ibid, 4; See also Heitmann, *Modernization of Louisiana Sugar*; Gleen R. Conrad, *Green Fields: Two Hundred Years of Louisiana Sugar*, (Lafayette, 1960).
[252] Tyrone Power, *Impressions of America During the Years 1833, 1834 and 1835. Volume 2*, (London, 1836), 215.
[253] Kaye, "The Second Slavery," 635.
[254] Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams*, 5-8.
[255] Power, *Impressions of America Vol. 2*, 195. For more on southern steam boats see Robert H. Gudmestad, *Steamboats and the Rise of the Cotton Kingdom*, (Baton Rouge, 2011).

reported "One improvement" which he had "never seen practised elsewhere." Porter's innovation consisted of:

> two immense sheds connected with the grinding-house by a railway, elevated as high as the eves of the buildings, on which cars are placed containing the bagasse as received from the rollers, and run into the sheds where it is tipped out and allowed to dry. It thus furnishes at least two-thirds of the fuel used for granulating the cane juice.[256]

Elite planters like Porter and Burnside developed networks of roads and railroads on their land holdings to improve the ease and speed of transportation to the mills. Planters who wished to produce more than one hundred-hogshead of sugar had "to double their investments from $40,000 to $75,000." The *Louisiana Gazette* noted that the typical starting cost of an 800 acre sugar estate required the substantial investment of $84,000.[257] Sugar planters sought the most high-tech equipment that their money could buy. Technological improvements created a greater demand for finer and whiter refined sugar, which resulted in the planters' adoption of the vacuum processing method. Vacuum pans evaporated the sugar juice in sealed units and produced a sugar of superior quality than the old open kettles. Maunsel White believed that vacuum-produced sugar was a "fancy article" that commanded a better price.[258]

In 1844, White purchased a new steam mill for his Deer Range plantation from Stelliman, Allen and Co., based in New York City. White, however, found himself facing difficulties in completing the instalment of the new mill. Left waiting for parts to be shipped, White wrote to the Northern manufacturer "You may easily imagine how much I am disappointed not receiving in this the clarifiers that you promised to send." He angrily stated, "I have every thing ready to commence rolling...the want of them at this moment is most annoying and it may cause me great loss."[259] The long distance between the foundry and the plantation frustrated and

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[256] R. L. Allen, *"Letters from the South –No. 9,"* in A. B. Allen, *The American Agriculturist; Designed to Improve The Planter, The Farmer, The Stock-Breeder and the Horticulturist. Vol. VI,* (New York, 1847), 213-214.

[257] Cited in Follett, *The Sugar Masters*, 28-29. For more on biological and mechanical innovation by sugar planters see Kaye, "The Second Slavery", 634-637. For Cuban advances see Tomich, *Through the Prism of Slavery,* 75-94.

[258] Ibid, 34.

[259] Maunsel White to Stelliman, Allen and Co., 21 Oct., 1844, Maunsel White Papers, SHC.

angered him: it "would show you that my <u>Irish</u> was getting up," for "The Machinery will cost me about $11,000."[260] The equipment did not arrive and White's 1844 crop suffered as a result.

The following year, he charged Stelliman, Allen and Co., with gross negligence, for he had lost nearly two hundred hogsheads, "by delays the cost of the clarifiers would be nothing in comparison to what I may lose by any detention this season." White urgently needed to have his new mill operational, for as it stood, "all my works in sugar house must remain suspended and put me to losses and expense."[261] If the new mill was not ready by September, White feared he would have to re-install his old equipment to save the harvest. However, by 17th November White reported that, as of the night before, "<u>they were up</u>" and the engine worked "beautifully well," but "the large and small mill give infinite trouble and I regret to say that the small one won't answer."[262] White's dealings with Stelliman, Allen and Co. cost him considerable time and capital, especially as timeliness was essential to a successful sugar crop. By 1847, White took legal action against the northern manufacturers.[263] Despite the setbacks, White's belief in the mechanisation of sugar remained. The industrialisation of sugar plantations resulted in the industry's domination by elite planters like John Burnside. It was common to hear a man say, "J. B has bought up next to me, and I shall have to quit soon."[264]

William Howard Russell from his observations was convinced that "nothing but 'involuntary servitude' could go through the toil and suffering required to produce sugar." On the Houmas plantation of John Burnside, Russell noted how the slaves were put to work and "moved off in silence from point to point, like a *corps d'armée* of some despotic emperor manoeuvring the battle field." On Burnside's plantations Russell scrutinised the true nature of American slavery:

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[260] Maunsel White to K. Patterson & Co., 8 Sep., 1845, Maunsel White Papers, SHC.
[261] Maunsel White to Stelliman, Allen and Co., 23 Jun., 1845, Maunsel White Papers, SHC.
[262] Maunsel White to Stelliman, Allen and Co., 17 Nov., 1845, Maunsel White Papers, SHC.
[263] Maunsel White to Stelliman, Allen and Co., 22 Dec., 1847, Maunsel White Papers, SHC.
[264] Olmsted, *The Cotton Kingdom*, 539.

> I am the more persuaded from what I see, that the real foundation of slavery in the Southern States lies in the power of obtaining labor at will at a rate which cannot be controlled by any combination of the labourers.[265]

Total control of labour is what enslavers in the South sought. Throughout the slave states, slaveholders believed that "without discipline there cannot be profit to the master or comfort to the slaves. Discipline is just a necessary on a plantation as in the navy and army." Total control on plantations was the result of "proper management," which constituted "the chief success of the planter. If he has not a proper control of them, he had much better give up planting; for as sure as he continues they will ruin him."[266] Planters wanted total domination over their slaves.[267] Planters required total obedience from their dependencies, and key to planter domination was use of the whip which "was as important to making cotton grow as sunshine and rain."[268] The true innovation of southern enslavers Baptist argues was the "whipping-machine," which is a metaphorical argument according to which successful working regimes on plantations rested on the use of torture as the central technology.[269] That "calibrated pain, regular as a turning gear, challenged enslaved people to exceed the previous day's gains in production."[270] Planters made records of each slaves daily cotton-picking output. These records, along with the measuring scales and whip, were vital parts of the "whipping-machine" that drove the increase in cotton cultivation.

Mechanical cotton pickers were not developed until the 1930s. The levels of agricultural output of the antebellum South though, were not reached again until the advent of tractors after the First World War. The efficiency of the "whipping-machine" increased the output of enslaved people who in 1800 cultivated and harvested a single acre of cotton; in contrast by the 1850s they grew twelve acres of cotton along with other

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[265] Russell, *My Diary*, 259 & 271.
[266] *Farmers Register*, 1 Feb., 1834 & *Southern Agriculturist,* May 1856, cited in Breeden, *Advice Among Planters*, 31-34.
[267] Faust, "Culture, Conflict and Community," 83-97; Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll,* 146-149; Christopher Morris, "The Articulation of Two Worlds: The Master-Slave Relationship Reconsidered," *JAH*, Vol. 85, No. 3 (Dec., 1998), 982-1007.
[268] Baptist, *Half Has Never Been Told*, 121.
[269] Ibid, 141-143.
[270] Ibid.

lesser crops such as corn.[271] Slaves were the only machines to harvest the cotton crop of the antebellum South. Yet, "the possibility that enslaved people might have picked more cotton because they picked faster, harder, and with more efficient technique does not come readily to our minds." Indeed, many historians have insisted as a point of dogma that slave labour was less efficient than wage labour.[272] However, Baptist's work has come under criticism for downplaying the impact of the improved cotton seed varieties that yielded larger cotton bolls.[273] Cotton planters experimented with seed types and different planting techniques such as adopting methods of "drilling," similar to grain-cultivation which contributed to higher crop yields.[274] Enrico Dal Lago notes that in the antebellum South, technological and biological innovation resulted in greater agricultural output and renewed planters' commitment to the institution of slavery as the only possible means to meet the increasing global demand for cotton.[275] Traditional assumptions that the plantations in the South were "premodern" thus have been challenged for overlooking "the unrelenting constancy of labor, in contrast to the seasonal breaks in most other agrarian regimes, and the relationship between its product, cotton fibre, and the Industrial Revolution."[276]

Plantations were frequently larger than factories and antebellum slavery allowed for an organisation of labour that was impossible in the newly emerging industrial cities of the North and Great Britain. Technological progress in cotton production was limited and productivity gains were a result of the violent domination and reorganisation of slave labour. Sven Beckert has demonstrated that the "all-encompassing control of workers - a core characteristic of capitalism - experienced its first great

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[271] Moore, *The Emergence of the Cotton Kingdom*, xi.

[272] Baptist, *Half Has Never Been Told*, 128-129.

[273] John E. Murray, Alan L. Olmstead, Trevon D. Logan, Jonathan B. Pritchett & Peter L. Rousseau, "Roundtable of Reviews for the Half Has Never Been Told," *Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 75, Iss. 3, 919-913.

[274] Schoen, *Fragile Fabric of Union*, 41-42; Alan L. Olmstead & Paul W. Rhode, *Creating Abundance: Biological Innovation and American Agricultural Development*, (New York, 2008), 98-133.

[275] Dal Lago, *American Slavery, Atlantic Slavery*, 78.

[276] Libby, *Slavery and Frontier Mississippi*, 47.

success on the cotton plantations of the American South."[277] Dan Josiah Lockhart successfully escaped slavery and settled in Canada, he recalled the ever-present threat of violence by his Irish master who "whip[ed] me till I was a striped as a zaybra [*sic*]" for failing to meet the demands placed on him in the fields. [278] Fear and the calibrated torture of the "whipping-machine" forced slaves of the South to increase their productivity. Visiting his uncle's plantation near Augusta for the first time, James B. Hamilton from Ballymoney recorded his first encounter with plantation discipline and the reign of terror:

> After tea and while reading alone heard some loud words and the sound of a whip. It did not take much reasoning to find out it was a negro flogging. I can scarcely write down what are my feelings, certain that I felt my own flesh creep. Was told it was for throwing bad potatoes into the wagon after being told not to do so.[279]

Irish slaveholders, like their American counterparts, ruled over their slaves with iron discipline, forcing slaves "to behave in the fields as if they themselves were disembodied mechanical hands that moved ever more swiftly over the cotton plant at the wave of the enslavers hand."[280] Irish slaveholders accepted violence against slaves as a natural part of the social order of the antebellum US South.

In early April 1856, Maunsel White was happy to have "cane plants growing fast" and the "orange trees blooming with flowers" colouring his plantation. All his slaves were "engaged in Earning by the sweat of their brows their daily Bread which we as in daily bound pray God to give us 'Man, Beast, Bird, Insect' all have according to the immutable Laws of Nature, 'Work' for a living."[281] White was unwavering in his commitment to slavery as the ideal labour system for the South. Elizabeth Fox-Genovese and Eugene Genovese argued that among the elite slaveholders the extreme doctrine of "slavery in the abstract" began to take root.[282] The ideological doctrine of slavery in the abstract argued that slavery was "the proper

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[277] Beckert, *Empire of Cotton*, 115.
[278] Benjamin Drew, *A North-Side View of Slavery. The Refugee: Or The Narratives of Fugitive Slaves in Canada. Related by Themselves, with An Account of the History and Condition of the Colored Population of Upper Canada*, (Boston, 1856), 45.
[279] 2 Dec., 1859, Extracts from the Diary Kept by J. B Hamilton, D1518/1/5, PRONI.
[280] Baptist, *Half Has Never Been Told*, 142.
[281] 11 Apr., 1856, Maunsel White Memorandum Book, Maunsel White Papers, SHC.
[282] Fox-Genovese & Genovese, *Slavery in White and Black*, 1.

condition of the labouring classes of all races."[283] Slavery in the abstract placed little credence in racial theories or scriptural agreements and its logic cast "enslavement, broadly defined, as necessary and proper for much of the white race, as well as for practically all the black race."[284] Fearing a Malthusian crisis and revolutionary class struggle due to the emergence of industrial capitalism, adherents of slavery in the abstract looked at the unravelling of society in the North and Europe. Their solution was the theory based on the belief that southern slaves enjoyed superior material conditions to those of free labourers and that the social system of the slave states was preferable to those of the emerging industrial urban regimes.[285]

Yet, proslavery theorists engaged in politics and the public sphere did not publically endorse slavery in the abstract. However, most of the southern elite in their writings embraced the basics tenets of the doctrine. For example, James Henry Hammond refused to endorse slavery in the abstract; yet his dramatic and widely published 1858 "Mudsill" speech endorsed everything except the name of slavery in the abstract. Hammond had no patience for abstractions but Genovese argues that Hammond knew "perfectly well that the word 'abstract' referred not to philosophical abstractions but to slavery as a normal condition of labor abstracted from race."[286] Another example was the Louisiana legal scholar John Fletcher, who in his *Studies On Slavery* (1852) argued that labour and capital could exist in but two relations; one of harmony or one of antagonism. The two were harmonious "only when it is true that labour constitutes capital which can only happen through slavery." Flecther and adherents of slavery in the abstract criticised the hypocrisy of the abolitionist movement whose sympathies were "not changed, from the miseries where capital and labour are decidedly congenerous [*sic*], to a consideration of that morass of misery into which the worn-out, broken tools of labour are thrown, with cruel

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[283] Eugene D. Genovese, "South Carolina's Contribution to the Doctrine of Slavery in the Abstract," in David R. Chesnut & Clyde N. Wilson, (eds.), *The Meaning of South Carolina History: Essays in Honor of George C. Rodgers, JR,* (Columbia, SC., 1991), 147.

[284] Fox-Genovese & Genovese, *Slavery in White and Black*, 1.

[285] George Fitzhugh, *Cannibals All! or, Slaves Without Masters*, (Richmond, VA., 1857).

[286] Genovese, "South Carolina's Contribution to Slavery in the Abstract," 150. For more on Hammond's Mudsill theory see George M. Fredrickson, *The Arrogance of Race: Historical Perspectives on Slavery, Racism and Social Inequality*, (Middletown, CT., 1988), 23-27.

heartlessness, where capital and labour are antagonistic."[287] The poor condition of industrial labourers, especially in Britain, were continuously referenced by advocates of slavery in the abstract and the conditions of Ireland where depicted as a damp, wet perversion of Dante's Inferno. John Mitchel and Maunsel White were two immigrants who acknowledged the full merits of racial slavery.

In 1859, William Smith O'Brien undertook a tour of the US and Canada. O'Brien had been the leader of the Young Ireland movement and was convicted of sedition for his role in the failed rebellion of 1848. Deported to Van Diemen's Land from 1849-1854, O'Brien became a known figure in liberal circles throughout Europe and the US.[288] His 1859 tour was politically significant. In Washington DC, he was accompanied by Thomas Francis Meagher and John Mitchel to meet President James Buchanan. After ten days of meeting various key politicians such as Alexander H. Stevens and Stephen A. Douglas, O'Brien embarked on a tour of the South.[289] In a letter to his sister Matilda Dixon detailing O'Brien's Washington visit, John Mitchel informed her of how "I am 'saving the South' with all my might- indeed so violently that a great part of the south (besides the whole North) think me mad." Undeterred, he noted how:

> we are rapidly advancing here to the accomplishment of our great measure the revival of the Africn slave-trade. Wm. O'Brien, though he seems well content with the institution of slavery, hesitates as yet about the actual importation. He will be propery indoctrinated however. At present he is on a visit with a large sugar plantation in Louisiana.[290]

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[287] John Fletcher, *Studies On Slavery, In Easy Lessons. Compiled Into Eight Studies, and Subdivided into Short Lessons For The Convenience of Readers,* (Natchez, 1852), 219-220.
[288] Robert Sloan, *William Smith O'Brien and the Young Ireland Rebellion of 1848*, (Dublin, 2001).
[289] Richard Davis, *Travels of William Smith O'Brien in Europe and the Wider World 1843 to 1864*, (Dublin, 2013), 140-141.
[290] John Mitchel to Matilda Dixon, 10 Apr., 1859, D1078/M/7B, PRONI; see also Michael Toomey "'Saving the South With All My Might': John Mitchel, Champion of Southern Nationalism," in John M. Hearne & Rory T. Cornish, (eds.), *Thomas Francis Meagher: The Making of an Irish American*, (Dublin, 2005), 132-135; Bryan McGovern, "John Mitchel: Ecuminical Nationalist in the Old South," *New Hibernia Review*, Vol. 5, No. 2 (Summer, 2001), 99-110.

This was "the sugar plantation of Col. Maunsel White," as noted O'Brien, where he was a guest for a couple of days.[291]

White was a financier of Mitchel's journalism. Absent on O'Brien's initial arrival, White informed Mitchel that he found his family with O'Brien in "the yard with a Dog or two of young Negroes dancing, beating Drum & Banjo". During his stay on the plantation, O'Brien visited the slave quarters and discussed with White the issues of slavery. White observed that O'Brien, "altho not approving of slavery in the abstract that is of white men as I understood, was I think obliged to acknowledge from what he saw that the slavery of the Negroes all in the South was a blessing to them & as he said a patriarchal Institution."[292] Genovese has argued that the debate of slavery in the abstract "notwithstanding its apparent impracticality, slowly insinuated itself into the very core of the slaveholders' worldview." It is clear that its ideas were influential among some of the leading Irishmen of the South.[293]

White accepted slavery as an "immutable" part of nature and he ensured that his slaves worked hard by insisting on strict discipline on his plantations.[294] Albert Patterson was born a slave in 1850 and was owned by Maunsel White. Patterson recalled how "De Frenchmen an' de Dutchmen were mean, but the Irishmen was good. I see de blood cut out o' niggers... but not Col. White. He not cruel, he wouldn't whip."[295] White, however, did whip his slaves for example "Caty by my own hand got a pretty good whipping for wilful lieing [sic]."[296] In his quest for total control, White was happy to congratulate his overseer for forcing some of the more troublesome slaves back to work "I notice what you say of the Negroes and I am indeed glad that you have got them 'straightened up'. Ironing and whipping a little,

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[291] William Smith O'Brien to John Mitchel, 16 Apr., 1859, William Smith O'Brien Papers, Ms 466, No. 3096, NLI; see also Richard Davis, *Revolutionary Imperialist: William Smith O'Brien*, (Dublin, 1998), 343-348.
[292] Maunsel White to John Mitchel, 10 Apr., 1859, William Smith O'Brien Papers, No. 3095, NLI.
[293] Fox-Genovese & Genovese, *Slavery in White and Black*, 9 & 117-118.
[294] 11 Apr., 1856, Maunsel White Memorandum Book, Maunsel White Papers, SHC.
[295] Interview with Albert Patterson, 22 May 1940, WPA Ex-Slave Narrative Collection, LSU, LLMVC.
[296] 18, Dec., 1856, Maunsel White Memorandum Book, Maunsel White Papers, SHC.

has made a great change in Talus."[297] Patterson may have forgotten White's use of the whip, but his practice of "ironing" left a searing mark on his memories. He recollected how White:

> had a iron band, he'd rivet to go around the anckle, an' he had a iron band to go around the neck, with a piece o' iron standin' up in de front, de back an' each side, yo' had to hold yo' head jes' so, an' yo' couldn't lay down, an' yo' had to pad that iron band, 'cause it was so heavy it would cut yo' neck.[298]

Iron collars and "nigger boxes" (cells with a few air holes and enough room to allow a slight change in position) were common features of the plantations.[299]

Davison McDowell, a native of Newry, inherited his father's James McDowell's rice plantations in Georgetown County, South Carolina. McDowell was in favour of "ironing" and maintained a strict discipline on his holdings. For example, on 16th July 1829, he recorded in his plantation diary that "Sibby Miscarried; believe she did so on purpose. Stop her Christmas & lock her up."[300] Revocation of Christmas holiday privileges and confinement were the favourite forms of punishment by McDowell. In one of his diary entries, two runaway slaves, Moses and Dowey, returned to the plantation after an absence of four weeks:

> As they have come home themselves (agreeable to a Rule of the Plantation) they are not to be whipped! But the are to be deprived of all the comforts of the Plantation: the are to get no summer cloths, Christmas: & as the offence appears to me of great enormity (my crop being very grassy when they went away) I think I will give them no winter cloths: Moses being a class leader is prohibited from Public Preaching for a year.[301]

McDowell's rules for self-surrender of runaways to avoid a whipping was an attempt to prevent long term runaways, especially during the height of the harvest season. Not all Irish slaveholders were willing to be lenient with runaway slaves. In June 1860, George, a slave of Patrick Murphy, ran away. Angered by the slave's absence Murphy recorded in his diary "When I get him he will have a reason to run off." "Revenge I want" declared

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[297] Munsel White to D. N Bracewell, 11 Oct., 1847, Maunsel White Papers, SHC.
[298] Interview with Albert Patterson, WPA Ex-Slave Narrative Collection, LSU, LLMVC.
[299] Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 67.
[300] Crimes and Misdemeanours. Asylum Plantation Journal, 1815-1833, Davison McDowell Papers, SCL.
[301] 24 Aug., 1830, Asylum Plantation Journal, 1815-1833, Davison McDowell Papers, SCL.

Murphy as he hunted for George.[302] Irish slaveholders were capable of cruel and unusual punishment. Francis Henderson was born a slave in Washington D.C and was sold to an Irishwoman and her husband. The Irish couple later bought "a man, a woman, and a male child." Francis remembered how "Mistress used to pinch pieces out of the boy's ears and then heal them with burnt alum," and that "the Irishman" murdered the male slave by striking "him about the temple, with a long handled scrubbing-brush."[303] The murder of a slave by a master was an extreme act and represented a significant loss of capital.

Violence was inherent in the plantation system and it was the most successful method for slaveholders to resolve labour disputes. Fitz William McMaster was a student at South Carolina College, Columbia. He wrote to his Irish born father that his hired out slave "Henry was taken up by the marshal and safely lodged in jail." Henry had runaway and the "jailer informs me that he must have been punished severely from the appearance of his back." Fitz William believed such "barbarities should not be allowed" and that the men who hired Henry were "dead of every sentiment of humanity. I would look into the matter and if the boy deserves it, let him be chastised in a Christian manner, but not with the cruelty of a savage."[304] Brutal violence, whether it was administered in "a Christian manner" or the manner of a "barbarian," was at the heart of American slavery and Irish planters accepted slavery as it was. Rachel O'Connor noted how "I have no power to change it or make it otherwise." Few Irish slave owners have left any surviving records echoing similar sentiments as expressed by O'Connor when she wrote "I cannot part from my Negroes. I have raised all but a few and I love them. They have their faults and I have mine. All living has

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[302] 30 Jun., 1860, Patrick Murphy Diary, Patrick Murphy Papers, LLMVC.

[303] Drew, *A North-Side View of Slavery*, 160-161. For more on the struggle of slave life see Peter Kolchin, "Reevaluating the Antebellum Slave Community: A comparative Perspective," *JAH*, Vol. 70, No. 3 (Dec., 1983), 579-601; Brenda E. Stevenson, Life in Black & White: *Family and Community in the Slave South*, (New York, 1996); Larry E. Hudson, *To Have and to Hold: Slave Work and Family Life in Antebellum South Carolina*, (Athens, GA., 1997).

[304] Fitz William McMaster to John McMaster, 24 Apr., 1850, Papers, 1778-1941, of John McMaster and Rachel Buchanan McMaster, SCL.

faults."[305] O'Connor's writings reveal that she was of the "paternalist" style of slaveholder.

Paternalist slaveholders "created the fiction of the contented and happy slave." The paternalistic plantation was to "be characterized by sentimental attachments between authoritative but benevolent masters and subservient but loyal slaves."[306] Eugene Genovese deduced that paternalism "defined the involuntary labor of the slaves as a legitimate return to their masters for protection and direction." For Genovese, the cultivation of paternalism illustrated planters' attempts to create dependency and cultural hegemony over their slaves. In doing so, slaveholders committed the "blunder of assuming that it [gratitude] could be forthcoming from a people who had had an acceptance of inequality literally whipped into them."[307] Peter Kolchin has argued that not all masters held paternalistic views, but that the resident character of American planters "produced unusually close contact between master and slave and fostered among many slave owners a strong paternalistic self-image."[308]

It is important to note that the endorsement of a paternalistic view of slavery in the South coincided with the growing critique of US slavery by abolitionists. In the US Congress Alexander Porter in 1835 and 1836 spoke out against the rising abolitionist movements.[309] Porter believed abolitionists to be "hypocrites and fanatics" who "were labouring incessantly" to render the position of southerners "in regard to their slaves uneasy and insecure." If an abolitionist was to visit the plantations of the South, Porter argued,

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[305] R. O'Connor to David Weeks, 3 Nov., 1833 & R. O'Connor to William Weeks, 3 Feb., 1844 cited in Webb, *Mistress of Evergreen Plantation*, 122 & 246-247.

[306] Eugene D. Genovese & Douglas Ambrose, "Masters," in Robert L. Paquette & Mark M. Smith, (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Slavery in the Americas*, (Oxford, 2010), 537.

[307] Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll,* 5, & 146. For more on paternalism see Eugene D. Genovese & Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *Fatal Self-Deception: Slaveholding Paternalism in the Old South*, (Cambridge, 2011); Dal Lago, *Agrarian Elites,* 150-166; Peter Kolchin, *Unfree Labor: American Slavery and Russian Serfdom*, (Cambridge, MA., 1987), 103-156.

[308] Kolchin, *American Slavery*, 111-112.

