

**SPECULATORS AND SLAVES**

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL

Speculators and Slaves in the Old South:  
A Study of the American Domestic  
Slave Trade, 1820-1860

being a Thesis submitted for the Degree of  
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PREFACE

The essential purposes of the pages which follow are to trace the character of the inter-regional slave trade and to assess the significance of that traffic in the life of the "peculiar institution". More specifically, this study examines the extent and organisation of the South's inter-regional slave trade; the economic importance of that traffic; the impact of slave sales upon the slave family; the status of the trader; and the character of relationships between masters and slaves as revealed by the inter-regional trade. In the chapters which follow, although attention is also paid to a wider chronological context, detailed analysis concentrates upon the operation of the trade during the 1820 to 1860 period - that is to say during the period of the inter-regional traffic's fullest development.

Slave traders' account books, together with large numbers of often very substantial collections of correspondence between traders, have provided an essential foundation for my research. These manuscript sources, which constitute an extremely valuable store of information illustrative of virtually all facets of the domestic slave trade, have previously gone almost completely ignored by historians. Such records, directly documenting trading activity in almost every Southern state, have made it possible to study the trade in a broad geographical setting. It should be noted that since, very commonly, traders' letters were almost completely devoid of punctuation, basic punctuation has, without acknowledgement, been added to many of the passages of correspondence quoted in the chapters which follow. Otherwise, all amendments to traders' letters are indicated in the quotations which are made. In addition to traders' papers, major sources of evidence have included manuscript and published census records; manifests documenting the coastwise movement of slave ships; newspaper advertisements; probate, equity, and sheriff's records of slave sales; tax lists; court cases concerning traders; slave narratives; as well as Abolitionist and pro-slavery publications.

I am greatly indebted to the staffs of many American libraries for their

assistance. In particular, I should like to express my appreciation of the advice and the warm hospitality of Mrs.Ollin Owens of the South Caroliniana Library; of Mrs.Granville T.Prior of the South Carolina Historical Society; and of friends at the South Carolina Department of Archives. I should like to thank Professor Stanley Engerman of Rochester University and Dr. William Calderhead of Annapolis Naval College for their very generous hospitality and for their willingness to discuss their interpretations of the slave trade and American slavery. I am very grateful to Dr.William Dusiherre of Warwick University for his encouragement and for carefully reading sections of my thesis. Finally, I should like to thank Dr.Phillip Taylor and Dr.John White, both of Hull University, for their most helpful advice and encouragement.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Manuscript Repositories

AAS American Antiquities Society, Worcester, Massachusetts  
AU Atlanta University, Georgia  
BPL Boston Public Library  
CHS Chicago Historical Society  
DU Duke University, Durham, North Carolina  
HLH Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts  
LC Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.  
MHS Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis  
NA National Archives, Washington, D.C.  
NCA North Carolina Department of Archives, Raleigh  
NYHS New York Historical Society  
NYPL New York Public Library  
SCA South Carolina Department of Archives, Columbia  
SCHS South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston  
SCL South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia  
SHC Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill  
SCSD Sumter County Sheriff's Office, Sumter, South Carolina  
UVA University of Virginia, Charlottesville  
VSL Virginia State Library, Richmond

States

In tables and figures the following two-letter abbreviations are used for states:

|                         |                   |
|-------------------------|-------------------|
| AL Alabama              | MO Missouri       |
| AR Arkansas             | MS Mississippi    |
| DC District of Columbia | NC North Carolina |
| DE Delaware             | NH New Hampshire  |
| FL Florida              | NJ New Jersey     |
| GA Georgia              | NY New York       |
| IL Illinois             | RI Rhode Island   |
| KY Kentucky             | SC South Carolina |
| LA Louisiana            | TN Tennessee      |
| MA Massachusetts        | TX Texas          |
| MD Maryland             | VA Virginia       |
| ME Maine                |                   |

Districts

Following ante-bellum practices, the term "district" is normally used in references to South Carolina's principal administrative subdivisions,

while, except for Louisiana where the term "parish" is used, similar subdivisions in other states are referred to as "counties".

This study often employs abbreviated forms of reference for South Carolina districts. Except for Chesterfield district (where "Chesf." is used), these abbreviations employ only the first four letters of the district name concerned. South Carolina district names appear in full in Figure 3.1, p.109.

### Appeals Court Cases

The following abbreviations are used in references to published digests of Appeals Court cases:

- Richardson                    Richardson, J.S.G., Reports of Cases at Law Argued and Determined in the Court of Appeals and Court of Errors of South Carolina (Columbia, 1867).
- Rich Eq                        Richardson, J.S.G., Reports of Cases in Equity Argued and Determined in the Court of Appeals in Equity and Court of Errors of South Carolina (Columbia, 1868).
- Strobhart                     Strobhart, James A., Reports of Cases Argued and Determined in the Court of Appeals and Errors of South Carolina on Appeal from the Courts of Law (Columbia, 1850).
- Strob Eq                      Strobhart, James A., Reports of Cases in Equity Argued and Determined in the Court of Appeals and in the Court of Errors of South Carolina (Columbia, 1850).

INTRODUCTION

THE INTER-REGIONAL SLAVE TRADE IN ITS HISTORIOGRAPHICAL SETTING

During the late eighteenth century, events were taking place which established a persistent and extensive southward and westward movement of the slave population of the planting states. The extension of hemp and tobacco production into Kentucky, the spreading of tobacco production into Tennessee, and, it appears, the development of the Georgia low-country contributed to the early stages of this movement. Of considerable and long-lasting importance was the development, starting in the late 1790s, of successful cane sugar planting in the south-eastern parishes of Louisiana. Pre-eminent in importance, however, was the establishment, on a commercial scale, of short-fibre cotton production. That development, and with it the founding of the massively important Cotton Kingdom, resulted from the late eighteenth century mechanisation of British textile manufacturing and resulted from inventions, taking place in the early 1790s, which permitted short-fibre cotton quickly and cheaply to be separated from its seed. Beginning in the mid-1790s in the Carolina-Georgia piedmont, substantial production of short-fibre cotton ultimately spread into the states to the South and West. In the post-Revolution period, Georgia, during much of the 1790s, and South Carolina, during the years 1803 to 1807, permitted Atlantic slave trade importations; but, overall, the introduction of slaves newly arrived from Africa and the West Indies can have made only a tiny contribution to the post-1790 population movement into the Carolina-Georgia piedmont and beyond.<sup>1</sup> Almost all of the huge movement of slaves into these latter regions was the product either of the inter-regional domestic trade in slaves or of the migration of planters who, having determined upon testing their fortunes in new lands, transported their slaves to the expanding sections of the South and there established agricultural enterprises.

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1. On the limited importance of Atlantic slave trade importations, see Chapter II.

From an early date the South's internal slave trade contributed to this inter-regional movement. In 1789, and again 1791, a group of Maryland Quakers, with the support of the state's anti-slavery society, sought to introduce legislation against domestic slave trade exportations from Maryland. On the grounds that such legislation would infringe property rights, would prevent slaves from moving to a "warmer and more congenial climate", and would inhibit the desired reduction in the state's black population, the Maryland legislature rejected these proposals. In 1795, one trader, introducing slaves into Kentucky and probably purchasing in Maryland or Virginia, declared his intention to "carry on the [slave trading] business extensively"; and in 1799 a certain Speers, on a trading trip between Virginia and Georgia, was killed by members of his slave gang. By 1802, traders appear quite commonly to have had recourse to the District of Columbia and in January of that year a grand jury in the District described "as a grievance, the practice of persons coming from distant parts of the United States into this District for the purposes of purchasing slaves". According to the jury, the slaves, having been confined in jails until sufficient numbers were collected, were

then turned out in our streets,...loaded with chains as though they had committed some heinous offence....We consider it a grievance [the jury continued]...that the interposition of civil authority cannot be had to prevent parents being wrested from their offspring, and children from their parents, without respect to the ties of nature.

Writing of Virginia in about 1808, a traveller observed that "the Carolina slave dealers get frequent supplies from this state, particularly from the eastern shore"; and by 1812, a well-established inter-regional slave trade led Hezekiah Niles, an advocate of gradual abolition, to inform the readers of his newspaper:

If there is anything that ought to be supremely hated - it is the present infamous traffic that is carried on in several of the middle states, and especially in Maryland, in negroes, for the Georgia and Louisiana markets. I blush for the honour and art of printing when I see advertisements published in the newspapers, openly avowing the trade and soliciting business,

with the indifference of dealers in horses. 2

The dividing line between the slave exporting and slave importing areas of the South was never sharply defined, and during the nineteenth century that invisible divide was steadily pushed farther to the west and south. The southward and westward progression of that divide reflected the planter's attraction to fertile new lands; reflected the substantial rates of natural increase which almost always obtained when North American slave populations became established; and, so far as movement by the domestic slave trade was concerned, reflected the attractions offered to old-established slaveholding areas by the high slave prices which obtained in more recently established planting regions. In the period from 1790 to 1820, Virginia, Maryland, Delaware, the District of Columbia and, by about 1800, North Carolina were net exporters of slaves. Over the period from 1820 to 1860 - the period with which the present study is most directly concerned - South Carolina and Kentucky, as well as the District of Columbia and the states already mentioned, acted as persistent net exporters of slaves; while, for all or part of the 1820 to 1860 period, Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Tennessee, Florida, and Texas were important recipients of slaves.<sup>3</sup>

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2. J.R.Brackett, The Negro in Maryland: A Study of the Institution of Slavery (Baltimore, 1889), pp.158-9; anonymous trader's letter of 24 Jan.1795, and Charleston (SC) City Gazette item of 21 Dec.1799, both reproduced in U.B. Phillips, et al. (eds.), A Documentary History of American Industrial Society (Cleveland, 1910; New York, 1958), II, pp.55-6, 70-1; grand jury presentment, cited in F.Bancroft, Slave Trading in the Old South (Baltimore, 1931; New York, 1959), pp.23-4; Phillips, A Documentary History, II, p.55; Niles's Weekly Register, XII, 19 July 1812. (In footnotes of the present study, wherever publication details cite more than one edition of a book, the initial entry concerns the first edition of that book and the entry which follows indicates the edition to which footnote page citations refer.) It should be noted that a slave traffic out of areas to the north of Maryland and into the South appears to have been conducted in the late eighteenth century and in the first years of the nineteenth century. Although a detailed discussion of such a traffic lies beyond the scope of this study of the South's internal trade, the possible existence of a domestic slave trade into the South is briefly commented on below in Chapter II, section III(i) and in Chapter VI, section II.

3. See Table 2.10.

That there was from the 1790s, and particularly after 1820, a massive inter-regional movement of the American slave population has never been seriously in dispute with historians. What has, however, been unclear and frequently disputed has been the character of that inter-regional movement and, more particularly, the relative importance of the domestic slave trade and of planter migration in contributing to that movement; the impact of the domestic slave trade upon the slave community; and the significance of that trade in determining the character of ante-bellum slavery.

I

For the most part, in the ante-bellum period, public defences of slavery avoided the embarrassing question of the internal slave trade, and, while praising the benefits which the black population supposedly enjoyed under slavery, attacked the evils attributed to Northern industrial "wage slavery".<sup>4</sup> When directly challenged on the domestic slave trade, however, the apologists for the "peculiar institution" routinely dismissed the slave trader as an outcast who could gain little or not foothold in the economy and society of the South. Typical of this school was the pro-slavery clergyman N.L.Rice who, in 1845, in a public debate on slavery, assured his adversary that "the slave trader was looked upon...with disgust" by all decent men in the slave holding states, for "none but a monster could inflict anguish upon unoffending men for the sake of accumulating wealth."<sup>5</sup>

The numerous pro-slavery novels written in reply to Uncle Tom's Cabin provide a sampling of Southern attitudes towards the internal slave trade. The plot of Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel, a work first published in 1852, owed much of its structure to that slave traffic. In the fifteen or twenty novels

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4. See, for example, the major defences of slavery edited by E.N.Elliott and published as Cotton is King, and Pro-Slavery Arguments: Comprising the Writings of Hammond, Harper, Christie, Stringfellow, Hodge, Bledsoe, and Cartwright (Augusta, 1860).
  5. J.Blanchard and N.L.Rice, A Debate on Slavery Held in the City of Cincinnati on the First, Second, and Sixth Days of October 1845, Upon the Question Is Slaveholding in Itself Sinful, and the Relation between Master and Slave, a Sinful Relation (Cincinnati, 1846; New York 1969), p.28.

written in the 1850s in rebuttal of Uncle Tom's Cabin, and in dozens of journal articles written with the same pro-slavery purpose, characters portrayed by Stowe were often re-examined in great detail.<sup>6</sup> The trader, however, received only slight attention and found no place at all in several of the "replies". When the trader appeared in Randolph's The Cabin and the Parlour (1852) it was because "Messrs. Skin and Flint, factors and merchants of New York" had, by charging excessive commissions and interest, forced their Southern client, Mr. Courtney, to make a sale of his slaves. The feelings of Southern communities on such occasions were, however, represented as having been such that

The slaves...were all purchased to remain in the district. Even among those planters who showed little concern for the ruined Courtneys there was a sentiment of honour on this point....A trader who had made his appearance was hustled away rather rudely by one or two present, so that, after making a few ineffectual bids, he thought it prudent to retire. 7

Again in J.W. Page's Uncle Robin in his Cabin and Tom without one in Boston (1853) it was Northern interference which threatened to bring disaster to the slave. Incited by visiting Abolitionists, two slaves were persuaded to run away to the North and, in order to gain provisions for their journey, stole hams from the meat-house of a New Englander who had settled in the South as a planter. In order to prevent the New Englander from having the slaves hung in punishment for their theft, the master of the runaways decided that he must sell them to a trader. The trader, a certain Mr. Boshier, was not at all surprised to find that the slaves had "brought trouble upon themselves" by planning to run away. "Our trade", he explained to the good-hearted master,

would be completely broken up...if t'want for runaway negroes; and I think sir, we have to thank the abolitionists for that; they entice them off, and we grab them flying. I know a Yankee trader who gets whole lots that way.

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6. For a discussion of many of the "replies", see J.B. Tandy, "Pro-Slavery Propaganda in American Fiction of the Fifties", South Atlantic Quarterly XXI (1922), pp.41-51, 170-9.

7. J.T. Randolph, The Cabin and the Parlour; or, Slaves and Masters (London, 1852), pp.31, 42.

The plot of Page's novel suggested too that, unlike their Southern-born counterparts, Northern-born slave-holders, interested simply in profit, frequently sold slaves without regard to their ties of family. These Yankee planters were represented as providing the trader with the greater part of his stock.<sup>8</sup>

It appeared from Mrs. Eastman's Aunt Phillis's Cabin (1852) that slave sales resulting in the separation of families were "the worst feature of slavery...but [were] very uncommon". The meddling of visiting Abolitionists, however, by inciting slaves, unsuccessfully as it turned out, to escape from their master, brought the threat of family separation and of sale to a trader. When the Abolitionists refused to purchase a slave woman who, as a punishment for her attempted escape was to be sold away from her husband, a humane Southerner purchased the woman, so allowing her to remain with her husband. In the Reverend Baynard R. Hall's Frank Freeman's Barber Shop (1852), the local community, mistakenly believing Frank to have been involved in a massacre of local white citizens, made no attempt to prevent the slave from being "sold South" for punishment. By a last minute intervention, however, justice was done and Frank was saved from the trader. With Thomas Bangs Thorpe's The Master's House (1854), slavery was seen to have had its evils; but these were attributed to the slave trader and to the overseer who, in the persons of Major Dixon and Mr. Toadvine respectively, were represented as delighting in the brutal treatment of slaves.<sup>9</sup>

In his Social Relations in Our Southern States (1860) - a treatise on Southern character types rather than a novel - D.R. Hundley, a defender of slavery, drew together many of the images of the pro-slavery novels. His classical sketch of the inter-regional slave trader declared:

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8. J.W. Page, Uncle Robin in his Cabin and Tom without one in Boston (Richmond, 1853), pp. 21-53, 230-6.

9. H. Eastman, Aunt Phillis's Cabin, or Southern Life As It Is (Philadelphia, 1852; New York, 1968), pp. 42-3, 216; B.R. Hall, Frank Freeman's Barber Shop: A Tale (New York, 1852), pp. 70-95; T.B. Thorpe, The Master's House; A Tale of Southern Life (New York, 1854), passim.



Pre-eminent in villany and a greedy love of filthy lucre stands the hard-hearted Negro Trader, who is in every respect as unconscionable a dog of a Southern Shylock as ever drank raw brandy by the glassful, or chewed Virginia tobacco, or used New England cowskins to lacerate the back of a slave....The miserly Negro Trader... is, outwardly, a coarse, ill-bred person, provincial in speech and manners, with a cross-looking phiz, a whisky tintured nose, cold hard-looking eyes, a dirty tobacco stained mouth, and shabby dress....He is not troubled evidently by a conscience, for although he habitually separates parent from child, brother from sister, and husband from wife, he is yet one of the jolliest dogs alive, and never evinces the least sign of remorse.

Hundley allowed that some traders might have begun their careers as decent men,

but the number [of decent traders] is few. Although [some are] honest and honourable when they first go into the business, the natural result of their calling seems to be to corrupt them; for they have usually to deal with the most refractory and brutal of the slave population, since good and honest slaves are rarely permitted to fall into the unscrupulous clutches of the speculator.

To have blamed the slaveholding community at large for the creation of a group of such detestable traffickers in human flesh would, Hundley argued, have been as inappropriate as to have condemned the whole institution of marriage for those instances of wife-beating which sometimes occurred. The grasping, unscrupulous attitudes attributed to the slave trader made him, according to Hundley, "the most utterly detestable of all Southern Yankees", and a character totally alien to the Southern tradition.<sup>10</sup>

The images of the slave trade and the trader, presented in Hundley and in the literary defences of the slaveholder, combined to suggest that the trader, or "speculator" as his contemporaries often called him, was almost always a man of the very worst character, who dealt only in the most vicious or most desperately unfortunate of slaves; and suggested that, thanks to the principles of the Southern community, the volume of the inter-regional slave trade was very slight indeed. It followed from this that, when inter-regional movements of slaves took place, they almost always occurred, not as a result

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10. D.R.Hundley, Social Relations in Our Southern States (New York, 1860), pp.139-48.

of the slave trade, but as a result of the migration of planters with their slaves. Such migrations, normally involving the whole population of a plantation, were assumed to have had no damaging effect upon the family structure of the slave population.<sup>11</sup>

## II

The Abolitionists did little to challenge the pro-slavery portrait of the trader's character. Critics of the South's "peculiar institution", whatever their approach to the slavery problem, would, like Philo Tower in Slavery Unmasked, have condemned these "miserable anti-human critters, walking on two legs,...looking like men, [and] called nigger drovers."<sup>12</sup> Abolitionists argued, however, that the trade was conducted on a vast scale, with slaveholders participating in the wholesale separation of black families. Most Abolitionists and pro-slavery men agreed that slavery was economically inefficient and agreed that plantation mono-cultures led to soil exhaustion. From this, Abolitionists argued that crops inefficiently produced on the older and supposedly worn-out lands of the Upper South were completely incapable of supporting the planters of that region. According to Abolitionists, those planters came, then, to be dependent on the sale of their slaves to the expanding cotton regions of the Lower South; and, it was argued, in order to capitalise to the full on this inter-regional traffic, a system of breeding slaves for the southern market became thoroughly established in the Upper South.<sup>13</sup>

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11. As a result, for example, of cross-plantation marriages, plantation migration would, in fact, sometimes have occasioned the separation of slave families. On this issue, see Chapter IX, below.
  12. P.Tower, Slavery Unmasked: Being a Truthful Narrative of Three Years Residence and Journeying in Eleven Southern States (Rochester, 1856), p.249.
  13. A rather full exposition of the argument appeared in Slavery and the Internal Slave Trade...being Replies to Questions Transmitted by the British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society (London, 1841). See especially the American Anti-Slavery Society's reply to the seventh British question on American slavery. An important statement on the economic arguments relating to the trade appeared in J.E.Cairnes, The Slave Power: Its Character, Career and Probable Designs (London, 1862).

To the Abolitionists, the slave trader was not simply a clever and unprincipled trafficker who tore slaves away from a few reluctant but destitute planters; nor was he a man who dealt essentially in criminal slaves who deserved no better fate than to be taken from their family and friends. It appeared to Abolitionists that the whole system of slavery, its survival in the Upper South and its expansion into the Lower South, was dependent upon the traffic in slaves. Despite the unpleasant character traits which she attributed to slave traders, Harriet Beecher Stowe believed, therefore, that

If there is an ill-used class of men in the world, it is certainly the slave-traders: for if there is no harm in the institution of slavery, - if it is a divinely appointed and honourable one, like civil government and the family state, and like other species of property relation, - then there is no earthly reason why a man may not as innocently be a slave-trader as any other kind of trader.

Like Stowe and like other American Abolitionists, James Sterling, a Scot who travelled extensively in the American South, found

This trade... [to be] a sore subject with the defenders of slavery. It is difficult to weave it handsomely in among the amenities of the patriarchal institution. They fain would make a scapegoat of the "Trader", and load all the iniquities of the system on his unlucky back.

To Sterling, such an attitude appeared illogical but, he added,

Conscience will not be put down; our intuitions are stronger than our logic, and the slave owner has the "noble inconsistency" to condemn his institution in the person of the agent who is essential for its existence. 14

### III

Since the Civil War, the historiography of the domestic slave trade has catalogued the alternation between two basic assumptions. With one school it has been assumed that the trade was of minimum numerical significance. This view has usually carried with it the assumption that the planter was loathe to separate slave families; that the trader was shunned by the slaveholding

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14. H.B.Stowe, A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin; Presenting the Original Facts and Documents upon which the Story is Founded (London, 1853), p.9; J.Sterling, Letters from the Slave States (London, 1857), pp.292-3.

community, and that the bonds between master and slave were strong. A second school has assumed that the slave traffic was of great numerical significance. This second school has argued that, in general, planters were willing to separate families in order to supply the trade; that the lives of slaves were profoundly disturbed by the trade; and that in condemning the trader, Southerners were merely finding a convenient scapegoat for the widespread evils of slavery. The most fundamental problem facing historians of the slave trade has always been that of finding a satisfactory means by which to quantify the trade and so to set that traffic in its true perspective.

In the late nineteenth century, the work of James Ford Rhodes and others, although dealing primarily with much broader themes, paid some attention to the domestic slave trade. Rhodes's History of the United States...from 1850 to...1877, a work influential in the 1890s, despite its pro-Southern interpretation of Reconstruction, reflected much of the Abolitionist view of slavery, and stressed the damaging effect of the domestic slave trade upon the slave family.<sup>15</sup>

Some years after Rhodes's History had touched on the trade, the first lengthy historical study of that traffic appeared with W.H.Collins's Domestic Slave Trade (1904).<sup>16</sup> Like U.B.Phillips who also wrote in the early part of the present century, Collins was strongly inclined to regard American slavery as having been a benign institution. He argued that "slave breeding" found no place in the South and that "traders were accounted the abhorrence of everyone. Their descendants, when known, had a blot upon them [as did] the property acquired in the traffic" (p.108). Using population censuses for the several states, Collins contrasted the rates at which the slave populations of the Upper and Lower South had grown, and from this estimated the extent of the

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15. J.F.Rhodes, History of the United States from the Compromise of 1850 to the Final Restoration of Home Rule at the South in 1877 (New York, 1893). See especially I, pp.303-83.

16. W.H.Collins, The Domestic Slave Trade of the Southern States (New York, 1904; Ann Arbor, 1967).

decennial slave movement between the two regions.<sup>17</sup> He found no systematic way of establishing what proportion of inter-regional slave transfers resulted from slave trading and what proportion resulted from planter migrations. His conviction that slavery had been a mild institution led him to conclude, however, that, in the period 1820 to 1850, at least three-quarters of all inter-regional slave transfers resulted from planter migrations. For the 1850s his estimate was different. He assumed that during that decade the border states enjoyed greater prosperity than during the three preceding decades, and suggested that, in the 1850s, prosperity reduced the rate of planter migrations out of the Upper South. From this he concluded that in the 1850s planter migrations accounted for only one-third to one-half of total inter-regional slave movements, the rest being accounted for by the trade. Elsewhere in his account of the trade Collins argued that planters were generally opposed to sales to traders and "as a rule they did not sell their slaves unless compelled to do so by pecuniary and other embarrassments" (p.79). Since he found that an inter-regional movement of at least 200,000 slaves had taken place in the 1850s, representing a considerably higher rate of movement than for the preceding decade, basic inconsistencies are apparent in Collins's interpretation of the motivating forces behind the overall slave movement out of the Upper South. While his statistics - which are broadly confirmed by the work of other historians - pointed in an opposing direction, his arguments suggested that the 1850s should have seen neither extensive planter migration nor extensive slave sales out of the Upper South.

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17. The growth rate calculations used by Collins and later by Frederic Bancroft assumed that after about 1810 or 1820 the southern slave population was not very significantly influenced by such factors as manumissions and importations from abroad; and assumed that the decennial rate of slave natural increase, that is the decennial excess of births over deaths, was roughly uniform throughout the South. For most practical purposes, these assumptions appear to have been justified (see Chapter II, below). From their assumptions it followed that, if, for a particular decade, the growth rate of the slave population in a state or region diverged from the southern norm for that decade, an approximately quantifiable inward or outward movement of slaves had modified the growth rate of the area concerned.

Even though American Negro Slavery, first published in 1918, contained a chapter on the domestic slave trade, U.B. Phillips never attempted an intensive study of the trade. Indeed, in his chapter on the domestic trade, having cited isolated instances of pre-1805 trading, he observed:

Such fugitive items as these make up the whole record of the trade in its early years, and...constitute the main body of data upon its career from first to last....What the common volume of the commercial transport [in slaves] was can hardly be ascertained from the available data. 18

Throughout his writings, it was Phillips's firm conviction that, for the overwhelming majority, American slavery was a thoroughly humane institution, with slaves attached by loyalty to their masters and warmly returning the affection which masters felt for them. The inter-regional slave trade could find no important place in such a system.

With American Negro Slavery, the first of his major works on slavery, Phillips had suggested that "the disesteem in which slave traders were held was so great and general as to produce a social ostracism" (p.200). In Life and Labor in the Old South, published in 1929, although presenting no substantial evidence to document the trade, Phillips allowed for the possibility of a more extensive inter-regional slave trade than had been suggested in his early work, and observed:

The dealers were not full of the milk of human kindness or they would not have entered upon their calling. On the other hand, they cannot have been fiends in human form, for such would have gone speedily bankrupt. The social stigma laid upon them can hardly have been as stringent as tradition tells, for many a planter and perhaps most of the general merchants turned a trade on favourable occasions, and sundry citizens of solid worth can be identified as regular participants. 19

Even so, Phillips suggested that only rarely did the slave-holders of the Upper South willingly sell their slaves to the trader. Indications of a strong "preference for selling to neighbors except as regards unruly slaves, [are]

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18. U.B. Phillips, American Negro Slavery: A Survey of the Supply, Employment and Control of Negro Labor as Determined by the Plantation Regime (New York, 1918; Baton Rouge, 1966), pp.189-90.

19. U.B. Phillips, Life and Labor in the Old South (Boston, 1929; Boston, 1951), p.158. See pp.155-9 for his discussion of the trade.

copiously confirmed in many...letters", he maintained. "Yet", he added,

the dealers first and last procured many thousands, with and without warrant of character. Sheriffs' and executors' sales are a partial explanation; and perhaps common field hands with whom their masters were not in close touch were not subjects of solicitude. 20

Although, especially in his latter work, suggesting the possibility of a not insubstantial inter-regional trade in slaves, the whole tenor of Phillips's writings relegated that traffic to a matter of only minor importance in his overall view of American slavery.

In 1931, with the publication of Frederic Bancroft's Slave Trading in the Old South, the pendulum began to swing against the Collins-Phillips school. In that year, a contributor to the Journal of Negro History commented: "Dr. Bancroft has exploded so many pet theories of U.B. Phillips that his [Phillips's] reputation as an authority on slavery must find new ground on which to stand."<sup>21</sup> Bancroft's final chapter, "Estimates as to Numbers, Transactions and Value", adding no very important refinement to Collins's growth rate method of calculation, presented estimates of total slave movements which, although more detailed than Collins's, were basically similar to those which the latter had published. Bancroft's statistical work was, however, supplemented by an extensive survey of slave traders' newspaper advertisements. From this survey, and from certain other sources, he concluded:

In the 'fifties, when the extreme prejudice against the inter-state traders had abated and their inadequate supplies were eagerly purchased, fully 70 per cent of the slaves removed from the Atlantic and border slave States to the Southwest were taken after purchase or with a view to sale, that is, were objects of slave trading. 22

Bancroft implied that, for several decades before, the importance of the slave trade as compared with planter migration was somewhat, though perhaps not very greatly, less than in the 1850s. He contended that the slave trade made family separations commonplace; and although not arguing that slaves were reared

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20. Life and Labor, p.158.

21. Journal of Negro History, XVI (1931), pp.240-1.

22. Bancroft, Slave Trading, p.398.

expressly for the Lower South market, he maintained that very high fertility among slaves was encouraged.<sup>23</sup>

W.H. Stephenson, in Isaac Franklin; Slave Trader and Planter of the Old South (Baton Rouge, 1938), was very far from satisfied with Bancroft's interpretation of the trade. According to Stephenson:

A caustic tone which punctuates his [Bancroft's] study tends to convince the reader that he permitted the historical pendulum to swing too far to the left in his attempt to portray objectively an institution which he implied Phillips detailed with kid gloves. 24

In his biography of Isaac Franklin, Stephenson attempted no systematic quantification of the trade. His study was of the senior partner in the long-distance trading firm of Franklin & Armfield. Finding no substantial documentation directly relating to the activities of Armfield, Stephenson relied very heavily upon the evidence of a court case concerning the probated estate of Franklin. He suggested that Franklin, in his trading activities, largely avoided the separation of families; and suggested that, as a result of his wealth and more particularly of his investment in land, Franklin escaped any very powerful social stigma.<sup>25</sup> The restricted scope of Stephenson's subject matter and evidence meant that the force of his criticism of Bancroft was limited.

Trends in a group of studies devoted to the history of slavery in individual states give some indication of the general movement of historical opinion on the subject of the domestic slave trade, and indicate the influence which the school of thought represented by Bancroft gradually came to enjoy in the years following 1930. Early histories of slavery in Maryland (published 1889), North Carolina (1899), and Virginia (1902), partly because of the limitations of the legislative records on which they drew so heavily, had contained little information on the trade: studies on Missouri (1914), Kentucky (1918), and

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23. Bancroft, pp.197-221; 67-87.

24. Stephenson, Isaac Franklin, p.6n.

25. See Isaac Franklin, pp.31-3, for comments on separations; and see p.93 for comments on status. For a development of Stephenson's views on the trader's social status, see his Basic History of the Old South (Princeton, 1959), Chapter VII.



North Carolina (1926) had tended to suggest that the inter-regional slave trade was of no great importance. From the 1930s, however, publications on the history of slavery in individual states tended to pay greater attention to the trade. In his Mississippi study (1933), Sydnor, although strongly influenced by U.B.Phillips's approach to the question of slavery, accepted Frederic Bancroft as "the foremost authority on the domestic slave trade", and adopted Bancroft's estimates of the extent of that trade. By arguing that "except for the omnipresent danger of being sold...being a slave was not for the average slave a dreadful lot", Sydnor, however, found some accommodation between Phillips's and Bancroft's conclusions. Flanders, in the preface of his Georgia study (1933), recognised Bancroft's "excellent work" on the domestic slave trade; but, very much a man of the Phillips school, he considered that slavery had been "a training school for the untutored savage" and that it had been "to a large degree a civilising agency". He regarded sales of slaves as having been governed essentially by "humanitarian influences"; and, in practice, made no attempt to incorporate Bancroft's much more brutal images into his own view of slavery. In his study of Kentucky slavery (1940), Coleman acknowledged the assistance of Bancroft and dwelt at length on the trade. Sellers, in his account of slavery in Alabama (1950), accepted Bancroft's estimates of the extent of the trade and provided much valuable information on the slave traffic in that state. Mooney, writing on Tennessee (1957), found that in the 1850s that state had conducted a considerable export trade in slaves. The study of Arkansas which O.W.Taylor presented (1958) argued that slave trading, mainly through the New Orleans market, was important for his state. In his study of slavery in Louisiana (1963), J.G.Taylor emphasised his belief that "a great many of the...slaves introduced into Louisiana...came with immigrating masters"; but, like Smith in her study of Florida (1973), he devoted a chapter to the

slave trade in the state concerned.<sup>26</sup>

The extensive inroads which the Bancroft thesis had made were underlined by its adoption in The Peculiar Institution (1956), Stamp's enormously influential counter to U.B. Phillips's interpretation of American slavery. While finding neither Bancroft's nor Collins's quantification of the trade conclusive, Conrad and Meyer, in their important article on the economics of American slavery (1958), were confident that the inter-regional slave trade, and slave "breeding" for the Lower South market, were absolutely vital to the economic system of ante-bellum slavery. Stanley Elkins in Slavery (1959), urged that "a fresh round of investigation" into the domestic slave trade be undertaken. This was not, however, because he was unconvinced by Bancroft's general conclusions on the extent of the trade; but was because of his conviction that important "research possibilities" were to be found in enquiring into the justifications which masters gave for the sale of their slaves, and in enquiring into the South's stereotype of the slave trader.<sup>27</sup>

The movement away from Phillips's interpretation of American slavery, together with the considerable body of evidence which Bancroft presented, had, then, carried the latter's basic appraisal of the trade into an increasingly wide acceptance among historians. At the same time, however, none of the

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26. Brackett, The Negro in Maryland; J.S. Bassett, Slavery in the State of North Carolina (Baltimore, 1899); J.C. Ballagh, A History of Slavery in Virginia (Baltimore, 1902); H.A. Trexler, Slavery in Missouri, 1804-1865 (Baltimore, 1914), pp. 45, 37-53; J.E. McDougale, p. 231, in "Slavery in Kentucky", published in Journal of Negro History, III (1918), pp. 211-329; R.H. Taylor, Slaveholding in North Carolina: An Economic View (Chapel Hill, 1926), p. 61 and chapters IV and V; C.S. Sydnor, Slavery in Mississippi (New York, 1933), pp. 171, 253; R.B. Flanders, Plantation Slavery in Georgia (Chapel Hill, 1933), pp. vii, 300, 188; J.W. Coleman, Slavery Times in Kentucky (Chapel Hill, 1940), pp. 115-218; J.B. Sellers, Slavery in Alabama (Alabama University, 1950), pp. 172, 141-94; C.C. Mooney, Slavery in Tennessee (Bloomington, 1957), pp. 34-52; J.G. Taylor, Negro Slavery in Louisiana (Baton Rouge, 1963; New York, 1969), pp. 37, 21-58; J.F. Smith, Slavery and Plantation Growth in Ante-Bellum Florida, 1821-1860 (Gainesville, 1973).
27. K.M. Stamp, The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South (New York, 1956), Chapter VI; A.H. Conrad and J.R. Meyer, "The Economics of Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South", Journal of Political Economy, LXVI (1958), pp. 95-130; S.M. Elkins, Slavery: A Problem in American Institutional and Intellectual Life (Chicago, 1959; New York, 1963), pp. 236-7.

numerous studies which followed Bancroft's general appraisal of the trade added any decisively important evidence in support of the fundamental element in Bancroft's thesis - the quantification of the trade. Bancroft, from the start, had disclaimed any hard-and-fast statistical quantification of the trade because there was, he said,

hardly anything worthy of the name statistics... [which bears] directly except upon certain features of the domestic slave trade at different times and places.

"At best", he added, his quantification could "be little, if any, more than a careful study in approximations".<sup>28</sup>

The documentary evidence which Bancroft presented in his quantification of the trade was, apart from a number of interviews with survivors from the days of slavery, composed almost exclusively of slave traders' newspaper advertisements. For the principal exporting states, his admirably painstaking survey of town and city newspapers presented considerable documentation on the trade in Baltimore (Slave Trading, Chapter II); the District of Columbia (Chapter III); Richmond and certain other Virginia towns of the Chesapeake area (Chapter V); Louisville and Lexington (Chapter VI); and Charleston (Chapter VIII): for marginal net exporting states, substantial documentation was presented on the slave exporting trade of St. Louis (Chapter VI) and Memphis (Chapter XII). The evidence presented conclusively demonstrated that, for the years to which the evidence related, there had been intensive slave trading in these important towns and cities. For areas beyond these urban centres, however, Bancroft's evidence became extremely thin. On Virginia beyond the shores of the Chesapeake, and on Kentucky and Tennessee beyond Louisville, Lexington, and Memphis, Bancroft was almost completely silent. To North Carolina he paid very little attention, mentioning only four trading firms. He observed that North Carolina slaves were drawn off to the principal urban markets of Virginia and South, and suggested:

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28. Bancroft, Slave Trading, p.382.

Presumably because of this outward flow of North Carolina slaves and the fact that her cities, unlike Richmond and Charleston, had few social attractions to planters in other States, she [North Carolina] possessed no first-class slave markets.

For South Carolina beyond Charleston, he cited only two auctioneering firms and three trading concerns, with all five enterprises being based at Columbia, which town was, he said, "the slave trading centre for all [of South Carolina] above the coastal regions".<sup>29</sup>

In documenting slave trading activity at many of the major towns and cities of the South, Bancroft had made it necessary for historians concerned with American slavery to take account of a significant inter-regional traffic in slaves. Despite Bancroft's very valuable researches, however, the extent of that traffic and its relative importance compared with planter migration were very far from having been conclusively documented. It was entirely possible that if, as Bancroft tended to suggest, the slave exporting trade had been essentially an urban-orientated business, even an intensively conducted urban marketing of slaves might have left the broad rural hinterland of the principal urban markets only very lightly affected by the trade. Bancroft provided only one detailed example of rural purchasing by traders. This was in his nine-page study of purchasing during the 1830s in Maryland's eastern shore area.<sup>30</sup> Although he found large numbers of traders and agents to have been active, the example was inconclusive since the counties concerned, being so close to the major slave-trading ports of the Chesapeake - so close to what Bancroft saw as the centre of the exporting trade - might have been more intensively worked than were the great majority of the counties of the Upper South. The limitations of Bancroft's evidence on the slave exporting areas were not compensated for by his analysis of the slave importing region. In that latter region attention was again almost exclusively devoted to trading at major urban centres. Similarly, on the question of the incidence of family separations in the trade, Bancroft's evidence, although most noteworthy, was

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29. Bancroft, pp.237-8, 239.

30. Bancroft, pp.29-37.

inconclusive. While presenting many examples of family separations, Bancroft was unable to demonstrate to what extent these examples typified the trade.

It was not until 1972, with an article by William Calderhead, that anything approaching a detailed alternative to Bancroft's quantification of the trade was suggested. Calderhead concentrated his attention on Maryland and, although recognising that there had in the ante-bellum period been a massive inter-regional movement of slaves, suggested that Bancroft, by ignoring a particularly strong Maryland manumission tradition, had tended very greatly to exaggerate total slave movements from that state. Calderhead found no way of distinguishing between the numerical importance of trading and of planter migration; and suggested, as a compromise between Collins's and Bancroft's estimates that the slave trade and planter migration might have made equal contributions to the total inter-regional movement. By a count of extant bills of sale and of certain other sales records, Calderhead then estimated, for a sample decade, Maryland's sales to traders. His evidence and assumptions led him to conclude that Maryland's slave trade was very much less extensive than had been suggested by Bancroft.<sup>31</sup>

Two years after the appearance of Calderhead's article, Fogel and Engerman, in Time on the Cross, launched a sweeping revisionist attack upon widely held interpretations of American slavery. They argued that American slaves were far better treated, led far more rewarding lives, and were far better contented with life under bondage than had been suggested in Stamp's profoundly influential Peculiar Institution and in many other modern studies of American slavery. An important part of Fogel and Engerman's thesis was dependent upon discrediting the view that the extent and character of the domestic slave trade had been such as to have embittered relations between slave and master and to have indicated among slave-holders a general disregard for slave emotions and for the institution of the slave family. After comparing the sex ratio of the overall inter-regional slave movement with that of the coastal slave trade,

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31. W. Calderhead, "How Extensive was the Border State Slave Trade? A New Look", Civil War History, XVIII (1972), pp.42-55.

Fogel and Engerman estimated the impact of the male-dominated coastal trade; and concluded that not more than about 16 per cent of all inter-regional slave movements were attributable to the trade. Further calculations, based on New Orleans sales records, led them to conclude that only about 2 per cent of the marriages of slaves involved in the movement to the Lower South were destroyed by the process of inter-regional movement. They argued, furthermore, that "slave breeding" for the Lower South market and the sexual exploitation of slaves were, to a great extent, no more than myths. The whole direction of Time on the Cross ran completely counter to Bancroft's interpretation of the slave trade and American slavery.<sup>32</sup>

Among the products of the heated debate which followed the appearance of Time on the Cross has been an important collection of critical essays published as Reckoning with Slavery (1976). This latter, a collaborative work, drawing together and developing earlier extended reviews by its contributors, is noteworthy in the present connection not least because it serves to emphasise the lack of consensus about and inconclusive nature of research on many important questions relating to the extent and character of the Old South's internal slave traffic. Gutman and Sutch, in a joint contribution to Reckoning with Slavery, observed that, if soundly based, Fogel and Engerman's assessment of the relative importance of slave trading and planter migration was "one of the half dozen most significant [findings] reported in Time on the Cross" (p.100). Although their criticisms paid little attention to Fogel and Engerman's principal line of argument on the volume question, they were skeptical of Fogel and Engerman's quantitative estimate of the trade. Gutman and Sutch concluded: "Without much more detailed research it is not possible to establish accurately the percentage of slaves crossing state boundaries who were sold" (p.102). Indeed, these latter historians observed that the share

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32. For their discussion of the slave trade and the slave family, see R.W.Fogel and S.L.Engerman, Time on the Cross (Boston, 1974), especially volume I, "The Economics of American Negro Slavery", pp.44-58, 67-86, 117-44; and volume II, "Evidence and Methods", pp.43-54, 79-80, 83-5, 100-6.

of the overall inter-regional slave movement which was properly attributable to the trade might have been anything in a range of from about 30 to about 80 per cent (pp.102-3). At the same time they suggested that there was "strong circumstantial evidence" for the prevalence of some form of deliberated "slave breeding" (p.155). They argued that a high proportion of slave sales must have involved family separations; and argued that since separation of a slave from his or her family would have brought distress not just to the slave sold but to a considerable number of relatives and friends of that slave, the impact of separations must have been profoundly felt by the slave community. Not feeling justified in making any specific quantitative estimate of the trade, however, Gutman and Sutch avoided any estimate of the numbers of family separations occasioned by that traffic.<sup>33</sup>

Herbert Gutman's arguments on the slave family were developed at much greater length in his major study, The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom (1976).<sup>34</sup> There Gutman argued that sales and separations brought great hardships to the slave community; but at the same time, he provided much evidence to suggest that, despite hardships, the slave family was able to operate as a deeply meaningful institution. Except in very broad terms, however, he offered no way of estimating the extent of the obstacles which sales placed in the path of the slave family. Gutman maintained:

Few more significant social and economic processes affecting developing slave communities and the slaves' family life and kin relations had a greater importance between 1815 and 1860 than the involuntary movement and uprooting of several hundred thousand Upper South men, women and children, which accompanied the shift in slave-based export agricultural production from the Upper to the Lower South. (pp.144-5).

He added: "Just how severely inter-regional migration and attendant sale affected the slave family remains unknown" (p.145).

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33. P.A.David, H.G.Gutman, R.Sutch, P.Temin, G.Wright and K.M.Stampp, Reckoning with Slavery: A Critical Study in the Quantative History of American Negro Slavery (New York, 1976), chapters III and IV. Gutman and Sutch's assessment of Fogel and Engerman's quantification of the trade is discussed more fully in Chapter I, below.
34. H.G.Gutman, The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925 (Oxford, 1976).

Eugene Genovese's Roll, Jordan, Roll, published a year before Gutman's study, also dealt at length with the slave family; but, reflecting the present lack of consensus on the significance of the domestic slave trade, made no direct judgement on the role of that traffic. Genovese's central argument was that American slavery, in the late eighteenth century and in the nineteenth century, rested on the foundation of a "web of paternalistic relationships". He readily conceded that acts of cruelty were not infrequently committed against slaves; but suggested that important restraints operated against such acts since cruelty to slaves "threatened a delicate fabric of implicit reciprocal duties, the acceptance of which by both masters and slaves alone could keep the regime intact" (pp.72-3). It was inherent in Genovese's thesis that the domestic slave trade and family separations were not such frequent events as to deny the master a paternal self-image; or to arouse the slave community into such bitter resentments as to lead that community to deny the legitimacy of the "paternal web" in which, according to Genovese, it was placed.<sup>35</sup>

#### IV

The initial aim of the present study is to provide a more reliable estimate of the extent of the inter-regional slave trade than has hitherto been available. Part I of this study is, therefore, devoted to estimating the volume of the Old South's slave trade in the four decades from 1820 to 1860 - that is to say in the period which represented the maturity of the inter-regional trade in slaves. Attention is paid, first of all, to the quantitative

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35. E.D.Genovese, Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made (London, 1975). In an earlier study, Genovese argued that the inter-regional slave trade was important in raising capital for agricultural reform in slave exporting states. He added, however, that Frederic Bancroft's quantitative estimates of the trade had been to a great extent based on guesswork. See Genovese, The Political Economy of Slavery: Studies in the Economy and Society of the Slave South (New York, 1965), pp.136-44.



estimates of the trade which have recently been published by Calderhead and by Fogel and Engerman. Evidence is then presented which suggests that a substantial majority of all inter-regional slave movements in the period 1820 to 1860 should be attributed to the internal slave trade. Part II of this study examines the organisation of the trade; while Part III argues that speculation in slaves was of massive importance in determining the character of slavery in the ante-bellum South.

**PART ONE**

**THE EXTENT OF THE INTER-REGIONAL SLAVE TRADE**

CHAPTER I

THE VOLUME PROBLEM: AN EVALUATION OF METHODS EMPLOYED IN RECENT STUDIES

In assessing the extent of the inter-regional slave trade it is important to take account of the recent studies by Calderhead (1972) and by Fogel and Engerman (1974). The former study concentrated on slave exportation from Maryland, while the latter, in its analysis of the domestic slave trade, was principally concerned with slave importation into New Orleans. Both studies offered alternatives to the conceptual approaches which Bancroft had used in his assessment of the volume of the slave traffic.

I

Calderhead was convinced that by citing numbers of Maryland traders who advertised their willingness to purchase slaves Bancroft had tended to give a much exaggerated impression of the numbers of Maryland slaves who were actually purchased by traders. Instead of counting slave traders, then, Calderhead, in his study of the Maryland slave traffic, undertook to count inter-regional sales of slaves. Having observed that certain documentation of slave sales survived in the public records of Maryland counties, he maintained:

It would be logical to assume that the historian who wanted to study the slave trade, especially the inter-state features, would begin at the beginning and note the amount of sales actually consummated. For whatever the reason, Bancroft never used this approach. 1

Calderhead's fundamental implicit assumption was that, for those years and for those counties with extant public records of slave sales, the available documents constituted a complete inventory of all slave sales which were transacted. The results which Calderhead obtained from his survey of slave sales were, after adaptations had been made, incorporated by Fogel and Engerman in their own quantitative study of the trade.

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1. Calderhead, "How Extensive", p.48.

Calderhead began the report on his researches by maintaining that there were three significant procedures by which slaves were sold out of Maryland and to the Lower South. The first category adopted by Calderhead was that which he called "standard bill of sale". "These bills of sale", he explained, "were written up either in a private transaction between buyer and seller or in public sales instigated by the owner or by legal authorities such as sheriffs and constables." The second category cited was the transfer of slaves at probate sales; while the third category was the sale by the state authorities of slaves convicted of crimes.<sup>2</sup> Calderhead selected the 1830s for his examination of the trade and analysed the sales records of a sample of Maryland counties. In his researches, he noted all sales made to obvious traders and to those who were identifiable as citizens normally resident in the Lower South states. His results suggested that, in the 1830s, the trade in Maryland slaves comprised 1,935 slaves sold by "standard bill of sale", 1,206 slaves sold at probate transactions, together with 460 convicted criminal slaves. Of the total estimated slave trade exportation, about 35 per cent were attributed to purchases by visiting Lower South planters and the remainder was attributed to the activities of professional traders.<sup>3</sup>

The contrast between Calderhead's estimate of the Maryland slave trade and Frederic Bancroft's estimate of the rate of slave movements from Upper South states is very striking indeed. Bancroft's growth rate calculations for the 1830s would have fixed at about 34,000 Maryland's total slave loss through causes other than death. Up to 70 per cent of this 34,000 total would have been attributed by Bancroft to the trade. Calderhead's count of the Maryland trade led him to conclude that Bancroft had massively exaggerated the extent of the trade from that state, and led him to suggest that research in the records of other states might well necessitate "a complete re-evaluation of the entire border slave trade" (p.55). There appear, however, to have been serious

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2. These three categories are described in Calderhead, p.47.

3. See Calderhead p.55n. It is possible that some of the "visiting Lower South planters" were in fact unidentified traders.

deficiencies both in Calderhead's quantification of sales to the slave trade and in his estimate of the overall inter-regional slave movement.

In order to estimate this latter, the total volume of the inter-regional slave movement from Maryland during the 1830s, Calderhead considered the relative importance of the slave trade and planter migration. For this his method was simply to strike a balance between the estimates of Collins and Bancroft, and to suggest that slave trading and planter migration each contributed 50 per cent of the total inter-regional slave movement. Calderhead argued, therefore, that in the 1830s these two factors each accounted for the transfer of about 3,600 slaves, with the decade's total net outward movement of Maryland slaves being about 7,200.<sup>4</sup> In addition, he suggested that in the decade concerned a substantial number of slaves were lost to Maryland by manumission. For the ante-bellum period as a whole, Maryland manumissions were, on the basis of available deeds of liberation, estimated at "upwards of 50,000" (p.53). Calderhead gave no manumission total for the 1830s, but observed that in that decade Anne Arundel county, with 10 per cent of the state's slave population, had 952 manumissions. It is probable, therefore, that 1830s manumissions for the whole state would have been estimated at about 9,500. This means that for the 1830s, while Maryland's total slave losses through causes other than death would have been estimated by Bancroft's growth rate calculations at about 34,000, Calderhead - by combining losses through the slave trade, planter migration, and manumission - accounted for a loss of only about 16,700 slaves. A discrepancy of at least 17,000 slaves existed.<sup>5</sup> There is, however, no reason to believe that Bancroft's growth rate approach would have significantly misrepresented Maryland's total slave losses from causes other than death. "Survival rate" calculations now provide demographers with

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4. Calderhead, p.53.

5. It is possible that the discrepancy was greater. This is because many manumission deeds promised freedom which was to become effective only after a period of years. Indeed, J.R.Brackett, in The Negro in Maryland (pp.160-70), reported that about half of the Maryland deeds of the 1831 to 1845 period provided for delayed manumissions. An unknown number died as slaves before their manumission deeds came into effect. It is not clear how Calderhead interpreted the statistical effect of delayed manumissions.

a standard method of calculating inter-regional population movements, and results from such calculations very closely agree with Bancroft's growth rate-based results.<sup>6</sup>

On the basis of survival rate calculations, Fogel and Engerman, as well as their critics Gutman and Sutch, rejected Calderhead's statistics as indicating impossibly low levels of total slave exportations. In interpreting Calderhead's slave trade statistics, however, Gutman and Sutch, in Reckoning with Slavery, differed very markedly with the authors of Times on the Cross. Following their survival rate calculations, Fogel and Engerman very greatly expanded Calderhead's estimate of Maryland's 1830s slave losses through causes other than death. At the same time, they ignored slave losses through manumission and assumed that all slave losses not accounted for by death or by Calderhead's count of the slave trade were attributable to planter migrations. The result of these procedures was to suggest that, in the decade concerned, slave trade exportations accounted for a mere 16.2 per cent of Maryland's overall inter-regional slave movement. Gutman and Sutch also greatly expanded Calderhead's estimate of total slave movements from Maryland, but considered that Calderhead had undercounted, perhaps very substantially undercounted, sales to the slave trade. They pointed out that "there is no assurance...that Calderhead was able to establish the names of all professional traders and their local agents"; and noted that some sales from counties in Calderhead's sample were probably not recorded with public officials, or might have been recorded at Baltimore or at Washington, D.C., that is to say at places outside of Calderhead's sample of counties. According to Gutman and Sutch, then, Calderhead's evidence was an inadequate basis upon which to advance an estimate of the relative importance of slave trading and planter migrations.<sup>7</sup>

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6. Survival rate calculations, on the basis of the age and sex of the population concerned, estimate the expected decennial mortality of population groups. Divergences from expected population levels are attributed to such factors as inter-regional population movements. The procedures involved in survival rate calculations are discussed much more fully in Chapter II.

7. Fogel and Engerman, Time on the Cross, II, p.53, section 2.6.1.1; Gutman and Sutch in Reckoning with Slavery, pp.107-10.

It has been noted that Calderhead's fundamental assumption was that for those counties and those periods with extant public record of slave sales, the available records represent a complete listing of all slave sales which had been transacted. There is a strong probability that the great majority of substantial Maryland probate sales were indeed recorded, so that with this category of sales Calderhead's assumption was probably to a great extent valid.<sup>8</sup> It is likely, too, that the Maryland state penitentiary would have kept accurate records of its inmates and that such records, for the dates which they covered, would not undercount the number of transportees sold to the trade.<sup>9</sup> At the same time, it is possible that by counting both the number of potential transportees held at the state penitentiary and, on the county level, the number of slaves who under state laws became liable for transportation, Calderhead double-counted certain sales of convicted slaves.<sup>10</sup> With Calderhead's remaining category of slave sales, those slaves whom he described as having been sold "by standard bill of sale", it appears, however, that Calderhead made a very substantial under-count. An act of 1817 required that those purchasing slaves for the purpose of exportation from Maryland should record the relevant bills of sale with the authorities of the Maryland county in which the slaves had been purchased. Almost certainly the object of this act was to discourage the exportation of those who by law were to be slaves only for a limited period of years. Against the exportation of such slaves severe penalties were imposed.<sup>11</sup>

8. In two sample South Carolina districts (Charleston district and Anderson, an up-country district) totals equal to about 11 per cent of the districts' estimated 1855 slave populations were sold at probate sales over the 1850 to 1859 period. With adult white decennial survival rates exceeding 70 per cent, and with the estates of many deceased persons being disposed of by means other than sale, the sales rate which has been found suggests, for South Carolina at least, a very high level of recording of probate sales. On these sales records, see Chapter VIII, section III.
9. For a discussion of Virginia's sales of convicted criminal slaves, see Chapter IV, section VI, below.
10. See Calderhead, "How Extensive", pp.52-3.
11. On this legislation, see Chapter VI, note 43.

The act of 1817 does not, however, appear to have led to anything like an efficient recording of the slave trade exportations of the 1830s.<sup>12</sup>

That the act had to a very large extent lapsed by the 1830s it suggested by evidence relating to the composition of the slave trade. Calderhead suggested that about a third of slave trade exportations was derived from probate sales; about 13 per cent from sales of criminal slaves, and<sup>suggested</sup> that the remainder, just over 50 per cent, was accounted for by "standard bills of sale". Slave traders' purchasing records and correspondence collections indicate, however, that the combination of probate sales purchases and purchases of convicted criminal slaves accounted for only a few per cent, probably not more than about 4 or 5 per cent of traders' purchases.<sup>13</sup> It appears, therefore, that the records which Calderhead examined document only a very small part of the slave trade exportations of Maryland during the 1830s.

## II(i)

While Fogel and Engerman drew upon Calderhead's Maryland study, their own quantitative analysis of the trade was based essentially upon an interpretation of census records and of records relating to New Orleans slave importations. Using survival rate calculations, they concluded that, in the period 1820 to 1860, the scale of the total inter-regional slave movement ranged from about 100,000 to about 200,000 transfers per decade. Their estimates were, in fact, lower than those arrived at by Bancroft's growth rate calculations, and, it will be seen, were lower than those arrived at by the survival rate calculations presented in Chapter II of the present study. The crucial aspect of Fogel and Engerman's estimate of the trade concerned, however, not their quantification of the total inter-regional slave movement, but the comparison

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12. To a very limited extent the under-recording of slave exportations would, perhaps, have been offset by the recording of certain slaves in both probate sales records and in "standard bills of sale".

13. On slave traders' sources of purchase, see below, Table 4.1 and Chapter IV, sections V and VI.



of the male-female ratios which they attributed to the overall inter-regional slave movement and to its constituent parts, planter migration and the trade.<sup>14</sup>

The authors of Time on the Cross began by considering the relative proportions of male and female slaves in inter-regional planter migrations. Since the census suggested that plantations in the net exporting states were, on average, populated by approximately equal numbers of male and female slaves, Fogel and Engerman made the entirely reasonable assumption that the migration of whole plantation populations would have carried to the net importing states an evenly balanced number of male and female slaves. Their assumption that the sex ratio of planter migrations was evenly balanced is supported by evidence in Chapter II of the present study.

Fogel and Engerman then turned to the sex ratio of the inter-regional slave trade, and made the more hazardous assumption that, in the trade, males were normally very markedly more numerous than females. To obtain information on the male-female ratio in the trade they drew in part upon manifests which described the coastwise movement of slaves to the port of New Orleans. Such manifests were required when, after the official ending, in 1808, of the Atlantic slave trade to the United States, the American government sought to regulate the shipping of slaves in United States waters. The law stated that all slaves carried on the river and coastal waterways of the United States were to be recorded in manifests which were to be lodged with the customs authorities at the port of exit and the port of entry of the vessel concerned.<sup>15</sup> The evidence which Fogel and Engerman gained from New Orleans manifests was supplemented by the use of records of slave sales at New Orleans, and by coastal

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14. For Fogel and Engerman's method of estimating the relative importance of planter migration and the trade, see Time on the Cross, II, p.53, section 2.6.1. On their interpretation of Calderhead, see II, p.53, section 2.6.1.1. For their estimate of the overall volume of the inter-regional slave movement, see II, pp.43-8, sections 2.4 to 2.4.3.
  15. In the present study, all references to manifests are to the collections filed at the National Archives, Washington, D.C., under "Bureau of Customs". Manifests are available for slaves arriving at New Orleans, Mobile, and Savannah. A relatively small collection of manifests for shipments from New Orleans to Texas is filed as "New Orleans, Outward Manifests".

manifests which recorded slave movements to Mobile, Alabama. Fogel and Engerman assumed that the bills of sale and manifests which they used were overwhelmingly the records of inter-regional slave trading. The samples which they drew from these different record groups caused them to conclude that males would have made up 57 per cent of all slaves recorded in extant New Orleans bills of sale, and led them to suggest that males would have made up 61 per cent and 64 per cent respectively of all slaves listed in New Orleans and Mobile manifests. From their sampling of these record groups, Fogel and Engerman concluded that males made up between 57 and 64 per cent of slaves carried in the inter-regional slave trade.

Since Fogel and Engerman had assumed the sex ratio of plantation migrations to have been evenly balanced, and since they considered the slave trade to have been predominantly male, they suggested that, if the trade had been extensive, the total inter-regional movement of slaves should have shown a marked bias towards the transfer of male slaves. By the use of survival rate calculations, they found that the male share of total inter-regional slave movements in the 1820 to 1860 period was only 51.1 per cent. They therefore concluded that the seemingly male-dominated slave trade could not have been a major influence upon the total inter-regional movement of slaves. Their calculations attributed not more than about 16 per cent of inter-regional slave movements to the domestic slave trade, and attributed the remainder to planter migrations. If Fogel and Engerman were correct in their assessment of the male-female ratio in the inter-regional slave trade, it would become necessary to see the trade as a far less significant influence on ante-bellum life than had been suggested by Frederic Bancroft.<sup>16</sup>

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16. S. Lebergott in a review of Times on the Cross (American Political Science Review, LIX (1975), pp.697-700) as well as Gutman and Sutch in Reckoning with Slavery, p.101 n.6, pointed out that if, in plantation migrations, females had in fact been a few per cent more numerous than males, Fogel and Engerman's calculations would quite substantially have under-counted the trade. An assumption for example, that only 48 per cent of the slaves carried by planter migration were male would, by Fogel and Engerman's evidence on the sex structure of the trade, have attributed 34 per cent of all inter-regional slave movements to the trade. At the same time, Lebergott, Gutman, and Sutch offered no reason why females should have substantially predominated in movements by planter migration; and Fogel and Engerman's description of the sex ratio of the trade went unquestioned.

An examination of New Orleans slave manifests fully confirms Fogel and Engerman's claim that the slave trade to New Orleans was predominantly male. In order to gain evidence for the present study, New Orleans inward manifests for the 1840s were examined in detail. For that decade, manifests list over 13,00 slaves who were brought to New Orleans by persons identified in Table 1.1 as slave traders. That table, for alternative years in the 1840s, indicates the number of slaves who, according to extant records of coastwise shipments from Chesapeake Bay ports and from Charleston, were brought to New Orleans by individual trading concerns. For the remaining years of that decade, Table 2.2 documents the structure of slave shipments by identified traders and suggests that in the New Orleans coastal trade of the 1840s 59.4 per cent of slaves shipped were male. Apart from the coastal trade, for which records, though substantial, are incomplete, the overland and river routes also brought large numbers of slaves to the New Orleans and southern Louisiana markets.<sup>17</sup> Three manuscript account books which relate in whole or in part to these overland and river routes have been found. These records, like the records of the coastal trade, reveal a strong male bias in the southern Louisiana trade.<sup>18</sup>

It has been seen that in addition to examining New Orleans records, Fogel and Engerman examined manifests documenting slave arrivals at Mobile, Alabama.

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17. On the incompleteness of surviving manifest holdings, see C.H.Wesley, "Manifests of Slave Shipments along the Waterways, 1808-1864", Journal of Negro History, XXVII (1972), pp.155-74. On trading to Louisiana from Kentucky, Missouri, and Tennessee, see for example Bancroft, Slave Trading, chapters VI, XI, XII.
  18. J.R.White's account book (see Table 1.2) shows that 57 per cent of slaves listed as being sold to southern Louisiana's cane sugar producing parishes were male. Similarly, males accounted for 58 of the 101 slaves sent to New Orleans early in 1859 by the South Carolina-based firm of Owings, Charles & Robertson. (See Anderson District Equity Court, S.C., 1861, Bill 325, SCA; and on the firm generally, see Bancroft, Slave Trading, p.316n). About 55 per cent of the 1000 slaves listed in a Bolton and Dickens account book were male. (See Bolton, Dickens & Co., Record of Slaves, 1856-58, manuscript volume housed at NYMS) Advertisements show that the firm was "buying for the Memphis and Louisiana markets". (See Bancroft, Slave Trading, p.142; and see Coleman, Slavery Times in Kentucky, pp.164-5.)

TABLE 1.1 MANIFESTS DOCUMENTING TRADERS' SHIPMENTS TO NEW ORLEANS IN SAMPLE YEARS OF THE 1840s

| Shipment From                       | Owner or Consignee               | 1840 | 1842 | 1844 | 1846 | 1848 | Evidence Documenting Trader |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|-----------------------------|
| Charleston<br>(Total 306<br>Slaves) | McDonald, Alexander              | 77   | 60   | 20   | 49   |      | Ch.VIII                     |
|                                     | Gadsden, Thomas N.               | 1    |      |      | 1    |      | Ch.III                      |
|                                     | Gilchrist, John M.               |      | 3    |      |      |      | Ch.III                      |
|                                     | Mordecai, Benjamin               |      |      |      | 2    | 38   | Ch.III                      |
|                                     | McBride, Michael                 |      |      |      | 1    | 8    | Ch.III                      |
|                                     | Oakes, Ziba B.                   |      |      |      | 1    |      | Ch.III                      |
|                                     | Johnson, Sherman                 | 1    |      |      |      |      | Phillips, 196               |
|                                     | Davis, Ansley                    | 25   | 4    |      |      |      | Bancroft, 93                |
|                                     | Davis, Solomon                   |      |      | 1    | 6    |      | Bancroft, 93                |
|                                     | Campbell, B.M.<br>Ryan, Thomas   | 3    |      |      | 3    | 2    | Bancroft, 316-7<br>Ch.III   |
| Baltimore<br>(Total 2180<br>Slaves) | Slatter, Hope H.                 | 119  | 236  | 46   | 353  |      | Bancroft, 372-4 etc.        |
|                                     | Purvis, James                    |      | 51   |      |      |      | Bancroft, 39, 102n          |
|                                     | McCargo, Thomas                  | 7    |      | 38   |      |      | Sydnor, 151, 154            |
|                                     | Harker, William                  |      |      | 25   | 12   |      | Stowe, 346                  |
|                                     | Boudar, Thomas                   | 9    | 2    |      |      |      | Bancroft, 92n, 277n,<br>314 |
|                                     | Williams, Wm. H. & T.            | 55   |      | 30   | 86   | 116  | Bancroft, 50, 56, 58        |
|                                     | Donovan, Joseph S.               |      |      | 112  | 299  | 204  | Bancroft, 120-2             |
|                                     | Campbell, W.L. & B.M.            |      |      | 42   | 72   | 188  | Bancroft, 316-7 etc.        |
|                                     | Woolfolk, Austin                 |      |      |      | 4    |      | Bancroft, 39, 277 etc.      |
|                                     | Crow, William<br>Staples, Joshua |      | 17   | 15   | 20   | 22   | Pittman<br>Mooney, 50       |

Continued over...

TABLE 1.1 (Continued)

| Shipment From                                | Owner or Consignee  | 1840 | 1842 | 1844 | 1846 | 1848                 | Evidence Documenting Trader               |
|--|---|------|------|------|------|----------------------|---|
| Virginia Ports and DC<br>(Total 2955 Slaves) | Davis, Mark, Ben, Henry, Geo., Goodman, & Sol. Apperson, G.W. | 118  | 82   | 167  | 434  |                      | Bancroft, 93                              |
|  | Johnson, Sherman  | 11   |      | 11   | 148  | 356                  | 208 Phillips, 196                         |
|  | Dickson, John   |      | 92   | 14   | 44   |                      | Phillips, 196                             |
|  | Beasley, Richard R.   | 38   | 15   | 2    | 79   |                      | Sydnor, 154                               |
|  | Boudar, Thomas  | 84   | 1    | 104  | 94   | 43                   | Bancroft, 28n<br>Bancroft, 92n, 277n, 314 |
|  | Freeman, Theophilus   | 193  |      |      |      |                      | Stowe, 8                                  |
|  | McCargo, Thomas   | 71   | 7    |      |      |                      | Sydnor, 151, 154                          |
|  | Kephart, George *   | 29   |      |      |      |                      | Bancroft, 51, 64n 91-2                    |
|  | Lumpkin, Robert *   | 15   |      |      |      |                      | Bancroft, 101-3                           |
|  | Hagan, John (& A.)  | 2    | 7    | 30   | 52   | 16                   | Phillips, 196                             |
|  | Rutherford, C.M.  |      |      |      | 16   |                      | Bancroft, facing 316                      |
|  | Cochran, B.F. & James, J.D.                                   |      |      |      | 63   |                      | Sydnor, 154                               |
|  | Goodwin, William H.   | 10   |      |      |      |                      | Ch. I, Table 1.2                          |
|  | Talbott, William F.   |      |      |      | 48   | 58                   | Phillips, 196                             |
|  | Shelton, Lewis N.   |      |      |      | 31   |                      | Chase                                     |
|  | Lockett, Edward   |      |      |      | 15   | 51                   | Chase                                     |
|  | Bradley & Saunders  |      |      |      | 4    |                      | Bancroft, 309                             |
|  | Barnes, G.W.  | 20   |      |      |      |                      | Stowe, 8                                  |
|  | Tait, Bacon   | 1    |      |      | 5    |                      | Bancroft, 101, 92n                        |
|  | Templeman, H.N.   | 3    | 1    |      |      |                      | Ch. I, Table 1.2                          |
| Peterson, H.F. & Smart, W.R.                 |   |      |      | 34   | 28   | Bancroft, facing 316 |   |
| Combined Total<br>5441 Slaves                |   | 892  | 578  | 805  | 2184 | 982                  |   |

SOURCES OF EVIDENCE IDENTIFYING OWNER OR CONSIGNEE AS TRADER:

- Where possible, references to readily accessible sources are employed. References to publications give edition from which evidence is taken.
- Ch. Evidence appears in the present study in the chapter cited.
  - Phillips U.B. Phillips, American Negro Slavery (Baton Rouge, 1969).
  - Bancroft F. Bancroft, Slave Trading in the Old South (New York, 1959).
  - Sydnor C.S. Sydnor, Slavery in Mississippi (New York, 1933).
  - Stowe H.B. Stowe, A Key to Uncle Tom's Cabin (London, 1853).
  - Pittman Letter of February 20, 1837, John W. Pittman Collection (LC).
  - Mooney C.C. Mooney, Slavery in Tennessee (Bloomington, 1957).
  - \* Manifests give as "shipper".
  - Chase Letter of February 13, 1843, Lucy Chase Collection (AAS).

Their procedure with both New Orleans and Mobile records was to record observations for the manifests of all "probable traders" and otherwise to record observations for every tenth manifest.<sup>19</sup> The similarity between their New Orleans and Mobile results seemed to justify their conclusion that the male-female ratio of the domestic slave trade to the several net importing states was uniformly high. It appears, however, that their sampling technique did not extract a representative body of information from the Mobile records. Mobile inward manifests are available at the National Archives for the inclusive period 1821 to 1860. For the forty years concerned, the manifests for every second year have been exhaustively re-examined. The names of traders identifiable from Bancroft's Slave Trading and from other published sources have been found to be almost completely absent from these records. In none of the twenty years of manifests did the proportion of male slaves recorded in the Mobile manifest group resemble the 64 per cent which Fogel and Engerman found to be the average male percentage for that city's inward manifests.<sup>20</sup> The highest proportion of males was in the year 1839, when 58.6 per cent of slaves in these manifests were male. Taking all of the slaves recorded in the twenty sample years of Mobile manifests, about 54 per cent were male. The proportion of males found in the Mobile manifests which have been examined was, then, far lower than that found by Fogel and Engerman. The fact that in the 20 year sample employed in the present study there were slightly more male than female slaves can be satisfactorily explained by a combination of factors unrelated to the character of the slave trade which served the state of Alabama as a whole.

Firstly, it is probable that the non-market, temporary movement of those personal servants who accompanied masters would have exaggerated the male component in the Mobile manifests. Males would have made up a majority of those

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19. Information derived from conversation with Engerman.

20. The manifests for 1821 to 1836 record the shipment of a combined total of only 100 slaves. For the purposes of this study, the manifests for these years have been treated as a single unit. Fifty-seven of the 100 slaves were male. For later years, Mobile inward manifests usually recorded between 200 and 1,000 slaves annually.

whites who travelled back and forth on plantation business and on other errands. Thus, when a white traveller was accompanied by a personal servant it is very probable that the servant would, in a majority of cases, have been male. Of the large proportion of the Mobile manifests which document the arrival of slaves in single units, a substantial majority were concerned with male slaves. It appears, therefore, that the sex ratio of the Mobile inward manifests might well have been significantly affected by the temporary movement of servants who accompanied masters. Secondly, the movement of slaves hired for heavy manual work would have been likely to have emphasised the male component in the Mobile manifests. Occasionally, manifests for Mobile and for other ports listed twenty or more adult male slaves, but listed no children, and, at most, one or two adult females. Shipments of this kind did not occur in the large sample of manifests relating to New Orleans traders. It is unlikely, therefore, that such highly selective consignments were part of the inter-regional slave trade. The structure of such consignments was, however, typical of the newspaper advertisements by which industrial enterprises, railroads and canal companies sought to hire gangs of adult male slaves, accompanied, perhaps, by one or two female cooks. A third factor, related not to the main stream of the Alabama slave trade, but to the urban population of Mobile, might have swelled the number of males found in the manifests of that port. The city of Mobile was unusual in the history of urban slavery in that, probably because of its industrial and economic structure, it tended to support a majority of male slaves. The movement and recruitment of this urban population would have been reflected in Mobile manifests.<sup>21</sup>

While the manifests recording slave arrivals at Mobile provide no reliable evidence on the structure of the slave trade to that city and to Alabama generally, the account books and slave purchasing records of traders give invaluable evidence which directly documents the composition of the trade to

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21. On the sex ratio of cities, see R.C.Wade, Slavery in the Cities: The South, 1820-60 (New York, 1964), p.330. Of cities studied by Wade, only Richmond, an industrialised city, had a higher male-female ratio than Mobile.

TABLE 1.2 THE SEX RATIO OF THE DOMESTIC SLAVE TRADE (EXCLUDING TRADE TO LOUISIANA'S PREDOMINANTLY SUGAR PRODUCING PARISHES)

| Record Type | Trader                | Sex Ratio Information Available for Period | Location of Records | Route Traded | Number of Slaves Traded |        |                         |                           |
|-------------|-----------------------|--|---------------------|--------------|-------------------------|--------|-------------------------|---------------------------|
|             |                       |  |                     |              | Male                    | Female | Children of Unknown age | Sex not clearly specified |
| S           | Rives, F.E.           | 1817-19                                    | DU                  | VA-MS        | 28                      | 25     |                         | 3                         |
| S           | Fields, O             | 1822-28                                    | DU                  | NC-SC        | 18                      | 25     | 6                       | 4                         |
| S           | Glen, T.              | 1830-37                                    | DU                  | NC-AL        | 221                     | 190    |                         | 12                        |
| P           | Glen, T. (additional) | 1830-40                                    | DU                  | NC-AL        | 59                      | 66     |                         | 7                         |
| S           | Totten, J.S.          | 1832-36                                    | NCA                 | NC-AL        | 81                      | 87     |                         | 5                         |
| S           | Mitchell, J.A.        | 1834-35                                    | DU                  | VA-AL        | 28                      | 21     |                         | 1                         |
| S           | Whitehead, F.L.       | 1835-36                                    | DU                  | VA-MS        | 39                      | 30     |                         | 4                         |
| P           | Badgett, H.           | 1837-50                                    | NCA                 | NC-GA/AL     | 22                      | 35     | 1                       |                           |
| P           | Long, W.              | 1836-49                                    | NCA                 | NC-MS        | 57                      | 35     | 5                       | 3                         |
| S           | Pittman, J.W.         | 1835                                       | LC                  | VA-LS        | 3                       | 7      |                         |                           |
| S           | Templeman, H.N.       | 1846-47                                    | NYPL                | VA-LS        | 40                      | 57     | 7                       | 3                         |
| S           | Templeman & Goodwin   | 1849-51                                    | SHC                 | VA-GA        | 45                      | 48     | 3                       | 2                         |
| S           | Hughes & Downing      | 1843-44                                    | Filsom              | KY-MS        | 7                       | 6      |                         |                           |
| P           | Robards, L.C.         | 1851-53                                    | LC                  | KY-LS        | 33                      | 34     | 3                       | 1                         |
| S           | Walker, A. & A.T.     | 1851-61                                    | SHC                 | NC-AL        | 28                      | 61     | 16                      |                           |
| P           | Ferguson, E.W.        | 1855-59                                    | NCA                 | NC-LS        | 14                      | 21     |                         | 2                         |
| S           | Omohundro, S. & R.F.  | 1857-62                                    | UVA                 | VA-LS        | 150                     | 178    | 32                      |                           |
| C           | SC Equity             | 1851-63                                    | SCA                 | SC-LS        | 234                     | 225    | 11                      | 10                        |
| C           | Char. Probate         | 1850-59                                    | SCA                 | SC-LS        | 104                     | 132    | 21                      | 144                       |
| * S         | White, J.R.           | 1846-60                                    | MHS                 | MO-LS        | 217                     | 244    | 22                      |                           |
| Totals      |                       |  |                     |              | 1428                    | 1527   | 129                     | 201                       |

SOURCES AND NOTES: Except for the Glen and for the White records, all traders' manuscripts used are housed at the repositories indicated, and are catalogued at those institutions according to the names given under column headed "Trader". Most of the traders listed had one or more partners.