[309] For more on the American Abolitionist movement see Molly Oshatz, *Slavery and Sin: The Fight Against Slavery and the Rise of Liberal Protestantism*, (New York, 2012); Timothy Patrick McCarthy & John Stauffer, (eds.), *Prophets of Protest: Reconsidering the History of American Abolitionism*, (New York, 2006); Stanley Harrold, *The Rise of Aggressive Abolitionism: Addresses to the Slaves*, (Lexington, KY., 2004); Richard S. Newman, *The Transformation of American Abolitionism: Righting Slavery in the Early Republic*, (Chapel Hill, 2002).

"Instead of oppression and tyranny displayed to slaves, they would see kindness practiced to those whom Providence has placed under the care of the inhabitants of the region." Porter warned enemies of the peculiar institution that planters were "determined and will neither take nor give quarter."[310] Some Irish slaveholders adopted tones of paternalism in some of their writings. Davison McDowell, for example, was sorry to record the death of "Poor old Jack" who had been "a faithful slave, he has been my property nearly 25 years & I do not recollect I ever given him a whipping."[311] McDowell believed it "is a thing most painful to be obliged to work my Negroes, on the Sabeth (sic)"; other Irish planters did not have such worries.[312] Bishop Patrick Lynch of Charleston was brought up in an Irish Catholic slaveholding family. His close familiarity with the institution convinced him that it was benign. The Lynch family correspondence include concern for their slaves' health and wellbeing but at the same time they never doubted slavery as a part of the established order. Bishop Lynch described plantation discipline as "vigilant and mild."[313] Slaveholders' paternalistic propaganda could be found throughout the newspapers of the antebellum US South, and some immigrants like P. Kennedy, who had lived in the slave states for over four and a half years, came to believe that the slaves in the South were:

> better fed and better clothed than the poor Irish farmer, Oh, it would be well for the Irish labourer if he was half as well fed &taken care off as the slaves. The master has an interest in the slave...there may be a few bad masters but compare the conduct of bad masters with the conduct of some of the Irish landlords who will drive out his Tenant on the Road side to starve & perish.[314]

Even the hardest slave masters knew that their slaves were worth more alive than dead to them.

Concern for the welfare of slaves by planters was predominantly an expression of economic self-interest. The healthier the slaves, the harder they could be pushed to work. The diaries of Davison McDowell are littered

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[310] Cited in Stephenson, *Alexander Porter*, 76-78.
[311] 31 Jun., 1841, Plantation Journal 1815-1842, Davison McDowell Papers, SCL.
[312] 30 Sep., 1826, Asylum Plantation Journal 1815-1833, Davison McDowell Papers, SCL.
[313] Heisser & White, *Patrick N. Lynch*, 68.
[314] P. Kennedy to Vere Foster, 19 Mar., 1855, Letters from P. Kennedy, Strasburg, Virginia, D3618/D/8/9, PRONI.

with references such as "Please God I will make a fine crop" and "God grant me good luck low river and good crop."[315] The appeals to a higher power were always made for McDowell's personal success; his slaves were mere appendages of the plantation that generated his wealth. Irish planters reveal in their writings that their actions on their plantations were rationally taken to maximise their profits. Material gain drove planters like Maunsel White who continually monitored developments in the global cotton and sugar markets. In 1848, White for example, was happy to report that "news in Europe & peace with Mexico" resulted in improved market conditions with "prices of cotton & sugar advancing."[316] Irish planters made use of technological and managerial improvements to enhance their ability to respond to changes in the markets and to expand their margins of profit.

This Chapter provided an examination of the Irish relationship with American slavery and revealed the complexity of the business-like and profit oriented plantation order of entrepreneurial Irish slaveholders. Throughout the evolution of slavery in the US, Irish slaveholders were involved in changing and manipulating the institution to suit their interests and that of the growing transatlantic industrial economy. This chapter highlighted that from the beginning of cotton's global ascent to industrial dominance, Irish families were involved in its cultivation. Small and large Irish landholders invested in the crop. The foundation of southern wealth rested on slavery and Irish immigrants who had the economic means invested heavily in the institution. The economic strength and vitality of southern slavery was reflected in the capitalist pursuit of profit by Irish planters. Irish immigrants undertook substantial financial risk by investing large sums of capital in slavery. However, the profits extracted from slavery created the opportunity for some Irish immigrants to enter the ranks of the wealthiest families, not only in the US but in the industrial world. Slaveholding became imperative for those residing in the slave states recalled Charles Spalding Wylly, a former captain in the Confederate army, for it was a "legacy made sacred by its social power, since it is claimed,

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[315] 6 Jul., 1830, Asylum Plantation Journal 1815-1833 & 12 Feb., 1839, Plantation Journal 1815-1842, Davison McDowell Papers, SCL.

[316] Maunsel White to James N. Bracewell, 31 May 1848, Maunsel White Papers, SHC.

with truth, that only through investment" in slavery "could money certainly and surely bring to its owners a social equality with the higher and most aristocratic circles of our Southern land."[317] Slavery made economic sense for those who could afford it and Irish planters fitted with ease into the slaveholding hierarchy.

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[317] Charles Spalding Wylly, *The Seed That Was Sown in the Colony of Georgia: The Harvest and the Aftermath 1740-1870,* (New York, 1910), 14.

Chapter 4

Rural Irish workers in the Antebellum US South

The success of the leading Irish planters showed a real possibility of economic prosperity and social advancement to immigrants arriving in the antebellum US South. Class distinction played a crucial role in the shaping of southern society. The purchasing of slaves granted Irish immigrants a stake in the slave system and this elevated Irish slaveholders above reproach. On her Irish father-in-law's plantation, in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, Juliana Margaret Courtney Conner observed that "everyone is welcome and receives the same hospitality," provided they were an "honest man (I do not include the laboring class such as overseers etc)."[1] As the price of slaves continued to rise, planters became more protective of their investments in human chattel. Planters were willing to exploit and also use hired free white labourers to bolster operations on their plantations. Wage labourers were hired often to complete jobs that required skill and expertise but also to undertake jobs that were deemed too hazardous for the slaves. Planters like John Burnside were happy to hire gangs of Irish immigrants to improve and clear their lands. Burnside hired John Loghlin "a great contractor, who he says, made plenty of money out of his countrymen, whose bones are lying up and down the Mississippi."[2] Although some Irishmen owned large plantations, thousands of other Irish immigrants laboured in the rural South.

To increase their profits, planters concentrated slave labour on the plantations to produce exportable staple crops. This resulted in labour shortages for public works. Irish labourers stepped into provide an essential source of labour for the development of the antebellum South. Charlestonian Bartholomew R. Carroll was aware of the important Irish contribution to the infrastructure of the South. Carroll warned against hostility towards the Irish, declaring that the Irishman:

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[1] 21 June 1827, Juliana Margaret Courtney Conner Diary, #174-7, SHC.
[2] William Howard Russell, *My Diary North and South*, (New York, 1863), 268.

> Brings his own industrious labor – that labor, which is seen all over the land, furthering its improvements – that labor, which is beautifying our streets – constructing our highways – excavating our canals – throwing up our railroads – guiding our commerce and doing all these things, which give sinews to a country, and show forth its strength to the world.[3]

The infrastructural development of the antebellum South relied heavily on hired free labour, despite elite southerners' aversion to free labourers. To maintain the profitability of the slave South, free labour was required to develop the subsidiary pillars of the Cotton Kingdom's economy.

This chapter examines the role of non-slaveholding immigrant labourers in the rural South and the impact they had on society. The first section assesses the acceptance of slavery by non-slaveholding poor whites and immigrants and reviews the notion of white equality. Despite their lowly position in the southern hierarchy, Irish workers impacted the southern landscape and the running of plantations. The second section details the lives of Irish born plantation overseers and their interaction with both their employers and the slaves. The position of the overseer illustrates uniquely the conflict of interest between hired labourers and coerced slaves. Frequently, some of the most hazardous work on plantations was performed by hired labourers. The third section discusses the importance of unskilled Irish workers on southern plantations and internal improvement projects which drew thousands of Irish workers into the interior of the rural South. The final section outlines the vital role of skilled Irish craftsmen hired by southern planters, and concludes by evaluating the interactions of Irish and slave labourers, which sometimes challenged the perceived normal interactions between whites and blacks.

i.   "The Negro is something like the Irishman"

Between 1845 and 1855, some 1,333,128 Irish nationals entered the US and as the Irish population of the slave states began to increase, so did questions about the loyalties of foreign born labourers.[4] This raised concern among the planter elite about the increasing number of non-slaveholding

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[3] Bartholomew R. Carroll, *An Address; Delivered before the St. Patrick Benevolent Society and Irish Volunteers on the 17th of March 1838*, (Charleston, 1838), 17.
[4] Tyler Anbinder, *Nativism and Slavery: The Northern Know Nothings and the Politics of the 1850s*, (New York, 1992), 4.

whites and their commitment to the enslaved economic order. Most southerners had a personal preference for slave labour when they could afford it. James Stirling detailed how the captain of a Charleston steamer "told me he paid eighteen dollars per month, for slaves and sixteen and seventeen for Irish; but he prefers the former, for, said he, naively, 'if an Irishman misbehaves, I can only send him ashore.' The alternative in the case of the nigger was 'understood.'"[5] Slaveholders dominated their enslaved workforce and this labour relationship led to a distinction in elite southern attitudes towards free labour. Pliable workers were desired, not free labourers.

Sectional tension over slavery increased during the 1850s. Southern newspapers carried stories regarding Irish immigrants and the issue of slavery. The *Semi-Weekly Mississippi*, for example, informed its readers that "we find that there is no politically prominent Irish born man who has taken the stand to announce his contempt for the constitution of his adopted country by texts from the folio of abolition treason." Irish immigrants proved themselves true citizens; they respected and held "inviolable the constitution" and its laws protecting southern human chattel, which they would not willingly sacrifice for "a malignant fanaticism or pseudo philanthropy."[6] To accredit the attack on the abolitionist movement, which had strong British connections, comparisons with Ireland became a standard of pro-slavery ideology.[7] In particular, comparisons between the favourable conditions of American slaves and the unfavourable one of the poor Irish tenant became a popular theme. In 1853, the *Daily Picayune*, for instance, carried an article titled "Mrs Stowe in Cork" which compared treatment of the slave, Uncle Tom, who was "well fed, well clothed, well housed, well doctored, and in many instances, well educated!" with that of "Father Pat," who was "dying in a ditch after being thrown out of his birth spot- raging in a spotted fever- without a drop of water to cool his burning tongue – without

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[5] James Stirling, *Letters from The Slave States*, (London, 1857), 230.
[6] *Semi-Weekly Mississippian*, 08 Aug., 1856.
[7] Edward B. Rugemer, "The Southern Response to British Abolitionism: The Maturation of Proslavery Apologetics, *JSH*, Vol. 70, No. 2 (May, 2004), 221-248; R. J. M. Blackett, *Building an Antislavery Wall: Black Americans in the Atlantic Abolitionist Movement 1830-1860*, (Baton Rouge, 1983). See also David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Emancipation*, (New York, 2014).

food, raiment or medicine- without sympathy."[8] The contrast between the supposed paternalism of the southern planter and the callousness of the English and northern capitalist was an important line of argument for proslavery ideologues.[9]

Southern politicians such as James Henry Hammond portrayed Britain as the brutal enslaver of Ireland in an attempt to gain moral and political capital for the South's alternative to the laissez-faire world of free labour.[10] This coincided with the growth of the Irish population in the slave states, after the Great Famine struck Ireland.[11] Between 1850 and 1860, the Irish-born population in the states that would form the Confederacy in 1861 increased by 55 percent.[12] Most of these new arrivals did not have the financial means to become slaveholders and, therefore to survive, had to work as unskilled manual labourers.

Earning a living in the antebellum US South as a labourer was a difficult task. Before the famine, Bishop England of Charleston warned Irishmen to avoid the South, for he believed that the "southern states are the worst places to which an Irishman can emigrate, except he is a merchant with good capital, a mechanic in the way of building or tailoring." Success could not be found without "steady habits and untiring industry."[13] Those who laboured in the South faced multiple hardships, especially, the "vile

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[8] *The Daily Picayune*, June 26, 1853.
[9] Elizabeth Fox-Genovese & Eugene D. Genovese, *Slavery in Black and White: Class and Race in the Southern Slaveholders' New World Order*, (Cambridge, 2008), 133.
[10] Rugemer, "The Southern Response," 221-224.
[11] For more on the Famine see John Crowley, William J. Smyth, & Mike Murphy (eds.), *Atlas of the Great Irish Famine, 1842-52*, (Cork, 2012); Cormac Ó Gráda, *Black '47: Beyond the Great Famine in History, Economy and Memory*, (Princeton, 1999); Graham Davis, "The Historiography of the Irish Famine," in Patrick O'Sullivan, (ed.), *The Meaning of the Famine*, (London, 1997), 15-39; Christine Kinealy, *This Great Calamity: The Irish Famine, 1845-1852*, (Dublin, 1994); Joel Mokyr, *Why Ireland Starved: A Quantitative and Analytical History of the Irish Economy, 1800-1850*, (Boston, 1983); For the impact of the Great Famine in the South, see David T. Gleeson, "Easing Integration: The Impact of the Great Famine on the American South," in David A. Valone & Christine Kinealy, (eds.), *Ireland's Great Hunger. Science, Memory and Commemoration*, (Lanham MD., 2002), 193-212; Storm Harvey, "South Carolina and Irish Famine Relief, 1846-47," *SCHM*, Vol. 103, No.2 (Apr., 2002), 130-152.
[12] David T. Gleeson, *The Irish in the South, 1815-1877*, (Chapel Hill, 2001), 27.
[13] Cited in George Potter, *To the Golden Door: The Story of the Irish in Ireland and America*, (Boston, 1960), 203.

mucilaginous weather" and the danger of disease.[14] Thousands perished as victims of disease carrying mosquitoes. A recent immigrant to Louisiana observed that mosquitoes "breed in millions in stagnant water, are something similar to our midges and their sting is so painful as that of our wasp."[15] On arrival to the slave states, Irish workers realised almost immediately that slavery cast its shadow over their chances of success. The wide economic gap between the planter elite and non-slaveholders was reflected in the elite planters' ambivalent view of manual labour. Among the southern elite was a growing belief that only degraded white people worked with their hands in the fashion characteristic of the enslaved population. "What respectable parent" declared one Savannah resident in 1815, "wishes to place his son at a trade...alongside an apprentice who is a slave."[16] Frances Ann Kemble observed in Georgia that labour was "the especial portion of slaves, it is thenceforth degraded, and considered unworthy of all but slaves. No white man, therefore of any class puts hand to work of any kind."[17]

In 1856, the critical ignominy generated by the disdain of manual labour was apparent in the murder of Irish immigrant Thomas Keating. He was a waiter in Willard's Hotel, Washington and was murdered for refusing to serve breakfast to Alabama-born Philemon Thomas Herbert, a Democratic US Representative for California, after the appropriate time. Herbert was acquitted of manslaughter and the Northern press used Keating's murder as an example of the desire "to extend the plantation tyranny of the slave-holding oligarchy over free labourers."[18] In the South, the press jumped to the defence of Herbert. The *Charleston Standard* denounced Keating, stating that he had no right to react to the "provocation of words" directed towards him. By taking a menial job, Keating and all white men should do so "with an apprehension of their relation to society,

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[14] Cited in Tyrone Power, *Impressions of America During the Years 1833, 1834 and 1835. Volume 2.* (London, 1836), 255.

[15] Journal of Hugh Quin, 21 Nov., 1817, Quin Papers T2874/1, PRONI.

[16] Cited in Thomas Paul Thigpen, "Aristocracy of the Heart: Irish Catholic Lay Leadership in Savannah, Georgia, 1820-1870," (PhD diss., Emory University, 1995), 580.

[17] Fanny Kemble, *Journal of a Residence on a Georgia Plantation in 1838-1839*, John A. Scott, (ed.), (Athens GA., 1984), 110.

[18] *Bangor Daily Whig & Courier*, 12 Jun., 1856.

and the disposition quietly to encourage both the responsibility and liabilities with the relation imposes."[19] Frederick Olmsted was disgusted that Herbert was "protected and screened by the Southern party, because killing a slave or a low Irishman is in their opinion no murder."[20]

The following year, Hinton Rowan Helper published *The Impending Crisis of the South*, a book dedicated to "*NON-SLAVEHOLDING WHITES OF THE SOUTH*." Born in North Carolina, Helper wrote a book not based on the traditional moral and religious grounds of previous abolitionist opinions, but on statistical and economic arguments, outlining the untenability of slavery as an institution that "retarded the development of our commercial and manufacturing interests." Non-slaveholding whites were "badly cheated" by the "entire system of oligarchical despotism."[21] Helper believed that the most effective way to abolish slavery required "Thorough Organization and Independent Political Action on the part of the Non-Slaveholding whites of the South."[22] Helper's rallying cry to the non-slaveholding South had a radical approach:

> being thus injurious, have we not a right to demand its extermination? shall society suffer, that the slaveholder may continue to gather his crop of human flesh? What is his mere pecuniary claim, compared with the great interests of the common weal? Must the country languish, droop, die, that the slaveholder may flourish? Shall all interests be subservient to one--all rights subordinate to those of the slaveholder? Has not the mechanic, have not the middle classes their rights--rights incompatible with the existence of slavery?[23]

Dissenting voices of poor southern whites were dangerous and not surprisingly Helper was branded a traitor.

Southern legislatures banned Helper's book. "Helperism" was declared a weapon of the abolitionist North to destroy the South through class conflict.[24] Elite southerners including the physician Samuel Cartwright

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[19] Cited in Bernard Mandel, *Labor: Free and Slave, Workingmen and the Anti-Slavery Movement in the United States*, (New York, 1955), 39-40 & 151.

[20] Cited in Fox-Genovese, & Genovese, *Slavery in Black and White*, 96.

[21] Hinton Rowan Helper, *The Impending Crisis of the South: How to Meet It,* (New York, 1857), iii, 125,127 & 153.

[22] Ibid, 155

[23] Ibid, 177

[24] Several books were published refuting Helper's arguments. For example, Gilbert J. Beebe, *A Review and Refutation of Helper's "Impending Crisis"*, (Middletown, NY., 1860); Louis Schade, *A Book for the "Impending Crisis": Appeal to the Common Sense and Patriotism of the People of the United States. "Helperism" Annihilated, The*

had little sympathy for white labourers "who make negroes of themselves."[25] Young Eliza Frances Andrews in Georgia believed that the "negro is something like the Irishman in his blundering good nature, his impulsiveness and improvidence."[26] In New Orleans, southerners could find on "any day in Canal Street, 'a most revolting sight' – Irishmen waiting on negro masons." Olmstead discovered that the slave-holding "bosses could get no white men to work with their slaves, except Irishmen or Germans," for no white man in New Orleans "who had any regard for his position among his fellow-craftsmen would ever let himself be seen working with a negro."[27] Necessity drove thousands of Irish immigrants to take the lowliest and most dangerous positions in the southern economy.

The inferior position Irish immigrants held in the US antebellum economy has led some scholars to question if Irish immigrants were accepted as members of the "White Race." Whiteness studies argue that Irish workers in the antebellum US, who faced extreme prejudice, had to identify as white, in order to differentiate themselves from free blacks and slaves and thus, gain respect.[28] These interpretations stress that Irish immigrants had "to claim the mantle of whiteness as a badge of citizenship and testament to one's humanity."[29] However, the studies of whiteness have come under critical scrutiny, especially regarding their arguments relating to

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"Irrepressible Conflict" and Its Consequences, (Washington, DC., 1860). See also David Brown, *Southern Outcast: Hinton Rowan Helper and the Impending Crisis of the South*, (Baton Rouge, 2006).

[25] Cited in Eugene D. Genovese, *The Political Economy of Slavery: Studies in the Economy and Society of the Slave South*, (New York, 1965), 47.

[26] Eliza Frances Andrews, *The War Time Journal of a Georgia Girl 1864-1865*, (New York, 1908), 340.

[27] Cited in Frederick Law, Olmsted, *The Cotton Kingdom. A Traveller's Observations On Cotton And Slavery In The American Slave States, 1853-1861. Based upon Three Former Volumes of Journeys and Investigations by the Same Arthur*, Arthur M. (ed.), Schlesinger, (New York, 1996), 231.

[28] David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class*, (New York, 1991); Theodore W. Allen, *The Invention of the White Race, Volume One: Racial Oppression and Social Control*, (New York, 1994); Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White*, (New York, 1995); Matthew Frye Jacobson, *Whiteness of A Different Color, European Immigrants and the Alchemy of Race*, (Cambridge, MA., 1998); Steve Garner, *Whiteness: An Introduction*, (New York, 2007), 120-136; David R. Roediger, & Elizabeth D. Esch, *The Production of Difference. Race and the Management of Labor in US History*, (New York, 2012), 19-39.

[29] Bruce Nelson, *Irish Nationalists and the Making of the Irish Race*, (Princeton, 2012), 10.

the Irish.[30] David Roediger's argument that Irish whiteness was "by no means clear" and Noel Ignatiev's suggestion "to consign the Irish, if not to the black race, then to an intermediate race located between white and black," denies the historical and political reality of the Irish in the antebellum US.[31] The Irish, on arrival were never considered "non-white." They were recognised in accordance with the Naturalization Act of 1790 as "free white persons." This granted them citizenship, the right to vote, sit on juries and travel the country without any restraints.[32] The very issue of the Irish becoming white as proposed by Whiteness scholars, notes Eric Arnesen, is "based upon a false premise."[33] Kevin Kenny argues that to "have asked the immigrants themselves how they 'became white' would surely have been to ask a nonsensical question...that they were 'white' was self-evident."[34]

Irish immigrants did suffer from native white prejudice; however, this hostility towards Irish immigrants was not based on a lack of "whiteness." Rather, for many antebellum Americans, Protestantism was essential to both republicanism and Americanism. The Catholicism of foreign born Irish immigrants was what truly alarmed native born American Protestants.[35] Notions of non-whiteness and cultural inferiority were two

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[30] Eric Arnesen, "Whiteness and the Historian's Imagination," *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 60 (Fall, 2001), 3-32; Eric Forner, "Response to Eric Arnesen," *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 60 (Fall, 2001), 57-60; Eric Arnesen, "Assessing Whiteness Scholarship: A Response to James Barrett, David Brody, Barbara Fields, Eric Forner, Victoria Hottam and Adolp Reed," *International Labor and Working-Class History*, 60 (Fall, 2001), 81-92; Peter Kolchin, "Whiteness Studies: The New History of Race in America," *JAH*, Vol. 89 No. 1 (Jun., 2002), 154-173; Andrew Hartman, "The Rise and Fall of Whiteness Studies," *Race and Class*, Vol. 46, No.2, (2004), 22-38; Timothy Meagher, *The Columbia Guide to Irish American History*, (New York, 2005), 214-232;

[31] Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness*, 134 & Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White*, 76.

[32] Forner, "Response to Eric Arnesen," 57-58; Jay P. Dolan, *The Irish Americans: A History*, (New York, 2008), 54-55.

[33] Arnesen, "Assessing Whiteness Scholarship," 84.

[34] Kevin Kenny, *The American Irish: A History*, (New York, 2000), 70.

[35] For more on Nativism and Anti-Catholicism see Jon Gjerde, *Catholicism and the Shaping of Nineteenth-Century America*, (New York, 2012); Jason W. Wallace, *Catholics, Slaveholders, and the Dilemma of American Evangelicalism, 1835-1860*, (Notre Dame, 2010); John David Bladek, "America for Americans: The Southern Know Nothing Party and the Politics of Nativism, 1854-1856," (PhD. diss., University of Washington, 1998); Dale T. Knobel, *America for the Americans: The Nativist Movement in the United States*, (New York, 1996); Brian Edward Crowson, "Southern Port City Politics and the Know-Nothing Party in the 1850s," (PhD. diss., University of Tennessee, 1994); Marius M. Carriere Jr., "Anti-Catholicism, Nativism and Louisiana Politics in the 1850s," *JLHA*, Vol.

very different things and the poor conditions endured by many immigrants also provoked class resentment. Kolchin remarks that "Americans have had many ways of looking down on people without questioning their whiteness."[36] In the South, the ascendency of whites over blacks was the foundation of the social order, and Irish immigrants adapted to this central social reality.

In the South, the Irish were entitled members of "the filthy aristocracy of skin."[37] It was on this social bedrock that the foundation of Irish life in the slave states rested. Their unwillingness to challenge the status quo resulted in the failure of the trans-Atlantic Repeal movement. The anti-slavery ideology of Daniel O'Connell and his links with northern abolitionists alienated the Irish community and doomed the Repeal campaign in the US.[38] O'Connell's articulated attacks on American slavery endangered the position of Irish immigrants in southern society. In response, they denounced O'Connell, "We say South Carolina forever" declared the disbanding Repeal association of Charleston.[39] In Charleston, the hero of Catholic emancipation had, by 1843, become "the arch agitator and incendiary, who has fully unveiled his atrocious character."[40] Status as loyal Americans was more important to Irish immigrants than the constitutional

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34, No. 4, (Autumn, 1994), 455-474; Michael Feldberg, *The Turbulent Era: Riot & Disorder in Jacksonian America*, (New York, 1980); Ray Allen Billington, *The Protestant Crusade: A Study of the Origins of American Nativism*, (New York, 1938).

[36] Kolchin, "Whiteness Studies," 164-165.

[37] Cited in Garner, *Racism in the Irish Experience*, 91.

[38] For more on O'Connell and slavery see Angela F. Murphy, "Though Dead He Yet Speaketh": Abolitionist Memories of Daniel O'Connell in the United States," *American Journal of Irish Studies*, Vol. 10, (2013), 11-38; Christine Kinealy, *Daniel O'Connell and the Anti-Slavery Movement: 'The Saddest People the Sun Sees'*, (London, 2011); Bruce Nelson, "Come Out of Such a Land, You Irishmen": Daniel O'Connell, American Slavery and the Making of the Irish Race," *Eire-Ireland*, Vol. 44, No. 1-2, (Spring/Summer, 2007), 58-81; Maurice J. Brick, "Daniel O'Connell and the Debate on Anti-Slavery, 1820-50, " in Tom Dunne & Laurence M. Geary, (eds.), *History and the Public Sphere: Essays in Honour of John A. Murphy*, (Cork, 2005), 69-83; Howard Temperley, "The O'Connell-Stevenson Contretemps: A Reflection of the Anglo-American Slavery Issue," *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 47, No. 4 (Oct., 1962), 217-233.

[39] Gleeson, *Irish in the South*, 129-130. For more on Repeal in the US see Angela F. Murphy, *American Slavery, Irish Freedom: Abolition, Immigrant Citizenship and the Transatlantic Movement for Irish Repeal*, (Baton Rouge, 2010); W. Caleb McDaniel, "Repealing Unions: American Abolitionists, Irish Repeal, and the Origins of Garrisonian Disunionism," *JER*, Vol. 28, No. 2 (Summer, 2008), 1-20; Michael F. Funchion, "Repeal Associations," in Michael F. Funchion, (ed.), *Irish American Voluntary Organisations*, (Westport CT., 1983), 236-241.

[40] *Charleston, SC Patriot* cited in *New York Freeman's Journal* July 22, 1843.

status of Ireland. Those who wanted to succeed in the South did not publicly question slavery.

The Irish immigrants were not the only poor whites in the antebellum South. Charles Ball, a former slave, recalled that the native southern poor rural whites experienced the lowest poverty "of which their clayey complexions, haggard figures, and tattered garments gave the strongest proof." Yet, they lived in a society where "the white man never works, except at the expense of forfeiting all claim to the rank of a gentleman."[41] Before the American Civil War, the number of landless whites in the South ranged from 30 to 50 percent of all whites.[42] For example, in North Carolina, some 38,000 or 22 percent of all white men between the ages of fifteen and seventy appear in the 1860 census as "farm laborers" or "laborers." In South Carolina, 15 percent of working age white males held the same occupations.[43] Most landless whites lived as farm labourers or as farm tenants. Planters often hired not only white men, but also poor white women to labour on their plantations, often alongside slaves. Slavery made it difficult for white rural labourers to find long term employment, and poor whites had to be willing to work various jobs. They travelled to gain temporary employment, resulting in a high level of mobility among the southern poor.[44]

Southern born labourers were often viewed with contempt by their wealthier slaveholding neighbours. Reflecting on his travels throughout the slave states, Frederick Olmsted remarked that on inquiring "the owner or the overseer of a large plantation about the poor whites of its vicinity" never failed "to elicit an expression indicating habitual irritation with them." One Louisiana planter explicitly explained his dislike for the rural poor based on the negative effect they had upon the discipline of the plantation, "which

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[41] Charles Ball, *Fifty Years in Chains, Or, The Life of An American Slave*, (New York, 1859), 288, & 269-270.
[42] Charles C. Bolton, *Poor Whites of the Antebellum South: Tenants and Laborers in Central North Carolina and Northeast Mississippi*, (Durham, 1994), 5.
[43] Jeff Forret, *Race Relations at the Margins: Slaves and Poor Whites in the Antebellum Southern Countryside*, (Baton Rouge, 2006), 39-40.
[44] Bolton, *Poor Whites*, 8; Timothy James Lockley, *Lines in the Sand: Race and Class in Lowcountry Georgia, 1750-1860*, (Athens GA, 2001), 29-32.

was had by the intercourse between the people and the slaves;" but worse was:

> the contrast between the habits of the former- most of the time idle, and when working only for their own benefit and without a master – constantly offered suggestions and temptations to the slaves to neglect their duty, to run away and live a vagabond life, as these poor whites were seen to.[45]

Non-slaveholders were often viewed by elite planters as ineffective and troublesome. The economic conditions of poor whites lives, including Irish immigrants, ensured that they interacted with enslaved and free blacks on a level of familiarity not experienced by the wealthier elements of white society. Planters such as Edward Spann Hammond may have been disgusted with the "worthlessness and obstinacy" of white labourers, but he, like many of the politically minded upper class did not make such sentiments known publicly.[46] Poor whites were looked down upon; yet, no southern politician could afford to alienate the vote of the small farmer and free labourer.

Mary Boykin Chesnut believed in the elitism of South Carolina's social hierarchy, which favoured the leading planter class. Mary was appalled when her uncle, a state legislator, Alexander Hamilton Boykin, invited "Squire McDonald" to join them and her husband, US Senator James Chesnut, to smoke and talk politics on the piazza of his Kershaw plantation. The "well digger" with "mud sticking up through his toes" was treated with respect by the two men because "Squire McDonald" was well respected in the local community and could influence fellow voters. Despite her class snobbery and sense of superiority, Mary could not contest his presence, for McDonald had a vote and she did not.[47] However poorly non-slaveholding labourers were viewed, they were an integral pillar of southern society for white males had the vote, served on juries and were needed to

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[45] Olmsted, *The Cotton* Kingdom, 578.

[46] Orville Vernon Burton, *In My Father's House Are Many Mansions: Family & Community in Edgefield, South Carolina*, (Chapel Hill, 1985), 77.

[47] Stephanie McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds. Yeomen Households, Gender Relations & the Political Culture of the Antebellum South Carolina Low Country*, (Oxford, 1995), 128-129 For more on White southern women and politics see Christopher J. Olsen, "Respecting 'the wise allotment of our sphere': White Women and Politics in Mississippi, 1840-1860," *Journal of Women's History*, Vol. 11, No. 3 (Autumn, 1999), 104-125; Joan E. Cashin, "'Decidely Opposed to the Union' Women's Culture, Marriage, and Politics in Antebellum South Carolina," *GHQ*, Vol. 78, No. 4 (Winter, 1994), 735-759; Suzanne Lebsock, *The Free Women of Petersburg: Status and Culture in a Southern Town, 1784-1860*, (New York, 1985).

form patrols to police the enslaved population. Slaveholders needed the services of the poor white population.

English traveller Charles Lyell heard "of a newly-arrived Irish ditcher at Chehaw, who was astonished when invited to sit down at the table with his employer, a proprietor in the neighbourhood, who thought it necessary to recognise him as an equal."[48] Recent studies by Graham A. Peck show that voters' allegiances in the antebellum US "could not be taken for granted, that party loyalties were less entrenched than is often acknowledged, that the stability of the party system has been correspondingly overstated."[49] Jeff Forret notes that "slaveholders had to court poor white ballots, offer economic aid, and woo them at barbecues."[50] In the South, the Irish were always regarded as 5/5 of a person in terms of political representation.

Wealthy and influential southerners argued passionately that slavery ensured the freedom of all white males. In 1848, John C. Calhoun famously remarked that the "two great divisions of society are not the rich and the poor, but white and black; and all the former, the poor as well as the rich, belong to the upper class, and are respected and treated as equals."[51] According to the rhetoric of proslavery propaganda, Irish immigrants were automatically a part of Calhoun's white "upper class." These sentiments reveal the need of the southern elite to foster an alliance with non-slaveholding whites. This need has been articulated in the expression "Herrenvolk Democracy". Herrenvolk Democracy, or "egalitarian racism," was first introduced to the study of American slavery by George M.

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[48] Charles Lyell, *A Second Visit to The United States of America. Volume II*, (London, 1849), 57.

[49] Graham A. Peck, "Was There a Second Party System? Illinois as a Case Study in Antebellum Politics," in Daniel Peart & Adam I. P. Smith, (eds.), *Practicing Democracy: Popular Politics in the United States from the Constitution to the Civil War*, (Charlottesville, VA., 2015), 145. For more on politics and the Second Party System see Enrico Dal Lago, *Agrarian Elites: American Slaveholders and Southern Italian Landowners, 1815-1861*, (Baton Rouge, 2005), 218-223 & 236-239; Don E. Fehrenbacher, *The Slaveholding Republic: An Account of the United States Government's Relations to Slavery*, (Oxford, 2001); Michael F. Holt, *The Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party: Jacksonian Politics and the Onset of the Civil War*, (New York, 1999).

[50] Forret, *Race Relations*, 17.

[51] Cited in John M. Murrin, Paul E. Johnson, James McPherson, Gray M. Grestle, Emily S. Rosenburg, & Norman C. Rosenburg, *Liberty, Equality, Power: A History of the American People*, (Belmont CA., 2009), [2007], 337.

Fredrickson.[52] Fredrickson defined herrenvolk democracy as an "ideological marriage between egalitarian democracy and biological racism, pandering at once to the democratic sensibilities and the racial prejudices of the 'plain folk' and thus well suited to the maintenance of inter-class solidarity" between planter and non-slaveholder.[53] This argument became the mantra of proslavery rhetoric.

In 1858, James Henry Hammond declared in the US Senate that "In all social systems there must be a class to do the menial duties, to perform the drudgery of life... It constitutes the very mud-sill of society and political government...Fortunately for the South, she found a race adapted to this purpose."[54] Olmsted observed on his travels that the advantage of slavery for the mass of southern whites was "that the niggers are yet their inferiors. It is this habit of considering themselves of a privileged class, and of disdaining something which they think beneath them, that is deemed to be the chief blessing of slavery."[55] Englishman Charles Lyell was not pleased to find in Georgia that "the drunken and illiterate Irish" were "unduly raised above" black artisans of "intelligence and sober habits" due to the "prejudices of race!."[56] White supremacy fed into the southern culture of honour. Orlando Patterson has demonstrated that slave-ownership generated honour. The sense of honour was real for slaveholders, due to the denial of their human chattels' honour; the planters' honour was enhanced "through the degradation of the slave." Non-slaveholders could claim honour in their white skin and "sharing in the collective honor of the master class, all free persons legitimized the principle of honor."[57] Irish immigrants adopted

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[52] George M. Fredrickson, *The Black Image In the White Mind: The Debate on Afro-American Character and Destiny 1817-1914*, (New York, 1971), 43-70; Kenneth P. Vickery, "Herrenvolk Democracy and Egalitarianism in South Africa and the U.S. South," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 16, No. 3 (Jun., 1974), 309-328; Bill Cecil-Fronsman, *Common Whites: Class and Culture in Antebellum North Carolina*, (Lexington KY., 1992), 82-83.

[53] George M. Fredrickson, *White Supremacy: A Comparative Study in American and South African History*, (New York, 1982), 154-155.

[54] "Speech on the Admission of Kansas, U.S. Senate, March 4, 1858," in Eric McKitrick, (ed.), *Slavery Defended: The Views of the Old South*, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ., 1969), [1963], 122.

[55] Cited in Olmsted, *The Cotton Kingdom*, 19.

[56] Lyell, *A Second Visit*, 11.

[57] Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study*, (Cambridge MA., 1982), 94-97. For more on Honour in the South see Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Southern*

southern assumptions of honour and black inferiority. In Georgia, Fanny Kemble discovered that the Irish were "despisers of niggers," that the "Irish hate the Negro more even than the Americans do."[58] Irish immigrants upheld the social order of the South to advance their own economic prospects.

The slaveholding elite successfully dominated the South through their ability to elicit the consent and co-operation of the largely enfranchised masses of non-slaveholding whites. Better concepts of herrenvolk democracy and Antonio Gramsci's notion of hegemony, describes in many ways the contingency of slaveholders' power and underline the significance of culture and ideology, in contrast to financial and political power, in relation to the planters mechanisms of social control.[59] The plantation as an ideal served as a focus for the ambitions of non-planters. When farmers deferred to the interests of planters, they did so as they aspired to the possibility that one day they or their family could also be planters. Thus, planters found support for their aristocratic position among the broad base of protoplanters.[60] Genovese argued that slavery as a system "did oppress the nonslaveholders but in a disguised and impersonal way, while creating bonds across class lines."[61] In defending slavery, slaveholders and non-slaveholders stood together. For most, this community of interest was a matter of economic necessity. Even when the slave system was detrimental to them, driving down crop prices, degrading manual labour and depriving them of markets; small producing farmers depended on plantations to buy

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Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South, (New York, 1982); Dickson D. Bruce Jr., *Violence and Culture in the Antebellum South*, (Austin, 1979).
[58] Kemble, *Journal of a Residence*, 123-124.
[59] Drew Gilpin Faust, *The Creation of Confederate Nationalism: Ideology and Identity in the American Civil War South*, (Baton Rouge, 1988), 15.
[60] Emory M. Thomas, *The Confederacy as a Revolutionary Experience*, (Columbia, SC., 1991), [1971], 16.
[61] Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World The Slaves Made*, (New York, 1976), [1974], 92; Elizabeth Fox-Genovese & Eugene D. Genovese, *Fruits of Merchant Capital: Slavery and Bourgeois Property in the Rise and Expansion of Capitalism*, (New York, 1983), 250-251.

their produce. Small-scale cotton growers also needed the assistance of planters in ginning and marketing their cotton crop.[62]

White labourers resisted any intrusion by black workers into their spheres of work. Irish labourers viewed slavery as a means of controlling competition. The dislike of blacks by the Irish was acknowledged by southerners. In 1844, for example, the *Daily Picayune* printed an anecdote about "Biddy" and "Ann," two Irish women who extolled the virtues of New Orleans. Praising the opportunities to find work, Biddy declared New Orleans "a fine city, in troth it is"; Ann replied "Barrin' the nagurs."[63] Irish immigrants were not alone in their dislike of the black population. When asked if slavery was a curse on the country, one poor Mississippi farmer stated that "the majority would be glad if we could get rid of the niggers. But it wouldn't never do to free 'em and leave 'em here...No body [*sic*] could live here then."[64] Emancipation was viewed as the loss of control of the black population and very few white southerners were willing to allow this. Bill Cecil-Fronsman has highlighted that the "great paradox of the antebellum South was that although slavery was not in the common whites interest, neither was emancipation."[65] Being placed on the same level as emancipated slaves was a prospect that threatened the social position of white labourers.

The herrenvolk thesis has come under criticism for being too reductive and theoretically simplistic. Indeed, it is important to "emphasize the simultaneous interplay of race, class and gender, rather than giving precedence to any one element."[66] The privileges of herrenvolk democracy

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[62]Richard H. Sewell, *A House Divided: Sectionalism and the Civil War 1848-1865*, (Baltimore, 1988), 13.

[63] "A Christmas Anecdote. The Expedition of Bridget and Ann to Early Mass on Christmas Morning", *Daily Picayune,* 7 January 1844.

[64] Cited in Olmsted, *The Cotton Kingdom*, 380.

[65] Cecil-Fronsman, *Common Whites*, 29.

[66] David Brown, "A Vagabond's Tale: Poor Whites, Herrenvolk Democracy, and the Value of Whiteness in the Late Antebellum South," *JSH*, Vol. LXXIX, No. 4, (November, 2013), 808; David Brown & Clive Webb, *Race in the American South: From Slavery to Civil Rights*, (Edinburgh, 2007), 1-9; Barbara J. Fields, "Ideology and Race in American History," in J. Morgan Kousser & James M. McPherson, (eds.), *Region, Race and Reconstruction: Essays in Honor of C. Vann Woodward*, (New York, 1982), 143-177; Fox-Genovese & Genovese, *Fruits of Merchant Capital*, 249-264; Eugene D. Genovese,

were not extended evenly to all white men. It was the strong farmers, the yeomanry, who interacted more with the planter elite and benefitted from their patronage.[67] David Brown argues that propertyless white men "were more likely to encounter planters in court than in church or at a political gathering." Victoria Bynum has detailed how poor whites, especially poor white women, suffered discrimination in the judicial system, due to their social standing.[68] The true mark of distinction in the antebellum US South was not white skin, but an individual's wealth, gender, family connections, and community standing. An individual's respectability was the most important factor. In the South, class relations were permeated with tension and discord and occasionally bitter resentments flared into conflict.[69] Instead of non-slaveholder passivity in the face of planter hegemony, many poor whites posed what Gramsci termed a "contradictory consciousness."[70] Non-slaveholders could agree with prominent slaveholders, but they also felt apart from the planter class, believing they were at odds with each other. The strains of the Confederate War effort for 1861-1865 illustrated how slavery failed to transcend the economic, social and political division between the rich and the poor in many parts of the South.[71]

"Yeomen Farmers in a Slaveholders' Democracy," *Agricultural History*, Vol. 49, No. 2 (Apr., 1975), 331-342.

[67] For more on Yeomen see J. William Harris, *Plain Folk and Gentry in a Slave Society: White Liberty and Black Slavery in Augusta's Hinterlands*, (Baton Rouge, 1998), [1985]; McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds;* Lacy K. Ford Jr., *Origins of Southern Radicalism: The South Carolina UpCountry, 1800-1860*, (New York, 1988); Steven Hahn, *The Roots of Southern Populism: Yeoman Farmers and the Transformation of the Georgia Upcountry 1850-1890*, (New York, 1983).

[68] Brown, "A Vagabond's Tale," 805; Victoria E. Bynum, *Unruly Women: The Politics of Social & Sexual Control in the Old South*, (Chapel Hill, 1992), 88-110. For more on gender and social status see Stephanie McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds; Confederate Reckoning: Power and Politics in the Civil War South*, (Cambridge, MA., 2010).

[69] Bertram Wyatt-Brown, "Community, Class, and Snopesian Crime: Local Justice in the Old South," in Orville Vernon Burton & Robert C. McMath, (eds.), *Class, Conflict and Consensus: Antebellum Southern Community Studies*, (London, 1982), 173-201; Keri Leigh Merritt, "'A Vile, Immoral, and Profligate Course of Life': Poor Whites and the Enforcement of Vagrancy Laws in Antebellum Georgia," in Susanna Delfino, Michele Gillespie and Louis M. Kyriakoudes, (eds.), *Southern Society and Its Transformation, 1790-1860*, (Columbia, MO., 2011), 23-44.

[70] T. J. Jackson Lears, "The Concept of Cultural Hegemony: Problems and Possibilities," *AHR*, Vol. 90, Iss. 3 (Jun., 1985), 569.

[71] Paul D. Escott, *After Secession: Jefferson Davis and the Failure of Confederate Nationalism*, (Baton Rouge, 1978), 94-134; Victoria E. Bynum, *The Long Shadow of the Civil War: Southern Dissent and Its Legacies*, (Chapel Hill, 2010), 19-36. See also Wayne K. Durrill, *War of Another Kind: A Southern Community in the Great Rebellion*, (New York, 1990); McCurry, *Confederate Reckoning*; Bruce Levine, *The Fall of the House of*

Poor whites and enslaved blacks constituted the majority of the South's labour force. These two groups were the economic losers, whose labour the planters profited from. The presence of a permanent, poor, white working class stood "as an aberration in a society that equated white skin with independence and freedom."[72] The reality of American slavery as an economic system condemned poor whites "to socioeconomic marginalization."[73] For whites at the bottom of social and economic life in the South, the racial boundaries separating black and white were often transgressed. Life at the lower level of society in the antebellum slave states was full of multiple types of biracial interactions. Poor whites, including Irish immigrants, often drank, gambled, stole, and slept with slaves and free blacks. Reports of Irish immigrants fraternising with blacks provoked the indignation and suspicion of native southerners, especially when they read such accounts as the case of runaway slave Ruben, who "went off with a man named David McDowell, an Irishman" or when the owner of a runaway slave, Bill, stated he had "good reason to believe that said boy was decoyed off by an Irishman who was at work on the same road, who calls himself Anderson Carroll."[74] Poor individuals challenged the prerogatives of the planter elite and the racial order, but there never was an organised collective of poor whites to challenge the status quo during the antebellum period. Genovese observed that the hegemony of the planter class implies "class antagonisms, but it also implies for a given historical epoch, the ability of a particular class to contain those antagonisms on a terrain in which its legitimacy" is not seriously questioned.[75] Most Irish immigrants were willing to uphold the social order, and by accepting slavery, they eased their assimilation into society as "hard-drinking, gambling, horse-racing, cock-fighting and tobacco-chewing Southerners."[76]

Dixie: The Civil War and the Social Revolution That Transformed the South, (New York, 2013).
[72] Bolton, *Poor Whites*, 42-43.
[73] Lockley, *Lines in the Sand*, 164.
[74] 15 April 1836, *The Mississippian*; 25 August 1836, *The Vicksburg Register*.
[75] Genovese, *Roll Jordan Roll*, 25-26.
[76] Lyell, *A Second Visit*, 115.

ii.   Hard taskmasters: Irish Overseers

The majority of Irish immigrants settled in the towns and cities of the Antebellum US South. Although rural life did not offer similar opportunities for work, Irish labourers also toiled on plantations throughout the antebellum South. Some planters believed that neither "the European or Asiatic could labor upon our plantations. They would perish by the thousand, and our lands would become a howling wilderness."[77] In 1800, based on his experience, one Irish immigrant believed that work on southern plantations was superior to any he encountered in Ireland for "here a man can have two shillings a day for plantishon [*sic*] work and as much bread and hogmet [*sic*] as he can eat."[78] Planters such as John Burnside were pragmatic and willing to supplement their slave work force with waged labourers. For example, in the spring of 1860, with his slaves' busy planting cotton, Aleck Gwin hired a large gang of Irish labourers from Vicksburg to construct a levee around his riverfront plantation at Brunswick Landing.[79] Irish labourers performed a variety of jobs on the plantations, including management as overseers.

The overseers' position was central to the operation of the large plantations and essential to the planters' acquisition of wealth. Overseers have long been viewed as slavery's man in the middle. The planter planned and incited, the slave worked the land, but it was the overseer "who brought the mind of one and the muscle of the other into cooperation."[80] The overseer acted as a lightening rod, since he "had to absorb the bitterness of bondage" felt by the slaves he directed and punished on the planters' behalf. Embodying the worst features of the plantation system, the overseer, as a hired intermediary, allowed the planter to adopt the façade of paternalism.[81] Genovese highlighted how "both masters and slaves in effect used the

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[77] Cited in James O. Breeden, (ed.) *Advice Among Planters: The Ideal In Slave Management In The Old South*, (London, 1980), 232.

[78] William and Agnes to Brothers and Sisters, 20 Nov., 1800, William and Agnes Faries, Turky Crek, York County, South Carolina, T3073/2, PRONI.

[79] Christopher Morris, *Becoming Southern: The Evolution of a Way of Life, Warren County and Vicksburg Mississippi, 1770-1860*, (New York, 1995), 117.

[80] John Spencer Bassett, *The Southern Plantation Overseers as Revealed in His Letters*, (Northampton, MA., 1925), 1-2.

[81] William Kaufmann Scarborough, *The Overseer: Plantation Management in the Old South*, (Athens, GA., 1984), [1966], x-xi.

overseers to detach themselves from the harsher side of the regime."[82] Planters demanded of overseers a near impossible task, to produce a large and profitable crop, but not to overwork and mistreat the slaves. Maunsel White informed one of his overseers, James Bracewell that he hoped for "90 Bales, even one hundred closely picked. Gin it out, Bale it, & send it off as fast as you can, without however neglecting any other work."[83] One overseer who grew tired of the challenges and pressure of the contradictory nature of his profession, noted in the *Southern Cultivator:*

> If there be...a favourable crop year, the master makes the splendid crop; if any circumstances be unpropitious and an inferior crop be made, it is the overseer's fault;...If he does not "turn out" hands in time, he is lazy; if he "rousts" them out as your dad and mine had to do, why he is a brute.[84]

In 1844, one South Carolina planter remarked that most "of the pleasure if not profit of planting depends on the character of the overseer."[85] The conflicting nature of the planters' economic interests ensured that disagreements between planters and overseers were frequent.

In 1847, a Mississippi planter published in the *Southern Cultivator* the traits required for a good overseer:

> he should be a man of the strictest honesty and truth; he should possess the most untiring industry; he should be orderly and systematic in everything; he should have sense enough to make just and sensible regulations for the government of the negroes and firmness to execute them...if he *drinks to excess,* do not employ him if he has every other qualification.[86]

The perfect overseer was a rare find, and the high turnover rate of overseers on plantations stands testament to this fact. Reports and complaints of poor overseers were common. For instance, Irish planter Davidson McDowell visited his Asylum rice plantation in Georgetown County, South Carolina, and discovered that his overseer "Mr McCarty has been intoxicated for some time past. The plantation all in disorder. Must part with for his

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[82] Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 21.

[83] Maunsel White to James N. Bracewell, 4 Oct., 1847, Maunsel White Papers #2234, SHC.

[84] Cited in James C. Bonner, "The Plantation Overseer and Southern Nationalism: As Revealed in the Career of Garland D. Harmon," *Agricultural History*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (Jan., 1945), 2.

[85] Cited in Breeden, *Advice Among Planters*, 291.

[86] Ibid, 297-298.

conduct."[87] Overseers on absentee plantations had greater responsibility and could potentially cause severe damage to the planter's estate in his absence.