White  
Glen

Source is J.R. White Account Book (1846-60), Chinn Collection (MHS).  
The information on Glen and partners is drawn from I.A. Jarratt Account Book, Jarratt-Puryear Family Papers (DU); Tyre Glen Note Books, Tyre Glen Papers (DU); several manuscripts giving "Amount of Sales of Negroes of Glen...1830", etc., Glen Papers (DU); Bills of Sale; Glen Papers (DU).

(Continued)



SOURCES AND NOTES (Continued)

- SC Equity Sales Books (1851-59, 1860-67) of James Tupper, Master in Equity, Charleston District (SCA).  
Char.Probate Inventories, Appraisals and Sales (1850-59), Charleston District Court of Ordinary (SCA).  
C Purchases from Equity and probate sales by those long-distance traders identified in Table 3.2.  
Filsom J.W.Coleman, "Lexington Slave Dealers and their Southern Trade", Filsom Club Historical Quarterly, XXII (1938), 1-23.
- S Information is derived from the sales records of the traders concerned.
- P Information is derived from bills of sale documenting traders' purchases. With Glen, bills of sale are supplemented by documents listing joint purchases by Glen and partners. Group "P" records do not directly document the sale to the Lower South of the slaves purchases, but (except in the case of Robards, documented in Bancroft, Slave Trading, p.132), the manuscript collections concerned contain information which clearly demonstrates that the business of the buyer was inter-regional slave trading. The purchases were, therefore, almost certainly made for the trade. Where the age structure of these purchases is known, it is consistent with that of the slave trade (see Table 2.1).
- \*S Sales to Louisiana's 13 predominantly sugar cane producing parishes are excluded. Sales included in the above Table are to LA, AL, AR, KY, MI, MO, TN, and TX.
- LS Lower South.

the several importing states. This evidence clearly demonstrates the exceptional character of the New Orleans and southern Louisiana trade. Table 1.2 draws upon all inter-regional slave traders' buying and selling records which have been located and which provide information on the sex structure of the trade other than that which directly served southern Louisiana.<sup>22</sup> These records, relating to over 3,000 slaves, extend over the whole of the 1820 to 1860 period and concern most of the states of the South. They indicate that, although sex ratios varied slightly from shipment to shipment, the sex ratio of the trade to areas other than southern Louisiana was, on average, evenly balanced. Fogel and Engerman's quantitative estimate of the trade had rested on the claim that the trade to the several Southern states, like that to New Orleans, was something like 60 per cent male. The approximately balanced sex ratio of the trade to all states except Louisiana meant, however, that except for taking some account of the Louisiana trade, their method failed to distinguish between planter migration and the slave trade. The result was that Fogel and Engerman's method provided a totally inappropriate basis for the quantification of the trade.

The exceptional sex ratio of the Louisiana trade is reflected in the structure of the total slave movement to that state. Fogel and Engerman were correct in observing that males made up only slightly more than 51 per cent of the South's total inter-regional slave movement. Table 1.3 indicates, however, that while, in the 1820 to 1860 period, there was no significant excess of males in the overall slave movement into each of the other net importing areas, in the case of Louisiana about 58 per cent of overall slave importations were male. The similarity between the sex ratio found in the New Orleans coastal trade (59.4 per cent male in the 1840s sample which was taken) and that found in the total slave movement to Louisiana (about 58 per cent male) suggests that the slave trade might well have accounted for the overwhelming proportion of Louisiana's slave arrivals. In Louisiana, then, the only state for which

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22. In Table 1.2, where "LS" (Lower South) rather than a specific state is indicated as the slave receiving area, some proportion of the slaves - usually not more than a few per cent - would probably have been purchased by southern Louisiana clients.

TABLE 1.3: MALE SHARE OF IMPORTATIONS BY COMBINED VEHICLES OF THE INTER-REGIONAL SLAVE TRADE AND PLANTER MIGRATION

| Importing Area                | Males as % of Total Slave Importations |          |
|-------------------------------|--|----------|
|                               | 1820s                                  | 1850s    |
| Louisiana                     | 58.08                                  | ** 57.12 |
| Alabama                       | 49.42                                  | * 49.54  |
| Arkansas                      | 49.06                                  | 51.01    |
| Florida                       | --                                     | 51.76    |
| Georgia                       | 50.17                                  | * 49.00  |
| Mississippi                   | 50.19                                  | 50.78    |
| Missouri                      | 44.73                                  | * 49.34  |
| Tennessee                     | 48.18                                  | --       |
| Texas                         | --                                     | 50.29    |
| Total Movement to Above Areas | 51.16                                  | 51.72    |

SOURCES AND NOTES: Evidence derived from survival rate calculations, using published census compendiums. See method employed in tables 2.6 and 2.7 (pp.84-5, below).

\* Indicates that, for the state and decade concerned, only movements into net importing counties are considered.

\*\* For Bienville parish, Louisiana, a parish thoroughly dominated by cotton production, the 1860 census gives only an estimated total population and does not sub-divide that estimated population according to age and sex. In order to include that parish in survival rate calculations, it is assumed that the structure of that parish's 1860 population was typical of that found in other Louisiana cotton parishes. Since Bienville appears to have accounted for only 1.5% of Louisiana's 1860 slave population, it is extremely unlikely that any significant error will arise from this assumption.

Fogel and Engerman's sex ratio method provides useful information, the indications are that the slave trade was of profound importance.

## II(ii)

That the nature of Louisiana's slave importations diverged so markedly from the Lower South's norm is explained by the special importance of sugar cane in the Louisiana economy. Over the pre-Civil War period, that state consistently produced all but a few per cent of the United States's total sugar cane crop.<sup>23</sup> Production was concentrated in the southern and especially the south-eastern part of the state and was such that, from 1820 and probably earlier, well over 30 per cent of Louisiana's slave population lived on sugar plantations.<sup>24</sup>

A comparison of the overall slave movements, on the one hand, into the sugar producing section of Louisiana, and, on the other, into the cotton producing section of the state, will illustrate the very selective nature of

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23. In the years 1849 and 1859, for example, Louisiana, with about 8 per cent of the U.S. slave population, produced over 95 per cent of the U.S. cane sugar crop. In the same years, that state produced only about 7 per cent of the U.S. cotton crop; about 2 per cent of the rice crop; and produced almost no tobacco. See J.D.B. DeBow, Statistical View of the United States...being a Compendium of the Seventh Census (Washington, D.C., 1854), p.177, Table excii; and see Eighth Census...Agriculture of the United States in 1860 (Washington, D.C., 1864), p.187.
24. Census statistics indirectly provide evidence on the number of slaves involved in Louisiana's sugar production. In 1850, for example, Louisiana's 13 leading sugar producing parishes had a combined slave population of 74,000. Production totals for staples other than sugar were so low in these parishes as to indicate that very few of the 74,000 slaves were involved in the production of cash staples other than sugar. In the crop year 1849-50, that area produced only 1,006 bales of cotton. The ratio of bales per head of slave population in the Lower South cotton states of Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Mississippi, and Texas - a ratio of 1.53 bales per head - suggests that in that year not more than about 670 of the slaves in Louisiana's 13 leading sugar producing parishes could have been employed on cotton farms. (See Seventh Census...1850 (Washington, D.C. 1853), pp.lxxxii-iii, Table LV.) Similar calculations with rice production per head of slave population in Georgetown district, South Carolina - a specialist rice producing area - suggest that in 1849-50 not more than 1,500 of the slaves in Louisiana's 13 leading sugar producing parishes could have been allocated to rice plantations. (See Seventh Census, p.346.) The above statistics (summarised in Table 1.4) suggest that in 1849-50, in the 13 leading sugar parishes, about 72,000 slaves produced 78 per cent of Louisiana's sugar cane crop, so that the state's total sugar crop of that year would have been produced by about 92,000 slaves, or 37.6 per cent of Louisiana's slave population. On the numbers of slaves involved in sugar production during the period 1820 to 1860 generally, see Phillips, American Negro Slavery, pp.166-8.

TABLE 1.4: CHARACTERISTICS OF LOUISIANA'S THIRTEEN LEADING SUGAR PRODUCING PARISHES: THE 1850s

|   | Cane Sugar and Molasses Production <sup>a</sup> | Ginned Cotton Production <sup>b</sup> | Rice Production <sup>c</sup> | Total 1850 Slave Population | Slave Importations of 1850s <sup>d</sup> |
|---|---|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| 13 Leading Sugar Parishes <sup>e</sup>                          | 345,259   | 1,006                                 | 3,495                        | 73,829                      | 7,510                                    |
| Other Louisiana Parishes  | 99,363  | 171,731                               | 930                          | 170,979                     | 33,577                                   |
| % of Louisiana Total Accounted for by 13 Leading Sugar Parishes | 77.7  | 0.56                                  | 79.0                         | 30.2                        | 18.3                                     |

SOURCES AND NOTES: Statistics are based upon published census returns. Crop totals refer to year ending 1 June 1850.

- a Sugar and molasses production is given in equivalent hogsheads of 1,000 lb. each. Molasses production was aggregated with cane sugar production on the basis that 50 gallons of molasses were equal to 1000 lb. of sugar or one hogshead. (See DeBow's Review, I (1845), p.55; and XI (1851), p.71).
- b Ginned cotton in bales of 400 lb. each.
- c Rice in 1,000 lb. units.
- d Importations are based upon survival rate calculations. Bienville parish is treated as in Table 1.3. Importations are "preliminary" rather than "final" totals (see definitions in Chapter II); that is to say they include only those slaves, imported in the 1850s, who survived to 1860 and in that year were 10 years or older.
- e The 13 leading sugar parishes are defined as the 13 parishes which ranked highest in sugar and molasses production per head of slave population. These parishes were Ascension, Assumption, Baton Rouge West, Iberville, Jefferson, Lafourche, Plaquemines, St. Bernard, St. Charles, St. James, St. John Baptist, St. Mary, and Terrebonne.

TABLE 1.5: AGE AND SEX CHARACTERISTICS OF OVERALL SLAVE MOVEMENTS TO LOUISIANA PARISHES, 1850-1859

|                                 | 0 - 4   |        | 5 - 9   |        | 10 - 19 |        | 20 - 29 |        | 30 - 39 |        | 40+  |        | Overall<br>% Male |
|---------------------------------|---------|--------|---------|--------|---------|--------|---------|--------|---------|--------|------|--------|-------------------|
|                                 | 10 - 14 |        | 15 - 19 |        | 20 - 29 |        | 30 - 39 |        | 40 - 49 |        | 50+  |        |                   |
|                                 | Male    | Female | Male    | Female | Male    | Female | Male    | Female | Male    | Female | Male | Female |                   |
| 13 Leading Sugar<br>Parishes    | -196    | -486   | 366     | 178    | 3128    | 1703   | 1855    | 972    | 860     | 92     | -699 | -263   | 70.76             |
| Other Louisiana<br>Parishes     | 1190    | 864    | 2237    | 3114   | 9070    | 8193   | 3102    | 1897   | 794     | 371    | 1760 | 985    | 54.06             |
| Total for State of<br>Louisiana | 994     | 378    | 2603    | 3292   | 12198   | 9896   | 4957    | 2869   | 1654    | 463    | 1061 | 722    | 57.12             |

SOURCES AND NOTES: Statistics are based on data in federal censuses. Totals given in this table are "preliminary" rather than "final" (see Table 1.4, note "d"). The age and sex structures cited in this table will, however, be very similar to those which would be obtained with final estimates. (See discussion of "preliminary" and "final" estimates in Chapter II.)

importations into the sugar producing area. Tables 1.4 and 1.5 show that in the 1850s males made up 70 per cent of all slave movements into the 13 Louisiana parishes which displayed the highest production of sugar per head of slave population. These 13 parishes were, in fact, devoted almost entirely to the production of sugar as their cash staple. In the remaining Louisiana parishes, where sugar production occupied only about 11 per cent of plantation labour forces, males accounted for only about 54 per cent of the 1850s inward movement of slaves. Census statistics show that differences are even more striking when the basis of comparison is made more rigorous. Males made up rather more than 75 per cent of total importations into those 7 Louisiana parishes which, in the 1850s, registered nil production of cotton; while males made up almost exactly 50 per cent of all importations into those 15 Louisiana cotton parishes which, in 1850, registered nil production of sugar cane.

The rigorous selectivity of slave importations into Louisiana's sugar producing areas extended to the age as well as the sex of the slaves traded. While, in Chapter II, Table 2.1 indicates that the under 10 age group accounted for as much as 18 per cent of those slaves traded to the non-sugar producing areas of the Lower South, Table 1.5 (cohort 0-4/10-14), in the present chapter, suggests that in the case of the sugar parishes of Louisiana that age group made almost no contribution to slave importations. The selectivity of the sugar parishes' importations was somewhat similarly reflected in the ages of slaves listed in the New Orleans slave traders' manifests. As Table 2.3 of Chapter II shows, children under 10 years of age represented only about 8 per cent of those traders' coastal importations. Clearly, with about 75 per cent of importations into sugar planting areas being male and with only about 59 of slaves listed in traders' manifests being male, the structure of the New Orleans coastal trade was a product of sales to the intensively selective sugar producing markets, together with the moderating effect of sales to the rather less selective markets in the cotton producing areas of Louisiana and <sup>of that</sup> state's hinterland. The bulk of the children listed in traders' coastal manifests would, no doubt, have been sold to cotton producing areas.

The very striking selectivity of the market in the sugar producing parishes must have stemmed from the peculiarly heavy labour demands of the cane sugar staple. While the labour of cotton production was demanding, much of the work involved in raising that staple called for dexterity and for steady effort rather than for sheer physical strength. With sugar production, however, the tasks of ditching and draining land; chopping and hauling wood for the sugar-house; cooperage; the frantic cutting, stripping, and hauling of ripe cane; and the boiling of cane and packing of sugar into hogsheads called for strength and lent themselves to adult labour and especially to adult male labour. U.B.Phillips made much the same point when he wrote:

All of the characteristic work in the sugar plantation routine called mainly for able-bodied laborers. Children were less used than in tobacco and cotton production, and the men and women, like the mules, tended to be of sturdier physique. This was the result partly of selection, partly of the vigorous exertion required. 25

Although the sex structure of slave sales to the sugar producing regions was unparalleled elsewhere in the domestic trade, it was similar to that of the Atlantic slave trade which supplied the West Indies and Latin American and which, until 1808, served North America. The high ratio of males to females in Atlantic slave trade importations into South America and the West Indies was well suited to the massively important sugar plantations of those regions. That the sex ratio of Atlantic slave trade importations into North America was similar to that of importations into the West Indies and South America is explained by the African slave trader's access to large numbers of relatively inexpensive Negro males and by his preference for carrying males, who commanded higher resale prices than females. With Atlantic slave trade importations into the West Indies and South America, areas to a large extent dominated by sugar production, the especially high demand for male slaves showed itself not in the basic sex structure of slave importations - which structure was similar to that of African importations into North America - but

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25. Phillips, American Negro Slavery, p.245. On the labour regime of sugar planting, see also L.C.Gray, History of Agriculture in the Southern United States to 1860 (Washington, 1933), pp.739-51.



in the intensive rate of slave importation and hence the maintenance of a high male-female ratio in the resident plantation populations. In the Africa slave trade, conditions which obtained in the trader's buying area meant that it was possible, by the use of force, to assemble cargoes with high proportions of male slaves. In the conditions which obtained in the North American domestic slave trade, however, both buyers and sellers - except in sugar producing areas, where particularly arduous tasks had to be performed - preferred to maintain an evenly balanced slave force. Such a force, with roughly equal numbers of males and females, brought the promise of a large and valuable natural increase. Additionally, by avoiding excessive sales of males, Upper South masters maintained more efficient work forces than would otherwise have been the case.<sup>26</sup>

## II(iii)

The New Orleans and southern Louisiana trade was, then, a highly specialised traffic, differing greatly from the trading patterns found elsewhere in the North American domestic slave trade. The advertisements of speculators buying for the New Orleans market often referred, directly or indirectly, to the specialised nature of that market. In 1859 and 1860, Webb, Merrill & Co., and Lyles & Hitchings were advertising in Nashville, Tennessee, that they "would at all times purchase NEGROES suited to the New Orleans market". At the same time, N.B. Forrest's advertisement in Charleston ran: "500 NEGROES WANTED. I WILL PAY MORE THAN ANY OTHER PERSON, for No.1 NEGROES, suited to the New Orleans market." In the 1830s, Lewis Thomas's advertisement announced: "I will give the highest price for likely young negroes, say from 10 - 25 years of age. Fellows will be preferred with proper certificate for the New Orleans market." Except when traders were active in the Louisiana traffic, their slave purchasing advertisements almost never specified the Lower South market for which they were buying. Advertisement references to slaves "suited to the New Orleans

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26. On the sex ratio of North America's Atlantic slave trade importations, see Table 2.5 and see the discussion of that table in Chapter II, below. On some of the demographic results of male-dominated slave trade importations see Chapter IX.

market" suggest a widespread familiarity with the special character of that market. Again with the exception of those buying for the Louisiana trade, purchasing advertisements expressed no preference for male slaves. Normally, advertisements simply sought "likely young Negroes" of selected ages. Occasionally, however, those trading to the cotton states of the Lower South gave specific information on the sex ratio of the coffles and consignments which they wished to assemble. One such speculator was J.W.Ford who, in 1850, announced to the citizens of Kershaw district, South Carolina: "Negroes wanted, I wish to purchase 200 Negroes, 100 men and 100 women. None need apply unless their Negroes are young and likely."<sup>27</sup>

The specialist nature of the New Orleans market and its important links with the coastal slave trade from the Chesapeake ports are often documented in the correspondence of slave traders and in the circulars periodically sent out by certain Richmond firms which, on a commission basis, sold slaves to the long-distance trade. One such Richmond firm, Betts & Gregory, in their circular of 11 September 1860, suggested the special quality of the New Orleans market by informing their suppliers:

We would say our negro market continues dull except for first rate negroes. There are several persons here now making up lots for the New Orleans market and if you have any on hand now is the time to bring them in.

A Pulliam & Slade report of 1850 ran:

This will inform you negroes are selling a shade better than when you were here [at Richmond]. Boys and girls are selling here - the demand for men has increased. Good shipping men are in demand. Murphy has arrived. Hagen is buying also Davis. [All three bought for the New Orleans market].

References to field girls suitable for the New Orleans market implied that they were to be those particularly capable of hard work. A Pulliam and Davis

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27. For the advertisements cited, see Bancroft, Slave Trading, p.249; Charleston Courier, Jan.-Mar. 1860; Taylor, Slaveholding in North Carolina, p.61; Camden Journal, June-Sept.1850. Comments on references to markets and on references to the sex of slaves are based on advertising patterns found in South Carolina newspapers of the 1850s. A survey was made of advertisements appearing in all such newspapers which are housed at the major repositories of South Carolina. Results of this survey are reported in some detail in Chapter III, below.

circular of 1854 began:

This is to inform you negroes are selling as follows...  
No.1 young men 18-22 years mostly in demand also girls  
16-20 years heavy set and very smart, suitable for  
shipping purposes.

The special quality of the New Orleans market was again made apparent when Thomas A. Clark replied to an R.H. Dickinson circular. Clarke reported that he had purchased two women, both with young children, but added:

I am sorry that I have not got any good negroes on hand that will suit the New Orleans market....Likely young men such as I think would suit the New Orleans market are very hard to find and also stout young women.

Letters of Phillip Thomas, a trader well established in the overland traffic to Mobile, give some indication of the special place which New Orleans occupied in the inter-regional trade and in the Richmond buying market in particular. Thomas advised that, in making end of season purchases at Richmond, his trading partner should "hold off until 1st March, then the New Orleans Traders will be out of the market....Compared with the New Orleans Traders... [we are] only a small drop in the bucket".<sup>28</sup>

### III

It was, perhaps, not surprising that it was upon the coastal trade from the Chesapeake ports to New Orleans that Fogel and Engerman chose to concentrate their study of the trade. Bancroft had pronounced that New Orleans had been "the Mistress of the Trade", and had devoted a substantial part of his study to slave buying in the Chesapeake area and slave selling in New Orleans. Ethan Andrews's Slavery and the Domestic Slave Trade (1835), one of the most informative and widely read first-hand accounts of the trade, was a report on the slave trade of the Chesapeake ports. W.H. Stephenson's study of the trader Isaac Franklin paid almost no attention to the overland trade and was devoted

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28. Betts & Gregory circular, D.M. Pulliam Papers (DU); Pulliam & Slade circular of 30 Oct. 1850, and Pulliam & Davis circular of 13 Oct. 1854, Harris-Brady Papers (UVA); Clarke to Dickinson, 10 Feb. 1846, Lucy Chase Papers (AAS); Thomas to Finney, Jan. 1860, W.A.J. Finney Papers (DU).

to a trader active in the coastal traffic from Alexandria, D.C., to New Orleans and Natchez. Calderhead declared that New Orleans was the "Queen City" of the trade, and suggested that, while visiting planters from the Lower South used the overland route in order to carry slaves to their plantations, professional traders concentrated almost exclusively on the coastal trade. The authors of Times on the Cross maintained:

While it would, of course, be desirable to have similar [slave trading] records from elsewhere in the South, there is no reason to believe that the age and sex structure of interstate sales at New Orleans were markedly different from those of other south central cities. Moreover, New Orleans, more than any other city, dominated the inter-regional slave trade, receiving annually about one third of all slaves sold between the states.

This concentration on the coastal trade between the Chesapeake and the Lower Mississippi neglected the full importance and extent of the overland trade, and ignored the selective character of the New Orleans trade and the special factors which gave rise to the Chesapeake-New Orleans traffic.<sup>29</sup>

In the domestic slave trade which served most Lower South states, traders operating in the Upper South, often from rural or small town bases, generally made up their coffles from any "likely Negroes", male or female, who came on to the market and who promised to be suitable for advantageous resale in the Lower South. The New Orleans trade, in contrast, lent itself to rigorously selective purchasing and this in turn lent itself to purchasing at large cities in Missouri, Tennessee, and Kentucky - cities which had relatively easy river communication with New Orleans - and lent itself to purchasing at the slave trading cities of the Chesapeake area. It was at major urban collecting points that slaves, often via the agency of petty traders and of resident slave brokers and commission agents, were assembled in sufficient numbers to allow the drawing off of large specialist lots suitable for the New Orleans trade. The Chesapeake

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29. See Bancroft, Slave Trading, p.312 and his chapters II,III,IV and XV; E.A.Andrews, Slavery and the Domestic Slave Trade in the United States, in a Series of Letters Addressed to the Executive Committee of the American Union for the Relief and Improvement of the Colored Race (Boston, 1836); Stephenson, Isaac Franklin, passim; Calderhead, "How Extensive", pp.45-6; Fogel and Engerman, Times on the Cross, I, p.52.

ports formed a major slave collecting complex and were, therefore, particularly well suited to take part in the New Orleans trade. With transport by sea being convenient for linking such distant markets, an extensive coastal slave trade between New Orleans and the Chesapeake ports was developed.

The specialist nature of the New Orleans trade and the limited base of evidence upon which Calderhead drew meant that both the study of Fogel and Engerman and that of Calderhead failed to provide a satisfactory estimate of the extent of the inter-regional slave trade. The two chapters which follow seek to provide a more reliable assessment of the volume of the Old South's slave trade.

CHAPTER II

THE VOLUME OF THE INTER-REGIONAL SLAVE TRADE, 1820-1860

In estimating the volume of the inter-regional slave trade this study employs a combination of two analytical approaches. Firstly in the present chapter, an analysis of the age structure of inter-regional slave movements provides, for the 1820s and 1850s, estimates of the volume of the trade between the Upper and Lower South.<sup>1</sup> Chapter III which documents the activities of very large numbers of traders who were engaged in the exportation of slaves from a sample state, South Carolina, during one of the decades concerned, the 1850s, provides a check on the validity of these estimates. Unlike Frederic Bancroft's studies of slave exportation, Chapter III pays considerable attention to traders' purchasing activity in rural as well as in urban areas. The statistics of the present chapter suggest that in the 1820s and 1850s, and very probably in the 1820 to 1860 period generally, at least some 60 per cent of inter-regional slave movements were accounted for by the trade. The numbers of traders documented in Chapter III fully support this conclusion.

I AGE STRUCTURE AS A BASIS FOR THE QUANTIFICATION OF THE TRADE

It has been seen that the analysis of sex ratios provides no satisfactory basis upon which to disaggregate the inter-regional slave movement into its two essential constituent parts, the slave trade and planter migration. Evidence presented below will indicate, however, that the age structure of the domestic slave trade was normally very significantly different from that of planter migration. This means that slave trading and planter migration must have differed markedly in their effects upon the age structure of the total inter-regional slave movement. An analysis of the respective age structures of the slave trade, of planter migration, and of the total inter-regional slave movement

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1. The terms Upper and Lower South are employed respectively to denote the areas which, at a given period, were net exporters and net importers of slaves.

will, therefore, make it possible to calculate the relative importance of the slave trade and of planter migration in determining the composition of the overall inter-regional slave movement. On the basis of such an analysis, the present chapter provides separate estimates of the volume of the slave trade and of planter migration.

## II. THE AGE STRUCTURE OF THE INTER-REGIONAL SLAVE TRADE

Occasionally whole slave gangs of unselected ages were traded between the Upper and Lower South. The Charleston Courier of 31 August 1859 provides an example of such a traffic. An advertisement announced:

WANTED FOR A LOUISIANA SUGAR PLANTATION, several gangs, varying from 50 to 150, of good PLANTATION NEGROES, accustomed to the culture of Cotton and Rice. Planters having such and wishing to secure them a good home, will forward full descriptive list - lowest cash price - when deliverable, at once or after the crops, and most accessible route from Charleston or their whereabouts.

On 2 January 1860, an advertisement in the same newspaper ran:

NEGROES WANTED. The subscriber residing on his plantation in Louisiana, wishes to add to his slave force by the purchase of 50 to 100 Negroes - to include old and young - from one plantation or estate. Payments can be arranged to the satisfaction of vendors, and a desirable opportunity in every respect offers to any party wishing to dispose of an entire gang.

Although an inter-regional trade in slaves of unselected ages existed, the texts of purchasing advertisements which traders placed in newspapers make it clear that the main stream of the inter-regional slave trade was very much an age-selective business. In his Slave Trading in the Old South, Bancroft reproduced a great many newspaper advertisements in which traders made public their plans to purchase slaves in the Upper South. Similarly, in Chapter III of the present study, Table 3.2 provides extracts from advertisements placed by many of the traders who were active in the 1850s in exporting slaves from South Carolina. The advertisements employed in Bancroft's work and those cited in the South Carolina study indicate that the great majority of traders preferred to buy slaves in something like the 12 to 25 age range.

While in the ante-bellum period advertisements in newspapers of all parts of the South, in general terms, documented the age-selectivity of the inter-regional slave trade, and while numerous surviving traders' account books document the sex ratio of that slave trade, only a few of the collections of traders' papers which have been located provide closely detailed information on the age structure of that traffic. Table 2.1 draws upon those traders' account books and bills of sale which provide information on the slave traffic to states other than Louisiana and which document the ages of slaves traded. That table, documenting some 600 slaves, indicates, with greater detail than is found in traders' advertisements, the age-selective nature of the main stream of the trade. A later table, Table 2.3, shows that in the late ante-bellum period as much as 15 per cent of the slave population of the net exporting region were aged 40 years and over. In contrast, only about 3 per cent of slaves traded according to Table 2.1 (and Table 2.3, line A) came within the 40 and over age group. Again, while in the late ante-bellum period the age group 10 to 29 accounted for only about 43 per cent of the slaves of the net exporting region, that age group accounted for about 72 per cent of slaves traded according to Table 2.1 (and according to line A of the summary table, Table 2.3).

As Chapter I has already briefly indicated, the age structure of the main stream of the Louisiana trade was even more rigorously selective than that found in the main stream of the trade which served other net importing states. Table 2.2 describes the age and sex of slaves imported by traders into New Orleans in the 1840s. The trading activities of the merchants concerned have been documented in Chapter I, Table 1.1. While the unusually heavy physical demands of the Louisiana sugar crop determined that male slaves predominated in the New Orleans trade, these demands also determined that among male importations into New Orleans the especially robust age group 20-24 was of leading importance. Thus, in the 1840s, 24.5 per cent of all slaves brought to New Orleans by identified traders were males of 20-24 years, and of New Orleans's total male



importations by identified traders over 40 per cent were aged from 20 to 24 years.

Although, as the summary table, Table 2.3 (lines A and B) shows, there were important differences between the age structures of the main stream New Orleans trade and that of the main stream slave trade to states where sugar production was insignificant, there were, at the same time, very striking similarities in the age structure of main stream slave importations into the different inter-regional markets. When, as in Table 2.3, main stream importations into all markets are compared with the age structure of the net exporting states, it is clear that, in the main stream of the inter-regional slave trade, children and slaves of 40 years and over were very much under-represented while slaves in the 10 to 24 age range were very much over-represented. The trade called essentially for "likely" teenage and young adult Negroes who could make particularly valuable contributions to expanding Lower South slave-holding enterprises. In contrast, it will be shown that so far as slaves were concerned planter migration was essentially a non-age-selective process. This means that when examining the age structure of total inter-regional slave movements it will be possible fairly accurately to differentiate between movements brought about by the main stream of the domestic slave trade and movements brought about by planter migration.

### III THE AGE STRUCTURE OF INTER-REGIONAL PLANTER MIGRATIONS

The factors which were operative in planter migrations were significantly different from those which obtained in the slave trade. In the case of the inter-regional trade, Lower South planters normally sought, with prime slaves, to supplement or to lay the foundations of their plantation labour forces. In the case of planter migrations, however, planters normally sought to transfer whole plantation units from one region to another. Planters seem to have made their decisions to migrate, not because they owned unusually "prime" labour

TABLE 2.1 AGE STRUCTURE OF MAIN STREAM INTER-REGIONAL SLAVE TRADE TO STATES OTHER THAN LOUISIANA

| Trader   | Age Data Available for Period | Age When Traded |        |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |        |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |  |  |
|--|-------------------------------|-----------------|--------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|--------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|--|--|
|  |                               | C               | Male   |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |        | Female   |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |  |  |
|  |                               |                 | 0 to 9 | 10 to 14 | 15 to 19 | 20 to 24 | 25 to 29 | 30 to 34 | 35 to 39 | 40 to 49 | 50 to 59 | 0 to 9 | 10 to 14 | 15 to 19 | 20 to 24 | 25 to 29 | 30 to 34 | 35 to 39 | 40 to 49 | 50 to 59 |  |  |
| <b>GROUP I</b>                                 |                               |                 |        |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |        |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |  |  |
| Totten   | 1832-36                       | 23              | 1      | 17       | 17       | 19       | 5        | 5        | 1        | 3        | 2        | 1      | 20       | 24       | 14       | 10       | 3        | 3        | 3        |          |  |  |
| W & L  | 1835-36                       |                 | 1      |          | 1        | 3        | 1        |          |          |          |          | 3      | 1        |          | 1        | 2        |          | 1        |          |          |  |  |
| T & G  | 1850                          | 3               | 2      | 4        | 2        | 5        | 2        |          |          |          |          | 2      | 4        | 10       | 3        | 1        | 1        |          |          |          |  |  |
| Glen   | 1830-37                       | 1               | 12     | 11       | 17       | 14       | 7        | 3        | 3        | 2        |          | 9      | 19       | 12       | 9        | 2        | 5        | 3        | 3        |          |  |  |
| <b>GROUP II</b>                                |                               |                 |        |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |        |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |  |  |
| Glen +   | 1830-40                       |                 | 12     | 10       | 11       | 8        | 9        | 2        | 1        | 1        |          | 7      | 18       | 14       | 5        | 5        | 2        | 1        | 1        |          |  |  |
| Long   | 1836-49                       | 2               | 3      | 5        | 7        | 10       | 3        | 2        | 1        | 1        | 3        | 5      | 4        | 11       | 2        | 2        | 1        |          |          |          |  |  |
| Robards  | 1851-53                       | 1               | 2      | 4        | 5        | 9        | 10       | 1        | 1        | 2        |          | 3      | 8        | 12       | 6        | 3        | 2        | 1        |          |          |  |  |
| <b>SUMMARIES</b>                               |                               |                 |        |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |        |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |          |  |  |
| <b>GROUPS I &amp; II</b><br>(Total 595 Slaves) |                               |                 | 7.9    | 8.6      | 10.1     | 11.4     | 6.2      | 2.2      | 1.2      | 1.5      | 0.9      | 7.8    | 12.4     | 13.9     | 6.7      | 4.2      | 2.4      | 1.5      | 1.2      |          |  |  |
| <b>GROUP I only</b><br>(Total 356 Slaves)      |                               |                 | 8.15   | 9.0      | 10.4     | 11.5     | 4.2      | 2.2      | 1.1      | 1.4      | 0.6      | 8.15   | 12.4     | 12.9     | 7.6      | 4.2      | 2.5      | 2.0      | 1.7      |          |  |  |

SOURCES AND NOTES: For references to manuscript collections used, see Table 1.2

- \* Summaries describe per cent of total accounted for by each age group
- GROUP I This is derived directly from records of traders' sales in net importing area.
- GROUP II Slaves in this group are not included in Group I. Group II entries are derived from records of traders' purchases in net exporting states. Slaves were almost certainly resold in the net importing area (see Table 1.2, note P), but no direct record of resale has been found for Group II slaves.
- W & L Whitehead and Lofftus
- T & G Templeman and Goodwin
- + Additional Glen purchases
- C Denotes children whose sex and specific age are not indicated in records used. This group is assumed, in summaries, to have comprised roughly equal numbers of males and females of ages 0 to 9 years.

TABLE 2.2 THE AGE STRUCTURE OF SLAVES BROUGHT TO NEW ORLEANS BY IDENTIFIED TRADERS

| Ages        | Percentage of Total Accounted for by Each Age Group |       |       |       |       |       |     |        |       |       |       |       |       |     |
|-------------|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|
|             | Male  |       |       |       |       |       |     | Female |       |       |       |       |       |     |
|             | 0-9   | 10-14 | 15-19 | 20-24 | 25-29 | 30-39 | 40+ | 0-9    | 10-14 | 15-19 | 20-24 | 25-29 | 30-39 | 40+ |
| Percentages | 3.4   | 4.1   | 13.7  | 24.5  | 8.1   | 4.2   | 1.4 | 4.6    | 4.7   | 18.8  | 7.0   | 2.3   | 2.1   | 1.1 |

SOURCES: Manifests for 1841, 1843, 1845, 1847 and 1849. The total number of slaves traded to New Orleans and included in this sample is 7,917.

TABLE 2.3 COMPARISON OF THE AGE STRUCTURE FOUND IN THE MAIN STREAM INTER-REGIONAL SLAVE TRADE AND THAT FOUND IN THE SLAVE POPULATION OF THE NET EXPORTING AREA

| Ages                               | Percentage of Total Accounted for by Each Age Group |       |       |       |       |       |      |        |       |       |       |       |       |     |
|------------------------------------|---|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|--------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-----|
|                                    | Male  |       |       |       |       |       |      | Female |       |       |       |       |       |     |
|                                    | 0 - 9   | 10-14 | 15-19 | 20-24 | 25-29 | 30-39 | 40 + | 0 - 9  | 10-14 | 15-19 | 20-24 | 25-29 | 30-39 | 40+ |
| A Main Stream Trade (excluding LA) | 8.15  | 9.0   | 10.4  | 11.5  | 4.2   | 3.3   | 2.0  | 8.15   | 12.4  | 12.9  | 7.6   | 4.2   | 4.5   | 1.7 |
| B Main Stream New Orleans Trade    | 3.4   | 4.1   | 13.7  | 24.5  | 8.1   | 4.2   | 1.4  | 4.6    | 4.7   | 18.8  | 7.0   | 2.3   | 2.1   | 1.1 |
| D Net Exporting Area (1850 Census) | 16.0  | 7.1   | 5.6   | (8.7) |       | 5.2   | 7.4  | 16.2   | 6.9   | 5.7   | (8.5) |       | 5.3   | 7.5 |
| D Net Exporting Area (1860 Census) | 15.8  | 7.3   | 5.6   | (8.5) |       | 5.3   | 7.5  | 15.9   | 6.9   | 5.8   | (8.3) |       | 5.5   | 7.6 |

SOURCES:

A Source Table 2.1 Group I

B Source Table 2.2

CD Method of establishing composition appears below, in Chapter II. A comparison of 1850 and 1860 figures shows only slight differences in composition at these dates. There appears to have been consistency in the basic demographic structure of those areas which, at late ante-bellum censuses, constituted the net exporting block.

forces, but because they hoped that their slave gangs, ranging from full-hands to superannuated slaves, would be most profitably employed in working Lower South lands. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that planter migrations would normally have transferred to the Lower South representative numbers of each age group of the slaves in the net exporting states. This means, for example, that if inter-regional planter migrations accounted for the removal of 5 per cent of the net exporting area's total slave population, these migrations would also have accounted for 5 per cent of the slave children of that area, 5 per cent of its prime adult slaves, and 5 per cent of its older slaves. Planter migrations from the net exporting area would, therefore, have tended to mirror the population structure of the net exporting states from which the slaves were drawn. On the basis of these assumptions, the age structure of inter-regional planter migrations should, therefore, in the 1850s, have been similar to the demographic structures described in Table 2.3, lines C and D. Such demographic structures stand in sharp contrast with the structure of the inter-regional slave trade as it is described in Table 2.3, lines A and B. Evidence presented below confirms the assumption that planter migration was essentially a non-selective process.

So far as the sex of slaves was concerned, it is clear that planter migrations were non-selective and, on average, carried approximately equal numbers of male and female slaves. This is apparent since, with all states except Louisiana, the domestic slave trade and the overall inter-regional slave movement - a movement combining the trade and planter migrations - was composed of approximately equal numbers of males and females. It is possible that in a small proportion of cases a migration would have involved only a portion of the whole slave force of a Lower South plantation. Such "partial migrations" might have occurred, for example, when an Upper South planter, while maintaining a holding in his home state, established an absentee plantation in the Lower South. Migrations of this type left no effect on the sex structure of the inter-regional movement, and cannot significantly have disturbed the age structure of the overall inter-regional movement of plantations. There can have been only a very few planters who held slaves in both the net importing

and the net exporting areas of the South. Certainly, the secondary literature, representing a variety of interpretations of slavery, has consistently suggested that, in the U.S., absentee ownership of slaves was rare.<sup>2</sup> Only those whose total slave holding was very large would have been in a position to have made possible an inter-regional division of their labour force; and of these slave-holding magnates it is probable that there were very few who would have considered such a dispersal of labour to have been worthwhile. Normally, planters would have sought, by concentrating their slave-holding in or near one area, to have reduced the costs of plantation management and supply, to have optimised the efficiency of the labour force, and to have streamlined the process of marketing plantation staples.<sup>3</sup> On hypothetical occasions when partial migrations took place, planters would not necessarily have found it to their advantage to have transferred an unusually prime group of slaves to the new plantation. The withdrawal of a large proportion of prime slaves would have rendered the Upper South plantation an unnecessarily inefficient unit which might have drained profits from the new Lower South plantation. The withdrawal of a markedly age-selective portion of a plantation's population would also have been likely to have cut across family units and so, even more than a policy of gradually selling selected slaves to traders, would have led to the disruption of plantation morale. Such a policy would also have deprived the Lower South plantation of senior slaves who might otherwise have served on that plantation as nannies, gardeners and general assistants.

Only one documented example of a partial migration has been located. This is the record of Leonard Covington's migration from Maryland to Mississippi.<sup>4</sup> Covington, when planning his migration, had not intended to divide his slave force but, being unable to obtain a satisfactory offer for his old land, he

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2. See, for example, Phillips, American Negro Slavery, p.341; Gray, History of Agriculture, I, p.498; Stamp, The Peculiar Institution, p.43; Fogel and Engerman, Time on the Cross, I, p.212; Genovese, Roll, Jordan, Roll, pp.5, 10-2, 681 n20.

3. Fogel and Engerman have recently underlined the advantages of large scale production which obtained in the plantation economy. See Time on the Cross, I, pp.234-7, 255-7, etc.

4. Records of this migration appear in Phillips, Documentary History, II, pp.201-18.

retained his Maryland plantation and left 26 slaves to work it under an overseer. The balance of his slaves, 31 in number, were sent to Mississippi in 1809. It is significant that Covington's slave partition appears to have been based upon established family units. It was not noticeably age-selective. In fact, in the slave population which remained in the East there was a higher proportion of 15 to 29 year olds than there was in the group of Covington's slaves who migrated to Mississippi. Partial migrations appear to have been extremely rare and those partial migrations which did occur are unlikely to have been age-selective.

Very occasionally, entries in the manifests which documented coastwise movements of slaves differentiated between slaves carried by migrating planters and those carried by traders. A manifest of 1819 contained the following asseveration: "The owner of these slaves is moving [from North Carolina] to Louisiana to settle, and is not a dealer in human flesh."<sup>5</sup> With such direct descriptions of consignments being extremely rare, the historian U.B. Phillips, in drawing upon coastal manifests, distinguished between traders' lots and planter migrations by regarding as migrants those groups which contained considerable proportions of aged slaves and slave children. He noted, for example, that

in 1831 James L. Petigru and Langdon Cheves sent from Charleston to Savannah 85 and 64 slaves respectively of ages ranging from 90 and 75 years to infancy, with the obvious purpose to develop newly acquired plantations in Georgia. 6

While manifests only very rarely contained entries which directly described slaves as being a migrant planter's gang - or as being a trader's lot - a sampling of this record group provides evidence which very much supports Phillips's conclusion that planter migrations carried slaves of unselected ages. All manifests for the 1840s, housed at the National Archives and describing slave shipments to New Orleans from more easterly states have been

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5. See Phillips, American Negro Slavery, p.182.

6. Phillips, American Negro Slavery, pp.195-6.

examined. In order to obtain from this general body of manifests a sample which was essentially representative of planter migration, three procedures have been adopted. Firstly, all slaves carried under the names of traders identified in Table 1.1 have been excluded from the sample. Secondly, in order so far as possible to exclude the short-term movement of those slave servants who attended non-migrant white travellers, and to exclude certain relatively small-scale purchases by unidentified traders and by private individuals, manifests documenting, for a single owner, less than 10 slaves have been excluded from the sample. The age structure resulting from these procedures is indicated in Table 2.4, line A. Because of the two procedures so far described, this sample must to an important extent be composed of planter migrations. It is significant, therefore, that this preliminary, somewhat impure, sample of planter migrations shows an age structure which is far less age-selective than that found in the New Orleans slave trade (compare Table 2.4, lines A and B), and which is similar to that of the slave population of the net exporting states (compare lines A and D).

Information on the age and sex structure of the New Orleans slave trade makes it possible further to refine this sample of planter migrations. It is known (see Table 2.3, line B) that there was a strong preponderance of males in slave trade importations into New Orleans; and, in fact, males constituted 78 per cent of New Orleans's trade importations of the 20 to 29 age group. In order to exclude from the sample of planter migrations a substantial proportion of those slave trade importations which have not so far been identified, all consignments in which males constituted 70 per cent or more of the 20 to 29 age group were discounted. As a result of this procedure, a total of just over one thousand slaves, showing the age structure described in Table 2.4, line C, were withdrawn from the preliminary sample of plantation migrations. The fact that the age structure of the group thus withdrawn was so similar to that found in the New Orleans slave trade (compare Table 2.4, lines C and B) suggests that, in the great majority of cases, these male-dominated consignments were indeed



TABLE 2.4 AGE STRUCTURE OF PLANTATION MIGRATIONS AS DERIVED FROM MANIFESTS OF SLAVE ARRIVALS AT NEW ORLEANS, 1840-1849

| Ages                              | Percentage of Total Accounted For by Each Age Group |      |         |     |         |      |         |      |         |     |        |     |        |     |        |     |           |     | Slave<br>Totals |
|-----------------------------------|---|------|---------|-----|---------|------|---------|------|---------|-----|--------|-----|--------|-----|--------|-----|-----------|-----|-----------------|
|                                   | 0 - 9   |      | 10 - 14 |     | 15 - 19 |      | 20 - 29 |      | 30 - 39 |     | 40 -49 |     | 50 -59 |     | 60 -69 |     | 70 & Over |     |                 |
|                                   | M   | F    | M       | F   | M       | F    | M       | F    | M       | F   | M      | F   | M      | F   | M      | F   | M         | F   |                 |
| A Preliminary Sample of Migration | 14.2  | 13.8 | 6.3     | 6.7 | 7.2     | 7.5  | 15.2    | 10.8 | 4.3     | 3.9 | 3.0    | 2.8 | 1.6    | 1.1 | 0.7    | 0.6 | 0.2       | 0.1 | 3,771           |
| B New Orleans Slave Trade         | 3.5   | 4.6  | 4.1     | 4.7 | 13.7    | 18.8 | 32.6    | 9.3  | 4.2     | 2.1 | 1.0    | 1.0 | 0.4    | 0.1 | 0      | 0   | 0         | 0   | 15,834*         |
| C Male Dominated Lots             | 10.0  | 7.6  | 7.2     | 6.4 | 10.1    | 9.3  | 26.5    | 5.6  | 5.4     | 3.7 | 2.3    | 3.1 | 1.4    | 0.7 | 0.5    | 0.2 | 0.1       | 0   | 1,081           |
| D Net Exporting ** Area           | 16.0  | 16.2 | 7.1     | 6.9 | 5.6     | 5.7  | 8.7     | 8.5  | 5.2     | 5.3 | 3.3    | 3.4 | 2.1    | 2.1 | 1.3    | 1.2 | 0.7       | 0.8 | 2,201,959       |
| E Adjusted Migration Sample       | 15.9  | 16.3 | 5.9     | 6.8 | 6.1     | 6.8  | 10.7    | 12.9 | 3.9     | 3.9 | 3.2    | 2.7 | 1.7    | 1.3 | 0.8    | 0.8 | 0.2       | 0.1 | 2,690           |
| F Further Sample                  | 17.0  | 16.0 | 6.2     | 6.4 | 5.9     | 6.8  | 11.3    | 13.4 | 3.3     | 3.2 | 2.7    | 2.5 | 2.1    | 1.5 | 0.6    | 1.0 | 0.1       | 0.1 | 1,457           |

SOURCES AND NOTES:

For sources see text.

M Male  
F Female

\* Based on expansion of count of 7,917 for years 1841, 1843, 1845, 1847, and 1849.

\*\* Based on 1850 census. See, in Table 2.3, similar statistics for 1860.

part of the New Orleans slave trade.<sup>7</sup>

Having adopted the several procedures described above, the age structure of the resultant sample of planter migration was that described in Table 2.4, line E. The structure represented in this sample is strikingly similar to that of the slave population of the net exporting states from which inter-regional migrations would have been drawn.<sup>8</sup> The results of the sampling of New Orleans manifests indicate, therefore, that, unlike the main stream of the inter-regional slave trade, planter migrations were essentially non-selective in the ages of slaves carried.

Only a very few detailed first-hand accounts of planter migration are available in published form or as manuscripts preserved in the major American libraries. Such accounts as have been located, with the exception of the Covington migration, have not contained references to the specific ages of the slave migrants; but incidental references to children and to aged slaves again very much support the conclusion that planter migration was not to any significant extent an age-selective process. When plantations were located at a convenient distance from shipping routes, migrant slaves were, no doubt, quite commonly sent by sea.<sup>9</sup> It is probable, however, that a majority of planter migrations followed an overland route. The British traveller, Basil Hall, described one such overland migration which he had observed in 1828 as it journeyed through South Carolina. The caravan, he wrote,

did not consist of above 30 persons in all, of whom five-and-twenty at least were slaves. The women and children were stowed away in wagons, moving up a steep, sandy hill....Along the roadside, scattered at intervals, we observed the male slaves trudging on foot.

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7. A small number of those included in this group of 1,081 slaves would probably have been slaves hired for industrial or heavy construction work.
  8. Table 2.4, line F, shows that a similar pattern is found when, instead of basing the sample of migrations upon lots of ten or more slaves, consignments of at least twenty slaves are considered. In both lines E and F, the slight peaking which occurs in the young adult groups is accounted for by the fact that it has not been possible to construct a sampling technique which excludes all slave trading activity. Though almost all trading into sugar producing areas must have been accounted for, it is probable that, for the cotton producing area, certain purchases composed of balanced numbers of male and female slaves have not been accounted for.
  9. Contemporary discussion of the relative advantages for migrants of travel by overland caravan, by rail, and by boat is presented in T.H.Wells, "Moving a Plantation to Louisiana", in Louisiana Studies, VI (1967), pp.279-89.

Another British traveller, G.W. Featherstonehaugh, recalled a journey made in the 1840s, through the Indian country of Alabama. "In the course of the day", his narrative records,

we met a great many families and planters emigrating to Alabama and Mississippi to take up cotton plantations, their slaves tramping through the waxy ground on foot, and the heavy wagons containing the black women and children slowly dragging on, and frequently breaking down. All that were able were obliged to walk, and being wet with fording streams were shivering with cold.

The provision of wagons meant that slaves of both age extremes could take part in migrations. It is clear that in James Shackelford's migration slaves of relatively feeble constitution travelled to Georgia. Shackelford, preparing to migrate from South Carolina to Georgia in the 1830s, was advised:

When you arrive, the first thing to do will be to build camps for the negroes, then put as many [as you can] to building a warehouse... for provisions.... While about this and other building, that division of force that is too feeble to work at this kind of work, may be cleaning up and burning the underbrush where you will plant.

The migration of Elias Lake seems to have carried slaves irrespective of age. In 1853, Lake made arrangements to transfer his slave force from South Carolina to Louisiana. A former migrant wrote to advise Lake that most of the whites should travel to New Orleans by sea, while the slaves, "except two or three that you will keep to wait on your family" during the sea journey, should be sent on foot and in wagons.<sup>10</sup>

Almost all migration accounts which have been found make direct reference to the participation of children. Thus, for example, in 1860 shortly after the eight week trek of T.C. Hanson's slaves from Georgia to Texas, Hanson reported: "We are all well but some of the little negroes. One has got the chills though the chills ant [sic] bad in this country." The small collection of letters describing the Brownrigg-Sparkman migration from North Carolina to Mississippi refers at several points to slave children who took part in the journey. On November 6, 1835, for example, Will Sparkman reported: "The only accident that

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10. B. Hall, Travels in North America in the Years 1827 and 1828 (Edinburg, 1829), III, pp. 128-9; G.W. Featherstonehaugh, Excursion Through the Slave States, from Washington on the Potomac to the Frontier of Mexico; with Sketches of Popular Manners and Geological Notices (New York, 1844; New York, 1968), p. 152; Shackelford manuscript (SHC); Lake migration cited in Wells, "Moving a Plantation", p. 283.

has happened to any of your Negroes, mules, horses or wagons is that Henry's child got her arm slightly burnt." A second letter of that date provides another example. That letter, by R.T.Hoskins, reported: "On the mountains Thomas' large wagon was upset - two of his negro children slightly injured." Again, with these migrants, most travelled on foot, while the remainder were carried in wagons. The Brownrigg-Sparkman group constituted a considerable migration. Sarah Sparkman wrote:

It is remarked by everyone that they have never seen so many without being chained and all looked so cheerful and happy....We travel from fifteen to twenty miles a day...sometimes the negroes [go on] a mile before us....Ninety-one Negroes and only four whites we are stared at such a caravan. 11

The Lide migration from South Carolina to Alabama provides an example of a planter migration carried out in two stages. An advance party went out, probably in the spring, in order to prepare for the arrival, in the autumn of 1835, of the main part of the plantation's slave population. The autumn migration, which occupied 39 days, almost certainly completed the transfer of an entire plantation population. It is possible that advance parties would have contained a large proportion of prime hands, able to clear fields and erect buildings. One might, therefore, argue that such advance parties would have influenced statistics of the age structure of inter-regional slave movements as derived from censuses. The statistical impact of advance parties must, however, have been negligible. Firstly, only a few of the larger plantation units would have found it worthwhile to send out and to supervise an advance party of slaves while at the same time supporting the remaining slaves in the Upper South. Secondly, only advance parties sent out in the final year of a given decade could have distorted census representations of inter-regional slave movements. In addition, advance parties sent out on a short-term basis to do the heavy preparatory work for the new plantation, would surely have contained more males than females. It has already been shown, however, that, except in the case of importations into Louisiana's sugar producing areas, total inter-regional slave movements carried approximately equal numbers of male and female slaves. Since

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11. Hanson to Hanson, 7 June 1860, Miscellaneous Letters Collection, addition (SHC); Sparkman to Brownrigg and Hoskins to Brownrigg, 6 Nov.1835, Sparkman to Brownrigg, 20 Oct.1835, Brownrigg Papers (SHC).

advance parties can have had no significant impact upon the sex structure of U.S. inter-regional slave movements, it is very probable that their impact upon the age structure of inter-regional movements was similarly insignificant. In the composite Lide migration, the principal migrant, James Lide, was sixty-five years old when he migrated. His fifty-seven year old wife accompanied him.<sup>12</sup> The ages of the white migrants suggest that blacks of a wide age range would have been thought able to have taken part in the movement of the Lide plantation.

From the evidence of ship's manifests and from first-hand accounts of migrations, it is clear that, with regard to the ages of slaves, planter migration was essentially a non-selective process. Normally, migrant planters would have been able to have transferred their whole slave force to their new plantation. That portion of the planter's force which was of advanced years would have been of little cash value to the migrant, but, since such slaves represented only a few per cent of the U.S. slave population, individual migrant planters were unlikely to have possessed more than one or two slaves of this class. Such slaves would usually have formed part of the migrant group. It is possible that in some cases planters, before migrating, entrusted to their relatives or neighbours in the exporting states the care of those slaves whose extreme age or poor health made them unsuited to the migrant's journey. There is no reason to suppose, however, that apart perhaps from the infirm and those of extreme old age other classes of slaves were under-represented in the migrant group. Planter migration and the slave trade must, therefore, have exercised profoundly different influences upon the age structure of the total inter-regional movement of slaves. In arriving at a quantitative estimate of the inter-regional slave trade it will not be necessary to assume that slaves of advanced years participated fully in planter migrations, The quantification of the trade will in this chapter be based simply upon the premise that while the main stream of the inter-regional slave trade was age-selective, planter migration was essentially a non-selective process.

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12. F.M.Green (ed.), The Lides go South and West: The Record of a Planter Migration in 1835 (Columbia, S.C., 1952), pp. iv-v. This volume is based upon the Lide-Coker Papers at the South Caroliniana Library, Columbia, S.C.

#### IV THE VOLUME AND STRUCTURE OF THE TOTAL INTER-REGIONAL SLAVE MOVEMENT

The survival rate method of demographic analysis provides, for suitable populations, a reliable means of calculating the volume and the age and sex structure of net inter-regional population movements.<sup>13</sup> This technique can usefully be employed with "closed populations", and with populations which can, after controlled adjustments are made, be treated as having been closed.<sup>14</sup> Survival rate calculations, when applied to closed or essentially closed populations, rest upon two basic assumptions: they assume that, between the populations being compared, there were neither significant differences in the quality of census enumeration nor significant differences in the mortality rates of those whose age and sex was the same.<sup>15</sup> A decennial survival rate represents the percentage of an age group which, enumerated at a given census, survives and is enumerated at the following census ten years later. Thus, for example, if, out of 100,000 males aged from 10 to 19 at one census, 80,000 survive and are enumerated in the age group 20 to 29 at the census ten years later, the decennial survival rate of this male age group (or "cohort") is said to have been 80 per cent. On the basis of the assumptions already mentioned, regional variations in specific cohort survival rates are attributed to increase or decrease resulting from inter-regional population movement.

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13. The literature on survival rate calculations has recently been surveyed by R.Sutch in an article, "The Breeding of Slaves for Sale and the Westward Expansion of Slavery, 1850-60", in S.L.Engerman and E.D.Genovese (eds.), Race and Slavery in the Western Hemisphere: Quantitative Studies, pp.199-205. A valuable discussion of the use of the survival rate technique is given by E.S.Lee in S.Kuznets and D.S.Thomas (eds.), Population Redistribution and Economic Growth: United States 1870-1950 (Philadelphia, 1957), I, pp.9-106. An excellent summary of the development of the survival rate technique is given in C.H.Hamilton, "The Effects of Census Errors on the Measurement of Migration", Demography, III (1966), pp.393-416.
  14. A closed population is one which is increased only by births and reduced only by deaths. Closed populations, by definition, are not influenced by international migrations.
  15. The first assumption does not require that census enumeration was totally accurate and complete. It relies upon the fact that within a given population similar tendencies towards inaccuracy would cancel themselves out. See K.C. Zachariah, "A Note on the Census Survival Ratio Method of Estimating Net Migration", Journal of the American Statistical Association, LVII (1962), pp.175-183; and see Hamilton, "Effects of Census Errors".

With the slave population of the South, federal census age enumeration categories are such that, for the 1820s and 1850s, a basis is provided for detailed cohort survival rate calculations.<sup>16</sup> Before the results of such calculations can usefully be presented and employed in a comparison of the age structures in the total inter-regional slave movement, planter migrations, and the trade, it is necessary, firstly, to establish that during the years under consideration the slaves of the South constituted an essentially closed population; and, secondly, to establish that there were, between the Upper and Lower South, no significant variations in age-specific and sex specific mortality rates or in the quality of census enumeration.

#### IV(i) A CLOSED POPULATION?

Recent studies of American slave demography are agreed that, for the period 1820 to 1860, the United States' slave population can be regarded as having been almost completely closed.<sup>17</sup> The factors which, in the period concerned, might to some extent have disturbed the essentially closed nature of the United States' slave population were the possible illegal importation of slaves from abroad; the colonization movement and the transportation of American slaves to areas beyond the United States; the permanent or semi-permanent flight of slaves beyond the reach of slave owners; and the manumission of slaves. Such factors could have disturbed survival rates and could, therefore, have led to inaccurate estimates of inter-regional slave movement. In practice, however, these factors appear to have been, in the period 1820 to 1860, of very little statistical significance.

In the late nineteenth century, W.E.B. DuBois estimated that after 1808 slave smuggling, the first of the four factors mentioned above, brought perhaps

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16. Since the 1820 census was the first to enumerate slaves according to age, such calculations cannot be applied to the United States' slave population for the years before 1820. Changes in the nature of census enumeration categories mean that detailed cohort survival rate analysis cannot be undertaken for the 1830s and 1840s.

17. See, for example, R. Farley, "The Demographic Rates and Social Institutions of the Nineteenth Century Negro Population: A Stable Population Analysis", Demography, II (1965), pp. 386-98; J. E. Eblen, "The Growth Rate of the Black Population in Ante-Bellum America, 1820-60", Population Studies, XXVI (1972), pp. 273-89; Sutch, "The Breeding of Slaves", pp. 199-205.

a quarter of a million slaves to the United States. Similar estimated totals were suggested by W.H.Collins (in 1904) and by L.C.Gray (1933), while N.Deerr (1950) suggested that in the post-1808 period the United States received a massive total of some one million smuggled slaves. As P.D.Curtin has pointed out, Deerr's estimate was "impossibly high". Instead of taking account of the fact that the United States' slave population - unlike the other slave populations of the Americas--displayed a vigorous natural increase, Deerr sought to explain the rapid growth of the North American slave population by means of Atlantic slave trade importations. In recent years historians have been in agreement that after 1808 Atlantic slave trade importations into the United States were of very limited extent. Curtin has estimated that, including all slaves smuggled into the Texas before that area was annexed to the United States, an annual average of not more than one thousand slaves were, after 1808, introduced into North America. The upper limit of even this estimate is, especially for the post-1819 period, very probably too generous. Furthermore, any foreign slaves introduced into Texas before 1850 will have no bearing upon the domestic slave trade estimates which are advanced in the present study.<sup>18</sup>

The estimates advanced by DuBois, Collins, and Gray, and at the same time Deerr's much higher estimate, have been rendered unacceptable by criticisms on several fronts. Curtin has argued that the authors of early estimates of the

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18. W.E.B.DuBois, "Enforcement of Slave Trade Laws", American Historical Association, Annual Report (1891), p.173, and W.E.B.DuBois, The Suppression of the African Slave Trade to the United States of America, 1638-1870 (New York, 1896; New York, 1969), pp.162-8, 178-88; Collins, Domestic Slave Trade, p.20; Gray, History of Agriculture, II, pp.648-9; N.Deerr, The History of Sugar (London, 1949-50), II, p.282; P.D.Curtin, The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census (Madison, 1969), pp.72-5. J.Potter, "The Growth of Population in America, 1700-1860", p.30, in D.V.Glass and D.E.C. Eversley (eds.), Population in History: Essays in Historical Demography (Chicago, 1965), argued that the number of illegal importations was too small to have influenced the demography of the American slave population. Historians cited in footnote 17, above, expressed similar opinions. On the unusually rapid growth rates of the North American slave population, see, for example, Curtin pp.28-30, 72-5, and see Chapter IX, below.



extent of the illegal importations were deceived by the large numbers of slave ships which were fitted out in American ports. Although the ships were built and carried slaves, they were active he pointed out, not in the slave trade to America, but in the traffic from Africa to Brazil and the Caribbean. W.S. Howard has suggested that the intermittent rumours of slave landings, rumours cited by DuBois, should not necessarily be taken as an indication that slave smuggling into the United States was anything more than a very rare occurrence. The same point was made by Kiple who suggested that the stir made by the Emperor case, which after 1820 was the only documented landing in Florida of slaves brought from Cuba, was so great precisely because the landing of smuggled slave cargoes was so rare.<sup>19</sup>

Further important evidence has concerned the male-female ratio of the American slave population. Farley, Curtin, and others have made the very telling point that, in the period 1820 to 1860, the trend in the sex ratio of United States's black population was inconsistent with the existence of any numerically significant Atlantic slave trade importation into the South. Males typically accounted for between three-fifths and two-thirds of slaves carried by the Atlantic slave trade to North America as well as to the West Indies and South America; and, as Table 2.5 indicates, the sex ratio of the North American black population of the eighteenth century showed the marked influence of male-dominated Atlantic slave trade importations. Because male slaves were more highly valued than female slaves and because conditions on the African coast allowed traders to acquire predominantly male cargoes, it is likely that from 1820 to 1860, as in earlier periods, any African slave trade importations into the United States would have carried high ratios of males to females. Indeed, with the much publicised Wanderer case of 1858, males comprised the bulk of the cargo smuggled into the South. The continuation, in the period 1820 to 1860, of any sizable slave importations from Africa would, therefore, have been

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19. Curtin, The Atlantic Slave Trade, p.74; W.S.Howard, American Slavers and the Federal Law, 1837-1862 (Berkeley, 1963), pp.142-54, 255-7; K.F.Kiple, "The Case Against a Nineteenth Century Cuba-Florida Slave Trade", Florida Historical Quarterly, IL (1971), pp.346-55.

reflected in the sex ratio of the American black population. Table 2.5 shows, however, that by 1820 numbers of black males and females were almost equal. In the period 1820 to 1860, natural increase tended to return the sex ratio to parity, while the fact that females had a slightly longer life expectancy than males accounted for the marginal surpluses of females which obtained after 1830. The sex ratios for 1820 to 1860, derived from federal census reports and presented in Table 2.5, are inconsistent with any statistically significant post-1820 African slave trade importations.<sup>20</sup>

While, on the basis of sex ratios, the notion of any important slave smuggling from Africa into the United States can surely be dismissed, it is possible to postulate that balanced numbers of male and female slaves were introduced into North America from the West Indies. Kiple has, however, suggested that illegal importations from Cuba - the best situated potential supplier to the United States market - are extremely unlikely to have taken place on anything more than a tiny scale.<sup>21</sup> He argued that the relative prices of Cuban and American slaves left no margin of profit for anyone contemplating the importation of slaves from Cuba. It might be added that, since

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20, Farley, "Demographic Rates", p.388; Curtin, The Atlantic Slave Trade, p.74. On the Wanderer, see T.H.Wells, The Slave Ship Wanderer (Athens, Ga., 1967), p.27. On the sex ratio of the Atlantic slave trade in general, see, for example, G.F.Dow, Slave Ships and Slaving (Salem, 1927), p.127. Dow observed that because men commanded higher prices than women the typical slaver was fitted to carry only half as many males as females. See also Davies, The Royal Africa Company, p.299, and Curtin, The Atlantic Slave Trade, passim. On the high proportion of males in slave importations to North America, see, for example, E.Donnan, "The Slave Trade into South Carolina Before the Revolution", American Historical Review, XXXIII (1927-8), p.818; and P.H.Wood, "'More Like a Negro Country': Demographic Patterns in Colonial South Carolina, 1700-1740", p.153, in Engerman and Genovese, Race and Slavery. Newspaper advertisements for slaves legally imported into North America often referred to cargoes being "chiefly male". Such an advertisement is cited in Flanders, Plantation Slavery in Georgia, p.37.

21. Kiple, "The Case Against", pp.352-5.

TABLE 2.5: SEX RATIO OF BLACK POPULATION, 1658-1860

| Date      | Location              |       | Scope of Data | Source    | Sex Ratio <sup>a</sup> |          |
|-----------|-----------------------|-------|---------------|-----------|------------------------|----------|
|           | South                 | North |               |           | Adult <sup>b</sup>     | All Ages |
| 1658-70   | MD                    |       | Inv *         | M 32      | 94.7                   | 87.5     |
| 1671-80   | "                     |       | " *           | "         | 100.0                  | 112.5    |
| 1681-90   | "                     |       | " *           | "         | 117.4                  | 127.5    |
| 1691-1700 | "                     |       | " *           | "         | 133.1                  | 130.6    |
| 1701-10   | "                     |       | " *           | "         | 142.9                  | 142.6    |
| 1703      | SC                    |       | Col *         | G 172-3   | 166.7                  |          |
| 1708      | SC                    |       | " *           | "         | 163.6                  |          |
| 1710-20   | MD                    |       | Inv *         | M 43      | 166.7                  | 145.7    |
| 1726      | SC                    |       | Par *         | W 161     | 128.7                  |          |
| 1726      |                       | NJ    | Col           | MC 212    |                        | 125.2    |
| 1721-30   | MD                    |       | Inv *         | M 43      | 144.7                  | 131.6    |
| 1730-1    | SC                    |       | Inv *         | W 154     | 179.7                  |          |
| 1732      |                       | IL    | Col *         | G 187     | 206.1                  |          |
| 1745      |                       | NJ    | Col *         | MC 213    |                        | 128.2    |
| 1754-5    |                       | MA    | Col *         | MC 199    | 163.7                  |          |
| 1754      | NC                    |       | Col           | G 157,162 | 146.9                  |          |
| 1755      | MD                    |       | Col           | G 126     | 121.1                  | 109.0    |
| 1755      |                       | RI    | Col           | G 67      | 100.9                  | 103.3    |
| 1764      |                       | MA    | Col           | MC 199    |                        | 135.9    |
| 1767      |                       | IL    | Part          | G 188     | 175.3                  |          |
| 1771      | GA                    |       | Pl 11*        | F 43      | 112.8                  | 127.4    |
| 1771      |                       | NY    | Col           | MC 210    | 115.0                  |          |
| 1772      |                       | NJ    | Part          | MC 213    |                        | 124.0    |
| 1773      |                       | NH    | Col *         | MC 200    |                        | 128.5    |
| 1780-1    | GA                    |       | Pl 2*         | F 44      | 161.2                  |          |
| 1786      |                       | NY    |               | MC 210    |                        | 101.6    |
| 1820      | U.S. Black Population |       |               | C         | 101.7                  | 103.4    |
| 1830      | "                     | "     | "             | "         | 99.6                   | 100.3    |
| 1840      | "                     | "     | "             | "         | 99.0                   | 99.5     |
| 1850      | "                     | "     | "             | "         | 98.5                   | 99.1     |
| 1860      | "                     | "     | "             | "         | 99.0                   | 99.6     |

SOURCES AND NOTES:

Sources are indicated by initial letter followed by page reference.

C U.S.Census

F Flanders, Plantation Slavery in Georgia

G E.B.Greene and V.D.Harrington, American Population Before the Federal Census of 1790 (New York, 1932)

M R.R.Menard, "The Maryland Slave Population, 1658 to 1730: A Demographic Profile of Blacks in Four Counties", William and Mary Quarterly, XXXII (1975)

MC E.J.McManus, Black Bondage in the North (Syracuse, 1973)

W Wood, "More Like a Negro Country"

a Sex ratio is defined as the number of males per 100 females

b For the eighteenth century the "adult" category usually comprises those of 16 years and older. "Adult" classifications for 1820 to 1860 were dependent upon the nature of census enumeration categories. "Adult" represents for 1820 those 14 years and over; for 1830 and 1840 those 10 years and over, and for 1850 and 1860 those 15 years and over.

\* Denotes slave population only. Other entries include free blacks.

IL "Illinois country"

Col Covers whole colony or state

Part Covers part of colony or state

Par Covers one parish

Inv Covers substantial sample of colony's probate inventories

Pl II Covers 11 rice plantations

Pl 2 Covers 2 plantations

their familiarity with sugar cultivation and their knowledge of Spanish would have been of little value in the bulk of the United States, acclimatized Cuban slaves would in fact have been at a disadvantage in the American market.<sup>22</sup>

Had substantial numbers of illegally imported slaves worked on North American plantations, such a situation would surely have been commented on by Abolitionists. The fact that in 1870, out of a total enumerated black population of five million, less than 10,000 were reported as having been foreign born - most of them no doubt coming to the United States by legal means - suggests that illicit slave importations from African, the West Indies, and Latin America can, in the period 1820 to 1860, have had no significant effect upon North American slave demography.<sup>23</sup>

The assessment of Colonization, the second factor which might have disturbed U.S. slave survival rates, seems to be relatively uncomplicated. Colonization was a formal legal process, and was sponsored by societies whose officers recorded the progress of slave emigration from the U.S. The history of Colonization is, therefore, fairly well documented, and its limited numerical significance has been accepted by historians. According to the statistics of the American Colonization Society's fifty-second Annual Report (1869), less than 10,000 colonists went from America to Liberia in the period 1817 to 1860.<sup>24</sup>

A third factor acting upon the American slave population was the flight of slaves from their masters. The numbers of successful fugitives appear, however, to have been very small indeed. In recording individual slave-holdings, the enumerators at the seventh and eighth censuses were required to enter "the

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22. Slave importations into southern Louisiana, the United States' only important cane sugar producing area, are accounted for by the inter-regional slave trade of the South. See Chapter I, above.

23. The Statistics of the Population of the United States...Nineth Census (Washington, D.C., 1872), Table VI, p.336.

24. See P.J.Staudenraus, The African Colonization Movement, 1816-1865 (New York, 1961), p.251.

number of slaves who, having absconded within the year, have not been recovered".<sup>25</sup> For the year preceding the 1850 census about a thousand such fugitives were reported, and for the year preceding the 1860 census the total fell to 803. Significantly, censuses show that the numbers of fugitives per head of slave population were only moderately higher in the slave exporting as compared with the slave importing states. In 1849-50 the number of reported fugitives per hundred slaves of population was 0.035 for the exporting states and 0.025 for the importing states: in 1859-60 a reported fugitive rate of 0.022 in the exporting states compared with a reported rate of 0.018 in the importing section. These statistics suggest that for the purposes of survival rate calculations the effects of the flight of slaves from the exporting states would have largely been cancelled out by the effects of flights from importing states such as Texas, Arkansas, and Florida. The fact that some 75 per cent of fugitives would have been male makes it possible further to delimit the effects of fugitives on survival rate calculations.<sup>26</sup> By the use of such calculations, the somewhat higher per capita fugitive rate of the exporting states would have tended to increase the numbers of males apparently transferred to the importing area. African slave importations into the Lower South would have had a similar tendency. The calculations presented in this study indicate, however, that in the inter-regional slave movement of the 1820 to 1850 period the excess of male over female slaves was very slight and was almost completely accounted for by importations into the sugar producing area of Louisiana. Slave fugitives, like illegal slave importations and like black colonists emigrating from America, can, therefore, have had no significant influence upon the American slave demography of the period 1820 to 1860.

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25. See The Seventh Census of the United States: 1850 (Washington, D.C., 1853), p.xxiii. For 1850 and 1860 fugitive statistics, see Preliminary Report of The Eighth Census (Washington, D.C., 1862), pp.11-2, 137.

26. Mullin, Blassingame, Gutman, and Meanders, using either runaway advertisement or Underground Railroad records, all reported that about 75 per cent of fugitives were male. See G.Mullin, Flight and Rebellion: Slave Resistance in Eighteenth-Century Virginia (London, 1972), p.40; J.W.Blassingame, The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Ante-Bellum South (New York, 1972), pp.113-4; Gutman, The Black Family, p.239; and D.E.Meanders, "South Carolina Fugitives as Viewed through Local Colonial Newspapers, with Emphasis on Runaway Notices, 1732-1801", Journal of Negro History, XXX (1975), p.292.

The numbers of slaves manumitted appear to have been far larger than the numbers of smuggled slaves, slave colonists, and slave fugitives. Nevertheless, in the period 1820 to 1860, manumissions can have had only a limited impact upon slave demography. In the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, Revolutionary ideals, religious reform movements, and, perhaps too, a period of low economic returns from slavery, encouraged high rates of manumission. This according to federal censuses, produced very high free Negro decennial growth rates of 82.2 per cent for the 1790s and 71.9 per cent for the following decade. As religious and Revolutionary zeal waned, as Northern slavery and hence Northern emancipation became virtually extinct, as new economic expansion took place in the South; and, especially after the Turner rebellion, as the South established stiff legal barriers against manumission, the growth rates of the free Negro population fell dramatically. For the period 1810 to 1820 the free Negro growth rate was 25.3 per cent; for the 1820s it was 36.8 per cent; for the 1830s it was 20.9 per cent; for the 1840s it was 12.5 per cent; and for the 1850s the growth rate was 12.3 per cent. During most of the post-1820 period, the free Negro growth rate was far lower than that for the slave population whose decennial growth rate, for the period concerned, averaged about 27 per cent. Special factors tended to depress the growth rate of the free black population. A minor factor was the loss of free Negroes and newly manumitted slaves through emigration to Liberia. Somewhat more important, the free black population had a slightly unbalanced sex ratio ; and, probably of prime importance, the Free Negro population was on average rather older than the slave population. In addition, a higher proportion of the free Negro population than the slave population lived in towns and, partly because of the ease with which diseases could spread in crowded communities, was probably subject to inferior health as a result. These several factors tended to discourage a high rate of natural increase in the late ante-bellum free black

population.<sup>27</sup> The free black growth rate, especially in the 1830 to 1860 period, was so low, however, that even when the above factors are considered there can have been, by means of manumission, no very large scale reduction of the ranks of the Southern slave population. Published studies of the free Negro in the United States very strongly support this conclusion.<sup>28</sup>

An appropriate quantification of Southern slave manumissions in the 1820s is made possible by comparing free Negro survival rates with the survival rates of the black population as a whole. Such calculations suggest that in the 1820s something like 20,000 Southern slaves were freed.<sup>29</sup> The censuses of 1850 and 1860 provide specific numerical estimates of manumission in the 1850s. On the basis of manumissions reported to have taken place in the year preceding the 1850 census and in the year preceding the 1860 census, the superintendent of the 1860 census estimated that 20,000 manumissions took place in the 1850s.<sup>30</sup> Statistics in part IV of this chapter will show that the numbers of decennial manumissions were equal to only a very small part of the numbers of decennial inter-regional slave movements.

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27. The fact that, in the 1850s for example, the gap between free Negro and slave survival rates (rates of 82.9 and 85.3 per cent respectively) was much less marked than the gap between the growth rates of the two populations (rates of 12.3 and 23.4 per cent respectively) suggests that the poor demographic performance of the free Negro population stemmed essentially, not from unusually high free Negro mortality rates but - because of age and sex structure - from the failure of the free Negro population to achieve a high birth rate.
  28. The most recent and most comprehensive is a fine study by I. Berlin, Slaves without Masters: The Free Negro in the Old South (New York, 1974). Other valuable studies include J.H. Russell, The Free Negro in Virginia, 1619-1865 (Baltimore, 1913); and L.W. Brown, Free Negroes in the District of Columbia, 1790-1846 (New York, 1972).
  29. In the 1820s, United States free Negro survival rates were substantially higher than survival rates for the black population as a whole. The excess of free Negro survival rates in this decade is attributable, wholly or almost wholly, to the liberation of slaves. By attributing this excess to the manumission and emancipation of slaves, it is estimated that about 30,000 slaves received their freedom during the 1820 to 1829 period. Since the Northern slave population, partly as a result of sales to the South, but mainly as a result of statutory emancipation, fell in this decade from about 20,000 to less than 4,000, at least one third of the decade's 30,000 liberations must be attributed to Northern emancipations. For a discussion of Northern emancipations as well as of sales to the South, see R.W. Fogel and S.L. Engerman, "Philanthropy at Bargain Prices: Notes on the Economics of Gradual Emancipation", The Journal of Legal Studies, III (1974), pp.371-401.
  30. Preliminary Report of the Eighth Census (Washington D.C., 1864), pp.11,137.

An examination of the geographical distribution of manumissions indicates that manumissions can, in fact, have only a very limited influence upon the estimates of inter-regional slave movement which are arrived at by survival rate calculations. Per capita rates of manumission seem to have been somewhat higher in the slave population of the net exporting states than in the slave population of the net importing states. Statistics presented in the Preliminary Report of the Eighth Census indicate that in 1850 the net exporting states, while accounting for 64.7 per cent of the South's slave population, accounted for 82.3 per cent of the South's manumissions. In 1860, with 69.4 per cent of the South's slave population, the net exporting states accounted for 57.58 per cent of manumissions.<sup>31</sup> These statistics suggest that, in addition to those manumissions of the importing states which in survival rate calculations of slave movement would have been cancelled out by manumissions in the net exporting states, the Upper South accounted for something like a further 15 per cent of total Southern manumissions. This 15 per cent, or 3000 manumissions, distributed over several cohorts, would have had very little impact upon the survival rate estimates of the volume and structure of inter-regional slave movements. For the 1820s, too, the relationship between Upper and Lower South per capita rates of manumission probably meant that, so far as survival rate calculations are concerned, the effect of manumission was of minor importance.

Evidence on the ages at which slaves were manumitted indicates, furthermore, that to the extent which manumissions will have disturbed the survival rate calculations which are presented later in this chapter they are particularly likely to have exaggerated the significance of the inter-regional transfer of middle-aged and older slaves. It will be seen that such a tendency would have had the effect of exaggerating the significance of planter migration in relation to the age-selective domestic slave trade. Federal censuses indirectly provide evidence on the ages of slaves at manumission. Such censuses indicate that the free Negro population was, on average, older than the slave population;

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31. Preliminary Report of the Eighth Census, p.137.



and, according to the 1850 census, children of under 10 years accounted for 32 per cent of the slave population and only 27 per cent of the free Negro population. The structures of the 10 years and over free Negro and slave populations suggest that the older free Negro age groups were, at a much more important rate than the younger groups, supplemented by slave manumissions. In the free Negro and slave populations of 10 years and older in 1850, those aged from 10 to 14 accounted respectively for 16.6 and 20.0 per cent; those aged 15 to 19 accounted for 13.9 and 16.3 per cent; those aged 20 to 29 accounted for 24.6 and 26.2 per cent; those aged 30 to 39 accounted for 17.5 and 16.2 per cent; those aged 40 to 49 accounted for 12.0 and 10.1 per cent; and those of 50 years and older accounted for 15.4 and 11.2 per cent.

In several states laws were passed which sought to discourage the manumission of slaves who were aged from about 45 or 50 years and older. One such law, passed in Maryland in 1796, declared that owners should only liberate slaves who were aged 45 years or less and who, on being liberated, were "able to work and gain sufficient maintenance and livelihood". A Virginia law of 1782 required that owners should make special provision for the welfare of any slaves of 45 years and older who were freed. While the passing of such laws indicated that owners did seek to manumit numbers of slaves who were 45 years and older, the restrictive provisions of such legislature rarely seem to have been enforced. The Baltimore editor Hezekiah Niles was critical of the practice of liberating "worn-out" slaves - slaves probably substantially older than 45 - and maintained:

The larger part of the apparent disproportion of old free Negroes arises from the unpleasant and oppressive fact - that aged and infirmed and worn-out slaves from all parts of the state [of Maryland] are turned to Baltimore, to live if they can or die if they must.

Similarly in 1858, the Richmond Daily Dispatch lamented that "old negroes, like old horses, are often turned loose to go where they wish". In her study of the free Negro in the District of Columbia, Letitia Woods Brown noted that courts, partly because of the lack of specific evidence on slave ages, found

age restrictions on manumission virtually unenforceable.<sup>32</sup>

Whether achieved as a result of the master's benevolence or indifference towards his servants, a substantial majority of manumissions appear to have followed long periods of service, so that, on receiving freedom, slaves would very commonly have been middle-aged or older. In his study of New Orleans manumissions of the 1846 to 1850 period, Richard Wade found that the grounds for manumission were usually "long, important, and faithful services". J.G. Taylor found the same to have been the case for Louisiana generally, and noted that a Louisiana Act of 1807 prohibited the manumission of all slaves under 30 years of age except those who had saved the life of their master. Ira Berlin found that, in the South generally, "before they freed their slaves, most masters were determined to wring full value from them." As a result, "many emancipated Negroes were old, decrepit, and unable to support themselves." K.L. Carroll and J.R. Brackett found that in Maryland, instead of granting manumission outright, there was a strong tendency for freedom to be made conditional on a stated period of service. Similarly, in his study of manumission in Tennessee, J.M. England found that, with manumissions by will, freedom very commonly was conditional upon substantial periods of service to the heirs of the testator. So far as survival rate calculations are concerned, then, manumissions, because of their age structure and because they were more important in the Upper South than in the Lower South, tended to exaggerate the exportation from the Upper South of middle-aged and older slaves.<sup>33</sup>

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32. See Brown, Free Negroes, p.75 (on the Maryland law of 1796); Russell, Free Negro in Virginia, p.82 (on the Virginia law of 1782); Niles's Weekly Register, 16 Jan.1830; Richmond Dispatch, cited in Berlin, Slaves Without Masters, p.153; Brown, Free Negroes, pp.91-2.
33. Wade, Slavery in the Cities, p.265; Taylor, Negro Slavery in Louisiana, pp.153-4; Berlin, Slaves Without Masters, p.152; K.L. Carroll, "Religious Influences on the Manumission of Slaves in Caroline, Dorchester, and Talbot Counties", Maryland Historical Magazine, LVI (1961), pp.176-97; Brackett, The Negro in Maryland, pp.160-70; J.M. England, "The Free Negro in Tennessee", Journal of Southern History, IX (1943), pp.37-58. On the manumission of middle-aged and older slaves, see also B.J. Klebaner, "American Manumission Laws and the Responsibility for Supporting Slaves", Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, LXIII (1955), pp.443-53; and see Genovese, Roll, Jordan, Roll, p.520.

The foregoing survey of factors of potential demographic significance indicates that in the period 1820 to 1860 American slaves made up an essentially closed population. Atlantic slave trade importations, the colonization of slaves, and slave fugitives - factors which might to some extent have tended to exaggerate the transfer to the Lower South of young adult slaves - were of very slight importance, and the significance of such factors must have been fully counter-balanced by the effects of manumission. Indeed, although the American slave population of 1820 to 1860 can for most purposes be treated as a closed population, the net effect of factors tending to intrude upon the closed nature of that population was probably - as a result of manumissions - slightly to exaggerate the inter-regional transfer of middle-aged and older slaves, and hence slightly to exaggerate the demographic significance of planter migration in relation to that of the age-selective domestic slave trade.

#### IV(ii) MORTALITY RATES AND CENSUS ACCURACY

In addition to requiring a closed or essentially closed population, survival rate calculations of inter-regional population movement assume that between population sub-groups being compared there were no significant differences in age-specific and sex-specific mortality rates, and assume that between these sub-groups there were no significant differences in the degree of accuracy of census enumeration. For the American slave population of 1820 to 1860, these assumptions appear to be fully justified. Yasukichi Yasuba, in a detailed study of ante-bellum demography, found that, for whites, regional variations in life expectancy were very slight, and found that such variations as did exist were mainly attributable to differences between urban and rural mortality rates.<sup>34</sup> Since the American slave population was almost completely rural, significant state-by-state variations in age-specific and in sex-specific mortality rates are very unlikely to have occurred. If, as seems improbable,

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34. Y. Yasuba, Birth Rates of the White Population of the United States, 1800-1860 (Baltimore, 1962), pp.73-86.

there was any truth in the Abolitionist claim that significant numbers of Louisiana and Mississippi masters "worked their slaves to death in seven years", such a practice would, however, so far as survival rate calculations are concerned, have tended to under-represent the extent of the inter-regional slave movement - and in particular the movement of those of slave trading age. In almost all cases, any slight state-by-state variations in specific mortality rates and in census accuracy are likely to be cancelled out by the practice adopted in the principal calculations of the present study - that of dealing with states not individually but according to two broad regional divisions, the net slave exporting and the net slave importing areas. At the same time, it will be seen that because of the small numbers of slaves involved and because of vagueness over the ages of senior slaves, survival rate transfer statistics for individual cohorts of older slaves are somewhat unreliable. The unreliability of evidence on these individual cohorts will be avoided by combining older slaves in one broad 40 years and over/50 years and over age cohort.

#### IV(iii) THE VOLUME OF THE TOTAL INTER-REGIONAL SLAVE MOVEMENT: THE 1820s AND 1850s

It is now possible to calculate the overall extent of the inter-regional slave movements which took place in the 1820s and the 1850s. Basic calculations indicate that in the 1820s Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Kentucky, and the District of Columbia were net exporters of slaves; while Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, and Tennessee were net importers. Calculations show that by the 1850s Tennessee and Georgia had joined the ranks of the net exporters, while Florida and Texas had been added to the net importing states. Figure 2.1 provides, for the 1850s, a detailed description of net exporting and net importing areas. In that map, slave movements involving Georgia, Alabama, and Missouri - states with significant areas both of net exportation and of net importation - are indicated on a county

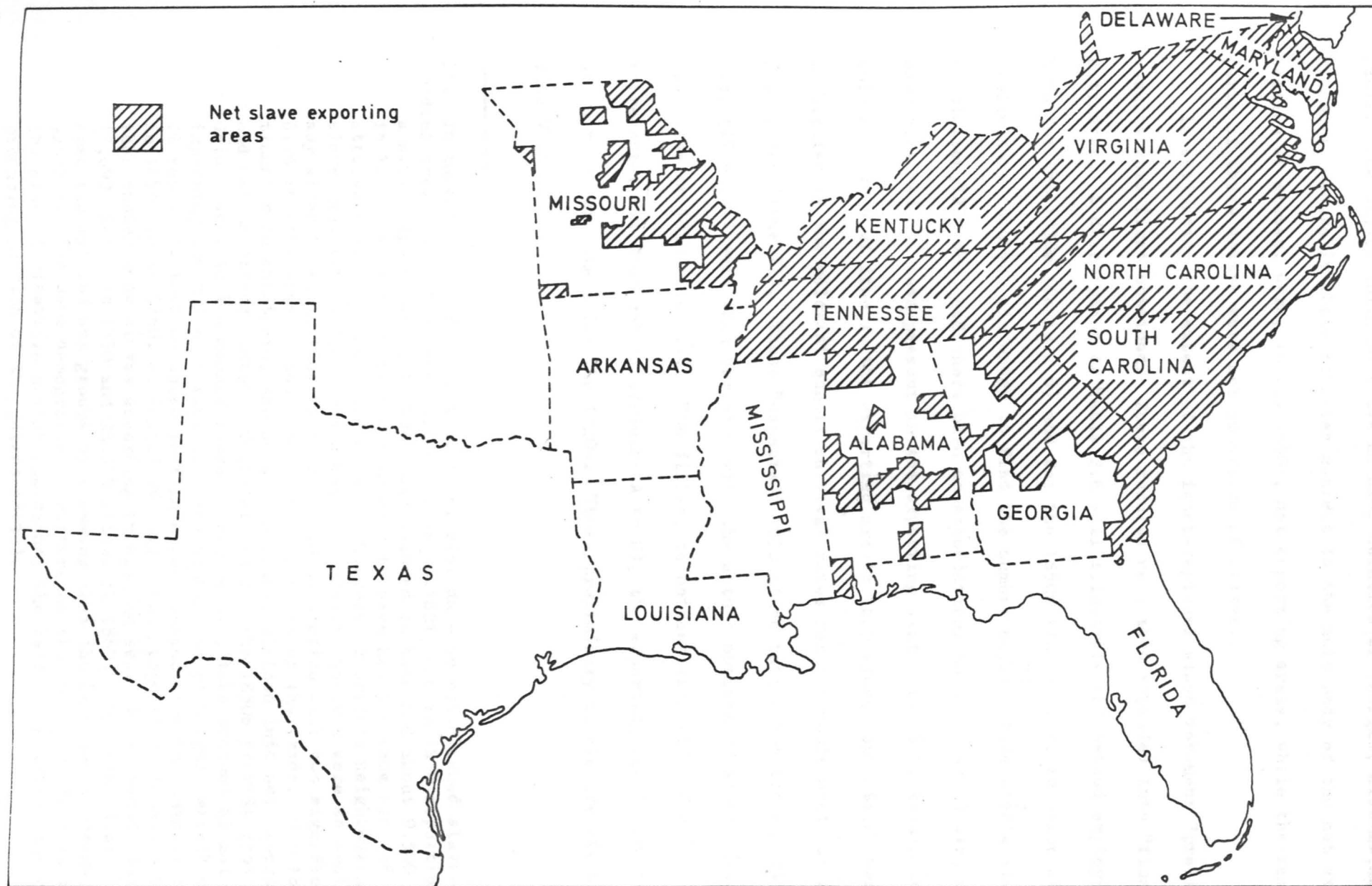


Figure 2.1 PRINCIPAL SLAVE EXPORTING AREAS, 1850-1859

basis. The old-established slave holding counties of Georgia, Alabama, and Missouri, generally those counties nearest to the main body of the net exporting section of states, were, in the 1850s, net exporting areas, while the remaining parts of these states were net importers of slaves.

In estimating the extent of the inter-regional slave movement "preliminary" results were first obtained. These results were then expanded into "final" estimates. A description of Table 2.6 will illustrate the method employed, both for the 1820s (Table 2.6) and for the 1850s (Table 2.7), in calculating preliminary results. In order to find the number of <sup>the</sup> exporting area's slave population <sup>of</sup> /1820 who, had there been no exportations to the Lower South, should have survived and been present in the exporting states in 1830, totals in columns A to H of line I (the exporting area's 1820 slave population) were multiplied by the relevant cohort survival rates for the whole Southern slave population (line II). These "expected" 1830 slave totals for the exporting area (line III) were then compared with the actual numbers of slaves held in that area in 1830 (line IV). The difference between lines IV and III represents, for each cohort (columns A to H), the exporting area's preliminary slave transfer totals for the 1820s. These preliminary totals are given in line V.<sup>35</sup>

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35. In calculations of 1820s transfers, Florida - an established slave-holding area acquired by the United States in 1821, and in 1830 reporting a slave population of 15,501 - was assumed to have had about 9,500 slaves in 1820. This population was assumed to have had the same age and sex structure as the slave population of Georgia, Florida's neighbouring slave importing state. The numbers of slaves involved were so small that any error in estimating Florida's 1820 population will not significantly disturb estimates of the extent and structure of the trade. For 1820s transfer calculations, the South was simply divided into net exporting and net importing states. Calculations for the 1850s provide greater detail and, in the manner shown in Figure 2.1, take account of net importing and net exporting counties within the principal "mixed" states. It should further be noted that in a few instances census authorities, in 1850 and in 1860, estimated overall county population totals rather than enumerating slaves according to age and sex. These county totals (3,692 slaves in 1850 and 26,086 slaves in 1860) have been allocated to specific age and sex groups by assuming that the counties concerned exhibited the same demographic structure as the parent state (or, in the case of Bienville parish Louisiana, the same structure as the cotton producing portion of the parent state).

TABLE 2.6 PRELIMINARY ESTIMATES OF THE OVERALL INTER-REGIONAL SLAVE MOVEMENT, 1820-1829

|  | A       | B       | C       | D      | E       | F       | G       | H      |
|--|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|---------|---------|--------|
| Age in 1820  | 0-13    | 14-25   | 26-44   | 45+    | 0-13    | 14-25   | 26-44   | 45+    |
| Age in 1830  | 10-23   | 24-35   | 36-54   | 55+    | 10-23   | 24-35   | 36-54   | 55+    |
|  | Male    |         |         |        | Female  |         |         |        |
| I 1820 Slave Population of Net Exporting States            | 256,227 | 146,218 | 119,144 | 59,557 | 241,478 | 144,037 | 111,570 | 55,430 |
| II Southern Slave Survival Rate for 1820s                  | .911    | .921    | .728    | .550   | .952    | .924    | .735    | .602   |
| III Expected 1830 Slave Population of Net Exporting States | 233,423 | 134,667 | 86,737  | 32,756 | 229,887 | 133,090 | 82,004  | 33,369 |
| IV Actual 1830 Slave Population of Exporting States        | 198,701 | 116,264 | 80,479  | 31,259 | 195,415 | 116,738 | 76,207  | 31,870 |
| V Slave Exportations ( Preliminary Totals )                | 34,722  | 18,403  | 6,258   | 1,497  | 34,472  | 16,352  | 5,797   | 1,499  |

SOURCES: U.S. Census Reports, 1820 and 1830

TABLE 2.7 PRELIMINARY ESTIMATES OF THE OVERALL INTER-REGIONAL SLAVE MOVEMENT, 1850-1859

|             | A       |         | B       |         | C       |         | D       |         | E       |         | F       |        | G       |        | H       |        | I      |        | J       |         | K    |        | L    |        | M    |        | N    |        | O    |        | P    |        | Q    |        | R    |        | S |  | T |  |
|-------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|--------|---------|--------|--------|--------|---------|---------|------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|---|--|---|--|
| Age in 1850 | 0 - 4   |         | 5 - 9   |         | 10 - 19 |         | 20 - 29 |         | 30 - 39 |         | 40 - 49 |        | 50 - 59 |        | 60 - 69 |        | 70+    |        | 40+     |         |      |        |      |        |      |        |      |        |      |        |      |        |      |        |      |        |   |  |   |  |
| Age in 1860 | 10 - 14 |         | 15 - 19 |         | 20 - 29 |         | 30 - 39 |         | 40 - 49 |         | 50 - 59 |        | 60 - 69 |        | 70 - 79 |        | 80+    |        | 50+     |         |      |        |      |        |      |        |      |        |      |        |      |        |      |        |      |        |   |  |   |  |
|             | Male    | Female  | Male    | Female  | Male    | Female  | Male    | Female  | Male    | Female  | Male    | Female | Male    | Female | Male    | Female | Male   | Female | Male    | Female  | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female | Male | Female |   |  |   |  |
| I           | 135,306 | 189,435 | 166,981 | 167,476 | 278,842 | 277,088 | 192,346 | 187,608 | 113,563 | 116,793 | 73,263  | 76,024 | 47,343  | 45,608 | 27,783  | 27,419 | 14,961 | 16,658 | 163,350 | 165,709 |      |        |      |        |      |        |      |        |      |        |      |        |      |        |      |        |   |  |   |  |
| II          | 1.043   | .972    | .927    | .958    | .899    | .872    | .759    | .785    | .808    | .783    | .735    | .688   | .712    | .717   | .407    | .431   | .343   | .384   | .642    | .628    |      |        |      |        |      |        |      |        |      |        |      |        |      |        |      |        |   |  |   |  |
| III         | 193,274 | 184,179 | 154,791 | 160,442 | 250,679 | 241,621 | 145,991 | 147,272 | 91,759  | 91,449  | 53,848  | 52,305 | 33,708  | 32,701 | 11,308  | 11,818 | 5,132  | 6,397  | 104,871 | 104,065 |      |        |      |        |      |        |      |        |      |        |      |        |      |        |      |        |   |  |   |  |
| IV          | 172,753 | 164,793 | 133,098 | 136,641 | 202,353 | 196,824 | 125,490 | 130,220 | 82,187  | 83,597  | 50,875  | 49,807 | 30,239  | 29,891 | 10,876  | 11,322 | 4,473  | 5,757  | 96,463  | 96,777  |      |        |      |        |      |        |      |        |      |        |      |        |      |        |      |        |   |  |   |  |
| V           | 20,521  | 19,386  | 21,693  | 23,801  | 48,326  | 44,797  | 20,501  | 17,052  | 9,572   | 7,852   | 2,973   | 2,498  | 3,469   | 2,810  | 432     | 496    | 659    | 610    | 8,408   | 7,288   |      |        |      |        |      |        |      |        |      |        |      |        |      |        |      |        |   |  |   |  |

SOURCES: U.S. Census Reports, 1850 and 1860.

- REFERENCES:
- I 1850 Slave Population of Net Exporting Area.
  - II U.S. Slave Survival Rate for 1850s.
  - III Expected 1860 Slave Population of Net Exporting Area.
  - IV Actual 1860 Slave Population of Net Exporting Area.
  - V Slave Exportations (Preliminary Totals).



The preliminary exportation totals indicated in Table 2.6 represent those inter-regional slave transfers who survived to 1830 and who at the census of that year were aged 10 years or older. In order to arrive at final transfer estimates it will be necessary to take account of two further groups of slave transfers: those slaves who, recorded in the exporting states at the 1820 census, moved to the importing states during the 1820s but who were no longer alive by the 1830 census, and those slaves born in the exporting states during the 1820s and by 1830 transferred to the importing states. By an examination of mortality rates and fertility ratios it is possible to take account of these two groups of slave transfers.

An estimate of the numbers of slaves transferred during a particular decade but not surviving to the end of that decade must take into consideration the mortality rate to which slaves, after having been transferred, would have been exposed. Had a majority of transfers taken place in the second half of the decade concerned, those slaves, after having been transferred, would have been subject to a lower mortality rate than would have been the case if a majority had been transferred in the first half of the decade. Evidence on annual slave population growth rates (and hence on slave exportation rates) is available for South Carolina and provides a valuable illustration of annual exportation patterns. This evidence, covering the 1830 to 1860 period and summarised in Figure 8.1, shows that trends in slave exportation from South Carolina very closely paralleled trends in slave price levels; and, as Chapter VIII shows, those price levels were for the most part a reflection of cotton price trends and of consequent fluctuations in the Lower South's level of demand for slaves. Figure 8.1 shows that, just as the Lower South's demand for slaves was significantly higher in the second half of the 1850s than the first half, so South Carolina's slave exportation rate was significantly higher in the later part of the decade. In Chapter VIII, a discussion of the decennial growth rates of the combined slave exporting area will demonstrate that, in the very close correlation between slave price trends and trends in rates of slave exportation, South Carolina was typical of the slave exporting

states. The relatively depressed demand for slaves in the early 1820s (see 1820s slave prices plotted in Figure 7.1) and the trends of the 1850s in slave prices and in South Carolina's exportation rates (see Figure 8.1) indicate that in both the 1820s and the 1850s a majority of slave exportations would have taken place in the second half of the decade. From these indications it is assumed that, both for the 1820s and the 1850s, something like 65 per cent of transfers are attributable to the second half of the decade concerned; and it is assumed that, after having been transferred to the importing states, these slaves would typically have been subject to 35 per cent of their cohort's mortality rate for that decade. On the basis of these assumptions, the preliminary transfer totals indicated in tables 2.6 and 2.7 - and relating to slaves aged 10 years and older at the end of the decade concerned - are expanded to produce the final totals which appear in tables 2.8 and 2.9.<sup>36</sup>

It remains to calculate the number of slave children born in the exporting area during the 1820s or 1850s and, by the end of the decade concerned, transferred to the importing area. The use of fertility ratios, that is ratios which compare the number of children to the number of women of child-bearing age, provides a basis for such calculations. These estimates rely on the assumption that in slave populations unaffected by net inter-regional slave movements there should be similar fertility ratios. If after accounting for the transfer to the importing states of a given number of slave women, the apparent fertility ratio of the net exporting area falls below the Southern norm, this divergence is considered to be attributable to the transfer from the Upper South of a proportion of the slave children born in that exporting area during the decade concerned.<sup>37</sup>

The fertility ratio which has been employed for the 1850s is that of slave children under 10 years to slave women aged 15 to 49 years. For the 1820s,

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36. Statistics based on alternative assumptions will also be given below.

37. A widespread Upper South specialisation in the breeding of slaves for exportation would have rendered the above comparison inappropriate. Chapter IX will argue, however, that there was no significant regional specialisation in slave breeding.

TABLE 2.8 EXPORTATION RATES AND FINAL ESTIMATES OF INTER-REGIONAL SLAVE TRANSFERS, 1820-1829

| Ages in 1820<br>Age in 1830                          | 0-9                  | 0 - 13  |         | 14 - 25 |         | 26 - 44 |         | 45+    |        | All Ages<br>All Ages   |
|--|----------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|--------|------------------------|
|  |                      | 10 - 23 |         | 24 - 35 |         | 36 - 54 |         | 55+    |        |                        |
|  | M+F                  | Male    | Female  | Male    | Female  | Male    | Female  | Male   | Female | M+F                    |
| I Transfer Totals                                    | 30,994               | 35,804  | 35,051  | 18,912  | 16,787  | 6,854   | 6,335   | 1,733  | 1,708  | 154,178 <sup>c</sup>   |
| II 1820 Slave Popu-<br>lation of Exporting<br>States | 492,438 <sup>a</sup> | 256,227 | 241,478 | 146,218 | 144,037 | 119,144 | 111,570 | 59,557 | 55,430 | 1,626,099 <sup>b</sup> |
| III Rate of Exportation<br>(I as % of II)            | 6.29                 | 13.97   | 14.52   | 12.93   | 11.65   | 5.75    | 5.68    | 2.91   | 3.08   | 9.48                   |

NOTES:

M + F Combined male and female statistics

a Exporting States' 0 - 9 slave population of 1830, plus 0 - 9 transfers of 1820s

b Exporting States' 1820 slave population, with their 0-9 year old slaves of 1830 and their 0-9 transfers of 1820s

c Total made up of 78,800 males and 75,378 females

Had it been assumed that some 65% of slave transfers for those 10 years and older in 1830 had taken place in the first half of the 1820s, and that transferred slaves, after arriving in the importing states, had been subject to 65% of that decade's mortality rate, the following transfer rates (given in the same order as in Line III, above) would apparently have obtained:

2.39; 14.34; 14.72; 13.23; 11.91; 6.18; 6.09; 3.25; 3.40; 8.60.

Most transfer rates would have been very similar to those given in Line III, with the child transfer rate, however, being markedly lower than that in Line III.

TABLE 2.9 EXPORTATION RATES AND FINAL ESTIMATES OF INTER-REGIONAL SLAVE TRANSFERS, 1850-1859

| Age in 1850<br>Age in 1860                 | 0 - 4                |         | 5 - 9   |         | 10 - 19 |         | 20 - 29 |         | 30 - 39 |         |         |
|--|----------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
|  | 0-9                  | 10 - 14 | 15 - 19 | 20 - 29 | 30 - 39 | 40 - 49 |         |         |         |         |         |
|  | M+F                  | Male    | Female  | Male    | Female  | Male    | Female  | Male    | Female  | Male    | Female  |
| I Transfer Totals                          | 50,469               | 20,212  | 19,576  | 22,247  | 24,151  | 50,034  | 46,804  | 22,230  | 18,335  | 10,215  | 8,448   |
| II 1850 Slave Population of Exporting Area | 802,770 <sup>a</sup> | 185,306 | 189,485 | 166,981 | 167,476 | 278,842 | 277,088 | 192,346 | 187,608 | 113,563 | 116,793 |
| III Rate of Exportation (I as % of II)     | 6.29                 | 10.91   | 10.33   | 13.32   | 14.42   | 17.94   | 16.89   | 11.56   | 9.77    | 9.00    | 7.23    |

| Age in 1850<br>Age in 1860                 | 40 - 49 |         | 50 - 59 |        | 60 - 69 |        | 70+    |        | 40+     |         | All Ages<br>All Ages   |
|--|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|--------|--------|--------|---------|---------|------------------------|
|  | 50 - 59 | 60 - 69 | 70 - 79 | 80+    | 50+     |        |        |        |         |         |                        |
|  | Male    | Female  | Male    | Female | Male    | Female | Male   | Female | Male    | Female  | M+F                    |
| I Transfer Totals                          | 3,249   | 2,771   | 3,819   | 3,088  | 522     | 595    | 811    | 742    | 9,461   | 8,237   | 308,318 <sup>c</sup>   |
| II 1850 Slave Population of Exporting Area | 73,263  | 76,024  | 47,343  | 45,608 | 27,783  | 27,419 | 14,961 | 16,658 | 163,350 | 165,709 | 3,007,317 <sup>b</sup> |
| III Rate of Exportation (I as % of II)     | 4.43    | 3.64    | 8.07    | 6.77   | 1.88    | 2.17   | 5.42   | 4.45   | 5.79    | 4.97    | 10.25                  |

NOTES:

M+F Combined male and female statistics

a Exporting area's 0 - 9 slave population of 1860, plus 0 - 9 transfers of 1850s

b Exporting area's 1850 slave population, with their 0 to 9 year old slaves of 1860 and their 0 - 9 transfers of 1850s

c Total made up of 158,574 males and 149,744 females

Had it been assumed that some 65% of slave transfers for those 10 years and older in 1860 had taken place in the first half of the 1850s, and that transferred slaves, after arriving in the importing states, had been subject to 65% of that decade's mortality rate, the following transfer rates (given in the same order as in III, above) would apparently have obtained:

1.75; 10.76; 10.42; 13.61; 14.60; 18.47; 17.51; 12.33; 10.36; 9.48; 7.66;  
4.76; 3.95; 8.70; 7.29; 2.16; 2.48; 6.28; 5.13; 6.35; 5.46; 9.43.

Most transfer rates would have been very similar to those given in Line III entries, with the child transfer rate, however, being markedly lower than that in Line III.

when censuses used broader age enumeration categories the ratio of children under 10 years to females of 10 to 54 years has been adopted.<sup>38</sup> The example of the 1850s will illustrate the method employed in calculating child transfers. It is found that in 1860 the South's slave fertility ratio norm was 132.02 children per 100 women of 15 to 49 years. At the same date, in the net exporting area, the number of slave children of 0 to 9 years was 752,301 and the number of slave women of 15 to 49 was 547,282. It has been established that of the total Southern slave population of females surviving to 1860 and aged in that year from 15 to 49 years a proportion will, during the 1850s, have been transferred from the net exporting to the net importing states. The examination of annual slave transfer patterns for the 1850s suggests that, on average, these surviving female transfers will, during the decade concerned, have spent 6.5 years in the exporting area and the remainder in the importing area. During this decade, then, the child-bearing capacity of these transferred female slaves will have been somewhat unequally divided between the exporting and importing regions. In order to find the number of females surviving to 1860 who would have influenced the exporting area's birth rate one must, therefore, add to the 547,282 potential child-bearing females of the net exporting area's 1860 slave population a total of 60,776 slaves, that is a total equal to 65 per cent of the decade's exportation of females who in 1860 were aged 15 to 49 years. As a result, the adjusted fertility ratio for the exporting states becomes 123.72 children per 100 women, or 8.3 below the Southern norm. Thus, for each of the exporting area's adjusted 1860 total of 608,058 surviving females of 15 to 49 years there must have been an exportation equivalent to something like 0.083 children. This suggests that in the 1850s some 50,469 children were transferred from the exporting states and survived to 1860, when they were aged from 0 to 9 years. Such a total, because of child mortality, is likely slightly to underestimate the actual number of child transfers.

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38. Essentially similar results would have been produced had fertility ratio calculations for the 1820s and 1850s employed census statistics for potential child-bearing women of narrower age ranges than those here employed.

IV(iv) THE STRUCTURE OF THE TOTAL INTER-REGIONAL SLAVE MOVEMENT:

THE 1820s AND 1850s

Tables 2.8 and 2.9, as well as presenting final slave transfer totals for the 1820s and 1850s, indicate the rates at which individual age and sex groups were exported from the Upper South. These rates describe the slave exportation totals of particular age and sex groups as percentages of the relevant exporting area slave population groups which were recorded in the census at the start of the decade concerned. On the basis of evidence already presented, the exportation rates given in tables 2.8 and 2.9 rely on the assumption that the preliminary exportation totals for slaves aged, in 1830 or 1860, 10 years or over had on average been subject to 35 per cent of the mortality rate for the cohort concerned. Significantly, however, notes appended to those tables indicate that, even if very different assumptions had been made about mortality among transferred slaves, estimated rates of exportation would have remained essentially the same.<sup>39</sup>

It has been established that, while the main stream of the domestic slave trade was markedly age-selective in character, inter-regional planter migrations tended to carry to the Lower South a representative sample of the exporting area's slave population. Had planter migration, then, over a given decade, accounted for 5 per cent of the exporting area's total slave population, it would also have accounted for an exportation rate of some 5 per cent from each of the exporting area's individual age and sex cohorts. The slave trade, on the other hand, being age-selective in character, would have produced especially high transfer rates for the most valuable slaves, that is to say for the young adult age groups. Given the different transfer characteristics of the slave

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39. For transfers of slaves aged 0 to 9 at the end of a particular decade, exportation rates have been calculated by finding the percentage which 0 to 9 transfers contributed to a slave total combining those 0 to 9 transfers with the 0 to 9 slave population which was recorded for the exporting states at the end of the decade concerned. Because of insufficient information on the combined effects of child mortality and the under-enumeration of children at censuses, the totals of 0 to 9 slaves which were used were not adjusted to take account of mortality among those transfers. The transfer totals given are likely very slightly to exaggerate the rate of transfer for that age group. Such tendencies will not be of any real significance in the slave trade calculations presented in section V, below.

trade and of planter migration, an analysis of transfer rates will provide a basis for differentiating between the trade and migration. It should be noted, however, that while the transfer rates for the 1820s are fully consistent with the combined effects of the slave trade and migration, the fluctuations in the 1850s transfer rates for the 40 to 70 years and over/50 to 80 years and over group of cohorts could have been produced neither by the trade, which had very little influence on the 50 years and older population groups, nor by planter migration, which tended to produce approximately equal transfer rates for each cohort. The fluctuations in the older cohort transfer rates of the 1850s were perhaps the result of especially high rates of manumission in the 50 to 59/60 to 69 and the 70 and over/80 and over cohorts; or were perhaps the result of looseness in the census allocation of slaves according to specific age groups.<sup>40</sup> Any inconsistencies which arise from inaccuracies in the census allocation of the 40 years and over/50 years and over slave population into more specific age groupings will be avoided in Figure 2.3 where these slaves are combined into one broad age cohort (subdivided by sex).

#### V. THE VOLUME OF THE SLAVE TRADE IN THE 1820s AND 1850s

Figures 2.2 and 2.3 summarise, for the 1820s and 1850s respectively, the structure of the total inter-regional slave movement. These figures show that instead of drawing at an equal percentage rate from each cohort, the inter-regional slave movement was heavily concentrated in the teenage and young adult age groups, that is to say, in the age groups which made up the bulk of the trade. The transfer rates for the 45+/55+ cohorts of the 1820s and the 40+/50+

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40. An examination of the ages which individual white citizens of Charleston district, South Carolina, reported at successive censuses (the censuses of 1850 and 1860) suggests that, for whites, age recording became significantly less accurate with older citizens. Inaccuracies were particularly likely to occur with slaves who had become of no great economic value and whose ages, like those of younger bondsmen, were reported by proxy to census enumerators.

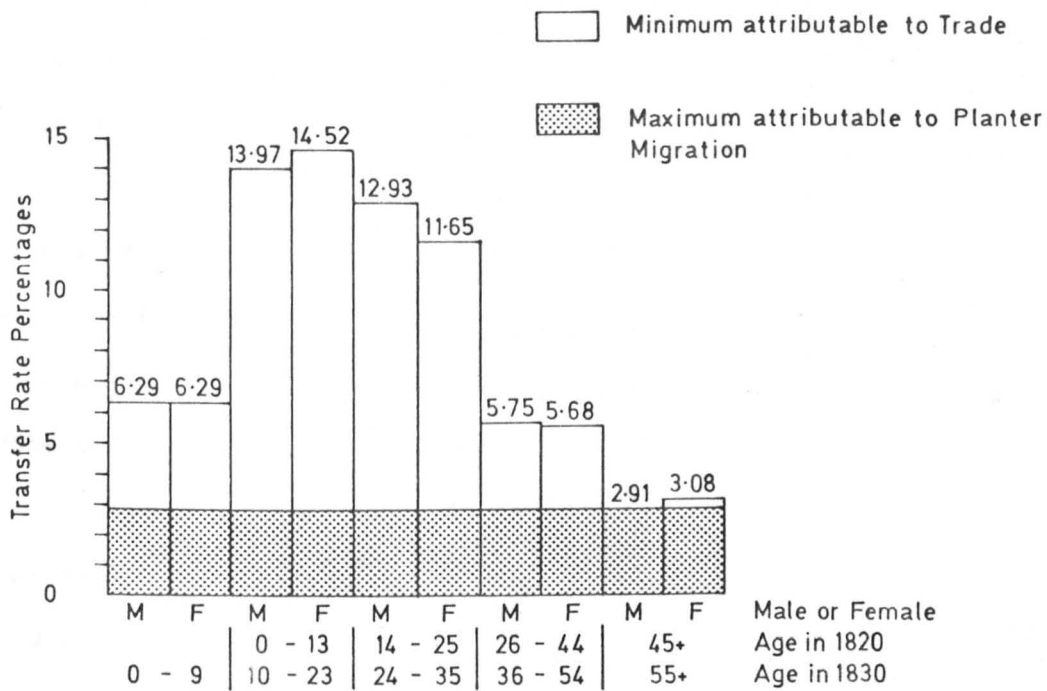


Figure 2.2 THE STRUCTURE OF THE TOTAL INTER-REGIONAL SLAVE MOVEMENT, 1820-1829

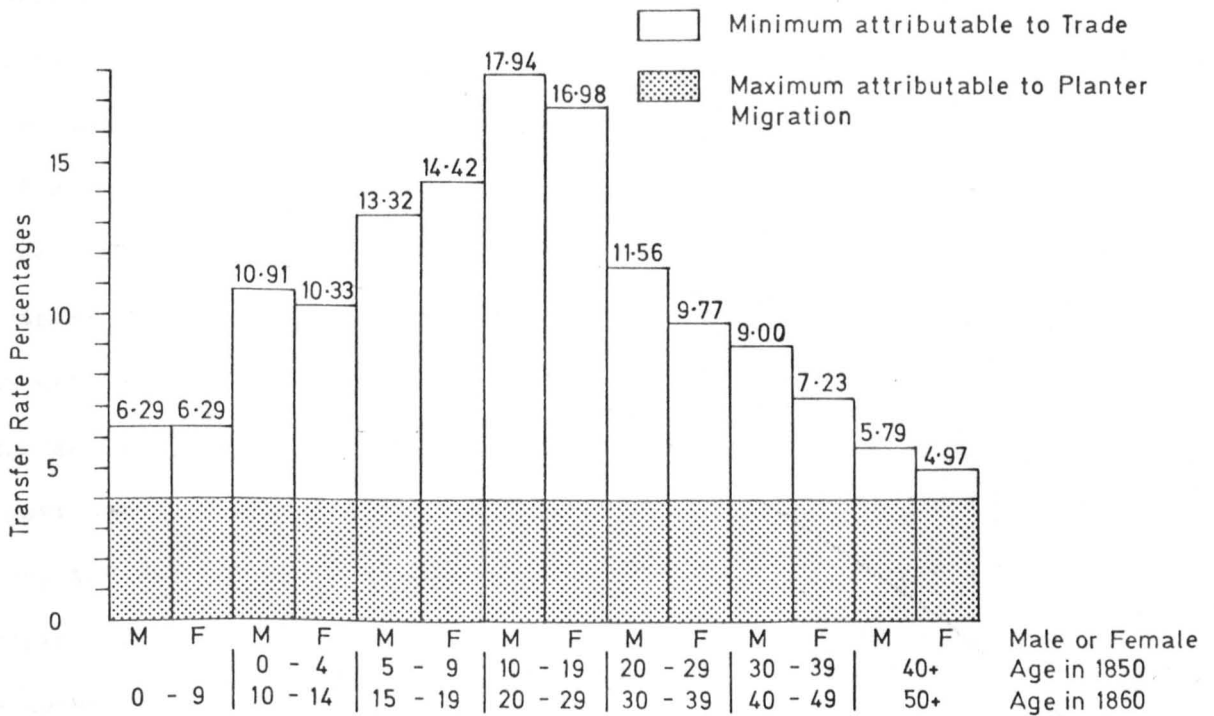


Figure 2.3 THE STRUCTURE OF THE TOTAL INTER-REGIONAL SLAVE MOVEMENT, 1850-1859



cohorts of the 1850s - rates which would to a great extent have been determined by planter migration - were far lower than the transfer rates for prime adults. It is possible that in some instances infirm slaves and slaves of very advanced years did not participate in the migrations of their owners, a factor which would have tended to lower the 45+/55+ and 40+/50+ transfer rates. Any such tendency would have been counter-balanced, however, by the effects of the non-selective branch of the trade and by the effects which have been attributed to the manumission of older slaves. The net effect of factors acting on the 45+/55+ and 40+/50+ cohorts was perhaps to exaggerate the transfer rates for those cohorts. The pyramidal patterns exhibited in Figures 2.2 and 2.3 by the several cohorts of the decades concerned must indicate the dominant role of the trade in determining the character of the inter-regional slave movement.

In both the 1820s and 1850s, the cohorts which include prime adult slaves show slightly higher transfer rates for males than for females. This is consistent with the influence of the male-dominated slave movement to the sugar producing areas of Louisiana - a movement for which, it has been seen, the domestic slave trade was almost entirely responsible. At the same time, in the predominantly teenage 0 to 13/10 to 23 cohorts of the 1820s and 5 to 9/15 to 19 cohorts of the 1850s, the higher transfer rates for males than for females reflect the slave trade's preference, so far as female slaves were concerned, for those in their teenage years.<sup>41</sup> Overall, the inter-regional slave movement carried only slightly more males than females - some 3,500 more in the 1820s and some 9,000 more in the 1850s. Statistics in Chapter I, Table 1.4 suggest that these male surpluses would almost entirely have been accounted for by the Louisiana trade. This means, then, that runaway slaves successfully escaping from Upper South masters, and the smuggling of African slaves into the Lower South - factors which would have tended to exaggerate the male component and the age-selective character of the inter-regional slave movement - can have been of no statistical significance so far as the present study is concerned.

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41. See age structure of the trade given in Table 2.3.

The 45+/55+ cohort transfer rates for the 1820s provide a convenient starting point in advancing a specific division of the inter-regional slave movement into its planter migration and slave trade components. The 2.91 per cent male transfer rate for this cohort suggests that, since planter migrations tended to draw at an equal percentage rate from each cohort, the 1820s transfer rate attributable to planter migration cannot have been higher than 2.91 per cent. That planter migration accounted in the 1820s for a transfer rate no higher than 2.91 per cent is further suggested by the 6.29 per cent transfer rate for those aged 0 to 9 in 1830. It is known from Table 2.3 that children of 0 to 9 years made up some 16 per cent of the main stream domestic slave trade; and since, in the 1820s, a significant portion of transfers for this age group would have been accounted for by the cohort which was aged 0 to 9 in 1830, a substantial part of the latter cohort's 6.29 per cent transfer rate is attributable to the slave trade. The conclusion that, in the 1820s, planter migration cannot have accounted for a transfer rate of more than 2.91 per cent is, furthermore, very much supported by the 26 to 44/36 to 54 transfer rates of about 5.7 per cent. The slaves in these age groups would have been sufficiently vigorous fully to have participated in planter migrations and, at the same time, these age groups would have contained a substantial trade component. A comparison of the 26 to 44/36 to 54 transfer rate of some 5.7 per cent with the much higher 0 to 13/10 to 23 and 14 to 25/24 to 35 transfer rates of about 12 to 14 per cent shows the strong age-selectivity of the inter-regional slave movement, and indicates that the transfer rate attributable to planter migration must have been very substantially lower than the 26 to 44/36 to 54 rate of 5.7 per cent.

The transfer rates for the several 1820s cohorts, therefore, combine to indicate that a transfer rate of not more than 2.91 per cent is attributable, during that decade, to planter migration. This means that up to 2.91 per cent of the exporting area's 1820s population of about 1,620,000 slaves (see total in Table 2.8) is attributable to transfers by planter migrations. For the 1820s, then, not more than about 47,000 slaves or 31 per cent of the inter-

regional slave movement are attributable to planter migrations; with the remaining transfers, at least some 106,000 slaves or 69 per cent of the inter-regional movement, being attributable to the trade.

While the 45+/55+ cohorts of the 1820s would have been only very slightly influenced by the age-selective main stream of the trade, the 40+/50+ cohorts of the 1850s, because of their lower base ages, would have been somewhat more significantly influenced by the main stream of the trade. Table 2.3 indicates, in fact, that about 4 per cent of males traded and about 3 per cent of females traded were 40 years old or over. For the 1850s, then, the male 40+/50+ transfer rate of 5.79 per cent and the female 40+/50+ transfer rate of 4.97 per cent suggest that planter migration, for the 1850s cohorts generally, would not have accounted for more than about a 3 to 4 per cent transfer rate, with the remaining transfers being attributable to the trade. The 6.29 per cent transfer rate for slaves aged 0 to 9 in 1860 is consistent with this conclusion, while further support is given by the 30 to 39/40 to 49 transfer rates of 7 to 9 per cent. Slaves in this latter 30 to 49 age range would have been sufficiently robust fully to have participated in those planter migrations which took place, and were sufficiently youthful to make up a significant part of the trade. Indeed, according to Table 2.1, about 11 per cent of males and about 12 per cent of females, when traded, were over 30 years old. Since transfer rates for the cohorts younger than 30 to 39/40 to 49 - rates ranging from 6 to 18 per cent - were very markedly influenced by the age-selective slave trade, the 7 to 9 per cent transfer rates of the 30 to 39/40 to 49 cohorts must also have been significantly influenced and expanded by the slave trade. The transfer rates for the several 1850s cohorts indicate, then,

that during that decade planter migration would not have accounted for more than a 3 to 4 per cent transfer rate. On a similar basis to that used earlier for the 1820s, such a transfer rate range indicates that during the 1850s the trade would have been responsible for an exportation of at least some 188,000 to 218,000 slaves or at least some 60 to 70 per cent of that decade's inter-regional slave movement. The conclusion that during the 1850s

the slave trade accounted for at least some 60 to 70 per cent of slave movements from the Upper South is further supported, in Chapter III, by a study of slave traders active in the exportation of slaves from South Carolina during that decade.

The foregoing transfer estimates for the 1820s and 1850s will, with similar accuracy for their respective decades, represent the relative importance of the slave trade and planter migration. It should be noted, however, that, for their respective decades, the estimates for the 1850s will somewhat more fully represent the volume of the slave movement than the estimates for the 1820s. This is because, while the calculations for the 1820s simply divided the South into net exporting and net importing states, the calculations for the 1850s took account of exporting and importing enclaves within the principal "mixed" states of the years concerned. Since, for the 1850s, an analysis recognising only the state divisions of the South would produce an estimate of the inter-regional slave movement which was equal to only about 85 per cent of the slave transfer volume indicated in Table 2.9, it is probable that for the 1820s the estimate given in Table 2.8 undercounts the inter-regional slave movement by something like 15 per cent. Taking account of the main exporting and importing areas of the South, then, the domestic slave trade would, during the 1820s and 1850s, have been responsible for at least 60 to 70 per cent of transfers totalling respectively some 180,000 and 300,000 slaves.

#### VI THE EXTENT OF THE INTER-REGIONAL SLAVE TRADE IN THE ANTE-BELLUM PERIOD

Detailed survival rate calculations, describing the inter-regional slave movement according to specific age groups, are not possible for the 1830s or the 1840s. Growth rate calculations together with those basic survival rate calculations which are possible suggest, however, that the inter-state movement would, in the 1830s and 1840s respectively, have carried some 285,000 and 185,000 slaves from the net exporting to the net

importing states.<sup>42</sup> Making approximate allowance for the "mixed" character of certain states, it appears, therefore, that in the 1820 to 1860 period an inter-regional movement of rather more than a million slaves took place. Calculations for the 1820s, a decade of relatively poor economic performance, and for the 1850s, a decade of widespread planter prosperity, have both attributed at least some 60 to 70 per cent of inter-regional slave movements to the trade.<sup>43</sup> This evidence suggests that over the 1820 to 1860 period as a whole the domestic slave trade accounted for at least 60 to 70 per cent of some one million inter-regional slave transfers.

Estimates of the net slave transfers of individual states are given in Table 2.10. These estimates, covering the decades from 1790 to 1860, are derived from growth rate calculations. The transfer totals for the decades from 1790 to 1819 are necessarily much less solidly based than those for the period 1820 to 1860. This is because the forces of manumission and of the foreign slave trade meant that in the period from 1790 to 1819 the United States' slave population was very far from constituting a closed demographic unit. Approximate calculations for the thirty year period ending in 1820 suggest, however, that in those three decades a total inter-regional movement of some 200,000 slaves took place. Thus, while approximate statistics for 1790 to 1819 suggest for the early national period the existence of an extensive domestic slave trade, the much more heavily documented statistics for 1820 to

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42. The essential principles of growth rate calculations are explained in note 17 of this study's introductory chapter. In the present study, growth rate estimates of inter-state slave movements assume that the transfers of a given decade were distributed evenly over that decade. Accordingly, divergences from expected end of decade slave totals are scaled down to allow for half of that decade's natural increase on transferred slaves. For a detailed description of such calculations, see Bancroft, Slave Trading, pp.384-95. In Time on the Cross (I, p.46, Figure 12; II, pp.45-8), Fogel and Engerman, by comparing the whole slave population of a given area at the start of a decade with that area's 10 year old and older slave population at the end of the decade, estimated the volume inter-regional slave transfers during the 1790 to 1860 period. It should be noted that in estimates for a given decade Fogel and Engerman's survival rate calculations took no account of the transfer of slaves born during that decade, nor did they make any allowance for mortality among transferred slaves. Their estimates, therefore, necessarily undercount the volume of the inter-regional movement. By adjusting their estimates to allow for the omissions mentioned, inter-regional slave transfer results similar to those given in the present study will, however, be obtained.
43. On economic conditions, see Chapter VIII, below.

TABLE 2.10 ESTIMATES OF DECENNIAL SLAVE TRANSFERS ACCORDING TO STATE, 1790-1859

|   | 1790-99 | 1800-09 | 1810-19 | 1820-29 | 1830-39  | 1840-49 | 1850-59 |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------|---------|---------|
| Natural Growth Rate of Whole Slave Population | 27.0%   | 27.0%   | 30.5%   | 31.2%   | 23.8%    | 27.8%   | 23.4%   |
| Delaware                                      | - 4,523 | - 3,204 | - 817   | - 2,270 | - 1,314  | - 912   | - 920   |
| Maryland                                      | -22,221 | -19,960 | -33,070 | -32,795 | -33,753  | -21,348 | -21,777 |
| D.C.  |         | - 1,123 | - 576   | - 1,944 | - 2,575  | - 2,030 | - 1,222 |
| Virginia                                      | -22,767 | -41,097 | -75,562 | -76,157 | -118,474 | -88,918 | -82,573 |
| North Carolina                                | + 4,671 | - 407   | -13,361 | -20,113 | -52,044  | -22,481 | -22,390 |
| South Carolina                                | + 8,935 | + 9,474 | + 1,925 | -20,517 | -56,683  | -28,947 | -65,053 |
| Kentucky                                      | +21,636 | +25,837 | +18,742 | - 916   | -19,907  | -19,266 | -31,215 |
| Georgia                                       | +19,595 | +26,231 | +10,713 | +18,324 | +10,403  | +19,873 | - 7,876 |
| Tennessee                                     | + 8,145 | +24,038 | +19,079 | +31,577 | + 6,930  | + 4,837 | -17,702 |
| Texas   |         |         |         |         |          | +28,622 | +99,190 |
| Arkansas                                      |         |         |         | + 2,123 | +12,752  | +18,984 | +47,443 |
| Alabama                                       |         |         |         | +54,156 | +96,520  | +16,532 | +10,752 |
| Florida                                       |         |         |         | + 2,627 | + 5,833  | + 5,657 | +11,850 |
| Missouri                                      |         |         | + 5,460 | +10,104 | +24,287  | +11,406 | + 6,314 |
| Louisiana                                     |         | + 8,159 | +20,679 | +16,415 | +29,296  | +25,924 | +26,528 |
| Mississippi                                   |         | +11,152 | + 9,123 | +19,556 | +101,810 | +53,028 | +48,560 |
| Total of Estimated Exports                    | 49,511  | 65,791  | 123,386 | 154,712 | 284,750  | 183,902 | 250,728 |
| Total of Estimated Imports                    | 62,982  | 104,891 | 85,721  | 154,882 | 287,831  | 184,863 | 250,637 |

- SOURCES AND NOTES: Basic population evidence is derived from federal censuses. Certain adjustments have been made to the crude growth rates reported in censuses:
- The crude growth rates of the 1790s and of 1800-1809 (rates of some 30 and 33 per cent respectively) were markedly influenced by Atlantic slave trade importations and were also influenced by high mortality among imported slaves. In order to make some allowance for these factors, estimated natural growth rates attributed to these decades are rates similar to the average decennial natural growth rates of the 1810 to 1859 period. Nevertheless, estimated inter-state importations for the 1790 to 1809 period will be exaggerated by the addition of many Africans imported during that period.
  - In order very largely to discount the effects of the Northern emancipation movement, growth rates for the 1810 to 1829 period are based on Southern rather than on national statistics.
  - Where areas were annexed or purchased, estimates have been made of each area's slave population at the start of the decade in which acquired. The Louisiana slave population of 1800 is estimated at 20,000; that of Florida in 1820 is estimated at 9,500 (see above, p.83, note 35); and that of Texas in 1840 is estimated at 20,000 (see American Anti-Slavery Society, Slavery and the Internal Slave Trade, p.248). These population estimates are incorporated in growth rate estimates for the relevant decades of purchase.

1860 demonstrate that the last few decades of the ante-bellum period saw the flourishing of an inter-regional slave trade of massive proportions.

Combining slave transfers for all age groups and including transfers by both planter migration and the trade, the decennial rate of slave exportation from the Upper South was in the 1820s about 9.48 per cent; in the 1830s about 15.90 per cent; in the 1840s about 10.10 per cent, and in the 1850s about 10.25 per cent.<sup>44</sup> These statistics indicate that of the exporting area's slave population which was under 10 years of age in 1820 and which survived to 1860, up to about 15 per cent would by 1860 have migrated with their owners to the importing states. From the same Upper South slave population, at least and probably rather more than 29 per cent would, by 1860, have been traded to the importing states.<sup>45</sup> The profound effects of a slave traffic on such a scale will be examined in later chapters.

44. These statistics are derived from "final" estimates resulting from survival rate calculations. Except in the case of the 1850s, regional divisions were, for these calculations, drawn simply from state rather than county boundaries. Despite the fact that the volume of the slave movement was much greater in the 1850s than in the 1840s, the estimated transfer rates for these two decades were similar. This is because, in the 1850s, the net exporting area included for the first time Tennessee and parts of Missouri, Alabama, and Georgia. These latter areas, although net exporters of slaves, were in some cases only marginally so. Thus, the transfer rate for the 1850s understates the rate of movement out of the established and the most typical net exporting regions of that decade.
45. The cohort transfer rates of the 1850s (see Table 2.9, Line III) are taken as having been approximately typical of the transfer rates for similar age groups during the three preceding decades. By attributing a 4 per cent decennial exportation rate to planter migration, it appears that in the 1850s the slaves of the Upper South had a 96 per cent chance of not taking part in an inter-regional planter migration. Over the four decades from 1820 to 1860, Upper South slaves would, therefore, have had a  $(0.96)^4 = 84.9$  per cent chance of not taking part in an inter-regional planter migration, or a 15.1 per cent chance of taking part in such a migration. By combining statistics for males and females of the same age group and by scaling down cohort transfer rates to take account of a 4 per cent planter migration transfer rate, it is found that the 0 to 9/10 to 19, 10 to 19/20 to 29, 20 to 29/30 to 39, and 30 to 39/40 to 49 cohorts had respectively a 91.85, an 86.58, a 93.32, and a 95.9 per cent chance of not being traded during a given decade. Upper South slaves aged 0 to 9 in 1820 would, therefore, over the four decades which followed have had a  $0.9185 \times 0.8658 \times 0.9332 \times 0.9590 =$  a 71.17 per cent chance of not being traded, or would have had a 28.83 per cent chance of being traded. Had a 3 rather than a 4 per cent transfer rate been attributed to migration, the chance, over the four decades concerned, of being traded would have risen to about 32 per cent and that of being transferred by migration would have fallen to about 11.5 per cent.

CHAPTER III

THE VOLUME OF THE INTER-REGIONAL SLAVE TRADE : THE EXAMPLE OF SOUTH CAROLINA,

1850 - 1859

Having, on the basis of age structure, estimated the volume of trade and having paid particular attention to the 1820s and 1850s, the present chapter, for one of those decades, the 1850s, seeks directly to illustrate the extent of slave trading activity. Specifically, the present chapter seeks to identify and to document as large a proportion as possible of that group of traders who, in the 1850s, were involved in the exportation of slaves from the state of South Carolina. Since the object of this chapter is conclusively to document the activities of large numbers of traders, much of the chapter is devoted to the discussion of types of evidence used and to methods adopted in assessing this evidence. This sample study, identifying over 90 trading firms engaged, in the 1850s, in the exportation of slaves from South Carolina, demonstrates that sufficiently large numbers of traders were active so as fully to support the view that the slave trade accounted for at least some 60 to 70 per cent of inter-regional slave movements. A discussion of the trading methods adopted by these and other firms is deferred until later chapters.

The example of South Carolina is considered to be suitable for the purpose of the present study, firstly, because South Carolina, a state whose slave population was one of the largest in the South, constitutes an extensive though, within the limitations of available evidence, a manageable sample. Secondly, since no previous study of South Carolina has documented for that state the activities of large numbers of slave traders, the example of South Carolina does not seem to represent an area of usually active slave trading.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, in the 1830 to 1860 period the decennial rates of net slave movement from

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1. Bancroft's Slave Trading provides the most detailed study of the South Carolina trade; but after devoting a chapter to the Charleston trade, that author allocated only six pages to the South Carolina trade outside of Charleston and documented only three non-Charleston slave trading firms. See p.18, above, and see Bancroft, pp.165-96, 239-44.



South Carolina were very similar to those of the net exporting area as a whole.<sup>2</sup> Concentration on the 1850s has been advantageous because, for the middle years of that decade, the papers of Ziba B. Oakes, a Charleston slave dealer, provide very valuable documentation on the South Carolina slave trade.

The approach employed in the present chapter constitutes an extension of the method which Frederic Bancroft adopted in his documenting of slave trading activity. It should be noted, however, that Bancroft's survey of trading activity was hampered by the fact that he confined himself almost exclusively to evidence drawn from newspaper advertisements; and by the fact that, as a result of the very broad scope of his study, he devoted very little attention to slave trading which was carried on outside of the major southern towns. Bancroft, furthermore, made no real distinction between those who specialised in the inter-regional slave trade and those who, as auctioneers, sold slaves on a commission basis and who, in the main, served the local rather than the inter-state market. The present chapter, to a far greater extent than was the case in Bancroft's Slave Trading, supplements evidence drawn from newspaper advertisements with information derived from other record groups; and in this chapter, by confining attention to one slave exporting state, it has been possible to document not only urban slave trading but extensive rural slave trading. In the place of Bancroft's rather loose definition, this chapter defines the slave trader as one who, rather than acting simply as auctioneer, on a full-time or part-time basis, made it his business to invest in and resell slaves in the inter-regional slave trade. A large number of the Charleston slave dealers referred to in Bancroft, are, therefore, excluded from the list of South Carolina slave trading firms which

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2. The respective percentage growth rates of the South Carolina and the net exporting states' slave populations were, in the 1830s, 3.68 and -0.55; in the 1840s, 17.71 and 11.70; and, in the 1850s, 4.52 and 6.10. See Chapter VIII, Table 8.2.

appears in Table 3.2 at the end of the present chapter.<sup>3</sup>

I

Documentation of South Carolina's slave trading activity of the 1850s has been based on five main classes of records. These comprise manuscript census returns; slave traders' newspaper advertisements; records of court hearings; records of certain judicial sales; and collections of slave traders' business letters.

The censuses of 1850 and 1860 were the first federal censuses which undertook to report citizens according to their business occupation. In the manuscript census returns of 1850 and 1860, however, enumerators tended to simplify data given to them and to represent occupations in rather general terms. This means that many who can be shown to have been slave traders were simply reported as "trader", "broker", "merchant", or "speculator". Nevertheless, in some instances the census returns of South Carolina districts, by describing a citizen as "slave trader" or "Negro speculator", specifically document slave trading activity.<sup>4</sup>

Although being very far from providing a comprehensive roll-call of South Carolina traders, newspaper advertisements have served as an extremely valuable source of information in the identification of slave traders. For the purposes

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3. Among the most important of the Charleston auctioneers and commission agents who specialised in the sale of slaves and who, in the main, served the South Carolina rather than the inter-state market were Louis D. DeSaussure and Alonze J. White. The former was misleadingly referred to by Bancroft as having been "at the end of the 'fifties...probably the most famous slave-trader in South Carolina" (Bancroft, p.186). DeSaussure, like White, and like a host of lesser auctioneers, presided over probate and similar sales at which whole slave gangs were disposed of, and in addition auctioned smaller lots of slaves. Only a small part of their sales would have been made to the inter-regional trade (see Chapter IV, below). On DeSaussure, see Louis D. DeSaussure Papers (SCHS) and DeSaussure Papers (SCL). On White see List Book of Negroes for Sale by Alonze J. White (SCHS).
  4. For a sampling of the occupations of traders as reported in censuses, see Appendix A, below.

of this study, a survey of the newspaper holdings of the major South Carolina libraries has been made, and all South Carolina newspapers available at these institutions and relating to the period 1850 to 1859 have been consulted.<sup>5</sup> Occasional use has also been made of out-of-state newspapers and of South Carolina newspapers of the early 1860s.

Certain characteristics have been found to be common to those slave purchasing advertisements which were placed in newspapers by individuals who, from the evidence of record groups other than newspapers, are identifiable as active slave traders. Many but by no means all of the purchasing advertisements of identifiable traders give some direct suggestion of the subscriber's speculative intention. Thus an advertisement might indicate that the subscriber was "purchasing for the trade" or "making up a lot" to take west; or might reveal that he "would at all times be in the market for likely negroes" and that "any number" of suitable Negroes would be bought. "Negre Speculation" was again strongly suggested in the many cases where advertisements were placed jointly by two or more persons who appear to have acted as partners. The great majority of advertisements placed by identifiable traders stressed a willingness to pay in cash rather than on credit. Typically, their advertisements also stressed that "young and likely" slaves were sought; and although mother and infant units were often purchased, the age range specified was - consistent with evidence given in Chapter I - very commonly that of slaves aged between about 12 and 25 years old. Traders' advertisements, when they did not announce that "any number" of "likely young slaves" would be purchased, usually indicated that substantial lots of 25, 50, or 100 or more such slaves were to be made up.<sup>6</sup> The advertisements of a particular trader frequently appeared in successive trading seasons.

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5. For this period the newspaper holdings of the South Caroliniana Library are by far the most comprehensive. Almost all extant South Carolina newspapers which are relevant to this period are available, either in their original form or on microfilm, at this library. The Charleston Library Society and the College of Charleston Library also possess very substantial newspaper holdings.

6. Railroad, construction, and industrial companies also advertised for large gangs of "likely" slaves; but since they sought to make up almost exclusively male gangs such purchasers are readily distinguishable from traders - the latter, except in the New Orleans trade, expressing no preference for male slaves.

The purchasing patterns of planters were very different from those of traders, so that there is usually little mistaking a slave trader's purchasing advertisement. When planters purchased for their own use they would not normally have done so on a scale sufficient to warrant advertising in newspapers. Planters, from time to time, sought to supplement their forces with prime slaves, but in any one season it would have been very rare indeed for even the largest planters of the South to have bought substantial numbers of prime teenage and young adult slaves. It was normal for planters, when they did buy on a reasonably large scale, to purchase family groups and lots of mixed ages and to pay for these slaves on terms of credit extending over one, two, or three years.<sup>7</sup> On any occasion when a planter might have used newspaper advertisements in order to facilitate the purchasing of slaves, it seems likely that he would have thought it advantageous to specify in these advertisements that he bought for his own use and not for resale. In this way, potential sellers would have been given some assurance that families were not to be divided by the purchaser. Very few planters would have had funds sufficient to have paid cash for such large lots of "young and likely" slaves as those sought in the class of advertisements under discussion. Surely none who were not slave traders, buying in order quickly to resell, could have purchased in this way in successive seasons. In the case of three-quarters of those South Carolina firms which are listed in Table 3.2 as "documented" slave trading concerns, evidence does not rest solely upon newspaper advertisements. The purchasing requirements specified by the remaining "documented" firms are, however, so typical of the advertisements of slave traders and so unlike the purchasing requirements of the remainder of the southern community that these firms can confidently be assumed to have been slave trading concerns.

In the South Carolina districts for which newspapers of the 1850 to 1859 period are available, those records have provided very valuable information on the trade. It should be noted, however, that newspaper holdings of the major South Carolina repositories are very far from being complete. With

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7. For a fuller discussion of terms of purchase and purchasing patterns generally, see Chapter IV.

about one-third of South Carolina's administrative districts, local newspapers are available for not more than 5 days from the whole of the 1850 to 1859 period. Records for Fairfield and Lexington districts are little better, with 8 and 31 issues surviving respectively. The limitations of newspaper holdings have tended to mean that the present survey of South Carolina traders undercounts trading activity very much more seriously in some districts than in others. Even in districts for which substantial newspaper files survive advertisements have, furthermore, revealed only a fraction of the South Carolina trade. It was necessary for traders to examine any slaves who might be offered to them, so that - except for those speculators located at important towns which were regularly visited by large numbers of slave-holders - traders usually led an itinerant existence, visiting the communities from which they hoped to make purchases. In many cases, therefore, traders seem to have dispensed with newspaper advertising and seem instead to have initiated and cemented their trading deals as they progressed on their tours of the countryside. Thus, for example, in Edgefield, a district for which a very substantial collection of relevant newspapers survives, of 8 "documented" trading firms listed in Table 3.2, only 4 have been traced in that district's newspaper advertisements.<sup>8</sup> A discussion of slave trading in Sumter will, at a later point, show that in that district only a very small percentage of active traders employed newspaper advertising as part of their purchasing routine. It is clear, moreover, that those traders who did advertise did not usually do so during all of the seasons in which they were active in the trade. For example, both the principals of the Edgefield firm of Atkins & Spires were recorded in the censuses of 1850 and 1860 as Negro traders, but, from a careful survey of the extensive newspaper records of Edgefield district, it is only in the year 1851 that that firm has been found to have advertised. Advertising seems to have been employed most often by newly founded firms; by firms which were undertaking

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8. The Edgefield district trading firm of Owings, Charles & Robertson did, however, in a Charleston district newspaper of 1859, advertise to purchase slaves. See Table 3.2.

an expansion of their base of operations; by firms which were resident in a readily accessible market town regularly visited by planters; and by firms which sought to supplement their trading activities by a slave consignment speedily assembled late in the season.

The records of cases heard by the district courts have provided further valuable information on the trade. With these records the scant documentation of the Court of Common Pleas has been far less important than the often lengthy depositions contained in "bills" relating to Equity court cases. By tracing one solidly documented trader in an Equity case it has sometimes been possible, quite fortuitously, to gain information on previously unidentified traders. Since these district court records represent a vast bulk of manuscript materials, indexed at best according to the names of the principal litigants, it has, however, only been practicable to employ them when evidence drawn from other record groups has suggested that a litigant in a particular case might have been involved in slave trading. There are, moreover, at least five districts - Beaufort, Chesterfield, Colleton, Georgetown, and Orangeburg - in which court records were destroyed as a result of the Union advance through South Carolina in 1865. In two other districts, Chester and Laurens, Equity court records are in such a poor state of preservation as to be of little value to the researcher. In addition to district court records, the much less extensive documentation of the South Carolina Appeals courts has been drawn upon.

In Chapter I, the critique of Calderhead's Maryland study has suggested that, for the trader, judicial sales were not major sources of supply. This same point is more fully documented in Chapter IV. Nevertheless, in attempting to distinguish between the slave traders of Charleston and the auctioneers of that city, the sale books of the Charleston district probate court and of that district's Master in Equity, have, used in combination with other records, been valuable. Those Charlestonians who were cited by Bancroft as having been connected with the trade but who have not been included in Table 3.2 below seem, in their own right, to have purchased very few slaves; and at Charleston

probate and Equity sales were, as slave buyers, almost completely inactive. In contrast, resident Charleston dealers included in Table 3.2 did repeatedly purchase at those judicial sales; and, furthermore, purchased in the selective fashion which one would expect traders to have followed. While at these sales members of the public tended to buy slave lots covering a wide age range and bought on extended credit, resident Charleston traders documented in Table 3.2 very much tended to buy prime teenage and young adult slaves and to pay for such slaves in cash or on short credit.

Collections of slave traders' business letters, particularly the Ziba Oakes Papers, have been of great importance in documenting the South Carolina trade of the 1850s. Such papers, for the districts to which they relate, have indicated a far greater level of slave trading activity than has been apparent from the combination of other available source materials.

## II

Drawing upon the sources which have been described, as well as employing certain less important sources, Table 3.2 provides documentation on the activities of 94 slave trading firms which have been found to have been engaged, in the 1850s, in the exportation of slaves from South Carolina. That table also indicates the time span for which a firm's trading activity has been directly documented. In addition to directly documenting 94 trading firms, Table 3.2 provides evidence on 63 "possible trading firms"; and, although the quality of evidence for these latter 63 "firms" varies, trading is in many cases very strongly suggested. The results given in Table 3.2 are summarised in Table 3.1. That summary table also, for the decade concerned, gives estimates of the annual slave exportation totals of individual South Carolina districts; and, for each district, gives some indication of the extent of available evidence on slave trading activity. Newspaper advertisements show that, in purchasing, it was common for individual firms to encroach into three, four, or five separate districts or counties. Since the South Carolina purchasing base of particular

TABLE 3.1 SUMMARY OF INFORMATION ON TRADING FIRMS BUYING SLAVES IN SOUTH CAROLINA DISTRICTS, 1850-1859

| District     | Annual net Outward Movement of Slaves <sup>a</sup> | Number of Trading Firms |                             | Availability of Evidence 1850-1859 |   |    |
|--------------|--|-------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|---|----|
|              |  | Documented Firms        | Possible Firms <sup>b</sup> | Equity Bills <sup>c</sup>          | Newspapers <sup>e</sup>                       |    |
| Abbeville    | 293  | 5*                      | 4                           | Eq.                                | 1854-9 quite good; otherwise only 20 issues   | 9  |
| Anderson     | 76   | 3                       | 6                           | Eq.                                | Total of 3 issues only                        | 3  |
| Barnwell     | 10   | 0                       | 2                           | Eq.                                | Total of 1 issue only                         | 1  |
| Beaufort     | 654  | 2                       | 0                           | -                                  | 1860 has 2 issues                             | 0  |
| Charleston   | 1564   | 32                      | 11                          | Eq.                                | Good coverage                                 | 10 |
| Chester      | 119  | 2                       | 1                           | Eq.                                | Except 1856-7, not more than 1 issue per year | 6  |
| Chesterfield | 41   | 0                       | 0                           | -                                  |   | 0  |
| Colleton     | 618  | 0                       | 0                           | -                                  |   | 0  |
| Darlington   | 46   | 1                       | 0                           | Eq.                                | Mar.1851 to Apr.1852 quite good               | 2  |
| Edgefield    | 357  | 8                       | 4                           | Eq.                                | Good coverage                                 | 10 |
| Faifield     | 183  | 1                       | 2                           | Eq.                                | Total of 8 issues only                        | 6  |
| Georgetown   | 395  | 3                       | 1                           | -                                  | 1853 none; 1851,1855, 1859 poor               | 8  |
| Greenville   | 108  | 3                       | 0                           | Eq.                                | 1851-2 good; otherwise very poor              | 8  |
| Horry        | 18   | 0                       | 0                           | d                                  |   | 0  |
| Kershaw      | 356  | 4                       | 1                           | d                                  | Good 1850-5; otherwise poor                   | 10 |
| Lancaster    | 48   | 2                       | 0                           | d                                  | Generally good                                | 8  |
| Laurens      | 139  | 2                       | 1                           | Eq.                                | 10 to 40 issues per year                      | 10 |
| Lexington    | 59   | 1                       | 0                           | Eq.                                | Total of 21 issues only                       | 6  |
| Marion       | (60)imp.   | 0                       | 1                           | Eq.                                | Quite good                                    | 8  |
| Marlboro     | 2  | 2                       | 5                           | Eq.                                |   | 0  |
| Newberry     | 176  | 1                       | 4                           | Eq.                                | 1858 quite good. Otherwise 7 issues only      | 4  |
| Orangeburg   | 215  | 3                       | 4                           | -                                  | Total of 5 issues only                        | 4  |
| Pickens      | 31   | 0                       | 1                           | Eq.                                | Quite good                                    | 5  |
| Richland     | 448  | 7                       | 2                           | Eq.                                | 1854,1856 good; otherwise poor                | 10 |
| Spartanburg  | 150  | 0                       | 4                           | Eq.                                | Good except 1852                              | 9  |
| Sumter**     | 288  | 11                      | 4                           | Eq.                                | Good  | 10 |
| Union        | 181  | 0                       | 1                           | Eq.                                | Quite good 1851-2; otherwise 2 issues only    | 4  |
| Williamsburg | (22)imp.   | 1                       | 0                           | Eq.                                | 1 issue in both 1859 and 1860                 | 1  |
| York         | ( 9)imp.   | 0                       | 4                           | Eq.                                | Quite good                                    | 9  |
| Total        | 6484   | 94                      | 63                          |                                    |   |    |

NOTES:

- a Based on growth rate calculations and giving district's annual average for 1850-1859 period.
- b For these entries evidence of slave trade purchasing in South Carolina (1850-1859) is not conclusive.
- c Eq. entered if Equity bills are extant. Bills are housed at South Carolina Department of Archives.
- d Indicates possibility that some Equity bills might survive and be found at local court houses.
- e Comment on the availability of district newspapers is followed by an entry showing the number of years (in the period 1850-1859) for which at least one day's issue of a local paper has been found.
- \* All Suber and Parks entries are considered to represent one firm only.
- \*\* Includes Clarendon, which district was separated from Sumter in 1855.
- imp. Indicates net importation.