Bishop Patrick Lynch of Charleston refused to hire an Irish born Catholic named Bresnahan to oversee his slaves in Columbia for fear that the Irish man might not take "sufficient control over the negroes if it became necessary to use harsh means."[88] Lynch was not the only person to question the ability of immigrants to oversee southern slaves and plantations. In his 1832, *Manual for Emigrants to America,* Calvin Colton declared that "none but natives can manage plantations to advantage, which are worked by slaves."[89] According to William Scarborough, those who entered the overseer profession could be divided into three categories: the sons of planters, a floating population of amateur overseers, and the general body of professional managers.[90] Professional managers were men capable of fully managing a plantation. They were knowledgeable, experienced and succeeded in satisfying the rigorous demands of their employers. Irish immigrants were found among the established professional managers, but the majority who undertook a job as an overseer fell into the amateur category. David Gleeson notes that native born southerners dominated the more established plantation regions, and Irish overseers did better in the newer plantation areas of the Southwest.[91]

William E. Wiethoff discusses how many "planters and overseers promoted an idealized notion of their professional relationship, and widespread reports of highly effective overseers tended to support this ideal."[92] Progressive southerners embraced the emerging economic modernisation instigated by the spread of railroads and industry. Steven G. Collins outlines how southern reformers "transformed new industrial ideas of system, technology, organization, and control into a unique vision of modernization based on agriculture and slave labor." Southern agricultural

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[87] 11, Sep., 1830, Asylum Plantation Journal 1815-1833, Davison McDowell Papers, SCL.
[88] David C. R. Heisser & Stephen J. White, *Patrick N. Lynch 1817-1882*, (Columbia, SC., 2015), 68.
[89] Calvin Colton, *Manual for Emigrants to America*, (London, 1832), 72.
[90] Scarborough, *The Overseer*, 5.
[91] Gleeson, *The Irish in the South*, 43.
[92] William E. Wiethoff, *Crafting the Overseer's Image*, (Columbia, SC., 2006), 105.

reformers championed making "factories in the fields" by advocating a style of plantation management that differed little from "the bureaucratic structures and business practices of railroads and factories. System, uniformity, and control became their mantra."[93] Technical schools and agricultural colleges were proposed as the means to modernise the South's technological and agricultural progress, with a view to further the professionalization of plantation management.[94] For example, in 1829, the *Southern Agriculturist* argued for the development of agricultural academies for overseers to instil "intelligence, industry and improvement." This could change overseers "from being ignorant and undeserving of confidence, into intelligent, valuable and industrious citizens," and help turn overseers into a tightly controlled part of the plantation order. Collins has shown that regulations for the "proper system of plantation management were interwoven with rules to control middle management."[95] Despite the desire of progressive planters to advance the cause of agriculture, they failed to establish state agricultural colleges to modernise the supervision and management of the South's plantations.

Between one-fourth and one-third of the South's rural slave population laboured under the supervision of a white overseer.[96] Overseers were intricately linked to the success and perpetuation of slavery. When the cotton economy boomed, so too did the overseer's profession. During the 1850s, the total number of overseers doubled in the slave states. For example, in 1850, in Mississippi 2,324 men were employed as overseers. By 1860, this figure jumped to 3,941. In the state of North Carolina, the number of overseers in 1850 stood at 989 and climbed to 1,782 in 1860. Scarborough credits this increase to the continued "expansion of the plantation system into the Southwest and... consolidation of existing

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[93] Steven G. Collins, "System, Organization, and Agricultural Reform in the Antebellum South, 1840-1860," *Agricultural History*, Vol. 75, No. 1 (Winter, 2001), 3-6; James Oakes, *The Ruling Race. A History of American Slaveholders*, (New York, 1998), [1982], 153-191.

[94] Collins, "System, Organization, and Agricultural Reform," 19-27; Charles G. Steffen, "In Search of the Good Overseer: The Failure of the Agricultural Reform Movement in Lowcountry South Carolina, 1821-1834," *JSH*, Vol. LXIII, No. 4 (Nov., 1997), 753-802.

[95] Cited in Wiethoff, *the Overseer's Image*, 106; Collins, "System, Organization, and Agricultural Reform," 10.

[96] Forret, *Race Relations*, 116.

holdings into larger units in the older agricultural regions."[97] Overseer wages varied according to individual contracts; no consistent pattern of pay existed and a number of factors influenced wages received, including the size of the plantation, the number of slaves, the length of tenure, the experience of the overseer and the geographic location of the plantation.[98]

In 1822, Davison McDowell offered the following contract for the position of overseer of his Contra plantation:

> By agreement with you to superintind [*sic*] my Plantation as an overseer from this to the 1st of Jan. next at the rate of $150 Pr year & from that time to the 1st Jan. 1824 for the sum of $150 – to obey me in all thing to treat my people with humanity during my absence & to do the best you can for my interest according to the best of your judgement.[99]

In contrast, in 1821, Antonio Patrick Walsh, on his cotton plantation in Louisiana, had offered a contract worth "Four hundred Dollars" with the possibility of a reward "of fifty dollars" if the overseer could make 75 to 80 bales of cotton "of the average weight of 375" pounds by "the first day of January, next 1822."[100] The bonus arrangement was used particularly by planters on the new cotton lands of the Southwest, where they required quick returns on their investments. In 1847, Maunsel White informed one of his overseers that he was "perfectly willing to employ you & desire you to stay but the figure of salary must surely & certainly correspond with the amount of Gain, from the pursuit you direct."[101] Established overseers received substantial incomes in comparison to other rural occupations. Some found that their wages were insufficient considering the performance pressure and managerial responsibilities of the job which included strategic planning for planting, maintaining a tight inventory and a detailed accounting book. In 1849, one overseer in Columbia, South Carolina wrote in *The Southern Cultivator* of the challenges those in his profession faced:

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[97] Scarborough, *The Overseer*, 9-11. For more on overseer wages see James D. Schmidt, "Overseers and the Nature of Southern Labor Contracts," in Gary M. Fink & Merl E. Reed, (eds.), *Race, Class, and Community in Southern Labour History*, (Tuscaloosa, AL., 1994), 87-96.

[98] Ibid, 27; Wiethoff, *the Overseer's Image*, 62-65.

[99] 2 Dec., 1822. MS Vol. Bd., 1811-1837, Davison McDowell Papers, SCL.

[100] 1823 Overseer agreement, Antonio Patrick Walsh Papers, Mss 887, 1208, LLMVC.

[101] Maunsel White to James N. Bracewell, 4 Oct., 1847, Maunsel White Papers, SHC.

> For wages scarcely if at all in advance of that given to the Irish ditcher, an overseer is obliged to manage the interests of a planter whose estate yields him from five to twenty thousand dollars a year. He has to punish and keep in order the negroes, at the risk of his life, and besides all this, he is virtually excluded from his kindred, and fellow creatures, and compelled to lead a life as secluded, in fact more so than the inmates of Sing-Sing prison.[102]

Despite the difficulties, thousands were willing to undertake the position of overseer, an occupation that earned a typical salary of two hundred to six hundred dollars.

Overseeing, for some, was perceived to have its rewards. The profession provided a stepping-stone towards becoming an independent farmer and slaveholder. Irish immigrant James McCann and his family moved to rural Mississippi to start farming, but his son John remained in South Carolina "he as over cer [*sic*]", where he was "geten [*sic*] 300 Dollars per yer [*sic*]."[103] With free accommodation and minimal expense, overseeing was seen as a means to earn and save money. It was difficult for an overseer to improve his social and economic standing, but some managed to become independent landowners and a few became plantation owners. One of the key difficulties in acquiring land was that it was generally purchased on credit. John Connolly was the overseer at Woodlands Plantation in Cass County, Georgia, the estate of Savannah exporter Godfrey Barnsley. When a neighbouring farm was up for auction, Connolly was "very thankful indeed Sir to you for proposing to advance me money to buy it." Although Connolly was unsuccessful at the auction, he was fortunate to enjoy a cordial relationship with his employer. Few planters were as generous.[104] Overseers who had a good working relationship with their employer generally had a more secure tenure and income.

In Natchitoches, American born Jefferson McKinney informed his brother that he could not, at present, return to farming "to use the plough and hoe myself. I cannot think of such a way of making a support for my family as long as I can git [*sic*] a situation as an overseer." He realised the

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[102] Cited in Scarborough, *The Overseer*, 131-132.

[103] James McCann to John McCann, 27 March 1845, McCann Family Papers 1825-1829, 1845 and nd, SCL.

[104] John Connolly to Godfrey Barnsley, 7 Jan., 1843, George Scarborough Barnsley Papers, 1837-1918, #1521, SHC.

difficulty of finding an alternative position to earn "$500 or 600 a year."[105] In 1856, Jefferson purchased "a negro girl which I give $1000 for one third cash and the balance one and two years from the first of may [*sic*]." He noted "it is a big prise [*sic*] but I have bin [*sic*] trying for several years to lay up money and find that at the end of every year that I have saved but little" due to previous debts. Yet, he believed that if his 16 year old slave "should breed she wil [*sic*] be cheap in a few years."[106] A strategy among overseers was to build up their slave property, so that they could subsequently hire out their slaves. Maunsel White, for example, offered to hire his overseer's slaves at "$120 a year for Men & $100 for women."[107] John Reynolds, a successful Irish overseer for Mary Stower in Warren County, Mississippi, managed Stower's sixty-eight slaves, and owned ten male slaves on the plantation as well.[108] By becoming slaveholders, overseers gained more respect in the eyes of potential employers as individuals well practiced in dominating others.

Overseeing was a hazardous occupation and many lost their lives on the plantations due to disease, accidents and acts of resistance by the slaves. In 1854, Irish immigrant David Thomson living in Charleston noted in a letter that there where "3 negroes to be hung up at Abbeville on the 15th of September for killing their overseer," who had punished one of them the day prior to the murder. The slaves "first threw him down and cut him on the head & neck with their axes and then ended his life by throwing him in a creek and drowning him."[109] In that same year, an overseer in Georgia stated that he encountered, "overseers armed as though they were going to a regular battle."[110] Overseers were also exposed to the same environmental conditions as the slaves in the fields. Irishman Patrick Carr was employed as

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[105] Jefferson McKinney to Jeptha McKinney, 4 June, 1854, Jeptha McKinney Papers, Mss. 273,718, LLMVC.

[106] Jefferson McKinney to Jeptha McKinney, 21 April, 1856, Jeptha McKinney Papers, LLMVC.

[107] Maunsel White to John Denson, 20 July 1845, Maunsel White Papers, SHC.

[108] David T. Gleeson, "The Mississippi Irish," (M.A. Thesis. Mississippi State University, 1993), 45-46.

[109] David Thompson to David Hill, 29 Aug., 1854, Hill and Thompson Emigrant Papers, T1830/2, PRONI; The leading protagonist in Michael Wayne's investigation was Irish immigrant John McCallin. Michael Wayne, *Death of an Overseer: Reopening a Murder Investigation from the Plantation South*, (New York, 2001).

[110] Cited in Breeden, *Advice Among Planters*, 299.

overseer on the Purdie plantation in Bladen County, North Carolina, owned by Thomas David Smith McDowell, a North Carolina planter and legislator along with his brother John McDowell. Their father, Dr. Alexander McDowell, was a United Irishmen supporter originally from Ballydavy, County Down. Carr had to manage the production of naval stores and keep the plantation self-sufficient in foodstuffs.[111] The Purdie plantation relied on river transportation, and Carr noted, for instance, that he had "to get the timber on the Elwell land as soon as I can and Raft hit [*sic*] and send it down."[112] In 1853, after four years working on the plantation, Patrick Carr drowned in an accident. Despite the risks and the loss of his brother Patrick, John Carr of Enniscorthy, County Wexford, was delighted at the opportunity to replace his brother in North Carolina, "Dear Sir there is nothing would give me greather [*sic*] pleasher [*sic*] than to live with you."[113]

By December 1854, John Carr was the working overseer on the Purdie plantation. It was an unusual act on behalf of the McDowell brothers to hire their new overseer from Ireland, when more qualified candidates were available in the Carolinas. The Carrs and the McDowells do not appear to have been kin and perhaps it was a sense of guilt over Patrick's death that influenced the appointment. The level of concern shown by the McDowells was not typical in the standard planter-overseer relationship. A letter from Ellener Carr, the mother of Patrick and John, to Thomas McDowell demonstrates this. She thanked him for "the Bill of ten pounds" that he sent her. She was happy to have John and his wife "being with you knowing you were so kind to my children and myself."[114] John succeeded in managing the plantation's slaves and mastered the production of turpentine. In one case, a slave refused to "go to the timber wood", so John "whiped [*sic*] him"

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[111] Patrick Carr to Thomas McDowell, 22 Oct., 1851, Thomas David Smith McDowll Papers, #460, SHC. For more on North Carolina's naval stores industry see Gloria Vollmers, "Industrial Slavery in the United States: the North Carolina Turpentine Industry 1849-61," *Accounting, Business & Financial History*, Vol. 13, No. 3 (No., 2003), 369-392; Robert B. Outland III, "Slavery, Work, and the Geography of the North Carolina Naval Stores Industry, 1835-1860," *JSH*, Vol. 62, No. 1 (Feb., 1996), 27-57.

[112] Patrick Carr to Thomas McDowell, 9 Nov., 1852, Thomas David Smith McDowell Papers, SHC.

[113] John Carr to Mr. McDowell, 29 Aug., 1853, Thomas David Smith McDowell Papers, SHC.

[114] Ellener Carr to Thomas Dowell, 28 May, 1855, Thomas David Smith McDowell Papers, SHC.

so that the slave "would do his work for the time to come."[115] Overseers had to be hard and could not tolerate insubordination if they were to satisfy their employers. In 1836, the *Southern Agriculturist* insisted that "it is by the punishment of small faults that large ones are prevented."[116] Many overseers were brutal in their duties of surveillance and physical intimidation of the slaves as they were responsible for the profitability of plantation production. James Oakes argues that all plantation managers "understood the importance of rules. Nothing seemed as conducive to profitable enterprise as the systematization of the workplace."[117] Establishing rules and strict routines, with the ever present fear of severe punishment, allowed planters and overseers to maintain order.

Key to an increased plantation output was the implementation of the "pushing system," which aimed to increase the speed and area covered by a slave. In 1805, planters believed that a slave kept five acres of cotton per year. Fifty years later, planters had come to expect ten or twelve acres per slave each year.[118] In Mississippi, recently arrived Israel Campbell, a slave originally from Kentucky, was hired out to a cotton planter named Bellfer. Campbell recalled that it was here that "I entered on a new way of life, that of the plantation system, that is, everyday one had to be up with the blowing of the horn, and be in the field by day light." The overseer on the plantation "was an Irishman by birth," and when it was time to pick the cotton crop each slave was given an expected quota of cotton to be picked daily. Those who did not meet their quota received as many lashes as they were pounds short. Campbell had never picked cotton before, yet he was expected "to pick a hundred pounds a-day" but he could not pick more than ninety pounds. In the field, the overseer noticed that Campbell was struggling and "he exclaimed, to hurry me up, 'Jatherous, Jatherous, by the holy and just God, Israel, you will have to buy the rabbit agin night,' meaning that I would get a whipping." The working day ended when the sun set and the overseer could be heard shouting "All ye's, all ye's gather up your baskets

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[115] John Carr to Dear Sir, 15, Dec., 1858, Thomas David Smith McDowell Papers, SHC.
[116] Cited in Breeden, *Advice Among Planters*, 53.
[117] Oakes, *The Ruling Race*, 156.
[118] For more on the "pushing system" see Edward E. Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism*, (New York, 2014), 111-144.

and away to the cotton-house." Each night the slaves' cotton baskets were weighed by the overseer, who "kept a slate with each hand's name on it, and would put each draft of cotton down as they brought it in." Campbell knew his task was short and when he spotted Mr. Bellfer walking to the cotton-house with "bull-whip and rope to tie the delinquents," he absconded into the woods.[119]

Israel was soon discovered. "There was no whipping ground there, so while Mr. Bellfer held me, the overseer prepared the stakes to which to tie me while they were whipping me. Finding they were going to give me a hard whipping, I commenced begging and pleading" which saved him, as "Mistress Besty" arrived and took pity on the newly arrived slave and convinced her husband to pardon him. In return, he promised to meet his quota thereafter, and never to run away again. Campbell knew he could not meet his quota and to save his back from being "cut to pieces," he hid watermelons in his basket to make up for the weight deficit. He successfully concealed his trick for the remainder of the year at Bellfer's plantation, using pumpkins and dirt when melons were not available.[120] Had Campbell been caught, he would have suffered terribly. Constant surveillance made it difficult for slaves to cheat in their tasks. As quotas rose over time, Baptist argues that slaves had to "marshal the forces of their own creativity against their own long-term health and independence, and even against each other" to meet their masters' demands. The fear of "punishment or even death" meant that slaves scrambled to come up with ways to speed up their work.[121] The overseer and his whip were an elemental feature in plantation production and had as much bearing on the crops' success as the rain and sun.

The professional and managerial ethos of planters and overseers ensured that slave labour on cotton plantations mirrored the new rhythms of industrial labour, or, as Edgar T. Thompson called it, "military

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[119] Israel Campbell, *An Autobiography. Bond and Free: Or, Yearnings for Freedom, for My Green Brier House. Being the Story of My Life in Bondage, and My Life in Freedom*, (Philadelphia, 1861), 33-34.
[120] Ibid, 35-38.
[121] Baptist, *Half Has Never Been Told*, 136.

agriculture."[122] Overseers were the ones to put the "system of violent labor rationalization into hour-by-hour practice."[123] Recalling his childhood as a slave in Louisiana, J. Vance Lewis stated that the plantation overseer Jimmie Welch proved "a hard taskmaster." Welch was born in Ireland and he "had many peculiar characteristics, and the Negroes who have a saying that "An Irishman is only a Negro turned inside out" disliked him almost to the extent of hatred."[124] Most Irish overseers were not regarded as wealthy or respectable men, and as poor foreigners they played into contemporary views of the "degrading function," which overseers exercised "in public esteem."[125] Many Southerners held poor working class whites in contempt. Even well to do Irish immigrants looked down upon their poorer countrymen, as shown by William John McClure, a chemist in Charleston and originally a Presbyterian from County Antrim. In a letter to his brother David in Ireland, he described how Charleston had been visited by "that fearfull [*sic*] malady Yellow fever" and that the city was:

> poluted [*sic*] by a low set of Ignorant Irish Mostly from the south whose only Character is impudence and filth/they are mostly Carters or Labourers in the streets they suffered much by the disease but in my Opinion not Enough for I would [have] been much pleased had they been all carried off as they are a disgrace to their country and those who come from it.[126]

Overseers too were deemed as socially inferior by a large segment of the southern middle class. They did the dirty work that the planters wished to avoid, and by undertaking this work they received a tainted reputation in the eyes of the planter elite. The majority of large planters treated their overseers "politely but with condescension." [127]

Observing their masters contempt for poor whites, many plantation slaves embraced, by association, their masters' sense of superiority over white workers. Amelia Murray recorded hearing a story about a planter who

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[122] Edgar T. Thompson, *Plantation Societies, Race Relations, and the South: The Regimentation of Population: Selected Papers of Edgar T. Thompson*, (Durham, NC., 1975), 217; Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton, A Global History*, (New York, 2015), 115.
[123] Baptist, *Half Has Never Been Told*, 135.
[124] J. Vance Lewis, *Out of the Ditch. A True Story of An Ex-Slave*, (Houston, 1910), 16 & 22.
[125] Scarborough, *The Overseer*, 44.
[126] William John McClure to David McClure, 8 Dec., 1849, McClure, William John, 1786-1867, Letters to David, 1842-1856, (43/2219), SCHS.
[127] Scarborough, *The Overseer*, 44; Wiethoff, *the Overseer's Image*, 75-76.

hired an Irish labourer to help assist his slave gardener to widen a ditch. When the planter went to inspect the work, he discovered "that the Irishman had done three times the work the other had accomplished. 'How is this Charles?,'" demanded the master. The planter was informed "Ah, massa, that very true; but white man used to work. You can't 'spect me – a nigger – demean myself like he."[128] On 6th January 1860, *The Irish-American* in New York reported how a southern slave complained that "My Master is a great tyrant" for "he treats me badly as if I was a common Irishman."[129] Belonging to a wealthy master bestowed a warped sense of status on some slaves: "To be a slave was thought to be bad enough," remarked Frederick Douglass, "but to be a poor man's slave, was deemed a disgrace."[130] Slaves' contempt for poor whites became a safe method of expressing contempt for all whites. Genovese argued that, when slaves sang songs such as "I'd rather be a nigger than a poor white man," they were attacking prevalent racist doctrines. Through the medium of songs, stories and jokes, slaves were able to lambast whites. Slaves "poured out scorn on the Irish in jokes that sent masters into fits of appreciative laughter." The masters' class prejudice made these jokes acceptable, even though they were ridiculing white men.[131] In 1851, Irish priest James Kelly spent eight months among the "rascally Negroes and infidel creoles" near Natchitoches, Louisiana, and he informed Bishop Blanc that he and other Irishmen in the area received "Nothing But Insolence from the worst kind of Negroes," who were defended by their masters who willingly believed any story about Irish stupidity.[132]

The gullibility and stupidity of the Irish were the themes of some slave tales. One example is the story of two Irishmen who encountered a wagonload of watermelons:

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[128] Amelia M. Murray, *Letters From the United States, Cuba and Canada. Two Volumes Complete in One*, (New York, 1856), 272.

[129] Cited in Carl Wittke, *The Irish in America*, (Baton Rouge, 1956), 125.

[130] Cited in Forret, *Race Relations*, 26; Joseph Holt Ingraham, *The South-West By a Yankee. Volume Two.* (New York, 1968), [1835], 30-31.

[131] Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, 23 & 582.

[132] Randall M. Miller, *Slaves and Southern Catholicism,* in John B. Boles, (ed.), *Masters & Slaves In The House of The Lord: Race and Religion in the American South 1740-1870*, (Lexington, 1988), 132.

> Neither one had seen a watermelon before, and they inquired of some negroes, who were working near by, what they were, and what they were good for. The negroes answered their questions very politely, and then, as it was their dinner hour, sat down in the shade to eat. The Irishmen concluded to buy a melon and see how they liked it. They went a little distance and cut the melon, but taking pity on the poor negroes, decided to share it with them. "Faith" they said, "guts is good enough for naygurs." So they cut the heart out of the melon and gave it away, and ate the rind themselves.[133]

The simple-mindedness of the Irish in these stories appealed to the planter, who often showed disdain for poor working class whites. Planters who hired Irish immigrants as overseers did so because they could be hired for lower wages than the more established professional overseers. The contrast between the status of the planter and the overseer was not lost on the slaves, for the material comfort and diet of the overseer often differed very little from that of the slaves.[134]

William Wiethoff has been the first to consider the role of foreign born plantation overseers. He argues that the "intricacy of black-white labor relations, and the unique problems in these relations caused by immigrant overseers" illuminates a "rival's image that confounds conventional wisdom about overseers."[135] Slaves were the white waged labourers' rivals for employment in the rural South. Planters regularly appointed slaves as overseers but did not call them by this title. Slaves often worked as foremen and drivers but effectively performed a similar role to that of overseers. Planters generally resorted to slave managers after the dismissal of their white overseers. Moses Liddell, a Louisiana sugar planter in 1841, informed his son that "my Irish overseer quit me on Sunday and I am without an overseer. I have so little to do that I believe that I am better off without one."[136] Some planters believed they could do better without paying an overseer. Widower Rachel O'Connor was saddened to report the death of

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[133] Cited in "Folk-Lore Scrap-Book", *Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 12 (July, 1899), 226-228; Herbert G. Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925*, (Oxford, 1976), 299-301.

[134] John Solomon Otto & Augustus Marion Burns III, "Black Folks and Poor Buckras: Archaeological Evidence of Slaves and Overseer Living Conditions on an Antebellum Plantation," *Journal of Black Studies*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (Dec., 1983), 195-197.

[135] Wiethoff, *the Overseer's Image*, 54-72; William E. Wiethoff, "Enslaved Africans' Rivalry with White Overseers in Plantation Culture: An Unconventional Interpretation," *Journal of Black Studies,* Vol. 36, No. 3 (Jan., 2006), 429-455.

[136] Moses Liddell to St. John R. Liddell, 14 Sep., 1840, Liddell Moses, St. John R. And Family Papers, Mss 531, LLMVC.

"poor Leven;" he was truthful and honest and "without a fault that I ever discovered. He oversaw the plantation nearly three years and done much better than any white man ever done here and I lived a quite life."[137] By 1860, Maunsel White was of the opinion that "no man nowdays should own a plantation without living on it all the time."[138] Slaves who were able to conduct the management of the plantation often received favourable treatment for themselves and their families. They could be just as ruthless as white overseers.[139]

Many slave drivers identified with the interests of the planter and did their best to stay in their masters' good graces to continue their privileged positions. Capable drivers were the most important slaves on the plantations and often they knew more about management than did the whites placed over them.[140] Davison McDowell on his Asylum plantation trusted his driver Manza, a native born African slave. McDowell acknowledged Manza's agricultural wisdom and ability on the rice plantation and he frequently left Manza to oversee the work. For example, McDowell recorded in his diary that Manza had been "engaged in preparing 22 acres of land hired from the state of John Taylor, which I commence planting Monday."[141] Manza received preferential treatment from his Irish master. When they were killing hogs on the plantation, Manza received a whole one for his own consumption. In 1829, McDowell recorded that "Manza moved into his new House today."[142] Manza also received cash payments.[143] He not only secured an elevated position for himself, but also for his son.

In 1841, at his Lucknow plantation, McDowell set to plant "vauxes field," a field that had been left fallow since 1819. He noted that Bonaparte

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[137] R. O'Connor to Mary Weeks, 9 March 1834, cited in Allie Bayne Windham Webb, (ed.), *Mistress of Evergreen Plantation: Rachel O'Connor's Legacy of Letters 1823-1845*, (Albany, 1983), 244.