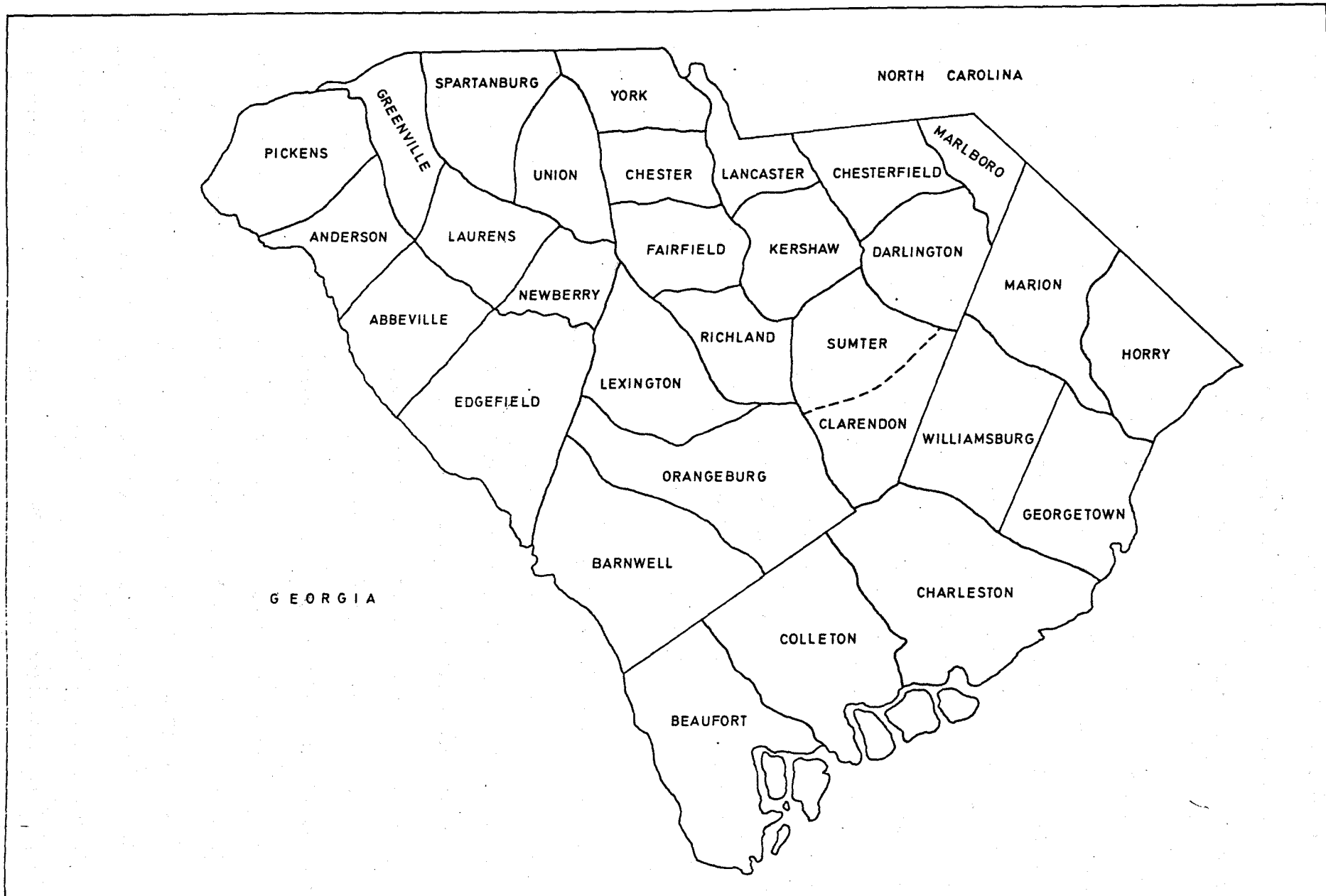


Figure 3.1 SOUTH CAROLINA DISTRICTS, 1850-1859.

firms has usually been made clear from the available records documenting these firms, firms are, however, in tables 3.1 and 3.2, attributed to particular districts. The district divisions of South Carolina are shown in Figure 3.1.

Limitations in the availability and quality of evidence inevitably mean that the results tabulated in this chapter undercount the number of trading firms which were active in South Carolina during the 1850s, and lead also to an undercount of the number of years over which the activities of a firm extended. Indeed, as Table 3.1 shows, the available base of evidence was for several counties very slight. Nevertheless, the results which are presented make it clear that the slave trade must, during the decade being considered, have had a predominating influence on the slave movement from South Carolina. In all of those net exporting districts - whether in the low-country or the up-country - where a reasonably extensive base of evidence has been found, there is strong evidence to suggest that substantial slave trading activity took place in the 1850s.

The ratio between the number of "documented" trading firms and the average number of slaves annually transferred provides a convenient means of assessing the extent of the South Carolina trade. For the state of South Carolina as a whole, while 94 trading firms have been documented, an average annual out-movement of some 6,484 slaves has been estimated; so that there was an average of 69 slave exportations per year for every slave trading firm documented. Discounting results for those 9 districts where little or no base of documentation on the trade survives, an average of 50 annual slave exportations per documented trading firm is found in the remaining 20 districts.<sup>9</sup> Traders, as Table 3.1 suggests, no doubt accounted for a large slave exportation from Charleston district; but it should be noted that, since that district's 1 to 49 ratio between documented trading firms and annual slave exportations was very similar to the average for the 20 districts mentioned above, the

9. The 9 districts excluded in the above reference are Barnwell, Beaufort, Chesterfield, Colleton, Fairfield, Horry, Newberry, Orangeburg, and Union.

present survey of the South Carolina trade will not be unduly influenced by Charleston district results. Table 7.1, drawing on traders' accounts and documenting some 50 coffles and shipments, suggests that such consignments very commonly comprised from 25 to 60 slaves, with far larger groups being sent by some major trading concerns.<sup>10</sup> A similar range in consignment sizes is suggested by the slave purchasing advertisements which traders placed in newspapers; and, on balance, evidence suggests that the average size of a slave consignment was perhaps 40 slaves. Evidence in Chapter VII indicates, furthermore, that many traders turned over part of their capital more than once per season, so that the number of slaves dispatched each season by a typical long-distance trader would have been in excess of 40. This evidence, together with the 1 to 50 ratio between annual slave exportations and documented traders, suggests that the trade would have accounted for the great majority of South Carolina's out-movement of slaves. In practice not all of the documented traders would have been active in South Carolina for the whole of the 1850s. The significance of this latter factor would, however, in all probability have been fully counter-balanced by the fact that, as a result of limitations of evidence, this study has necessarily undercounted the number of traders who were active in South Carolina during the decade under consideration.

An opportunity to check the validity of the assumption that this study has significantly undercounted the number of active traders is afforded in instances where collections of traders' correspondence are available as sources of evidence on the South Carolina traffic. Thus, fragments of correspondence have indicated, for Anderson, Greenville, Laurens, Marlboro, and Charleston districts, certain slave trading firms which otherwise would have gone unnoticed in the present study. Even more important, the Ziba B.Oakes Papers - a collection of some 600 letters of the 1854 to 1858 period and relating in large part to slave purchasing in and around Sumter district, South Carolina - reveal for that district a far more intensive level of slave trading activity than is apparent from the combination of manuscript census records, extensive

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10. It should be noted that in Table 7.1 the Belton and Dickens entry for 1856-7, and perhaps certain of the annual entries for J.R.White, represented the combination of several consignments sent during the season concerned.

Equity court records, substantially complete Sumter newspaper files, and other sources.<sup>11</sup> Of the 11 documented trading firms which in Table 3.1 are attributed to Sumter, none were conclusively identifiable from occupational descriptions given in censuses; 2 were identified from newspaper advertisements of the 1850s; one was identified from evidence in an Appeals case; and the remaining 8 were identified, initially at least, from evidence in the Oakes Papers.<sup>12</sup> Initial identification in the Oakes Papers made it possible, with 2 of the latter 8 firms, to gain further evidence from court cases; with another of those firms further evidence was gained from a Richmond slave dealer's day book; with another of the firms supplementary evidence was gained from the S.O.Wood Papers; and with another evidence was also gained from a Sumter newspaper of 1863. The essential source of evidence in documenting the Sumter district trade was, however, not census returns or the abundant newspaper and court records of that area, but the Oakes Papers.

With a few exceptions, those Oakes papers which concern the slave traffic of the Sumter area were letters sent to Oakes by the trader A.J.McElveen. The latter, although he also made independent trading trips from South Carolina to Alabama, was, in the 1850s, principally concerned with supplying slaves to Ziba Oakes of Charleston. Oakes, at his Charleston depot, specialised in selling slaves to long-distance traders. The McElveen-Oakes letters make it clear that in purchasing in the Sumter market, McElveen can rarely have been without trading competitors. On 4 November 1856, anticipating a lull after a period of intensive trading activity, McElveen wrote: "I reckon that will be the last of the traders flying round. We had some 8 to 10 traders in Sumter." Two weeks later, he observed: "Our country are [sic] never clear of buyers. I am certain if I could keep a lot of negrees in Sumter I could sell them well.

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11. In 1855, Clarendon was separated from Sumter district and itself achieved the status of district. Throughout the present chapter, references to Sumter relate to the whole of the Sumter-Clarendon area.
  12. A further trader, A.J.Hydrick, advertised in Sumter in the 1850s; but since his base was in Orangeburg district he was, in Table 3.1, attributed to that district rather than to Sumter. It should be noted that apart from Hydrick and the 11 Sumter trading firms mentioned above, the Oakes Papers provide evidence on 4 individuals who were probably traders.

We have not been clear of one or more buyers since last July." In the following month McElveen was still faced with stiff trading competition. "The prices of negroes are such", he wrote, "[that] I dont see any chance to buy to make a dollar [in the Charleston resale market] and what I am to do I cant say. The traders west are here buying everything." Considerable trading competition continued and in February 1857, after attending a sale which was held in the vicinity of Sumter, McElveen reported: "I believe they was [sic] some ten western traders here [at the sale]. A good many bought and paid cash." While the traders active in Sumter district would also have purchased in neighbouring areas, there can be no doubt that the Sumter district trade was intensively conducted.<sup>13</sup>

The level of trading activity in Sumter district was, moreover, almost certainly no more intensive than in South Carolina as a whole. Although McElveen was principally concerned with supplying the Charleston market, the trading activity of the Sumter area does not, in general, appear to have been based upon any special relationship with Charleston a city which was some one hundred miles from Sumterville, the administrative centre of Sumter district. The Charleston market must have drawn substantial numbers of slaves from much of the coastal plain of South Carolina, but in districts beyond Charleston's principal catchment area the Negro speculators of South Carolina appear, in the main, to have traded directly with the more westerly states. It was, in fact, precisely the activities of the numerous "traders West" which presented McElveen with his purchasing problems. Had such traders excessively concentrated their purchasing activity in Sumter district, the slave prices of that area would, under the stimulus of demand, have risen to unattractively high levels. That an unusually heavy concentration on the Sumter market did

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13. McElveen to Oakes, 4 and 19 Nov., 2 Dec. 1856, 2 Feb. 1857, Ziba B. Oakes Papers (BPL). Ziba Oakes's trading arrangements relied essentially upon a quick turn-over of capital. Out-of-state traders who bought from Oakes were, in return for the convenience of being able speedily to make up slave gangs from large numbers of selected slaves, prepared to provide him with a profit on his slaves. These arrangements are discussed more fully in Chapter V.

net take place is shown by a comparison of the slave natural growth rates of Sumter district and of South Carolina as a whole. While, as a result of slave exportations, the South Carolina growth rate of the 1850s was 4.52 per cent - very considerably below the 23.4 per cent United States average for that decade - the Sumter district growth rate, as a result of a somewhat less intensive rate of slave exportation, was 9.46 per cent.

### III

Evidence presented in this chapter fully supports the conclusion that at least some 60 to 70 per cent of inter-regional slave transfers were attributable to the trade. In the course of examining the slave trading systems of the South and the stocking of particular markets, the chapters which follow provide further evidence in support of this conclusion.

TABLE 3.2 TRADING FIRMS BUYING SLAVES IN SOUTH CAROLINA DURING THE 1850s

SOURCES AND NOTES:

Newspaper Sources

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| News. | Indicates that source is a newspaper advertisement from newspaper as listed below: |
| 1     | <u>Abbeville Banner</u>  |
| 2     | <u>Independent Press (Abbe.)</u>   |
| 3     | <u>Laurensville Herald</u>   |
| 4     | <u>Edgefield Advertiser</u>  |
| 5     | <u>Beaufort Enterprise</u>   |
| 6     | <u>Charleston Mercury</u>  |
| 7     | <u>Yorkville Enquirer</u>  |
| 8     | <u>Chester Standard</u>  |
| 9     | <u>Darlington Flag</u>   |
| 10    | <u>Sumter Banner</u>   |
| 11    | <u>New Orleans Picayune (LA)</u>   |
| 12    | <u>Charleston Courier</u>  |
| 13    | <u>Winyaw Observer (Geor.)</u>   |
| 14    | <u>Greenville Mountaineer</u>  |
| 15    | <u>Gamden Journal (Kers.)</u>  |
| 16    | <u>Kingstree Star (Will.)</u>  |
| 17    | <u>Lancaster Ledger</u>  |
| 18    | <u>Lexington Flag</u>  |
| 19    | <u>Marion Star</u>   |
| 20    | <u>Carolina Spartan</u>  |
| 21    | <u>The Southron (Oran.)</u>  |
| 22    | <u>Sumter Watchman</u>   |
| 23    | <u>Black River Watchman (Sumt.)</u>  |
| 24    | <u>Daily South Carolinian (Rich.)</u>  |
| 25    | <u>Daily Carolina Times (Rich.)</u>  |
| 26    | <u>Darlington Southerner</u>   |
| 27    | <u>Kingstree Star (Will.)</u>  |
| 28    | <u>Yorkville Miscellany</u>  |
| 29    | <u>Louisville Gazette (GA)</u>   |
| 30    | <u>The Confederation (Montgomery, AL)</u>  |
| 31    | <u>Memphis Eagle and Enquirer (TN)</u>   |
| 32    | <u>The Daily True Delta (New Orleans, LA)</u>                                      |
| 33    | <u>New Orleans Crescent (LA)</u>   |

Traders' Manuscripts

Unless otherwise stated, letters cited were directed to the individual named in the title of the relevant manuscript collection.

|         |  |
|---------|--|
| ZBO     | Z.B.Oakes Papers (BPL)                                   |
| SOW     | S.O.Wood Papers (DU)                                     |
| JTH     | J.T.Harrison Papers (SHC)                                |
| WAJF    | W.A.J.Finney Papers (DU)                                 |
| CF      | Cox Family Papers (SCL)                                  |
| ALT     | A.L.Taveau Paper (DU)                                    |
| HD/CHS  | Hector Davis & Co., Slave Sales Record Book (CHS)        |
| HD/NYPL | Hector Davis & Co., Day Book (NYPL)                      |
| EL      | W.D.Ellis to Z.B.Oakes, Miscellaneous Manuscripts (NYHS) |
| RHD     | E.H.Dickinson & Bro., Slave Dealers' Account Book (AAS)  |
| TG      | T.Glen Papers (DU)                                       |
| JG      | J.Graham Papers (DU)                                     |

Miscellaneous Sources

Adams F.C.Adams, Uncle Tom at Home: A Review of the Reviewers and Repudiators of Uncle Tom's Cabin by Mrs.Stowe (Philadelphia, 1853).

Sellers Sellers, Slavery in Alabama

Korn B.W.Korn, "Jews and Negro History in the Old South, 1789-1865", Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society, L(1961) pp.151-202.

Bancroft Bancroft, Slave Trading

Stroyer J.Stroyer, My Life in the Old South (Salem, 1879; Salem 1898)

Sydnor Sydnor, Slavery in Mississippi

JSC Testimony Taken by the Joint Select Committee to Inquire into the Conditions and Affairs of the Late Insurrectionary States, 13 vols. (Washington, 1872; New York, 1968)

Census Manuscript returns of U.S. census for district and year indicated.

S.C.Misc. Miscellaneous Records of Secretary of State for South Carolina (SCA)

Appeals Appeals case. Reference system as used in South Carolina Reports

Equity Equity Court case. Reference indicates district, year case was filed, bill number. Records consulted are at SCA, mainly on microfilm.

CCP Court of Common Pleas case. Reference indicates district, year case filed, judgment roll number. These manuscript records are at SCA

Manifests New Orleans inward manifests (NA). Very few manifests are available for the period after 1852.

P/ME Charleston district probate and/or Master in Equity sales of slaves. Evidence from Charleston district Court of Ordinary, Inventories, Appraisals, and Sales, 1850-1859 (SCA); Charleston district Court of Chancery and Equity, Sales Book of James Tupper, Master in Equity, sales 1851 to 1863 (SCA).

CCD Charleston City Directory for year indicated

Notes

Unless otherwise indicated (by letters tr,r), members of the firms listed appear to have bought from the public generally and then travelled to the Lower South to make sales.

tr Firm probably bought mainly through resident urban dealers rather than buying directly from the public.

r Resident urban dealers investing in slaves and selling to traders who, in the Lower South, resold the slaves. Some of the resident South Carolina dealers listed also bought and sold on a commission basis; and some, perhaps, made occasional trips to the Lower South.

( ) Traders known not normally to have been resident in South Carolina. The State in which they were usually resident is indicated in brackets.



Notes (continued)

- s Activity might have been confined to one or a small number of trips.
- + Possibly a trading firm. Evidence not conclusive
- ++ See note with individual entry concerned. Counted in Table 3.1 as "possible" rather than "documented" firm.
- Dates Dates given for firm being "Found Active" refer only to the date span for which direct evidence has been found. Activities probably extended over a longer period.

| Trading Firm and District          | Found Active    | Brief Indication of Evidence   |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|--|
| <u>ABBEVILLE</u>                   |                 |  |
| Vance, A.                          | 1859            | "50 Negroes Wanted...liberal prices for likely Negroes, both men and women, between 15 and 25 years" (Newsp. 1 and 2, July-Aug.1859).  |
| Merrimon, L.D. & Clinkscales, J.W. | 1847-56         | "100 Negroes Wanted!...young men and women, boys and girls" (Newsp. 4 and 1, June-July, June-Oct. 1856). L.D.M. & J.W.C. were "merchants trading under the name of Merrimon & Clinkscales" (Laur.CCP 1848, 5071) L.D.M. & J.W.C. were partners in the 1851-4 period (Abbe. Equity 1868, 308). The firm also advertised in Edge. and in Laur. By 1858 J.W.C. had joined D.N. Boozer.  |
| Clinkscales, J.W. & Boozer, D.N.   | 1858-63         | "Negroes Wanted....a lot of young and likely Negroes...between the ages of 12 and 25....One of us can always be found at home, prepared to pay the highest prices for such negroes as suit us, in cash" (Newsp.3, May-July 1858).<br>"Clinkscale and Boozier sold 7 yesterday [at Mobile]...at fully \$100 under the market" (WAJF, 6 Jan.1859). Witness "saw J.W.Clinkscales in Charleston in 1863....Clinkscales was at that time buying negroes." JWC made trips between South Carolina and Texas in 1861 (Abbe. Equity 1868, 308). Purchases were made in the firm's name in 1860 and 1863 (P/ME). |
| Suber, J.W. & Parks, J.T.          | 1855-6          | "Wanted immediately 40 or 50 likely young negroes for which liberal prices in cash will be given" (Newsp.2, Sept.1855-Mar.1856). See also Suber & White, and see Parks, below.   |
| Suber, J.W.                        | 1856-7          | "Wanted Immediately! 100 Negroes! For which the highest cash prices will be paid" (Newsp.1, June 1856-Jan.1857). Also advertised in Ande. and Laur.  |
| Parks, J.T.                        | 1858-60         | "Negroes Wanted. The undersigned will at all times purchase likely negroes between 10 and 20 years" (Newsp.1, Aug.1858-Jan.1859). "Will at all times be in the market...negroes...ages of 12 to 25" (Newsp.1, Aug.1858-Jan.1859).  |
| White, L.J. & Mosely, T.P.         | Late 1840s-1851 | Abbe. census of 1850 gave TPM as "speculator". Judge reports: "The evidence derived from Mosely was to the effect that before the death of White he had been his agent to traffic in the purchase and sale of negroes....That after his death he continued in the business for the widow." The widow herself made some purchases (Appeals, 7 Richardson 45).   |
| + Wiss, E.J.                       |                 | Wrote to Oakes (see Char.district) to ask whether any suitable slaves were available (ZBO, 14 Apr. 1857). Abbe.census of 1860 gave E.J.W. as "trader".   |

| Trading Firm and District        | Found Active | Brief Indication of Evidence  |
|----------------------------------|--------------|---|
| + Waites, J.F.                   |              | Abbe. census of 1860 gave E.J.W. as "trader".   |
| + Jackson, G.J.                  |              | " " " " G.J.J. "  |
| + Gardner, W.                    |              | " " " " W.G. "  |
| <hr/>                            |              |   |
| <u>ANDERSON</u>                  |              |   |
| Wood, S.O.                       | 1859-60      | Letter from T.G.Eving, Alabama, to T.Eving, Anderson district, S.C., asks the latter to give assistance to Samuel O.Wood, "a gentleman visiting your state and district for the purpose of purchasing slaves" (SOW, 12 Jan.1859). J.P.Pool of Pool & Blassingame (See Gree. district) wrote that he intended to buy in S.C. "and would like for you [Wood] to take an interest in them and you take them to sell" (SOW, 19 Mar.1860). Wood also bought at Richmond (HD/NYPL, 15 June 1860). |
| Cobb,E.M. (J.T.),J & Seaborn, G. | 1837-59      | "The have been trading in negroes for several years" (JTH, 6 Mar.1837). They "were partners in the business of buying and selling slaves" (Appeals, Rich.Eq.54). "He stipulated with Cobb [in 1857] to deliver said slaves to Cobb's depot for slaves, in Carnesville, Georgia" (Appeals, 12 Rich.Eq.234). See also S.D.Berry below.  |
| Berry, S.D.                      | 1850-53      | Berry "sworn saith that he went with Mr.E.M.Cobb. They had some negroes. This was in October last [1853]....Mr.J.C.Cobb, E.M.Cobb and J.T.Cobb had some negroes and this deponent had some also. They had...between 25 and 40 negroes amongst them. They remained together a portion of the road....E.M.Cobb was in the habit of backing J.T.Cobb and this deponent [S.D.B.]" (Ande. Equity 1854, 202) See Cobb & Seaborn, above.   |
| + Owens, A.J.                    |              | Ande. census of 1860 gave A.J.O. as "trader".   |
| + Campbell, H.                   |              | " " 1850 " H.C. " "   |
| + Richardson, J.                 |              | " " " " J.R. " "  |
| + Wilson, J.                     |              | " " 1860 " J.W. " "   |
| + Brown, J.J.                    |              | " " " " J.J.B. " "  |
| + Byrum, E.W.                    |              | " " " " E.W.B. as "speculator".   |

BARNWELL

|                 |  |  |
|-----------------|--|--|
| + McKay,A.N.    |  | Bought in low-country, possibly including Barn. district. A.N.M. wrote from Graham's Turn Out (Barn.?) and complained to Oakes (see Char. district) about an unsound slave bought from that trader: "If you wish I will sell him in Mississippi....I expect to start for Mississippi in a few days" (ZBO, 26 Sept.1854). |
| + Behling, E.C. |  | Barn. census of 1860 gives E.C.B.as "speculator".  |

| Trading Firm & District                                | Found Active | Brief Indication of Evidence   |
|--|--------------|--|
| <u>BEAUFORT</u>  |              |  |
| r Bryan, J. (GA)                                       | 1859-61      | J.B. advertisement in Beau. district seeking patronage for his Savannah pen: "Special attention given to the sale of Negroes, and very superior accommodations provided for them" (Newsp.5, Sept.1860). Also advertised: "Wanted to purchase 100 likely single negroes, for which the highest cash price will be paid" ( <u>Savannah Republican</u> , Dec.1859). J.A.Stevenson advertised: "Negroes wanted. Having commenced in the trade in Savannah, I will give the highest cash price....My office is at Capt.J.Bryan's" (Newsp.29, Jan.1861). See also Bancroft,pp.223-4, 378.  |
| r Wylly, G.W.;<br>Montmollin, J.S;<br>Collins,T.W.(GA) | 1853-60      | Partnership arrangements between the three underwent changes, but buying from Beau., Char., and low-country persisted. Handbill, probably of 1853 indicated that W. & M. opened "a slave Depot" in Beaufort district, across the river from Savannah; and W. & M. would pay "highest cash prices for Negroes, either singly, in families, or in gangs" (ZBO, 7 July 1853). J.S.M. told Oakes (see Char.): "I would be willing to purchase [from you] a few young Negroes the season through, allowing you a reasonable profit or commission" (ZBO, 20 Sept.1856). G.W.W.'s Savannah depot advertised in Beau. district (Newsp.5, Sept.1860). See also Nipson (Char.), below. |

CHARLESTON

|                              |         |  |
|------------------------------|---------|--|
| Gilchrist, J.M.;<br>King, J. | 1845-59 | "Negroes Wanted. Persons wishing to dispose of slave property may obtain the highest market prices" from J.M.G. (Newsp.12, Jan.1845). Slave sold to "one J.M. Gilchrist of Charleston, a dealer or trader in negroes" (Char.Equity, 1847, 27). Manifests for 1840s and 1850 show J.M.G. shipping to New Orleans (see Table 1.1). J.M.G. bought at least 95 slaves at Char.district judicial sales of 1850s; and in the year 1851 purchases made under name Gilchrist & King (P/ME). "Gilchrist bought some also Belser [see Sumt.] bought pretty largely" at a Sumt.district sale (ZBO), 2 Jan.1854). J.K. wrote from Georgia and asked Oakes (see Char.) about prices compared with "when I was in Charleston in October last. I have only bought two since I saw you" (ZBO, 19 Feb.1854). J.M.G. was active in 1859 (Bancroft,p.176n). |
| Austin, R.                   | 1850s   | CCD gave Austin as "Negre Trader". "Bob Austin" referred to as a trader who was willing to kidnap free Negroes (Adams, pp.95-6,166). Bought at least 23 slaves at Char.district judicial sales of 1850s (P/ME). See also Bancroft,p.183.   |

| Trading Firm and District | Found Active | Brief Indication of Evidence  |
|---------------------------|--------------|---|
| Nipson, F.                | 1854-60      | Wylly & Montmollin (see Beau.district) arrange that "Francis Nipson of your city may purchase Negroes for us" (ZBO, 23 Mar.1854). "Francis Nipson is said to be the illegitimate son of Montmollin and is buying negroes to ship" (ALT, 20 July 1857). Nipson active in Charleston market in 1860 (Bancroft, p.176n). Bought at Char. district judicial sales of late 1850s (P/ME).   |
| Robinson, G.A.            | 1860         | Robinson, of Chalmers Street ("traders' row"), Charleston, advertised to buy 500 slaves (Newsp. 12, 20 Feb.1860, quoted in Bancroft, p.177n).   |
| r McBride, M.             | 1845-63      | "Negroes wanted - The highest prices will be paid for NEGROES of all descriptions and any arrangement made with the seller strictly complied with" (Newsp.12, Jan.1845). "Negroes Wanted...likely young Negroes for which the very highest market prices will be paid" (Newsp.6, July 1850). Bought at least 47 at Char.district judicial sales of 1850s (P/ME). Shipped to New Orleans (Table 1.1). Several references to M.M.'s trading (ZBO, 11 Feb. and 16 Mar.1854, etc.). M.M. bought "with view to resell" (Char.Equity case of 1856). M.M. was active in 1860-1863 period (Bancroft, p.176n; P/ME, 1860-1863).  |
| r Mordecai, B.            | 1846-60      | Shipped to New Orleans in 1840s and 1850s (Table 1.1 and Manifests). Sold to traders (ZBO, 25 Dec. 1854). B.M., on buying a certain slave, undertook "that the said slave Norris shall immediately be taken beyond the limits of the state of South Carolina" (S.C.Misc., Volumn 6H ,p.568). Bought at least 102 slaves at Char.district judicial sales of 1850s (P/ME). Active in 1860 (Bancroft, p.176n). Bought extensively and had own slave pen (Korn, pp.172-3).  |
| r Gadsden,T.N.            | 1840-60      | T.N.G. arranged that S.Gasque should buy slaves in the Georgetown area and ship them to Gadsden for resale at Charleston. "Send me on prime negroes and I can do well for you" (Appeals, 2 Strobhart 324). Shipped some slaves to New Orleans in 1840s (Table 1.1.). In 1853, it was stated that "Thomas N.Gadsden, as part of his business, is engaged in the purchase and sale of Negroes... He provides shelter, clothing and food, for such Negroes as may be left for sale" (Appeals, 8 Richardson 180). Bought at least 33 slaves in Char. judicial sales of 1850s (P/ME). The trader Briscoe (see Sumt.) bought from T.N.G. (ZBO, 27 Aug.1854). The trader A.J.McElveen (see Sumt.) "Saw T.N.Gadsden up at the sale" near Sumter (ZBO, 6 Feb.1857). Bancroft described T.N.G. as South Carolina's biggest trader of the mid-1850s. Still active in 1860 (Bancroft, pp.167-9, 176n). Described as "mendacious" Negro Trader (Adams, pp.65-6). |

| Trading Firm and District | Found Active | Brief Indication of Evidence  |
|---------------------------|--------------|---|
| r Oakes, Z.B.             | 1846-63      | Z.B.O. was a major dealer with very extensive trading connections. See eg. J.H.Bryan (Char.), N.Vignie (Char.), and A.J.McElveen (Sumt.) entries; and see Z.B.Oakes Papers (660 items), passim. Shipped some slaves to New Orleans in 1840s (Table 1.1). Bought at least 180 slaves at Char. district judicial sales of 1850s, and continued to buy 1860-1863 (P/ME). See also Bancroft, pp.183-4,176n.   |
| r Ryan, T. & W.B.         | 1846-63      | Shipped some slaves to New Orleans in 1840s (Table 1.1). Bought at least 54 slaves at Char. judicial sales of 1850s, and continued to buy 1860-1863 (P/ME). Ryan's Mart a major vehicle of the trade, and T.&W.B.R. still active in 1860 (Bancroft, pp.170, 176n). Wylly (see Beau.) asked Oakes (see above) to find out where a runaway slave had been raised before W. bought him from T.R. Several other references to T.&W.B.R. (ZBO, 10 Apr.1854, etc.).   |
| r Salinas, A.J.           | 1851-63      | Began as trader's clerk, became "commission agent"; but also bought and sold in his own right. A.J.S. "was clerk with... (the trader T.N.Gadsden) in February 1840" (Appeals, 2 Speers 566). Advertised in Geor. that he had removed to Charleston where he continued in "business in the sale and purchase of negroes" (Newsp.13, Jan.1849). Bought at least 123 slaves at Char. district judicial sales of 1850s, and continued to buy 1860-1863 (P/ME).  |
| r Anker, G.V.             | 1855-63      | Described as "G.V.Anker & Co., Brokers and general commission agents" (TAV, 22 Feb.1860). Purchased and resold in own right. Bought at least 97 in Char. judicial sales of 1850s (P/ME). Bought at Richmond, Va., on 21 Aug.1858, and June-July 1860, etc. (HD/NYPL; HD/CHS).   |
| tr Vignie, N.(LA)         | 1857         | Arrangement made for Vignie, at New Orleans, to sell slaves supplied by Z.B.Oakes of Charleston. "Since I wrote you I have had an understanding with [Vignie] that he will make sales...for 3 per cent... This Mr.Vignie is a French creole, a gentleman of good standing that will readily command the entire confidence of the french sugar planters. [Other arrangements with Shelton or Peterson could be made] but this arrangement with Vignie is already better. More negroes could be sold at high prices [than through other contacts mentioned]" (EL, 6 Oct.1857). See also Bancroft, pp.337-8. |
| tr Bryan, J.H.(LA)        | 1850s        | J.H.B. informed Z.B.Oakes: "I am now in the trade [at New Orleans] as I was in Charleston, and would be happy to do some business with you in that way, between the two places...as fast as I sell them will remit you the proceeds to be reinvested" (ZBO, 5 May 1854; see also 12 Dec. 1856).   |
| tr Austin, W.W.           | 1856         | Wrote from Georgia that slaves bought in Charleston were still unsold. Wanted 10 to 15 young men and girls "that will suit the market....I shall go west if I buy a lot that will authorize me to go" (ZBO, 2 Oct.1856).  |

| Trading Firm and District                             | Found Active | Brief Indication of Evidence  |
|---|--------------|---|
| tr Wright, W.<br>(GA)                                 | 1854-6       | Asked Oakes of Charleston to keep him informed of the market, and to send some Negroes to him in Georgia "as I intend to cross the river [Savannah] and make titles to negroes from another stall this season, it being done here frequently" (Object was, by documenting sales in South Carolina, to evade Georgia's slave trade ban.) - see ZBO, 1 Oct.1854 and see other ZBO letters.  |
| tr Bitting, J.A.<br>(NC)                              | 1848-57      | Traded to Alabama in 1848 (Sellers, p.155). Told Oakes of Charleston: "I would like to buy a few negroes in your market" (ZBO, 25 Oct.1856). Wrote on his purchases and the prices he hoped to get (TG, 5 Nov.1857).  |
| tr Vogue, P. (AL)                                     | 1857         | "Having some money and wishing to purchase some negroes for my own use also some to sell again I take the liberty of writing". Wanted 15 to 20 (ZBO, 12 Mar.1857).  |
| tr Mattingly, J.<br>(MO, MS)                          | 1857         | His advertisement in Missouri offered to pay "more than any other trading man in the city of St. Louis and the state of Missouri" (Bancroft, p.140). "At Branchville last night I had escape from me a man that I purchased from Mr. White, the broker on Broad St. in Charleston" (ZBO, 15 Feb.1857). Asked Oakes to "ship him if he is caught when you ship the others" to Mississippi (ZBO, 16 Feb.1857).  |
| tr Adams, R.S. &<br>Wicks, M.L.<br>(MS)               | 1853-4       | 1852 advertisement stated that A. & W. agents had for two months "been purchasing...in the old states" (Bancroft, p.309). R.S.A. wrote from NC to ask Oakes of Charleston "whether you have bought any negroes for us....I have bought 80 in Richmond and Baltimore" (ZBO, 22 July 1853). A. & W. wrote: "Should we buy next summer we will probably request you to buy for us again. We have done very well with your purchases this year" (ZBO, 4 Jan.1854). R.S.Adams was, perhaps, the "unprincipled" South Carolina-Mississippi trader referred to in Adams, pp.95-6, 123-6. |
| tr Thomas, T.J.                                       | 1857         | Wrote from Gaineville (Alabama?) that he had sold the slave supplied by Oakes. "I have had some trouble. The old woman always complains and one of the boys has had an attack of plurisy (sic)" (ZBO, 30 Apr.1857).   |
| tr McKinley, J.D.<br>(FL)                             | 1854         | J.M.Bryant recommended J.D.M. as a man well qualified "to be connected with you in sales of negroes in Florida, in accordance with the plan you proposed" (ZBO, 6 Nov.1854).  |
| Forrest, N.B.,<br>W.H. & Jones, S.S.<br>(TN, LA etc.) | 1857-60      | Detailed description of the firm; bought in SC, NC, VA, etc. (Bancroft, pp.256-65). "500 NEGROES WANTED. I WILL PAY MORE THAN ANY OTHER PERSON, for No.1 NEGROES, suited to the New Orleans market" (Newsp. 12, Jan.-Mar.1860).   |
| Delap, A (TN)<br>(also Delap,<br>Witherspoon & Fly)   | 1857-9       | "A. Delap & Co. [of Memphis] have just received a large stock of South Carolina and Virginia negroes at their Mart...and expect to receive fresh supplies every 2 or 3 weeks" (Newsp. 31, Apr.1857). D., W. & F. bought at Char. district probate sales, 1857 and 1859 (P/ME).  |

| Trading Firm and District          | Found Active | Brief Indication of Evidence   |
|------------------------------------|--------------|--|
| Pickard & Cox<br>(TN?)             | 1856-7       | J.Cox wrote from TN that he wanted to buy 8 or 10. "I want to do a little trading this winter if prices will justify" (ZBO,3 Oct.1856). J.C. probably belonged to the firm of P. & C. who wrote from Savannah: "I want to buy 10 to 12 negroes... young and likely from 14 to 23. There appears to be good many negroes here but mainly in families. Mr.Wright has bought about 50." Referred to having been in TN (ZBO, 7 Jan.1857),  |
| Porter, R.W.<br>(TN)               | 1856         | Wrote from Nashville: "I am of the opinion that money could be made between your city and this... a man could buy small negroes say girls from 9-14 and ploughboys and women with one or two children... I am anxious to try the thing on, and if it will pay, either stay there myself or employ someone to buy for me" (ZBO,21 Oct.1856).  |
| Womack, J.B. &<br>Martin, W.J.(LA) | 1854         | W.J.M. of New Orleans wanted to buy 15 to 20 "pro- viding I can get them at prices to suit a falling market" (ZBO, 11 May 1854). W. & M. enquired whether there were any slaves in the Charleston market. W.J.M. asked for bill of sale to be drawn up "after the same form I have all my bills of sale drawn up" (ZBO, 18 Oct. and 9 Dec.1854). CCD (1860) gave John B.Womack as "broker".  |
| Smith, J. &<br>J.B. (LA)           | 1857-60      | JBS wrote from Richmond, referring to J.S. at New Orleans: "If you hear from or get Mr.Briscoe's Negroes you will please send them out by some ship to my brother." On Briscoe see Sumt. (ZBO, 3 Feb. 1857). J.B.S. wrote from New Orleans to Oakes: "Yours containing a list of Negroes...bought by my brother in your market I received by the course of the mail....Let me know what the prospects are of buying negroes in your market...such as Jeremiah has been buying....I presume you know what kind he bought" (ZBO,21 Feb.1857). J.B.S. advertised VA and SC slaves for sale at New Orleans (Newsp.11, Jan.1860). |
| Matthews, T.E.<br>(LA)             | 1860         | "Negroes for sale. The undersigned has re-opened the well known slave Depot...recently occupied by John B.Smith [see above], with a likely lot of... [slaves] - all imported from Virginia and South Carolina. Additional supplies will be received from those states during the season" (Newsp.32,Dec.1860).  |
| Carman, J.L.<br>(LA)               | 1858         | Received regular consignments from SC,MI,GA,AL, and FL (Newsp.33, Mar.1858).   |
| McCargo, T.<br>(LA)                | 1850         | On McCargo, a major trader, see Table 1.1, and see Sydnor, pp.151,154. Bought at Char.district pro- bate sale of 10 Dec.1850 (P/ME).   |
| Shelton, L.N.<br>(LA)              | 1859         | Bought at Char.district judicial sales, 1859 (P/ME). Was an established New Orleans trader (see Table 1.1; and see Vignie entry, above) but it is not clear to what extent he purchased in SC.   |
| Filor, J. (FL)                     |              | Demanded that Oakes of Charleston replace an unsound slave and added: "I hope [Oakes's co-operation in the matter] may be the means of opening a mutually advantageous business" (ZBO,25 May 1857). Filor's name frequently appeared in manifests for Florida ports.   |



| Trading Firm and District | Found Active | Brief Indication of Evidence  |
|---------------------------|--------------|---|
| + Scruggs, F.<br>(AL)     |              | "I have recently rented a house in this city [Mobile] as a depot for the negro trade. I take the present opportunity of enquiring the prices of certain classes, the demand and your general conception of the coming season for trade. What could likely <u>girls</u> from 12 to 15 be bought at, 15 to 18 - men likely 20 to 15, 15 to 12 year old boys. Nice fancy young women" (ZBO, 20 July 1854). It is not altogether clear whether Scruggs bought slaves or simply ran a "nigger jail" for the trade. |
| + Hill, A. (LA)           |              | Wrote from Shreveport, LA: "I wish to purchase a few young negroes, girls and boys - prefer girls - from 8 to 10 years of age. Can you purchase for me....The amount is not sufficient to justify a trip at present" (ZBO, 5 May 1854). Very probably a trader.   |
| + Behn, G.W. (TX?)        |              | Wrote from Georgia informing Ziba Oakes that he wanted to buy (ZBO, 12 Dec. 1854). Wrote from Texas to recommend two traders, one from Alabama, the other from Mississippi. Hoped Oakes made profits. Enquired about slave prices and asked whether there was a vessel serving Galveston, New Orleans, and Charleston (ZBO, 6 Sept. 1856). Very probably a trader.  |
| + Pillow, G.P.<br>(TN)    |              | Wrote to Ziba Oakes that, after "the character for honour, integrity and fidelity Mr. Cox [see Pickard & Cox, above] has given you and from your knowledge of the market, I would rather risk your purchases than those of any agent I could send there." Wanted to buy 10 to 15 "likely girls 14 to 18" (ZBO, 5 Aug. 1856). Very probably a trader.  |
| + Limehouse, T.           |              | Probably a part-time trader. Reported to Ziba Oakes that slaves were available in the Summerville area of Char. district and "If you are of a mind we will buy them between us" (ZBO, 5 Sept. 1854). Also appears to have been a planter (ZBO, passim). CCD (1852) gave as "trader".  |
| + Newman, J.              |              | " " " " "   |
| + Wilkinson, E.           |              | " " " " "   |
| + Singleton, D.           |              | " (1855) " " "speculator".  |
| + Chaplin, B.             |              | Census (Char. district, 1850) gave as "trader".   |
| + Tressel, J.S.           |              | " " " 1860 " " "  |
| + Petit, G.H.             |              | " " " " " " "speculator".   |

CHESTER

|               |         |   |
|---------------|---------|---|
| Pride, C.J.   | 1857-8  | "Wanted 100 Negroes, men, boys and girls for which the highest cash prices will be given" (Newsp. 8, Jan.-Dec. 1857). Also advertised in York district: "Wanted 100 likely young field negroes from ages 12 to 25...full cash prices" (Newsp. 7, Aug. 1857-Jan. 1858).  |
| Lipford, J.C. | 1856-60 | "Likely negroes for sale. J.C. Lipford has a desirable lot of fine negroes, men, women, boys, girls, and children to sell low for cash" (Newsp. 8, Jan. 1856). Census (Ches. district, 1860) gave as "merchant, speculator and farming". Bought at Richmond 24 April 1858 and 19 June 1860 (HD/CHS and HD/NYPL). Probably acted as feeder to long-distance trade. |

| Trading Firm and District                           | Found Active | Brief Indication of Evidence  |
|---|--------------|---|
| + Houston, W.                                       |              | Census (Ches.district, 1850) gave as "trader". W. Houston was perhaps "John W.B.Houston" (or a relative of J.W.B.H.) who was "doing a little [Negro] trading in Texas" (JG, letter of 1850). See also J.A.Houston (Edge.district).  |
| <u>CHESTERFIELD</u>                                 |              |   |
|   |              | No references to traders found.   |
| <u>CLARENDON</u>                                    |              |   |
|   |              | Created (1855) out of Sumt.district. See Sumt., below.  |
| <u>COLLETON</u>                                     |              |   |
|   |              | No references to traders found.   |
| <u>DARLINGTON</u>                                   |              |   |
|   |              | See also Sumt. district.  |
| Barnes, W.J.  | 1849-51      | "Negroes Wanted. 18 or 20 hands wanted, boys between 12 and 25 years old, girls 12 and 18 for which liberal cash prices will be paid" (Newsp.10, Sept.1849). Similar advertisement, for "18 to 20 young negroes from 12 to 25 years...cash" (Newsp. 9, Oct.1851). W.Barnes (probably the same W.J. Barnes), writing from Georgia, asked why he had not heard from Ziba Oakes. Asked Oakes about collecting money from the trader T.N.Gadsden of Charleston (ZBO, April 1854, 27 May 1854).  |
| <u>EDGEFIELD</u>                                    |              |   |
| Owings, R.M.;<br>Charles, J.H. &<br>Robertson, A.P. | 1856-60      | A.P.R. asked Oakes about the state of the Charleston market (ZBO, 8 Aug.1856). R.M.O., writing from Hamburg, Edge. district, asked Oakes: "Can you sell some good negroes in your market. Is there any buyers and what are they paying....It may be I will ship you some down" (ZBO, 23 Mar.1857). The firm advertised in Charleston for 100 likely Negroes from 12 to 25 years (Newsp.12, Nov.1859). Advertised in New Orleans: "Will be receiving fresh supplies during the season of the best negroes that can be bought in the Virginia and Carolina markets" (Newsp. 11, Nov.1859). Detailed information on the firm's "partnership in purchasing and selling negroes" (Ande.Equity 1861, 325). Census (Edge.district, 1860) gave RMO as "Negro Trader". |
| Crouch, J. &<br>Culbreath, H.C.                     | 1856-8       | C. & C. "were partners in the business of buying and selling slaves....Crouch went with the negroes to the west" (Appeals, 11 Richardson 9). Most of J.C.'s estate (he died in 1858) "consisted of negroes, he being a negro trader" (Edge. Equity 1868, 1091).   |

| Trading Firm and District                 | Found Active | Brief Indication of Evidence  |
|---|--------------|---|
| Teague, E.F. & A.G.                       | 1850-1       | "Negroes for sale! The subscribers having purchased 15 to 20 likely young negroes for the trade, will offer them on sale day" (Newsp.4, Dec.1850-Feb.1851). Acted as suppliers to the trade and also ran general store (Newsp.4, June 1853).          |
| Adkins, T. & Spires, W.                   | 1850-60      | "A fresh lot will be received each week" (Newsp. 4, 4 Feb.1851). Censuses (Edg.district, 1850 and 1860) gave both T.A. and W.S. as "slave trader".  |
| Gardiner, W.Q.                            | 1860         | Census (Edge.district, 1860) gave as "slave trader".  |
| Houston, J.A.                             | 1860         | " " " " " " " " "   |
| Sullivan, R.H.                            | 1860         | " " " " " " " " "Trader".<br>"Wanted! Twenty likely young negroes for which I will pay the market cash prices" (Newsp.4, Aug. 1858).  |
| Addison, J.A. & Warren, C. + Watson, B.J. | 1857         | "Wanted to buy 50 likely Negroes for which the highest prices will be paid" (Newsp.4, Jan.1857). "Negroes wanted. The subscriber wishes to purchase 25 to 30 Negroes" (Newsp.4, Dec.1856). A probable trader despite lack of detail in advertisement. |
| + Coleman, N.                             |              | Census (Edge.district, 1860) gave as "Speculator".  |
| + Leonard, G.F.                           |              | " " " " " " " " "   |
| + Harrison, S.                            |              | " " " " " " " " "Trading".  |

FAIRFIELD

|                         |        |   |
|-------------------------|--------|---|
| Hughes, D. & Randolph,- | 1850-7 | Census (Fair.district, 1850) gave D.H. as "speculator". H. & R. asked Oakes the prices of No.1 likely young fellows 14-25 and young women 14-20" (ZBO, 2 Feb.1854). H.& R bought at Char. district probate sale, 1857 (P/ME). |
| + Edrington, R.J.       |        | Census (Fair.district, 1850) gave as "trader".  |
| + McAlloy, J.           |        | " " " " " " " " "   |

GEORGETOWN

|                    |         |   |
|--------------------|---------|---|
| Sampson, S.        | 1848-50 | "Negroes. The highest cash prices will be paid by S.Sampson & Co." (Newsp.13, Oct.1848-Jan.1850). Also advertised to sell dry goods, etc. (Newsp.13, Dec.1849). Evidently a part-time trader or an agent for purchasing.  |
| Christie, G.S.S.   | 1845-57 | Had business associations with T.N.Gadsden (see Char.) and S.Gasque (see Chapter V) - see Marion Equity 1847, 86. Christie vouched for man who wanted to sell a slave to Oakes (ZBO, 19 Mar. 1857). "Dickinson and Kerton are engaged in merchandising and in buying and selling negroes.... Kerton or Christie was Dickinson's agent". (Appeals, 2 Richardson 507).  |
| "Rumney on Santee" | 1850s   | F.C.Adams described several traders - "Bob" Adams, T. Norman Gadsden, "Bob" Austin (on these, see Char.), and "Rumney on Santee". Rumney's "transactions would outshame (H.B.Stowe's) Haley". Referred to Rumney's "life on the borders of Texas - his slave traffic in the middle and southern states, ...his cunning systems of running off free Negroes, ...his revolting examinations of wenches,...his making up slave gangs". Bought in the River Santee area of SC (Adams, pp.96-8). |

| Trading Firm and District | Found Active | Brief Indication of Evidence                   |
|---------------------------|--------------|--|
| + Coletrane, S.           |              | Census (Geor.district, 1860) gave as "trader". |

GREENVILLE

|                              |         |   |
|------------------------------|---------|---|
| Irvine, E.S. & O.B.          | 1847-51 | E.S.I. "being at that time engaged in the purchase and sale of slaves on speculation". A woman was to be sold to E.S.I., "who would carry her entirely out of the country" (Gree.Equity 1847, 160). "Negroes. I wish to purchase a number of likely young negroes...cash" (Newsp.14, Mar.1849-Jan. 1851).   |
| Kelly, E. & Harris, -        | 1853    | "Plaintiff declined to sell to (Kelly) a negro trader" (Gree.Equity 1854,208).  |
| Pool, J.P. & Blassingame, F. | 1859-60 | J.P.P. wrote to S.O.Wood (See Ande.) from Selma, Alabama: "My partner Mr.Blassingame will remain for the week....Since I saw you we have sold 6 negroes. I should like to carry out the conversation we had on the (railroad) cars relative to the trade....It may be I can get a few on my arrival home [to SC], if so I will buy them wright (sic) and would like for you to take an interest in them and take them to sell" (SOW, 19 Mar.1860). W.A.J.Finney, a trader, (see Chap.IV) sent his regards to Briscoe (see Sumt.), Glover, John C. Calhoun (see Laur.), and Frank Blassingame (WAJF, 19 Oct.1859). |

HORRY

No references to traders found

KERSHAW

|                  |        |  |
|------------------|--------|--|
| Ford, J.W.       | 1850   | "Negroes wanted. I wish to purchase 200 Negroes, 100 men and 100 women. None need apply unless their Negroes are young and likely. For such the highest prices will be paid" (Newsp.15, June-Sept.1850). Probably still trading in 1857. Bought at Char.district probate sale in 1857 (P/ME).  |
| An Advertiser    | 1851   | "Negroes wanted. Those having young Negroes for sale, from the age of 15 to 26 will find a purchaser by applying to the Wateree House" (Newsp. 15, Jul-Oct. 1851).   |
| Page, J.         | 1860   | "Negroes Wanted. The subscriber will pay liberal cash prices for young Negroes" (Newsp.15, Jan.-Feb.1860). Census (Kers.district, 1860) gave as "Negro Speculator".  |
| Brown, S.N. (AL) | 1854-9 | Was already active and referring to his "old patrons" in 1852 (Bancroft, pp.297,381). A.J.McElveen (see Sumt.) wrote to Oakes: "Mr.Brown is here and wants nothing but what is strictly prime and says he will be here in January and is willing to join me in a lot of negroes" (ZBO, 11 Dec.1854). Had depot in Alabama and regularly advertised that depot in Kers.district newspapers: "Will give my |

| Trading Firm<br>and District           | Found<br>Active | Brief Indication of Evidence  |
|--|-----------------|---|
| Brown, S.N. (Continued)                |                 | personal attention to purchasing and selling slaves on commission...office...Montgomery, Ala." (Newsp. 15 and 16, (Sept.1858-Mar.1859). "New arrival of Negroes. I have just received [at Montgomery depot] ...a large lot of Virginia and Carolina raised field Negroes" (News.30, 15 Jan. 1859).  |
| ++ Bulger, O.L. &<br>DeVane, P.R. (AL) |                 | Advertised in Kers.district: "Will attend to boarding, selling and purchasing NEGROES on commission. Office at Sanders and Fisher's old stand,...Montgomery, Ala." (Newsp.15, Sept.1854-Dec.1855). Handled slaves brought to Alabama by trader A.J. McElveen of Sumter district (ZBO, 5 Jan.1855). No evidence that the firm itself purchased in SC.  |
| <u>LANCASTER</u>                       |                 |   |
| Cureton, J.E.                          | 1856            | "Wanted to purchase, 25 likely young negroes, for which the highest cash prices will be paid" (Newsp. 17, Aug.1856).  |
| Ellis, H.                              | 1859            | "Negroes Wanted! The highest cash prices will be paid for single Negroes ranging in age from 10 to 30 years" (Newsp. Nov.-Dec.1859).  |
| <u>LAURENS</u>                         |                 |   |
| Dial, L.<br>(Crews, J. agent)          | 1856-61         | "Joseph Crews...used to be a Negro trader" (JSC, IV, p.1212). From about 1856 he traded in slaves with Dial. Crews "had a <u>carte blanche</u> to sign his name 'Lewis Dial, per Joseph Crews'. He carried on that [trade] up to the war" (JSC, V, p.1314). "Negroes Wanted. I wish to purchase any number of likely young negroes for which I will pay the highest cash prices...Jos. Crews, ag't" (Newsp.3, Sept.1859).   |
| Nickels, R.J.<br>& Anderson, -         | 1858-60         | R.J.N. of Waterloo, SC, wrote to the trader W.A.J. Finney (see Chap.IV ): "Me and Anderson will start to the mountains in a few days for the pirpus [sic] of buying some....If nothing happens I will be at Montgomery by the last of February with a few slaves". Had just got back to SC from AL (WAJF, 8 Jan.1859). "Negroes here [Laur.] is but very high and but few to sell. We have bought a few yet, some 8 to 10. We intends buying and trying the market this fall" (WAJF, 28 June 1860). Census (Laur.district, 1860) gave R.J.N. as "Negro Trader". |
| + Johnson, L.T.                        |                 | Census (Laur.district, 1860) gave as "Trader".  |
| <u>LEXINGTON</u>                       |                 |   |
| Steedman, R. &<br>Fox, W.H.            | 1859-60         | "Negroes Wanted. We will pay the highest cash prices for young Negroes, male and female" (Newsp. 18, May 1859-Sept.1860). Census (Lexi.district, 1860) gave W.H.F. as "Negro Trader".   |

| Trading Firm and District   | Found Active | Brief Indication of Evidence  |
|---|--------------|---|
| <u>MARION</u>   |              |   |
| ++ McLaurin & McNeal  |              | "Negro for sale....Said Negro was warranted to be sound by McLaurin and McNeal, negro speculators, but she proved to be mentally and physically un-sound, and was then tendered back for recantation; they refused. Now girl will be sold at their risk" (Newsp.19, Apr.1856). Marion was, in 1850s, still a net importing district. Not clear whether the firm exported from SC.   |
| <u>MARLBORO</u>   |              |   |
| Weatherly, T.C. & J.A.  | 1846-59      | T.C.W. bought at Richmond on 12 June 1846, 18 Nov. 1848, etc. (RHD). TCW "by force of arms did take away a negro slave" (Marl.CCP 1848, 3416). The trader E.C.Briscoe (see Sumt.) wrote: "T.C.Weatherly ...will be out here [Port Gibson, MS] this summer and [will] bring her [a slave purchased]" (ZBO, 30 Mar.1854). J.A.W. wrote to Ziba Oakes: "The negroes I bought of you are all doing well. I have an arrangement with my bankers to send you \$10,000 the first day of Dec. to invest in negroes" (ZBO, 6 Sept. 1856). A.J.McElveen (see Sumt.) wrote to Oakes: "I saw Col. [T.C.] Weatherly of Marlboro district. He is wanting to buy (slaves)". He later wrote: "I am fearful Col.Weatherly will buy [in competition]" (ZBO, 8 July 1856 and 30 Dec.1856). J.A.W. wrote: "I returned from the South about the middle of April - made a good trip, though I lost two negroes - the first I ever had to die. Write me news of trade and the state of your market" (ZBO, 4 May 1857). T.C.W. bought at Char.district probate sale, 1859 (P/ME). |
| s Cox, R.A. & M.E.  | 1857         | M.E.C. wrote from Marl. to R.A.C.: "I received your letter...which informed me that you were in Memphis and had not sold any of the negroes....You should have sold by this time...the expenses will take all the profits" (CF, July 3-21 1857).  |
| + Hasque, T.<br>+ Quick, A.<br>+ Bingham, G.<br>+ Brazier, J.<br>+ Peterkin, J.A. |              | Census (Marl.district, 1850) gave as "trader".<br>" " " " " " "<br>" " " " " " "<br>" " " " " " "<br>" " " " " " "trader and clerk". JAP had dispute with trader TCW. (on T.C.W., see above) - see Marl.CCP case of 1850.   |
| <u>NEWBERRY</u>   |              |   |
| Holeman, R.B. & Tolleson, A.  | 1856         | "100 Negroes Wanted. I wish to purchase 100 likely Negroes between the ages of 12 and 25, for which I will pay fair cash prices. Persons wishing to sell will please inform Mr.Alfred Tolleson, at Spartanburg Court House, or myself at Newberry Court House" (Newsp.20, July-Sept.1856).  |

| Trading Firm and District | Found Active | Brief Indication of Evidence  |
|---------------------------|--------------|---|
| + Kinnard, H.H.           |              | Dell of Florida wrote: "Mr.Kinnard never was an agent of mine and at the time he took the negroes to Charleston [he] had no claim on them" (ZBO, 1 Nov.1856). H.H.K. wrote to Oakes that he was interested in the woman, her four children and the driver, and added "Katherine and William will suit the market except Katherine's teeth are bad". Later he added that Oakes should let him have the woman and her children at \$1500 "as they are not sale-able in this or the western market" (ZBO, 23 and 29 Nov.1856). |
| + Harris, J.Y.            |              | Census (Newb.district, 1850) gave as "speculator". See also Kelly & Harris entry (Gree.).   |
| + Suber, M.               |              | Census (Newb.district, 1860) gave as "trader". See also J.W.Suber entry (abbe.).  |
| + Counts, H.              |              | Census (Newb.district, 1860) gave as "trader".  |

ORANGEBURG

|               |      |  |
|---------------|------|--|
| Ellis, W.L.   | 1859 | "Wanted 100 Negroes [sic]. I will pay the highest cash prices for 100 young and likely Negroes" (Newsp.21, Mar.1859).  |
| Hydrick,A.J.  | 1857 | "NEGROES WANTED. I am paying the highest cash prices for young and likely NEGROES, those having good front teeth and being otherwise sound... address Poplar P.O., Orangeburg District" (Newsp. 22, March 1857). Advertised in Sumter and apparently bought mainly in the neighbouring districts of Sumt. and Oran.  |
| Manning, -    | 1850 | Stroyer (pp.40-2) described the sale of two of his sisters and other slaves: "A Mr.Manning bought a portion of...[the slaves] and Charles Login [see Rich.] the rest. These two men were know as the greatest slave traders in the South". The location given - "28 miles south of Columbia" and "25 or 30 across the River" from Sumterville - places the transactions in Oran.district. Stroyer's date of birth (1849), and the fact that the traders used the railroad at Sumter, places the sale in the 1850s. |
| + Cook, W.    |      | Census (Oran.district, 1860) gave as "trader".   |
| + Louis, S.   |      | " " " " " " "  |
| + Alorp, A.   |      | " " " " " " "  |
| + Griffin, W. |      | " " " " " " "  |

PICKENS

|                |  |   |
|----------------|--|---|
| + Fringe, J.C. |  | Census (Pick.district, 1860) gave as "trading". |
|----------------|--|---|

RICHLAND

|               |         |  |
|---------------|---------|--|
| Sharp, J.M.E. | 1845-54 | "...heard John Sharp say that he has applied to said J.C.Hawkins to run off his negroes...out of state....Sharp is about going off to the west in a few days" (Rich.Equity 1845, 502). "\$10,000 cash. |
|---------------|---------|--|

| Trading Firm and District | Found Active | Brief Indication of Evidence  |
|---------------------------|--------------|---|
| Sharp, J.M.E. (continued) |              | In hand for purchase of negroes of either sex. Apply J.M.E.Sharp, Columbia, S.C." (Newsp.23, Aug. 1849-Jan.1851). Had depot at Charleston in 1853 (Newsp.6, Jan.-June 1853). P.M.Huson testified: "Sharp, for several years previous, and up to his death had been engaged in the business of buying and selling negroes.... [Huson] acted as his agent [and] bought and sold negroes.... [Sharp] left Columbia in the fall of...1854 on a trading excursion or trip westward and did not return to the state again" (Rich.Equity 1856, 624). |
| Satterwhite, J.A.         | 1840s-1851   | "I am conversant in the value of negroes. Have been trading for some time and was in November 1850" (Rich.Equity 1850, 548).  |
| Forsythe, A.              | 1840s-1858   | "I have been dealing in negroes for some time and am pretty well acquainted with their value" (Rich. Equity 1850, 548). "There were a good many slave-dealers in and about Columbia... [including] an Irishman named Forsyth" (interview cited in Bancroft p.244n). "On June 9 1857...sold...to a negro trader ...one Forsythe" (Manuscript Appeals Opinion bundles, Anderson v. Aiken, 1860). Bought at Char. probate in 1858 (P/ME).  |
| J.M.C.                    | 1858         | "Wanted! Persons...having any likely negroes for sale, aged 13 to 28 years, will be called on" (Newsp.24, Dec.1858).  |
| Crowley, J.B.             | 1856         | "Negroes wanted...good sound Negroes between the ages of 12 and 35...cash" (Newsp.25, June 1856).   |
| Logan, C.                 | 1854-60      | Logan purchased slaves in 1854 and "carried them to the west and sold them...in Mississippi" (Rich. Equity, 1858, Taylor v. Swedish Iron Co.). "Slaves wanted....Highest cash prices for young and likely Negroes of both sexes" (Newsp.25, Mar.1856). Census (Rich.district, 1860) gave as "Negro Trader". See also Bancroft, pp.240-1; and see Manning entry (Oran.).   |
| s Bythewood & Smith       | 1856         | "Wanted to purchase 20 young and likely Negroes, for which the highest cash prices will be paid" (Newsp.25, May 1856). Also acted as auctioneers and commission agents (see Newsp.25, 1850s).   |
| ++ Huson, P.M.            |              | Was agent of Sharp (see above Rich. entry). Very probably continued to trade in his own right after 1854. S.P.Watson (see York) advertised that he dealt in slaves in Montgomery and cited Huson as a referee as to his reliability (Newsp.7, Feb.1857-Jan.1858).   |
| + Rabb, J.                |              | Census (Rich.district, 1860) gave as "trader".  |

SPARTANBURG

|                 |  |   |
|-----------------|--|---|
| ++ Owens, J.    |  | "Committed to jail...Henry...says he belongs to a Mr.James Owens, a speculator" (Newsp.20, July 1850). The trader probably bought in SC, but no direct evidence has been found. |
| + Chapman, L.D. |  | Census (Spar.district,1860) gave as "trader".   |
| + Walker, J.    |  | " " " " " " "   |
| + Smith, E.P.   |  | " " " " " " "   |



| Trading Firm<br>and District                             | Found<br>Active | Brief Indication of Evidence  |
|--|-----------------|---|
| <u>SUMTER</u>  |                 |   |
| Belser, W.S. &<br>Myers, R.C., D.<br>(with Belser, L.H.) | 1849-57         | In 1849, W.S.B. and R.C.M. "entered into a partnership in carrying on the business of buying and selling Negroes." Louisiana selling trip described; W.S.B. absconded with profits in 1850. L.H.B. had made some purchases with the firm, and continued to trade (Sumt. Equity 1852, 180 new series). "Belser has agents up here [Darl. and Sumt.] and is buying slaves" (ZBO, 20 Aug. 1853; see also 2 Jan. 1854, 15 Apr. 1857).         |
| Louisiana Trader<br>Burkett, H.G. &<br>McElveen, W.      | 1853<br>1853-4  | See Burkett reference, below.<br>Were "co-partners in the business and trade of buying and selling slaves" (Sumt. Equity 1858, 325 new series). A.J. McElveen (see below) wrote: "Burkett met with a trader from Louisiana since he left town and from what I learn is trying to get him a lot of negroes. Sharp [see Rich.] sent him over to see Burkett" (ZBO, 29 July, 1853).  |
| McElveen, A.J.   | 1853-63         | Acted as major purchasing agent for Oakes of Charleston. Bought in Sumter and neighbouring districts (see text of present chapter; and see ZBO passim). Also made at least one selling trip to Alabama. Wrote from Alabama: "I have made some sales of my poor scrubs" (ZBO, 1 Nov. 1856). Not all of his purchases were made with Oakes. Was still active in 1863. "50 young and likely negroes wanted ... cash" (Newsp. 26, Mar. 1863). |
| Dinkins, T.J.  | 1849-50         | "\$25,000 cash to be paid for negroes from age 14 to 30" (Newsp. 10, Aug. 1849-Jan. 1850).  |
| Ellis, P.H.  | 1857            | "I desire to purchase young and likely Negroes for whom the highest cash market valuation will be given." Wanted those "young, sound, good countenances and front teeth, and who are good talkers" (Newsp. 22, Mar.-July 1857).   |
| Manser, H.   | 1846-54         | A.J. McElveen (see above) wrote from Sumter: "I met Manser this evening from Richmond. He says they are [sic] but little doing". Later A.J.M. wrote that, in Sumter area, he and M. "have the promise of three fellows". Next month he wrote: "I think Manser is wiped out...two negroes ran away" (ZBO, 23 and 29 Sept., 4 Oct. 1854). Manser bought in Richmond 1846-7 etc. (RED).  |
| White, J.K.<br>(or G.K.)                                 | 1854-5          | A.J. McElveen wrote: "White is on his way to Alabama.... [He] is not willing to take any negroes that will be any trouble in getting along" (ZBO, 11 Dec. 1854). White wrote that he had not yet sold one of Oakes's slaves - "You both know it requires a man of a great deal of patience to deal in negro property" (ZBO, 25 Jan. 1855).  |
| Watson, -  | 1856            | A.J. McElveen wrote from Sumter: "I saw a new trader in here from North Carolina, Mr. Watson, he told me he paid 1800 for two boys in Columbia last week" (ZBO, 8 July 1856). Watson was perhaps the B.J. Watson entered under Edge. as a possible trader.  |

| Trading Firm and District | Found Active | Brief Indication of Evidence  |
|---------------------------|--------------|---|
| Briscoe, E.C.             | 1854-9       | Wrote from Port Gibson, Mississippi: "I landed home safe....I have sold none yet on account of sickness" (ZBO, 30 Mar.1854). Wrote from Port Gibson that he expected to get to Charleston in a couple of months to buy slaves (ZBO, 8 Mar.1857). See also Smith reference of 1857 (Char.) and Pool & Blassingame reference of 1859 (Gree.).   |
| s Lewis, W.               | 1858-9       | Bought "Negroes on credit at estate sales" and sold them "in west...for cash" (Appeals, 13 Rich. Equ.269).  |
| ++ McElveen, E.           |              | Appears to have bought in small way from Oakes of Charleston, rather than being an independent trader. "Owing to illhealth during last spring I was not able to take down any negroes [to Charleston] during that time, but as my health has somewhat improved, I can attend to business of that kind if I know what the prices of negroes are" (ZBO, 7 July 1856).   |
| + Cook, R.                |              | A.J.McElveen wrote from Sumter: "I met Bob Cook here the other day. He is in private conveyance and waiting man. He says he wants to pick up some old negroes. He says he is on his way up country. Mr.Disher came in yesterday and will be here a day or two. I have just met with Mr.Barr from Alabama. He is on his way to Richmond. He tells me prime fellows are worth 1050 also he tells me Lumpkin wrote him fellows in Richmond is worth 1050" (ZBO, 9 Sept.1854). On Lumpkin, the owner of an important "nigger jail", see Chapter V, and see Bancroft, pp.101-3. On Barr, see letter in which he reported from Richmond: "What southern buyers there are here say they will not pay the price" (ZBO, 11 Sept. 1854). Disher bought at Char.district probate sales in 1853, 1858, and 1859 (P/ME). Cook, Disher, and Barr were almost certainly slave traders. |
| + Disher, R.W.            |              | See Cook entry, above.  |
| + Barr, J.A.              |              | " " " "   |

Note: A.J.Hydrick, entered under Oran. district, also advertised in Sumt. district.

UNION

+ Fowler, J.W.                      Census (Union district, 1860) gave as "trader".

WILLIAMSBURG

Nettles, W.J.                      1860                      "Negroes wanted....Young and likely negroes... highest cash prices at all times" (Newsp.27, Oct. 1860).

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| Trading Firm<br>and District | Found<br>Active | Brief Indication of Evidence |
|------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|
|------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|

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YORK

++ Watson, S.D. (AL)

Advertised in York: "S.D. Watson, Montgomery, Alabama. Keeps on hand for sale, a good assortment of plantation negroes, house servants, mechanics, carriage drivers, etc. Also sells on commission at auction or private sale, and hopes for a liberal share of the patronage from his native country" (Newsp. 28, (Feb. 1857-Jan. 1858). From the evidence of this advertisement, which ran for at least a year, Watson expected and seems to have found a significant sale of slaves from "his native country", the York area.

- + Wilson, J.P.
- + McElvee, J.
- + Sanders, J.

Census (York district, 1860) gave as "trader".  
 " " " " " " "  
 " " " " " " "

Note: Although York district was a net importer of slaves during the 1850s as a whole, the last years of the decade were probably years of net exportation.

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## PART TWO

### SLAVE TRADING SYSTEMS

CHAPTER IV

SLAVE PURCHASING IN THE UPPER SOUTH: BASIC PRINCIPLES

Among those who chose to enter the ranks of the slave trading fraternity there were, no doubt, many whose business practices were very far from systematic, and there were surely many restless individuals who, in order to tap the massive speculative opportunities of the Southern trade, were prepared to flout both conventional business practice and the legal codes of the South. At the same time, however, market forces encouraged traders, both in the collecting and distributing phases of the slave traffic, to conform to certain basic trading practices. The regimenting influence of market forces was powerfully reflected in the seasonal character of the trade, in the financing of the trade, in the methods of slave purchasing, and in the quality of slaves purchased.

I

The inter-regional slave trade was very much a seasonally-orientated enterprise. In a large part this seasonal character arose because, in a society which to a great extent subsisted on credit arrangements among planters and between planters and factors, it was at the time when the planters of the Lower South marketed their crops that they could most readily command funds for the purchase of slaves.<sup>1</sup> It was at that time, too, that Lower South planters assessed their labour requirements and made out

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1. On the importance of credit arrangements in the ante-bellum South, and on the general shortage of hard cash, see Gray, History of Agriculture, II, pp.711-5; and see M.B. Hammond, The Cotton Industry: An Essay in American Economic History, pp.107-112, in Publications of the American Economic Association, New Series, I, (New York, 1897; 1966).

their plans for the crop year which was to follow. With successive pickings of the annual cotton crop beginning to appear on the market from late September and October, and with the Louisiana sugar crop beginning to be marketed from about December, the slave trade in the Lower South was active in the winter and spring, the great majority of traders' sales being made from December to March or April.<sup>2</sup>

In the case of the New Orleans slave market, which to a significant extent was concerned with supplying the sugar producing area of southeastern Louisiana, and which reacted to the rather later marketing of sugar than of cotton, trading extended into and perhaps somewhat beyond May. Manifests documenting the coastal slave traffic of the 1840s show that in those seasons the first substantial traders' shipments from the Chesapeake ports were started on their 20 to 25 day sea voyage to New Orleans in late September and in October. As late as April, however, substantial shipments were still leaving Chesapeake wharves, so that most of the slaves in these end-of-season shipments would not have reached the New Orleans market until May, and would probably have been sold in May and June.<sup>3</sup> Even though trading at New Orleans extended into May and June, it appears that January and the two months which followed saw the most active trading in that market. On 12 December 1856, the New Orleans trader James H. Bryan informed Ziba Oakes, the Charleston dealer, that: "no doubt in January, February and March there will be [at New Orleans] a great demand for negroes." Similarly, on 6 October of the following year, Oakes was informed that an arrangement

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2. On the marketing of staples, see Gray, History of Agriculture, II, p.715, Table 24, and pp.744, 750; see Phillips, American Negro Slavery, pp.243-4; and see Stamp, Peculiar Institution, pp.45-7.

3. A sample of about 7,800 slaves shipped by traders in 1841, 1843, 1845, 1847, and 1849 shows that September accounted for 4.7 per cent of these Chesapeake departures, with October accounting for 16.8 per cent, November 18.1, December 10.8, January 18.6, February 7.3, March 8.2, April 12.6, May 1.8, June 0.1, July 0.7, and August 0.3 per cent. Manifests (NA).

had been made to supply Vignie, of New Orleans, with slaves, and "Mr. Vignie says that he will be able to make sales of 500 negroes to good advantage in January, February and March."<sup>4</sup>

In the slave trade which dominated the southern traffic, that is to say the trade to the cotton producing areas of the Lower South, coffles were sometimes sent out from the exporting states as early as August or September. One Virginia trader, in July 1835, described his plans for driving a large slave coffle from the western part of his state to Mississippi, and reported: "We shall certainly start by the 10th August. I think we will be able to get 125 [slaves for the coffle] by that time." Chapter VI indicates that such a journey commonly took something like 40 days. No doubt slaves sent out early in the season would have benefited from a period of recuperation after their long journey, while by reaching the market early speculators would have been in a position to take advantage of what early season demand there was. Generally, however, sales in the Lower South were slack until December or a little before. It appears, for example, that in the 1858 to 1859 season the trader W.A.J. Finney did not begin actively selling in Alabama until the last few weeks of 1858. This is suggested by a letter of mid-January 1859 in which Finney's principal trading partner informed him: "I am well pleased at your sales [in Alabama] and think as the trade has opened brisker there it will remain good until 1st April." In the case of the North Carolina-based traders Jarratt and Glen, about 90 per cent of sales for the years 1833 to 1835 appear to have been made in the December to April period. That this four to five month period accounted for the great bulk of the active trading season in the cotton producing areas of the Lower South is again suggested by evidence in the William Long Papers. Early in September 1844, Long, a North Carolina-based trader was informed that

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4. Bryan to Oakes, 12 Dec. 1856, Ziba B. Oakes Papers (BPL); Ellis to Oakes, 6 Oct. 1857, William D. Ellis letter (NYHS).