[138] Cited in Eugene D. Genovese & Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *Fatal Self-Deception: Slaveholding Paternalism in the Old South*, (Cambridge, 2011), 36.

[139] William L. Van Debury, *The Slave Drivers: Black Agricultural Labor Supervisors in the Antebellum South*, (Westport CT., 1979); Genovese, *Roll Jordan Roll*, 365-388.

[140] James M. Clifton, "The Rice Driver: His Role in Slave Management," *SCHM*, Vol. 82, No. 4 (Oct., 1981), 331-353.

[141] 24 May 1828, Asylum Plantation Journal 1815-1833, Davison McDowell Papers, SCL.

[142] 19 Dec., 1828 & 19 March 1829, Asylum Plantation Journal 1815-1833, Davison McDowell Papers, SCL.

[143] 16 Aug., 1820, MS Vol. Bd., 1811-1837, Davison McDowell Papers, SCL.

"the son of Manza has an opportunity to try himself & see if he can beat his father."[144] In 1856, Frederick Olmsted observed that, on southern rice plantations, "the advice of the driver is commonly taken in nearly all the administration and frequently they are, de facto, the managers." He was left with the impression, that in some cases, overseers were "employed as a matter of form, to comply with the laws requiring the superintendence or presence of a white man among every body of slaves."[145] Wiethoff notes that where regulations were lacking, "planters frequently did not hire an overseer," and by doing so, they "intentionally or unintentionally gave slaves the opportunities to prove their worth as plantation managers and forced the overseer to enact the rival's image."[146] This rivalry, argues Wiethoff, caused the cruel and vicious behaviours traditionally associated with overseers. It is important, however, to note that the utilisation of slaves as overseers occurred predominantly on smaller farming units. On large plantations, it was common to have slave drivers working under a white overseer carrying out plantation operations as a part of the plantation hierarchy.

The overseer lacked the social status of the planters and he often found getting slaves to obey their orders frustrating, as "the slaves themselves recognized that he lacked the ultimate power over them."[147] Letters from overseers to their employers reveal their subordinate position. Irish overseer John Connolly, for example, signed off his letters as "your obt. servant."[148] When an overseer failed to dominate the slaves, he failed to keep his job. In 1834, *The Farmers Register* addressed the issue of slave management by overseers. It declared that "negro women are harder to manage than the men." If an overseer could not control female slaves, his ability to dominate males was undermined, and this raised questions about the overseer's capability. The best way to deal with troublesome female slaves, according to *The Farmers Register*, was "by kind words and flattery.

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[144] 1 May 1841, Plantation Journal 1815-1842, Davison McDowell Papers, SCL.
[145] Cited in Wiethoff, "Enslaved Africans' Rivalry," 438.
[146] Wiethoff, *the Overseer's Image*, 71.
[147] Forret, *Race Relations*, 117.
[148] John Connolly to Godfrey Barnsley, 4 May 1845, George Scarborough Barnsley Papers, SHC.

If you want to cure a sloven, give her something nice occasionally to wear and praise her up to the skies whenever she has on anything tolerably decent."[149] Some overseers may have heeded such advice, but many resorted to violence, sexual assault, and the rape of slave women to assert their dominance and power. The sexual abuse of female slaves by overseers went largely unchecked, especially on absentee plantations. With low pay and long hours, some overseers regarded "their sexual indulgences with slave women as nothing less than a perk of the job."[150]

Fanny Kemble, when visiting her husband's rice plantation in Georgia, recorded that former overseer Roswell King Jr. had fathered several illegitimate children with the slaves. One slave, Judy, bore one of his children and explained how he "forced her, flogged her severely for having resisted him."[151] William Howard Russell, on John Burnside's sugar plantations noted some "exceedingly fair" slave children; the overseer, Mr Seal, "murmured something about the overseers before Mr. Burnsides' time being a rather bad lot." Russell found that Seal did not believe there "was any particular turpitude in the white man who had left his offspring as slaves on the plantation."[152] Most overseers cared little for the consequences of their sexual relations with the slaves, but the children born from these relations left a lasting legacy.

One former slave, Casper Rumple, was born in Lawrence County, South Carolina, the son of an overseer. His father, Casper recalled "Course he was a white man−Irishman. Show I did know him. He didn't own no slaves. I don't guess he have any land. He was a overseer in Edgefield County. His name was Ephraim Rumple. What become of him? He went off to fight the Yankees and took Malaria fever and died on Red River."[153]

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[149] Cited in Breeden, *Advice Among Planters*, 32. For more on overseers' confrontation with slave women see Elizabeth Fox-Genovese, *Within the Plantation Households: Black and White Women of the Old South*, (Chapel Hill, 1988), 187-190.
[150] Forret, *Race Relations*, 212-213; Wiethoff, *the Overseer's Image*, 32-38; Scarborough, *The Overseer*, 75-78.
[151] Kemble, *Journal of a Residence*, 238.
[152] William Howard Russell, *My Diary North and South*, (New York, 1863), 274.
[153] *Slave Narratives. A Folk History of Slavery in the United States From Interviews with Former Slaves. Typewritten Records Prepared by the Federal Writers' Project in 1936-1938. Volume II, Arkansas Narratives, Part 6*, (Washington, 1941), 103.

Despite this, Casper decided to keep his father's surname. Another former slave from South Carolina, John C. Brown, stated that his wife Adeline Brown's father was "a full blooded Irishman" who was the overseer for "Marse Bob Clowney." John divulged how the Irish overseer:

> took a fancy for Adeline's mammy, a bright 'latto gal slave on de place. White women in them days looked down on overseers as poor white trash. Him couldn't git a white wife but made de best of it by puttin' in his spare time a honeyin' 'round Adeline's mammy. Marse Bob stuck to him, and never 'jected to it.[154]

Planters tolerated their overseers' sexual discrepancies, since they resulted in the birth of children like Adeline, a natural increase in the slaveholders' property.[155]

The sexual molestation of slaves by overseers caused tension in the slave quarters. Some planters preferred to hire married overseers and they cautioned against over familiarity with the slaves. Rachel O'Connor was continuously concerned about the conduct of her overseers. In 1832, her overseer Patrick Simpson was "one of the best of farmers; he will raise a good crop...he has never given any impudence."[156] One month later, the overseer had been let go, Rachel declared that "Patrick behaves too mean to be a white man. His tracks are often found where he has been sneaking about after those Negro girls."[157] Although fired, Patrick Simpson left a legacy behind on O'Connor's Evergreen plantation. Rachel recorded the birth of a slave child, "Charity has a fine daughter, just like Patrick."[158] O'Connor's overseer's troubles were not yet over, for Patrick's replacement "Mulkey behaves well in every respect expect one, and in that one I must say he is worse than Patrick...He is a smart overseer, but a dirty beast after all."[159] O'Connor's negative experiences with her overseers convinced her to try and run the plantation without a white overseer. Ten years later, in

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[154] *Slave Narratives. A Folk History of Slavery in the United States From Interviews with Former Slaves. Typewritten Records Prepared by the Federal Writers' Project in 1936-1938. Volume XIV, South Carolina, Part I*, (Washington, 1941), 128.

[155] For more on slave resistance see Stephanie M. H. Camp, *Closer to Freedom: Enslaved Women and Everyday Resistance in the Plantation South*, (Chapel Hill, 2004).

[156] Rachel O'Connor to Mary Weeks, 4 June 1832, cited in Webb, *Mistress of Evergreen Plantation*, 69-70.

[157] Rachel O' Connor to David Weeks, 8 July 1832, cited in ibid, 71-72.

[158] Rachel O' Connor to David Weeks, 19 Jan., 1833, cited in ibid, 92-93.

[159] Rachel O' Connor to David Weeks, 31 Oct., 1833, cited in ibid, 120-121.

1843, she was able to say that "I have not hired an overseer for several years and find the place much improved by not having any."[160] Rachel reached the conclusion that "mean low white men" were the chief source of trouble and disobedience among her slaves and they "cause more punishment to be inflicted amongst the poor ignorant slaves, than all else they commit."[161]

Occasionally, however, overseers demonstrated kindness and affection towards some slaves. One such case is that of Dublin born Patrick Lynch. Lynch left Ireland with his family at a young age and they settled in Ohio. Patrick, as a young man in the 1840s, travelled to the South and found employment as an overseer on Tacony plantation, Concordia Parish, Louisiana. Patrick fell in love with and married Catherine White, a mulatto slave on the plantation. The Irishman was aware that his marriage did not affect the legal status of his wife. After having children, Patrick was determined to purchase his family. However, he died before he could complete his plan to emancipate his family. They remained slaves, but one of his sons John Roy Lynch, who was only two when his father died in 1849, later became Mississippi's first black Congressman after the Civil War.[162]

The role of the overseer was complex and difficult. The contradictory nature of the planters' desires to increase plantation productivity and yet protect their slave property invariably led to the overseers labelled as incompetent or tyrants. Negotiating the conflict of interest between the planter and the slave community resulted in discrimination against overseers by both opposing forces. The nationality of Irish-born overseers emerged as yet another fault according to both dissatisfied planters and disgruntled slaves, but, slaves were not the only group of labourers with whom overseers engaged.

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[160] Rachel O' Connor to Mary Weeks, 12 July 1843, cited in Webb, ibid, 241-243.
[161] Rachel O' Connor to Mary Weeks, 6 July 1834, cited in ibid, 149-150.
[162] John Hope Franklin, (ed.), *Reminiscences of an Active Life: The Autobiography of John Roy Lynch*, (Chicago, 1970), 9-15.

iii.   Mid-Deep in Black Mud: Irish Workers

Hired free labourers performed a variety of tasks on some plantations, and problems arose when the conventional means of labour resolution, violence, could not be legally used. The diary maintained by H. Blackwood, overseer on B. F. Moore's plantation in Lauderdale County, Mississippi, gives an insight into an overseer's interaction with hired Irish labourers. On 26th of January 1859, "Conney [*Cooney*] an Irishman" was hired to commence ditching on the plantation. Each day, Blackwood made note of the Irishman's progress. The winter of 1859 was wet, "It rain every night hard so as to keep the plantation full of water. Three ditched. Cooney ditched all day yesterday."[163] By February, Cooney was joined by another hired labourer named Cotter. Due to poor weather, Cooney was reported "sick, he only went out at 2 o'clock." Three days later, the Irishman had "quit ditching and was paid up in full," but by the next day Cooney was back ditching "all day by his self for Mr. B. F. Moore."[164] The poor weather continued with "a great deal of water on the ground," and Cooney was still out "all day. He cut 23 yards of ditch today." The unfavourable weather persisted. "We had heavy rains and it rained so much plowers had to stop," Cooney continued to slip back into the ditches to dig, but it took its toll on him, he "ditched 2 or 3 hours, then was taken sick, and did not ditch anymore today."[165]

By mid March three more Irishmen were hired to ditch on the plantation. Two days after their arrival, neither Cooney "nor none of the Irish ditched today." They claimed that the conditions were too poor, but Blackwood was of the view that "it wants [*sic*] shou [*sic*]." Three days later it was St. Patrick's Day. Cooney left the plantation to visit the nearby town of Enterprise, while "The other three did not ditch today."[166] Cooney did not work the next day either after his trip to Enterprise. Three days later, Cooney was working with some slaves: "Coney ditched with the boys

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[163] 26 Jan., & 29 Jan., 1859, Plantation Diary by H. Blackwood, January, 1859- July 1859, MDAH.
[164] 4 Feb., 7 Feb., & 8 Feb., 1859, Plantation Diary by H. Blackwood, MDAH.
[165] 9 Feb., 1 Mar., & 3 Mar., 1859, Plantation Diary by H. Blackwood, MDAH.
[166] 14 Mar., & 17 Mar., 1859, Plantation Diary by H. Blackwood, MDAH.

today. The other three Irish commenced to ditch today in their one contract in the woods on the north side." The following day, Cooney refused to work and Blackwood's next diary entry stated that Cooney did not ditch the next day "until 9 in the morning for contrariness."[167] Cooney remained bothersome for the overseer: "Coney [*sic*] hasn't ditched today. He never got home until about 3 in the evening." The tension between the two continued to escalate and Blackwood's last reference to Cooney stated that he "ditched today with the boys in the oat patch field."[168] An antagonistic encounter similar to that of Cooney and Blackwood would not have been tolerated had a slave behaved in the manner of the Irishman. By taking time off, leaving the plantation and starting work when it suited him, Cooney demonstrated his independence and showed he was aware of Blackwood's lack of authority over him. Hired waged labourers changed the dynamics of the plantation work force.

In Louisiana, William Howard Russell was struck by the fact that the labour of "ditching, trenching, cleaning the waste lands and hewing down the forests, is generally done by Irish laborers." The economic argument for this, according to John Burnside's overseer, was that it "was better to have Irish to do it, who cost nothing to the planter, if they died, than to use up good field-hands in such severe employment."[169] The rising cost and demand for slaves brought a change, noted in the *Southern Cultivator*, in 1849. Planters could no longer recklessly "kill up and wear out one Negro to buy another." Rising slave prices had reached a point where they were "too high in proportion to the price of cotton, and it behoves those who own them to make them last as long as possible."[170] Planters like John Burnside were conscious of their capital investment in slaves when they hired Irish immigrants to undertake work they believed to be "death on niggers and

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[167] 18 Mar., 22; Mar., 23; Mar., & 25 Mar., 1859, Plantation Diary by H. Blackwood, MDHA.
[168] 28 Mar., & 2 Apr., 1859, Plantation Diary by H. Blackwood, MDHA. Studies on Irish labourers working with slaves are limited. See Bryan Giemza, "Turned Inside Out: Black, White, and Irish in the South," *Southern Cultures*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (Spring, 2012), 34-57; Margaret Brehony, "Irish Free Labor and the Abolition of Slavery in Cuba, 1835-1844," *Éire-Ireland*, Vol. 47, Iss. 1 & 2 (Spring/Summer, 2012), 70-93.
[169] Russell, *My Diary*, 272-273.
[170] Cited in Breeden, *Advice Among Planters*, 40.

mules."[171] The port cities of the South provided planters with a reservoir of Irish labourers. For example, when Edmund Ruffin conducted an agricultural survey of South Carolina, he encountered forty-three Irish labourers from Charleston building a dyke on a rice plantation along the Cooper River.[172] By 1834, James R. Creecy recognised that, for many years, the annual influx of Irish immigrants to New Orleans was "immense" and "the numbers who are buried in the 'swamp,' subjects of yellow jack and cholera, are astonishing; and yet their places are instantly filled up."[173] The desperation of many immigrants to find work, particularly those who arrived as a consequence of the Great Famine, created a cheap and dispensable pool of labourers for planters to exploit.

Large sugar, rice and cotton plantations required huge infrastructural investment and development, especially those situated on the rich deep alluvial soils of the South's riverfronts, which needed levees to protect them from the threat of flooding. For example, John Burnside's Houmas plantation was "pierced with wagon roads, for the purpose of conveying the cane to the sugar mills, and these" were intersected and ran "parallel with drains and ditches, portions of the great system of irrigation and drainage, in connection with a canal to carry off the surplus water to a bayou." The extent of these works was "thirty miles of road and twenty miles of open deep drainage," the main canal was "fifteen feet wide, and at present four feet deep."[174] The skills Irish labourers acquired in building canals and railroads were transferable and they successfully applied them on southern plantations.

The building of canals was essential to the economic development of the early American Republic. In 1808, the US had only 115 miles of canals, but by 1850, this figure increased to 4,000 miles.[175] By 1830, most canallers

[171] Russell, *My Diary*, 282.
[172] William M. Mathew, (ed.), *Agriculture, Geology and Society in Antebellum South Carolina: The Private Diary of Edmund Ruffin, 1843*, (Athens, GA., 1992), 65.
[173] James R. Creecy, *Scenes in the South and Other Miscellaneous Pieces*, (Washington, 1860), 24.
[174] Russell, *My Diary*, 271.
[175] Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848*, (New York, 2009), [2007], 216-222; Denis Clark, *Hibernian America: The Irish and*

in the US were Irish immigrants.[176] Canal construction was brutal work. Using axe, shovel and pick, the land on the canal route was levelled and the banks built up. Next, the bed of the canal was dug, with portage paths along its side as well as the locks, dams, slips and docks, which were required to operate the canal. Irish immigrants provided the muscle needed to carve the canals out of the American landscape.[177]

In the South, canals were not as well developed as they were in the Northern states. For example, by 1830, only South Carolina had more than fifty miles of canals.[178] The rivers of the Mississippi basin provided a readymade transportation route for goods in the southern interior to New Orleans. Canals in the South were built to extend the advantages of water transportation, and as in other parts of the US, Irish labourers dominated their construction.[179] One example was the Brunswick-Altamaha canal, undertaken to divert commerce on the Altamaha River to the South Georgia town of Brunswick. It had a natural harbour but no river to connect it with the interior. From 1830 to 1834, the state government provided the capital for the project and five hundred slaves were hired to construct the twelve mile canal. By 1834, the canal was unfinished and the state and the slaveholders, whose slaves had been badly mistreated, withdrew their support for the project. The canal company reorganised with financial support from investors in Boston, who recruited gangs of Irish workers at $18 to $20 per man, per month, to finish the canal. Over four hundred workers arrived from the North, but more than half soon quit the project for better paying opportunities in Savannah. The panic of 1837 halted work on the canal, and in 1839 one last attempt was undertaken to finish

Regional Cultures, (Westport Ct., 1986), 14; J. Douglas Porteous, *Canal Ports: The Urban Achievements of the Canal Age*, (New York, 1977), 1-40; Clifford Reginald Hinshaw Jr., "North Carolina Canals Before 1860," *The North Carolina Historical Review*, Vol. 25, No. 1, (Jan., 1948), 1-56.

[176] Peter Way, *Common Labour: Workers and the Digging of North American Canals, 1780-1860*, (New York, 1993), 97.

[177] Clark, *Hibernian America*, 14.

[178] Aaron W. Marrs, *Railroads in the Old South. Pursuing Progress in a Slave Society*, (Baltimore, 2009), 12-13. See also Ronald E. Shaw, *Canals For A Nation: The Canal Era in the United States, 1790-1860*, (Lexington, KY., 1990), 98-127.

[179] Peter L. Bernstein, *Wedding of the Waters: The Erie Canal and the Making of a Great Nation*, (New York, 2005).

construction.[180] In January 1839, Fanny Kemble noted how James Hamilton Coupes and P. M. Nightingale "two planters of the neighbourhood; have contracted to dig a canal, called Brunswick Canal and not having hands enough for the work, advertise at the same time for Negroes on hire and for Irish labourers," offering a flat rate of $20 per month for Irish labourers.

The Irish workers and the hired slaves were to work on separate sections of the canal, since it was believed impossible to have both groups working together, for "there would be tumults, and risings, and broken heads, and bloody bones and all the natural results of Irish intercommunion with their fellow creatures." Kemble was intrigued by the interactions of the two sets of workers. She believed that the Irish had "been oppressed enough themselves to be oppressive whenever they have a chance; and the despised and degraded condition of the blacks" presented them with an "ugly resemblance to their own circumstances in Ireland." She believed that this ignited in the Irish "disgust and contempt of which they themselves are very habitually the objects; and that such circular distribution of wrongs may not only be pleasant, but have something like the air of retributive right to very ignorant folks."[181] Another English traveller recorded that there "were more serious quarrels and more broken heads among the Irish in a few years when they came to dig the Brunswick Canal, than had been known among the negroes in all the surrounding plantations for half a century."[182] Conflict between Irish workers and slaves was not the only source of violence on public works projects. During the construction of both canals and railroads, clashes between Irish labourers and other Irishmen, often related to their counties of origin, were frequent. They did so not for recreational fun, as the anti-Irish stereotype portrayed in contemporary newspapers, but as a part of "a desperate struggle for access to employment, with each side trying to

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[180] Shoemaker, "Strangers to Citizens," 249; Edward M. Steel Jr., "Flush Times in Brunswick, Georgia in the 1830s," *GHQ*, Vol. 39, No. 3 (Sep., 1955), 221-239; Milton Sydney Heath, *Constructive Liberalism: The Role of the State in Economic Development in Georgia to 1860*, (Cambridge MA:, 1954), 221-239.

[181] Kemble, *Journal of a Residence*, 104 & 123-124.

[182] Charles, Lyell, *A Second Visit to The United States of America. Volume I*, (London, 1849), 266.

drive the other off the job."[183] By November 1839, work stopped on the Brunswick Canal and the Irish labourers were fired. The project was finally completed in 1854 with slave labour, but the developments in rail road made the canal obsolete and it was abandoned in 1860.

One important canal completed by Irish labour was the New Basin Canal in Louisiana. The Bayou St. John Canal Carondelet was constructed in 1794, and provided the trading route from the Mississippi River to Lake Pontchartrain and out to the Gulf of Mexico. The Canal Carondelet was operated by the New Orleans Navigation Company. It had a monopoly on trade entering the city from Lake Pontchartrain. The Canal ended in the old French Quarter, allowing the older Creole families to dominate much of the city's trade and industry. Tension and frustration grew amongst American born businessmen and merchants, who felt excluded from the lucrative trade opportunities provided by the canal. To break the canal monopoly, the New Orleans Canal and Banking Company was established in 1831, and among its leading stockholders and charter members were Maunsel White and Charles Byrne, leading members of the Irish merchant community. Some Irish business interests were more established than others, and the president of the New Orleans Navigation Company was John Walsh. Its Secretary was James M. Murray, and leading Irish businessman Thomas Barret was a director of the organisation.[184] The New Orleans Canal and Banking Company was the first improvement bank to be organised in Louisiana and was capitalised with $4 million to construct a new six mile canal, sixty feet wide and catering for vessels with a six foot draft.[185]

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[183] Kevin, Kenny, "Race, Violence, and Anti-Irish Sentiment in the Nineteenth Century," in J. J. Lee, & Marion R. Casey, (eds.), *Making the Irish American: History and Heritage of the Irish in the United States*, (New York, 2006), 372. For more on stereotypes see Dale T. Knobel, *Paddy and the Republic: Ethnicity and Nationality in Antebellum America*, (Middletown, CT., 1986).

[184] Earl F. Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans, 1800-1860*, (Baton Rouge, 1965), 40-46; Patrick Brennan, "Fever and Fists. Forging an Irish Legacy in New Orleans," (Ph.D diss., University of Missouri-Columbia, 2003), 106-109; James Gill, *Lords of Misrule: Mardi Gras and the Politics of Race in New Orleans*, (Jackson, 1998), 38.

[185] Laura D. Kelley, *The Irish in New Orleans*, (Lafayette, 2014), 32-35.

By the end of 1831, Simon Cameron, an engineer from Pennsylvania, was hired to oversee the canal's construction.[186] Before he embarked for Louisiana, Cameron recruited 136 Irish labourers in Philadelphia on favourable terms. Cameron offered to pay passage, as well as the workers' lodgings and board. The workers were offered $20 a month and an agreement was made that their pay would be remitted back to Philadelphia to support their families. However, these agreements were not honoured. The gang of workers published in *The Louisiana Advertiser* a serious indictment against Cameron. The Irishmen believed they had been treated no better than "redemptioners" by the company, because they were required to purchase their supplies from the onsite company store at extortionate prices and the man hired as the company doctor "had no right to practice medicine." When they refused to work and protested against their working conditions, "orders were issued for shutting up our sleeping places, for stopping our cooking and for turning us all adrift." They stated how "the quondam contractor" had tried to brand them as "a turbulent and disobedient set of men, because we do not tamely submit to the numberless acts of injustice."[187] The strike action taken by the Irish gang from Philadelphia was one of the first in the history of New Orleans, but it failed. At the time of the strike, Cameron had made a contract "for making all the bread to be consumed by 2,000 men." The 136 "Yankee Irish" were the only reported group to take action against the company, they failed to win the solidarity of other workers on the canal.[188]

The land between the city and the lake for the New Basin Canal was a mosquito-infested swamp. The dangerous nature of the project meant that slaveholders were unwilling to hire out slaves for the canal's construction. In 1835, Irish actor Tyrone Power penetrated the swamp to witness the digging in progress. At the site, he viewed Irishmen at work "wading amongst stumps of trees, mid-deep in black mud, clearing the spaces pumped out by powerful steam-engines; wheeling, digging, heaving, or

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[186] Lee F. Crippen, *Simon Cameron Ante-Bellum Years*, (Oxford, OH, 1942), 9; Davis Kearns Goodwin, *Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln*, (New York, 2006), 409-415.
[187] Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 45.
[188] Ibid.

bearing burdens it makes one's shoulders ache to look upon."[189] The Irish workers were exploited by contractors, who paid them a pittance, and the weary workers were "stimulated by the worst alcohol, supplied by the contractor, of a cheap rate for the purpose of exciting a rivalry of exertion." On site were many of the workers' families who were lodged "worse than cattle of the field." Witnessing the workers' plight, Power was shocked. He observed that slave labour could not be used as a substitute "to any extent, being much too expensive; a good slave costs at this time two hundred pounds sterling, and to have a thousand such swept off a line of canal in one season, would call for prompt consideration." Immigrant workers were still cheap, despite the "enormous" mortality rate amongst Irish labourers.[190]

The miserable conditions of workers on the New Basin Canal, in the swamps, proved a perfect breeding ground for yellow fever and cholera. Irish immigrants were particularly afflicted by the pestilence of the southern environment. In 1855, Dr. Edward H. Barton reported that the mortality rate due to yellow fever among those in the New Orleans area "from Ireland reach the enormous amount of 204-97 in 1,000, showing the consequences of an entire revolution in everything, climate, diet, drink, social habits." Barton was of the opinion that the Irish "propensity to crowd their families into a small space, with the inevitable result of accumulation of filth, and deficient ventilation" was conducive to "a greatly enhanced mortality."[191] Contractors were not legally liable for workers' deaths and few were concerned about the high attrition rate of their labour force. Many employers held similar views to those expressed in the *Daily Orleanian*:

> Yellow fever will but slightly retard it [Irish immigration]; indeed, we imagine that it will have a contrary effect, as the desire to supply the places of those carried off by the epidemic will influence numbers. Besides our city is looked as the El Dorado of the new world, and will long continue to attract toward it all classes. [192]

The construction of the New Basin Canal coincided with some of the most devastating epidemic outbreaks in the history of New Orleans. In 1832, with

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[189] Power, *Impressions of America, Vol. 2*, 239.
[190] Ibid, 239-242.
[191] Edward H. Barton, "*Report Upon the Sanitary Condition of New Orleans,*" in Edward H. Barton, *The Cause and Prevention of Yellow Fever at New Orleans and Other Cities in America*, (New York, 1857), 40.
[192] *Daily Orleanian*, Sep., 30, 1847.

work underway, New Orleans was struck by a devastating cholera epidemic. The poor working class of the city were hardest hit, thousands of the wealthier residents left to escape the scourge. During "the entire epidemic, at least six thousand persons perished" in twenty days.[193] By the end of 1838, at a cost of one million dollars and a loss of an unknown number of Irish workers' lives, the New Basin Canal was completed, running a total length of 6.17 miles.[194] Once the canal was finished, most of the workers stayed on in New Orleans to work in other jobs, including digging ditches in the surrounding sugar parishes.[195]

Many planters took advantage of Irish labour. On 2nd April 1851, W.W. Starke published in the *Savannah Republican*, *"An Amusing Sketch"* about Irish ditchers on his plantation. The article was patronising towards immigrants and looked down on their political activity and ambition in the US, but did acknowledge the positive economic impact of Irish labourers. Starke had a plantation of several thousand acres, fifty miles below Augusta. At the heart of his estate was Mobly's pond "a celebrate sheet of water, seven miles round and eight feet deep, heretofore a fruitful source of disease to the neighbourhood, and of revenue to the doctors." At the expense of $10,000, he employed gangs of Irishmen to drain the pond. A central ditch, four miles long and at some points 16 to 20 feet deep, was dug, "beginning at the Savannah swamp and passing entirely through the pond." Then, "spring ditches of several miles in length in all suitable places" were dug and parallel ditches leading from the centre to the spring ditches were added. The project was completed with Irish labour: "Negroes, it is said could have done it cheaper; but governed by the maxim "*ne sutor ultra crepridam* [*sic*]*"* [No shoemaker, is above the sandal] I confined the black man to the cultivation of the staple commodities." Starke believed that the Irish ditcher, when "properly schooled in a little cisatlantic adversity becomes the finest labourer in the world." The construction of canals and railroads by Irish labourers demonstrated "the magnitude and value" of the

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[193] Theodore Clapp, *Autobiographical Sketches and Recollections: During Thirty Five Years Residence in New Orleans*, (Boston, 1858), 129; Charles E. Rosenberg, *The Cholera Years: The United States in 1832, 1849 and 1866*, (Chicago, 1962), 37-38.
[194] Kelley, *The Irish in New Orleans*, 33-35.
[195] Gleeson, *Irish in the South*, 33.

Irish immigrant to his "adopted country a satisfactory remuneration for his eccentricities and turbulence." The planter was certain that if "the bog-trotter of Erin be laid low, history, in filling her pages, will be compelled to admit that he wielded the *spade* with more adroitness than the *sceptre*, and that his achievements as a *ditcher* immeasurably transcend all his efforts as a *politician*."[196]

Some planters remained unwilling to hire Irish labourers. Thomas Affleck, in Adams County, Mississippi, was one of the leading agriculturists in the antebellum South and he dismissed the notion of employing Irish workers, "You surely do not suppose friend", that "drunken Irishmen would suit me!."[197] Regarding the construction of a canal on his plantation, Moses Liddell stated: "I would prefer the employment of Dutchmen rather than Irishmen as it seems to be so difficult to obtain the latter free from dissipation."[198] The Liddell family had received news that "Irishmen had disappointed" a neighbouring planter: "after he had made a contract with them, he has put some of the men to ditching, - they have finished planting cotton and will next put a piece of new ground in corn."[199] Despite their apprehensions, the Liddell family employed Irish labourers on their plantations. Reporting a poor bill of health on his Mississippi plantation, James M. Liddell noted that the "Irishmen are getting along pretty well" but "they are pestered a good deal with chills and fevers." Eight days later, he found that all "the negroes have improved" but the "Irishmen are all sick."[200] Irish workers often suffered from poor health and inadequate accommodation on southern plantations. Few cared for the welfare of "Irish levees & Ditchers." Fr. Peter McLaughlin did, and he requested permission

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[196] Cited in *W.W. Starke's "Amusing Sketch" Resketched By An Irish Ditcher*, (Boston, 1851), GHS, 5-10.

[197] Thomas Affleck to Mr Constock, 28 Jan., 1851, Thomas Affleck Papers, Mss 3, 1263, LLMVC.

[198] Moses Liddell to John Liddell, 26 Mar., 1847, Liddell Moses, St. John R. And Family Papers, LLMVC.

[199] A. Metcalfe to John Liddell, 10 Apr., 1853, Liddell Moses, St. John R. And Family Papers, LLMVC.

[200] James M. Liddell to Judge Liddell, 12 Aug., & 20 Aug., 1853, Liddell Moses, St. John R. And Family Papers, LLMVC.

from Bishop Blanc, to make "another excursion among the Irish plantation shanties."[201]

Irish labourers came to work on the plantations both as individuals and as part of gangs. For example, Moses Liddell made an agreement with an individual Irish worker to be employed on his son's plantation:

> I have engaged the labourer James Stevenson /an Irishman/ to go over to you to be employed in Ditching at fifteen dollars per month from the time he commences or as the rate of twenty cents per cubic yard, to be found in meat & bread and to be furnished with a pair of blankets or such lodging as you can furnish him with. He agrees to work faithfully & diligently and that his doing so you may be able to find him employment into Spring...His work or wages to be paid for when fully completed.[202]

Many workers lived as itinerant labourers, travelling from plantation to plantation in search of work. Andrew Leary O' Brien, a native of County Cork, and a dropout seminarian from Chambly College in Lower Canada, worked on canals in New York and as a mason in Pennsylvania. After the 1838 fire in Charleston, destroyed much of the southern city, reports reached New York that "labor could not be procured to rebuild & that most of the clerks of Charleston were carrying the hod at three & four dollars per day, & consequently young men could not be got who were qualified to fill many places vacant." This "vague & false rumor brought many from the North" to Charleston, including O'Brien. Unable to secure work, he decided to set out for Augusta. After missing the train, O'Brien teamed up with another Irish immigrant, and "we started peddler fashion on the railroad, & walked thirty miles that day to Summerville, where we lodged. Started the next day enquiring as we proceeded, of matters generally, till we arrived at Midway. There we put up for a night, & got a Job there painting two chimneys." As they travelled along the Savannah River, they were employed by George Odom, a planter, who needed "a mill race to be dug." The two Irishmen agreed "on the widening of his mill race which we did in about three weeks the price was forty six dollars ($46) though I never attempted such work before I excelled in it. I could shovel dirt by the

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[201] Fr. Peter McLaughlin to Bishop Blanc, 13 Dec., 1859, Bishop Blanc Papers, University of Notre Dame Collection, AANO.

[202] Moses Liddell to St. John R. Liddell, 13 Nov., 1840, Liddell Moses, St. John R. And Family Papers, LLMVC.

wholesale." Being well educated, O'Brien impressed Odom, who persuaded him to stay on the plantation as private tutor to his children.[203] Most plantation labourers were not as well educated or as fortunate as O'Brien, and when they finished the job they moved on in search of the next one.

Many Irish workers in the rural South worked as a part of a labour gang on large improvement projects. Edward J. Gay was one of the leading businessmen in St. Louis, but was also one of the largest sugar planters in Louisiana. He received an order from P, O. Daigre in Plaquemines Parish, who was "employing a crowd of Irishmen cutting out Ditches and Canals – we shall need a quantity of provisions during the year." It included 30 barrels of beef, 20 barrels of "good common whiskey," 30 barrels of flour and other goods "such as you get for negroes something fresh."[204] In Louisiana, William Howard Russell observed that Irish workers travelled "about the country under contractors, or are engaged by resident gangsmen for the task."[205] Russell was informed about contractor John Loghlin's gang of Irish workers, who had laboured on John Burnside's Orange Grove plantation. The men under Loghlin worked "like fire." The overseer, Mr. Gibbs, told how the contractor did "not give them half the rations we give our negroes, but he can always manage them with whiskey; and when he wants them to do a job he gives them plenty of 'forty-rod', and they have their fight...Next morning they will sign anything and go anywhere with him."[206] Workers in gangs were exploited by contractors and often found their wages substituted with cheap and poor quality whiskey. Yet, being a member of a working gang gave the workers a collective voice and better equipped them to seek redress for wages withheld by employers.

Charles Lyell was informed of a sugar planter near New Orleans who had "resolved to dispense with slave labour" and "hired one hundred Irish and German immigrants at very high wages. In the middle of the

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[203] Andrew Leary O'Brien, *The Journal of Andrew Leary O'Brien*, (Athens GA., 1946), 34-36.
[204] P. O. Daigre to Edward J. Gay, 2 May 1860, Edward Gay and Family Papers, Mss1295, LLMVC.
[205] Russell, *My Diary*, 272.
[206] Ibid, 278.

harvest they all struck for double pay. No others were to be had, and it was impossible to purchase slaves in a few days." In the short period of the strike, the planter "lost produce to the value of ten thousand dollars."[207] The demands for better wages and the ability to strike by hired labour concerned planters, who strove for total domination over their workforce. Many feared the disruptive influence free labourers could have upon their slaves. Former slave Georgia Johnson remembered how her former master made "heaps of money" from cotton. He "hired a lot of Irishmen to help dig ditches for to dreen de water off his land. Den dey planted cotton." The cotton "sho' was fine", but "dem Irishmens got mad 'cause dey said Marse Pope hadn't paid 'em for deir wuk, and dey blowed up de dams and let all dat water back on de cotton. Hit was plumb ruint."[208] The tactic of destroying work done was reminiscent of rural protest strategies used against landlords in Ireland.[209] Supporters of tenant rights in Ireland and those who migrated to labour in the antebellum South believed they were justified in their actions against an irresponsible and callous landlord or employer. Working with a gang helped secure employment and made it easier for immigrants who did not speak English.

Maunsel White, on his Hermitage plantation, employed Irishmen to construct a canal in 1856. He recorded an incident where he inquired about "an assult [*sic*] made on Mr C. Combur," who was wounded and beaten, "he said without provocation by one of the Irishmen." Endeavouring to find out what really happened, White discovered that a "misunderstanding occurred in consequence of the parties not understanding each others Language & the violent & passionate temper of Mr Combur who bust a cap on his Gun in an attempt to shoot the Irishman who on seeing it seized the Gun wrested it out

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[207] Lyell, *A Second Visit*, 162-163.

[208] *Slave Narratives. A Folk History of Slavery in the United States From Interviews with Former Slaves. Typewritten Records Prepared by the Federal Writers' Project in 1936-1938. Volume IV, Georgia Narratives. Part II*, (Washington, 1941), 330-331.

[209] See James Donnelly, *Captain Rock: The Irish Agrarian Rebellion of 1821-1824*, (Cork, 2009); Kevin Kenny, *Making Sense of the Molly Maguires*, (New York, 1998); Peter Way, "Shovel and Shamrock: Irish Workers and Labor Violence in the Digging of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal," *Labor History*, Vol. 30, Iss. 4 (Fall, 1989), 489-517; David Grimsted, "Ante-Bellum Labor: Violence, Strike, and Communal Arbitration," *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 19, No. 1 (Autumn, 1985), 5-28; Samuel Clark & James S. Donnelly, Jr., (ed.), *Irish Peasants: Violence and Political Unrest, 1780-1914*, (Madison, 1983).

of the hands of Combur & knocked him down with a stick."[210] White did nothing more about the assault, but he was a demanding employer. Patrick Murray and his men were hired earlier that year and White expected that each man dig daily at least 840 cubic feet "so that 13 of them should finish an acre each Day. Weather beautiful so that in 40 working Days the Canal should be finished."[211] Conflict between Murray and White erupted later that May. White penned that "Murray came up with his men from the canal" declaring if "I did not send him some three Barrels of sundries Prom[ised] he gave up Digging of the Canal." Aware of the possible violent means of redress, White quickly stipulated that Murray was responsible for any loss or damage on the plantation. Unhappy, Murray "swore at a great rate" and White sent him and "several of his men back to the city."[212]

Murray was soon replaced by James Kelly and his men. White stated that "I would pay from that Day forward for whatever work was done at the rate of $32½ pr acre & nothing else to them or whoever they appointed to represent them." Soon, however, Kelly "came for money which I refused to give beyond $20-on which he returned to the Bayou in a fit & I suppose will quit diging [*sic*] in the canal hereafter." Two hours later, Kelly returned with "a paper from the men overthrowing him to collect their money"; this group of men wanted to keep their recently secured job.[213] Working in gangs thus gave Irish immigrants also a level of autonomy over their labour in a land severely hostile to workers' rights.[214] Those who went on strike were fired and often arrested. For example, in 1855, when the labourers of the Northeastern Railroad in South Carolina struck for better wages, they were jailed, fined, fired and replaced by hired slaves.[215] The southern elite upheld a social order that leading social theorist George Fitzhugh believed was one "not troubled with strikes, trade unions,

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[210] 29 May, 1856, Memorandum Book, Maunsel White Papers, SHC.

[211] 4 Apr., 1856, Memorandum Book, Maunsel White Papers, SHC.

[212] 6 May, 1856, Memorandum Book, Maunsel White Papers, SHC.

[213] 2 & 13 July, 1856, Memorandum Book, Maunsel White Papers, SHC.

[214] Jacqueline Jones, *A Social History of the Laboring Classes: From Colonial Times to the Present*, (Malden, MA., 1999), 61-88. For more on the struggle of the American working class see; Christopher Clark, Nancy Hewitt, Joshua Brown & David Jaffee, *Who Built America? Working People and The Nation's Economy, Politics, Culture, and Society. Volume 1: From Conquest and Colonization Through 1877*, (New York, 2000).

[215] Marrs, *Railroads in the Old South*, 81-82.

phalansteries, communistic establishments, Mormonism and the thousand other isms that deface and deform free society."[216] Despite the potential of Irish labourers to disrupt plantation operations, planters in the South were still willing to employ them.

David Gleeson notes that the only rural counties in the South with any significant Irish population between 1845 and 1860 were the ones through which railroads passed or where levee builders and ditchers were required.[217] Internal improvement projects provided much needed employment in the rural South. The great boom in levee and railroad construction in the 1850s coincided with, and accommodated, the rising number of post Great Famine Irish immigrants. Soaring profits for cotton resulted in the spread of its production in the lower Mississippi Valley, along the Red, Ouachita, Tensas and Yazoo rivers. This expansion of upriver cotton production required immense land clearing, draining and levee construction, transforming the landscape into profitable plantations.

On 3rd of May 1849, a swollen Mississippi River breached the levee at the Saúve plantation, upriver from New Orleans, resulting in the worst flood in the lower Mississippi River, in the nineteenth century. Over 220 city blocks and 12,000 residents of New Orleans were flooded.[218] Fr. Rousselon, the Vicar General of the Archdiocese of New Orleans, informed the Secretary of the Propagation of the Faith in Lyon that the Mississippi:

> rose to an unaccustomed height and maintained itself at a menacing level during several months breaking levees, drowning the countryside and destroying the crop. A third of New Orleans remained submerged for several months; there were two to three feet of water in all our streets. Yellow fever came then to add to all the above.[219]

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[216] Cited in Peter S. Onuf, "Antebellum Southerners and the National Idea," in L. Diane Barnes, Brian Schoen, & Rank Towers, (eds.), *The Old South's Modern World: Slavery, Region, and Nation in the Age of Progress*, (Oxford, 2011), 37-38.

[217] Gleeson, *The Irish in the South*, 34.

[218] Christopher Morris, *The Big Muddy: An Environmental History of the Mississippi and It's Peoples, from Hernado de Soto to Hurricane Katrina,* (New York, 2012), 106-107; Donald W. Davis, "Historical Perspective On Crevasses, Levees, and the Mississippi River," in Craig E. Colten, (ed.), *Transforming New Orleans and its Environs: Centuries of Change*, (Pittsburgh, 2000), 84-106.

[219] Fr. Rousselon to Secretary Meynis, 20 Oct., 1849, #2826, Propagation of the Faith Collection, New Orleans, AANO.

The flood of 1849 added momentum and urgency to a Congressional act, passed a few months prior to the flood. This act ceded millions of acres of Federal owned swamp land to the state governments of the lower Mississippi Valley to use for drainage projects and flood control. This legislation created a levee building boom, providing thousands of jobs along the banks of southern rivers.[220]

The construction of these earthen embankment protections was gruelling work, and levee contractors seeking workers "for the growing levee program, met almost every immigrant ship arriving in New Orleans. Cario, St. Louis and Cincinnati were also important centres for recruiting immigrant labor for levee work." Irish gangs were considered more efficient than slaves and Irish workers under professional levee contractors monopolised "the barrow work."[221] In Washington County, Mississippi, W. E. Hunt organised a private Levee Board, which taxed local planters to maintain the levee defences along the Mississippi River. In 1858, these private levees were breached and the Levee Board sold bonds to bring Irish labourers from Dublin to rebuild and improve the levees.[222] Levee work drew Irish immigrants into the interior of the Cotton Kingdom.

Although levee construction enjoyed vigorous growth in the 1850s, southern railroad construction boomed during the last decade prior to the Civil War. In 1836, Andrew Richey informed his parents in Ireland that the "Americans are making a great many rail roads throughout the whole country both north and south. It will make travelling in a few years both remarkably expeditious & very cheap."[223] For example, in 1833, the South Carolina Canal and Railroad Company, at the cost of almost one million dollars, had successfully constructed a railroad between Charleston and the town of Hamburg. At the time of completion, the 136 mile Charleston-to-Hamburg line was the longest stretch of rail in the world under a single

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[220] James L. Pillar, *The Catholic Church in Mississippi, 1837-65*, (New Orleans, 1964), 113-114.

[221] Robert W. Harrison, *Levee Districts and Levee Building in Mississippi: A Study of State and Local Efforts to Control Mississippi Floods*, (Washington, DC., 1951), 8 &62.

[222] Mary Helen Griffin Halloran, *A Mississippi Family: The Griffins of Magnolia Terrace, Griffin's Refuge and Greenville 1800-1950*, (Bloomington, IN., 2009), 64.

[223] Andrew Richey to Father & Mother, 11 Apr., 1836, D3561/A/1/13A, PRONI.

management.[224] The Panic of 1837 and the economic depression of the early 1840s stalled rail construction in the South. However, from 1850 to 1860 wealthy southerners committed themselves to building railroads, resulting in an extraordinary expansion of the southern rail mileage.[225]

Table 2 Southern Railroad Mileage by State

State	1850	1860
Georgia	646	1,420
Louisiana	80	335
Mississippi	75	862
North Carolina	283	937
South Carolina	289	973

Source: Marrs, *Railroads in the Old South*, 5.

The expansion of the southern railroad network was essential for the integration of the Cotton Kingdom into the global market. Railroads allowed for larger quantities of cotton to be transported at a speed that eclipsed all other contemporary modes of transportation. Railroads also helped to spur on southern industry and allowed for a better and greater distribution of goods. Thomas Affleck, a planter in Georgia, firmly believed, that during difficult seasons "were it not for our Great chain of railroads we should be little better off than poor old Ireland during the famine."[226] Southern railroad companies purchased and hired slaves. Aaron Marrs argues that this demonstrates the southern capitalist elites' interest in "pursuing the most modern form of transportation available while retaining the South's preferred form of labor." Railroad companies regarded purchasing slaves a sound investment, and 76 percent of the 118 southern railroads in operation

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[224] Tom Downey, *Planting A Capitalist South: Masters, Merchants, and Manufacturers in the Southern Interior, 1790-1860*, (Baton Rouge, 2006), 94; Ford Jr., *Origins of Southern Radicalism*, 219-243; Donald A. Grinde, Jr., "Building the South Carolina Railroad," *SCHM*, Vol. 77, No. 2, (Apr., 1976), 84-96.
[225] William Thomas, "'Swerve Me?' The South, Railroads, and the Rush to Modernity," in Barnes, Schoen, & Towers, (eds.), *The Old South's Modern Worlds*, 166-188.
[226] Thomas Affleck to J. V. Jones, 13 Sep., 1851, Thomas Affleck Papers, LLMVC.

by 1861 used slave labour.[227] One observer noted how on "the Georgia railway Irish labourers were lately employed; now they have slaves. The American railway officials prefer the latter, but only, I suspect because Irishmen refuse to be driven."[228] Since railroad companies were the largest industrial employers of slave labour, the scale of these rail projects required a tremendous number of workers, and thousands of Irish immigrants were hired to fill the labour shortages on southern railroads.

In 1838, Charles Daubeny made an excursion by train from New Orleans to Lake Pontchartrain. He observed how the:

> rail-road passes along a swamp more dreary and more impracticable than any of those which I have seen in Carolina, and one can well understand the sacrifice of life, which attended the construction of a cause-way, across such a country, during the summer months. The Irish, I am told, as usual, the chief volunteers on this service of danger. [229]

Irish workers were utilized by all major southern railroads. For instance, the Durnin family, originally from County Louth and settled in St. Helena Parish, Louisiana, in 1849, were informed that many Irishmen were "working on the N. Orleans Jackson & great northern R. Road within 2 miles of us. They are some of them fine fellows but most of them gallous chaps whose acquaintance I do not covet."[230]

Antebellum rail construction was arduous work; the majority of it was done by hand, with limited help from primitive black powder for hard-rock blasting. One of the most ambitious, but unsuccessful, engineering work undertaken in the antebellum South was Stumphouse Mountain Tunnel, in South Carolina. Funded by the Blue Ridge Railroad, it aimed to connect Charleston with Knoxville. In 1854, John Hamilton Cornish, an Episcopal minister from South Carolina, visited the construction site where "the Blue Ridge R. Road Company are cutting a tunnel 1 and ¼ miles –

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[227] Marrs, *Railroads in the Old South*, 57 & 83; William G. Thomas, *The Iron Way: Railroads, the Civil War, and the Making of Modern America*, (New Haven, CT., 2011), 17-36.
[228] Stirling, *Letters from The Slave States*, 229.
[229] Charles Daubeny, *Journal of a Tour Through the United States and in Canada, During the Years 1837-1838*, (Oxford, 1843), 140.
[230] Unknown, 6 Nov., 1853, James and John Durnin Papers, Mss 697, LLMVC.

through solid granite."[231] That same year, Dr. J. T. Craig visited the mountain to assess the possibility of establishing a medical practice. He found that "accidents" were "occurring weekly." On site, were approximately "200 cabbins [*sic*] put up, two stores, & two very good Hotels. The workmen were about 500" and this number was expected to reach "1500 work hands before the summer ended." Families of the workers also settled on the mountain and the doctor believed that they alone "would give a pretty fair practice."[232] In 1854, Irish priest Jeremiah Joseph O'Connell noted that contractors had "brought from Pennsylvania and New York a number of Irish labourers...about five hundred."[233] The project required a large commitment from labourers, and nine Irishmen were killed in 1854. Many more suffered injury trying to dig the tunnel.[234] The laying of railroads was acknowledged as a hazardous occupation.

In 1836, John R. Hicks supervised the hired slaves of Samuel S. Downey on the Natchez to Jackson railroad. Hicks reported that all "our negroes seem to be dissatisfied here. Such shantees [*sic*] as they have will not do in the winter – The mosquitoes torment them almost to death in the night time – The meat they use is very salty and a little spoiled." Work on the railroads exposed the slaves' health, and, with many of them catching fevers, Hicks stated that railroads were "very bad places for sick people."[235] Cotton prices in the 1850s enticed planters to focus their labour force on the cultivation of the crop rather than hire them to railroad contractors. Gleeson notes that the Irish "exploited this situation to bargain for better wages."[236] Irish labourers, during the 1850s, could receive wages that were the equivalent or even higher than those in some of the leading industrial northern states.

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[231] 26 Jul., 1854 in Conover Batram R., (ed.), "The Diary of John Hamilton Cornish, 1846-1860 (Continued)," *SCHM*, Vol. 64, No. 2, (Apr., 1963), 83.
[232] J. T. Craig to "Cousin Lizzie", 17 Apr., 1854, N. E. Craig Papers, SCL.
[233] Jeremiah Joseph O'Connell, *Catholicity in the Carolinas and Georgia: Leaves of Its History, AD 1820-AD 1878.* (New York, 1879), 341.
[234] Marrs, *Railroads in the Old South*, 50-54.
[235] John R. Hicks to Samuel S. Downey, 14 July, 1836, Letters and Papers 1830-1836, Samuel Smith Downey Papers 1762-1965, DU.
[236] Gleeson, *The Irish in the South*, 53.