This is the dullest season for the [Alabama] negro market, the winter and early spring is the best time to sell [here]...I think cotton will hardly bear quite as good a price as last season and that in consequence negroes will be some lower...It will depend a great deal on the numbers in the market, negroes will be in great demand here in the early part of spring from December till April. 5

The nature of demand for slaves in the cotton producing areas of the Lower South meant that, although some slave gangs were sent out somewhat earlier, most were started from the exporting states in October or November, with any additional gangs being sent out until about mid-February. It was, for example, the practice of Tyre Glen to make a "fall trip" in October or November, and, in some seasons, if demand and funds permitted, to supplement this with a "spring trip" made in January or February. Discussions of similar arrangements appear in correspondence between traders. In mid-December 1834, the trader J.S.Totten, still in Alabama disposing of a coffle of slaves which he had taken South a month or so before, received news from his partner who wrote:

I am daily looking for a letter from you. I wish you to write me advising me of the proprieties of a spring trip as I expect to send a parcel of negroes by William Hooper.

The question of a spring trip was discussed in Zach Finney's letter of February 1860. On that occasion, however, he advised Jack Finney, one of his trading associates, that the season was too far advanced for a further trip.

I have been thinking seriously [he wrote] and taking into consideration the slight differences of price here [in Alabama] and in the Richmond market, the expenses, the risk and the shortness of time we have to sell in, together with the fact that we would have to come in competition with the closing out of all the stock now upon the market and to come here, I think it will be prudent to abandon the project [of an end-of-season trip]...I am anxious to get money out of the trade as anyone and need it as much but I am rather afraid to risk it further this season.

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5. Haynes to Meek, 29 July 1836, Negro Collection (AU); Thomas to Finney, 12 Jan. 1859, W.A.J.Finney Papers (DU); Tyre Glen Note Books, Glen Papers (DU), in conjunction with I.A.Jarratt Account Book, Jarratt-Puryear Papers (DU), dating between them 149 sales for 1833 to 1835; Woolf to Long, 10 Sept. 1844, Long Papers (NCA).



The character of the demand for slaves and the "closing out of stock" meant, then, that traders were encouraged to conform to a basic seasonal routine.<sup>6</sup>

## II

In Chapters II and III of this study, it has already been seen that part of the inter-regional trade in slaves was accounted for by Lower South planters who visited the Upper South in order to make purchases of slaves. Somewhat similarly, numbers of Upper South Planters, in order to try to take full advantage of slave prices in the Lower South, travelled to that section to sell off surplus slaves from their plantations.<sup>7</sup> This latter practice; no doubt because of the time, inconvenience, and expense involved, appears not to have accounted for more than a few per cent of inter-regional slave sales. In general, the sale of slaves to the Lower South was more conveniently handled by professional traders who could devote long periods to the business of extracting good prices for their slaves; and who, because they operated on an extensive scale, could fairly readily absorb the costs involved in the transportation and accommodation of slaves. At the same time, some planters, in order to avoid the effects of foreclosures on property which they had mortgaged, carried their slaves out of state to be sold.<sup>8</sup> No doubt somewhat more commonly, slaves were sold to the Lower South by agents of Upper South planters, the agents receiving a commission on the sales which were made. Traders of limited means, and those not wishing to incur risks with slaves of uncertain title, sometimes adopted a policy of carrying

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6. See Glen Papers (DU) passim, and see especially Glen's lists of slaves sent to Alabama from 1830 to 1837; Gunn to Totten, 16 Dec. 1834, Totten Papers (NCA); Finney to Finney, 1 Feb. 1860, Finney Papers (DU).
  7. The Edward D. Tayloe Papers (UVA) provide a rather detailed account of such a slave selling arrangement.
  8. See for example, South Carolina Reports, Wiley et al., v. Lawson, 7 Richardson 152.

slaves to the importing states and selling them there on a commission basis.<sup>9</sup> In Chapter III, the study of the South Carolina slave trade has already documented a very considerable rate of direct inter-regional trading by professional speculators. This suggests that, while some Upper South slave-holders, directly or through agents who acted on a commission basis, sold their slaves to Lower South planters, the inter-regional slave trade must very much have been dominated by professional traders.

In many and quite probably in a substantial majority of cases, traders financed much of their purchasing on the basis of loans from banks and from private capitalists. The scale on which banks extended loans to slave traders was, indeed, very considerable. In the flush times of the mid-1830s, Gunn of the firm Totten & Gunn wrote from Yancyville, North Carolina, that "Negro fellows are a selling here for \$600 and every man that can get credit in the bank and his situation will let him leave home is a negro trader." In a publication of 1841, J.J.Gurney, a Quaker reformer, reported that during his visit to the South he had been assured that

Two-thirds of the funds of the Bank of North Carolina were invested in loans to slave merchants; and that not less than a million dollars had been expended the year before [that is, in about 1836], in the single county of Caswell for the purchase of Negroes on speculation.

Early in 1837, as the forces of the Panic were mounting, John M. Bass, President of the Union Bank of Tennessee, gave assurances that loans to traders would, in the future, be dealt with more cautiously. Bass wrote:

It has been a common subject of complaint against the Union Bank that too large amounts of its accommodations have been extended to Negro traders and others to the exclusion of the Planter and Merchant - It is the intention of the Board at least not to merit this imputation in the future.

It is likely, however, that as business confidence revived loans to traders would again have been made on an extensive scale.<sup>10</sup>

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9. See Rux to Stokes, 12 Feb. 1861, Lucy Chase Papers (AAS); and see Gunn to Totten, Totten Papers (NCA).

10. Gunn to Totten, 14 Jan. 1835, Totten Papers (NCA); Gurney, quoted in G.G. Johnson, Ante-Bellum North Carolina (Chapel Hill, 1937), pp. 473-4; Bass to Cooper, 1 Feb. 1837, papers in private possession (quoted in Mooney, Slavery in Tennessee, p. 44).

The papers of W.A.J. Finney, a Virginia-based trader already encountered in this study, dwell at length upon the importance of bank loans in financing the trade. Traders found that, in the importing states, advantageous sales could often be made by taking payment in negotiable "acceptances" which matured after perhaps 60 or 90 days. While Finney traded in Alabama, Phillip Thomas, his principal partner, constantly urged him to cash his "paper" before it matured, and to send the money to him in Virginia. The firm would receive somewhat less than the face value of the acceptance but would be able to meet payments on loans from the bank, and by doing so would ensure that the bank's credit was always available to them. A steady flow of credit would allow Thomas and Finney to buy throughout the season and so to maximise turn-over and profits. On 6 October 1859, Thomas's enthusiastic lecture on the economics of "Negro speculation" ran:

Now Jack if we can borrow money at  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent in Virginia and carry Negroes south and make money on them, cant we afford to cash the paper (acceptances)...Cash the paper as soon as possible. Send the money to Richmond care of Robert Lumpkin [the owner of a "nigger jail"]...I will start immediately to Richmond, and [travelling by rail?] in 8 days after I leave home I will be in Montgomery with a fresh lot of negroes. Some may say I ought not sell my 90 or 60 day bills and lose the interest but you do so. For why says you, Because the more exchange we let the Banks have the more indulgence we can get and the more negroes we buy the more exchange we get, and the more we can let the banks have.... For instance if we now could sell and pass through the Bank of Danville between this and the time our note [at the bank] falls due 40, or 50,000 dollars in exchange, I am firmly of the opinion that they then with two good endorsers would let us have \$30,000.

Although Finney was not easily convinced of the merits of his partner's scheme, the Finney Papers make it clear that, for the firm of Thomas & Finney, capital borrowed from banks was of great importance.<sup>11</sup>

In the papers of Joseph Meek and his associates somewhat similar discussions of the financing of the trade appear, but with these traders credit seems to have been obtained, in the main, from private capitalists. A

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11. Thomas to Finney, 6 Oct. 1859, Finney Papers (DU). See also Thomas to Finney, 8 Oct. and 19 Nov. 1859.

letter from Samuel Logan, in March 1835, informed Joseph Meek:

I have been promised from \$500 to \$1000 by Lewis Smith for the last 4 or 5 weeks [but] he has not let me have it yet.... John M. Prescott will not yet promise me, only in this way, that if he can get in money more than he needs he will during the summer let me have some.

About a year later a letter from Logan indicated the possibility of borrowing on a far larger scale. He informed Meek that, by a scheme which would involve Logan and Meek foregoing interest on bills, Colonel White was prepared to "raise cash that would suit us, from fifty thousand to \$100,000." Loans from both banks and private investors are documented in the A. & A.T. Walker slave trading accounts, while contracts to loan money for the purposes of slave trading are preserved in the Badgett slave trading papers.<sup>12</sup>

### III

The great majority of traders' slave purchasing advertisements specifically indicated that the traders concerned would pay in cash for the purchases which they made. In fact, of all traders whose slave purchasing advertisements have been identified in South Carolina newspapers of the 1850s, about 75 per cent, in their advertisements specifically announced that payment would be in cash.<sup>13</sup> The remaining 25 per cent implied, of course, that generous prices would be paid, and, no doubt, followed a similar payment policy to the rest of their colleagues. While advertisements generally announced that payment would be made in cash, available slave traders' bills of sale indicate that this policy was, indeed, followed in practice. Bills of sale recording traders' purchases are preserved in the papers of the traders Glen, Robards, Pascal & Raux, Long, Badgett, and Ferguson; and, with almost every purchase, payment appears to have been made in cash. In

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12. Logan to Meek, 8 Mar. 1835 and 4 May 1836, Negro Collection (AU); entry on page 29 (1857) in A. & A.T. Walker Account Book, 1851-1861 (SHC); contracts of 24 June 1843 and 15 July 1846, Badgett Papers (NCA).

13. See Table 3.2. For a further sampling of traders' advertisements, see Bancroft, Slave Trading, passim.

the case of the 214 slaves listed in the Glen bills of sale of the 1830s, the documents concerned, almost without exception, indicated that Glen had "paid in full" at the time the bill of sale was signed. In the case of Robard's 71 recorded purchases, the seller, in signing the bill of sale, indicated that the purchase price had been "to me in hand paid." The Pascal & Raux bills of sale recorded 146 slaves purchased and each bill began: "Received of Bernhard Raux the sum of...for the slave..." Two bills of sale in the Long collection referred to bonds being posted to secure credit purchases, and one bill of sale referred to purchase on a credit of six months. The remaining dozens of bills of sale in the Long Papers, like those in the other five collections mentioned above, give no indication of having involved anything but cash purchases.<sup>14</sup>

The trader's policy of making large-scale purchases in cash contrasted sharply with the policy almost universally followed by planters. At probate and at other judicial sales, for example, unless only a small number of prime slaves was involved, slaves were almost always offered to the public on the basis of a down-payment of something like one-third of the sale price, with the balance paid after twelve months or, more usually, paid in two or three annual instalments. Interest was to be paid with each instalment and the credit of purchasers at such sales was established by "approved personal security" together with a mortgage on the slaves purchased. A sampling of the terms of sale offered at judicial sales is provided by the records of the Master in Equity for Charleston district, South Carolina. Of all slaves sold by that official in the 1850s, only 14 per cent were sold for cash; 26 per cent were sold on the basis of a half-payment in cash with the balance paid in twelve months; while the remaining 60 per cent involved payments over two or three years.<sup>15</sup> For the same period, public records of Charleston

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14. The Pascal bills of sale recorded purchases for the New Orleans trade and are part of the Paul Pascal Papers (HLH). On the Robard's, Badgett, Ferguson, Long, and Glen papers, see Table 1.2.

15. Charleston District Court of Chancery and Equity, Sales Book of James Tupper, Master in Equity (SCA). This manuscript volume covers the period October 1851 to Dec. 1859 and documents the sale of 880 slaves.

District's probate sales do not indicate the terms on which slaves were sold. Advertisements placed in the Charleston Courier and announcing probate sales demonstrate, however, that at probate sales just as at Equity sales purchases on a credit of one, two, and three years were very much the norm. In a society subsisting largely on credit transactions, the traders' offers of "CASH for likely Negroes" must have had a strong appeal.

While the trader's practice of paying in cash must have been looked upon with favour by Upper South slave-holders, the practice does not seem to have been followed solely as a means of tempting planters to part with their slaves. When cash was not available, traders would make purchases on a short credit. It seems, however, that traders had a positive preference for cash purchases, and that such a purchasing policy was very much in their interests. This preference is suggested in the correspondence of the trader Samuel Logan. Logan informed his partner that, with available funds, "[we] can make some purchases upon a short credit. But you know nothing does as well as the cash." He, therefore, redoubled his efforts to draw in funds and to raise loans in order to make cash purchases. Similarly, the trader Tyre Glen reported:

I cant close more than 3 or 4 trades until I get more money, unless I do it on a short credit which I think I will do for all the most desirable, and rely on your remittances [to be sent from Alabama] for payment.

E.W.Ferguson informed his buying agent that he should, when buying slaves, seek to "get the lowest cash price." The advantage of buying on a cash basis is directly indicated in a letter received by the prominent Charleston slave dealer, Ziba B. Oakes. Oakes's associate, C.C.Cooper, informed him that the terms of a sale of slaves had been fixed at twelve months credit. "Had the money to have been paid on delivery of the property they would", Cooper observed, "have sold 20 per cent lower. Should any cash sales take place", he continued, "I will keep you informed." A letter of A.J.McElveen, one of Oakes's buying agents, again emphasised the importance of cash purchases. McElveen reported to Oakes: "[I] will be at another sale on Wed. I suppose

I will have some chance as the sale will be for cash - that is unless the creditors do not [sic] come in competition."<sup>16</sup>

Purchasing in cash meant that, with cash in great demand, the trader gained the advantage of lower basic purchase prices than when slaves were bought on credit.<sup>17</sup> Additionally, cash purchases meant that extended interest payments were avoided. It was, then, in the trader's interest to pay in cash. In a great many cases, cash purchasing on an extensive scale was made possible by the trader securing substantial loans from banks and from private individuals. These loans, extending for a trading season or sometimes for part of a season, were less expensive than the two and three year interest payments which most credit purchases of slaves involved. Since speculators bought slaves in the Upper South in order quickly to resell them in the inter-regional trade, it was generally possible for the trader readily to repay loans and to take substantial profits from his trafficking.<sup>18</sup> Cash purchasing on a similarly large scale would almost always have been impossible for planters. This is because, while the trader speedily gained substantially more than his purchase price in reselling slaves, the return on the planter's investment in slaves usually came much more slowly, with the harvesting of successive crops. When buying from the trader, however, Lower South planters were generally able to buy for cash or on terms of something like 60 to 90 days' credit.<sup>19</sup> This was possible because, in dealing with traders, planters

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16. Logan to Meek, 8 Mar.1835, Negro Collection (AU); Glen to Jarratt, 23 Dec.1833, Jarratt - Puryear Papers (DU); Ferguson's undated note, Ferguson Papers (NCA); Cooper to Oakes, 12 Nov.1853 and McElveen to Oakes, 5 Mar. 1855, Oakes Papers (BPL).
  17. See Gray, History of Agriculture, II, p.713. See also Richland district Equity Court (SC) Pollack v. Mordecai, 1850, Bill 548 (SCA). In this court case, traders and auctioneers were called to give expert witness on the value of the slave Jim. Witnesses were agreed that "Jim was worth \$450 for cash - credit would have made him bring more."
  18. On the question of trading profits, see Chapter VII.
  19. See discussion of traders' selling practices, Chapter VII.

bought slaves in order to fill specific requirements, and generally bought not more than two or three slaves at a time.<sup>20</sup> For such small-scale purchases, cash from the planter's personal funds could sometimes be employed. Failing that, loans could be arranged with factors, or credit could be secured with the assistance of accepting houses.<sup>21</sup> By selling to planters for cash and on short credit, the trader's cycle of investment and reinvestment in slaves was facilitated.

#### IV

Market forces tended, then, to lend a seasonal pattern to the domestic slave trade, and encouraged traders to conform to a policy of purchasing slaves on a cash basis. The demands of the Lower South market tended also to make the trader selective in the types of slaves he bought. With traders buying for the New Orleans and southern Louisiana markets this selectivity showed itself in a preference for male slaves, while in the slave trade as a whole selectivity was shown in the preference for young adult slaves.<sup>22</sup> The age-selectivity of the Lower South market meant that speculators generally considered complete families and groups of slaves of mixed ages to be unsuitable for the trade.<sup>23</sup> Lower South planters usually bought from the trader in order to fulfil specific labour requirements, so that it was in the interests of traders to carry a "stock" principally composed of "likely", "single" slaves who could be sold in order to suit any combination of planter's requirements. The trader's lack of interest in purchasing family units is reflected in a letter from the trading firm Cox & Pickard to the Charleston dealer Ziba B. Oakes. The letter, of January 1856, informed Oakes:

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20. See Chapter VII.

21. On the financing of purchases from traders, see Chapter VII.

22. See Chapters I, II, and III, above, on the age and sex structure of the trade.

23. On the question of family separations and the trade, see Chapter IX.



I want to buy 10 or 12 Negroes. I am not particular about the kind so [long as] they are young and likely from 14-23. There appears to be a good many negroes here but mostly all in families. 24

Similarly, A.J.McElveen wrote to Oakes that in March 1855 few suitable slave purchasing opportunities offered in his locality.

If I cannot buy in the country at prices to suit what will I do [he asked]...I reckon [that at a recent sale] the negroes sold for 50 to 1500. Young women sold as high as 1200, but few likely fellows single. The most of fellows was in families. 25

In addition to a preference for the purchase of young adult slaves, there was, perhaps, so far as field hands were concerned, a preference for the purchase of black rather than mulatto slaves. Certainly, according to a letter sent to the trader Tyre Glen, J.A.Bitting considered that "black negroes was more desireable and saleable and freer from disease" than "yellow" slaves. In the 1830s, when collecting information for a series of letters on the slave trade, Ethan Andrews was informed that mulattoes were not much valued as field hands, but were often purchased for domestic work and the females for prostitution. The slave dealer Silas Omohundro, in a report on the Richmond market, quoted prices for "second class and yellow women." Though he quoted no price for black females, his market report suggests a price differential between black and mulatto, or light mulatto, women. This impression is reinforced by trade reports such as that of Hector Davis which, on 31 January 1860, quoted Richmond prices for "best young men" and "best black girls". The 31 January report ran:

Our Negro market is very brisk indeed at this time. In fact good young men are as high or higher than I ever saw them. Best young men 19-24 years bring 1550-1650. Best black girls 16-20 1450-1475. If you can bring any good negroes I would advise you to do so.

For the purpose of the present study, however, more important than a

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24. Pickard & Cox to Oakes, 7 Jan.1857, Oakes Papers (BPL).

25. McElveen to Oakes, 5 Mar. 1855, Oakes Papers (BPL).

probable price differential between black and mulatto field hands was to the slave trade's unmistakable preference for young adult slaves rather than for groups of slaves of unselected ages.<sup>26</sup>

V

A strong tradition asserts that traders were generally held in low esteem by the rest of Southern society, and maintains that it was usually only in dire circumstances that planters could be prevailed upon to release their slaves to traders. This tradition holds that - apart from criminal, runaway, and diseased slaves - traders were seldom able to make purchases except when owners were pressed by debt into selling slaves, or when, at the death of an owner, the executor of a will was left with the task of dividing up or settling the estate of the deceased. It was natural that many of those who have left historians with accounts of their travels in the ante-bellum South should have considered probate sales and the debtors sales which sheriffs presided over to have been the essential vehicles in the sale of slaves to traders. These judicial sales, advertised in newspapers and taking place at local court houses or at other public places, were, after all, the most readily observed slave sales in the South. Abolitionists, anxious to show that, in the system of slavery, the death of a master or the onset of debt might cause the slaves of even the most well-meaning of masters to be sold, often lent support to this interpretation of the role of probate and debt sales in furnishing slaves for the inter-regional trade. Thus, for example, in Harriet Beecher Stowe's most widely read novel, the owner of Uncle Tom:

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26. Bitting to Glen, 5 Nov. 1857, Glen Papers (DU); Andrews, Slavery and the Domestic Slave Trade, p.166; Omohundro to Jordan, 12 Dec. 1853, John A. Jordan Papers (DU); Hector Davis report, 31 Jan. 1860, Richard R. Reid Collection (UVA). See also circulars cited in Appendix B.1.

was a fair average kind of man, good natured and kindly, and disposed to easy indulgence of those around him, and there had never been a lack of anything which might contribute to the physical comfort of the negroes on his estate. He had, however, speculated [in his financial arrangements] largely and quite loosely; had involved himself deeply, and his notes to a large amount had come into the hands of Mr.Haley.

The latter, a trader, pressed for payment of the debts, so that the well-intentioned owner was reluctantly obliged to release Uncle Tom to the speculator.<sup>27</sup>

The dominance of probate and debtors' sales in the slave trade has been rather widely accepted by modern historians who have commented on the domestic slave trade. U.B.Phillips, for example, maintained that "there is abundant unconscious evidence that the typical planter had a controlling distaste for selling slaves except in emergencies". Convinced, however, that "dealers first and last procured many thousands" of slaves for the internal slave trade, he attributed these flaws in what was seen as an essentially benign system to purchases at sheriffs' and at probate sales, and to purchases of "common field hands with whom their masters were not in close touch". The emphasis on probate and sheriffs' sales has passed down into Meier and Rudwick's very valuable survey of the Afro-American experience, where it is assumed that "slaves sold in the interstate trade were largely obtained either from impecunious planters, who disposed of them to pay off a debt, or from executors of wills settling an estate". In a recent thesis, Bobby Frank Jones presented, in a modified form, the traditional interpretation of the origins of slave traders' purchases. Jones wrote:

Thus it becomes apparent that social ostracism of the slave trader did not stem from Southerners' concern with the slaves' plight. More likely the trader reminded the slave holder of some personal misfortune. For like a vulture attracted to a carrion, this dealer in human flesh was never far behind the mortician or bankruptcy proceedings.

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27. H.B.Stowe, Uncle Tom's Cabin, or, Life Among the Lowly (Sampson Low illustrated edition, London, 1853), p.22.

On the basis of evidence indicating the generally high profits accruing to the slave holder in the Old South, Fogel and Engerman concluded that bankruptcies cannot have been a sufficiently frequent occurrence to have supplied traders with significant numbers of slaves. They argued, therefore, that probate sales, supplemented to some extent by sales of unruly or criminal slaves, accounted for the great majority of sales to traders.<sup>28</sup>

In contrast to the historical tradition which has just been described, the age-selectivity of the slave trade - together with the slave trader's strong preference for cash rather than credit purchases - meant, however, that judicial sales were generally little suited to the trader's purposes. It has already been shown that at judicial sales purchases were usually made on long credit, that is on credit extending over one, two, or three years. At these sales, too, slave gangs covering all ages and abilities were sold. It was generally to the advantage of the vendor or estate to sell such slaves in "lots", each lot consisting of perhaps four or five slaves offered at a collective price.<sup>29</sup> By this procedure, "selling in the round" as it was called, slaves of limited value, who would not readily have sold singly, could be disposed of. Furthermore, by selling in this way something was done to maintain family units, and by maintaining many such identities, prospective buyers in the planter community were encouraged to bid high in the expectation that slave morale and labour efficiency would be high. "Prime and orderly" gangs of slaves, divided into lots and sold "in the round",

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28. Phillips, "The Slave Labour Problem in the Charleston District", reprinted in E. Miller and E. D. Genovese (eds.), Plantation, Town and County: Essays in the Local History of American Slave Society (Urbana, 1974), p. 26; Phillips, Life and Labor, p. 158; A. Meier and E. Rudwick, From Plantation to Ghetto (New York, 1970), p. 55; B. F. Jones, "A Cultural Middle Passage: Slave Marriage and Family in the Ante-Bellum South", unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Chapel Hill, 1965, p. 193; Time on the Cross, I, p. 55.

29. The 4000 slaves sold in South Carolina at the Charleston district probate sales of the 1850s were generally disposed of in this way. See Charleston District Court of Ordinary, three manuscript volumes of Inventories, Appraisals, and Sales, 1850-1859 (SCA). Also sold in this way were the several hundred slaves listed in the Hutson-Lee collection of handbills advertising public sales of slaves, and the many hundreds of slaves appearing in the sales book of A. J. White, a Charleston auctioneer. See Hutson-Lee Collection (SCHS); and see List Book of Negroes for Sale by Alonzo J. White, c. 1855-1863 (SCHS).

often brought particularly high prices when offered to bidders from the slave gang's own locality. The prominent Charleston auctioneer Alonzo J. White pointed to the advantage gained from selling a slave gang to buyers from the slaves' own neighbourhood. In a court deposition relating to the sale of slaves, White testified that: "the gang was from 40 to 60 [in number]- the Negroes being from Savannah and Savannah River purchasers being in the market gave additional value to them."<sup>30</sup> While the conditions of purchase at judicial sales were, then, generally not well suited to the trader's purpose, they were such as to suit the local market and to promise a high price for the class of slaves offered.

For the trader, judicial sales provided a relatively minor source of supply, but provided a useful index of slave prices and a valuable point of contact with those interested in buying and selling slaves. The multiple roles in which judicial sales served the trader are suggested in a slave purchasing advertisement which, in 1863, the speculator A.J. McElveen placed in the Darlington Southerner. The advertisement announced that

The subscriber wishes to purchase 50 young and likely negroes for which the highest cash prices will be paid. Any person having slaves they would like to dispose of will do well to apply at once. I will be at the Darlington auction on Monday next. A.J. McElveen, Sumter, S.C. [emphasis added] 31

Clearly, apart from the possibility of successfully bidding for slaves at "the Darlington auction", which was probably the district's monthly court sale, McElveen hoped to gain contact with private individuals who had slaves for sale. It was, in fact, private purchases from slave-holders which must have provided the essential source of supply for the trade.

Collections of bills of sale which document purchases by the traders Pascal & Raux, Badgett, Robards, Long, and Ferguson have already been commented on in other connections.<sup>32</sup> These same bills of sale suggest an

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30. Deposition of A.J. White, Charleston District Equity Court (SC), Lowndes v. Lowndes, 1864, Bill 15 (SCA).
  31. Darlington Southerner (SC), 13 Mar. 1863.
  32. For the location of the Pascal & Raux records, see note 14 in the present chapter, and for the remaining record groups see Table 1.2.

overwhelming predominance of purchases resulting from private dealings between slave owners and traders. The Glen records show that, of 214 slaves named in available bills of sale and bought in the 1830s by Glen and his associations, only three were sold by persons describing themselves as the executor or administrator of the estate of a deceased slave-holder; one was described as being sold by the county sheriff, and nine were sold by persons describing themselves as trustees or guardians. With the 201 slaves remaining out of the total of 214, the vendor, before signing the bill of sale, declared that he was the owner of the slave or slaves concerned. The patterns found in the Pascal & Raux, Badgett, Robards, Long, and Ferguson bills of sale are basically similar to those found in the Glen collection. Table 4.1 presents a summary of the results obtained from an analysis of the several collections of bills of sale. It is possible that in a few cases purchases from judicial sales are concealed. This is because 10 of the Badgett slaves were bought as the property of identifiable Richmond slave traders; 16 of the Robards slaves were bought in small lots from John Engelman, apparently a slave dealer of some sort; and six of the Long slaves were bought from Totten & Gunn, traders already encountered in this study, or from T.W.Burton, an associate of Long. It is possible that these small numbers of slaves had originally been acquired for the trade at probate sales. With these exceptions, however, the names of slave sellers are almost never repeated and the names of identifiable traders are not found in the bills of sale which are cited in Table 4.1. Since the names of slave sellers do not normally recur in the records which are here being considered, it is unlikely that more than a handful of purchases listed in Table 4.1 can have been made from traders. Furthermore, since persons acting in the capacities of sheriffs, Masters in Equity, and administrators and executors of estates did not sell their own property, but acted as agents in sales, it is unlikely that in signing bills of sale they would have failed to indicate the capacity in which they acted. Any such failures would, no doubt, have meant that the bill of sale concerned was not legally binding, and such bills of sale would

TABLE 4.1 SLAVE TRADERS' SOURCES OF PURCHASE AS INDICATED IN COLLECTIONS OF BILLS OF SALE

| Trader        | Total Number of Slaves | Source of Purchase Indicated in Bill of Sale |                  |              |                |                       | % Recorded as being from Judicial Sales |
|---------------|------------------------|--|------------------|--------------|----------------|-----------------------|---|
|               |                        | Slave-owner                                  | Trustee of owner | Probate Sale | Sheriff's Sale | Master in Equity Sale |   |
| Glen          | 214                    | 201  | 9                | 3            | 1              |                       | 1.9                                     |
| Pascal & Raux | 146                    | 139  | 1                | 6            |                |                       | 4.1                                     |
| Badgett       | 58                     | 56   |                  |              | 2              |                       | 3.4                                     |
| Ferguson      | 35                     | 28   |                  | 4            |                | 3                     | 20.0                                    |
| Robards       | 71                     | 71   |                  |              |                |                       | 0.0                                     |
| Long          | 100                    | 90   |                  | 3            | 5              | 2                     | 10.0                                    |
|               | 624                    | 585  | 10               | 16           | 8              | 5                     | 4.6                                     |

NOTES:

For derivation of sources see text.  
 Sales by trustee are not counted as judicial sales.

surely not have been accepted by purchasers. The results summarised in Table 4.1 suggest, therefore, that only about 5 per cent of slave traders' purchases were from judicial sales, while the rest were made in private dealings with slave owners.

An analysis of slave traders' purchases in a substantial sample of South Carolina's judicial sales of the 1850s very much suggests that, within a margin of a few percentage points, the sample of bills of sale drawn upon in Table 4.1 was representative of the slave trade's composition. Table 3.2 has already demonstrated that at least 30 trading firms - and probably substantially more - were active during the 1850s in purchasing slaves in Charleston district, South Carolina. In Chapter VIII, Table 8.4 indicates, however, that at that district's judicial sales of the 1850s period, the large numbers of traders known to have been active in the district purchased a combined total of only about 800 slaves. It is clear, then, that judicial sales could not have provided these numerous traders with anything more than a very minor source of supply. Indeed, the slave trade from Charleston district appears to have accounted, in the 1850s, for about 9,500 to 11,000 of that district's slaves, with the number of identified traders' purchases from Charleston district's judicial sales of the 1850s being equivalent to about 7 to 9 per cent of that estimated slave trade exportation.<sup>33</sup>

Since the evidence<sup>of</sup> traders' bills of sale and of slave purchasing in Charleston district indicates that the great majority of traders' purchases must have been made in private transactions with slave-holders rather than at judicial sales, it appears that the slave-holders of the Upper South were far more deliberately active in supplying the slave trade than has often been assumed. This latter question is explored more fully in Chapters VIII and IX of the present study.

## VI

In his classical stereotype of the trader, D.R.Hundley maintained:

33. Based on an estimate of Charleston district's total exportations for the 1850s (see Table 3.1), and upon attributing 60 to 70 per cent of those exportations to the trade.



Nearly nine-tenths of the slaves he (the trader) buys and sells are vicious ones sold for crimes or misdemeanors, or otherwise diseased ones sold because of their worthlessness as property. These he purchases at about half what healthy and honest slaves would cost him; but he sells them as both honest and healthy, mark you! 34

Given the very considerable extent of the slave trade which has been established by evidence presented in Part I of the present study, Hundley's characterisation of the trade would imply an extremely high rate of slave criminality. Whatever the rate of slave criminality was, it is clear that Hundley vastly exaggerated the criminal slave element in the trade. It is most unlikely, too, that more than a few per cent of the slaves bought and sold by traders were physically unsound.

In Chapter I, the analysis of Calderhead's evidence has already suggested that that historian attributed far too much importance to the trade in slave convicts, and has suggested that slave convicts sold by the authorities of the several states formed an almost totally insignificant part of the trade. Indeed, penitentiary records indicate that in the 1816 to 1842 period an annual average of not more than about 20 convicted blacks were "transported" by traders from all of Virginia. U.B.Phillips, in examining the records of the Virginia State Auditor and of the Virginia penitentiary, found similar results for a somewhat broader period. The sex ratio of Virginia transportees confirms the conclusion that the trade in convicted slaves sold by state authorities must have been very slight indeed. This is because, while all but about 5 per cent of Virginia transportees were male, the sex ratio of the trade was almost evenly balanced.<sup>35</sup>

Troublesome and runaway slaves were, no doubt, far more numerous in the trade than were convicted criminal slaves. The threat and practice of "selling South" must have provided planters with a convenient means of

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34. Hundley, Social Relations, p.140.

35. Manuscript headed, "A List of Slaves and Free Persons of Colour Received into the Penitentiary of Virginia for Sale and Transportation, from June 1816 to 1st Feb.1842," Item 153, Virginia State Auditor's Papers (VSL); U.B.Phillips, "Slave Crime in Virginia", American Historical Review, XX (1915), pp.336-40. On the sex ratio of transportees, see Phillips, "Slave Crime"; and see numerous lists in the Virginia State Auditor's Papers, Item 153.

disciplining slave gangs. J.R.Long, a Mississippi planter and part-time trader, hoped to instill discipline on his plantation by the threat of sale. Long wrote: "I made [the slave Adam] a promise that if he ever ran away again I would send him to New Orleans and there sell him - he said he would rather stay and I think perhaps he'll stay." Traders were, on numerous occasions, instructed that slaves, after purchase, were, as a form of punishment for their misbehaviour, to be sold out of state. In March 1854, for example, the trader A.J.McElveen reported of a newly purchased slave:

I promised his owner...to send him out of the state. Nothing much against him but...[the owner] wishes him sent to the West if possible. He will run away if you give him the least chance.

Similarly, in February 1859, J.J.Toler wrote to his trading partner:

I bought an old cook yesterday that was to go out of state. ...She just made the people mad that was all. She is said to be a No.1 cook.

Those slave traders' account books and correspondence collections which have been consulted have provided dozens of instances of traders buying runaways either immediately after their masters had recaptured them, or of buying runaways who were still "in the woods" or "running at large". The speculator J.W.Pittman, for example, reported the purchase of a slave girl who was still "a running away", but who "came in the day after" he had bought her. In February 1853, A.J.McElveen reported that a slave whom he had recently purchased for the trade had been "taken by the dogs" which had been sent out for him. In August of that year the same trader wrote:

They are one runaway which I am sure of getting. His master put out word if he come to me he would be let off. I give him until Tuesday to come to me. If he dont come in I will have the bloodhounds after him as soon as I can get them. 36

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36. Long to Long, 3 June 1838, Long Papers (NCA); McElveen to Oakes, 6 Mar. 1854, Oakes Papers (BPL); Toler to Ferguson, 17 Feb. 1859, Ferguson Papers (NCA); Pittman to Williamson, 29 Jan. 1837, John W. Pittman Papers (LC); McElveen to Oakes, 26 Feb. and 9 Aug. 1853, Oakes Papers (BPL).

Persistently troublesome slaves were often to be identified by whip marks, while reclaimed runaways were often identifiable by brandings, by cropped ears, or by the absence of front teeth. The editor of American Slavery As It Is (1839) presented a compilation of many runaway advertisements in which the slaves concerned were marked by branding, cropping, and the removal of teeth. In a note on these advertisements, the editor, apparently T.D.Weld, explained that such mutilations furnished "a convenient mark by which to describe [a slave] in case of [that slave's] elopement."<sup>37</sup> White society would presumably have been familiar with the significance of such marks, so that these markings would have helped to secure slave ownership by reducing the chance of successful escape and concealment in the southern community. An example of the marking of runaways appears in the William Long Papers . In November 1838, J.R.Long reported that a slave who had runaway from his plantation had been caught. He added:

I gave him a real whipping and hand sawing and he has been a fine negroe ever since. I told him he might run off if he chosed and I would knock out one of his jaw teeth and brand him and I intend to stick to my promise.

It seems that the word of J.R.Long could be relied upon. In June 1839, he reported that, because of a whipping,

Adam ran away from... [his overseer] the other day....  
[He] come home to me at knight and I branded him. He's been at work since and is done fine. 38

The association between runaways and the removal of teeth is again indicated in the papers of the Charleston trader Ziba Oakes. In July 1853, a letter from one of Oakes's buyers informed him:

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37. (T.D.Weld), American Slavery As It Is: Testimony of a Thousand Witnesses (New York, 1839), pp.77-85. Gerald W.Mullin, in Flight and Rebellion: Slave Resistance in Eighteenth Century Virginia (London, 1972), pp.40-1, erroneously it seems, associated the removal of front teeth with African tribal markings.

38. Long to Long, 16 November, 1838 and 29 June 1839, Long Papers (NCA).

I refused a girl 20 year old at 700 yesterday. I offered 675 for her and think it enough. If you think best to take her at 700 I can still get her. She is very badly whipped but good teeth. The whipping has been done long since.

Similarly, in July 1856, Oakes's associate reported that he expected to purchase a slave who had "good teeth and [was] not whipped."<sup>39</sup>

In general, traders were wary of buying slaves whose markings suggested that they had a record of troublesomeness, and who would, therefore, be difficult to resell. This wariness is indicated in the purchasing instructions with which the trader E.W.Ferguson provided a buying agent. Ferguson's note ran:

Age from 8-22 year old. See no scars no burn whip marks see no lumps under throat nor rupture see ankles straight, and knees also. See the age and height and what you think they will weigh and get the lowest cash price direct to me to Richmond. Good teeth. E.W.Ferguson, Richmond, Virginia [emphasis added].

Traders' slave purchasing advertisements sometimes specifically referred to detrimental markings. A.J.Hydrick, for example, advertised:

NEGROES WANTED. I am paying the highest cash prices for young and likely NEGROES, those having good front teeth, and being otherwise sound.

At about the same time, and in the same South Carolina district, P.H.Ellis's advertisement began:

NEGROES WANTED. I desire to purchase a number of young and likely NEGROES for whom the highest cash market valuation will be given. Persons having negroes and desiring to dispose of the same, who are young, sound, have good countenance and front teeth... may do so to advantage on application as below. 40

Evidence presented above indicates that runaway and troublesome slaves, especially those without detrimental markings, were sometimes bought by traders. Those without detrimental markings were presumably resold as well disposed and "likely" slaves. It is highly improbable, however, that a traffic as extensive as that of the Old South's inter-regional slave trade -

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39. McElveen to Oakes, 10 July 1853 and 8 July 1858, Oakes Papers (BPL).

40. Undated manuscript, Ferguson Papers (NCA); advertisements in South Carolina's Sumter Watchman, 18 and 25 Mar. 1857.

a traffic involving each decade well over 10 per cent of the Upper South's teenage and young adult slaves - could have been composed to any great extent of runaways and of outstandingly troublesome slaves.<sup>41</sup> Certainly, no published study has suggested that the system of American slavery was so precariously maintained as to have produced in the Upper South each decade a vast exportable population of "criminal and vicious slaves". The limited overall importance of the trade in runaways is suggested by the fact that, while some 75 per cent of runaways were male, the sex ratio of the slave trade was normally rather evenly balanced.<sup>42</sup> It is likely, furthermore, that, had the trade been to any great extent composed of "criminal and vicious" slaves, this would have been reflected in slave traders' correspondence collections by recurrent references to the problem of disciplining slaves bought, transported, and sold. In practice, however, slave traders' letters only very rarely touch upon such a theme, and traders' records do not convey the impression that the slave traffic was to any very great extent an outlet for the Upper South's chronically troublesome slaves.

The survey of slave traders' advertisements in South Carolina newspapers, a survey outlined in Chapter III above, found no traders who made a point of advertising an intention to specialise in the purchase of unsound slaves; and only one such specialist purchasing advertisement, apparently by a trader, has been located in the secondary literature dealing with American slavery. The advertisement, placed by a New Orleans subscriber in an 1839 issue of the Kentucky Gazette, and cited by J.W.Coleman, announced:

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41. The derivation of this statistic is explained in Chapter III.

42. On the male-female ratio among female slaves, see Chapter II, note 26.

To planters and owners of slaves! Those having slaves rendered unfit for labour by Yaws, Scrofula, Chronic Diarrhea, Negro Consumption, Rheumatism, etc., and who wish to dispose of them on reasonable terms will address J.King, No.29 Camp Street, New Orleans.

The intention of the buyer was perhaps to pass the slaves off as sound or substantially sound, and so to make a profit; or was perhaps to buy at such extremely low prices that the slaves, even when openly resold as unsound, would yield valuable returns. In 1859, a market report issued by Betts & Gregory, Richmond auctioneers, observed that "scrub" Negroes - a term used to describe old or unsound slaves - did not normally sell readily; but, the auctioneers added: "There came in this morning some scrub buyers and I hope we will be able to work them [the scrubs] off after a while." It is not clear, however, whether the "scrub buyers" bought for their own use or bought for resale in the trade.<sup>43</sup>

Any systematic trade in unsound Negroes is very unlikely to have accounted for a substantial part of the overall trade between the states. Almost without exception, slave traders' buying advertisements indicated that "sound and healthy slaves" or "likely young Negroes" were sought. The whole rationale of the trade was based upon supplying young adult slaves who would fill the labour requirements of expanding Lower South slaveholdings. Most traders would surely have found it advantageous to build up a reputation for supplying "likely" slaves. It is extremely unlikely, in any case, that the young adult slaves who predominated in the trade would, in large numbers, have suffered from physical or mental disabilities which could have been both detected by the traders and concealed from purchasers in the Lower South. Just as the operation of basic market forces determined that the trade was essentially seasonal; tended to influence the financing of the trade; and tended to direct the trader away from substantial purchases at judicial sales; those forces must have been the essential determinant of the quality of slaves purchased.

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43. Coleman, Slavery Times in Kentucky, p.188; Betts to "Edward", 31 Dec. 1859, Chase Papers (AAS). For further references to scrubs, see Appendix B, Table B.1.

CHAPTER V

SLAVE PURCHASING IN THE UPPER SOUTH : EXAMPLES FROM THE TRADE

The inter-regional traffic in slaves lent itself to several types of trading enterprise. Most of the large towns of the Upper South had resident slave dealers who, sometimes through a network of agents, bought slaves and resold them to the long-distance traders who patronised their depots. The leading trading towns of the exporting states had auctioneers who sold slaves on a commission basis and who specialised in supplying the inter-regional trade; while, at towns large and small, general auctioneers dealing in slaves and in other property, as some part of their business, sold slaves to the trade. Those traders who purchased from resident urban dealers and auctioneers were sometimes speculators based in the exporting states; but, very commonly, were Lower South-based traders who, in order to obtain supplies of slaves, made relatively brief trips to the principal markets of the exporting states. A large proportion, probably a substantial majority of the inter-regional slave traffic was accounted for by a further group of speculators; that is to say those, often belonging to trading partnerships, who, rather than buying from resident dealers and auctioneers, in the main bought directly from Upper South slave-holders and, after travelling to the Lower South, resold their slaves to the planters of that section. Most of this latter group of traders operated, so far as their activities in the exporting states were concerned, from village or county town bases; and for these traders the major urban markets of the Upper South were very often of little direct importance. Although the Upper South's major towns are likely to have handled only a minority of the trade from the exporting states as a whole, these urban markets, since they were particularly highly organised branches of the trade, demand special consideration. Before turning to a discussion of the day-to-day slave trading

practices of the Upper South in general, attention will, therefore, be paid to the trading systems which operated at two of the most important urban markets of the exporting states - that is to say at Richmond, Virginia, and at Charleston, South Carolina.

## I

Chapter I has already given some indication of the importance of the trade from the Chesapeake ports, and has shown that the great volume of slaves available at those ports made the Chesapeake trading centres particularly well suited to supplying the specialist shipments which the New Orleans trade demanded. In addition to serving the New Orleans trade, the Chesapeake complex was heavily involved in supplying slaves to the Lower South in general. The city of Richmond stood at the geographic centre of the Chesapeake complex and, of the several ports in that system, its slave trading facilities and connections were probably the most extensive and elaborate.

A major part of the Richmond trade was handled by resident firms which acted as auctioneers and commission agents and which specialised in supplying the long-distance slave traffic. During the 1840s Hodges, Ray & Pulliam; Sidnum Grady; and R.H.Dickinson & Brother were among the more prominent of the Richmond firms engaged in this branch of the trade. By the late 1850s, leading slave auctioneering firms included Dickinson, Hill & Company; Pulliam & Betts; and Hector Davis & Company.<sup>1</sup> The scale of the traffic which these firms handled was truly massive. During the late 1840s, a period of relatively light trading, the firm of R.H.Dickinson & Brother, alone, sold about 2000 slaves per year, with the overwhelming majority going to traders.<sup>2</sup> In August 1856, A.J.McElveen, a South Carolina trader, reported that

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1. For documentation on these and other Richmond firms, see Appendix B, Table B.1.
  2. R.H.Dickinson & Brother, *Slave Dealers' Account Book, 1846-1849* (CHS). On the relative slackness of trading in the late 1840s, see Figure 8.1, and see Chapters VII and VIII generally.



he "was told by good authority there was [at that time] \$2 million in Richmond to buy Negroes." When the editor of the Warrenton Whig visited Richmond, in January 1857, he was informed by the auctioneers Dickinson, Hill & Company that

The gross amount of [that firm's] sales of negroes last year [1856] reached the enormous sum of two million [dollars]! [The editor concluded that] the entire sales of other houses of a similar kind in Richmond would make the amount go over four millions, and still the business is increasing.

A series of letters from the Virginia-based trader J.J.Toler gives, for December 1858 and the first months of 1859, further indications of the scale of the Richmond trade. On 21 December 1858, Toler wrote that, the previous day, Pulliam & Betts had offered 40 slaves for sale and Hector Davis 70, "and when they stopped it was 5 o'clock. Mr. Hill [of Dickinson & Hill] says he will have today 125 to sell, so [wrote Toler] you may judge there is a great many selling." On 24 December, Toler reported that "the three [principal] houses are selling 100 to 125 negroes a day. I think I haven't seen as many selling for years". In his letter of 15 February 1859, he observed: "They seem to be a rite smart of buyers coming in but Negroes sell so high that they don't buy many before they leave for home." His letter of 26 February, quite late in the Richmond season, reported that

Hector Davis sold a brown skin fancy [girl]...for 1600... [and other slaves sold well]. The 3 houses did not get through selling until  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 3 o'clock yesterday and it was snowing and haling [when they closed]. 3

The principal Richmond slave auctioneering firms provided their suppliers with regular market reports and with advice on probable market trends. A few of these trade circulars have already been cited in earlier chapters, and Appendix B, Table B.1, provides a digest of slave prices reported in circulars for the 1846 to 1861 period. The circulars, as Table B.1 shows, reported slave prices according to various market grades, these

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3. McEwen to Oakes, 2 Aug. 1856, Oakes Papers (BPL); Whig, quoted in Bancroft, Slave Trading, p.116; letters of Toler to Ferguson, Ferguson Papers (NCA). On "fancies", attractive young women sold for concubinage, see Chapter IX.

grades usually corresponding to age, sex, and quality; although slaves under about fifteen years of age were sometimes graded according to height. A somewhat typical Dickinson & Hill circular, that of 20 December 1858, reported:

|   |             |
|---|-------------|
| Dear Sir. The demand brisk for likely Negroes |             |
| Extra No.1 men                                | \$1500      |
| No.1   "                                      | \$14-1475   |
| Extra No.1 fieldgirls                         | \$13-1350   |
| No.1       "                                  | \$12-1275   |
| Likely ploughboys 17 and 18                   | \$12-1350   |
| "               "   15 and 16                 | \$1050-1175 |
| "               "   12 to 14                  | \$ 850-1050 |
| Likely girls 14 and 15                        | \$1000-1150 |
| "               "   12 and 13                 | \$ 850-1000 |
| Girls 10 and 11                               | \$ 700- 825 |
| No.1 woman and child                          | \$1250-1350 |
| Families rather dull and hard to sell.        |             |

Yours respectfully, Dickinson, Hill & Company

Notes appended to circulars sometimes advised particular traders on appropriate selling times. Typical of many such notes was that in a Hodges, Ray & Pulliam circular which advised the trader James Brady: "I believe you can make a profit on the boys you had here some time ago if you could drop them in to an auction house and sell them to the highest bidder." For their auctioneering services, the major Richmond houses charged a commission amounting to about 2 per cent of the value of the slave sold. This meant that it was in the interests of these auctioneering firms, like auctioneering firms in general, to sell at the highest possible price. It meant also that the auctioneers' price reports and advice on the slave market are likely, in general, to have been reliable.<sup>4</sup>

When sending slaves to the Richmond auctioneering houses, some clients, more or less strictly, attached conditions of sales. While some requested that their slaves should, as a form of punishment, be sent out of state, others expressed an opposite preference. John G.Skelton, on sending Dickinson, Hill & Company a dining room servant, wrote:

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4. Circular, Joseph Dickinson Papers (DU); Hodges, Ray & Pulliam to Brady, 24 May 1847, Harris-Brady Papers (UVA). On commission rates, see sales accounts of Pulliam & Slade, 7 Feb.1850, and of Dickinson & Hill, 15 Nov.1854, Harris-Brady Papers (UVA); and see accounts of Hector Davis, 8 Mar.1859, Ferguson Papers (NCA).

If you can dispose of him in Richmond or in such a way that he will not leave the state, for what you consider his value or near it, I would be glad - I presume you have applications sometimes for servants of particular descriptions - but I had rather you should not make much delay in the sale.

Quite often clients fixed a minimum price below which slaves were not to be sold, although some, like J. Joseph Donovan, left the sale largely to the auctioneer's discretion. In 1860, Donovan asked Dickinson, Hill & Company to sell the slave Shadrack to the best advantage. "If he is not in good condition, or the market is depressed," the client added, "keep him till you think all things favourable. Exercise your own judgement in the matter." Numerous letters received by Richmond auction houses contained requests that slaves be well clothed and shod and generally made presentable when offered for sale; or contained requests that slaves should be housed satisfactorily before sale. One such letter, of February 1846, instructed Dickinson to

Ask Mr. Lumpkin [the proprietor of a slave jail] to see that the negroes [to be sold by Dickinson] wash and fix up as well as they can for the market. Say to Mr. Lumpkin that we wish him to be careful to keep them from any smallpox and measles. 5

The Richmond auctioneers who specialised in the inter-regional slave trade seem to have had their own jails at which, prior to and immediately after sale, a proportion of the slaves whom they disposed of were housed. A letter from one of Dickinson's regular suppliers referred to some sort of jail, perhaps one not sufficiently secure for prime adult males. In August 1848, the supplier wrote to Dickinson: "I send over some good stock which I think will sell well - please have them fixed up right...put the boys and girls in your yard." The jail of the auctioneer Hector Davis was perhaps more secure and, for the purposes of the auctioneer and his clients, better suited to the accommodation of adult male slaves. Advertisements indicate that, for a daily charge of thirty cents per slave, Davis would, at his "commodious jail", board all slaves who were sent to him for sale. Slaves

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5. Skelton to Dickinson, (?) Feb. 1846 and Fitzhugh to Dickinson, 16 Feb. 1846, Chase Papers (AAS); Donovan to Dickinson, 14 July 1860, Richard H. Dickinson Papers (CHS); Pointer to Dickinson, 10 Feb. 1846, Chase Papers (AAS).

not accommodated in the jails of slave dealing auctioneers and commission agents were often housed in institutions which served exclusively as commercially run slave jails. In the 1850s, the best known and most important of these Richmond establishments was Robert Lumpkin's "nigger jail". Otis Bigelow, a visitor from the North, left an account of his visit to that institution. The jail, he wrote, was centred upon a large open court, with

on one side of the court...a large open tank for washing. ...Opposite was a long, two-story brick house, the lower part fitted up for men and the second story for women. The place, in fact, was a kind of hotel or boardinghouse for negro traders and their slaves. I was invited to dine at a large table with perhaps twenty traders, who gave me almost no attention, and there was little conversation. They were probably strangers to one another. 6

Slaves sold at Richmond's slave auctioneering houses were, in part, drawn directly from the planters and slave owners of the city's hinterland. The circulars which these houses issued were, however, designed for the convenience of a class of traders who acted, sometimes wholly, sometimes only partly, as suppliers to the Richmond market. Because of the extensive and persistent nature of their sales at the major auctioneering houses, many of the speculators involved in the Richmond supplying trade are fairly readily identifiable from the surviving manuscript account books of these auctioneering establishments. An R.H.Dickinson & Brother account book, covering the period 1846 to 1849, suggests that, in the period concerned, the most important suppliers to the Richmond market included Brooks & Nelson; E. Billingham; S.B.Brown; and T.Williams. There were, however, a great many other names which recurred from month to month and year to year.<sup>7</sup> The Elias W.Ferguson Papers, in the custody of the North Carolina Department of Archives, provide a detailed example of a trading concern, Toler & Ferguson, which was primarily involved in the Richmond supplying trade, and which, on some occasions, also

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6. Williams to Dickinson, 19 Aug.1848, Chase Papers (AAS); Hector Davis advertisement, and Bigelow manuscript cited in Bancroft, Slave Trading, pp.100, 102-3. On Richmond slave jails in general, see Bancroft, pp.99-103.

7. Dickinson Account Book (AAS).

traded directly with the Lower South. The purchasing policies of this firm are briefly discussed at a later point in the present chapter.

The supply of slaves available to traders who purchased in the Richmond market was augmented by a further class of dealers who established themselves at Richmond depots and who - unlike auctioneers and commission agents - in their own right, bought slaves and resold them to the trade. One trading concern of this type was the firm of Silas & R.F.Omohundro. An itinerant member of the firm bought slaves in the countryside, with his partner, at Richmond, reselling them. An Omohundro account book, covering the period 1857 to 1862, shows that sales were made to customers from numerous states, and shows that the time elapsing between the Omohundros' purchase and resale of a slave was usually not more than about two weeks. The great majority of the Omohundros' customers can, from evidence contained in Bancroft and in other secondary sources; from primary sources including coastal manifests; from the repeated nature of purchases; and from references to purchasing by partners, rather safely be identified as long-distance traders.<sup>8</sup>

In addition to the various classes of dealers so far considered, there was, in the Chesapeake trading complex, at least one other trading group: that is to say those who, on a regular and extensive basis, were involved both in the Richmond supplying trade and in the direct shipping trade to New Orleans. These latter two branches of the trade no doubt fitted together conveniently since, from the overall total of purchases by the traders concerned, selected slaves could be drawn off for the specialist New Orleans traffic, while the balance could be marketed in Richmond. One prominent trading concern involved in this two-part traffic was the firm of W.L. & B.M.Campbell. Some indication of the importance of that firm's contribution to the New Orleans trade has already been given in Table 1.1. B.M.Campbell's correspondence demonstrates the dual nature of his firm's

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8. Silas & R.F.Omohundro Account Book, 1857 to 1862 (UVA). See also Omohundro to Jordan, 12 Dec. 1853, John A.Jordan Papers (DU).

trading activities. His letter of 9 February 1850, written from his Baltimore base, informed R.H.Dickinson, the Richmond auctioneer, that he was "making up a shipping lot" for New Orleans, and at the same time informed Dickinson:

I send you [from Baltimore] a good lot of Negroes which I have bought myself this week. None of my buyers got in this week...or I would have sent you a larger lot....I want all the negroes sold. I think from the present disposition to sell that I can give you a lot every week.

Thomas Williams, who bought in the Washington and Baltimore area, was also involved in the Richmond supplying trade, and, as Table 1.1 shows, was extensively involved in the New Orleans trade. His links with the Richmond market are documented in several letters found in the Lucy Chase Papers. In June 1847, for example, Williams wrote from Washington to inform R.H. Dickinson of Richmond: "I have six agents out in the country buying so you may look for negroes from me pretty often." Two weeks later, he informed Dickinson that

If your market [at Richmond] will justify it I will send some 40 to 60 or perhaps 75 Negroes between now and July 15. I am determined to buy 150 from now to 1st September. 9

## II

Numerous traders active in the 1850s in Charleston, South Carolina, have already been identified in Table 3.2. These traders included the firm of Gilchrist & King, a partnership which seems, primarily, to have been involved in buying from South Carolina slave-holders and in directly reselling in the Lower South. Most of the traders active at Charleston and documented under "Charleston district" in Table 3.2 were, however, either resident urban dealers or visiting speculators from the Lower South. An examination of records relating to T.N.Gadsden & Company and to Ziba Oakes & Company, two

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9. Campbell to Dickinson, 9 Feb.1850, Dickinson Papers (CHS); Williams to Dickinson, 9 and 28 June 1847, Chase Papers (AAS).

of Charleston's leading resident trading concerns of the 1850s, will provide illustrations of trading arrangements adopted by resident urban slave dealing establishments, and will illustrate the relationships between these establishments and visiting traders from the Lower South.

T.N.Gadsden, like Thomas Ryan, and like certain other dealers listed in Table 3.2, combined the role of auctioneer, selling on a commission basis, with that of trader, directly buying and reselling slaves. The South Carolina Appeals Court heard the following description of Gadsden's business activities:

The defendant, Thomas Norman Gadsden, is a broker, residing in the city of Charleston,...[and] as part of his business, is engaged in the purchase and sale of negroes....[In his role as auctioneer] he provides shelter, clothing, and food, for such negroes as may be left with him for sale...and...for that shelter, clothing, and food, when required, he charges a reasonable price.

In addition to directly purchasing slaves from the citizens of South Carolina - a business pursuit documented in Table 3.2 - and to acting as a slave auctioneer for the public at large, Gadsden entered into special arrangements with slave purchasing associates. By one such arrangement, with Samuel Gasque, Gadsden provided capital for slave purchasing in and around the Georgetown district of South Carolina. Gasque undertook to purchase slaves and to ship them to Gadsden for resale. The latter was to take a commission for his auctioneering services, to charge board and lodging for slaves, and, when the supply of slaves was slow, to charge interest on capital lent out. After this, the balance of the resale price was to be sent to Gasque.<sup>10</sup>

The basic purchasing policy of the resident Charleston dealer Ziba Oakes has, in Chapter III, already been noticed. Oakes, partly through A.J.McElveen and other agents and associates, purchased slaves in Charleston district and

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10. For contracts signed between Gasque and Gadsden in 1844 and 1845, and for documentation on the working of this arrangement, see *South Carolina Reports*, *Gadsden v. Gasque*, 2 Strobbart 324 (Jan.1848); and see 8 Richardson 180 (Jan.1855). See also Marion District Equity Court (SC), *Bank of Georgetown v. Gadsden and Gasque*, 1847 Bill 86 (SCA). On a similar trading arrangement with W.A.Smith, see Charleston District Equity Court (SC), *Smith v. Gadsden*, 1843, Bill 1 (SCA).

its surrounding area.<sup>11</sup> Although A.J. McElveen made occasional selling trips to the Lower South, the Oakes establishment was based essentially on supplying out-of-state traders.<sup>12</sup> An examination of the Oakes Papers reveals that, from his Charleston base, Oakes maintained an extensive network of trading arrangements.

A great many traders purchased from Oakes on an occasional basis. One such trader was John Cox of Tennessee who, in August 1856, arranged to visit Oakes and to purchase from him "8 or 10 men under 22" years of age. In July 1853, Robert S. Adams, of the Mississippi firm Adams & Wicks, wrote from North Carolina asking Oakes to inform him

whether you [Oakes] have bought any negroes for us and if any how many. State what time you can have them in Wilmington [North Carolina, and] if you think you could put them in [the] charge of a captain and send them....I have bought about 80 in Richmond and Baltimore and am now getting them together....I have bought at high prices and hope that you have done better.

In the following January, Adams informed Oakes that "Should we buy next summer we will probably request you to buy for us again. We have done well with your purchases this year." Several letters in the Oakes Papers indicate that John B. and Jeremiah Smith, prominent New Orleans traders, bought from Oakes on an occasional basis. From time to time, Oakes also supplied substantial numbers of slaves to J.A. Weatherly, whose buying area covered parts of North and South Carolina. A letter of September 1856 indicated that Weatherly was about to take a coffle of slaves to the Lower South, and informed Oakes that

The Negroes I bought of you are all doing well. I have an arrangement with my bankers to send you \$10,000 the first day of December to invest in negroes. 13

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11. On Elijah McElveen, who was a relative of A.J. McElveen and who acted at least on a part-time basis as a purchasing agent, see McElveen to Oakes, 7 July 1856, Oakes Papers (BPL). On "Whitesides", who assisted in purchasing, see McElveen to Oakes, 29 Sept. and 9 Nov. 1854, Oakes Papers (BPL).
  12. On McElveen's trips to the West, see McElveen to Oakes 25 Dec. 1854, 13 Aug. and 16 Sept. 1856, Oakes Papers (BPL).
  13. Cox to Oakes, 1 Aug. 1856; Adams to Oakes, 22 July 1853 and 4 Jan. 1854; Smith to Oakes 17, and 21 Feb. 1857, etc.; Weatherly to Oakes, 6 Sept. 1856, Oakes Papers (BPL).



It is clear that several of the slave supplying arrangements in which Oakes was involved were intended to be conducted on a long-term basis. One such arrangement was suggested by John S. Montmollin of Savannah, Georgia.

He informed Oakes:

I have frequent orders for Negroes and would like to make some arrangement with you whereby a mutual benefit might be derived, for instance, I would be willing to purchase a few young Negroes the season through allowing you a reasonable profit or commission, or would be willing to divide the profits here, you drawing on me for first cost.

This general proposal, of September 1856, appears to have been put into practice. In January 1857, Montmollin telegraphed Oakes asking that five very prime slaves immediately be shipped to Savannah. A letter of the same date asked "What could 50 such [very prime slaves] be had for and what time would it take to purchase?" The speculator Rees W. Porter of Nashville, Tennessee, suggested a trade in classes of slaves which, although valuable, were not normally in as much demand as "single" young adult slaves. Porter wrote:

I am of the opinion that money could be made between your city and this. To be sure when I was there the prospect was a dull one, but at this season of the year if a man could buy small negroes, say girls from 9-14 and ploughboys and women with one or two children, young women, ... [profits could be made]. I am anxious to try the thing on. 14

It is clear that Oakes envisaged a firmly established link with the Florida market. A letter from J.M. Bryant of Jacksonville, Florida, recommended to Oakes a man well qualified

to be connected with you [Oakes] in sales of negroes in Florida, in accordance with the plan you proposed. It is Mr. John D. McKinley, tax assessor and collector in our county - he is well acquainted with the whole district and suited to your business. He can if you desire [Bryant added] give a bond for \$5000 for the faithful discharge of his duties.

Similarly, with the Louisiana market, arrangements were made so that Oakes could establish a trade on regular and systematic basis. James H. Bryan, in a letter of 1856, informed Oakes:

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14. Montmollin to Oakes, 20 Sept. 1856 and 31 Jan. 1857; Porter to Oakes, 21 Oct. 1856, Oakes Papers (BPL).

I am now a citizen of this place [New Orleans], and am now in the trade as I was at Charleston, and would be happy to do some business with you in that way, between the two places....No doubt in January, February and March there will be a great demand for negroes, and as I have a plantation up in that section of the country [in north-western Louisiana] and a general acquaintance with the country people it gives me a great advantage in selling negroes as planters come down to the city.

In 1857, perhaps to replace the Bryan arrangement, or perhaps to supplement it by establishing a contact with the French-speaking sugar planters of south-eastern Louisiana, a trading association seems to have been established with N.Vignie. W.D.Ellis reported to Oakes:

I have had an understanding with the gentleman whose card I enclose to this effect that he will make sales with full guarantee and pay all taxes for 3 per cent and that in case sale cannot be effected in time to meet [a] draft at 60 days that he would advance \$10,000 for that purpose. Ordinarily he says sales could...be made in time....

This Mr.Vignie is a French creole, a gentleman of good standing that will readily command the entire confidence of the french sugar planters, and will no doubt be able to command from \$100 to \$200 higher than sales reach by the trade generally....[Vignie] has no yard nor does he wish to open one offering as a reason that if he seemed to be connected in any way in interest that he could not have the confidence of the buyers that he now has. One or two houses offer to take negroes at 25¢ per day and I think they can be boarded at 20¢. [An arrangement is possible with Shelton or Peterson, slave traders] but this arrangement with Vignie is altogether better. More negroes could be sold at high prices and the french creole capitalists will be more ready to discount paper that comes from him. In his card he makes no reference, but he is universally know to old residents, his father was president for many years of one of the banks and is said to be a very wealthy man, commanding [the] universal respect and confidence of the wealthy portion of the community.

Mr.Vignie says that a large number of mechanics can be sold, particularly blacksmiths, carpenters, bricklayers, coopers, and at high prices....Mr.Vignie says that he will be able to make sales of 500 Negroes to good advantage in January, February and March.

From a further description of Vignie, presented in Bancroft's Slave Trading, Vignie appears, indeed, to have been a man of substance and high standing; so that Oakes's informant seems to have been fully justified in considering the arrangement to have been "a choice one".<sup>15</sup>

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15. Bryant to Oakes, 6 Nov.1854 and Bryan to Oakes, 12 Dec.1856, Oakes Papers (BPL); Ellis to Oakes, Miscellaneous Manuscripts (NYHS); Bancroft, Slave Trading, pp.337-8.

Although Oakes, a Charleston trader, appears to have had important links with the New Orleans market, in general, Charleston's slave trading links with New Orleans must have been far less important than those of the Chesapeake ports. The coastal manifests which have survived and which are housed at the National Archives indicate that in the 1840s, for example, slave traders shipped 7 times as many slaves from Baltimore's wharves as from the port of Charleston.<sup>16</sup> A substantial majority of these latter Virginia and District of Columbia shipments was accounted for by slaves shipped from Richmond. Certain marketing characteristics varied according to the extent of trading connections between individual Upper South cities and the New Orleans market. Nevertheless, many of the trading arrangements which have been found in the foregoing survey of the Richmond and Charleston trading systems were, no doubt, to a greater or lesser extent according to the size of the selling market concerned, reproduced in the other urban markets of the exporting states.

### III

Chapter VII provides estimates of the profit rates which were produced in the long-distance slave traffic between the Upper and Lower South. For the speculators who supplied Dickinson, Hill & Company and who supplied other Richmond auction houses; and for the Omohundros, Gadsden, Oakes, and others, in their roles as suppliers to long-distance traders, profit rates on each slave sold were generally far lower than those which obtained when slaves were taken to the Lower South and there traded. The business of furnishing slaves for the urban trading centres of the Upper South did, however, allow its participants to turn over their capital perhaps two, three, or four times during the active months of each trading season; and in this way substantial

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16. See Table 1.1.

accumulations of profit could result.<sup>17</sup>

Scattered comments and trading account entries provide indications of the profit rates which obtained in the business of supplying slaves for the long-distance trade. In 1845, T.N.Gadsden considered that slaves bought in the Georgetown district of South Carolina should, when resold at Charleston, normally have produced profits of 50 to 75 dollars. He advised his associate: "You can give \$525 for men; they will bring \$575 to \$600; women, \$400, will sell at \$475". Against these gross profits were to be set interest on any borrowed capital, as well as expenses including the transportation and accommodation of slaves. An indication of the profits which J.J.Toler expected from supplying the Richmond market is given by a letter of February 1859. Having bought a man at \$750 and having resold him at Richmond for 860, Toler observed: "that was a small profit but I was tired of [the expense of] keeping him in jail". Similarly, A.J.McElveen's letters of 1853 and 1854 suggest the scale of gross profits which that trader expected to obtain from buying slaves in Sumter district, South Carolina, and reselling them at Charleston. In July 1853, McElveen bought a slave for \$775 and wrote to Oakes, his trading associate, explaining that he hoped the "boy" would sell for \$900. A month later, he bought two slaves for \$900 and \$850 respectively, and indicated that he expected at least \$50 profit on each. Similarly, on certain slaves bought in October 1853, McElveen wrote: "I think the above two will pay at least...50 each. If we can make even \$50 on the head at the present rates I think we may be satisfied". Again with two slaves bought in November he spoke of making \$50 profit per head. On a slave advantageously purchased at \$900 in 1854, the same trader refused \$80 profit and anticipated making a gross profit of \$100.<sup>18</sup>

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17. For evidence on the most active months in the urban supplying trade of the Upper South, see below.
  18. Gadsden to Gasque, 17 Sept. 1845, produced in evidence in *South Carolina Reports*, Gadsden v. Gasque, 2 Strobbart 324 (1848). Toler to Ferguson, 17 Feb. 1859, Ferguson Papers (NCA); McElveen to Oakes, 10 July, 25 Aug., 20 Oct. and 7 Nov. 1853, 7 Feb. 1854, Oakes Papers (BPL).

The Silas & R.F.Omohundro account book provides information on the profit levels which, in the Richmond supplying trade, that firm achieved in the 1859-60 season and in the early part of the Civil War. The account book shows that, on 46 slaves sold in the period from November 1859 to March 1860, the Omohundros, before deducting expenses, made a profit of 10.8 per cent. The special alarms and the windfall opportunities of wartime conditions meant that, on 39 slaves sold between June 1860 and June 1862, a loss of 5,177 dollars was incurred; while 13 slaves sold in the July to December 1862 period produced an unusually high gross profit of 18.9 per cent.<sup>19</sup>

As Chapter VII indicates, in the 1845 to 1860 period the profit rates of the long-distance domestic slave trade fluctuated considerably, with these fluctuations reflecting variations in the level of the Lower South's demand for slaves. Such fluctuations in profit levels must have extended to the slave supplying trade at Richmond and Charleston and at the other urban markets of the Upper South. Evidence cited above, and relating to Gadsden, Toler, McElveen, and the Omohundros, suggests that in the 1845 to 1860 period the gross profits on individual slaves bought for the supplying trade at Upper South's urban markets ranged from 6 per cent or less to about 15 per cent of capital invested.

#### IV

Although some of the slaves sold by urban dealers were directly conveyed to the dealers' "yards" by planters and by townspeople who wished to sell certain of their slaves, the great majority of slaves involved in the inter-regional traffic - whether or not they passed through the urban markets of the Upper South - would initially have been purchased for the

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19. See Omohundro Account Book (UVA). The account book covers the period 1857 to 1862, but the poor state of preservation of the account book means that profit rate information for 1857 and 1858 has not survived.

trade by speculators and agents who toured the countryside in search of suitable slave purchases. The roving nature of much of the business of slave purchasing in the rural South is documented in numerous traders' advertisements. One such advertisement, that of Clinkscales & Boozer, announced that "young and likely Negroes between the ages of 12 and 25" were sought, and informed the public that

Those having such property to sell, will find it in their interests to bring them to us, or drop a line to us and we will come and see them. One of us can always be found at home, prepared to pay the highest prices for such negroes as suit us, in cash. 20

A.J.Hydrick's advertisement, typical of advertisements by many other traders, announced:

Persons having...[suitable Negroes] and desiring to dispose of them, by addressing a line, at 'Poplar P.O., Orangeburg District', may do so to advantage. Such persons will please state the age, quality and price of the negroes, and if the stipulated figures are not above the market CASH VALUE, I will in a short time after the receipt of their letter give them a call. 21

The itinerant traders who purchased in the rural areas of the Upper South, and who either supplied the urban markets of that section or traded directly with the Lower South, formed the essential foundation of the inter-regional slave trading system. In many cases - evidence presented in Table 3.2 suggests in about 50 per cent of cases - these itinerant traders shared their speculative activities with one or more partners. Very commonly these traders based themselves at a village or a county town and - traders' correspondence collections, bills of sale, and slave purchasing advertisements suggest - from such a base and over a period of several years, purchased in a territory covering sections of perhaps three, four, or five neighbouring counties.<sup>22</sup>

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20. Laurensville Herald (SC), 15 May 1858.

21. Sumter Watchman (SC), 18 Mar.1857.

22. On village and county town bases see Appendix A and the sample of South Carolina traders there described. Newspapers consulted are those listed in Table 3.2 and collections of bills of sale are those cited in Table 4.1. The A.J.McElveen purchasing records, in the Oakes Papers (BPL) are, in the present connection, typical of the purchasing patterns found in numerous collections cited in this study. McElveen's purchasing territory has already been discussed in Chapter III.

Traders were very much concerned with the state of competition in the slave purchasing business and, although tending to buy in the same general territory over several seasons, sometimes talked of testing trading conditions on the fringes of that buying area. In 1848, for example, the trader A.W.Lewis, who seems for several years to have bought in the vicinity of Raleigh, North Carolina, hoped by moving some forty miles from Raleigh to Nashville, North Carolina, to gain access to a cheaper supply of slaves. The price differential between the countryside and the major urban centres of the trade - a differential which has been observed in a discussion of the urban supplying trade - suggests that the Nashville area would, indeed, have been cheaper than the immediate vicinity of Raleigh. Lewis reported on his new trading location in a letter to his trading associate.

I have tuck up a stand at Nashville [he wrote] to see if I cant make sum trade about her [e]. There is negrows a bout her for sal and one very likely fellor witch can be had for a fa[i]r price. He is No.one in any market. There is sum others bin offerd to me. I want you to come down in a few days and see me that I can give you all the hang of the trade. I have got where I have not got so much imposement in the trade of Negrows....I flatter myself to say I think I have got a fust rate plas to do sum tradin this season. The market a bout Raleigh is sode up with too miny Traders and thay are too damn smart to make any money. 23

The appearance of new trading competitors in a particular buying locality was a matter of considerable moment for the established buyers of that area. Increased trading competition was, of course, far from welcome. At the same time, however, useful indications of Lower South price levels could sometimes be gained from the prices paid by traders newly arrived in a buying market. These issues were the subject of correspondence between G.W.Barnes, buying in the Halifax area of North Carolina, and his associate, Theophilus Freeman of New Orleans. In November 1839, Barnes wrote:

You recollect that...Perkins [a trading associate of Barnes] wrote to me that a trader was there [in North Carolina] paying 850 for fellows and [Perkins said that] he belonged to a company from Richmond and you said you did not know who he was and I told you that I wrote to Perkins that if he

belongs to Richmond he would quit paying them prices and return to Richmond. The man is buying for Mr. Shearsman Johnson of New Orleans.

Barnes was wary of the new competitor, but seems to have taken the prices paid by Johnson's man as a guide to price trends in New Orleans, a market for which both he and Johnson's agent bought. Barnes, therefore, wrote:

I had a great many negroes offered to me when I was down there [with Perkins] and they will be compelled to sell but they asked 750 and 800. I told them when they come down to what I thought I could afford to pay I would buy and not until then. I left instructions with Perkins not to pay more than 750 without Mr. Johnson's man came in the market and if he did to pay as high as he did. 24

Traders, when attending public sales at which they were faced with competition from colleagues in the same business, sometimes came to special purchasing arrangements with their rivals. At sales in March 1859, J.J. Toler of Virginia made joint purchases with two traders but, at a further sale in the same month, failed to come to an agreement with certain of the traders present. Toler's letter of 4 March reported that he had attended a sale in Sussex county, Virginia, where

Mr. Davis, Boosaw and myself bought [a] man for \$1080 and the others was bought by country people....Mr [Messrs] Valentine Jones and Powers were there. If it had not been for them we could have bought the man rite but we did not come in with them.

As it was, the price of the slave had been forced up so high by bids and counter-bids that a profit of only five dollars was gained when Toler resold the slave, apparently in the Richmond market. The attentions of Valentine, Jones, and Powers at the sale in Sussex county - the heart of Toler's buying area - were strongly resented by Toler, so that he wrote to his trading associate:

I want you to keep a good look out over beyond Petersburg [a city located in one of Sussex's neighbouring counties] and if there is any sales we will both attend them and we will help them along and give them [the trading rivals] a good time and then they wont be so fond of going over your way so much. 25

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24. Barnes to Freeman, 7 Nov. 1839, G.W. Barnes Papers (BPL). On Barnes and Freeman, see also correspondence cited in Stowe, A Key, p. 8.
25. Toler to Ferguson, 4 and 11 Mar. 1859, Ferguson Papers (NCA).



The possibility of rival traders making special arrangements not to bid against each other was mentioned in the trader Tyre Glen's discussion of a North Carolina sale held in November 1832. It seems, however, that, as in the case of the Sussex county sale which Toler attended, the principal rivals failed to come to any fruitful compromise. Reporting to his partner, Isaac Jarratt, on the North Carolina sale, Glen wrote:

Bob Huie was there. I proposed a compromise on the first day [but] he refused. I seen him on all that he bid on intirely above the worth but neither bought on that day. The next morning he proposed a compromise. He finally bought at prices that would not afford a prospect sufficient to justify the risks.

In the 1833-4 trading season, two of Glen's letters indicated possible approaches which traders might take in dealing with their rivals. Glen's letter of 29 December 1833 commented on the possible advantages of putting up prices paid for slaves and so seeking to discourage rival traders from establishing themselves at the centre of his slave buying area. The letter informed Isaac Jarratt:

Puryear [an occasional trading associate of Glen & Jarratt] advises me to put fellows that is tip top to 550 [dollars] which I shall not do untill I here from you again [from the Alabama market] and for the following reasons. Thar is at this time very little competition. I can close several trades at the prices of last summer say 350 to 375 [for females?], 450 to 500 or the extreme 525 [for males?].  
...Puryear saw oald Dick Russel a few days ago in Fayetteville. He told Puryear he had paid \$600 for a large portion of his fellows, \$650 for sum. He was on his way to Mobile whar he had 250 negroes for Orleans. Puryear thinks that if I can get funds that I ought to put negroes up \$50, purchase all I can, send the negroes to you or write to you to send Carson [an assistant] for them, and continue in the market myself to keep out other purchasers, as he thinks...that this is the cheapest market in the United States and that other purchasers would flock in here in my absence.

Glen added, however:

I dont intend to run the price mutch until they make a run on me or I hear from you and you think from the prospects [in Alabama] that I ought to raise the price....You are in the market. You can by the time you receive this be [able] to learn what is the prospects of collecting [money on slaves already in the Alabama market] and seling a second lot.

A letter of 9 January 1834 shows that Glen's decision was to concentrate on the following season rather than to risk further speculations at the end of

the 1833-4 season. He informed Jarratt: "I think from your information it is best not to strain the market here very hard this winter, as it will injure the next summers purchases."<sup>26</sup>

In the Upper South, the distribution of slave purchasing over particular years was very much influenced by the seasonal character of the trader's slave selling in Lower South markets. Traders who purchased in the rural Upper South, and who traded directly with the cotton states of the slave importing region, appear to have purchased most actively in the summer months and up to about October and November, the latter two months being the time when most coffles set out for the importing states. A purchasing pattern of this type is suggested by Tyre Glen's reference to holding off until "next summer's purchases"; and, although quite numerous purchases are documented for a broader period, is reflected in the available collection of Glen's receipts from slave purchases. A similar purchasing pattern, in this case even more heavily concentrated in the June to November period, is found in the collection of bills relating to purchases by the trader William Long. With Pascal & Raux, who bought slaves in rural North Carolina and shipped them to the New Orleans and Mississippi markets, purchasing, according to available records, was heavily concentrated in the inclusive period from July to January. This latter purchasing pattern reflected the rather unusual seasonal character of the New Orleans market, a market which became active and continued to be active somewhat later than did slave markets in the predominantly cotton producing areas of the Lower South. A further variant in purchasing patterns is found with those who concentrated on supplying the numerous traders who made up their coffles and shipments by buying at the urban markets of the Upper South. According to available bills of sale, Toler & Ferguson who bought for the Richmond trade, and L.C. Robards, a resident Lexington, Kentucky dealer, very much concentrated their purchasing in the period from early

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26. Glen to Jarratt, 2 Nov. 1832, Isaac Jarratt Papers (SHC); Glen to Jarratt, 29 Dec. 1833 and 9 Jan. 1834, Jarratt-Purveyer Papers (DU).

September to late February - in the period, that is to say, when visiting traders made the urban markets of the Upper South most active.<sup>27</sup>

With trading concerns like Toler & Ferguson, and like L.C. Robards & Company - firms involved in the urban supplying trade of the Upper South - the tendency to concentrate purchasing in a few months of each year might, in some cases, have reflected a desire to avoid the possible inconvenience and expense of accommodating slaves over the long periods when urban markets were relative inactive. It was possible, however, for traders to avoid such inconveniences and accommodation costs by arranging to leave slaves with their former owners until the urban trading market became active, and was possible for traders with plantations to employ newly purchased slaves on those properties. It might also, in some cases, have been safe and convenient to hire out certain newly purchased slaves. For speculators involved in the urban supplying trade, the essential factor leading to the concentration of sales in a relatively few months of each year seems to have been the seasonal character of demand in the Upper South's urban markets. The opening of the season in these markets made it possible to effect sales and, with the receipts from these sales, those involved with urban supplying trade could enter into a four or five month cycle of investment and reinvestment in slaves. For those traders who, without agents or partners, bought in the rural areas of the Upper South and sold directly to the importing states, departure for the Lower South inevitably brought a curtailment of all but occasional purchasing. For larger organisations involved in the same direct traffic between the rural Upper South and the importing states, it was usually the inaccessibility of funds which restricted purchasing during the first few months of each year. The Virginia-based

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27. The above seasonal patterns are those represented in the collections of bills of sale which are cited in Table 4.1. The Badgett bills of sale, also cited in Table 4.1, being concentrated mainly in a single month, March 1837, do not provide a useful sample of seasonal purchasing trends. The trading activities of Glen, Long, Pascal & Raux, Toler & Ferguson, and Robards are discussed in several chapters of the present study. On Robards, see also Coleman, Slavery Times in Kentucky, pp.153-63.

traders Haynes and Logan, in correspondence with their partner Joseph Meek, who had just disposed of a coffle of slaves in Mississippi, discussed this problem. On 22 April 1836 Haynes told Meek:

We have bought about 50 all of the right kind, No.1, and put what is able to [to] work, plough etc, but I fear we will have to sell some to pay for others. I believe I could buy every day if I had money but I have done all I can without money....100 negroes could be bought here (in the locality of Abingdon, Western Virginia) by August if we had the means. All hands now idle. Fulcher (an agent) hired at \$550 and nothing doing.

Three days later, Logan, a lawyer and speculator, called on Meek to send what money was available from his recent sales and informed him:

I have been round the circuit in the several counties attending the courts, and perceive there are a good many slaves for sale....We have engaged and bought some 25 or 20....We have made engagements promising money for slaves by the time we expected from your letters you would be able to send it to us: that time has now run out....We are losing trades every day....Slave traders are rushing in on all sides and before long the whole business [of buying slaves at low off-season prices] will be over in this quarter, so that no slave can be got at a reasonable price. 28

Traders purchasing for all branches of the trade often found it convenient to classify slaves according to their weight. Reference to such conventions often, even for the slave trade, had a particularly barbaric appearance. The instructions which Tyre Glen sent to his brother, Thomas, contained careful reference to purchasing slaves by the pound. Tyre Glen informed Thomas:

If you can buy young fellows at 700 that is as likely as Aaron Shope, Nelson Hutton or Nathan Williams...I would be willing and glad to get them or if the fellows is very likely 750 can be stood, for likely field girls 500-550 or if they are very likely 600, for plough boys 5 to 6 dollars per pound. If the boy is very likely and weys 60 to 90 or 100 - 7 may be gone. If you can get Ken's boy at 7 per pound take him.

The trader A.J.McElveen made frequent reference to the weight of slaves. In July 1853, for example, when reporting the purchase of the slave Wilson from

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28. Haynes to Meek, 22 Apr. 1836 and Logan to Meek, 25 Apr. 1836, Negro Collection (AU).

a Mr. Semore, McElveen added: "This boy Wilson I weighed him. His weight is 100 lbs by the scales." Later that month, McElveen bought a girl from "Mr. Mims of Darlington district", and reported that he hoped to be able to purchase her brother who "weighs 100 lbs." A few weeks later, the trader enthusiastically reported that he had bought "The likeliest girl I ever saw. Black, 18 years old, very near as tall as I am, No surplus flesh, fine form... 173 lb...and 5'10". When reporting the weight of another slave, McElveen added, with a certain professional pride, that he had not weighed him" but... [was] pretty good a guessing" in such matters.<sup>29</sup>

Quite commonly, too, traders and other buyers referred to stripping and examining slaves during purchasing negotiations. Such examinations might reveal signs of physical unsoundness, or might, by revealing whip marks or other scars suggest the troublesome nature of a slave. A slave purchased in August 1853 was reported by the trader McElveen to have been "the best stripped fellow I ever examined." The speculator J.J. Toler, having received complaints from a customer about the health of two recently purchased slaves, reported that he told the customer "to strip them and examine them and he took them in my back room and came back and said he did not see anything the matter with them." The examination of a slave by the speculator G.W. Eutsler provided the occasion for that slave's escape.

I bought a boy... [Eutsler wrote] and had him in my room and stripped him and told the man I would take him. He gave him an order to go and get his clothing and that was the last I have seen of him.

For the trader, the physical examination of slaves, like the weighing of slaves, provided a convenient and commonplace means of assessing the value of slave property: for Abolitionists, however, such practices were taken as proof that the morality of American slavery tended more towards that of the cattle market than towards that of the benign social institution so often

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29. Glen to Glen, 9 Jan. 1836, Glen Papers (DU); McElveen to Oakes, 10 July, 29 July and 25 Aug. 1853, 2 Aug. 1856, Oakes Papers (BPL).

referred to by the pro-slavery school.<sup>30</sup>

V

Over the 1820 to 1860 period, the slave purchasing systems of the Upper South led to the marshalling of tens of thousands of slave coffles and consignments. The slave, having suffered the often severe psychological brutalities of being sold into the trade, still faced the anxieties of the long journey to the Lower South and of sale to an unknown master. For the long-distance trader, the journey to the importing states ushered in the protracted business of disposing of slaves, but created the very real possibility of generous returns on the effort and capital which he had invested.

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30. McElveen to Oakes, 9 Aug. 1853, Oakes Papers (BPL); Toler to Ferguson, 4 Mar. 1859 and Eutsler to Ferguson, 14 Aug. 1856, Ferguson Papers (NCA).

CHAPTER VI

GAINING ACCESS TO LOWER SOUTH MARKETS: TRANSPORTATION TO SOUTHERN  
MARKETS AND LEGAL RESTRICTIONS ON THE TRADE

Speculators introduced slaves into Lower South markets by means of overland coffles, by railroad, by coastal shipment, by river, and by various combinations of these means of transportation. The mode of transportation which was chosen by individual trading concerns depended, no doubt, upon considerations of convenience and expense. Since, as Chapter I has shown, the specialist New Orleans market had natural links by sea with the major slave trading complex of the Chesapeake ports, and since the New Orleans market was conveniently linked by river with the important exporting areas of the upper Mississippi, the slave marts of the Crescent City were to a great extent supplied by the coastal and river routes. In general, however, Lower South markets did not demand the specialised supplying arrangements required by the southern Louisiana trade, and were not conveniently linked by water with Upper South exporting areas. This meant, therefore, that the trade was usually conducted by means of overland routes rather than by water.

I(i)

A history of Rowan county, North Carolina, a study published in 1881, provides one of the few available accounts of the departure of a cofle destined for the Lower South. The author of that history, the Reverend Jethro Rumble, reproducing a widely held tradition, maintained that the citizens of Rowan county "generally [made] arrangements...to purchase, and keep in the neighbourhood, all deserving negroes." He added, however, that the trader, "having the longest purse", was able to make purchases sufficient to supply his coffles. Before their departure for the Lower South, Rumble recalled, troublesome slaves were carefully secured in a "baracoon" or jail,

while other slaves were less closely confined. Then, the historian of Rowan county continued,

on the day of the departure for the West the trader would have a grand jollification. A band or at least a drum and fife would be called into requisition, and perhaps a little rum be judiciously distributed to heighten the spirits of his sable property, and the neighbours would gather in to see the departure. First of all one or two closely covered wagons would file out of the 'baracoon', containing the rebellious and unwilling, in handcuffs and chains. After them the rest dressed in comfortable attire, perhaps dancing and laughing, as if they were going on a holiday excursion. At the edge of the town...the pageant faded away, and the curious crowd, who had come to witness the scene returned to their homes.

After some months had passed by, the trader's wagons returned

loaded with luxuries for his family. In boxes and bundles, in kegs and caskets, there were silks and laces, watches and jewelry, ribbons and feathers, candies and tropical fruits, wines and cordials, for family use and luxurious indulgence, all the profits of an accursed traffic in human flesh and blood, human tears and helpless anguish and oppression. 1

It appears that the Rowan county "jollifications" were designed in part to foster the morale of the departing slaves, and were at the same time designed to promote, in the local white community, a favourable impression of the trade. It is not clear whether such exercises commonly marked the departure of coffles. There were, however, during the progress of the coffle towards the Lower South, strong reasons of self-interest which prompted traders to pay some attention to slave morale. Some eye-witness accounts talk of the hardships of the inter-regional trek being eased by story telling and by music and singing. A coffle which the Reverend J.H.Dickey came upon in 1826 was led by two slave musicians. Similarly, the British traveller G.W.Featherstonehaugh reported that, in 1834, he had encountered a coffle whose members, as they treked southward, happily sang "Old Virginia Never Tire". Traders, looking to the saleability of their property, must have found it advantageous to feed their slaves adequately; and, indeed,

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1. J.Rumple, A History of Rowan County, North Carolina, Containing Sketches of Prominent Families and Distinguished Men, with an Appendix (Salisbury, N.C., 1881), pp.323-4.



Featherstonehaugh reported that the members of the coffle which he encountered were generally well fed. The papers of the trader James A. Mitchell contain a list of "The expence of Travelin with negros from Virginia to Mississippi...[in] 1834", and that list, recording regular purchases of food, suggests that the coffle was quite liberally supplied with bacon and other provisions. On approaching the area in which sales were to be attempted, the good disposition of the trader's gang was particularly important, for slaves who "talked up right" sold much more readily than did sullen slaves. Traders, therefore, if the experience of Charles Ball was typical, encouraged good slave morale by means of lectures on the "happy life" which the slaves of the Lower South enjoyed.<sup>2</sup>

The Charles Ball narrative provides a rather detailed account of the progress of a coffle which, in about 1805, set out from Maryland for the Georgia market. That coffle was made up of 51 slaves, and, rather unusually for the Georgia market, three-fifths of the slaves were male. As the coffle set out,

the women [Ball reported] were tied together with a rope, about the size of a bed cord, which was tied like a halter round the neck of each; but the men...were very differently caparisoned. A strong iron collar was closely fitted by means of a padlock round each of our necks. A chain of iron about a hundred feet long was passed through the hasp of each padlock, except at the two ends, where the hasps of the padlocks passed through a link of the chain. In addition to this, we were handcuffed in pairs.

At night, the slaves often slept in "those miserable public houses...called 'ordinaires'". After about four weeks, the slave gang entered South Carolina and, on the first morning in that state, the slaves were given a special meal "to welcome...[them] to South Carolina ". The trader

then addressed us all, [Ball wrote] and told us we might now give up all hope of ever returning to the place of our nativity; as it would be impossible for us to pass through the states of North Carolina and Virginia without being taken up and sent back. He further advised us to make ourselves contented; as he would take us to Georgia, a far better country than any we had seen; and where we would be able to live in great abundance.

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2. Rev.J.H.Dickey, cited in Coleman, Slavery Times in Kentucky, p.145; G.W.Featherstonehaugh, Excursion through the Slave States, from Washington on the Potomac to the Frontier of Mexico; with Sketches of Popular Manners and Geological Notices (New York, 1844, 1968), p.36; Charles Ball, Fifty Years in Chains; or Life of an American Slave (New York, 1858), pp.33-7.

Some days later as the slaves approached Columbia, the capital of South Carolina, the trader, "Colonel" McGriffin, removed the chains which had bound the male slaves: from that time McGriffin began earnestly to make preparations for his sales in South Carolina and Georgia.<sup>3</sup>

A series of letters in the William Long Papers provide a valuable description of the progress of a coffle which, in December 1845, left North Carolina for Mississippi. The coffle was supervised by Thomas W. Burton, who was assisted by J.D. Long, the son of the trader William Long. Burton's letter of the 15 December informed William Long:

We have got along very well. So far all well and able to eat a good allowance, with the exception of colds. J.D. Long and myself has very severe colds. We are worse off than any of the negroes.... We have travelled over 20 miles per day since we left you. We are now 150 miles from home. We have had a severe time for travelling today. [It] has been raining and freesing all day but slow and we have drove some 22 or 3 miles.

Later that month, Burton wrote:

When I left my camp I travelled all day yesterday and arrived at my old friend John Gobers in Franklin County, Georgia, last night and this morning it was raining very hard and has continued all day so far and I thought it was...best for me to remain all day as it has rained all the time and would be very unpleasant travelling. My friend Gober finds me a good comfortable house for the negroes and myself and wood also free of charge.

In the same letter the trader reported that, apart from one slave who had been attended by a doctor, the gang was in good health "with the exception of light colds, and there is no end hardly to their eating." At that time the coffle was "525 or 50 miles from home".<sup>4</sup>

By night the coffle rested, sometimes in tents, sometimes in accommodation provided by Burton's acquaintances, and sometimes, perhaps, at the same sort of "ordinaire" of which Ball wrote. On 29 December, Burton, writing from Coweta county, Georgia, reported:

I now take up my seat to write you a few lines. We are all as well as common. We are getting clear of our colds. We now have fine weather for travelling though the roads are rough and hard frozen every morning. We will get in Alabama on Wednesday next to Jesse Gunns.... I have travelled from 20 to 32 miles per day when I could travel.

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3. Ball, Fifty Years, pp.29-30, 31, 36-7, 33.

4. Burton to Long, 15 Dec. and late Dec. [date unclear] 1845, Long Papers (NCA).

By late December, bids had already been received for some of the slaves and it appears that on nearing Alabama Burton unchained some or all of the male slaves. It is probable that few if any of the female slaves had been chained. Burton's letter of 29 December continued:

Old Harry is the sprightliest boy in the company and has taken the road every morning and goes ahead until night and has quit complaining altogether. They are all as hearty a set of negroes as I ever saw in my life. It seems they never know when they get enough to eat.

In early January some sales were made at Tuscaloosa, Alabama; and by mid-January Burton, despite the Mississippi legislature's ban on the inter-regional slave trade, was trading in Hinds county, Mississippi.<sup>5</sup>

The collected correspondence of the North Carolina traders Tyre Glen and Isaac Jarratt provides further descriptions of the business of driving coffles to the Lower South. In November 1832 Glen, writing from his home base at Huntsville, North Carolina, informed his partner, Jarratt:

Carson (an assistant) and myself expect to start the last of next week. We expect to purchase a few more and will have when we start about 40. One only under the size of the boy I bought of Walker. We have a few likely girls and a choice lot of boys and fellows. 8 or 10 boys of 13 to 17 and as many 17 to 22 or 3 and some 24 or 5. No old property yet nor no very small boys. The littlest weighs 68 pounds and the smallest girl 100. We expect to start with about 8 fellows chained all of which is very likely. We have five of them in Goal.

Late in the 1833-4 season, on 1 March 1834, Glen set out from North Carolina with a cofle of slaves which was to be driven to Alabama, where Jarratt had for about three months been selling slaves. The description of this cofle, like that of the 1832 cofle, makes it clear that many but not all adult males were chained. Jarratt's friend, R.C.Puryear, informed him that Glen had set out with a gang of slaves

well assorted and generally likely. He has about 16 fellows, seven boys, the balance women and girls, except one child.... He has 12 fellows in the chain all of which jumping Jinny (Glen's wife) drives before her. She carries up the rear armed and equipped in a style which reduces it to a certainty that if life lasts you will see her in Montgomery - Glen has employed Baldy Kerr to go with him, with (Glen having) the privilege of dismissing him at any time. 6

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5. Burton to Long, 29 Dec.1845, Long Papers (NCA).

6. Glen to Jarratt, 2 Nov.1832, Jarratt Papers (SCH); Puryear to Jarratt, 3 Mar. 1834, Jarratt-Puryear Papers (DU).

In the inter-regional trade, the universal practice seems to have been to chain most prime male slaves for the greater part of their southward trek. In 1836, Logan, Meek, and their associates drove a coffle of slaves to the Lower South; and, with thirteen of the men in chains, the coffle was said by one of the traders to have progressed "very cheerfully, peaceably and safely". The British traveller James Silk Buckingham reported seeing, near Fredericksburg, Virginia, a coffle with "the men chained together in pairs, and the women carrying the children and bundles". Featherstonehaugh reported seeing a coffle, in Virginia, bound for the sugar producing areas of Louisiana. That coffle, said to have been of 300 slaves, was reportedly led by 200 men who were bound together in chains. Traders, however, being equipped with guns and other weapons, and having issued a variety of threats and promises to their slaves, sometimes considered that the prime males in their gang could safely be left unchained during the later stages of the inter-regional trek. The sores which resulted from weeks of marching in chains would thus have been given some time to heal, so allowing the slaves to arrive on the market in relatively good condition. At the same time, by offering the reward of unchaining slaves who proved co-operative, the trader probably gained a useful lever in the psychological preparation of slaves for their sale.<sup>7</sup>

The numerous correspondence collections which have been consulted in the preparation of the present study have not provided any examples of slave gangs rising up against the traders who drove them to the Lower South. Indeed, since pressing anxieties over possible revolts during the southward trek form no part of the subject matter of the many slave traders' correspondence collections which have been examined, the policing of coffles by traders seems

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7. Logan-Meek coffle described in Mooney, Slavery in Tennessee, pp.42-3 (Mooney draws upon the portion of the Logan-Meek trading correspondence which is now preserved at Dillard University, New Orleans, and is catalogued as part of the American Missionary Association Papers. A further important group of Logan-Meek papers, housed at Atlanta University, is drawn upon at several points in the present study); J.S.Buckingham, The Slave States of America (London, 1842), II, pp.552-4; Featherstonehaugh, Excursion, pp.36-7. Numerous descriptions of coffles appear in Executive Committee of American Anti-Slavery Society, Slavery and the Internal Slave Trade, pp.53-63.

generally to have been efficient. In 1829, however, the Kentucky Reporter informed the public that the members of a coffle, when passing through Kentucky, had become rebellious and had killed one of the traders who had been driving them southward. The Reporter added that the men in the coffle had been "handcuffed and chained together in the usual manner for driving these poor wretches, while the women and children...[had been] suffered to proceed without encumbrance."<sup>8</sup>

It has been seen that Featherstonehaugh reported seeing a coffle of some 300 slaves. Ethan Andrews, on visiting Franklin & Armfield's pen at Alexandria in the District of Columbia, was informed that that firm sent out coffles of 150 slaves to the Natchez, Mississippi, market. Usually, however, coffles were a good deal smaller than those reported by Featherstonehaugh and Andrews. Slave traders' papers suggest, in fact, that coffles were very commonly made up of something between 25 and 60 slaves.<sup>9</sup> As records already cited suggest, on days when travel was possible, coffles generally travelled at something over 20 miles per day. Ethan Andrews was informed that 25 miles per day was the usual rate of progress. Travelling at something like that rate, a Cochran & James coffle took 44 days in journeying from Richmond to Natchez; while James A. Mitchell's coffle on its "wet and muddy journey" from Pittsylvania county, Virginia, to Natchez "was just 7 weeks on the road"; and Thomas Burton's slave gang, in the winter of 1845-6, took about a month in their trek from Yancyville, North Carolina, to Hinds county, Mississippi.<sup>10</sup>

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8. Reporter cited in Coleman, Slavery Times in Kentucky, pp.176-7.

9. On Franklin & Armfield's coffles, see Andrews, Slavery and the Domestic Slave Trade, Chapter XX. Table 7.1 of the present study documents the size of coffles dispatched by numerous firms. It should be noted that while most entries in that table relate to single, complete coffles, the Bolton & Dickens entry and some of the White entries relate to multiple slave consignments. A further indication of the size of traders' coffles is given by the numbers of slaves cited in traders' purchasing advertisements. For a substantial sample of these advertisements, see Table 3.2.

10. Andrews, Slavery and the Domestic Slave Trade, p.130; Cochran & James's coffle, cited in Bancroft, Slave Trading, p.289n; Mitchell to Mitchell, 10 Dec.1834, Reid Papers (UVA); Burton to Long, 15 Dec.1845 and 8 Jan. 1846, Long Papers (NCA).

I(ii)

As the mileage of southern tracks increased, the railroads became, especially in the last ten or fifteen years of the ante-bellum period, an important supplement to the overland coffle and to other modes of transporting slaves. Many letters in the Elias Ferguson Papers and the Ziba Oakes Papers refer to sending slaves down "on the cars", and make it clear that, in the 1850s, the railroad played an important part in the business of supplying the slave markets of Richmond and Charleston. Southern railroads also carried slaves on much longer journeys. The Finney Papers indicate that in 1859 the leading New Orleans speculators Smith & Edmondson sent all their slaves by the Jackson and New Orleans railroad. Two years earlier, Jeremiah Smith's slaves, bound for New Orleans, were sent out on the South Carolina railroad. Although by using the railroad expenses must have been higher than when traders relied upon overland coffles, the railroads, of course, on certain convenient routes offered the advantage of speed in the marketing of slaves. In October 1856, for example, the trader A.J.McElveen reported that only about 36 hours after setting out by rail from Bamberg, South Carolina, he and his gang of slaves had arrived at Montgomery, Alabama. In 1859, the trader Phillip Thomas took 55 hours to travel by rail from Montgomery to Richmond.<sup>11</sup>

The scene at a Washington, D.C., railroad depot where slaves bound for the Georgia market were being made ready for departure was described by a Boston Whig reporter on 22 April 1848:

An Affecting Scene - Last eve as I passed the railroad depot, I saw quite a large number of coloured people gathered round one of the cars....I found in the car towards which they were so eagerly gazing fifty coloured people some of whom were nearly as white as myself. A majority of them were the number who attempted to gain their liberty last week....The men [on the train]

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11. Ferguson Papers (NCA) and Oakes Papers (BPL); Thomas to Finney, 11 Nov. 1859, Finney Papers (DU); Smith to Oakes 17 Feb. 1857 and McElveen to Oakes, 13 and 15 Oct. 1856, Oakes Papers (BPL); Thomas to Finney, 8 Nov. 1859, Finney Papers (DU). On the comparative expenses of different modes of transporting slaves, see Wells, "Moving a Plantation", pp.279-89.

were ironed together. [At the end of the car]...stood two ruffianly looking personages, with large canes in their hands and if their countenances were an indication of their hearts, they were the personification of hardened villany itself. In the middle of the car stood the notorious slave dealer of Baltimore, [Hope H.] Slatter, who I learn is a member of the Methodist Church "in good and regular standing".

According to Lyman Abbott, a Northerner who travelled on the railroads of the South; and according to numerous other authorities, slaves when carried by rail usually travelled in the Negro car or some car set apart from the rest of the train. "Every train going South", Abbott observed in 1856, "has slaves on board...,twenty or more, and [has] a 'nigger car', which is very generally also the smoking car, and sometimes the baggage car." A court case indicates that slaves carried on the South Carolina Rail Road, from Charleston to Augusta, normally travelled in "the negro or conductor's car as it is termed". An article published in the Petersburg Express and reproduced in the Austin, Texas, State Gazette of 12 February 1859 reported:

SLAVE EXODUS - an almost endless outgoing of slaves from Virginia to the South has continued for more than two weeks past. On Tuesday morning the car allotted to servants on the Richmond and Petersburg Railroad was filled to such an extent that one of the spring bars over the truck broke down, without, however, producing any harm. 12

I(iii)

For a great many traders who purchased in the interior of the Upper South the ports of that region were not readily accessible. It has been seen, however, that in the specialist New Orleans trade, the complex of Chesapeake ports was of pre-eminent importance. Manifests for the 1840s show that in the Chesapeake-New Orleans trade the average size of consignments sent by individual traders was not less than 20 slaves; and very often the total cargo of trading vessels, a cargo comprising several individual consignments, was

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12. Abbott, quoted in Bancroft, Slave Trading, p.290; South Carolina Reports, State v. Clayton, et al., 11 Richardson 581; Gazette, cited in Bancroft, Slave Trading, p.290.

as high as 100 to 150 slaves. Most of this latter traffic seems to have been accounted for by specially equipped slaving vessels, which took something like 20 to 25 days to carry their human cargoes from the Chesapeake ports to New Orleans. The facilities of the coastal trade allowed speculators based in the Upper South, without interrupting their purchasing activities, speedily and efficiently to transfer substantial consignments of slaves to partners and associates at the New Orleans market.<sup>13</sup>

In the 1830s, Franklin & Armfield were heavily involved in the trade between Alexandria, D.C., and New Orleans. They also traded extensively at Natchez; and their specialist slaving vessels carried to New Orleans, and in some cases probably as far as Natchez, not only their own slaves but those of other traders. An advertisement of 1 September 1834 announced:

Alexandria and New Orleans Packets:

Brig Tribune, Captain Smith, and Brig Uncas, Captain Boush, will resume their regular trips on the 20th of October: one will leave this port every thirty days throughout the shipping season. They are vessels of the first class, commanded by experienced officers, and will at all times go up the Mississippi by steam, and every exertion used to promote the interests of shippers and comfort of passengers. Apply to the Captain on board, or to Franklin & Armfield. Alexandria. September 1.

Another Franklin & Armfield advertisement, probably of the following year referred, in addition to the brigs Uncas and Tribune, to the Brig Isaac Franklin; and announced that one or other vessel "will continue to leave this port [Alexandria] on the 1st and 15th of each month throughout the shipping season". The advertisement added that "servants that are intended to be shipped, will at any time be received for safe-keeping at a fee of 25c per day."<sup>14</sup>

An anti-slavery clergyman, Rev. Joshua Leavitt, in a letter of 23 January 1834, left a description of his inspection of the Tribune, one of the Franklin

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13. On the length of voyages and size of consignments and cargoes, see Manifests (NA). For a detailed example of shipping between Norfolk, Virginia, and New Orleans, see Pascal Papers (HLH), passim, and see especially Pascal to Raux, 20 Dec. 1831.
  14. Advertisement of 1 Sept. 1834 cited in William Jay, Slavery in America or an Inquiry into the Character and Tendency of the American Colonization and American Anti-Slavery Societies (London, 1835), p. 149; advertisement cited in William Jay, A View of the Action of the Federal Government in behalf of Slavery (New York, 1839), p. 86.



& Armifield brigs. Leavitt reported:

The Captain very obligingly took (me)...to all parts of the vessel. The hold was appropriated to the slaves, and is divided into two apartments. The after-hold will carry about eighty women, and the other about one hundred men. On either side [of the holds] were two platforms running the whole length; one raised a few inches, and the other half way up the deck. They were about five or six feet deep. On these the slaves lie, as close as they can be stowed.

It appears, however, that during much of the voyage the slaves were not confined to the ships' holds. An ex-slave, Nathan Ross, left the following description of his voyage, in about 1846, from Richmond to New Orleans:

[The trader] brought 'bout 50 or 60 all de way by boat to New O'leens. We drifted down de Jeems to Po'tsm'oth an' den we was put on de New O'leens ship. Dere was 30 or 40 uthahs owned by tradahs. On board de ship we was treated well; had plenty to eat. We was allowed to walk on deck. We was not in de hol' 'cep'n' at night er when it sto'med. At New O'leens we was taken to a tradah's office. De yahd was walled up 13 er 14 feet high 'round to de front.

When slaves became troublesome, the closest of confinement was, of course, possible. On 9 January 1830, Niles' Register reported:

The schooner Lafayette, with a cargo of slaves from Norfolk, Virginia, for New Orleans, narrowly escaped being captured by them on the voyage. They were subdued after considerable difficulty, and twenty-five of them were bolted down to the deck, until the arrival of the vessel at New Orleans. 15

#### I(v)

The narrative of William Wells Brown provides an account of slave trading along the Mississippi River. As a slave, Brown was hired for a year to a speculator named Walker, and during that year had the job of assisting the trader with his slaves. Brown's narrative records that the trader bought in the interior of Missouri, making purchases "as he passed the different farms and villages". The slaves were then conducted to St. Louis.

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15. Leavitt quoted in Jay, Slavery in America, pp.149-50; recollections of Ross recorded in Bancroft, Slave Trading, p.279n.

During their subsequent journey by steamer down the Mississippi conditions were very far from comfortable; but the slaves were well fed and, it seems, not whipped. On Brown's first voyage with the trader there was, the narrative records,

a large room on the lower deck [of the vessel], in which [room] slaves were kept, men and women, promiscuously - all chained two and two, and a strict watch [was] kept that they did not get loose; for [Brown added] cases have occurred in which slaves have got off their chains and made their escape at [the] landing-places...[where] the boats...[took] on wood.

Brown did not give any evidence to suggest that the slaves were unchained during the later part of the voyage. Before arriving at New Orleans, Walker broke his journey at Rodney and at Natchez; and, having arranged for his arrival to be advertised in local newspapers, at these towns offered his slaves for sale. Those slaves not sold gained some opportunity for exercise, and then continued their journey to New Orleans.<sup>16</sup>

In the 1840s, the traders Hughes & Downing conducted a similar traffic to that of Walker. Hughes and his partner made their slave purchases in the vicinity of Lexington, Kentucky; and shipped their slaves down the Ohio and Mississippi rivers to the port of Natchez, their principal selling market. On their trips to Natchez, according to S.W.Tod, one of the firm's agents, "the negroes were all put on deck of the steamboat....They were chained together two by two until we got to the mouth of the Ohio River, when they were unchained."<sup>17</sup> The unchaining of the slaves, though it no doubt created problems of security must have been in the interests of the health and morale of the slave gang. Although the Mississippi and Ohio network doubtless provided the principal river channels of the trade, many other rivers were used by traders. In November 1849, for example, the South Carolina based traders Myers and Belser carried their slaves by rail from Columbia, South Carolina, apparently as far as Montgomery, Alabama; at

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16. W.W.Brown, The Narrative of William W.Brown: A Fugitive Slave (Boston, 1847, Reading, Mass., 1969), pp.14-26.

17. Cited in Coleman, "Lexington Slave Dealers", p.7. See pp.4-7 of that article for further information on Hughes & Downing.

which city the traders and their slaves boarded a boat which took them by river and sea to New Orleans.<sup>18</sup>

### I(v)

Conditions imposed upon slaves during their journeys to the markets of the Lower South were often physically very harsh. These hardships, nevertheless, were slight compared with the physical hardships endured during the "middle passage" of the Atlantic slave trade. In contrast to the high mortality of the African slave trade, coastal manifests as well as account books of the Old South's inter-regional trade - by enumerating slaves at their departure from the Upper South and at their arrival in the Lower South - indicate that the domestic slave trade of the Old South, whether conducted by land or water routes, produced very few fatalities indeed.<sup>19</sup> The emotional crises which slave trading, both international and inter-regional, precipitated among slaves must, however, have been very severe. Some attempt to measure the emotional upheavals wrought by the inter-regional trade is made in a later chapter, Chapter IX.

### II

In the ante-bellum period almost no legal restrictions were placed either upon inter-regional plantation migrations or upon the importation of slaves whom planters, for their own use, directly rather than through an agent, purchased in the Upper South and brought into the Lower South. There were, however, in certain states and at certain times, prohibitions

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18. Letter of W. Belser to L. Belser and deposition of N. B. Hill, both given in evidence in Sumter district Equity Court (SC), Belser v. Myers et al., 1852, Bill 180 in new series (SCA).

19. See Table 7.1, column F.

against the inter-state importation of slaves for the purpose of resale. An analysis of the motives which brought about these prohibitions, and an examination of the degree of efficiency with which they were administered will illustrate one of the problems with which speculators had occasionally to cope; and will at the same time provide some indication of southern attitudes towards the trade. It will be argued that moral opposition to the trader was not a significant factor in bringing about those prohibitions of the inter-regional slave trade which were enacted. Further aspects of this latter issue, the status of the trader, will be explored in Chapter X.

## II(i)

The present study is concerned essentially with the years 1820 to 1860 - the years of the inter-regional slave trade's fullest development. It should be noted, however, that in the period from the Revolution until 1820 several states enacted prohibitions of domestic slave trade importations. Bans imposed by Delaware in 1776, by Maryland in 1783, and by Kentucky in 1798, were in force for several decades and extended well beyond the year 1820. Virginia prohibited domestic slave trade importations in the period from 1778 to 1819; South Carolina had similar bans from 1787 to 1788, 1792 to 1803, and from 1816 to 1818; North Carolina imposed prohibitions from 1794 to 1818; Tennessee from 1812 until 1817; and Georgia from 1817 until a few years after 1820. The remaining southern slave states and territories did not, in the 1775 to 1820 period, impose prohibitions on the trade.<sup>20</sup>

The bans during these early years from the mid-1770s to 1820 were no doubt to some extent influenced by the uncertainties, current in the Revolutionary era, about the morality of slavery. These uncertainties,

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20. In Figure 6.1 and in the present chapter generally the dates of bans on the inter-regional slave trade are drawn mainly from J.C.Hurd, The Law of Freedom and Bondage in the United States (Boston, 1858-62; New York, 1968); and from Collins, The Domestic Slave Trade, pp.109-39. Hurd provides a digest of the laws relating to slavery which were passed in individual states. Collins, drawing on Hurd as well as directly employing statute books of individual states, provides an almost complete compendium of bans and repeals of bans on the inter-regional slave trade. Certain omissions in Hurd and Collins are indicated in note 27, below.

together with other factors, had contributed to the bans which most states, in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, imposed on Atlantic slave trade importations, and had contributed towards the movement for the abolition of slavery within the Northern and Middle states. In the South, however, the economic importance of slave labour, together with the sheer size of the Negro population and the fear of creating a massive free black community, pre-empted any very broadly based, thorough-going anti-slavery movement. With the Southern states in the 1775 to 1820 period, questions of self-interest and security, rather than doubts over the morality of slavery, appear to have been dominant in forming attitudes towards slave importation.

In the period from the Revolution to 1820, as in later periods, it was in the interests of net slave exporting regions like Virginia, Maryland, and Delaware to oppose domestic slave trade importations into their territories, and was in their interests to oppose African slave trade importations into the American states as a whole. Such policies of opposition, by tending to reduce the supply of slaves, increased the value of slaves already held in Virginia and in similar states. At the Philadelphia Constitutional Convention of 1787, Charles C. Pinckney of South Carolina, in explaining his state's attitude towards the importation of African slaves, made this same point. Being, in the Revolutionary era, areas with great potential for agricultural expansion, South Carolina and Georgia, he argued,

cannot do without slaves. As to Virginia she will gain by stopping the importations. Her slaves will rise in value, and she has more [slaves] than she wants. 21

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21. See M. Ferrand (ed.), The Records of the Federal Convention of 1787 (New Haven, 1911), II, p. 371. On Virginia and on Maryland's slave surpluses and exportations, see also W. D. Jordan, White Over Black: American Attitudes Towards the Negro, 1550-1812 (Chapel Hill, 1968; Baltimore, 1969), pp. 319-21. Delaware, too, was almost certainly a net exporter of slaves by the 1770s. North Carolina became a net exporter of slaves from about 1800. For a division of states into net importers and net exporters of slaves in each of these decades of the 1790-1860 period, see Chapter II, Table 2.10.

The exporting states of the 1775 to 1820 period, areas where the ratio of black to white was often high, tended to show particular anxiety over possible black insurrections and, on these grounds too, were wary of a policy of slave importation. These anxieties were considerably exacerbated by the Santo Domingo revolution of 1791 and by the Gabriel Prosser slave revolt which took place in Virginia in 1800.<sup>22</sup>

The demand for slaves and the price of slaves were inevitably higher in the slave importing states of the Lower South than in the slave exporting states.<sup>23</sup> The slave importation prohibitions of the exporting states cannot therefore, to any significant extent, have been directed against importations from the Lower South. The prohibitions of the 1775 to 1820 period, enacted by the Virginia legislature and by the legislatures of other net exporting states, must surely then have been designed to insulate the Border states from importations of Northern and Middle state slaves. With these latter Northern and Middle states involved in the rapid dismantling of the institution of slavery, the prices of their slaves would have been depressed, and would, no doubt, have been lower than slave prices in the Border South. The bondsmen of the Northern and Middle states offered the possibility of successful speculation to those who would, sometimes in contravention of the gradual emancipation statutes of those northerly regions, sell those slaves to the Border South or to the less accessible net importing states of the Lower South.<sup>24</sup> The slaves of the Middle and Northern states, because of their probable awareness of the anti-slavery impulses abroad in those

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22. See Jordan, White over Black, especially pp.375-402.

23. See Figure 7.1, and see Phillips, Life and Labor, p.177.

24. Northern and Middle states recognised that a strong temptation to sell slaves southward existed, and several states passed laws which were designed to prevent the circumvention, by sales, of gradual emancipation laws. On this issue, see R.W.Fogel and S.L.Engerman, "Philanthropy at Bargain Prices: Notes on the Economics of Gradual Emancipation", Journal of Legal Studies, III (1974), pp.377-401. Fogel and Engerman argued that, despite legal restrictions on exportations, a considerable North-South traffic took place in the 1775 to 1820 period.

states; and because of their often extensive contact with free citizens, white and black, appear, however, to have been regarded in the South as potentially subversive elements. Apparently for this reason their importation was opposed by the legislatures of the Border South.

In the net importing states, as elsewhere in the South during the period from the Revolution to 1820, the fear of slave insurrection and anxiety over the importation of potentially troublesome Northern and Middle state slaves must have played their part in determining attitudes towards slave importation.<sup>25</sup> Of considerable importance, too, and probably of predominating importance, were economic considerations. The operation of economic interests in the importing states is illustrated by South Carolina's legislation in these early decades. At the Philadelphia Convention of 1787 Pinckney and the South Carolina delegates successfully defended their state's interests as an area promising considerable agricultural expansion - the delegates being influential in establishing that for the twenty years following the Convention states could, when they wished to do so, import slaves from Africa. In the same year, however, the South Carolina legislature approved "An Act to Regulate the Recovery and Payment of Debts and for Prohibiting the Importation of Negroes". With many South Carolinians heavily in debt as a result of a combination of wartime hardships, a post-war surge in spending, and a series of bad harvests, the prohibition on slave importation - extending to the Atlantic as well as the domestic slave trade - was designed to prevent a further drain of funds.<sup>26</sup> The prohibition of the Atlantic slave trade remained in force until 1803 and that relating to the domestic trade was in force for all but five of the years

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25. See Jordan, White over Black, pp.375-402; and see P.S.Brady, "The Slave Trade and Sectionalism in South Carolina, 1787-1808", Journal of Southern History, XXXVIII (1972), pp.601-20.

26. Extracts from the debate of the 1787 act appear in E.Donnan (ed.), Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America (Washington, D.C., 1935), IV, pp.492-4. These extracts indicate the dominance of economic motives in South Carolina's prohibition of 1787. On this legislation, see also Jordan, White over Black, p.318. Jordan concluded that the South Carolina prohibition "was a matter of men denying themselves what they wanted [slaves importation] but could not afford". On South Carolina's policy towards slave importation in the 1787 to 1803 period, see Brady, "The Slave Trade and Sectionalism", *passim*.

from 1787 to 1803. By 1803, however, the balance of the state's economic interests had changed; and the demand for slaves both by her up-country short-staple planters and her sea-island cotton planters was such that prohibitions on both Atlantic and domestic slave trade importations were lifted. It is probable that bans which occurred in the 1775 to 1820 period in certain other net importing states - in Kentucky, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Georgia that is - were motivated in part at least by a desire to impose curbs on the considerable outflow of funds which the purchasing of slaves from traders involved.

## II(ii)

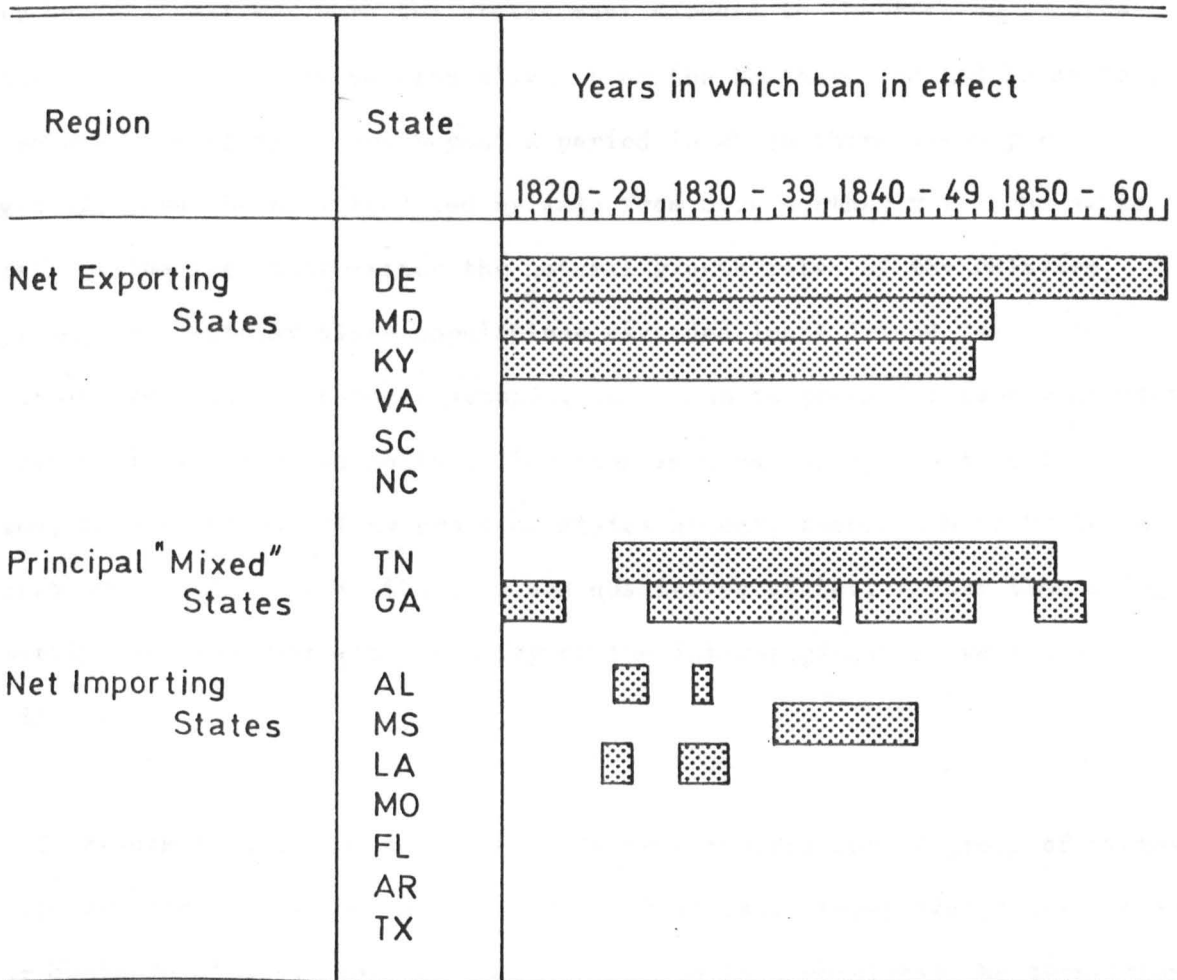
For the period 1820 to 1860, the period with which the present study is directly concerned, Figure 6.1 summarises the prohibitions of inter-state slave trade importations which, from time to time, were in force in individual Southern states.<sup>27</sup> It should be noted that as well as the slave trade prohibitions represented in this figure, most states, for reasons of security, passed legislation which was specifically designed to prevent the importation of convicted criminal slaves. The discussion below is concerned with general slave trade prohibitions rather than with prohibitions which related only to the importation of convicted slaves. In Figure 6.1, the Southern states have been divided into three categories - that is to say the net exporting states; the principal "mixed states"; and the net importing states. The adoption of these categories will be helpful in assessing the attitudes of Southern states towards prohibitions of the inter-regional trade in slaves.

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27. On Kentucky's legislation on the trade, an omission in Collins, The Domestic Slave Trade (pp.133-5) is corrected by reference to Coleman, Slavery Times in Kentucky (pp.149, 155, 159). On Georgia, an omission in Flanders, Plantation Slavery in Georgia (pp.183-5) is corrected by reference to Hurd, The Law (II, pp.101-3, 108) and to Collins (pp.118-20). On Alabama, an omission in Sellers, Slavery in Alabama (pp.172-94) is corrected by references both Hurd (II, p.151) and Collins (p.132). Figure 6.1 corrects several inaccuracies in Stamp, Peculiar Institution (p.253).



Figure 6.1 PROHIBITIONS OF DOMESTIC SLAVE TRADE IMPORTATIONS: THE SOUTHERN STATES, 1820-1860.



Indicates years in which state laws declared trade importations to be illegal.

In the first group of states, those which were consistently net exporters of slaves throughout the 1820 to 1860 period, extended bans were in force in Delaware, Maryland and Kentucky; while Virginia and the Carolinas, the remaining states in the group, did not, in the 1820 to 1860 period, impose bans on domestic slave trade importations. The explanation of the origins of the Delaware, Maryland, and Kentucky bans - bans dating from the late eighteenth century - has already been suggested. Those states, because of their border location, were the states most exposed to the risk of importations of potentially subversive slaves from the Northern and Middle states. The maintenance of the bans beyond a period in which there was any real danger of slaves being introduced by sale from more northerly regions seems to reflect the fact that - since the natural growth rates of the Delaware, Maryland, and Kentucky slave populations exceeded local demand for slave labour - there was, on economic grounds, no reason to press for repeal of what had become legislative anomalies. The bans imposed during the 1820 to 1860 period, in the net exporting group of states appear, then, to have reflected concern over conditions in the free and quasi-free states, rather than being primarily concerned with the morality of the inter-regional slave trade of the South.

In Figure 6.1, Tennessee and Georgia comprise the second group of states and are referred to as the principal "mixed" states. These two states, unlike other Southern states, over the 1820 to 1860 period, completed the transition from being net importers of slaves to being net exporters. Over the period from 1820 to 1849 both Tennessee and Georgia were net importers, while during the 1850s both were net exporters.<sup>28</sup> Despite being predominantly net importers, however, Tennessee, for the 1827 to 1853 period, and Georgia, for most of the 1820 to 1855 period, officially prohibited slave trade

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28. See Table 2.10.

importations. Tennessee's ban, introduced in 1827, seems to have been precipitated by the depression which began in 1826.<sup>29</sup> The extended nature of Tennessee's ban and that of Georgia appears, however, to have stemmed from the particular mixture of slave importing and slave exporting interests which was found in those states during the 1820 to 1860 period.

By the 1820s there was, in Georgia, an approximate parity between the numbers of exporting and importing counties, with exporting counties being located in coastal and east-central Georgia, and being bordered on the west by a band of importing counties. In succeeding decades the number of exporting counties steadily increased, but this increase was to a large extent counter-balanced by numbers of importing counties which were carved out of previously unsettled lands. The balance of political representation seems, over the whole 1820 to 1860 period, to have favoured the exporting areas. A somewhat similar development took place in Tennessee. In the 1820s substantial exporting areas had existed in north-central and in eastern Tennessee. By the 1830s, all but the western third of the state was made up of exporting counties. In the 1820s, despite the heavier representation of old-established, more populous counties, the advantage of political representation was, in Tennessee, probably with the importing counties; but by the 1830s the advantage was with the exporting sector. In both Tennessee and Georgia, the interests of net importing and net exporting counties combined in such a way that, while importations generally had a predominating effect on slave demography, net exporting counties generally predominated in representation at state legislatures. The superior political weight of the exporting areas seems to explain why these states, although net importers of slaves for all but the last decade of the 1820 to 1860 period, nevertheless, for most of that 1820 to 1860

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29. Figure 7.1, by plotting staple and slave prices, indicates the general trends in the business cycle of the South during the 1820 to 1860 period. On the relationship between the 1826 depression and slave trade prohibitions, see the discussion below on bans in Alabama (1827-1828) and Louisiana (1826-1828).

period, officially prohibited slave traders' importations.<sup>30</sup>

It will be seen that Tennessee and Georgia's legislation against slave trade importations had little practical effect. Nevertheless, the exporting counties of these states had several cogent reasons for attempting to stem the flow of slaves into the importing sections of their states. By discouraging the importation of slaves across state lines and into the newly developing counties, the net exporting section of a state might hope to hold back the perhaps reckless expansion of an agricultural rival; or, from a somewhat different standpoint, might hope by limiting the supply of slaves to enhance the value of their own bondsmen. The exporting counties - areas whose economic interests were not served by slave trade importations, and areas in which black-white population ratios were generally high - tended to view with alarm uncontrolled slave trade importations which would increase the black presence in their state, and which seemed to undermine the strength of slaveholding interests in net exporting states like Delaware and Maryland.<sup>31</sup>

Some of the anxieties of opponents of slave trade importations were expressed in a letter which, in December 1821, appeared in the Milledgeville Journal - a newspaper published in one of Georgia's net exporting counties. The letter urged that Georgia should not relax her prohibition of slave trade importation, for

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30. The importing or exporting status of a particular county has been determined by comparing the decennial growth rates of the slave populations of individual counties with the growth rates of the U.S. slave population over those same years. On political representation in Tennessee and Georgia counties, see C.S.Sydnor, The Development of Southern Sectionalism, 1819-1848 ([Baton Rouge], 1948), pp.45-7 in volume V of the series W.H.Stephenson and E.M.Coulter (eds.), A History of the South ([Baton Rouge] Louisiana State University Press and Littlefield Fund, 1948- ).

31. A somewhat similar intra-state clash of interest was already found in South Carolina in the 1787 to 1808 period. See Brady, "The Slave Trade and Sectionalism in South Carolina", *passim*.

Everyone knows that the speculators would constantly introduce into the state the dregs of the coloured population of the states to the north of us;...and the jails of North and South Carolina, Maryland, and Virginia would be disgorged upon this deluded state.

Furthermore, it was argued, free Negroes from the North and elsewhere would be kidnapped and sold into Georgia. The trade, it was maintained, would undermine slavery in the Upper South; and in this situation, the correspondent continued, the future of American slavery would be thrown into doubt, with the black population presenting a massive threat to the well-being of white society. Somewhat similar considerations of security, together with factors of economic self-interest, were referred to by Judge Benning of the Georgia Supreme Court. In 1855, Benning, attempting to explain the motives for his state's slave trade prohibitions, argued.

The main reason for the enactment was, I think, a fear that this traffic, if permitted, would in the end, empty the more northerly of the slave states of their slaves, and thus convert those states from friends and allies into enemies and assailants. The chief reason was, I think, not at all to promote abolition in this State, but to prevent abolition in other States. Another reason was, no doubt, a disposition to keep the proportion of the free population to the slave from being materially changed. And avarice probably had some degree of influence - the avarice of slaveholders already in the state, the value of whose slaves would be diminished as the supply from abroad should be increased.

The motive of "avarice" was referred to, and, indeed, espoused by another Georgia Judge, Judge Floyd of the Bibb county Superior Court. In 1849, Floyd, speaking in Bibb county, a net exporting county, drew the Court's attention to the frequent violations of Georgia's slave trade prohibition, and pointed out that the large influx of slaves from Maryland, Virginia, and elsewhere had undermined the market value of Georgia's slaves and, at the same time, had increased the production of cotton, thereby tending to depress the price which that staple brought.<sup>32</sup>

It will be seen that in practice, despite the statutory prohibitions

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32. Letter of 1821 reproduced in Phillips, Plantation and Frontier, II, pp.67-70; Benning and Floyd cited in Flanders, Plantation Slavery in Georgia, pp.253, 184.

of the trade, the pressure for slave trade importations into the developing counties of Tennessee and Georgia proved irresistible. With Georgia, the resurgence of sea-island cotton production, in the 1850s, revived the demand for slaves in coastal areas of that state - areas which had long been net exporters of slaves. This resurgence probably helped to provide a legislative majority for the policy of repealing Georgia's slave trade prohibition. In addition, during the late 1840s and the 1850s the radical phase of the pro-slavery movement - a phase which tended to sweep away all that might be considered to imply criticism of the institution of slavery - launched a propagandist campaign to reopen the African slave trade and no doubt contributed in certain states towards the lifting of bans on domestic slave trade importation.<sup>33</sup>

The third of the group of states represented in Figure 6.1, that is to say the net importing states, represent the principal markets towards which the inter-regional slave trade of the 1820 to 1860 period was aimed. Of the several net importing states only Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi introduced prohibitions against the trade. Those prohibitions, arising out of exceptional circumstances, were generally short-lived. Domestic slave trade importations were prohibited in Alabama from 1827 until January 1829 and were again prohibited for much of 1832; in Louisiana the trade was prohibited from June 1826 until repeal in 1828 and was again prohibited from late 1831 until an act of repeal in 1834; while in Mississippi trade importations were unlawful from mid-1837 until early 1846. As in other states in the 1820 to 1860 period and in earlier decades, attitudes towards slave importations appear to have been determined according to considerations

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33. On the resurgence of sea-island cotton in Georgia, see Gray, History of Agriculture, II, pp.733-4. On the radical pro-slavery phase, see, for example, R.T.Takaki, A Pro-Slavery Crusade: The Agitation to Reopen the African Slave Trade (New York, 1971).

of economic self-interest and of security, rather than as a result of moral stances on the business of slave trading.

Alabama's prohibition of 1827 to January 1829 followed a period of very intensive slave importation. Censuses show that between 1820 and 1830 Alabama's slave population increased by over 180 per cent, with more than 50,000 slaves being imported. The prohibition of 1827 to 1829 was almost certainly a product of the depression which, after a period of soaring cotton prices, began in 1826 and continued for several years.<sup>34</sup> The principal aim of the prohibition seems to have been to encourage financial stability by curtailing the drain on Alabama's funds. In addition, the legislation probably sought, by restraining the expansion of Alabama's cotton production, to encourage an improvement in prices of the cotton staple. A prohibition of slave trade importations into Alabama was again imposed in January 1832 and was maintained almost throughout that year. This prohibition, like a ban introduced in Louisiana in 1831, appears to have been a result partly of the alarm created by the Nat Turner rebellion of August 1831, and partly of a continuation of the economic forces which had prompted the 1827 to 1829 ban.

No further prohibitions of domestic slave trade importations into Alabama were imposed after 1832. By the mid-1840s, however, substantial areas of the state had become net exporters of slaves and with this process the representatives of the net exporting counties began to caution - no doubt in much the same way as did similar interested groups in Tennessee and Georgia - against continued slave trade importations.<sup>35</sup> Several objections to domestic slave trade importations were advanced by the Kittrell committee, a body set up by the Alabama assembly in 1846 and given the task

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34. On importations, see Table 2.10.

35. For the 1850s, a subdivision of Alabama into importing and exporting counties is made in Figure 2.1.

of enquiring into the expediency of prohibiting domestic slave trade importations. Kittrell found that many Alabama counties did not require further slave importations; and his committee argued against the continued importation of slaves, many of whom, it was maintained, were criminals who caused unrest among Alabama's bondsmen. The committee argued that the expansion of slave-holdings, including those of non-resident planters, were forcing white smallholders to sell out and to move from Alabama. As a result, it was argued, the ratio of black to white Alabamians was rapidly increasing and with this increase there was, reportedly, a growing alarm over possible black insurrections. In 1849, three years after the Kittrell committee had made its report, S.A. Heydenfeldt, in an open letter to the State Governor, urged that slave importations into Alabama, whether by traders or planters, should be prohibited. He maintained that such a prohibition would enhance the value of slaves already held in that state; would stop the exodus of slaves from the Upper South and would thereby ensure that the institution of slavery was not undermined in that section; and would both encourage the diversification of Alabama's economy and stimulate white immigration into Alabama, thereby enhancing land values in the State. By 1852, Alabama's Governor Collier spoke out against the trade, arguing that slave importations both discouraged economic diversity, and, by increasing cotton production, undermined the price of the cotton staple. The criticisms advanced, in the 1840s and 1850s, against slave trade importations into Alabama represented a movement towards that alignment of interest groups which was formed in Tennessee and Kentucky in the 1820 to 1860 period. The relatively late establishment of slavery in Alabama meant, however, that the state's slave importing interests were able to predominate over slave exporting interests.<sup>36</sup>

The course of Louisiana's legislation on domestic slave trade prohibitions

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36. Information on the Kittrell committee, on Heydenfeldt, and on Collier is derived from Sellers, Slavery in Alabama, pp.178-91.



very closely resembled that of Alabama. In Louisiana, however, there seems, in the 1840s and 1850s, to have been no sustained criticism of slave importation. This sprang, no doubt, from the fact that even the longest established slave-holding areas of the state, because of the peculiar demography of sugar plantations, remained throughout the ante-bellum period net importers of slaves, rather than, as old-established slave-holding areas tended to do elsewhere in the South, becoming net exporters of slaves.<sup>37</sup>

In the depression which began in 1826, and which followed a period of intensive slave importation, Louisiana, like Alabama, imposed a ban on domestic slave trade importations. Louisiana's prohibition, directed, it seems, principally against the drain of funds from the state, was initially designed to operate for a period of two years; but, in 1828, was repealed some months before it had run its full term. As in Alabama, a further prohibition of slave importations followed the Nat Turner revolt of August 1831. Soon after the Turner revolt a special session of the Louisiana assembly was called and was warned by the State Governor of the threats posed by the importation of slaves who might be infected by the insurrectionary virus. Earlier in that year, the Governor had already warned of the alarming drain on funds which domestic slave trade importations imposed on the state. Louisiana, he informed the Assembly, annually purchased slaves "to the amount of \$2½ million, principally from the states of Maryland and Virginia". It was this drain on funds which the Virginia-New Orleans slave trader Paul Pascal considered to have been at the root of the 1831 prohibition. On 21 November 1831, Pascal informed his partner:

Quand je vous ais écrie dachette des negres est les envoyer les plus tôt possible on ne pouver sutendre aucune lois aussi injuste que celle que la législature a passer. Ils lont fait qu'à leur avantage et pour chasser de leur état les persons

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37. On the demography of sugar plantations, see chapters I and IX.

qu'il suppose qui emporte beaucoup de leur argent.<sup>38</sup>

Mississippi, a state which developed somewhat later than Alabama and Louisiana, imported something like 20,000 slaves in the 1820s, while in the 1830s over 100,000 slaves were imported. Censuses show that these importations represented, for the 1820s, a slave growth rate of slightly over 100 per cent; and, for the 1830s, a growth rate of almost 200 per cent. The considerable slave importations of the 1820 to 1825 period were followed, from 1826 to 1832, by a period of depression and relatively low slave prices. Concern over large out-pourings of money on slave purchases, coupled with alarm over the glutted cotton market, seem to have been responsible for the inclusion in the Mississippi state constitution of 1832 of a provision for the prohibition of domestic slave trade importations. The prohibition was to take effect from 1 May 1833. By 1833, however, a sudden and extremely vigorous upturn in cotton prices created in Mississippi an enormous revival in the demand for slaves. The Mississippi legislature, therefore, discarded any plans to bring the constitutional ban into effect, and failed to establish legal penalties for the infraction of the constitutional provision. Instead, the legislature, in December 1833, by slightly amending an act which imposed taxes upon the trade, recognised the legality of the traffic in slaves.<sup>39</sup>

Very clearly, the operation of economic self-interest was again at work when, in 1837, Mississippi, massively disturbed by the Panic which began in that year, passed legislation to prohibit domestic slave trade importations. From 1833 to 1836, in a period of enormous expansion, Mississippians had purchased huge numbers of slaves from traders. In 1837, with the collapse of Mississippi's prosperity - a collapse more dramatic than in almost any other state - the Mississippi legislature, drawing conveniently on the

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38. On Louisiana's legislation of 1826 and 1831, see Taylor, Negro Slavery in Louisiana, pp.39, 41-4; on the financial drain, see Gov. Dupre, cited in Stephenson, Isaac Franklin, p.74 n21; and see Pascal to Raux, 21 Nov. 1832, Pascal Papers (HLH).

39. On Mississippi's importations see Table 2.10, and on slave prices see Figure 7.1. For details on the Mississippi constitution provision and on the law of 1833, see Sydnor, Slavery in Mississippi, pp.163-4.

hitherto dormant provision of the 1832 constitution, declared that slave trade importations since May 1833 had been illegal.<sup>40</sup> Mississippi's 1837 prohibition of the trade therefore declared that notes arising from slave trade purchases of the 1833 to 1837 period were void. The Supreme Court of the United States rejected Mississippi's revival of the 1832 constitutional provision; but, with the Mississippi state courts supporting the state legislature, slave traders found it extremely difficult to collect money owed to them. Other importing states, whose slave populations had, in the 1830s, generally expanded at only a half or considerably less than a half of the rate experienced in Mississippi - and which had no convenient constitutional provision on which they could draw-did not, in the late 1830s, outlaw the trade.<sup>41</sup> Their reaction to the Panic, as a study of annual slave growth rates suggests, was simply to cut back slave importations until planting prospects improved.<sup>42</sup>

## II(iii)

In those areas which introduced prohibitions of the domestic slave trade the balance of factors tending towards the enactment of prohibitions varied with time and with locality. Consistently, however, policies of prohibition were determined, not by considerations relating to the morality of the traffic in slaves, but by considerations of security and economic self-

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40. On the impact of the Panic and depression in Mississippi, see Phillips, American Negro Slavery, p.372; and see R.C.McGrane, The Panic of 1837 (Chicago, 1924), pp.115-7. On Mississippi's policy of 1837, and on clashes with the Supreme Court of the United States, see Sydnor, Slavery in Mississippi, pp.164-71.

41. The single exception in this comparison of slave growth rates is Arkansas, which, in 1830, achieved statehood. According to Federal censuses, that state's slave population grew from 4,576 in 1830 to 19,935 in 1840, representing a growth rate of 336 per cent. It is very probable that at such an early stage of Arkansas's development much of the state's slave population would have been introduced as a result of plantation migration, with slave trade importation becoming a major part of the state's economy only in the 1840s when planters began to expand their operations.

42. See Figure 8.1, which plots the annual slave exportation rates of South Carolina for the years 1830 to 1859.

interest. At the source of the slave traffic, in the slave supplying states of the Upper South, only a few unimportant restrictions were imposed upon the exportation of slaves. Slave trade exportations brought an influx of funds into the exporting states and eased anxieties which arose in those states as a result of their high black-white population ratios. In no case, it seems, were exporting states prepared to deny themselves the advantages which arose from slave trade exportations. Such exportation restrictions as were imposed applied only to Delaware and Maryland. The Delaware legislation required that those exporting slaves should obtain an exportation licence; while the Maryland legislation required that those purchasing slaves for exportation should record their purchases with the authorities of the counties in which the slaves had been bought. The objects of the Maryland legislation, and almost certainly of the Delaware legislation too, were to discourage the kidnapping of free Negroes and the exportation and sale of those who were slaves for a period of years rather than for life.<sup>43</sup>

Southern critics of the trade often maintained that speculators introduced large numbers of criminal slaves into the Lower South. An examination of the question of the traffic in criminal slaves has, in Chapter IV, provided evidence which suggests that these critics very much exaggerated the criminal element which was present in trade importations. In some cases an exaggeration of the criminal slave element probably served as a convenient device for those who, essentially on economic grounds, were opposed to slave trade importations. It is likely that those genuinely concerned over importations of criminal slaves were anxious, not so much for the moral well-being of Lower South slaves, as for the security of the white population. Except for certain legislation in Louisiana, no enactments were made, either

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43. On Maryland's registration laws of 1810 and 1817, and on Delaware's registration laws of 1787, 1789, 1793, 1827 and 1829, see Collins, Domestic Slave Trade, pp.121-3, 125 and see Hurd, The Law, pp.21, 75-81. Phillips in American Negro Slavery (p.202) and Stampp in Peculiar Institution (p.252), wrongly it seems, assumed the Delaware legislation to have required a complete prohibition of slave trade exportations from that state.

in the importing or exporting states, which sought to combat those family separations which resulted from the inter-regional trade in slaves. The Louisiana legislation, introduced in 1829, merely required that, unless there was proof that the mother was dead, slave children of ten years of age and younger should not be imported and sold without their mother. The law did not condemn separations of husband and wife or separations involving children of eleven years and older. It will be seen that the Louisiana legislation was of limited practical significance since, in the inter-regional slave trade in general and in Louisiana in particular, there was relatively little demand for unattached children of ten years and younger.<sup>44</sup>

Had there been genuine and widespread condemnation of the trade, severe legislative prohibition of slave trade importations and exportations would surely have been the norm. As it was, however, slave exporting states failed to restrain exportations; while the importing states Missouri, Florida, Arkansas, and Texas failed to restrict importations, and restrictions on importations into Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana were short-lived. Those prohibitions which were adopted by importing areas represented responses to temporary alarms: those prohibitions supported by exporting areas, rather than being disinterested condemnations of the traffic in slaves, generally reflected anxieties over developments in neighbouring areas.

### III

Evidence suggests that slave trade prohibitions were generally far from being watertight, but suggests that contraventions of the prohibitions imposed by the importing states Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi were a great deal less common than in the mixed states, Tennessee and Georgia. The short duration of the Alabama, Louisiana, and Mississippi prohibitions

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44. For the Louisiana act, see Collins, Domestic Slave Trade, p.127 and see Taylor, Slavery in Louisiana, pp.40-1. On child sales and on family separations, see Chapter IX, below.

militated against the development of evasions by traders. Probably more important was the fact that the prohibitions in the three importing states listed coincided, and indeed were caused by, crises which themselves severely depressed demand for new slave purchases. In by far the longest of the prohibitions imposed in the three importing states, that is to say in the Mississippi prohibition of 1837 to 1846, enforcement appears to have been progressively more lax as recovery from the state's economic crisis progressed and as the demand for slaves increased. With the mixed states, Georgia and Tennessee, a different set of circumstances operated. The prohibitions had not arisen out of the desires of the importing counties of those states, but had been enacted in order to restrain the aspirations of those sections. In these mixed states, where prohibitions did not conform with the natural pattern of demand for slaves, enforcement as a result of the efforts of traders and the citizens of developing plantation areas, seems to have been impossible.

The Paul Pascal Papers document the reactions of one trading firm to the prohibition which was debated and introduced by Louisiana in 1831. Having received news that the Louisiana assembly was to meet to consider a prohibition of the trade, Pascal, based at New Orleans, urged his Virginia-based partner to send him as many slaves as possible so as to beat the probable importation deadline which a ban would impose. Pascal and his partner Raux were faced with a special problem since their purchases were made in and near Southampton county, the scene of Nat Turner's rebellion of August 1831. Traders importing slaves into Louisiana were, in 1831, required to describe their importations in lists which were to indicate the age, sex, and county of origin of the slaves concerned. Pascal therefore urged his partner that Southampton should not appear as the county of origin. On 24 December 1831, about a month after the Louisiana prohibition had come into force, Pascal told his partner: "Je n'ais pas encore découvert le mystère pour l'introduction des esclaves en contrebande." He added, however, that

demand was low and that slaves already in New Orleans were not selling. By 9 February 1832, Pascal advised his partner that the way to circumvent the law was to make it appear that any slaves sent were shipped, not for the purpose of general speculation, but to meet the specific order of a resident Louisiana planter for whom the trader merely acted as purchasing agent. The tightening of the Louisiana law made this practice difficult and in late February Pascal informed Raux that agents acting on behalf of Louisiana citizens were required to have been resident in that state for seven years. Pascal therefore expected that, with traders' importations into Louisiana difficult, planters would travel out to Virginia and elsewhere to make purchases. "Il est nécessaire pour leur culture", he observed. The Louisiana prohibition seems to have significantly affected the trading operations of the Pascal firm, so that in September 1832 Pascal tried the Natchez, Mississippi, market. Even there he found that the slackening of economic activity was damaging the Negro market. He considered, however, that heavy losses through a cholera epidemic would make it necessary for planters to make purchases.<sup>45</sup>

From the start, some traders were prepared to flout the Mississippi prohibition of 1837 to 1846. In May 1838, for example, J.R.Long of Mississippi urged his North Carolina associate to "bring all [the Negroes] you can get and I can sell them. The laws can take no hold on me." During at least the first years of the Mississippi ban, however, many of the traders who continued to supply the Mississippi market operated with caution. One such trader was Newton Boley who evaded the Mississippi prohibition by making sales across the Mississippi River in the state of Louisiana. Boley's advertisement which appeared in the Mississippi Free Trader and Natchez Gazette of 20 December 1838 announced that he had "NEGROES FOR SALE. The subscriber has for sale at Vidalia, La., opposite Natchez, between 70 and 80 Negroes". A similar practice was followed by the trader Rice C. Ballard who,

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45. Pascal to Raux, 29 Oct. and 24 Dec. 1831; 9 and 21 Feb., 14 Sept. 1832, Pascal Papers (HLH).

during the spring of 1840, stated to witness that he felt somewhat uneasy about the decision of the Supreme Court of Mississippi and proposed to...arrange [the sale of slaves] by passing the bill of sale in Louisiana.

According to Heydenfeldt who, in 1849, unsuccessfully pressed for a slave trade prohibition for Alabama, there had been very widespread abuse of the Mississippi prohibition, whose provisions had stated that no imported slave could within twelve months of importation be offered for resale. Instead of successfully deterring speculators, traders had, Heydenfeldt maintained, simply established plantations in Mississippi, stocked them with slaves, and, at the end of twelve months, sold the stock and replaced them with new slaves. This arrangement, Heydenfeldt argued, had brought great profits to the speculator.<sup>46</sup>

The William Long slave trading papers suggest that in the last years of the Mississippi prohibition, as demand for slaves increased, less and less attention was paid to legal restrictions on the trade. On 19 January 1846, Thomas Burton wrote from Mississippi to William Long, his trading associate:

As for the stop law the voice of Mississippi is for repeal and there is no doubt it will be [repealed]....There is no presumable danger in bringing negroes here. There is some in Vicksburg and...at Clinton.