Table 3 Average Wage for 1850

States	Monthly to a Farm Hand with Board	To a Day Labourer with Board	To a Day Labourer without Board	Day Wages to a Carpenter without Board	Weekly Board to Labouring Men
Georgia	9.03	.50	.72	1.66	1.82
Louisiana	12.80	.73	1.04	2.36	2.70
Mississippi	11.00	.69	.95	1.94	2.00
New York	11.50	.67	.90	1.38	1.78
North Carolina	7.72	.42	.54	1.22	1.33
Pennsylvania	10.82	.51	.80	1.23	2.06
South Carolina	7.72	.49	.65	1.40	1.73

Source: J. D. B. De Bow, *Statistics of the Seventh Census of the United States, 1850*, (Washington, 1854), 164.

Southern railroad development in the 1850s spurred on urban growth, and cities such as New Orleans enjoyed a construction boom, providing a wide array of jobs for immigrant workers. Skilled labourers were attracted to the urban centres of the South, and many of skilled workers found themselves engaged also in employment at one stage or another on southern plantations. The primary business of the leading southern cities was the distribution and exportation of plantation produced commodities. This was largely a seasonal enterprise. New Orleans remained the largest exporting port in the antebellum US, which was impressive since the trading season was limited to six months a year by the unforgiving tropical summers.[237] During the summer months, the inclement weather and the fever kept the merchants and planters out of the cities. Before the arrival of the year's cotton crop, the wharves of southern ports "looked like a desert...all seems dreary and desolate." This contrasted sharply with the image of the levee in winter, the "zenith of the business season," when the wharf was "lined with a perfect forest of masts."[238] During the slow season of the southern business cycle, Irish immigrants provided a reserve pool of labour, one from which planters drew upon regularly.

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[237] Laura D. Kelley, Erin's Enterprise: Immigration by Appropriation: the Irish in Antebellum New Orleans. (PhD diss., Tulane University, 2004), 50-51.
[238] William Henry Allen, "The Last Trip by a Steam Boat Clerk," *Knickerbocker, or the New-York Monthly Magazine*, LXVI (Dec., 1855), 596-597.

iv. Skilled Labour & Workers Unease with the Peculiar Institution

Skilled labour was required on plantations. Plantations with a completely self-sufficient workforce were rare. Planters often had to hire engineers, mechanics, sugar makers, carpenters, coopers and masons for the regular operations and maintenance of their estates.[239] In 1856, Irish immigrant Alexander Lowrie informed his parents of how he had been:

> away from home all winter; I was down south black smithing [*sic*] all down through the slave states. I was hired in Pittsburgh at 50 dollars per month and my board. I was six months away; I had a very pleasant trip; I was working on a flat boat at the time; I had a chance to see the cotton and sugar growing, all the work done by slaves.[240]

Elite planters could afford to purchase and train their slaves to be skilled craftsmen, but most slaveholders hired specialised labourers for certain tasks. In February 1820, Gilbert Potter arrived in New Orleans from Dublin. He soon set out for Natchez. Potter's "Business out to this country" was the construction of "corn mills for the purpose of grinding corn for the planters."[241] The newly arrived immigrant had no acquaintances in Natchez, but, by the end of the next month, he reported that, since, "I have been in Natchez, I have completed four [mills] and have got the fifth under way." His mills could grind "from fifty to sixty bushels per day & the price of their erection is two hundred & fifty dollars a mill."[242] Potter enjoyed success and by December he had men working under him, whether they were slaves or free labourers he did not state: "I brought with me a few more mills and as I am coming down to Woodville I should be pleased in putting yours up at the same time as my hands will be in the place."[243]

Natchez was a thriving hub of Mississippi's Cotton Kingdom and provided numerous employment opportunities. Irish immigrants in Natchez

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[239] J. Carlyle Sitterson, "Hired Labor on Sugar Plantations of the Ante-Bellum South," *JSH*, Vol. 14, No. 2 (May, 1948), 192-205.
[240] Alexander Lowrie to "Dear Father and Mother", 25 Aug., 1856, T2018/3, PRONI.
[241] Gilbert Potter to Antonio Patrick Walsh, 12 Feb., 1820, Antonio Patrick Walsh Papers, LLMVC.
[242] Gilbert Potter to Antonio Patrick Walsh, 26 Mar., 1820, Antonio Patrick Walsh Papers, LLMVC.
[243] Gilbert Potter to Antonio Patrick Walsh, 20 Dec., 1820, Antonio Patrick Walsh Papers, LLMVC.

held many different occupational positions, such as carpenters, clerks, merchants, painters, teachers, tailors, shoemakers, blacksmiths, gunsmiths, brick masons, fruit dealers and coffee house owners. Natchez was home to some of the wealthiest families in the US. These nouveau riches were known as the Nabobs.[244] One poor Mississippi farmer noted the concentration of wealth around Natchez and believed that they "Must have ice for their wine...or they'd die. So they have to live in Natchez or New Orleans." A new development in the ostentatious display of wealth by the Nabobs, observed the farmer, was the employment of a foreign gardener: "That's all the fashion with them. A nigger isn't good enough for them."[245] Irishmen such as twenty year old Ned Barrett and sixty year old M. B Burns were employed as gardeners by the planters of Adams county, Mississippi.[246]

American born John B. Nevitt, the leading Catholic layman in Natchez, was the owner of Clermont plantation outside Natchez. On 1st January 1827, Nevitt recorded in his Diary that he had leased "my garden and garden house to James Donnelly for one year for the consideration of sixty dollars and the use of such fruit and vegetables as I may want."[247] Donnelly remained on Clermont for a number of years and performed tasks other than just tending Nevitt's garden. For example, Nevitt penned that "James Donnelly was cutting me a crop ditch at the upper part of Swamp field." Donnelly would go on supply runs to Natchez for the plantation "with little horse cart."[248] Donnelly also engaged in work with slaves on the plantation, for instance, Nevitt recorded "J. Donnelly & old Sam making hay." Between 1827 and 1829, Nevitt hired and fired seven different overseers. By July 1829, he was making reference to "the overseer

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[244] William K. Scarborough, "Lords or Capitalists? The Natchez Nabobs in Comparative Perspective," *Journal of Mississippi History*, Vol. 54, No. 3 (Aug., 1992), 239-267; Morton Rothstein, "The Natchez Nabobs: Kinship and Friendship in an Economic Elite," in Hans L. Trefoussee, (ed.), *Toward a New View of America: Essays in Honor of Arthur C. Cole*, (New York, 1977), 97-112; James D. Clayton, *Antebellum Natchez*, (Baton Rouge, 1968), 136-161.
[245] Cited in Olmsted, *The Cotton Kingdom*, 416-420.
[246] Seventh Census, 1850, (Adams County, Miss.), Natchez South.
[247] 1 Jan., 1827, John Nevitt Diary, #543, SHC.
[248] 3 Nov., & 21 Nov., 1827, John Nevitt Diary, SHC.

Donnelly." Donnelly continued in the employment of Nevitt until the following year.[249]

John Nevitt's plantation was not a fully self-sufficient unit of production, and he depended at various times of the year on hired labour. He hired skilled craftsmen from Natchez; for example, he hired "Pat Murphy" to "work in setting up my gin stand."[250] In 1828, during the cotton picking Nevitt had to hire additional help to secure its harvest. On 13th December, he recorded how his hands were now "trashing cotton" and he "discharged all the Indians they having picked in all 2100 [pounds]."[251] In 1857, another skilled tradesman named Patrick Murphy was employed by Judge John Perkins to undertake extensive construction work, which included the building of stables, slave quarters, a hospital and a green house on his Somerset plantation, in Ashwood, Madison Parish, Louisiana. Murphy received $3 per day and was allowed to borrow books from Perkins' library, but he had to adhere to strict conditions, which "forbid me leaving his place" during his term of employment. On arrival, Murphy noted how he felt as if he was "going to some penal setlement [*sic*] in going to Mr Perkin's. I look on it as depriving my self [*sic*] of my liberty for money."[252] Murphy worked hard and the first few months of the job passed without incident. By November, Murphy recorded that one of the other hired labourers, Sam Orr, was harrying some of the female slaves. Murphy noted that Orr "had one of the girls if so I think she must have the clap. I spoke of it [wi]th the Old Bitch that brought her to him. Said I would get medicine if she would see her and that I would tell Mr Rhodes." Orr soon quit the plantation. Murphy was not comfortable with hired white workers interacting with the slaves and, he recorded how the plantation management "was thankful to me for trying to stop such doings."[253]

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[249] 20 Jul., 1829 & 11 Jan., 1830, John Nevitt Diary, SHC.
[250] 25 Sep., 1827, John Nevitt Diary, SHC.
[251] 13 Dec., 1828, John Nevitt Diary, SHC.
[252] 28 Jun., 1857, Patrick Murphy Diary1856-1858, Patrick Murphy Papers, Mss 309, LLMVC.
[253] 10 Nov., 1857, Patrick Murphy Diary1856-1858, Patrick Murphy Papers, LLMVC.

As a skilled tradesman, Murphy did not want his reputation to be tarnished by associating with slaves. When he found the other white workers eating breakfast with slaves, he informed his employer that he wished to leave for he "was not one of them to sit at second or nigroes [*sic*] table."[254] Two days later, the white workers were informed by a slave that "orders came from Master John not to give supper until ½ an hour after dark." Murphy recorded how one offended worker by the name of Doyle declared he would "leave in the morning. I am no Niger [*sic*] to have me working <u>over</u> in the night." The following day, apologies were made to the white men and Murphy was persuaded to continue with the job.[255] Murphy felt isolated on the plantation; by March he was in "bad humor [*sic*]." One morning at breakfast Murphy, "slapt" a slave girl who "waited on the table for telling a lie and giving impudence." Judge Perkins sent for Murphy, stating that he "did not alow [*sic*] any person to slap his Nigroes [*sic*] in his yard." Murphy packed his tools and "got my cheque for 453½ dollars."[256] As a skilled carpenter and bridge builder, Murphy did not take long to find new employment, but his experience on Somerset plantation demonstrates the unease felt by some skilled tradesmen on southern plantations. Murphy was not the only person uncomfortable with free waged workers labouring on plantations. Many planters were wary of the interaction and effect that hired white labourers might have on their slaves.

Many slaveholders were reluctant to hire out their slaves to rail and canal contractors. They feared the risk to their property's health, but also the lack of discipline and demoralisation that their slaves would be exposed to by working with free labourers, especially Irish immigrants. Slaves who were hired to railroad companies were often under the stipulation that they were "not to work with Irish or dutch [*sic*] labourers."[257] Antebellum southerners drank "prodigious amounts of alcohol" and the South was infamous for violence. In the slave states, the foreign-born population

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[254] 14 Nov., 1857, Patrick Murphy Diary1856-1858, Patrick Murphy Papers, LLMVC.
[255] 16 & 17 Nov., 1857, Patrick Murphy Diary 1856-1858, Patrick Murphy Papers, LLMVC.
[256] 8 & 9 Mar., 1857, Patrick Murphy Diary 1856-1858, Patrick Murphy Papers, LLMVC.
[257] Marrs, *Railroads in the Old South*, 63.

comprised of less than 3 percent of the total free white population in the 1850s; however, "they represented anywhere between 8 and 37 percent of the prison populations."[258] As a result, in the public mind of many southerners, Irish immigrants were the worst offenders for drunkenness and rowdiness. In Georgia, Henry L. Cathell of New York observed that the Irish "were the grand movers in all disturbances. The green horns or 'Country crakers,' suffered when they got among the Hibernians." Cathell noted how the Irish had adopted southern customs: "here Bowie knives, Revolvers and Clubs were used."[259] Southern newspapers carried accounts of Irish criminality. For example, in New Orleans, it was reported that "John O'Conner was last night arrested in Edward Street for making a great disturbance, being drunk and beating his wife. Recorder Caldwell fined the accused five dollars, at which the wife of the accused was highly indignant and spoke her mind freely in the Irish language."[260]

William Johnson in Natchez was not impressed by the Irish immigrants who settled and passed through the town. He frequently noted them as the source of trouble and disorder. For instance, he recorded on 1st October 1841:

> Whilst standing on the Bluff this Evening nearly dark, I saw 8 or 10 wild Irishman fighting all among One another. It was realy [sic] Laughable indeed – They Beat one man by the name of Roundtree – a guard he is for the city...there was two moore [sic] fights Carbine, 1 of them, got whipped – Folies wife struck him with a Brick Bat – Cut his head thrugh [sic] mistake &c. Just like such people.[261]

Such Irish individuals, observed one Charleston magistrate, manifested "a proclivity to turbulence. I am afraid there is an inclination to make war upon the Negro."[262] Irish workers, desperate for work, despised competition from slaves. Not only did slaves threaten to lower wages for white workers, but also slaves were used to quash any labour disturbances. Poor working

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[258] Edward L. Ayers, *Vengeance and Justice, Crime and Punishment in the 19th Century American South*, (New York, 1984), 14 & 75.
[259] Cited in Ibid, 101.
[260] *The Daily Picayune*, 02 Sep., 1851.
[261] William Ransom Hogan & Edwin Adams Davis, (eds.), *William Johnson's Natchez: The Ante-Bellum Diary of a Free Negro*, (Baton Rouge, 1993), 352.
[262] Cited in Christopher Silver, "A New Look at Old South Urbanization: The Irish Worker in Charleston, South Carolina, 1840-1860," in Samuel M. Hines, George W. Hopkins, Amy M. McCandless, Jack R. Censer, (eds.), *South Atlantic Urban Studies. Volume 3*, (Columbia, SC., 1979), 156.

immigrants were often looked down upon by "honourable" southerners. Prince Johnson, an ex-slave from Mississippi, recalled "a sad thing" happened on the plantation when "My young Mistis, de one named for her ma, ups an' runs off wid de son o' de Irish dirch digger an' marrie 'im." By doing so, the planter's daughter had committed class suicide and "Old Mis' wouldn' have nothin' more to do wid 'er, same as if she warnt her own chil.'"[263] Poor white southerners often viewed themselves as socially superior to recently arrived immigrants. In 1858, Alderman Merritt, "a very poor man" in Sampson County, North Carolina, was imprisoned for "his cruel drubbing, the severest castigation ever inflicted in a civilized community" of his daughter Eliza Jane for her liaison with an Irish ditch digger.[264] Planters were cautious of unattached foreign born itinerant workers, who had a reputation for heavy drinking and fighting. Slaveholders feared that some Irish workers behaved as if they were either ignorant or dismissive of southern racial etiquette.

Irish workers and slaves sometimes worked together, "and drinking and conviviality was an integral part of some work activities."[265] At the bottom of the South's social hierarchy, the racial boundaries were sometimes blurred, especially in the southern grog shop. Taverns and grog shops were "all over the land, in cities and towns, in the most retired hamlets, and at every cross-roads." The "Southern groggery", noted one southerner was "usually a small wooden building, with two rooms; one intended for a sleeping room but used mostly for playing cards in, and the other devoted to the retailing of ardent spirits."[266] Both slave and poor whites frequented these grog shops. The southern elite despised owners of grog shops. Daniel Hundley noted that the "groggery keeper" of the South was "usually a man of uncultivated mind, devoid of principle, habitually a blasphemer and Sabbath-breaker, a reviler of religion, and ... sometimes also

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[263] *Slave Narratives. A Folk History of Slavery in the United States From Interviews with Former Slaves. Typewritten Records Prepared by the Federal Writers' Project in 1936-1938, Volume IX, Mississippi Narratives*, (Washington, 1941), 80.
[264] Cecil-Fronsman, *Common Whites*, 136.
[265] Forret, *Race Relations*, 56.
[266] Daniel Hundley, *Social Relations in Our Southern States*, (New York, 1860), 225-227.

an abolitionist-owing to his secret traffic with the slaves."[267] Bernard
Powers has argued that the atmosphere in southern grog shops "destroyed
the critical distance between masters and slaves," and this "was especially
the case with immigrant grog shop keepers and their black clientele. It was
charged that the former 'become courteous to the negro and submit to an
equality of sociability.'"[268] Some Irish workers even drank and gambled
with slaves.

In 1860, Charles Gorman, a twenty three-year old Irish labourer, was
brought before the Darlington District Court, SC., accused of "playing at a
game with cards and dice" with two slaves.[269] Grog shop keepers made easy
money by supplying slaves with alcohol at inflated prices. In Mecklenburg
County, NC., Irish immigrant Samuel McCraken was convicted on three
counts of "unlawful trading with negroes." Solicitor S. Nye Hutchison
stated that McCraken, without a license, retailed liquor and "his house is the
general rendevous [sic] for negroes." H. B. Williams, a wealthy Charlotte
merchant, declared McCarken a "miserable drun[k]en fellow [who] had
done nothing for the last 18 months but drink and sell whiskey to slaves at
night."[270] Interaction between poor non-slaveholding whites and slaves was
viewed by planters as a threat to the fabric of southern society. Timothy
Lockley argues that slaveholders feared that, by encouraging slaves to drink,
"non-slaveholding whites were fostering miscegenation, insubordination
and social turmoil, knowing full well that any financial or criminal
consequences of bi-racial interaction would most likely fall upon" slave-
owners. [271] Irish immigrants were deemed by some to have a negative
influence on slaves. In June 1853, "a rather goodlooking Irish woman
named Theresa Lee arrived at the Third District Guard House" in New
Orleans "strapped to a cart." A letter from the overseer of Battle Ground

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[267] Hundley, *Our Southern States*, 226.
[268] Bernard E. Powers Jr., *Black Charlestonians: A Social History, 1822-1885*,
(Fayetteville, AR., 1994), 24.
[269] Cited in Forret, *Race Relations*, 103.
[270] Cited in Ibid, 59.
[271] Timothy J. Lockley, "Crossing the race divide: Interracial Sex in Antebellum
Savannah," *Slavery & Abolition: A Journal of Slave and Post-Slave studies*, Vol. 18, No. 3,
(1997), 164-165; "Race and Slavery," in Robert L. Paquette & Mark M. Smith, (eds.),
Oxford Handbook of Slavery in the Americas, (Oxford, 2010), 336-356.

plantation stated that the Irishwoman had been living in a small shed on the plantation and "she had succeeded in demoralizing" a "large number of the negroes on the plantation." The overseer had ordered Lee off the plantation on several occasions but she refused to leave, and he therefore seized her and sent her to New Orleans. Lee was found to be "totally depraved" and was sentenced to two months in the workhouse.[272]

The fraternisation of slaves and poor whites in grog shops resulted in a thriving illicit trade. For poor whites, trading with slaves offered an opportunity to acquire goods, generally stolen from the plantation, at bargain prices. Trading also allowed slaves to acquire money and goods such as alcohol, which ameliorated their daily existence. Charles Ball, a former slave, described the importance of slaves as customers for southern shop and tavern keepers: "the slaves... are frequently better customers than many white people; because the former always pay cash, whilst the latter almost always require credit."[273] Another former slave, Allen Parker, recalled how he stole and slaughtered a pig and "turned him over to a 'poor white' who took him to a neighboring town the next day and sold him for me." Stealing earned Parker enough money to purchase "cloth, which a white woman made into a coat and a pair of pants for me."[274] Charles Ball explained that many white men lived near his masters' plantation "without property, or without interest in preserving the morals of slaves" and conducted "an unlawful and criminal traffic with the negroes to the great injury of the planters."[275] In North Carolina, ex-slave Charity Austin remembered how "we children stole eggs and sold 'em durin' slavery. Some of de white men bought 'em. They were Irishmen and they would not tell on us."[276] Jeff Forret, in his work on poor whites in the antebellum rural South, notes that foreigners were "among the whites most likely to collaborate and trade clandestinely with slaves." Despite the trade being illegal, poor whites

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[272] Judith Kelleher Schafer, *Brothels, Depravity and Abandoned Women: Illegal Sex in Antebellum New Orleans,* (Baton Rouge, 2011), 40.
[273] Ball, *Fifty Years in Chains*, 130.
[274] Allen Parker, *Recollections of Slavery Times*, (Worcester MA., 1895), 76-77.
[275] Ball, *Fifty Years in Chains*, 233-234.
[276] *Slave Narratives. A Folk History of Slavery in the United States From Interviews with Former Slaves. Typewritten Records Prepared by the Federal Writers' Project in 1936-1938. Volume XI*, *North Carolina, Part 1*, (Washington, 1941), 60.

undertook the risks to trade with the slave population since the likelihood of being criminally convicted was low. Southern courts did not permit slaves to testify against whites, and for interracial trade "the inadmissibility of slave testimony, designed to ensure white hegemony over blacks, prevented slaveholders from enforcing class supremacy over the poor of their own race."[277] Poverty and necessity fuelled this illicit trade that helped improve the material lives of those who engaged in it.

It is important to state that slaves, in their dealings with marginalised whites, were often unequal trading partners. Allen Parker recognised the persistent demand of a "market among the poor whites, for whatever a slave had to sell, though the price paid was often very low, for the slave was in a measure at the mercy of the buyer...the slave could not complain of him without getting into trouble himself."[278] In trading with slaves, poor whites held a "precarious superiority." The trade between Irish immigrants and slaves should not be "constructed as a sign of either solidarity with bondspeople or of animosity towards planters. On the contrary, the clandestine trade effectively channelled lower-class discontent within the established social framework; and never seriously threatened to undermine the southern social order."[279] However, some Irish immigrants sympathised with the slaves with whom they traded and socialised, some even helped slaves to flee from bondage.

On 6th March, 1845, William Johnson recorded in his diary that "The Irishman that Stole Mr Roses Darkey and McClures Horse, was Brought Home today."[280] Those who stole slaves were generally motivated by venal greed, but on rare occasions it was an act of benevolence. The stealing or enticement of slaves to flee their masters was treated as a criminal act. For example, in Mississippi, any person convicted of enticing a slave to flee

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[277] Cited in Forret, *Race Relations*, 76 & 98; Timothy J. Lockely, "Trading Encounters between Non-Elite Whites and African Americans in Savannah 1790-1860," *JSH*, Vol. 66, No. 1, (Feb., 2000), 25-48.
[278] Parker, *Recollections of Slavery*, 15-16.
[279] Forret, *Race Relations*, 114.
[280] Hogan & Adams, *Diary of a Free Negro*, 519.

would receive a twenty year prison sentence.[281] Irish immigrant Henry Neill certified how a "great roguery" was "practiced by the rascally Negro-traders who will often sell a man in one place and appoint him to meet him again in another place and sell him again this way. Our papers are always thronged with advertisements of runaways."[282] Fugitive slaves often paid whites to play the role of their master in return for their independence. Collaboration was more common in the larger cities of the South. Having just arrived in New Orleans with a fresh cargo of salt, William Mitchell informed his wife that, on the first night in the city, most of the crew absconded, including "David and Bradely which I am sorry to say, I think two very bad boys; they got into the hands of these man catchers and make them grogy and got their cloths away before I or the captain knew they had any intention of running; they left without cause for none ever touched either of them."[283] Among the large urban populations, fugitive slaves found it easier to be inconspicuous. The editor of the *New Orleans Daily True Delta* lamented the "extent to which female runaway slaves (especially if they happen to be paled by amalgamation) are harboured in this city."[284] In 1839, John Roche, a twenty-six year old Irish immigrant whose professed trade was "rum-selling," was sentenced in Savannah to five years imprisonment for attempting to pass a runaway slave off as his own.[285]

Some slaves masterminded their own escapes with the unknowing help of Irish immigrants. In 1846, in Craven County NC., Daniel O'Rafferty, a young journeyman tailor "was convicted and sentenced to be hung" for carrying a slave named Albert away "with the intent and for the purpose of enabling said slave to Effect an Escape." The Irishman had worked alongside Albert, who was owned by the tailor Edward C. O.

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[281] David D. Morris, *Southern Slavery and the Law, 1619-1860*, (Chapel Hill, 1996), 340-346.

[282] Henry Neill to Samuel Neill, 1 Apr., 1839, Neill Emigrant Papers, T1796/1, PRONI.

[283] William Mitchell to "Dear Wife", 8 Feb., 1849, Correspondence of Captain William Mitchell, D1665/1/2, PRONI; Matthew Taylor Raffety, *Law, Honor, and Citizenship in Maritime America*, (Chicago, 2013), 190-197; Thomas C. Buchanan, *Black Life on the Mississippi: Slaves, Free Blacks, and the Western Steamboat World*, (Chapel Hill, 2004).

[284] Cited in Ira Berlin, *Slaves Without Masters: The Free Negro in the Antebellum South*, (New York, 1975), 263.

[285] Timothy J. Lockley, "Partners in Crime: African Americans and Non-Slaveholding Whites in Antebellum Georgia," In Matt Wray & Annalee Newitz, (eds.), *White Trash: Race and Class in America*, (New York, 1997), 63.