A few days later Burton wrote from Monroe County, Mississippi:

William and Samuel Harper...are here at Wallington with a lot of negroes. They are doing nothing as well as myself. This county are full of negroes, they are at every village in the county.

From Burton's letter of 20 February 1846, written from Jasper County, Mississippi, it appears that in the winters of 1844-5 and 1845-6, both of which preceded the lifting of the slave trade prohibition, extensive trading had been done in Mississippi. Burton reported:

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46. Long to Long, 22 May 1838, Long Papers (NCA); Boley advertisement cited in Bancroft, Slave Trading, p.274n; testimony of J.M.Pelton, 11 Oct. 1841, Quitman Family Papers (SHC); Heydenfeldt cited in Sellers, Slavery in Alabama, p.185.



Times here are very dull indeed and negroes selling slow in consequence of the quantity in this county. There is double the quantity here that there were last winter and what is selling are for better prices. 47

Tennessee's geographical location was such that Kentucky traders who drove and shipped slaves to southern markets inevitably, on their way southward, passed through that state or plied the Mississippi river which formed the state's western boundary. Traders from western Virginia, and perhaps from more easterly Border state areas, supplemented the slave traffic which flowed through Tennessee.<sup>48</sup> Since the right of transit through Tennessee could not constitutionally be denied to traders, the influx of slaves was considerable.<sup>49</sup> The ready availability of slaves from "transient" speculators, together with western Tennessee's heavy demand for slaves, seem to have rendered unworkable the restrictions which Tennessee, from 1827 to 1855, sought to impose on slave trade purchases. In all states, the trader's right of transit must have very seriously hampered any attempts to restrict the trade; but in the case of Tennessee, served by the Mississippi, a major channel of the trade, the right of passage permitted the emergence of Memphis as a leading slave trading centre. Major trading firms, no doubt under the pretence that they sold exclusively to traders and planters who would carry slaves to more southerly states; established themselves at Memphis; and in the city's newspapers openly advertised that they kept on hand a constant supply of Virginian and other out-of-state slaves.<sup>50</sup> Memphis, well situated as an important entrepot for the lower Mississippi trade, was also ideally situated for playing its part in illegally supplying western Tennessee's demand for slaves.

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47. Burton to Long, 19 and 24 Jan., 20 Feb. 1846, Long Papers (NCA)

48. One firm active in western Virginia and transporting their slaves through Tennessee to Southern markets was that of Logan, Meek, and associates. See Negro Collection (AU).

49. See Phillips, American Negro Slavery, p.203 and Bancroft, Slave Trading, p.273, for comments on this constitutional situation.

50. For such advertisements, relating to the '30s, '40s and early '50s, see Mooney, Slavery in Tennessee, pp.46-52 and Bancroft, Slave Trading, pp.258, 274.

Georgia's long-standing slave importation prohibitions encouraged the establishment, in neighbouring South Carolina, of various slave supplying practices. From the early 1830s the South Carolina village of Hamburg - situated on the South Carolina Railroad by a bridge which carried traffic over the Savannah River and into Georgia - became an important depot for supplying Georgia with slaves. During the early 1830s Joseph Wood, "a gentleman dealing in slaves", advertised that he had "on hand [at Hamburg] a likely parcel of Virginia Negroes" and that he received "new supplies every 15 days". In September 1838, Benjamin Davis advertised in Hamburg that he had just arrived from Petersburg, Virginia, with 120 slaves for sale to planters and traders; and in November 1840 T. Goldsmith, based at Hamburg advertised in a local paper and in Georgia's Augusta Constitution that he had a stock of Virginia Negroes for sale. Passing through Hamburg in 1839, the British visitor J.S. Buckingham observed that Hamburg had two depots to which Virginia Negroes were brought for the purposes of sale to traders; those traders carrying the slaves to Georgia and the South-West. Charleston, too, was an entrepot for the Georgia trade. In 1847, petitioners to the South Carolina Senate complained that since Georgia prohibited the introduction of slaves for speculation:

This state [South Carolina] and the city of Charleston in particular, have become a common place of meeting between the slave dealer from places north of us, and the purchaser south-west of us - that the motive of the slave dealer is not only to approach as near as he can to his buyer, but to remove the slave as far from his old range, and from notorious bad characters as possible. That while on sale here many vicious slaves are palmed upon careless and confiding citizens among us, and their mixture with our own has a sensible [significant] influence upon the docility and usefulness of our own slaves.

Several years later, in 1856, the Charleston City Council made similar reference to the Georgia prohibition whose effect had been "to make Charleston a mart for the sale of slaves drawn from states lying to the north of us". The Council considered, however, that a substantial city tax imposed on this aspect of the trade was lessening the nuisance created by these traders.

Criticism of this particular traffic sprang from the fact that while it afforded little or not direct advantage to the South Carolina economy it at the same time seemed to endanger slave discipline.<sup>51</sup>

Numerous traders, operating within Georgia's boundaries, established contacts with Georgia clients and, in order to comply with the letter of Georgia's prohibition, removed to South Carolina for the purposes of executing bills of sale for the slaves concerned. One firm with convenient facilities for this practice was the Savannah, Georgia, company of Wylly & Montmollin. Their trade notice ran:

Beaufort district, South Carolina, March 1853.

Having opened in the Union Ferry Road (Dr. Scriven's) opposite Savannah, Georgia... a Slave Depot for the purpose of buying and selling Negroes and Real Estates, [we] would inform the public generally that... [we] will have constantly at said depot, Negroes of all descriptions for sale, and at the same time are prepared to purchase, for highest cash prices, Negroes, either singly, in families, or gangs, having numerous orders to fill.

We will also buy and sell on Commission, and having a similar establishment at Savannah, will afford our friends many advantages.

Another Savannah firm following this practice was that of Wright & Company.

In January 1854, Wright wrote to the Charleston dealer, Ziba B. Oakes:

I will take the woman and try to sell her for you. It is against the law to sell negroes into the state but as we are on the boundary line I can take her across the River and make titles.

A few months later, in October 1854, Wright urged Oakes to keep him informed as to the Charleston market and to send him some slaves as, he wrote, "I intend to cross the [Savannah] river to make titles from another stall this season - it being done here frequently". According to the editor of the Savannah Republican, Georgia's prohibition was

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51. Wood advertisement cited in Jay, A View, p.78; Davies cited in Rev. W. Goodell, The American Slave Code in Theory and Practice; its Distinctive Features shown by its Statutes, Judicial Decision, and Illustrative Facts (London, 1853), p.40; The Edgefield Advertiser (SC), 26 Nov. 1840; Buckingham, The Slave States, I, pp.170; Petition to Senate of South Carolina by certain citizens, 1847, in Slavery: Loose legislative Papers, Box 4 (SCA); Proceedings of Charleston City Council, reported in Charleston Courier, 10 Jan. 1856.

constantly evaded by corrupt speculators, and hundreds of negroes are annually introduced and sold. It is a practice among these speculators, after having agreed with their several purchasers upon the price to be paid, to take the Rail-road or stage to the nearest point in Alabama or South Carolina, and there make out and sign their bills of sale....All this is a corrupt violation of the law. 52

Numerous firms had long-established connections with the Georgia market.

The Anderson district, South Carolina, traders Amaziah Cobb and his father Henry Cobb had been involved in the Georgia trade for some years when in 1836, upon Henry Cobb's retirement, Amaziah

went to the North, purchased Negroes, brought them to the South and sold them in the state of Georgia and in this state [South Carolina], realising a considerable profit.

Amaziah, in partnership with Elijah Pepper, continued, with somewhat less success, to trade during the 1837 to 1839 period. At about the same time, another Anderson district firm, Seaborn, Cobb & Daniels, was -apparently without direct links with Pepper & Cobb - active in the trade. In the difficult trading year, 1837, T.Harrison, who appears to have been a speculator, wrote:

Major Seaborn has just returned [to South Carolina] from Alabama. He took negroes to sell there, and had to bring them back to Georgia where he disposed of most of them. It is getting to be an uncertain business....I'm afraid the Cobbs and Daniels will break up Seaborn. They have been trading in negroes for several years together, Seaborn furnishing the means and they pocketing the profits.

Many years later, however, in the 1850s, George Seaborn, apparently the same "Major Seaborn", was still in association with the Cobbs, and had important links with the Georgia market. In the winter of 1852-3, Jesse Cobb, a junior partner, purchased Negroes who "were to be taken to Georgia, and title made there by somebody". After purchasing, "Jesse Cobb went with the Negroes...[to Georgia?]....E.M.Cobb and Seaborn [already] had 15 or 20 Negroes

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52. Printed trade notice with, on reverse, letter from Wylly & Montmollin to Oakes, 7 July 1853, also Wright to Oakes, 24 Jan. and 10 Oct. 1854, Oakes papers (BPL); Savannah Republican cited in Stamp, Peculiar Institution, p.256.

there at [the] time". A court case established that in 1859, after the Georgia prohibition had been lifted, the Cobbs had "a depot for slaves, in Carnesville, Georgia, kept by one Reynolds." It is possible that during Georgia's trade prohibition period "titles had been made" at such a depot by a resident Georgian and that the Cobb and Seaborn slaves had been, for legal purposes, represented as having been local Georgian slaves.<sup>53</sup>

The records of the North Carolina-based traders Badgett & Glass provide another example of the evasion of Georgia's prohibitions. In November 1847, J. and J.D.Glass reported from Georgia on that season's illicit trip:

We are too late this season. We don't know where to go to sell. All trade seems to have stop[ped] in a measure.... Alford is here and only sold one girl....Bracken is here. He has sold some 10 or 12 negroes all before we came.

Two months later, J.D.Glass reported from Covington, Georgia, that he still had 14 Negroes unsold; but added that he had decided against moving to a different part of the state since, he said, "I have seen several traders and our prices is better than they are." Clearly Badgett & Glass were far from being without rivals in their section of the Georgia market. In December 1849, Henry Badgett wrote from Putnam county, Georgia, informing his wife and children:

We are doing a very fair business in the way of selling [having sold 21 at good prices]...so you can see that we shall make a very good trip if we have [no] bad luck.

Badgett added: "The law prohibiting the selling of slaves" - a law which he had for several years ignored - is now "repealed so that we are now in a free county running no risk of being troubled about selling".<sup>54</sup>

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53. Testimony of A.B.Cobb, Anderson district Equity Court (SC), *Pepper v. Cobb*, 1839, Bill 91 (SCA); Harrison to Harrison, 6 Mar. 1837, James Thomas Harrison Papers (SHC); testimonies of S.Reid, J.Pike, and S.D.Berry, Anderson district Equity Court (SC), *Campbell et al. v. Cobb et al.*, 1854, Bill 202 (SCA); *South Carolina Reports*, *Fountain v. Bryce*, 12 Rich.Eq. 234.

54. Glass to Badgett, 25 Nov. 1847 and 12 Jan. 1848; Badgett to Badgett, 19 Dec. 1849, Badgett Papers (NCA).

In situations where speculation in slaves was illegal, the law sometimes significantly modified traders' selling practices. Essentially, however, the trade, in "free" areas and elsewhere, responded not to legal enactments but to the level of demand for slaves. In practice, therefore, the trader's access to the expanding agricultural areas of the South was never, for more than the briefest of periods, effectively denied.

## CHAPTER VII

### SLAVE SELLING IN THE LOWER SOUTH

Having introduced his merchandise into the markets of the Lower South, the slave monger began what was for him a sometimes anxious and usually rather lengthy period of slave selling. The trader's descanting on the virtues of his gang, and the careful assessment of that property by planters and others, would decide the fate of the slaves concerned. For the present, however, attention will be directed not so much towards the slave's experience in the markets of the Lower South as towards the trader's experience and towards the business practices, problems, and profits of the trade in that region. Later chapters, in Part III, will consider the impact of these sales upon the slave population.

#### I

Speculators were very much interested in the state of trading competition in the various markets of the Lower South. Their letters, therefore, routinely contain references to the numbers of traders active in particular markets; and on several occasions provide specific and probably rather well-informed estimates of the volume of stock on hand at individual markets. From these letters and from other sources there can be little doubt that in most seasons New Orleans was the most important of the urban markets of the Lower South. Information on the New Orleans market was contained in a letter dated 16 January 1834 and sent from that city to the trader Isaac Jarratt. The letter explained that some sales had been made in the very early part of the season, but reported:

For the last month or six weeks there have been very few sales....There is traders who has been in for a month or six weeks and not sold the first negro. I cannot say as to the number of negroes in the market though am of the

opinion there is 12-1500 and upwards, and small lots constantly coming in.

The season's sales at New Orleans were very probably substantially in excess of 1500 slaves. Some years later, in February 1842, the Baton Rouge Gazette reported that "Negro men without fault" were selling at New Orleans for \$1100 and that, after several weeks' sales, there were some 1000 Negroes for sale in the city. Far from complete files of ships' manifests directly record that during the 1840s, generally years of relatively slack trading, speculators brought to New Orleans, by the coastal trade alone, an annual average of over 1000 slaves. Since many manifests have now been lost to the historian, and since very large numbers of slaves were brought to New Orleans by the Mississippi and Ohio river routes and by overland routes, the total volume of the New Orleans trade would no doubt have been very much greater than that suggested by extant coastal manifests. In late December 1859, shortly before the New Orleans season opened in earnest, the trader Phillip Thomas, after a visit to that city, reported the market particularly well stocked. "I find about 3000 negroes in the [New Orleans] market and none selling", he wrote.<sup>1</sup>

After New Orleans, Natchez was one of the most important of the urban markets in the importing states. In December 1832, during a season when the trade in general was beginning to pick up after a number of slack years, and when, as a result of Louisiana's prohibition of the trade, some speculators had been diverted to Mississippi; the trader Paul Pascal estimated that the season's sales at Natchez had already amounted to "apeupres 1000 negres", and reported that many slaves were still on the market in that city. In December 1834, with Louisiana's slave trade restrictions lifted, there were far fewer slaves at Natchez than there had been in December 1832. "There is not

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1. Jarvis to Jarratt, 16 Jan. 1834, Jarratt-Purveyer Papers (DU); Gazette, cited in Taylor, Slavery in Louisiana, p. 53; on manifests, see Table 1.1; on the scale of trading in the 1840s compared with the 1820 to 1860 period generally, see discussion of Figures 7.1 and 8.1; for Thomas's estimate, see Thomas to Finney, 26 Dec. 1859, Finney Papers (DU).



many at this place for sale. Not more than between 2 and 300", the trader James A. Mitchell reported from Natchez on 10 December 1834. Over the season, however, it is probable that a great many more than 2 or 300 were sold at Natchez. In 1902, General William T. Martin, who fifty or so years earlier had been a Natchez lawyer specialising in breach of warranty cases arising out of the slave trade, told the historian Frederic Bancroft:

In some years there were three or four thousand slaves here [at Natchez]. I think that I have seen as many as 600 or 800 in the market at one time. There were usually four or five large traders at Natchez every winter. Each had from fifty to several hundred negroes, and most of them received fresh lots during the season. They brought their large gangs late in the fall and sold them out by May. 2

The urban slave markets of Alabama, though less important than New Orleans and perhaps less important than Natchez, handled a substantial traffic. At about the same time as he reported that the New Orleans market was stocked with about 3000 slaves, Phillip Thomas, in December 1859, estimated that there were 400 slaves for sale at Mobile. In mid-January Thomas reported that stocks at the Mobile market would be supplemented with "several large lots...next week". John C. Calhoun, Thomas's assistant, considered, however, that Montgomery was a far better market than Mobile. Calhoun, in January 1859, wrote of Mobile:

This market is as I expected to find it and as I have often told you - dull as hell and every man for his self. This is no place for outside traders. There are not near as many negroes sold here as in Montgomery and not for as good prices as in the Montgomery market.

The evidence of Frederic Bancroft's survey of slave traders' advertisements in Mobile and Montgomery newspapers suggests that, in the 1850s at least, the Montgomery market was, indeed, a good deal more important than that of Mobile. For the 1850s, Bancroft found almost no evidence of long-distance traders having been active at Mobile; but found that each season numerous traders advertised in Montgomery newspapers.<sup>3</sup>

2. Pascal to Raux, 19 Dec. 1832, Pascal Papers (HLH); Mitchell to Mitchell, 10 Dec. 1834, Reid Papers (UVA); Martin, cited in Bancroft, Slave Trading, pp. 304-5.
3. Thomas to Finney, 31 Dec. 1859, 14 Jan. 1860, and Calhoun to Finney, 12 Jan. 1860, Finney Papers (DU); Bancroft, Slave Trading, pp. 294-300.

Although in the major cities of the Lower South the slave trade was of very considerable importance, it was by no means only at those cities that traders offered their slaves for sale. A major section of the trading fraternity concentrated directly on small town and rural markets. The speculator Obediah Fields was one of this very numerous band, and during the 1820s concentrated his sales in the Greenville district and elsewhere in the then quite thinly settled South Carolina up-country. "Dr. Weatherly" was another such trader. During a selling trip in the winter of 1856, A.J. McElveen, trading at the village of Hainville, Alabama, reported: "Dr. Weatherly is here. He lives in his tents. He told me he sold ten negroes last week at fair prices. [As a means of finding customers] he is following the counties round attending the courts." In 1846, Peter Stokes, trading at Gainesville, a small settlement north-west of Demopolis, Alabama, informed a friend that "Warner [a speculator] got here a few days ago with 13. He made no stop at this place but went on into the hills." In the 1847 to 1849 period S.A. Browning concentrated his trading in the villages and countryside of north-eastern Louisiana and west-central Mississippi; while at about the same time James Graham was actively trading over a broad area of south-eastern Texas; and during the 1840s and 1850s the traders Glass & Badgett concentrated their sales in the small towns and countryside of north-eastern Georgia. In the 1845-6 season, the speculator T.W. Burton found the rural and small town markets in Mississippi and Alabama to be crammed with slaves. From Loundes county, Mississippi, he reported: "There is a vast quantity of negroes in the market and traders are holding them high." In neighbouring Monroe county he found that traders were offering negroes "at every village in the country" and the area was "full of negroes". Having moved to Alabama, Burton and his assistant, J.D. Long, found that "there is negroes [offered by traders] all through the state". The very numerous groups of traders who concentrated on rural and small town markets periodically made short expeditions from one county to the next. As Chief Justice Chilton of Alabama explained in reviewing the difficulties involved in

taxing traders who were active in his state: "A slave merchant or trader may engage in this business without being located in any particular county. He is often migratory with his slaves", selling in several different counties.<sup>4</sup>

## II

Prior to sale, slaves traded in the urban centres of the Lower South were sometimes housed in a depot owned by the trader concerned, but, more commonly, were placed in a commercially run slave pen which combined the functions of private jail and show-room. An advertisement which appeared in the New Orleans Daily Crescent, as well as in the newspapers of Charleston and Virginia, is fairly typical of a large number of newspaper items relating to these slave pens. The Charleston Mercury advertisement of 2 January 1860 announced:

C.F.Hatcher, 195 Gravier Street, New Orleans, Louisiana.  
Liberal advances made on property placed in my hands for sale. Slaves, Texas, Mississippi and Louisiana lands for sale.

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Notice to Traders and Slaveholders.

Having built a large and commodious show-room, and otherwise improved my old stand, I am now prepared to accommodate over 200 Negroes for sale.

The owners can have comfortable rooms and board in the same premises at reasonable terms.

In New Orleans, slave pens and traders' "offices" proliferated and in the 1850s Gravier and Baronne Streets were dominated by the slave traffic, there being in 1854 no less than seven slave dealers in a single block on Gravier, and eleven in one square. In the St.Charles Hotel area there were numerous traders' "offices", and in 1854 Moreau Street housed a row of particularly commodious

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4. Fields to Fields, 29 Nov . 1822, etc., Fields Papers (DU); McElveen to Oakes, 21 Oct.1856, Oakes Papers (BPL); Stokes to Hatchett, 11 Mar.1846, William Haney Hatchett Papers (DU); on Browning see series of letters in Boyd Papers (DU); Houston to Houston, winter 1850, James Graham Papers (DU); on Glass & Badgett, see Chapter VI, and see letters of 1847-53 and 12 Feb.1860, Badgett Papers (NCA); Burton to Long, 16 and 24 Jan., 9 Mar. 1846, Long Papers (NCA); Chilton, cited in Sellers, Slavery in Alabama, pp.154-5.

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The slave housing and selling arrangements of W.S.Campbell, a prominent New Orleans trader, while especially advantageous, were exceptional and were a result of his very extensive involvement in the trading business. His purchasing activity, through his partner B.M.Campbell, has already been commented on in Chapter V. Walter Campbell's advertisement of 29 September 1860 announced to the subscribers of the New Orleans Picayune:

Negroes for sale at all times.

From this time until the fall trade opens in New Orleans, planters can purchase negroes by visiting my farm, 5 miles from Osyka, Mississippi, on the New Orleans and Jackson Railroad, where I will have a large body of choice hands for sale.

About three months later, in the New Orleans Daily True Delta of 14 December 1860, W.S.Campbell announced:

Sale of Negroes. Over 100 Negroes were brought in last night from my farm within 80 miles of the city, and are for sale. A large number of them have been on the place for the last year and longer, and all passed the last summer. Virginia and Maryland Negroes, with this advantage of acclimation and trained to plantation labour, offer special inducements to purchases.

The use of this conveniently located plantation made it possible, prior to sales, to accommodate slaves cheaply and even profitably; and allowed the Campbells to prepare slaves for the market, to adjust slave supplies to the fluctuations of demand, and to avoid New Orleans at times when disease epidemics raged in that city.

When offering slaves for sale, traders tried, of course, to ensure that their stock was displayed to the best advantage. A somewhat unusual aspect of preparing slaves for the market appears in the narrative of William Wells Brown, a slave who for a year served as the hired assistant of a trader named Walker. Describing a lot of slaves bought in Missouri and shipped to market down the Mississippi, Brown wrote:

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5. R.C.Wade, Slavery in the Cities: The South, 1820-1860 (New York, 1964), p.199. For a general account of slave pens at New Orleans and elsewhere, see Wade, pp.187-206.

There was in this lot a number of old men and women, some of them with grey locks....On my way down [the Mississippi River] ...I had to prepare the old slaves for market. I was ordered to have the old men's whiskers shaved off, and the grey hairs plucked out where they were not too numerous, in which case we had a preparation of blacking to colour it, and with a blacking brush we put it on. This was new business to me, and was performed in a room where the passengers could not see us. These slaves were also taught how old they were by Mr.Walker, and often after going through the blacking process they would look ten or fifteen years younger; and I am sure that some of those who purchased slaves of Mr.Walker were deadfully cheated, especially in the ages of the slaves which they bought. 6

Traders did, no doubt, try to make their slaves appear as "young and likely" as possible; but the age distribution of the slaves described in correspondence between traders and described in traders' business accounts - that is to say in letters and accounts not seen by customers - suggests that the palming off of "old men and women...with grey locks" was not a routine feature of the trade.

A more typical account of the preparation of slaves for sale is presented by the former slave Soloman Northrup. In his narrative, Northrup described his experiences when, in the 1840s, after being shipped from Norfolk, Virginia, he was offered for sale at New Orleans. Northrup recalled:

In the first place [the trader, Freeman]...required [us] to wash thoroughly, and those with beards to shave. We were then furnished with a new suit each, cheap but clean. The men had hat, coat, shirt, pants and shoes; the women frocks of calico and handkerchiefs to bind about their heads. We were now conducted into a large room in the front part of the building to which the yard was attached, in order to be properly trained, before the admission of customers. The men were arranged on one side of the room, the women on the other. the tallest was placed at the head of the row, then the next tallest, and so on in order of their respective heights.... Freeman charged us to remember our places; exhorted us to appear smart and lively.... During the day he exercised us in the art of 'looking smart', and of moving to our places with exact precision....Next day customers called to examine Freeman's 'new lot'. The latter gentleman was very loquacious, dwelling at much length upon our several good points and qualities. He would make us hold up our heads, walk briskly back and forth, while customers would feel of our hands and arms and bodies, turn us about, ask us what we could do, make us open our mouths and show our teeth....Sometimes a man or woman was taken back to the small house in the yard, stripped and inspected more minutely. Scars upon a slave's back were considered evidence of a rebellious or unruly spirit, and hurt his sale.

A very similar description of the equipping of slaves and their forming up in carefully arranged lines for display to customers was given by J.H.Ingraham after his visit, in the 1830s, to a slave pen at the "Fork in the Roads" near Natchez.

Entering through a wide gate into a narrow court-yard, partially enclosed by low buildings, a scene of a novel character was at once presented [Ingraham wrote]. A line of [male slaves]...,commencing at the entrance with the tallest...down to a little fellow about ten years of age, extended in a semicircle around the right side of the yard.... Each was dressed in the usual uniform of slaves when in the market, consisting of a fashionably shaped, black fur hat, roundabout and trousers of course corduroy velvet, precisely such as are worn by Irish labourers, when they first 'come over the water'; good vests, strong shoes, and white cotton shirts completed their equipment....Opposite to the line of males was...a line of females, extending along the left side of the court. They were...dressed in neat calico frocks, white aprons and capes, and fancy kerchiefs, tied...around their heads.

Most family separations appear to have occurred in the Upper rather than the Lower South phase of the trade. Nevertheless, the ranking of slaves according to height and sex no doubt helped to reduce the embarrassment of purchasers when further family separations were made.<sup>7</sup>

Some traders, although, since no mention is made of them in the correspondence of most traders, probably a minority of the trading fraternity, employed black or mulatto assistants. Some of the duties of William Wells Brown, Walker's slave assistant, have already been mentioned. The speculator James A.Mitchell also employed slave assistants, although possibly not in the supervision of his gang. After arriving in Natchez with a coffle of slaves, the trader reported: "Mariah Finney [a slave] cooks for me and can do smart if she will but she is uncertain and mulish at times. Washington waites on me and is the best I have ever seen." The narrative of the slave John Brown indicates that the foreman at a New Orleans slave pen was a mulatto who was

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7. Solomon Northrup, *Twelve Years a Slave: Narrative of Solomon Northrup, a Citizen of New York, Kidnapped in Washington City in 1841, and Rescued in 1853 from a Cotton Plantation Near the Red River, in Louisiana* (Auburn, 1853), pp.78-80; J.H.Ingraham, *The South-West, by a Yankee* (New York, 1835), pp.192-7. On family separations see Chapter IX of the present study.

allotted considerable power, and who had the task of preparing slaves for showing. In Alabama during the 1859-60 trading season, due to the negligence of Phillip Thomas's white assistant, it fell to the slave Ann to make the trader's gang ready for sale. Thomas complained of his assistant:

He has sold no negroes and does not see that they are ready for show in the morning but tells Jane to have it attended to....I told John [the assistant] that he must actually get up sooner, see them dressed and ready for show. 8

Another slave, Milo, owned by F.L.Whitehead, a Virginia-based trader, acted as assistant to Whitehead's partner, Lofftus, when the latter took a coffle of slaves to Natchez in 1836-7. In a letter written by Milo to his "Dear Master", the slave reported to Whitehead:

We have 19 of our pupils on hand...besides the last lot that came....The sales we have made is as good as any that was made this season, but we do not know when we may make sale of the balance. Everything was going well until the last lot [of our slaves] came in and they made a heap of difference.

Milo added that he had been stabbed - it appears by one of Lofftus's slaves - and that he had since been told not to have anything to do with the other slaves. "Mr.Lofftus", Milo wrote, "has said that he would not give me for any two white men". Milo, although acting as some sort of assistant to Lofftus, was, however, no totally submissive subject. In 1839, R.Rives wrote to Whitehead:

I am so afraid of the corrupting influence of Milo on my negroes that I have directed none of them shall see him and particularly that they shall not go to your plantation. It will require all the authority of both you and me to break up the connection which [whose break up] it is so much in our interest to effect. Notwithstanding my particular orders to the contrary I believe Mary, the wife of Milo, and her mother Clara may both see him. 9

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8. Mitchell to Mitchell, 10 Dec.1834, Reid Papers (UVA); L.A.Chamerovzow (ed.), Slave Life in Georgia: A Narrative of the Life, Sufferings, and Escape of John Brown, A Fugitive Slave Now in England (London, 1855), pp.111-3; Thomas to Finney, 19 and 22 Jan. 1860, Finney Papers (DU).
  9. Milo Morris to Whitehead, 14 Mar.1837 and Rives to Whitehead, 5 May 1839, Whitehead Papers (SHC).

In addition to his other duties as assistant to the trader Walker, it fell to William Wells Brown to see that slaves, when offered for sale, gave the appearance of being in good spirits. Brown recalled:

Before the slaves were exhibited for sale, they were dressed and driven out into the yard. Some were set to dancing, some to jumping, some to singing, and some to playing cards. This was done to make them appear cheerful and happy. My business was to see that they were placed in those situations before the arrival of the purchasers, and I have often set them to dancing when their cheeks were wet with tears.

The compliance of the slaves in the business of their profitable sale was also encouraged by small bribes from traders. A memorandum of the North Carolina trader Obediah Fields records:

It was understood that I should give the negroes a present if they would try to get homes and not do anything against the interest of their sales, and to Isaac I gave \$3; to Dick \$2; to Fan \$1; to Isabel \$2; Dick and Isaac a hat each and \$1 = \$2.

A similar system of rewards was followed by E.Lockett, a New Orleans trader.<sup>10</sup>

### III

For the Abolitionists, the symbol of the whole American slave regime was the public auction of slaves. Such auctions, both in the exporting and the importing states, very often arose when a planter became bankrupt and his property was levied upon; and arose when a probate sale followed the death of a slave-holder. Bankruptcies and planters' deaths, with the public sales which often resulted, did indeed, even on relatively humanely managed plantations, preclude any guarantee that slave families would not, at very short notice, be divided by sales. In the inter-regional slave trade, some dealers, like Vignie of New Orleans, regularly imported slaves and disposed of them at public auction.<sup>11</sup> The overwhelming majority of traders' sales in the

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10. Brown, Narrative, pp.17-8; memorandum of 11 Feb.1828, Fields Papers (DU); Lockett to Dickinson, 13 Feb. 1846, Chase Papers (AAS).

11. On Vignie, see Table 3.2 and see Chapter V.



Lower South must, however, have been effected, not at public auctions, but at private sales. Again and again, traders, in correspondence collections which provide documentation on slave selling in the importing states, instead of making mention of selling at auctions, referred to private negotiations with and private sales to the Southern customers. As correspondence collections conclusively show, traders like Mitchell, Finney, Pascal, and Glen, concentrating at important urban markets - and traders like Weatherly, Stokes, Browning, Houston, Fields, Badgett, and Burton, concentrating at rural and small town markets - did not, on arriving in the Lower South, quickly dispose of their slaves at public auctions. Instead, in order to extract the best possible prices for their slaves, they devoted a great deal of time to the contracting of private sales transactions.<sup>12</sup> Typically, in their correspondence, traders' from the Upper South, having arrived in the importing states in the late autumn, over a period of months, reported the sales of individual members of their slave gang, with the last sales not usually being made until the end of March or a little later. The slave selling advertisements of traders also reflected the practice of making private sales. Almost without exception, such advertisements either specified that sales would be made privately or - instead of indicating dates and times of sale, the routine practice when property was auctioned - were confined to enthusiastic reports on recent slave arrivals and promises of further importations "during the season".<sup>13</sup>

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12. For correspondence collections relating to the traders cited, see Mitchell Papers (DU); Finney Papers (DU); Pascal Papers (HLH); Glen Papers and Jarratt-Puryear Papers (DU); and see note 4 of the present chapter. On the protracted nature of slave selling, see also the discussion, later in the present chapter, of the trader's slave selling problems.
  13. See for example advertisements reproduced in Bancroft, Slave Trading, facing p.316.

In some cases, especially with domestic servants and those for whom special skills were claimed, slaves were lent out for trial periods so that the prospective buyer could assess the qualities of the slave concerned. Josiah S. Brown of New Orleans took advantage of this trial system and, before buying the slave Sandy, put him "with a good carpenter for a few days" to see what he was worth. The speculator Phillip Thomas reported that he had "got Henry out on trial at 1200": after the trial period the slave was sold, apparently to the same customer, for \$1150. N.C. Trowbridge, trading in Georgia in 1850, wrote of one of his slaves: "The girl Ann I let a gentleman in Burk Co. take for a day or two and he will give 800 if she pleases his wife"; and similarly the trader A. Gunn reported, in 1833, that he had a seamstress out on trial. In addition to putting slaves out on trial, traders sometimes, for one reason or another, engaged in swopping slaves. Peter Stokes, a speculator active in Alabama, in this way acquired a valuable slave who had been owned, somewhat precariously, by a local citizen. The trader wrote: "[Nathan] and Betsy I swopped for a girl and got \$90 [to] boot, and [I] got scared about [her] title and sent her to New Orleans". In 1850, N.C. Trowbridge informed his associate: "I exchanged your boy Patrick today and got a No. one boy 18 and 50 dolls. A fust rate swop." Quite numerous references to swopping occur in the business accounts of Obediah Fields and other traders.<sup>14</sup>

#### IV

Citizens of the Lower South normally bought from the trader in order to fill specific requirements and, in any one season, appear typically to have bought, for a single slave-holding, only a small number of slaves. Certainly,

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14. Brown to Oakes, 24 Nov. 1853, Oakes Papers (BPL); Thomas to Finney, 12 Jan. 1860, Finney Papers (DU); Trowbridge to Dickinson, 6 Apr. 1860, Dickinson Papers (CHS); Gunn to Totten, 23 Nov. 1833, Totten Papers (NCA); Stokes to Hatchett, 8 Feb. 1846, Hatchett Papers (DU); Trowbridge to Dickinson, 4 Mar. 1850, Dickinson Papers (CHS); Fields Papers, passim (DU).

out of any one consignment, the trader did not usually sell more than two or three slaves to the same customer. The historian W.H. Stephenson, who analysed records of Franklin & Armfield's sales in the Lower South, found that, from a given Franklin & Armfield consignment, 56 per cent of purchasers bought only one slave; 16 per cent bought 2; 12 per cent bought 3 or 4; 10 per cent bought 5 to 10; 4 per cent bought 11 to 20; and 2 per cent bought 21 to 29 slaves. Basically similar results, though with even less emphasis on purchases of more than 4 slaves, have been obtained by examining the sales records of the traders Templeman & Goodwin, Tyre Glen, and Paul Pascal. This latter sales pattern is reflected in the numerous trader's correspondence collections which have been drawn upon in the present study.<sup>15</sup>

The terms on which traders sold slaves tended to be very different from those which obtained at probate sales and at other judicial sales. In a sample of judicial sales examined in Chapter IV, something like 60 per cent of slaves were disposed of on terms of credit extending over at least 2 years, and a further 26 per cent were sold on at least 12 months' credit. The routine practice at such transactions was to secure purchases by a mortgage on the buyer's property and by endorsements given by two local persons of substance. Extended credit arrangements of this sort were generally not well suited to the trader's sales in the Lower South. Traders who visited the importing states in order to make their sales were only rarely in a position reliably to assess the credit worthiness of clients or of private individuals who might endorse those clients; and the resident traders of Lower South cities, since they sold to a very scattered clientele, were often in much the same position. The problems of making collections on sales which were effected on the basis of personal credit would have been compounded by the considerable scale of traders' sales. Additionally, extended personal credit sales tended to be disliked by traders since many, having financed

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15. Stephenson, Isaac Franklin, pp.86-93; Templeman & Goodwin Account Book (SHC); Glen Papers (DU); Pascal Papers (HLH).

their slave purchasing largely on borrowed capital, needed ready cash in order to pay off their trading loans.

For the reasons outlined, a wariness over sales on extended personal credit constitutes a recurring theme in the correspondence of traders. Typical of many trader's reports on selling conditions in the Lower South was that of S.A.Browning, who was active in rural Louisiana and Mississippi. "I could have sold all the property by taking say one half cash", he wrote, but "that wont suit as you know so I have to hold on." James A.Mitchell, in much the same vein, wrote from Mississippi: "There appears a good demand for them [slaves] but I cant get no money. They all want [to buy] on a credit and that dont suit me for I want cash." Similarly, W.S.Belser, frustrated by his inability quickly to effect satisfactory sales, reported that Montgomery, Alabama,

is a poor market for negroes unless you can sell on twelve months time and in that case fellows would command \$1100, but in my opinion there is no small amount of swindlers located here and [the] least a man has to do with them the better. 16

As a result of considerations of convenience, security, and economy there was, then, a strong tendency for traders to sell on terms of cash or short credit, or to sell in exchange for "good cashable paper". Such "paper" usually took the form of "approved city acceptances"; that is to say bills of exchange signed ("accepted") by the drawee and, in most cases, endorsed by an accepting house, a bank, or by a merchant house. Having been "accepted" the bill became negotiable; and with the endorser undertaking to make payment in case of the client's default, "approved city acceptances" were, at a reasonable discount, readily convertible into cash.

Payment by acceptances seems to have been of importance particularly with traders active in or near the major markets of the Lower South, that is at centres where arrangements with accepting houses, banks, and substantial

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16. Browning to Boyd, 24 Mar. 1849, Boyd Papers (DU); Mitchell to Mitchell, 10 Dec. 1834, Reid Papers (UVA); Belser to Belser, 2 Nov. (1849), letter given in evidence at Sumter district Equity Court (SC), Belser v. Belser, 1852, Bill 180 in new series (SCA).

merchants could most readily be made. In the advertisements of New Orleans traders reference to "cash or good city acceptances"- acceptances endorsed by members of the New Orleans business community -was very common indeed. The wording of advertisements which appeared in the New Orleans Picayune of 4 January 1860 was typical of a great many advertisements published in the newspapers of that city. On 4 January, C.F.Hatcher's slaves were offered "for cash or good city paper"; J.M.Wilson's were offered "low for cash, or on time for good city acceptances"; J.B.Smith's slaves were on sale "for cash or approved paper"; A.Wieseman's were offered "low for cash or approved city acceptances"; C.M. Rutherford's were to be sold "cheap for cash, or its equivalent"; H.F.Peterson's were offered "low for cash or good 12 month city acceptances"; and Joseph Bruin's slaves were for sale "on accommodating terms". The traders W.L.Campbell and R.H.Elam also had large numbers of slaves for sale at their depots, but their advertisements made no reference to the terms of sale which were to obtain.<sup>17</sup>

The records of the firms Franklin & Armfield, Pascal & Raux, and J.R. White provide valuable direct documentation of the terms on which many hundreds of slaves were sold at the New Orleans and Natchez markets. W.H. Stephenson, after examining the available sales records of Franklin & Armfield, traders active in both the New Orleans and Natchez markets, reported that 69 per cent of that firm's sales were wholly cash transactions. An examination of Pascal & Raux sales records for 1832 to 1834, sales made mainly at Natchez, indicates that 49 per cent of the slaves handled were sold for cash; and indicates that a further 20 per cent were sold, usually with about a fifty per cent down-payment, on a credit of 60 days or less. In addition, 14.5 per cent were disposed of on credit not exceeding 6 months, while the remaining 16.5 per cent were sold on credit of up to a year. Altogether, then, 85 per cent

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17. The Picayune advertisements of 4 Jan. 1860 are reproduced in Bancroft, Slave Trading, illustration facing p.316. The traders Finney & Thomas, active in the Mobile market, also made frequent reference to the use of acceptances. On cashing "90 or 60 day bills" before maturity and on acceptances generally, see Thomas to Finney, 20 and 24 Jan. 1859, 6 and 8 Oct. 1859, 31 Dec. 1859, 3 Jan. 1860, Finney Papers (DU). See also discussion of Finney & Thomas in Chapter IV.

of Pascal & Raux's sales involved either cash transactions or part-payment in cash combined with a credit of not more than 6 months. Several references to discounting "notes" received in payment for slaves suggest that the firm's "payments on time", in some cases, and indeed probably in many cases, took the form of acceptances. The accounts of J.R.White, a trader active in the New Orleans market, do not, on the question of terms of sale, provide information as detailed as that found in the Pascal & Raux records. Nevertheless, the White account book provides useful indications of the terms on which some one thousand slaves were sold; and it is clear that the overwhelming majority of slaves listed were sold either for cash or for acceptances endorsed by substantial city business establishments. With the White accounts, sales for approved acceptances were, in fact, somewhat more numerous than cash sales. In many cases, White, at a discount, cashed the acceptances before their maturity.<sup>18</sup>

It is possible that some trading firms were less rigorous in their selling practices than were the firms whose sales records have been cited; and it is possible that in times of unusual business confidence firms showed some relaxation in policy. The avoidance of any substantial commitment to extended personal credit sales seems, however, to have been a very widely accepted tenet of the trader's slave selling policy.

Traders' customers were sometimes able, from their own funds, to pay for small-scale slave purchases in cash or on the basis of cash and short credit. Probably a good deal more commonly, planters adjusted to the trader's preferred terms of sale by arrangements made with accepting houses or by the loans and credit endorsements of agricultural factors. These factorage firms, in order to establish and develop their clientage, and hence to foster their own commissions and profits, generally considered financial assistance to planters to be an integral part of their business activities; and at about the

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18. Stephenson, Isaac Franklin, p.86; Pascal & Raux sales accounts, covering Nov.1832 to Oct. 1834, and involving 118 slaves, Pascal Papers (HLH); J.R.White, Account Book, Chinn Collection (MHS).

time when crops began to come on to the market were often prepared to provide substantial support for slave purchases.<sup>19</sup>

V

Occasionally the trade was disturbed by major crises in American economic or political life. One such disturbance attended the financial panic which set in in April 1837. New Orleans prices for "prime" cotton - prices which in 1836 had stood at about 18 cents per pound, and which in January, February, and March 1837 stood consistently at 17 cents - in April suddenly slumped to 13 cents. In some markets the fall was even more pronounced; and in all American markets, except for a brief revival in 1838-9, low cotton prices were sustained in the late 1830s and early 1840s.<sup>20</sup> The depression which followed the speculative boom of the mid-1830s meant that for some time the planter's ability to pay for new slaves, and confidence in making new purchases, was considerably weakened. Overall, the result was a marked slackening in the pace of the slave trade; and in Mississippi where an act of 13 May 1837 repudiated debts incurred since 1833 and owed to out-of-state slave traders, the speculator's problems were especially severe.<sup>21</sup> The repudiation would particularly have affected the many thousands of slaves sold in the 1836-7 season on the basis of acceptances and short personal credit.

The exceptional political alarms during and immediately before the Civil War very markedly affected the traffic in slaves. In November 1859, as the sectional crisis mounted, the speculator Phillip Thomas was, however, confident about the prospects for the slave trade. He wrote from Virginia that there was a

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19. On the importance of loans in the business activities of factors, see R.E. Roeder, "Merchants in Ante-Bellum New Orleans", Explorations in Entrepreneurial History, X (1958), pp.113-22. See also Gray, History of Agriculture, II, p.713.

20. See statistical supplement in A.H.Cole, Wholesale Commodity Prices in the United States, 1700-1861 (Cambridge, Mass., 1938, 1969). For a summary of New York price quotations on "middling upland" cotton, see Figure 7.1, below.

21. On the slackening of the trade, see discussion of figures 7.18 and 8.1. On the Mississippi act, see Sydnor, Slavery in Mississippi, p.167.

good deal of talk about Harper's Ferry... [but] nobody cares a damn if the Union is dissolved. Everybody nearly wants to volunteer to go to fight, but no serious danger is apprehended. I have tendered the Governor the services of my company and so has all the volunteer companies....Tell the Southern people not to fear old Virginia any more....Virginia can whip the whole North herself.

With the Harper's Ferry incident, Thomas reported, "Negroes have fallen some in Richmond but it is only momentarily, say about \$100." By 3 December, Thomas was far more anxious.

Jack [he wrote] I look upon it as quite a critical time to be engaged in the Negro trade. Brown no doubt was hung yestidy but the others will not be till 16th, then I believe the whole thing will die away... [but] I am firmly of the opinion that times are growing worse and worse as fast as the moments flee and the sooner we get out of it the better...or at least say if our present lot was sold we then could wait till it became more settled. I do not mean to sell any how but I do mean that I would actually take \$25 net profit on the head if I could not do better. 22

As Appendix B shows, a recovery in slave prices took place in January 1860 and was maintained until the autumn, when a sharp decline began. On 9 November, a Betts & Gregory trade circular informed speculators: "The election excitement is very intense and doubtless is the cause of the extreme flatness and inactivity of the present and past state of the market. There has been nothing doing for the past 2 or 3 weeks." By 28 December, the Richmond dealers Dickinson & Hill were profoundly pessimistic about the trade, and advised that as a result of "political derangements" and the excessive economic "speculations and extravagancies of the last three years...we think for some years to come negroes will not command over \$1000 for best men and \$800 for best women." Such figures represented a decline of some \$500 compared with quotations for mid-1860. Despite a sharp decline in real prices the inter-regional slave trade did continue during the Civil War; although in many cases, as a result of the advances made by Union troops, traditional inter-regional price differentials were disturbed and the direction of the

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22. Thomas to Finney, 26 Nov. and 3 Dec. 1859, Finney Papers (DU).



flow of the trade was very much modified.<sup>23</sup>

Major economic panics and extreme sectional tensions represented exceptional problems for the trader. Somewhat more common were the problems and, indeed, the speculative opportunities brought by disease epidemics. In December 1848, S.A. Browning, trading at Millikin's Bend, Louisiana, reported that as a result of a cholera epidemic planters were not prepared to risk slave purchases. "I could sell if it was not for the excitement about the colria [cholera]. I hope it will blow over soon. If it does not the consequences may be bad", Browning wrote. At the start of the following season, the trader reported that as a result of the cholera epidemic "the planters has lost a great many negroes and have to replace them." A good trading season was therefore anticipated. Disease epidemics, apart from disturbing demand for slaves, sometimes depleted the traders stock; and it appears that at Natchez in 1833 Isaac Franklin "lost a great many with cholera" and "had buried 18 at one time". In an average season, however, as Chapter VI has shown, traders could confidently expect that very few if any of their slaves would die before being sold. At times of epidemics many traders took the precaution of vaccinating or insuring the slaves whom they purchased.<sup>24</sup>

The overall progress of slave sales in Lower South markets was determined by such factors as the level of staple prices; the state of the planter's purchasing power; and the number of slaves brought south. Traders constantly

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23. Betts & Gregory circular, Finney Papers (DU); Dickinson & Hill circular, Dickinson and Washington Papers (DU). For Civil War slave prices, both in inflated Confederate currency and in real value, and for a discussion of trading during the war, see B.I. Wiley, Southern Negroes, 1861-1865 (New Haven 1938, 1965), pp. 85-98. For speculators' correspondence on the trade in the Civil War period, see E.H. Stokes letters in Chase Papers (AAS).

24. Browning to Boyd, 26 Dec. 1848 and 22 Aug. 1849, Boyd Papers (DU). Comments on the opportunities created by epidemics also occur in Pascal to Raux, 14 Sept. 1832, Pascal Papers (HLH); and occur in Watkins to Watkins, 14 July 1833, Palmore Papers (UVA), a letter which discusses Franklin's losses. For examples of the vaccination and insurance of slaves during epidemics, see McElveen to Oakes, 6 and 7 Feb. 1854, Oakes Papers (BPL); and see Thomas to Finney, 24 and 30 Jan., 28 Nov. 1859, Finney Papers (DU).

studied the trends in slave prices which these variables produced; and as the season advanced weighed the possible advantages of holding out for high prices against the risks attendant on being caught up in the "closing out" of the trade, a period when a decline in prices usually set in. It will be seen that the profit margins of the slave traffic fluctuated considerably from period to period, so that at times of relatively tight profit margins the trader had particular reason carefully, and often anxiously, to appraise the trends in market prices.

The inconveniences and frustrations of the protracted business of slave selling were often reflected in correspondence between speculators. During the 1845-6 season, T.W.Burton found the Alabama market "glutted" with traders' gangs, and as a result "negroes...[were] a perfect dead drag". In March 1846, with ten slaves still on hand, Burton was "anxious to get home and...sick and tired of trading especially in such times as the present." The trade, he assured a colleague, demanded much "time, patience, and energy". J.K.White provided similar testimony. "You both know", he informed his Charleston associates, that "it requires a man of a great deal of patience to trade in negro property". The isolation and inconveniences of selling in the Lower South were such that, when making known his acceptance of an offer to enter into a trading partnership, J.W.Nelson wrote: "I am willing to undertake any part of the business except the selling part, as I have a perfect aversion to that." In the 1830s, Samuel Logan, a Virginia lawyer, acted as fund raiser and slave buyer for his partner Joseph Meek, the latter being for much of his time involved in slave selling in the importing states. Logan, greatly impressed by the resilience and professionalism of his slave selling partner, informed Meek:

You certainly have made money on our drove beyond all expectation; I am very much gratified at your success and feel indebted to you more than will ever be in my power to pay. I know but little, but I can well imagine the fatigues, troubles and anxieties you have to go through: if I could, it seems to me that I would not under-go what you do for any consideration. However, nature has so formed us that we can become accustomed to anything. 25

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25. Burton to Long, 27 Feb. and 15 Mar.1846, 1 Mar.1845, Long Papers (NCA); White to Oakes and McElveen, 23 Jan.1855, Oakes Papers (BPL); Nelson to Totten, letter of March 1846, Totten Papers (NCA); Logan to Meek, 6 Nov. 1835, Negro Collection (AU).

VI(i)

Table 7.1, drawing directly on slave traders' account books and on documentation relating to 26 trading seasons, provides evidence on the levels of profit which slave traders achieved in the 1817 to 1860 period. The evidence presented in that table and summarised in Figure 7.1 suggests that the gross profit rates of the trade commonly ranged from about 20 to 40 per cent, and indicates that in exceptional seasons gross profits significantly in excess of 50 per cent were achieved. Although a proportion of these gross profits would have been absorbed in trading expenses, it appears that in most seasons the trader was substantially rewarded for his "fatigues, troubles and anxieties".<sup>26</sup>

In order to try to explain the general trends in slave trade profit levels over the 1817 to 1860 period, profit rate statistics are, in Figure 7.1, supplemented by statistics on cotton, tobacco, and slave prices. Slave prices quoted are U.B. Phillips's Richmond and New Orleans prices for prime male slaves, together with Richmond prices for "No.1" male field hands aged from

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26. Gross profit rates are here defined as the difference between the trader's buying price and selling price, taken as a percentage of the buying price. No account is taken of routine trading expenses or of losses through slave deaths. Where profit rate statistics on more than one trading expedition are available for a particular season, the rate entered in Figure 7.1 is the average gross return on the relevant combined total of purchasing expenditures. It should be noted that two small Glen consignments and certain Totten & Gunn consignments (see style of entry in Table 7.1) are dated in the original manuscripts simply according to year, rather than according to year and month of departure from the Upper South. For the purposes of Figure 7.1, it is assumed that these groups of slaves represented "fall" rather than "spring" consignments of the year concerned. On this basis the consignments are allocated according to trading season. These seasonal allocations appear to be accurate, firstly, because in the trade as a whole most expeditions did set out in the autumn (see Chapter IV); secondly, because the 11 Glen slaves concerned, as the property of Glen & Moody rather than of Glen and his usual partner, Jarratt, appear to have been supplements to the main 1830-31 consignment; and, thirdly, because the seasonal profit rates arrived at for Totten & Gunn closely parallel Glen's profit rates for the same seasons.

TABLE 7.1 GROSS RATES OF PROFIT IN THE INTER-REGIONAL SLAVE TRADE, 1817-1860\*

| A              | B                           | C                 | D                       | E     | F    | G                             | H                      | I                   | J                 |
|----------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|-------|------|-------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Season or Year | Firm                        | Route             | Number Bought for Trade | Excl. | Dead | Purchase Price Paid by Trader | Basic Expenses of Trip | Gross Profit Amount | Gross Profit Rate |
| 1817-18        | Rives & Partners            | VA-MI             | 30                      |       |      | 11,112                        |                        | 10,196              | 91.8              |
| 1818-19        |                             |                   | 26                      |       |      | 14,505                        |                        | 10,138              | 69.9              |
| 1822-23        | Fields & Partners           | NC-SC             | 12                      |       |      | 2,939                         |                        |                     | 35.0**            |
| 1832           | Totten & Gunn               | NC-AL             | 23                      |       |      | 6,525                         |                        | 2,591               | 39.7              |
| 1833-34        |                             |                   | 37                      |       | 2    | 11,939                        | 1050                   | 2,638               | 28.4              |
| 1833           |                             |                   | 24                      |       |      | 7,588                         |                        | 3,964               | 52.2              |
| 1834           |                             |                   | 21                      |       |      | 7,841                         |                        | 3,831               | 48.9              |
| 1835           |                             |                   | 42                      |       |      | 21,890                        |                        | 13,907              | 63.5              |
| 1836           |                             |                   | 26                      |       |      | 21,991                        |                        | 14,179              | 64.5              |
| 1830           | Glen & Partners             | NC-AL             | 9                       |       |      | 6,042                         |                        | 3,608               | 59.7              |
| 1830           |                             |                   | 5                       |       |      | 3,250                         |                        | 1,600               | 49.2              |
| 1830-31        |                             |                   | 59                      |       |      | 16,832                        |                        | 5,316               | 31.6              |
| 1831-32        |                             |                   | 54                      | 2     |      | 15,211                        |                        | 5,344               | 35.1              |
| 1832-33        |                             |                   | 55                      | 1     |      | 17,992                        |                        | 7,480               | 41.6              |
| 1833-34        |                             |                   | 79                      | 5     |      | 25,605                        |                        | 13,155              | 51.4              |
| 1833-34        |                             |                   | 22                      | 1     |      | 9,520                         |                        | 3,201               | 33.6              |
| 1834-35        |                             |                   | 56                      | 3     |      | 21,573                        |                        | 8,935               | 41.4              |
| 1835-36        |                             |                   |                         | 39    |      |                               |                        |                     |                   |
| 1836-37        |                             |                   | 29                      |       |      | 17,905                        | 1110                   | 11,138              | 62.2              |
| 1836-37        |                             |                   | 21                      | 5     |      | 19,793                        |                        | 8,612               | 43.5              |
| 1843-44        | Hughes & Downing            | KY-MI             | 13                      |       |      | 5,292                         | 257                    | 3,403               | 64.3              |
| 1849-50        | Templeman & Goodwin         | VA-GA             | 38                      |       |      | 20,655                        | 298                    | 4,665               | 22.6              |
| 1849-50        |                             |                   | 26                      |       |      | 12,595                        | 500                    | 2,090               | 16.6              |
| 1850-51        |                             |                   | 38                      |       |      | 20,217                        |                        | 6,653               | 32.9              |
| 1852-53        | Walker, A.&A.T.             | NC-AL             | 5                       | 10    |      | 2,090                         |                        | 304                 | 14.5              |
| 1853-54        |                             |                   | 16                      | 8     |      | 10,237                        |                        | 2,828               | 27.6              |
| 1854-55        |                             |                   | 13                      | 6     |      | 9,740                         |                        | 2,040               | 20.9              |
| 1856-57        |                             |                   | 2                       | 6     |      | 1,635                         |                        | 440                 | 26.9              |
| 1856-57        | Bolton & Dickens***         | MO, VA etc.-LS    | 664                     | 391   | 3    | 668,474                       |                        | 130,492             | 19.5              |
| 1858-59        | Owings, Charles & Robertson | SC-LA             | 34                      | 67    | 2    | 30,186                        |                        | 7,006               | 23.2              |
| 1845-46        | White & Partners            | MO-LS             | 181                     | 8     | 8    | 81,887                        |                        | 25,968              | 31.7              |
| 1846-47        |                             | (LA, MI, TX etc.) | 12                      | 1     |      | 5,795                         |                        | 994                 | 17.2              |
| 1847-48        |                             |                   | 29                      | 6     | 1    | 14,731                        |                        | 3,948               | 26.8              |
| 1848-49        |                             |                   | 24                      | 1     |      | 12,727                        |                        | 4,296               | 33.8              |
| 1849-50        |                             |                   | 88                      | 1     |      | 50,866                        |                        | 17,443              | 34.3              |
| 1850-51        |                             |                   | 146                     | 18    | 6    | 87,060                        |                        | 25,026              | 28.7              |
| 1851-52        |                             |                   | 19                      | 9     | 3    | 10,922                        |                        | 1,961               | 18.0              |
| 1852-53        |                             |                   | 64                      | 26    | 1    | 42,485                        |                        | 16,202              | 38.1              |
| 1853-54        |                             |                   | 28                      | 53    | 1    | 23,055                        |                        | 4,755               | 20.6              |
| 1854-55        |                             |                   | 16                      | 2     |      | 12,495                        |                        | 2,657               | 21.3              |
| 1855-56        |                             |                   | 62                      | 34    | 1    | 48,832                        |                        | 21,027              | 43.1              |
| 1856-57        |                             |                   | 90                      | 32    | 1    | 79,854                        |                        | 22,832              | 28.6              |
| 1857-58        |                             |                   | 62                      | 12    | 4    | 54,801                        |                        | 13,369              | 24.4              |
| 1858-59        |                             |                   | 59                      | 8     | 1    | 51,026                        |                        | 20,904              | 41.0              |
| 1859-60        |                             |                   | 183                     | 16    | 4    | 176,957                       |                        | 63,761              | 36.0              |

SOURCES AND NOTES: With the exception of the Bolton and Dickens and the Owings, Charles, and Robertson accounts, sources are indicated in Table 1.2.

Bolton *et al.* Source is Bolton and Dickens Record of Slaves, 1856-58 (NYHS).

Owings *et al.* Source is Anderson District Equity Court (SC), Charles v. Owings *et al.*, Bill 325 (1861).

\* For the definition of "gross rate of profit" here adopted, see text.

Excl. These slaves appear in traders' accounts for the seasons indicated, but price information is incomplete. These slaves are excluded from Table 7.1 Columns D, and F-J. In many cases, where the number of "excluded" slaves was small, the slaves were "carried over" into the trading account for the next season.

Dead Those slaves who died while directly involved in the trade are enumerated in column F and are included in column D; but, except for medical expenses relating to them, are otherwise excluded from Table 7.1.

R Slave included in column P, but who, in fact, escaped from trader and was not recovered.

\*\* Based on letter of 29 Nov. 1822 in which Fields provided information on the sales that he had made up to that time, and in which he informed his wife that: "the cost of the 12 negroes and bay mare is \$2939. I think I will clear \$900 on this trip". That sum, \$900, is taken as Fields's net profit, suggesting a gross profit rate of about 35.0 per cent.

\*\*\* Several groups of slaves, appearing between lots dated 1856-57, do not, in the account book, have any specific date attached to them. The average gross profit rate for those trades not dated is 19.7%, and for those specifically dated 1856-57 is 19.1%. Since lots of unspecified date were mixed with lots dated 1856-57, and since the profit rates on both groups were very similar, both groups are attributed to the 1856-57 seas.

LS Lower South.

Columns G, H, I Amounts quoted are in dollars.

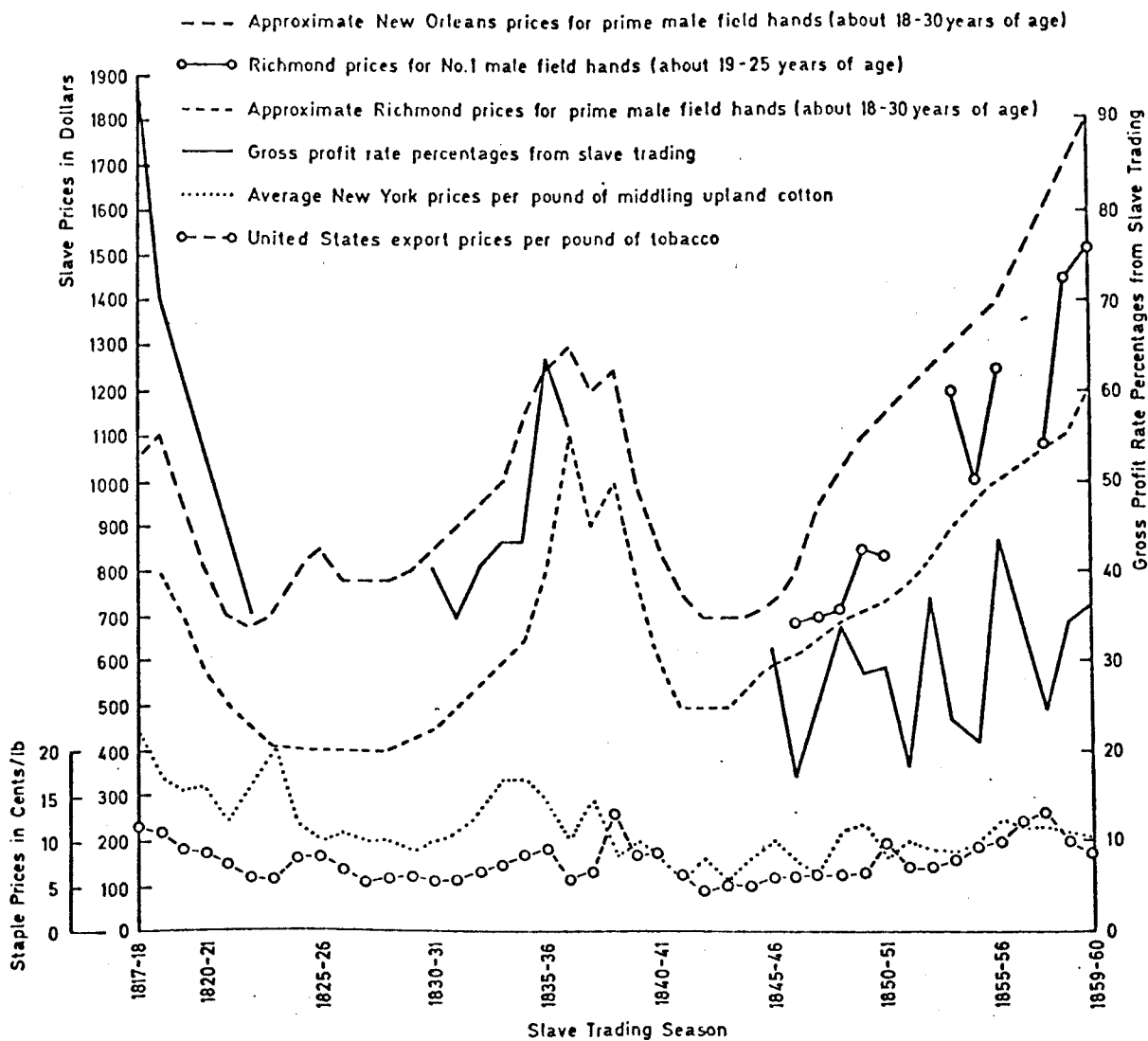


Fig. 7.1. CORRELATION BETWEEN LEVEL OF DEMAND FOR SLAVES AND LEVEL OF PROFIT RATES IN SLAVE TRADE.

SOURCES : Richmond prices for No. 1 male field hands are derived from Appendix B.1; other slave prices, as well as cotton prices, are derived from Phillips, *Life and Labor*, p.177; profit rates are from Table 7.1; tobacco prices are from Gray, *History of Agriculture*, II, p.765, Figure 10. Profit rates and prices for No. 1 slaves are based on trading season. Other prices are for calendar years, with 1818 prices being entered for the 1818-1819 season, and with a similar practice being adopted for the annual prices and for the seasons which followed.

about 19 to 25 years. These latter prices for "No.1" men are derived from Richmond trade circulars of the 1846 to 1860 period. The sharp fluctuations in Richmond slave prices quoted in circulars for these years contrast with Phillips's smoothly rising price curve for the 1846 to 1860 period. It should be noted, therefore, that Phillips's slave price statistics, although reflecting the general movement of prices, represent for individual years only very approximate quotations.

From the profit rates, and the slave and staple prices plotted in Figure 7.1, there emerges a persistent, close correlation between levels of demand for slaves in the importing and exporting states and levels of slave traders' profits.<sup>27</sup> Figure 7.1 shows that during the early years of the short-staple cotton bonanza, during and immediately before 1817 to 1819 that is, with cotton prices sometimes exceeding 30 cents per pound, the Lower South's demand for slaves was so intense that the trader was able to achieve massive gross profit rates amounting to something like 70 to 90 per cent. As both cotton and slave prices show, the early 1820s brought a steep decline in the Lower South's demand for slaves. With that decline came a sharp fall in the level of profits which the trader achieved. In the 1830 to 1837 period, however, a major resurgence in cotton prices and in the Lower South's demand for slaves occurred; and, as Figure 7.1 shows, with

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27. The very small Hughes & Downing consignment, described in Coleman, "Lexington Slave Dealers" (pp.5-7) and cited in Table 7.1, is omitted from Figure 7.1. This is because, as Coleman - on the basis of court records relating to Hughes & Downing's trading activities - observed, the profit rate of 64.3 per cent on these 13 slaves was "far above the average" for the firm. The evidence of a trader cited by Coleman suggests that profits of about 30 per cent would much more commonly have been experienced in the period concerned. That the profits were so high on the 13 Hughes & Downing slaves mentioned is perhaps explained by the fact that the consignment included certain skilled slaves who brought unusually high profits. It is only possible to calculate profits on a few of the 13 slaves, but it is clear that the blacksmith George brought a gross profit of 114 per cent while several unskilled slaves brought profits of only about 30 per cent.

that resurgence slave traders' rates of profit underwent a strong revival and ranged between about 35 and 60 per cent.

In the late 1840s, both cotton prices and traders' profit rates were generally substantially lower than in the early and mid-1830s. Figure 7.1 indicates too that during the 1850s, despite generally rising cotton prices; despite Texas's massively expanding demand for slaves; and despite a strong upward movement in American slave prices, traders rarely returned to the huge profit rates of the 1830 to 1837 period. The explanation for the relatively low trading profit rates of the 1850s must surely lie in the major revival of tobacco planting which took place in the exporting states during that decade. The revival was such that tobacco prices, which for most of the 1840s had stood at between 5 and 6 cents, soared by 1857 to over twice that level. This steep increase in price was accompanied by and, until 1857, was maintained despite a massive expansion in the production of that staple. In the 1850s, much "worn out" land was reclaimed for tobacco planting; and the increase in tobacco production over the decade was probably in excess of 100 per cent. "Under the influence of this expansion tobacco prices were beginning to weaken a little just before the war (by about 1858)", Lewis C.Gray wrote. He added, however, that even in the few years after 1858 production continued and expanded "still at very profitable levels."<sup>28</sup> The great revival in tobacco planting meant that the Upper South's own demand for slaves was enormously increased, and the combination of demand from tobacco and cotton planters led to a very strong upward movement in slave prices. For the trader

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28. Gray, History of Agriculture, II, p.769. On the tobacco revival of the 1850s, see Gray, II, pp.753, 757-9, 769. Gray shows that the increase in the volume of tobacco exportations was particularly rapid in the 1857 to 1860 period (Gray, II, Appendix, Table 47, p.1036). This increase must have been of considerable importance in forcing slave prices to unprecedented heights in the 1857 to 1860 period. A less important factor in stimulating slave prices in the 1850s generally was the expansion of sea-island cotton during that decade. On sea-island cotton production, see Gray, II, pp.733-4.

the effect of the Upper South's revival of demand for slaves was to increase purchasing prices and hence to reduce profit margins to significantly lower levels than might, at first sight, have been expected from the trend in cotton prices and in New Orleans slave prices. Even in this period, however, as reference to the movement of Richmond slave prices tends to show, fluctuations in traders' profit levels generally reflected fluctuations in slave price levels. Over the late 1840s and the 1850s, then, traders' gross profit rates fluctuated between something less than 20 per cent to over 40 per cent, with gross profit levels of about 28 per cent constituting the average for those years.

#### VI(ii)

In order to translate into net profits the rather broadly defined gross profit results which have so far been presented, several factors must be considered. Among the most important of these are interest payments on borrowed capital; travel and routine trading expenses; and losses resulting from slave mortality and morbidity and from bad debts.

Conrad and Meyer found that from the evidence of contemporary chronicles "it is obvious that southerners and northerners alike considered 6-8 per cent a reasonable...asking price for loans" during the ante-bellum period generally; and found that such interest rates were consistent with rates charged on prime commercial paper at New York and Boston. Their statistics show, however, that in individual years rates sometimes went far higher than the 6 to 8 per cent ante-bellum norm, with in 1836, for example, rates soaring to something like 20 per cent. Conrad and Meyer provided interest rate statistics on the years 1831 to 1860, and for the periods 1831 to 1837 and 1845 to 1860 - two of the periods for which slave trading activity is plotted in Figure 7.1 - those statistics indicate that interest rates at the principal national money markets stood at 9.7 and 8.7 per cent respectively. For 1817 to 1823, the remaining period of slave trading activity plotted in Figure 7.1, Conrad and



Meyer did not provide interest rate statistics. It is probably safe to assume, however, that in those generally prosperous years interest rates at the principal money markets stood at 9.7 per cent or somewhat higher. There were no doubt regional variations in interest rates and, ideally, southern statistics should be used in order to estimate slave traders' interest payments. The available New York and Boston statistics appear, nevertheless, to provide a useful guide. In 1859, for example, the trader Phillip Thomas, financed his slave purchases by borrowing in Virginia at  $7\frac{1}{2}$  per cent; and at that time the New York and Boston interest rates quoted by Conrad and Meyer stood at about 7 per cent.<sup>29</sup>

On the basis of the average interest rates quoted, and with the assumption that traders financed two-thirds of their operations on the basis of borrowed capital, it is possible to take account of traders' interest payments and so to adjust estimates of gross slave trading profits. For the 1817 to 1823 period, estimated interest payments would have reduced slave traders' gross profits from the levels quoted in Figure 7.1 down to a range of 29 to 85 per cent, and to an average of perhaps 60 per cent. For the 1830 to 1837 period, profit rates ranging from 29 to 57 per cent and averaging 46 per cent are arrived at; and, for the 1845 to 1860 period, rates ranging from 11 to 37 per cent and averaging 23 per cent are obtained.

Slave traders' papers occasionally indicate the extent of basic expenses incurred during the process of transporting slaves to the Lower South and of selling them in that region. Rather detailed itemised descriptions of such expenses occur in the Hughes & Downing trading account of 1843-4, and in J.A.Mitchell's record of an overland slave selling expedition which set out from Virginia in October 1834. The Hughes & Downing expenses, relating to a trip from Lexington, Kentucky, to Natchez, included several charges for river transportation, and included expenses for food, clothing, medical treatment, and jail fees. As Figure 7.1 shows, these expenses, on 13 slaves,

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29. Conrad and Meyer, "Economics of Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South", p.101 and p.102, Table 3; Thomas to Finney, 6 Oct. 1859, Finney Papers (DU).

totalled \$257. The destination of the trader J.A. Mitchell was also Natchez and principal expenses were food and clothing and charges for being ferried across rivers. Expenses at Natchez and for the outward journey with 50 slaves amounted to just over \$570, and a further expense of \$113 was incurred on the trader's return journey to Virginia. While it is known that the Mitchell slaves sold for a total of about \$30,000, the amount which Mitchell paid for the slaves is not recorded.<sup>30</sup> Documentation on basic trading expenses of the sort mentioned in the Hughes & Downing and the Mitchell accounts is available for four of the consignments entered in Table 7.1. These expenses, as entries in Table 7.1 show, were equal to an average of 4.7 per cent of the purchase price of the slaves concerned. Travel and other basic expenses of the trader's selling season would have been more substantial in the New Orleans coastal trade than elsewhere, but available evidence suggests that for most speculators such expenses would have accounted for not more than about one or two per cent of gross profits.

Expenses incurred by traders would sometimes have included payments to hired assistants. The correspondence collections which have been examined and which have been cited in this and earlier chapters suggest, however, that assistants hired, on a long-term basis, as buying and selling agents would only have been employed by major firms handling more than, and, indeed, probably substantially more than, one hundred slaves per season. The impression gained from these numerous correspondence collections is fully supported by a survey of slave traders' purchasing advertisements. While it is known from chapters IV and V that many major urban traders employed buying agents, advertisements cited in Table 3.2, a summary of the South Carolina trade of the 1850s, instead of mentioning buying agents, almost always referred only to trading partners. With small firms, assistants were sometimes hired on a temporary basis in order to facilitate the supervision of coffles or, less commonly the supervision of sales; but in such instances expenses

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30. From account headed "The expence of Travelin with negros...commenced the 18 of October, 1834", in Mitchell Papers (DU).

were usually quite limited. In 1834, for example, Jarratt & Glen hired Richard J. Cook as assistant for the supervision of a coffle. Cook's note of 2 December 1834 records: "Received of Jarratt and Glen \$45.50 in full for my services from the time I left home being 25 days coming out and allowing 16 days for going home. Wages \$20.50. Expenses money home \$20."<sup>31</sup> In January 1860, the trader Phillip Thomas decided that Calhoun, hired at \$21.13 per week to assist with slave sales in Alabama, should be sent home.<sup>32</sup> When such assistants were used, their wages and expenses would probably have been included in the basic selling season expense totals which have already been accounted for. Apart from these expenses, however, traders, in the business of making up slave consignments, would, over a period of several months, have incurred travel, lodging, and other expenses. Costs incurred in the accommodation of slaves during the trader's period of buying in the Upper South would probably in many cases have been offset by the use of the labour of these slaves.

With large firms which did employ one or more buying assistants on a permanent or semi-permanent basis, business costs would have been relatively high. The wage paid in 1836 to one such assistant appears to have been \$550 per year.<sup>33</sup> In addition to relatively high expenditures, major trading firms, in some cases at least, concentrated on the volume of total sales, and were prepared to receive lower rates of profit on each slave sold than were traders operating on a smaller scale. Table 7.1 suggests that in 1836-7 this was the case with Bolton & Dickens, whose gross profits on each slave sold were lower than those of A. & A.T. Walker and of J.R. White. Evidence presented earlier in the present chapter suggests that with most trading concerns of small and middling size sales did not move sufficiently quickly to permit more than a small portion of capital to be turned over more than once in a season.

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31. Cook note, Jarratt-Puryear Papers (DU).

32. Thomas to Finney, 19 Jan. 1860, Finney Papers (DU).

33. Haynes to Meek, 22 Apr. 1836, Negro Collection (AU).

With major trading firms which, by the use of hired buying assistants, could reinvest capital as it became available and could readily transport slaves to market, the turn-over of capital might have been something approaching twice a season. Relatively low profits on each slave traded and relatively high operating expenses would thus have been justified by the total volume of sales and of the income received.

Losses through slave deaths would occasionally have had a marked effect upon the level of traders' profits. The rate of incidence of deaths in the trade has already been touched upon at an earlier point in the present chapter, and Table 7.1 provides direct evidence on this question. It appears that J.R. White, perhaps because of outbreaks of disease in the New Orleans market, lost as many as 2 to 3 per cent of his slaves through death. The records of Bolton & Dickens, traders who were also active in New Orleans, document very few slave deaths, but it is probable that those records undercount deaths. The records of other traders listed in Table 7.1 do not, however, appear significantly to undercount slave deaths, and suggest that the death rate in the trade was usually lower than one per cent. Particularly at times of epidemics, traders insured their slaves and incurred certain expenses as a result. Temporary illnesses of slaves, by causing sales to be deferred, decelerated the rate of accumulation of profits. Loss of revenue also occurred as a result of failures to pay debts owed to traders, those failures occurring especially when traders, in some part, sold on personal credit. In some cases traders' receipts were increased by interest received from acceptances, although at other times traders, by cashing before maturity, received less than the face value of their "paper". It appears, however, that traders usually entered in the account books which are utilised in Table 7.1, not the theoretical value of their acceptances, but the actual value received.