Tinker. O'Rafferty "had not been long in this country" and it was claimed that Albert, "repeatedly advised & informed" O'Rafferty that "he was to be free" after his employer's death. When Tinker died, O'Rafferty was convinced that he was to emancipate Albert. The jury in O'Rafferty's case found him guilty but added that it was their "unanimous recommendation" that the state's Governor pardon him.[286] Fugitive mulatto slave Henry Bibb found himself in difficulty as he tried to board a steamship bound for St. Louis, for he knew that the captain of the ship "could not take a colored passenger on board his boat from a slave state without first ascertaining whether such person was bond or free." On board were many Irish passengers and Bibb "insinuated myself among them so as to get into their good graces, believing that if I should get into difficulty they would stand by me." Bibb invited the men to the ship's bar with him. They drank together and Bibb paid the bill; and doing so "brought us into a kind of union." When the ship's porter came "ringing his bell for all passengers who had not paid their fair" to settle it in the captain's office, Bibb asked one of his "Irish friends" if he would be "good enough to take my money and get me a ticket when he was getting one for himself, and he quickly replied 'yes, sir, I will get you a tacket [*sic*].'" Once in the possession of a ticket, no further questions were asked of Bibb and he arrived safely into St. Louis.[287]

When travelling to Lafayette, on top of an omnibus, Frederick Olmsted heard "an Irishman somewhat over-stimulated, as Irishmen are apt to be, loudly declare himself an abolitionist: a companion endeavoured in vain to stop him or make him recant and finally declared he would not ride any further with him if he could not be more discreet."[288] Discretion was necessary for anyone who believed in abolition in the slave states. Planters avidly protected their human property and did not tolerate overt declarations against their means of wealth. In 1856, Irish immigrant James Cowell experienced firsthand the rabid intolerance of southern slaveholders. On 17th September, in the *New York Herald*, Cowell wrote that he had been "a

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[286] Cited in Forret, *Race Relations*, 140; Cecil-Fronsman, *Common Whites*, 88-89.
[287] Henry Bibb, *Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Henry Bibb, An American Slave*, (New York, 1850), 164-169.
[288] Olmsted, *The Cotton* Kingdom, 232.

resident of the southern states for the last three years, and for the last six months a resident of Cheraw, S.C., I have been engaged in the business of selling window shades, and at the time of my arrest had four men employed with me." On 7th September, he stopped with one of his men John Malone, at the hotel, in Cheraw. At the bar, the conversation was predominantly about the status of Kansas and slavery; "in the course of it Malone, who is a mere boy," stated that "he would vote for Kansas being a free state, and assigned as a reason that he did not think that poor white men stood as good a chance to get a living in the slave States as they did in the free States." Several remarks were made insulting Malone, and a local store owner threatened to shoot the two Irishmen.

In retaliation, Cowell drew his "revolver and a bowie knife, and told them if they wished to fight I was ready." His determination made the locals back off "after some further braggadocio and abuse of the North." However, the following day, the two Irishmen were arrested and brought before "a Vigilance Committee, charged with being abolition agents." The evidence used against them was "flimsy", having "inquired the way to different places, of negroes whom we met on the road, was brought up as proof of our being abolitionists." Cowell recalled how some of the committee were "in favour of tarring and feathering us, but the majority finally decided to send us to the free states." They were escorted to Wilmington, NC, by a sheriff and four deputies. When word was out that they were abolitionists, they were confronted by a mob and "for a time we were in imminent danger of being lynched. We could hear the mob cry out 'hang them! – hang the d––d sons of b––s!.'" From Wilmington, they were escorted to Norfolk, VA, and finally to New York. As a result, John Cowell was penniless and "deprived of all my property."[289]

The case of John Cowell demonstrates the increasing fear among slaveholders of "a nefarious conspiracy against them" at a time of growing

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[289] *Milwaukee Daily Sentinel*, 4 Oct., 1856. For more on Kansas see Donald L. Gilmore, *Civil War on the Missouri-Kansas Border*, (Gretna LA., 2006); Nicole Etcheson, *Bleeding Kansas: Contested Liberty in the Civil War Era*, (Lawrence, KS., 2004); William W. Freehling, *The Road to Disunion, Volume 1: Secessionists at Bay 1776-1854*, (New York, 1990).

abolitionist challenges and increasingly sectional tensions that filled the climate of the late antebellum period.[290] Southern vigilantes increasingly interrogated northerners and other travellers. In late 1859, for example, members of a vigilance committee in Yorkville, SC, held "several travelling 'Irish Pedlars'" to evaluate their loyalty. All gave satisfactory explanations of themselves, except for a man named Lawrence Henry, who had a sealed letter that raised "suspicions as to the purity of the man's motives and feeling." He was forced to leave town immediately "under the penalty of being summarily dealt with."[291] Wary enslavers grew increasingly suspicious of those arriving from outside the slave states, especially those travelling from the northern states.

Some Irish immigrants held abolitionist views. Simon Ansely O'Farrall, a barrister from Dublin, was not typical of the Irish travellers in the rural South. He found that, on becoming "more intimate with the general character of the Africans, I like it better: I find they steal, cheat, and hate their masters; and if they were to do otherwise I should think them unworthy of liberty."[292] In 1854, Charleston banker Christopher Memminger, in a letter to James Henry Hammond, expressed his fear over newly arrived free labourers replacing:

> negro mechanics and all sorts of operatives from our Cities, and who must take their place. The same men who make the cry in Northern Cities against the tyranny of Capital – and there as here would drive all before them all who interfere with them – and would soon raise hue and cry against the Negro, and be hot abolitionists – and everyone of these men would have a vote.[293]

In New Orleans, Irishman William Brown struggled to accept the complex contradictions of the American Republic. He understood the importance of cotton and sugar as "a source of great wealth to the country," but he believed that the use of slave labour was "incompatible with justice and humanity. In this land of freedom where equal rights and universal emancipation are the theme of every tongue and the boast of the community

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[290] Forret, *Race Relations*, 114.
[291] Cited in Stephen A. West, *From Yeoman to Redneck in the South Carolina UpCountry, 1850-1915*, (Charlottesville, 2008), 60.
[292] Simon Ansley Ferrall, *A Ramble of Six Thousand Miles Through The United States of America,* (London, 1832), 203.
[293] Cited in Downey, *Planting A Capitalist South*, 141.

– Slavery – detested Slavery prevails." Brown observed that, for the American slave, "every <u>white</u> man is his enemy – Surely there will be a day of fearful retribution." He had come to the US to make "money" and success required him to become one of the "constant notaries at the shrine of avarice, all generous feelings and better principles of the heart are sacrificed to this great object."[294] The ambiguity of some Irish immigrants' commitment to racial slavery raised questions in their local communities; however, Irish immigrants never fostered an organised criticism of slavery. The intricacy of the relationship between Irish immigrants and American slavery emerges in the case of John McGuiggin, an immigrant in Vicksburg. In 1860, McGuiggin was sentenced to twenty years of hard labour for "Inducing Slaves to Run Away." John Roach, another Irish man, was responsible for turning McGuiggin over to the authorities, Urich French testified against him, and a third Irishman, John O'Reilly, served on the jury that convicted him.[295] The Irish relationship with southern slavery therefore was one of a manifold nature, even though most that stayed in the slave states accepted the reality of black servitude and treated slavery as a means of economic mobility and greater freedom.

The expansion of slavery and cotton fuelled the growth of the southern economy, which in turn created employment opportunities for Irish immigrants. Non-slaveholding Irish workers were still considered a part of the southern ruling class, albeit a strict regimented ruling class. They enjoyed the freedom and fundamental rights that were denied to the slave population. As overseers, Irish immigrants exercised a level of white power and mastery over the slaves similar to the planters. Irish workers stood as an important pillar of the South's economy; yet, despite their perceived privileges of "whiteness," Irish immigrants performed some of the most dangerous and socially degrading work in the antebellum US South. Often at the bottom of white society, some grew disenchanted with the southern social order. Many came to the South for seasonal work and returned later to

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[294] William Brown to Robert Grimshaw, 7 Apr., 1819, William Brown New Orleans, T1116/32, PRONI.
[295] William R. Ferris, "'A Lengthening chain in the shape of memories': the Irish and Southern Culture," *Southern Cultures*, Vol. 17, No. 1 (Spring, 2011), 16.

the northern states. To fully appreciate the true nature of Irish immigrants experience in the antebellum South, the lives and experiences of rural Irish workers must be comprehended. Irish labourers performed a crucial role in the development and modernisation of the southern economy.

Irish labourers accepted the racial order of the South and the employment opportunities it provided. The construction of canals, levees, and railroads connected and integrated the Cotton Kingdom into the industrial Atlantic World. Slave labour produced cotton and Irish labour helped ensure that US cotton reached the global market. Non-slaveholding Irish immigrants, for the most part, lived hard lives, performing demanding work in an unsparingly harsh environment. Most accepted the poisonous racism of their American contemporaries, but occasionally they shared moments of charity and fellowship with African Americans. For most, life in the rural South was a struggle for survival. The commencement of the American Civil War disrupted employment opportunities in the South. In 1861, William Howard Russell remarked on his travels of the newly formed Confederacy how "the Irish population, finding themselves unable to migrate northwards, and being without work, have rushed to arms with enthusiasm to support Southern institutions." Many planters were forced to risk their slave property to undertake work that they had previously done "with Irish [workers] ...but we can't get them now, as they are all off to the wars." The initial enthusiasm of many Irishmen for the Confederacy was inspired by the promise of "eleven dollars a month, and food, and everything found...we'll come back as rich as Jews."[296] As before the war, rural Irish labourers undertook whatever employment they could to support themselves and their families, in this case fighting for the new southern nation and the institution of racial slavery.

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[296] Russell, *My Diary*, 231, 282, & 285. For more on the Confederate Irish see David T. Gleeson, *The Green and the Gray: The Irish in the Confederate States of America*, (Chapel Hill, 2013); Kelly J. O'Grady, *Clear the Confederate Way! The Irish in the Army of Northern Virginia*, (Mason City, IA., 2000).

Conclusion

By 1860, division between the northern and southern states had grown to an unprecedented level. The victory of Abraham Lincoln, the Republican Party candidate, in the divisive presidential election of 1860 provided a platform for secessionist radical proslavery ideologues. On 20th December 1860, South Carolina became the first of eleven southern states to secede from the Union. By April 1861, cotton broker Ezekial J. Donnell in New York informed his Tyrone-born planter brother John Robert Donnell in North Carolina that "Undoubtedly we have entered upon the most monstrous Civil Wars that has ever occurred in the annals of the human family."[1] The American Civil War raged for four years, and by April 1865 the dreams of a Confederate nation were decimated. William Hill in Abbeville, South Carolina sent word to Ireland that the "war has ruin'd the South and I may say the whole country. The people here are impoverished not one in ten but is reduced to insolvency."[2]

The emancipation of the slaves' consequent to the war destroyed the old southern social and economic order. Slavery was not a retrograde institution nor was it on a natural road to extinction. The economic strength and vitality of southern slavery had "anticipated the efficiency and productivity of factory assembly lines" and "exhibited enough flexibility to put slaves into mines, building canals and railroads, and even manufacturing textiles and other industrial products."[3] By 1860, the South generated unprecedented profits from its export economy and the value of slaves continued to soar. Indeed, many wealthy elite slaveholders dreamed of annexing an expanding empire ranging from Cuba to Central America.[4] Five years later, however, uncertainty over what fate awaited white southerners caused major concern as hostilities ceased and the sudden liberation of some four million slaves became the new reality. William Hill declared that:

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[1] E. J. Donnell to "My Dear Bro." 17th April 1861, Donnell Family Papers, 1795-1869, #1154, SHC.
[2] William Hill, to David Hill, 8 Sep., 1865, McDowell Papers, T/2305/38, PRONI.
[3] David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery, In the Age of Emancipation*, (New York, 2014), 325.
[4] Ibid, 325-328.

> The negroes are all freed and confusion reigns predominate, the freed men and
> women will not work, and no means to compel them, the consequence is that they
> steal and pilfer as they must live by some means ... Hitherto they had been happy
> and contented and class of labours in the world had as easy a time of it as them,
> when sick or aged they were kindly cared for... I owned fifteen, all of whom are
> gone to shift for themselves.

The war cost William "about 30,000 dollars," and he was not the only Irish slaveholder to suffer financial loss as a result of uncompensated emancipation.[5] Slavery in the US had allowed many families of Irish descent to prosper and amass substantial fortunes.

The antebellum propaganda conjured up an image of the Yankees as an amalgam of money-grubbing, Black Republican, abolitionist Goths and Vandals, in the mind of southerners. At the outset of the War, the Confederate appeal to turn back the invader and protect southern liberty stirred a majority of whites to defend the new flag.[6] Letters and diaries of many Irish Confederate soldiers are full with the rhetoric of liberty, self-government, and expressions of a willingness to die for the cause. For example, Cork-born Patrick Cleburne, who became the highest ranking foreign born general in the Confederate army, was swept up by the secession rhetoric of 1861. In early January he wrote to his brother Robert in Kentucky:

> As to my own position I hope to see the Union preserved by granting to the South
> her full measure of her constitutional rights. If this cannot be done I hope to see all
> Southern States united in a new confederation. If both these are denied to us I am
> with Arkansas in weal or in woe…if the stars and stripes become the standard of a
> tyrannical majority, the ensign of a violated league, it will no longer command our
> love or respect but will command our best efforts to drive it from the state.

The day following Arkansas's secession, Cleburne wrote again, stating "I am with the South in life or death, in victory or defeat. I never owned a Negro and care nothing for them, but these people have been my friends and have stood up for me on all occasions."[7] Most Irish immigrants in the slave states were reluctant secessionists, but they ultimately accepted the new

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[5] William Hill, to David Hill, 8 Sep., 1865, McDowell Papers, PRONI.

[6] James McPherson, *What they Fought For 1861-1865*, (Baton Rouge, 1994), 18.

[7] Cited in Howell Purdue & Elizabeth Purdue, *Pat Cleburne, Confederate General*: *A Definitive Biography*, (Hillsboro TX., 1973), 66-69. For more on Cleburne see Mauriel Phillips Joslyn, (ed.), *A Meteor Shining Brightly. Essays on Major General Patrick R. Cleburne*, (Macon GA, 2000); Craig L. Symonds, *Stonewall of the West: Patrick Cleburne & the Civil War*, (Lawrence KS., 1997).

Confederate States of America. Irish immigrants of all religious denominations in the South rallied in defence of their adopted southern home and its peculiar institution of racial slavery. Some 20,000 Irishmen served in the armed forces of the Confederacy.[8]

In his famous Savannah speech, delivered on 21st March 1861, Vice President Alexander H. Stephens of the Confederacy declared that the cornerstone of the Confederate government:

> resets upon the great truth, that the negro is not the equal of the white man, that slavery-subordination to the superior race-is his natural and moral condition. This, our new Government, is the first, in the history of the world, based upon this great physical, philosophical and moral truth.[9]

A limited number of Irish immigrants enjoyed the wealth and status of being southern planters, but the majority of Irish immigrants were committed to the idea that opportunities for white males and their independence was preserved by the system of slavery. Southerners feared that any significant weakening of slavery's bonds could lead to the collapse of the plantation order and of white supremacy. Defenders of human bondage represented it as the only way to enforce the privileges and dominant position of white men in society. In 1851, future Confederate President, Jefferson Davis, then as U.S Senator for Mississippi, delivered a speech succinctly capturing this belief. "No white man, in a slaveholding community, was the menial servant of any one." Davis asserted that "distinction between him and the negro…elevated and kept the white laborer on the level with the employer." Emancipation would cast the poor white man down to the level of the poor black man.[10] Slavery's breakdown, therefore, threatened the vast number of whites who never owned slaves. The Irish immigrants' experience with southern slavery drew them to the proslavery argument and ultimately explains their willingness to fight for the Confederate cause.

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[8] David T. Gleeson, *The Green and the Gray: The Irish in the Confederate States of America*, (Chapel Hill, 2013), 41.

[9] Cited in Robert F. Durden, *The Gray and the Black: The Confederate Debate on Emancipation*, (Baton Rouge, 1972), 7-9.

[10] Bruce Levine, *Confederate Emancipation: Southern Plans to Free and Arm Slaves during the Civil War*, (New York, 2006), 53.

Conclusion

This thesis has provided an in-depth analysis of the relationship between Irish immigrants and the institution of slavery in the rural antebellum US South. To understand the totality of the Irish immigrant experience in the nineteenth century US, the experience of the Irish in the rural slave states must be considered an integral part of a dynamic and evolving antebellum US. A prerequisite to understanding the significance of the Irish in the antebellum South is a detailed examination of their involvement with the institution of slavery. The evidence presented in this thesis demonstrates that Irish immigrants who could afford to purchase slaves did so with no misgivings. Prior to this investigation, the historically uncomfortable presence of Irish slaveholders has received limited attention from historians. The entrepreneurial Irish slaveholder does not fit conveniently with the traditional canon of the Irish immigrant in the US. The lives of Irish labourers on southern plantations reveal a more familiar story of hardship and struggle for social and economic mobility.

Irish slaveholding families in the antebellum US South were an integral part of the Irish slaveholding diaspora that spanned centuries. For this reason, this thesis began by discussing the importance of Irish emigration to the British and European Catholic empires during the seventeenth and eighteenth century and by assessing how these families benefitted from the rise of New World slavery. Enquiry into the complex and entangled history of colonization and Irish immigration and the connection with New World slavery proved essential to understanding the historical origins of Irish slaveholders. The colonial roots of Irish slaveholders in the states of Louisiana, Mississippi, Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina demonstrated that from the beginning of colonial slavery in North America, Irish servants, settlers, planters and missionaries were actively involved. Understanding Irish colonial roots in the South helps explain and contextualise the established wealthy Irish slaveholding families at the turn of the eighteenth century and the impact they had by establishing precedents for their countrymen in the antebellum period.

A review of the Irish Catholic experience in the antebellum South demonstrates the moral acceptance of slavery by Irish immigrants. In the

South, the Catholic Church gave Irish immigrants a welcome sense of familiarity in a strange new land, where slavery was the economic, social and political foundation. From the middle decades of the nineteenth century onwards, Catholics in the slave states were predominantly immigrants who faced the challenge of maintaining their religious identity and simultaneously assimilating into an overwhelmingly evangelical Protestant culture. The testimony of the Irish Catholic experience demonstrates how Irish Catholics forged religious, national, and regional elements of their identity into a "triune" identity as southern American Catholics. In creating a triune identity, Irish Catholics lived and socialised with Southern Protestants. This complicates the dominant historiographical view of interreligious animosity and gives an example of religious pluralism in an unexpected time and place.[11] By adopting an ecumenical approach to southern Catholicism, a clearer comprehension of how Irish immigrants practiced their faith, assimilated into southern society and accepted racial slavery unfolded. The religious toleration of southerners could be fickle and the racial etiquette of the antebellum South had to be reverently respected by Catholics.

To survive and thrive, the Catholic Church had to adapt to the reality of the recently established American Republic. Catholics fashioned the Church in order to accommodate American republicanism. The development of the trustee controversies in Charleston and New Orleans demonstrates the difficulty the Irish had in shaping and controlling the development of the Church, it reveals that Irish immigrants did not dominate the antebellum southern Catholic Church. In fact, Irish Catholics faced some of their sternest opponents in American and French born co-religionists, who held conflicting beliefs about what the Church should be. Irish Catholic immigrants, as a distinct minority, struggled to maintain their faith in a land where the Church was poorly developed and many participated in various Protestant services. Numerous factors influenced the

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[11] Andrew Stern, "Southern Harmony: Catholic-Protestant Relations in the Antebellum South," *Religion and Culture: A Journal of Interpretation,* Vol. 17, No. 2 (Summer, 2007), 165-190.

practice of southern Catholicism and its development. To be accepted as true southerners, Catholics stepped carefully regarding slavery. For this reason, the Catholic Church, mirrored the racial values of southern society and accepted the slave system. By defending slavery, the Catholic Church helped place Irish Catholics on an equal footing with white southerners. The Catholic Church's acceptance of, and adaptation to, southern slavery upheld a standard for Irish Catholics to follow. By weaving a triune identity, Irish Catholics in the antebellum US South consciously exploited and profited from the institution of slavery.

Having established a historical understanding of Irish slaveholders in the antebellum US South, the thesis proceeded with a further examination of Irish slaveholders in the context of the expansion and evolution of American slavery during the antebellum period. It revealed the willingness of Irish immigrants to partake in and gain from US slavery. Slavery in the antebellum South was not a static institution; it was in a state of constant motion and change, driven by the pursuit of profit. The general literature of Irish emigration, and particularly that of the Irish in the southern states, has not taken sufficiently into account of Irish slave-ownership in the rural South. Irish immigrants understood the potential of wealth made from slave labour and also that slave-ownership served as the basis for elevated prestige and respect in their adopted society. The rise of cotton as the premier commodity of the industrial world generated spectacular wealth at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and Irish immigrants already settled in the South took advantage of the new economic conditions. The first decade of the first cotton boom in the US coincided with a wave of emigration from Ireland after the violence and political instability of the United Irishmen movement and the failed 1798 Rebellion. United Irishmen exiles, drawn by the profits of slavery and cotton, settled in every major southern town.

The first cotton boom created opportunities for non-slaveholding white families to acquire slave property, and Irish immigrants asserted their assimilation into southern society by becoming slaveholders. The case of Antonio Patrick Walsh, for example, a native of Dublin who established

himself as a cotton planter in West Feliciana Parish, Louisiana, highlights the difficulty of establishing a successful plantation and demonstrates the centrality of profit-seeking as the main goal of Irish slaveholders. The evolutionary nature of antebellum slavery and its expansion into the Southwest provided immigrants with significant opportunities for economic advancement. The booming southern economy resulted in an increase of Irish immigrants working in skilled and middle class occupations, which in turn led to an increase in Irish slaveholding. Practicing Irish lawyers and doctors quickly progressed both economically and socially into the planter class. Successful Irish planters were, then, able to consolidate and expand their holdings during the last decade of US slavery, when the price of slaves soared, putting slave ownership out of reach for most southerners. Some Irish planters were among the largest slaveholders in the US, such as Maunsel White and John Burnside. This study of the large Irish slaveholders' economic experiences reveals the fundamentally capitalist nature of the larger plantations of the antebellum South. The concern expressed for profit by Irish slave-owners along with technological innovations and complex labour routines were a distinctive part of the South's slave-based variant of agricultural capitalism. Indeed, the planter paternalism expressed by some Irish slaveholders served their economic interest. The paternal feelings that were occasionally expressed rarely compromised their profit-focused ambitions. Irish masters subjected their slaves to harsh and demanding conditions in their pursuit of great fortunes. The capitalist endeavours of Irish planters reflected their desire for total control of their slave labour force. Violence was the cornerstone of the plantation order. The success of the leading Irish planters showed real possibilities of economic and social advancement in the slave states for arriving immigrants.

Understanding the Irish experience in the rural plantation South requires not just recognition of the importance of Irish slaveholders but also an acknowledgement of the essential role of Irish labourers on southern plantations. Investigation into the role of non-slaveholding immigrants in the rural South underlines the impact they had on the southern plantation

landscape. Non-slaveholding Irish immigrants lived hard lives, performing demanding work in the unforgiving southern climate. Irish immigrant labourers held an inferior position in society, but they were not the only poor whites in the antebellum South. The evidence with regard to the controversial concept of whiteness and southern herrenvolk democracy reveals that, despite their low status, Irish labourers were always considered, white, and entitled members of "the filthy aristocracy of skin." The ascendency of whites over blacks was the foundation of the southern racial order, and Irish immigrants adapted to this social reality to advance their own economic prospects. The true mark of distinction in the antebellum US South, though, was not just white skin, but also an individual's wealth, gender, family connections, and community standing.

Irish labourers undertook a variety of jobs on the plantations, including management as overseers. Irish overseers did the dirty work the planter class wished to avoid and by undertaking this work they received a tainted reputation in the eyes of the elite. Research into the slaves' attitudes towards Irish overseers and workmen illustrates the overseers' struggle to maintain and control the southern slave population. Some of the most hazardous work on the plantations was often performed by hired Irish labourers. This thesis has highlighted the importance of studying the lives of unskilled Irish workers on southern plantations and their contribution to internal improvement projects in canal, levee and railroad construction, which drew thousands of Irish into the interior of the rural South. Hired waged labourers changed the dynamics of the plantation workforce causing planters to fear the disruptive influence free labourers had upon their slaves. Irish workers often suffered from poor health and abysmal accommodation on plantation shanties. Skilled Irish labourers were also employed on southern plantations, and some feared their reputations would be tarnished by engaging in such employment. Life in the lower echelons of society in the slave states encompassed multiple types of biracial interactions. Poor Irish immigrants often drank, gambled, stole, and slept with slaves and free blacks. The present study has shown the complexity of interactions between

Conclusion

Irish and slave labourers, and has found they challenged the perceived norm of antebellum interactions between whites and blacks.

In sum, this thesis endeavoured to present a detailed account of the Irish immigrant experience with slavery in the antebellum rural US South. It has demonstrated the important role slavery played in the Irish southern experience on many levels. Irish immigrants in the antebellum South constituted an important part of the Irish experience in the Atlantic World in both positive and negative ways. The examination of the Irish relationship with American slavery provides a fresh lens through which to scrutinise the South's peculiar institution. As foreign born outsiders, Irish immigrants had to mould their own bias and expectations to accommodate the slaveholding culture of the South. Irish born slaveholders had to observe and learn how to be successful first generation slaveholders. Understanding how and why Irish immigrants became southern planters reveals the complexity of a business-like, and profit oriented plantation order. The sources examined relating to Irish immigrants provides a fresh perspective on the variety of Irish experiences in the antebellum rural South. Ultimately, the challenges facing the Irish slaveholder, canal digger or priest should be viewed as part of the wider problems faced by southerners. The sources tell a great deal about the lives and aspirations of Irish immigrants in the five southern states under examination and the important economic niche they forged during the antebellum period. Slavery created the possibility of economic prosperity and social advancement for immigrants in the antebellum South. The arrival of new Irish immigrants to the South declined dramatically when slavery ended. The South entered a period of economic decline and Irish fears about labour competition from the emancipated slaves became a reality during Reconstruction. Irish immigrants had been enticed by and actively settled in the southern states to reap the rewards and benefit from racial slavery. Irish population decline in the South coincided with the influx of rural blacks into the southern cities and towns. The strong Irish presence in the South ended with the abolition of slavery.

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