Traders' gross profit levels have, on the direct evidence of account books, been indicated in Table 7.1. It would, however, given the many variables which have been mentioned, be hazardous without reservation to present estimates of net profit rates. The balance of evidence suggests that, after accounting for

the cost to traders of interest payments, the combination of the other factors of expenditure and income which have been mentioned would have removed a figure of something like 5 to 10 per cent from the level of traders' annual profits. On this basis, it is probable that during the 1817 to 1823 period annual profits commonly ranged from about 25 to 80 per cent and averaged something like 55 per cent. For the period 1830 to 1837, the range was probably from about 20 to 50 per cent and the average about 40 per cent; while, for the period 1845 to 1860, the range was probably from about 5 to 30 per cent and the average about 16 per cent.

#### VI(iii)

Despite using very different methods from those employed in the present study, Robert Evans, in the only detailed published study of the domestic slave trader's profits, arrived at basically similar net profit rate statistics to those presented above.<sup>34</sup> He estimated that traders' net annual profits averaged 45.8 per cent in the period 1830 to 1835; 11.8 per cent in the period 1836 to 1840; 16.6 per cent in the period 1841 to 1845; 20.4 per cent in the period 1846 to 1850; 17.8 per cent in the period 1851 to 1855; and 11.8 per cent in the period 1856 to 1860. Evans made use of the correspondence of certain traders, and used a portion of the Jarratt & Glen trading accounts as well as using the A. & A.T.Walker accounts. Being unable to draw upon other traders' accounts, however, he adopted a practice of inferring inter-regional slave price differentials from U.B.Phillips's statistics on prime male slaves, and of relating these differentials to his own estimates of trading expenses. While certain of Evans's assumptions appear very greatly to have exaggerated the trader's income from slave sales, his estimate of the significance of labour costs appears to have led to a similar exaggeration of the operating expenses of the trade.

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34. R.J.Evans, "Some Economic Aspects of the Domestic Slave Trade, 1830-1860", Southern Economic Journal, XXVII (1961), pp.329-37.

Evans appears to have exaggerated the trader's income from sales principally as a result of two factors. Firstly, in order to estimate differences between traders' buying and selling prices, he compared an average of U.B. Phillips's Charleston and Virginia prices for a particular year with an average of Phillips's New Orleans and mid-Georgia prices for that year.<sup>35</sup> This procedure led Evans rather consistently to arrive at inter-regional price differentials which were for given years, about one-third greater than the inter-regional price differentials found in the traders' accounts cited in Table 7.1. The inclusion of New Orleans statistics in Evans's sample appears to have been the cause of an exaggeration of actual inter-regional differences in prices. This is because, as Chapter I has shown, the sugar staple attracted to the southern part of Louisiana very large numbers of adult male slaves who were of especially high quality as labourers. In contrast, the slaves in Evans's Upper South sample would have been far less rigorously selected and would have been of significantly less value if sold in the Lower South. A second source of exaggeration in estimating traders' incomes was surely Evans's assumption that on average traders were able to turn over the whole of their capital twice in each season. Evidence discussed earlier in the present chapter suggests, in sharp contrast to Evans's assumption, that only a few very large-scale traders turned over their capital twice in a season, and suggests that the great majority of traders turned over only a small part of their capital more than once in a season. It appears, then, that Evans exaggerated traders' gross incomes from sales by something like one hundred per cent.

Evans based his estimate of labour costs on five pieces of evidence. The records of one trader, he observed,

suggest that \$5 per day was an appropriate wage for the man who handled the coffee.... One trader (he continued) apparently received \$1,132 for six months when he handled 146 slaves. Another record lists the trader's wage as equal to 5 per cent of the capital invested, in this case a wage of \$1500. One Trader (Phillip Thomas) discharged a man, for failure to attend to his duties, whom he had been paying \$21.13 per week. (And, Evans added,) Many traders

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35. For Phillips's prices see Life and Labor, p.117. His Richmond and New Orleans prices are plotted in Figure 7.1 of the present study.

appear to have worked on commission, one party contributing capital and the other labour services, in some cases with the net income split one half each way.

From the above evidence, which he described as "five cases where a reasonable estimate of labour costs can be made", Evans concluded that the labour costs of the trade should be estimated "on the basis of a 50-50 split of [the] net proceeds" which traders obtained from sales after accounting for all costs except labour. The remaining 50 per cent of proceeds represented, according to Evans, the trader's net profits.<sup>36</sup>

The labour cost estimates which Evans made appear to be at odds with almost all available evidence. Records drawn upon in the present study indicate that, although hired labour was sometimes taken on to provide assistance in driving slaves to market and, less commonly, to assist in the business of slave selling, it was, except for those who traded on the largest-scale, very rare indeed for traders to employ hired labour on anything like a permanent basis. The wages of Evans's coffle driver hired at \$5 per day, and those of the sales assistant hired at \$21.13 per week would not to any significant extent have cut into trading profits. Similarly, wages and expenses totalling \$45.50 and paid by Jarratt & Glen to the supervisor of a coffle were of very slight importance compared with the firm's gross profits of \$16,000 during the season concerned.<sup>37</sup> Wages of a much higher level, those estimated by Evans at over \$1000, would have been paid to the buying agents employed by some large firms; but, with the annual sales of each of those firms probably far in excess of 100 slaves, would not normally have accounted for more than a few per cent of the profits of the firms concerned.<sup>38</sup> Unlike Evans, the present writer has not found it to have been at all common for trading arrangements to have been based on a

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36. On Evans's five pieces of evidence, and on his division of net proceeds into labour costs and returns on capital invested, see Evans, "Some Economic Aspects", pp.330-2.

37. For documentation on Jarratt & Glen's payment, of December 1834, see note 31, above. On the firm's profits for the season concerned, the 1834-5 season, see Table 7.1.

38. See profit levels in Table 7.1.

contribution of capital from one partner and labour from another. Thomas W. Burton, encountered in this and in other chapters, did over several seasons, sell slaves on some sort of commission basis for William Long of North Carolina; but no indication that he received a 50 per cent share of net proceeds from sales has been found. With other trading partnerships, papers which have been examined suggest or, indeed, very often specifically document direct capital investment by the partners concerned. It appears that Evans's exaggeration of labour costs was so great as to cancel out the effects of his exaggeration of the trader's gross sales revenue. As a result the net profit rate estimates of the present study broadly coincide with the final profit rate levels suggested by Evans.

#### VI(iv)

It has been seen that in most periods the profit rate margins of the trade were determined essentially by fluctuations in the level of the Lower South's demand for slaves. This meant that in periods when cotton and slave prices were relatively low, a slackening in the Lower South's demand for slaves would not only have narrowed profit margins, but would also have reduced the overall volume of the trade. In the 1850s, rather unusual conditions obtained, with a resurgence in tobacco prices narrowing the trader's profit margins, but with the Lower South's very considerable demand for slaves ensuring a high volume of trade.<sup>39</sup> Fluctuations in the demand for slaves meant that the 1817 to 1822 and the 1830 to 1837 periods offered outstanding opportunities for successful speculation in slaves; meant that substantial trading fortunes could still quite rapidly be made in the 1850s; but meant that in the 1823 to 1829 period, the late 1830s, and much of the 1840s, recruitment to the trading fraternity and the accumulation of slave trading fortunes must have been relatively slow.

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39. More detailed evidence on fluctuations in the volume of the trade appears in Chapter VIII.



**PART THREE**

**MASTERS, SLAVES, AND TRADERS**

CHAPTER VIII

"SPECULATIVE" AND "INVOLUNTARY" SALES: SOME IMPLICATIONS

The themes of the chapters which make up Part Three of this study are the motivations behind the sale of slaves; the effects of sales upon the slave community; and the attitudes of slave-holders towards the trader and towards the ethics of Negro speculation. An exploration of these themes, in the context of earlier discussions of the extent and organisation of the inter-regional slave trade, will provide a basis upon which to assess the slave trade's significance in relation to the system of ante-bellum slavery.

I

After extensive researches into plantation journals, slave-holders' diaries, and other sources, Kenneth Stampf reported that "it was hard to find a master who would admit that he sold slaves as a deliberate 'speculation' - a business transaction whose object was a profit - rather than as an unhappy last resort."<sup>1</sup> The typical slave-holder maintained that he sold slaves, to the trader and to others, only when special circumstances "necessitated" such sales. As Stampf discovered, however, the lexicons of slave owners contained extremely broad definitions of the term "necessity". The pressure of debts; the division of an estate between heirs; the disciplining of refractory slaves; and the increase of slave stock beyond the needs of their owner were, Stampf found, considered by slave-holders as being among the circumstances which might "necessitate" the sale of slaves.<sup>2</sup> Since, as federal censuses show, the American slave population grew in the nineteenth century by about 25 per cent per decade, the on-going slave-holdings of the Upper South in fact produced very substantial slave "surpluses" which could, with marked

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1. Stampf, Peculiar Institution, p.240.

2. Stampf, pp.239-44.

financial advantage, be sold to the expanding planting regions of the Lower South. The patterns of the slave sales examined below very much support the conclusion that - rather than debt sales, probate sales, or the disciplining of refractory slaves by sale to the Lower South - it was precisely the sale of "surplus" slaves from on-going plantations which constituted the essential source of supply for the inter-regional slave traffic.

In Time on the Cross, Fogel and Engerman, on the basis of certain evidence relating to 19 plantations, argued that slave sales from on-going plantations were very rare indeed.<sup>3</sup> It appears, however, that the documents which they consulted must either have failed to provide detailed and exhaustive records on slave sales, or must have been totally unrepresentative of the rates of sale which obtained, at least, in the slave exporting section of the South. Chapter II has shown that in each of the last four ante-bellum decades well over 10 per cent of the prime teenage and young adult slave population of the net exporting states was sold into the inter-regional slave trade. Furthermore, it is known from evidence given in Chapter IV of the present study that not more than a very few per cent of slaves carried by the inter-regional trade were bought by traders from judicial sales. Since judicial sales were for the trader only a very minor source of supply, it is clear that the bulk of the very extensive slave trade must have been supplied by some combination of purchases from on-going plantations and purchases from those who, other than by judicial sales, decided to terminate their Upper South slave-holdings.

No doubt in some instances owners, although not selling at judicial sales, found it necessary to terminate slave-holdings in order to meet pressing financial obligations. Terminations in such circumstances do not, however, appear to have been a significant source of supply for the trade. The sample of bills of sale drawn upon on Table 4.1 suggests that, in a

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3. Fogel and Engerman, Time on the Cross, I, p.54.

particular year, customers normally sold to the trader not more than two or three slaves - a practice consistent with selling from on-going plantations. A closer study of the sample of Tyre Glen bills of sale, documents cited in Table 4.1, lends further support to the conclusion that most traders' purchases were from on-going slave-holdings. All of the Tyre Glen bills of sale dating from 1830 to 1837 and headed "Stokes County, North Carolina", or describing the seller as being resident in that county, were examined and whenever possible the names of sellers were traced in that county's tax lists. Those lists, as well as providing other information, indicate the number of taxable slaves - that is slaves aged from 15 to 50 years of age - owned by each person taxed. Of the 28 slave sellers traced, at least 20 were the owners of on-going slave-holdings and in the year following their documented slave sale still owned taxable slaves. In 7 of the 8 cases which cannot be shown to have been on-going slave-holdings, the owners - although they might have owned non-taxable slaves - immediately before the sale owned not more than one taxable slave. The 28 slave sellers traced represent a 25 per cent sample of extant Glen bills of sale of the 1830 to 1837 period, and suggest that at the very least 70 per cent of Glen's sales were from on-going plantations.<sup>4</sup>

An examination of decennial fluctuations in the South's inter-regional slave movement provides further evidence on the circumstances in which sales to the trade were made. Documentation in Chapter II has shown that from the principal exporting states - those states which in the decades from 1820 to 1860 were consistently net exporters of slaves - there were in the 1820s some 150,000 slave exportations; in the 1830s some 285,000

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4. Tyre Glen Papers (DU) and Stokes County Lists of Taxables, 1830-1837 (NCA). In addition to the 28 sellers traced, a further 8 Stokes county sellers were not traced. These omissions were mainly because signatures on bills of sale were not clearly made; or because bills of sale indicated only the seller's surname and initials, while tax lists gave more than one resident of that description.

exportations; in the 1840s some 185,000 exportations; and in the 1850s some 225,000 exportations.<sup>5</sup> It has been seen, too, that although the decennial volume of slave movements fluctuated the domestic slave trade - both in periods of booming prosperity and in periods of relatively slow economic growth - accounted for the great majority of those movements. Essentially, fluctuations in the volume of the inter-regional slave trade would have reflected trends in the state of the market for cotton - the importing states' dominant staple - and would have reflected consequent trends in the level of the Lower South's demand for slaves. In the 1820s then, a decade which as Figure 7.1 (p.249) shows saw a downward trend in cotton prices, slave trading activity was far less intensive than in the 1830s, a decade when a major upswing in cotton prices brought a massive Lower South demand for slaves. Similarly, the moderation in cotton prices during the 1840s brought a much lower slave trade total than in the 1830s, while, in the 1850s, an upward movement in cotton prices encouraged an increase in the volume of the slave trade. In interpreting the circumstances in which sales to the trade were made, it is important to note that, as Figure 7.1 shows, the prices of tobacco - the dominant staple of most exporting states - tended to follow similar trends to those of cotton. Generally, therefore, periods of intensive inter-regional slave trading activity were periods when both tobacco and cotton prices were good and when, in both the importing and exporting states, agricultural opportunities were especially favourable. Indeed, during the 1830 to 1837 boom in cotton planting, a similar feverish speculation occurred among the tobacco planters of the exporting states. In 1836, a contributor to the Farmers' Register declared:

Within the last two years, there are men actually attempting, and do really think, that they are going to become rich, immensely rich, from making tobacco who scarcely know a tobacco plant from a mullein plant....It is really amusing to see and to

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5. The consistent net exporters of the 1820 to 1860 period were Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, the Carolinas, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. In the present chapter, references to the "principal exporting states" are to those several states together with the District of Columbia.

hear many such characters speak of what, they say, they can afford to give for rented land, and hired negroes, to make this precious and all-valuable plant....

Whilst I am constrained to ridicule the promiscuous and indiscriminate cultivation of tobacco, I am fully sensible [he added] that there are many, very many planters, getting rich from its cultivation.

The 1850s, too, was, as L.C.Gray wrote, not only a period of very profitable cotton planting, but one of massive expansion in tobacco planting and a decade when those dependent on tobacco production enjoyed "exceptional prosperity". Such staple price and production trends suggest that the Upper South slaveholder's sales to the trader were not usually the result of any need to stave off bankruptcy by "sacrificing" slaves during years of economic reverses; but were rather a product of the very attractive prices which, in periods of high confidence, Lower South planters were prepared to pay for slaves.<sup>6</sup>

The correlation between slave trade exportations and the cycle of cotton, tobacco, and slave prices is shown in some detail in Figure 8.1. That figure, in order to indicate year-to-year trends in slave exportations, employs evidence on the annual slave population growth rates of South Carolina, a state whose exportation trends appear to have been essentially typical of the trends in the exporting states as a whole.<sup>7</sup> In that figure, the plotting of low growth rates represents intensive slave exportation, while the plotting of high growth rates represents periods of high slave retention within the net exporting area. The annual exportation trends plotted very much support the conclusion already drawn from fluctuations in the decennial volume of the slave trade. Growth rates cited show that in the 1830 to 1836 and 1850 to 1860 periods - periods of strong upward movements in staple prices and periods when the Upper South's economic returns from crop production must also have exhibited strong upward movements - slave trading activity became progressively more intensive.

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6. Farmers' Register (Virginia), III, p.711, cited in Gray, History of Agriculture, II, p.768; Gray, p.769.

7. Slave population statistics are found in the exhibits of evidence on taxation which the South Carolina Comptroller-General presented each September. These exhibits appear in South Carolina's Reports and Resolutions, and are available at the South Caroliniana Library for the period 1830 to 1860. That South Carolina - despite differing from most other major exporting states by being a cotton rather than a tobacco producer - exhibited slave growth rates which were essentially typical of the principal exporting states is suggested in Table 8.2 (p.271), where South Carolina's growth rates are compared with those of the principal exporting states and of the American slave population as a whole.

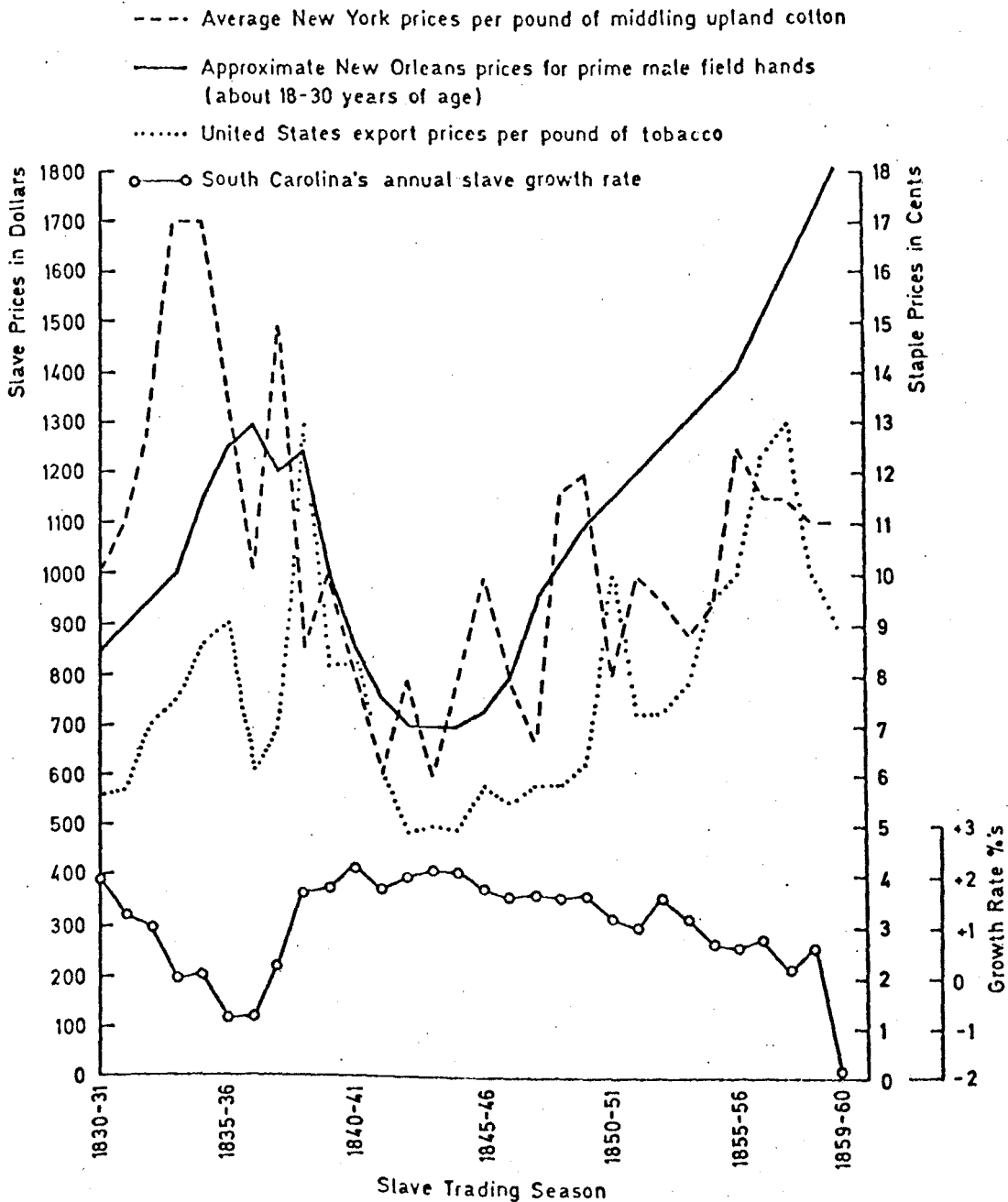


Fig. 8.1. CORRELATION BETWEEN RATE OF SLAVE EXPORTATION AND SLAVE AND STAPLE PRICES.

SOURCES: For derivation of annual growth rates of South Carolina's slave population, see text. For sources on cotton, slave, and tobacco prices, see Figure 7.1. Growth rates compare South Carolina's slave numbers at the start of successive slave trading seasons. Price quotations are for calendar years, with 1831 prices being entered for the 1830-1831 season, and with a similar practice being adopted for the annual prices and for the seasons which followed.

It seems, then, to be clear that most sales to the trade were from on-going plantations and that a large proportion of sales, rather than being the result of economic necessity, were the product of rapid agricultural expansion in rich Lower South lands and of slave price levels which resulted from that expansion. At times of favourable slave prices, it must have become, for many Upper South slave-holders, more attractive to sell certain "surplus" slaves than to retain those slaves for the expansion of crop production at home. The sales patterns outlined suggest that, in practice, deliberate speculation was the leading motive in prompting sales to the inter-regional trader. Such sales of "surplus" slaves brought major supplements to the incomes of Upper South slave-holders, but must have created great hardship in the slave community and surely stretched beyond meaningful limits the definition of "necessity" which the Old South advanced in its attempt to reconcile the sale of slaves to traders with its claim that American slavery was a system inspired by benevolent motivations.

## II

From the ante-bellum period until today, argument on the economic importance of the domestic slave trade has persisted. This economic theme has been of some importance since, following a tradition which Abolitionists established, many have taken the view that in the ante-bellum period the viability of the Upper South's economy, and hence the continuation of the Upper South as a slave-holding section, rested upon the inter-regional slave trade.<sup>8</sup> The use-

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8. For a brief discussion of the Abolitionist viewpoint, see the introductory chapter of the present study. The most recent publications which have paid attention to the economic importance of the trade have been Fogel and Engerman's Time on the Cross and David et al., Reckoning with Slavery. Fogel and Engerman argued that the total value of slaves sold out of the Upper South represented "less than one per cent of the gross value of agricultural output in the exporting states" (I, p.48). The contributors to Reckoning with Slavery suggested that sales to the trade represented "approximately 10 per cent of the total return to slave owners in the exporting states" (p.160). A somewhat earlier publication, W.L. Miller's "A Note on the Importance of the Interstate Slave Trade of the Ante-Bellum South", Journal of Political Economy, LXXIII (1965), pp.181-7, estimated that Upper South tobacco producers' receipts from sales to the slave trade were in 1830 equal to 70 per cent of the value of that year's tobacco crop, and in 1840 equal to 30 per cent of the tobacco crop's value.



fulness of studies of the slave trade's economic importance has, however, been very severely limited by the inconclusiveness of published studies of the volume of that trade. Efforts to evaluate the slave traffic by comparison with the profits produced in the agriculture of the Upper South are further complicated by the lack of consensus on the broad question of the profitability of American slavery: although recent studies have agreed that slavery was profitable they have differed in estimating the extent of that profitability. The analysis which follows will, therefore, to a large extent be concerned not with comparing the value of the slave trade to that of the profits of the Upper South's agriculture, but will concentrate instead upon the somewhat simpler comparison between the value of the slaves traded from the principal net exporting states and the value of the staple crops of those states. The quantification of the inter-regional slave trade which has already been presented in this study makes it possible to advance such a comparison with some confidence.

The evaluation of the relative economic importance of the slave trade from the principal exporting states and the staple production of that section requires information on several factors - the price of slaves according to age, sex, and date; the composition and volume of the slave trade; and the volume and value of staple crop production in the area concerned. The last three ante-bellum censuses between them provide - for the crops of 1839-40, 1849-50, and 1859-60 - statistics on agricultural production, and include statistics on the production of tobacco, cotton, and rice, that is to say on the exporting states' major agricultural staples. Since information on the prices of those staples is readily available, it will be possible to estimate the value of staple crop production in the three crop years specified. First, however, the value of slaves traded will be considered.

Indices of slave prices according to age have been found in two collections of slave trading papers, Duke University's Tyre Glen Papers and the University of Virginia's Richard R. Reid Papers. The Glen manuscript provides an index of

prices for male slaves of specific ages from 0 to 60, while the Reid index divides slaves according to broad age categories and provides information on both male and female slave prices. These price indices, together with a slave price index recently published by Fogel and Engerman, provide a substantial basis upon which to assess slave prices for specific age and sex groups.

Evidence derived from these indices is summarised in Table 8.1, where slave prices are presented according to the age categories used in the Reid index. In Table 8.1, slave prices for each age and sex group are given as percentages of the prices for the most valuable broad category of slaves, that is to say as percentages of values for male slaves aged from 16 to 29 years. Although Chapter IX advances certain criticisms of Fogel and Engerman's price levels for those slaves coming within the 16 to 29 age category, differences between the age group price levels of the Glen, Reid, and Fogel and Engerman indices are, for the purposes of the present chapter, of no real importance.<sup>9</sup>

Having gained evidence on slave prices according to age and sex, and, from Table 2.3, having a substantial basis of evidence on the composition of the slave trade, it is now necessary to obtain information on slave prices according to year. Such information is provided by U.B. Phillips's survey of price trends in several major markets. That survey was based essentially on credit rather than cash sales, so that the price levels which were given were generally somewhat above those paid by traders. In the present study, by calculating the value of slaves traded on the basis of Phillips's Richmond prices - prices which were significantly lower than in the Charleston exporting market and, it seems, lower than in much of the slave exporting area - the upward price bias resulting from a source based on credit sales will, however, be largely or wholly counter-balanced.<sup>10</sup>

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9. The Glen and Reid indices are reproduced verbatim in Appendix B. Fogel and Engerman's index appears in Time on the Cross, I, p.76, Figure 18; and certain additional information on that index appears in Time on the Cross, II, p.79. Although the Glen manuscript does not directly indicate the sex of the slaves valued, there can be no doubt that the index is concerned with male slaves. This is, firstly, because traders routinely took males, the market leaders, as their guide in assessing price levels; and, secondly, because the age-price peaking coincides, as Table 2.3 shows, with the age concentration of the male but not the female element of the trade.

10. For Phillips's price survey see Life and Labor, p.177; and for a reproduction of his Richmond prices see Figure 7.1 of the present study.

TABLE 8.1: SLAVE PRICES AS A PERCENTAGE OF THE AVERAGE PRICE OF MALES AGED FROM 16 TO 29 YEARS

| Age     | Male Slaves |      |       | Female Slaves |      |       |
|---------|-------------|------|-------|---------------|------|-------|
|         | Glen        | Reid | Fogel | Glen          | Reid | Fogel |
| 0 - 3   | 14          | 18   | 10    |               | 16   | 13    |
| 4 - 7   | 27          | 30   | 34    |               | 26   | 34    |
| 8 - 11  | 48          | 50   | 55    |               | 40   | 53    |
| 12 - 15 | 73          | 80   | 77    |               | 60   | 69    |
| 16 - 29 | 100         | 100  | 100   |               | 70   | 82    |
| 30 - 39 | 69          | 90   | 98    |               | 50   | 71    |
| 40 - 49 | 30          | 60   | 72    |               | 40   | 47    |
| 50      | 19          | 40*  | 54    |               | 20*  | 33    |
| 55      | 13          |      | 38    |               |      | 20    |
| 60      | 6           |      | 25    |               |      | 11    |
| 65      |             |      | 15    |               |      | 5     |
| 70      |             |      | 7     |               |      | 2     |

NOTES:

Where no quotation is given for a particular category, information for that category is lacking in the manuscript concerned.

Fogel Denotes Fogel and Engerman.

\* Indicates that quotation is for Reid's "50+" category.

From the several groups of evidence which have been mentioned, it now becomes possible to estimate the average value of slaves traded in the 1839-40, 1849-50, and 1859-60 seasons; that is to say in the seasons for which censuses provide evidence on crop production levels. The Reid age-price index is taken as a basis for this calculation. Since compared with the 16 to 29 age group - the most valuable age category entered in Table 8.1 - the relative values of the other age groups are generally lower in the Reid than in the Fogel and Engerman index, the use of the Reid index is unlikely to tend to exaggerate the value of slaves traded. The calculation of slave values also adopts average prices for equal numbers of slaves spread over something like the fairly broad age-price categories cited by Reid.<sup>11</sup> Again, since the trade - an age-selective system - is likely to have been most heavily concentrated in the most valuable sub-divisions of these broad age groups, the method adopted is unlikely to exaggerate the value of slaves traded.

11. The Reid age groupings are rounded so as to give values for slave ages 0-9, 10-14, and 15-29, etc. These rounded values are, in general, slightly lower than those which Fogel and Engerman's statistics yield.

Using the Reid index, male slaves traded to cotton areas are found to have averaged 80 per cent and females 56 per cent of the value of a prime male field hand aged from 15 to 29 years. These weightings take no account of the participation of skilled slaves in the trade, and similarly take no account of the unusually age-selective nature of the New Orleans branch of the trade. In order to make approximate allowance for these factors the weightings are adjusted for males to 95 per cent and for females to 62 per cent. Based on Phillips's prices for prime field hands, the average price paid by traders to Upper South slave-holders therefore appears to have been - in the years 1839-40, 1849-50, and 1859-60 respectively - for male slaves \$950, \$656, and \$1,045, and for female slaves \$620, \$428, and \$682.

Attributing only 60 per cent of transfers to the trade, slave trade exportations from those areas defined as comprising the principal exporting states have already been estimated for the 1830s at 175,000, for the 1840s, at 111,000, and for the 1850s at 135,000 slaves; and of these slaves, as evidence in Chapter I shows, approximately 50 per cent would have been male. Table 8.2 shows that although for much of the ante-bellum period South Carolina exported at a slightly less intensive rate than did the principal states as a whole, that state's slave population exhibited growth rate fluctuations whose basic trends were representative of the principal exporting states. A comparison between South Carolina's annual slave population growth rates and her decennial growth rates will therefore make it possible approximately to estimate the numbers of slaves traded from the principal exporting states in specific years.

TABLE 8.2: DECENNIAL GROWTH RATES OF SLAVE POPULATIONS

| Decade | Decennial Growth Rate Percentages of Slave Populations |                                |                             |
|--------|--|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|
|        | South Carolina   | Principal Net Exporting States | Total U.S. Slave Population |
| 1830s  | 3.69   | -0.55                          | 23.8                        |
| 1840s  | 17.72  | 11.70                          | 27.8                        |
| 1850s  | 4.53   | 6.10                           | 23.4                        |

SOURCES: Federal censuses of 1830, 1840, 1850, and 1860. U.S. slave population growth rates are calculated as in Table 2.10.

Statistics entered in Figure 8.1 and Table 8.2 show that the 1839-40 South Carolina slave growth rate of 1.77 per cent was much above that state's average annual growth rate for the 1830s, but was similar to its average for the 1840s. It appears therefore that in 1839-40 the slave trade from the principal exporting states would have been lower than that area's estimated 1830s annual average total of 17,500 slaves and similar to the area's estimated 1840s annual average of 11,100 slaves. For the 1849-50 season, South Carolina's growth rate of 1.61 per cent was again similar to the state's 1840s average, so that for that year, as for 1839-40, the trade from the principal exporting states is estimated at 11,100. Since the 1859-60 South Carolina growth rate of -1.94 per cent was significantly below the state's average for the 1850s, the trade from the principal exporting states during the 1859-60 seasons is estimated at not less than the 1850s' annual average of 13,500 slaves. On the basis of the volume and price statistics indicated above, slave traders are estimated in the 1839-40 season to have paid \$8.71 million to the slaveholders of the principal exporting states; in 1849-50 to have paid \$6.02 million; and in 1859-60 to have paid at least \$11.66 million.

Having estimated the value of slaves traded, it remains to calculate the value of the staple crops produced in the principal exporting states during the three sample years. A summary of evidence on crop values is given in Table 9.3. Except in the case of sea-island cotton (where production totals are estimated from L.C. Gray's History of Agriculture) crop totals are taken from statistics given in federal censuses for the years concerned.<sup>12</sup>

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12. Annual production totals for sea-island cotton - a fibre of especially high quality - do not appear in ante-bellum censuses, but evidence given in Gray (History of Agriculture, II, pp.675-80, 731-9, 1031-2) makes estimates possible. In the principal exporting states, sea-island cotton production was confined to South Carolina and, based on statistics for the state's crop of 1857-8, it appears that the South Carolina crop of 1859-60 was something over 10½ million pounds. Since statistics on America's sea-island cotton exportations of 1805 to 1860 are available, since exportations accounted for rather more than 80 per cent of production, and since South Carolina appears before the mid-1850s to have accounted for something like 70 per cent of production, it has been possible to incorporate in Table 8.3 estimates of the South Carolina crops of 1839-40 and 1849-50.

TABLE 8.3: VALUE OF MAIN STAPLE CROPS AND OF RECEIPTS FROM SALES TO THE INTER-REGIONAL SLAVE TRADE: THE PRINCIPAL EXPORTING STATES

|                         | Year    | Tobacco | Rice    | Sea-Island Cotton | Short-fibre Cotton | Total Staple Crop Value | Slaves Traded |
|-------------------------|---------|---------|---------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|---------------|
| Production              | 1839-40 | 170,480 | 63,431  | 7,420             | 110,408            |                         |               |
| Price in Dollars        |         | 105.0   | 34.4    | 280.0             | 87.5               |                         |               |
| Value                   |         | 17.90   | 2.18    | 2.08              | 9.66               | 31.82                   | 8.71          |
| Number of Slaves Traded |         |         |         |                   |                    |                         | 11,100        |
| Production              | 1849-50 | 145,779 | 165,419 | 6,930             | 135,530            |                         |               |
| Price in Dollars        |         | 47.5    | 32.9    | 260.0             | 116.7              |                         |               |
| Value                   |         | 6.92    | 5.44    | 1.80              | 15.82              | 29.98                   | 6.02          |
| Number of Slaves Traded |         |         |         |                   |                    |                         | 11,100        |
| Production              | 1859-60 | 303,489 | 126,703 | 10,665            | 193,996            |                         |               |
| Price in Dollars        |         | 92.0    | 40.8    | 430.0             | 116.7              |                         |               |
| Value                   |         | 27.92   | 5.17    | 4.59              | 22.64              | 60.32                   | 11.66         |
| Number of Slaves Traded |         |         |         |                   |                    |                         | 13,500        |

NOTES:

Production totals are expressed in units of 1,000 lbs; prices are for quantities of 1,000 lbs; and values are expressed in millions of dollars.

Tobacco prices are derived from Gray, History of Agriculture, II, p.765, Figure 10; and sea-island cotton prices are from Gray, II, p.1031, Table 43. Prices for short-fibre cotton ("middling" grade) and for rice ("prime" grade) are derived from A.H.Cole, Wholesale Commodity Prices in the United States, 1700-1861 (Cambridge, Mass., 1938). Staple prices quoted are as far as possible monthly averages for the 12 month period during which a particular crop would have been marketed. 1839-40 prices, for example, are based as the last 4 months of 1839 and the first 8 months of 1840.

Prices quoted for tobacco are those which obtained at Virginia warehouses, through which much of the tobacco crop passed; while for cotton and rice prices are those which obtained at Charleston, a port which handled the bulk of the area's production of those latter staples.<sup>13</sup> Statistics quoted in Table 8.3 indicate that the value of the principal exporting states' major staples was in the crop year 1839-40 something like \$31.82 million; in 1849-50 about \$29.98 million; and in 1859-60 about \$60.32 million.

From evidence which has been presented and which is summarised in Table 8.3, it appears that for the slave-holders of the principal exporting states receipts from sales to slave traders were, in 1839-40, equal to about 27.4 per cent of the value of staple crop production in those states; it appears that in 1849-50 sales to the trade were equal to about 20.1 per cent of the value of staples produced; and it appears that in 1859-60 sales to traders were the equivalent of at least 19.3 per cent of the value of the area's staple production. It is probable, therefore, that during the 1820 to 1860 period as a whole receipts from the slave trade were, for the slave-holders of the principal exporting states, worth not less than 19 or 20 per cent of staple crop production; and such receipts would surely have been equivalent to a very substantial proportion of the profits which the exporting area received from agricultural production. Since, as Chapter VII has shown, traders' profit margins were usually substantial, and since very many traders were normally resident in the exporting states, the Upper South's total receipts from the inter-regional slave trade would have been even greater than has so far been indicated. That the great majority of Upper South slave-holders were not obliged to sell to the trader in periods of relatively low staple prices - periods when, as the persistent inter-regional slave price differential shows, significant Lower South demand for slaves continued - suggests that during the ante-bellum period the survival of Upper South slavery was not dependent on income from sales to the trade. Nevertheless, the trade probably

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13. See Gray, pp.711-20, 723-4.

meant for very many Upper South slave-holders the difference between mere economic viability and genuine prosperity.

### III

The lucrative traffic between slave-holder and trader must have done much to define the context of the family and social life of Upper South slaves. Dislocations of the slave's social world arose, however, not only from sales to the long-distance trader, but arose also from local and intra-state sales. Many and probably most of these latter local and intra-state transactions would have been judicial sales and as such could with some justification be defined as having been "involuntary" rather than "speculative" sales. At judicial sales, slaves were commonly offered in lots covering broad age ranges, so that at these sales the rate of separation of families, friends, and loved ones would have been a good deal less common than in the age-selective sales which typified the trade. Nevertheless, local sales were quite commonly the cause of family separations.<sup>14</sup> An estimate of the volume of local sales will, therefore, help to determine the extent of the pressures which slaves faced in seeking to maintain ties of community and family.

Recent studies by Calderhead and by Fogel and Engerman have paid attention to the question of the extent of local sales and the relative importance of local and inter-regional sales. These studies have argued that local sales were several times more numerous than long-distance sales. Since Part I of the present study has already shown that a very extensive inter-regional slave traffic existed, the adoption of Calderhead's or Fogel and Engerman's ratio between local and long-distance sales would imply, overall, a truly massive

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14. On family separations see Chapter IX.



decennial rate of slave sales. It appears, however, that the studies of those historians exaggerated the importance of local sales in relation to that of long-distance slave trade sales.

According to Calderhead's study of slave bills of sale, long-distance sales accounted for about 16 per cent of Maryland's slave sales.<sup>15</sup> Chapter I has, however, already shown that Calderhead's sample of slave sales was unrepresentative of the overall pattern of sales, and has demonstrated that his sample was very strongly biased towards local transactions. Fogel and Engerman examined records relating to some 5,000 slaves sold at New Orleans during the extended period from 1804 to 1862; and on the basis of the residence of the seller as reported in the bills of sale concerned, they sought to differentiate between local and long-distance sales. Their impression was that

Only 22 per cent of slaves sold there [at New Orleans] were from the net exporting states. Approximately 68 per cent of slaves marketed in the Crescent City were owned by residents of Louisiana. The other 7 per cent belonged to owners who lived in the western states which were like Louisiana net importers of slaves.

From this it was concluded that local sales vastly out-numbered long-distance sales.<sup>16</sup> Fogel and Engerman, however, drew unwarranted inferences from the records which they examined.

Evidence already given in the present study indicates that Fogel and Engerman's sample of some 5,000 slaves can have been equivalent to only a very small percentage of the slaves sold at New Orleans during the 1804 to 1862 period.<sup>17</sup> The sales sampled appear to have been transactions recorded with the local public authorities. Such sales records, in the case of South Carolina at least, very much undercounted transactions involving the long-distance slave trade. In the many volumes of publically recorded South Carolina

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15. Calderhead, "How Extensive", pp.50-1.

16. Fogel and Engerman, Time on the Cross, I, p.53; II, p.53. Fogel and Engerman briefly described their sample of bills of sale in II, p.24, Table B.1.

17. See Chapter I on New Orleans's coastwise importations and Chapter VII on the stocking of the New Orleans market.

slave sales, very few sales to traders have been found. Those sales which were recorded with the South Carolina authorities tended very often to be non-routine transactions, including sales conducted on behalf of a third party; sales by or to a group of persons; sales in trust; and transfers by deed or gift. In such circumstances, where misunderstandings or duplicity might have been particularly likely to have arisen, or where a guardian executed his official duties, there was a special advantage to be gained from the official recording of a bill of sale.<sup>18</sup> If such sales recording patterns extended to Fogel and Engerman's New Orleans sample, the long-distance slave trade element would inevitably have been undercounted in that sample.

Furthermore, and more importantly, while Louisiana law required that teenage and adult slaves imported into that state during the limited period 1829 to 1834 should be accompanied by certificates of good character, and required that such certificates should indicate the state of origin of the slave concerned, there was no requirement that bills of sale should record the slave's state of origin. In 1834, even the requirement for certificates of good character seems to have lapsed.<sup>19</sup> Although bills of sale indicated the residence of the seller and far more frequently indicated the place of sale, they only very rarely gave any indication of the place of origin of the slave sold. It has been seen that the long-distance slave trade was quite commonly based upon partnership arrangements, with one partner spending much of his time in the net importing states. This arrangement meant that after importing slaves from the Upper South bills of sale signed in the Lower South by the slave selling partner might suggest, from that partner's reported place of residence, that the sale had been local rather than part of the long-distance slave trade. Thus, for example, Rice C. Ballard, on reselling slaves sent out to Mississippi by his Upper South partner, in those bills of sale which have been examined, gave Port Gibson and Natchez - both in Mississippi - as the only indications of his place of residence.<sup>20</sup> Similarly, where resident New

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18. Bills of Sale, South Carolina Secretary of State's Office (SCA).

19. On Louisiana's legislation, see Collins, Domestic Slave Trade, pp.126-8.

20. See bills of sale in Quitman Family Papers (SHC).

Orleans traders received slaves from brokers and petty traders of the Upper South, geographical references in the bills of sale issued by those New Orleans traders would have given no useful indication of the place of origin of the slaves sold.<sup>21</sup> The reported place of residence of slave sellers cannot, then, form a basis for inferring the character, local or inter-regional, of slave sales.

In order to arrive at an estimate of the extent of local sales, the present study draws upon evidence relating to judicial sales which took place in South Carolina - principally in Charleston district - during the 1850s. For that district very valuable records of probate and Master in Equity sales - the district's principal classes of judicial sales - are available. A continuous run of probate sales accounts indicates that in the 1850s, 4,193 slaves were sold at Charleston district probate sales, with just under 10 per cent being bought by traders identified in Table 3.2, and with the remainder being bought by the public at large.<sup>22</sup> Similarly, a continuous run of sales records for James Tupper, one of the two Charleston district Masters in Equity of the 1850s, is available for the period October 1851 to December 1859. The results of the Tupper records have been slightly expanded so as to take account of the whole decade concerned, and these expanded results show that Tupper would have sold a total of some 1,067 slaves in the 1850s, with about 17.5 per cent being sold to traders. Charleston district, representing the First Circuit of the South Carolina Court, was in the 1850s concurrently served by two Masters in Equity, both of whom - as a result of Equity Court cases - held regular sales of slaves and of other property. It therefore appears that Tupper, in combination with his colleague J.W.Gray, would in the 1850s have

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21. See Chapter V for examples of such marketing arrangements.

22. It is possible that some purchases by unidentified traders, with these and other records which will be mentioned, have wrongly been ascribed to the public at large. Any such error is unlikely, however, to have been significant. This is because, while identified traders purchased over several years, very few others appeared as purchasers at more than one of the judicial sales which have been studied.

TABLE 8.4: SLAVES SOLD IN CHARLESTON DISTRICT JUDICIAL SALES, 1850-1859

| Type of Sale                  | Bought by Traders | Bought by Non-traders | Slaves Sold | % Bought by Traders |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------|---------------------|
| Probate <sup>a</sup>          | 401               | 3,792                 | 4,193       | 9.6                 |
| Master in Equity <sup>b</sup> | 374               | 1,760                 | 2,134       | 17.5                |
| Sheriff <sup>c</sup>          | 34                | 393                   | 427         | 8.0                 |
| Totals                        | 809               | 5,945                 | 6,754       | 12.0                |

Sources and Notes:

- a Evidence derived from Charleston District Court of Ordinary: Inventories, Appraisals, and Sales (3 MS.vols., 1850-1859)(SCA).
- b Evidence derived from Charleston District Court of Chancery and Equity: Sales Book of James Tupper, Master in Equity (1 MS. Vol.1851-1859)(SCA).
- c Evidence derived from manuscript sales books of H.Skinner (sales of 1848-1852) and J.C.Rhame (1852-1856), Sheriffs of Sumter District, South Carolina (SCSO). In the first half of the 1850s, before Sumter was divided into two districts (Sumter and Clarendon), the Sumter sheriff sold an annual average of 22.5 slaves, with about 8 per cent being bought by identified traders. It is therefore estimated that in the whole decade a total of 222 slaves were sold by the sheriffs of the Sumter-Clarendon area. The estimate for Charleston district was made by comparing the sizes of the slave populations of Charleston district and the Sumter-Clarendon area.

sold a total of about 2,134 slaves.<sup>23</sup> Charleston district sheriff's sales records do not survive for the relevant period, but estimates have been made based on records for Sumter district, South Carolina. These records suggest that in the 1850s rather more than 400 slaves would have been sold by Charleston district's sheriffs, and suggest that traders probably purchased about 8 per cent of these slaves. The relatively small number of slaves sold at sheriff's sales is reflected in Charleston newspaper advertisements, for although it seems to have been the normal practice to advertise sheriff's sales the number of sheriff's advertisements was not large. Records of the several classes of sales which have been mentioned combine to suggest that, in the 1850s, 6,754 slaves were sold at Charleston district's judicial sales, with traders taking about 12 per cent. While these results - which are summarised in Table 8.4 - take no account of non-judicial local sales, approximate allowance will later be made for such sales.

The count of Charleston district judicial sales makes it possible to estimate the extent of the local sales of South Carolina as a whole. It is very probable that, in terms of the ratio of sales to numbers of slaves in the area concerned, judicial sales occurred at a roughly similar rate in most or all of the South. This is firstly because, with mortality rates varying relatively little over the South, the rate of incidence of probate sales is likely to have been similar in different slave-holding areas.<sup>24</sup>

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23. That Charleston district was shared by Tupper and Gray is shown in issues of Miller's Planter's and Merchant's Almanac for the years from 1850 to 1860. The Charleston Courier indicates that both Tupper and Gray regularly held sales of slaves.

24. As Chapter I has noted, the rate of incidence of probate sales was, in the 1850s, very similar in Charleston, a low-country district, and Anderson, an up-country district in the same state. Charleston district's estimated 1855 slave population (based on an average of 1850 and 1860 census totals) was 40,833; and in the 1850s 4,193 slaves - or 10.3 per cent of that district's estimated 1855 slave population - were sold at probate sales. Anderson district's estimated 1855 slave population was 7,969; and based on a count of October 1850 to October 1855 sales (Anderson district Court of Ordinary: Inventories, Appraisals, and Sales Book, 1850-1856, SCA), 1,024 Anderson slaves - or 12.8 per cent of that district's estimated 1855 slave population - would have been sold in the 1850s at probate sales.

Secondly, since the same price cycle has been seen to have affected the South as a whole, the rate of incidence of those judicial sales which arose out of debts is likely to have been similar in most slave-holding communities. With the strong probability that, in particular decades, judicial sales occurred at a roughly similar rate throughout South Carolina, the fact that Charleston district accounted for about 10 per cent of South Carolina's slave population suggests, therefore, that in the 1850s about 67,500 slaves were sold in South Carolina at judicial sales. Charleston district evidence suggests, furthermore, that something like 12 per cent of these slaves would have been sold to traders, so that the vast majority of the remaining total of some 59,400 slaves would have been sold to the local market, with a few per cent perhaps being accounted for by sales to visiting Lower South planters.<sup>25</sup> Since in the 1850s the volume of South Carolina's sales to the inter-regional slave trade - attributing 60 per cent of inter-regional transfers to the trade - was about 39,000, slaves sold to the local market at judicial sales appear, in South Carolina, to have been up to about 35 per cent more numerous than slaves sold to the inter-regional trade by the combination of judicial and non-judicial sales. When approximate allowance is made for non-judicial local sales, the excess of South Carolina's local sales over her inter-regional slave trade sales will be increased to a figure representing at least, and probably substantially more than, 50 per cent of those long-distance sales.

The above estimate of South Carolina's slave sales of the 1850s makes it possible approximately to compute for that decade the combined extent of the principal exporting states' local sales and sales to the trade. Since it is known from Table 8.2 that, in the 1850s, South Carolina's slave exportation

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25. The Charleston sample, it should be noted, probably exaggerates the inter-regional slave trade element and correspondingly undercounts the local element in South Carolina's judicial sales. This is because the rate of slave exportation from that district, and from the old-established low-country districts of the state generally, was higher than for South Carolina as a whole. In the 1850s, the Charleston district slave growth rate was -15.97 per cent, while the state's slave growth rate was +4.53 per cent.

rate was similar to that of the group of leading exporting states; since the rate of incidence of judicial sales would during the 1850s have been similar throughout the Upper South; and since in that decade South Carolina's local judicial sales exceeded that state's sales to the trade, it follows that the local judicial sales of the principal exporting areas would similarly have exceeded that region's sales to the slave trade. It is known, furthermore, that in the 1850s, as in earlier decades of the 1820 to 1860 period, at least 6.25 per cent of the net exporting states' slaves were sold to the trade.<sup>26</sup> This indicates, therefore, that in the 1850s sales to the trade, combined with the more numerous local sales, would have accounted for at least 15.6 per cent of that decade's slave population of the principal exporting states.

By an extension of these calculations, it now becomes possible to estimate, for the 1820 to 1860 period generally, the combined extent of the principal exporting states' local and long-distance sales. Chapter II has shown that in each of the decades from 1820 to 1860 an average of at least 6.25 per cent of the principal exporting states' slaves were sold to the trade. It appears, furthermore, that the rate of incidence of local judicial sales would, over those decades, have been similar or slightly higher than for the 1850s. This is, firstly, because the rate of incidence of probate sales, as a result of the approximate uniformity of mortality rates over the ante-bellum period, would have been fairly constant; and, secondly, because during the 1850s - a decade of general prosperity - the rate of incidence of those judicial sales which arose out of debts is likely to have been similar to or somewhat lower than that for the 1820 to 1860 period as a whole. From this it follows that, during each of the decades from 1820 to 1860, at least some 15.6 per cent of the slave population of the principal exporting states would have been sold by the combination of local and long-distance sales.

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26. In Chapter II, on the basis of the 10.25 transfer rate cited in Table 2.9, a slave trade transfer rate of at least 6.25 per cent and a planter migration transfer rate of up to 4 per cent were computed.

Chapter II has demonstrated that in a typical decade of the 1820 to 1860 period the 0 to 9/10 to 19, 10 to 19/20 to 29, 20 to 29/30 to 39, and 30 to 39/40 to 49 year old cohorts of the principal exporting states, at most, had respectively a 91.85, an 86.58, a 93.32 and a 95.9 per cent chance of not being sold to a trader.<sup>27</sup> When allowance is made for a 9.35 per cent local sales rate, the percentage chances of members of these cohorts not being sold during a particular decade are respectively adjusted to 82.50, 77.23, 83.97, and 86.55. These statistics indicate that a typical Upper South slave aged 9 years and under in 1820 and surviving to 1860 would have stood at least something like a 54 per cent chance of being sold-locally or inter-regionally - during that 40 year period.<sup>28</sup> Since, in the statistics drawn upon in this calculation, the estimate of non-judicial local sales was probably too low, it is possible that the proportion of the above Upper South slave group which experienced sale was in fact substantially greater than the 54 per cent which has been indicated.<sup>29</sup>

The slave-holders of the importing states were perhaps, on average, rather more prosperous and somewhat younger than those of the Upper South, so that in the former region the rate of incidence of probate sales and of

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27. See p.100, note 45.

28. The chance of not being sold would have been, at most,  $.825 \times .7723 \times .8397 \times .8655 = .4631$  (or 46.31 per cent).

29. In Time on the Cross, Fogel and Engerman, using statistics derived from Calderhead's study of Maryland slave sales, argued that the combined rate of local and long-distance sales was 1.92 per cent per year. They suggested that this rate was "low" and implied that it would not greatly have disturbed slave life (Time on the Cross, I, p.53). Gutman and Sutch (Reckoning with Slavery, pp.110-2) have pointed out, however, that, were one to accept Calderhead's statistics or Fogel and Engerman's adaptation of those statistics, it would appear that a typical slave - presumably a typical Upper South slave - had about a 50 to 70 per cent chance of being sold at least once over a 35 year lifetime. While the percentages which Gutman and Sutch computed do not greatly differ from those given in the present study, Chapter I of this study has suggested that, for several reasons, Calderhead's statistics do not form a reliable basis from which to make such computations.



judicial sales arising out of debts might have been slightly lower than in the exporting states. Nevertheless, over the 1820 to 1860 period, slaves born in the importing states and surviving to middle-age would probably have stood at least something like a 30 per cent chance of being sold.<sup>30</sup> In addition to sales, factors including slave hiring and non-market divisions of estates between heirs would also, in both the Upper and Lower South, have caused fundamental disruptions of slave communities.

#### IV

The sales rates which have been indicated mean that, in the ante-bellum period, Upper South-born slaves - the great majority of the slave population - were very likely to have experienced sale; and mean that in the South as a whole the typical slave could expect to see many relatives and friends sold. Anxiety over the possibility of being sold or of relatives and friends being sold, and distress experienced at times when sales occurred, must have been fundamental in determining the slave's attitudes towards the "peculiar institution".

While sale and the threat of sale formed an essential part of the slave's experience, the extent of Upper South slave-holders' involvement in the slave trade provides a valuable indication of the attitudes of those slave-holders towards the system of slavery. Since, in the principal exporting states, the average size of a slave-holding was about 9 slaves, and since death and sale removed slaves from those holdings, it appears that over a given decade the typical slave-owner of that section would have owned slightly more than 11

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30. This assumes for the importing states a decennial local sales rate of only about 8 per cent.

different slaves.<sup>31</sup> It has been seen that, on average, exporting state slave-holders sold at least 6.5 per cent of their slaves to the trader each decade, so that the typical slave-owner of that section would have sold a slave to the trade about every 12 years. Although, at a given time, the average exporting state slave-holding comprised 9 slaves, the typical slave lived on a holding which was twice that size, and about 46 per cent of the area's slaves lived on holdings which ranged from 20 up to several hundred slaves.<sup>32</sup> This meant that, in the principal exporting states, the typical slave found that his master sold a slave to the trade about every 6 years; and meant that on large slave-holdings sales to the trade would have been even more common. These sales practices - motivated essentially by the Upper South's desire to profit from favourable slave prices - must have brought profound distress to slave communities. The patterns of sale which have been outlined suggest that, though they disavowed such a description, Upper South slave-owners - particularly the more substantial among them - deserved to share with the trader the title of "Negro Speculator".

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31. For the sizes of slave holdings in 1850 and in 1860, see U.S.Census Office, Agriculture in the United States in 1860 (Washington, D.C., 1864), pp.247-8. During each decade, total slave-holdings would have been reduced by a mortality rate of at least 15 per cent and by a sales rate of at least 6.5 per cent. On mortality, see survival rates in Chapter II.

32. Based on reported sizes of slave-holdings (Agriculture...in 1860, p.248). Slave-holdings were reported in categories of 1 slave; 2 to 4 slaves; 5 to 9 slaves; 10 to 19 slaves: slave-holdings of 20 to over 1000 slaves were reported according to several categories. The average size of slave holdings of 2 to 4, 5 to 9, and 10 to 19 slaves are assumed respectively to have 3, 7, and 14.5 slaves.

CHAPTER IX

THE SLAVE TRADE AND THE SLAVE FAMILY

The system of slavery inevitably placed severe restrictions upon the role of slave parents as decision makers and as protectors of their families. Indeed, slavery was based upon the Negro's supposed incapacity for responsibility; and drawing upon this supposition, Southern legal codes, in order to protect the master's absolute right of property in his bondsmen, declared marriage between slaves to have no legal standing. At the same time, Southern lore made much of the claim that the master stood as the protector of his slaves and stood as one who sought to encourage among his "people" attachment to the institution of family. The extent and character of the domestic slave trade suggest, however, that the support of family life among slaves was only rarely a matter to which the slave-holder was profoundly committed.

I THE SLAVE BREEDING HYPOTHESIS

The Abolitionist school, far from seeing masters as the sponsors of stable slave families, maintained that the slave-holding community brutally frustrated the slave's ambitions of enjoying a stable family life. Abolitionists claimed that the Upper South, hampered by soil exhaustion and by the fact that much of its area was unsuited to cotton planting, failed to operate profitably on the basis of crop production. From this claim, Abolitionists went on to argue that in order to compensate for its agricultural disadvantages - disadvantages which both the pro-slavery and the anti-slavery schools tended significantly to exaggerate - the Upper South resorted to a system of slave breeding for the rapidly expanding Lower South market. In 1841, the American Anti-Slavery Society, in one of its principal publications on the nature of American slavery, sought to define the respective roles of what were termed the "breeding states" of the Upper South and the "buying states" of the Lower South. "The states called breeding states are not such exclusively", the Society argued,

neither are those called buying or consuming states exclusively such. The former work their slaves, as well as breed and sell them, and the latter produce [slaves] to a limited extent as well as buy [them]; though in both cases these are subordinate operations.

Typically, according to the same publication of 1841, the Upper South slaveholder

selects his "breeders", he encourages licentiousness, he rewards amalgamation, he punishes sterility, he coolly calculates upon the profits of fecundity, takes vengeance for miscarriages, and holds mothers accountable for the continued life and health of their offspring. On the head of the new-born child he sets its future price. He trains it in premeditated ignorance, he feeds it for the same purpose for which he feeds his swine - for the shambles. From the day of its birth he contemplates the hour he shall separate it from the mother who bore it... and when that hour comes...no entreaties or tears can surprise him into pity. The mother's frenzied cry, the boy's mute look of despair, move him not. He tears them asunder, handcuffs the victim, and consigns him to the soul driver. 1

While Abolitionists insisted that breeding slaves for the market was the leading characteristic of Upper South slavery, their publications usually dealt only in very general terms with the policies adopted in the management of the so called slave breeding system. It was, for example, not altogether clear whether Abolitionists assumed Upper South slaveholders deliberately to have neglected agriculture in order to concentrate on slave rearing, or whether - as was implied in their references to the slaves of both the Upper and Lower South being "severely tasked and driven" - the predominant position ascribed to slave breeding was merely seen as arising when, after full attention had been given to agriculture, incomes from crop production and from slave sales were compared. Again, it was not clear whether, by references to "selecting breeders", Abolitionists meant simply that when making purchases masters preferred those slaves whose age and fitness promised to produce a

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1. American Anti-Slavery Society, Slavery and the Internal Slave Trade, pp.25, 42, 31. Very similar descriptions of the "breeding and selling system" are found in Weld, Slavery As It Is, pp.15-6, 39, 85, 182-7, and in numerous other Abolitionist publications. On the Abolitionists' exaggeration of the Upper South's economic problems, see pp.261-75 in the present study.

substantial natural increase, or whether by such reference Abolitionists meant that slave-holders promoted polygamy, selective mating, and planned eugenics. Abolitionists, however, expressly and persistently maintained that one feature of the sexual exploitation of slaves arose out of the slaveholder's licentious attitude towards his slave women. Such licentiousness, the American Anti-Slavery Society argued, was "one of the foul features of slavery everywhere", but, the society maintained,

it is especially prevalent and indiscriminate where slave-breeding is conducted as a business....In the planting states [the master's] licentiousness is a passion, but in the breeding states it is both a passion and a [business] pursuit. The pecuniary inducement to general pollution must be very strong, since the larger the slave increase the greater the master's gains, and especially since the mixed blood [the Abolitionist publication maintained] demands a considerably higher price than the pure black. 2

Numerous studies have, in one form or another, accepted the Abolitionist claim that the Upper South specialised in the breeding of slaves for the inter-regional trade, and the principal arguments in support of the slave breeding hypothesis have been developed in articles by Conrad and Meyer (1958) and Richard Sutch (1975). While Conrad and Meyer did not discuss the methods adopted in the exporting states in order to encourage natural increase, Sutch argued that those states promoted promiscuity and polygamy and resorted to a system of "breeding farms" with, on each of those farms, one or two male slaves being mated with large numbers of female slaves.<sup>3</sup>

In their article of 1958, Conrad and Meyer advanced two lines of argument in support of their claim that the Upper South had operated a slave breeding system. Firstly, they argued that the age structure of the exporting states' slave population - a population showing higher proportions of slaves in the under 5 and in the 50 years and older categories than was the case with the importing states - suggested for the Upper South a remarkably high

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2. American Anti-Slavery Society, Slavery and the Internal Slave Trade, p.32. On the "severe tasking" of Upper South slaves see especially p.26 in the same publication.

3. See Conrad and Meyer, "The Economics of Slavery", especially pp.114-5; and Sutch, "The Breeding of Slaves", passim. One of the more influential studies giving a general survey of American slavery and accepting the slave breeding hypothesis has been G.Myrdal, An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy (New York, 1944, 1964), I, pp.121-2, cvi, cxxxviii.

fertility among younger adult slaves, and thus suggested an Upper South concentration on slave breeding. Secondly, Conrad and Meyer argued that while male slaves of a given age were everywhere more highly priced than females of the same age, the male-female gap in slave selling prices was proportionately less in the exporting states than in the importing states, so suggesting that the child-bearing role of slave women was especially highly valued in the exporting states. Neither of these arguments provide a satisfactory basis for the conclusion that the Upper South, to a greater extent than elsewhere in the slave states, concentrated on slave breeding. Rather than indicating an important regional breeding specialisation, the age structure of the Upper South's slave population is explained by the age-selective character of slave exportations from that area. Conrad and Meyer's second argument, their argument relating to supposed inter-regional variations in male-female slave price ratios, was not supported by satisfactory evidence. Little evidence was produced on Lower South slave prices, and, with the various Southern states, price evidence which was produced failed to indicate in more than the broadest of terms the ages and qualities of the slaves being compared.

In supporting the slave breeding hypothesis, Richard Sutch argued, firstly, that slave fertility rates (taken as the crude ratio of slave children per 1,000 slave women of breeding age) were higher in the exporting than in the importing states. Secondly, Sutch observed that inter-regional movements of male slaves were 7 per cent more numerous than inter-regional transfers of female slaves; and from this latter pattern of slave movements he argued that, with a view to slave breeding, the Upper South deliberately retained a surplus of female slaves. For a further group of arguments Sutch turned to evidence relating to some 2,600 slave-holdings, with about one thousand of those holdings being from the Upper South. He noted that males were more commonly found than females in those slave-holdings which were made up of only one slave; but found that in holdings which included females there was, especially in the Upper South, some predominance of females. This imbalance of the sexes was taken as an indication of polygamy and of slave breeding. Finally, from

the very substantial sample of slave-holdings which<sup>he</sup>/examined, Sutch found 47 holdings in which there were disproportionately large numbers of children and of women of child-bearing age; and of these 47 holdings 29 were located in the exporting states. The 47 holdings which he isolated were considered by Sutch to have been farms on which, by promoting polygamy and promiscuity, slaves were bred for the market.

With Sutch, as with Conrad and Meyer, evidence presented was unsatisfactory. The Upper South slave population's high crude fertility ratios - ratios in effect referred to by Conrad and Meyer as well as by Sutch - are, it has been seen, explained by the age-selective nature of slave trade exportations. That male slave exportations slightly exceeded female exportations, rather than as Sutch suggested being associated with the interests of Upper South "breeding farms", was as Chapter I has shown a product of the specialist demands of Louisiana's sugar plantations. Equally unsatisfactory were the inferences which Sutch drew from evidence on the relative numbers of male and female slaves belonging to individual holdings. It was, in fact, not surprising that, when only those slave-holdings which contained at least one woman were considered, women tended to outnumber men: by ignoring exclusively male slave-holdings and at the same time taking full account of exclusively female slave-holdings, Sutch's sample was inevitably biased towards females. That bias would have been particularly marked in the Upper South, where slave-holdings tended to be smaller than in the importing states, and where, therefore, large numbers of small all-male slave-holdings would, by Sutch's method, have been excluded.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, from a sample of some 2,600 slave-holdings there was little remarkable in the fact that 47 holdings showed disproportionately large numbers of children and of women of child-bearing age. The demographic characteristics of those 47 holdings, rather than being a product of specialised slave breeding, were very probably a result of some combination

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4. In 1860, for example, holdings in the principal exporting states averaged 9.2 slaves, and elsewhere averaged 11.1 slaves. It should be noted, however, that average holding sizes tend somewhat to misrepresent the experience of the typical slave. Thus, in 1860, 50 per cent of all U.S. slaves lived on holdings of 20 slaves or more and a similar percentage of the exporting area's slaves lived on holdings of 18 slaves or more. For the derivation of these statistics see p.285, above.

of employing female slaves as domestic servants and of situations in which the slave families of a plantation produced several daughters some of whom had children by off-plantation marriages.<sup>5</sup> Finally, and of considerable importance, Sutch's 47 "suspected breeding farms" actually displayed lower fertility ratios than those found in the Southern slave population as a whole.<sup>6</sup>

The severe limitations of the Conrad and Meyer and Sutch evidence did not necessarily mean that slave breeding, using something like animal stock rearing techniques, did not take place. Indeed, the narratives of ex-slaves occasionally refer to slave breeding practices. In the 1930s, Elige Davison, who had been a slave in Virginia, told his interviewer:

I been marry once 'fore freedom, with home weddin'. Massa, he bring some more women to see me. He wouldn't let me have jus' one woman. I have 'bout fifteen and I don't know how many children. Some over a hunerd, I's sho'.

When aged something over 90 years, Jephtha Choice, born in Texas in 1835, told his interviewer that his master in slavery times had been

mighty careful about raisin' healthy nigger families and used us strong, healthy young bucks to stand the healthy nigger gals. When I was young they took care not to strain me and I was as handsome as a speckled pup and was in demand for breedin'. Later on we niggers was 'lowed to marry and master and missus would fix the nigger and gal up and have the doin's [wedding celebrations] in the big house.

Such testimonies, if they were not excessively exaggerated recollections of youthful days, indicate that masters sometimes engaged in slave breeding practices. In the narratives of ex-slaves, such testimonies are, however, so rare as to provide no real indication of whether or not Upper South masters commonly engaged in "stock rearing" methods. Moreover, as the Jephtha Choice narrative shows, these exceptional testimonies, when they did occur, were not confined to the so-called breeding states.<sup>7</sup>

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5. On Sutch's 47 "suspected breeding farms", the average number of slave adults per holding was 12.5, and the average slave woman/slave man ratio was 3 to 1 (see Sutch, pp.196-7, Table 14). The demographic character of Sutch's 29 Upper South farms was very similar to that of his 18 importing state farms.
  6. In his 47 farms, the average ratio of slave children (0 to 14 years) to slave women (15 to 44 years) was 2,055 per thousand: in the Southern slave population as a whole, the ratio, according to the 1850 census, was 2,267 children per thousand.
  7. Davison and Choice ex-slave narratives recorded by the Federal Writers Project and appearing in G.P.Rawick (ed.), The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography (Westport, Conn., 1972), IV part I (Texas narratives), pp.299-218.



Even though the direct testimonies of slaves fail to provide a satisfactory body of information with which to test the slave breeding hypothesis, valuable evidence is available from other sources. Any slaveholders seeking to breed slaves by "stock rearing" methods might be expected to have encouraged polygamy and to have sought to promote "stock improvement" by mating slave women with selected male slaves or - following the Abolitionist claim that mulatto offspring was particularly valuable - with white males. Evidence presented below suggests that the extensive use of such barbaric methods was, apart from the influence of ethical considerations, ruled out by factors of practicality.

The employment of very high woman-man ratios and the promotion of some form of polygamy did not, it seems, promise particularly attractive economic returns on investment. Because of the age-selective nature of inter-regional slave trade demand, those selling to the trade would, from the birth of each slave, have had to have waited at least 8 and more often something like 15 to 25 years before marketing their "crop"; and during the intervening period, hypothetical breeding farms, being composed essentially of young children and of child-bearing women, would have been enormously inefficient agricultural crop producing units.<sup>8</sup> The extreme delay in obtaining economic returns would surely not have recommended such farms to investors in slave property. Furthermore, as Herbert Gutman has, with impressive evidence, recently argued, the vast majority of slave children lived in two-parent families.<sup>9</sup> Such a situation not only suggests that breeding farms with high female-male ratios must have been very exceptional, but argues that masters - rather than being able, for the purposes of "stock improvement", to ensure that females were mated with particularly healthy male slaves - must have left the "quality" of their "stock" largely to pairings of regular spouses.

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8. On the structure of the slave trade see Chapter II; and on the age at which slaves were sold separately from their mothers see discussion of Table 9.2 in part V of the present chapter.

9. Gutman's evidence, drawn from plantation records, Freedman's Bureau registers of marriage, and from numerous other sources, is summarised in part V of the present chapter. The same section of this chapter provides evidence on a sample of large probate sales, and in those sales the overwhelming trend was for slave children to appear in two-parent family groupings.

As Abolitionists claimed, numbers of slave women were sexually exploited for the pleasure of white males. Indeed, apart from the exploitation of certain field girls and servants, there was a specialist traffic in particularly attractive slave girls who were sold as "fancies" or concubines. Typical of many traders was R.M.Owings who told a Charleston slave supplier that he was "at all times" interested in buying "all likely and handsome fancy girls...if they can be got at reasonable prices". Similarly, surviving correspondence relating to the Richmond market quite frequently refers to the sale of "fancies" - often "bright" or "brown skin girls" selling some 30 per cent or more above the price of "No.1" field girls of the same age.<sup>10</sup> Exceptionally, instances are found when the offspring of slave mistresses are shown as having been somewhat systematically sold. In 1854, the judge in a South Carolina court case deplored the 80 year old plaintiff's "depraved appetite for the society of... [a certain] wench". The judge was told that at the time of the court hearing Ephraim Christopher, the plaintiff seeking payment for certain slaves, was

living in the same house with the slave Maria [a woman of 37 years], and living with her as his mistress. Her [13] children were all mulattos and supposed to be the children of the complainant. He had been selling one [of the children] almost every year. John Bates senior had purchased four or five of them at the several times when each one of them was about 9 or 10 years, at about \$225....The Rev.David Blythe had purchased one of them, and Mr.Cox had likewise purchased one.

While Christopher's dispersed mulatto family had certainly brought him a considerable income, that income was surely the result of his callousness and of his likeing for "the society of the wench", rather than, as Abolitionists might have suggested, being in part a result of considerations relating to

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10. See Owings to Oakes, 24 Dec. 1856, Oakes Papers (BPL). On "fancies" see also Scruggs to Oakes, 20 July 1854, and Otey to Oakes, 20 Mar. 1857, Oakes Papers (BPL). On "fancies" in the Richmond market see Thomas to Finney, 26 July, 22 Oct., and 24 Dec. 1859, Finney Papers (DU); Toler to Ferguson, 15 and 26 Feb. 1859, Ferguson Papers (NCA); and S. & R.F.Omohundro Account Book (UVA).

the special market value of mulatto offspring. Indeed, it appears that, apart from exceptionally attractive mulatto girls sold as "fancies", mulattos of both sexes sold less well than Negroes. In contrast with Abolitionist claims then, the ratio of mulatto to black slave prices suggests that miscegenation would not have been regarded in the slave market as contributing towards "stock improvement".<sup>11</sup>

Evidence already referred to suggests that the promotion of polygamy and the use of planned eugenics must, everywhere in the South, have been extremely rare. This suggestion is reinforced by the fact that, in the numerous slave traders' correspondence collections which have been consulted in the course of pursuing the present study, no references to such practices, or to specialist slave breeding farms of any kind, have been found. Furthermore, the price and demographic structures of the inter-regional slave trade very strongly suggest that natural increase among slaves was no more highly valued in the so-called breeding states than in the importing states. The character of demand for slaves - a demand to an important extent determined by the Lower South - was such that, except for those with special skills and training experience, prices of male slaves were highest for those aged from 19 to 25 years and prices of females were highest for those aged from 16 to 20 years.<sup>12</sup> Similarly, in terms of volume, the inter-regional slave trade was, with male slaves, concentrated in the 15 to 24 age range, and more particularly in the middle and upper part of that range; and, with females, the trade was concentrated in the 10 to 19 age range, again with the middle and upper part of that range being particularly important.<sup>13</sup>

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11. Greenville District Equity Court (SC), Christopher v. Bates, 1854, Bill 208, (SCA). On the relative prices of mulattos and Negroes, see pp.149-50, above.

12. See Richmond trade quotations for No.1 slaves (Appendix B, Table B.1); and see contrasting male and female price trends for slaves of the 12 to 39 age range (Reid index, Appendix B, Table B.3). The age-price peak in the trader Tyre Glen's index of male slave prices was at 20 years (see Appendix B, Table B.2).

13. See p.57, Table 2.3 (lines A and B).

These price and age characteristics indicate that, with males, the Lower South preferred to import those who were at or near the peak of their fitness and who were able to promise a long career of hard physical labour. The preference, in importing females, for those of a somewhat younger age range (females who had not necessarily reached the peak of their potential value as field workers, but who were at or near the start of their child-bearing years) and the fact that, except in the special case of Louisiana's sugar plantations, the Lower South imported approximately equal numbers of male and female slaves, seem very much to indicate a strong Lower South concern for the promotion of natural increase.<sup>14</sup>

## II "SLAVE BREEDING" BROADLY DEFINED

While, very probably, natural increase among slaves was accorded no less importance by Lower South slave-holders than by the slave-owners of the Upper South, and while, in both the exporting and importing states, slave breeding in the sense of the fostering of polygamy and "stock improvement"

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14. It should be noted that in their study of slave prices Fogel and Engerman found the price peak for males to be at about age 27, and for females to be at about age 24 (see Time on the Cross, I, p.76, Figure 18). The discrepancy between Fogel and Engerman's age-price peaks and those indicated in the slave trade materials cited in Appendix B of the present study seems to arise because, while Fogel and Engerman's price sample (derived from probate records) would have included highly-priced skilled slaves, the age-price data in Appendix B relates to prime field slaves with no special skill. Since craftsmen, slave drivers, and coachmen, as well as housekeepers, cooks, and domestics of one sort or another, acquired their special value after a period of experience and training, the inclusion of skilled slaves in Fogel and Engerman's sample would have delayed the apparent age-price peaks for typical field slaves. In the 1830s, J.H.Ingraham, after a visit to the Natchez slave market, provided information on prices for various classes of slaves. A male field hand, he noted, could not at the time of his visit be bought in Natchez for less than \$800, or a field girl for less than \$600. Turning to skilled slaves, he noted that \$1000 was a common price for body-servants; good mechanics sometimes sold for as much as \$2000 and rarely for less than \$900; coachmen were highly priced; house-servants were at all times worth from 10 to 30 per cent more than field hands; and a good seamstress or a nurse usually commanded from \$700 to \$1000 (see Ingraham, The South-West, by A Yankee, pp.244-5). U.B.Phillips noted that prices for mechanics were often twice as high as those for field hands of similar age (see American Negro Slavery, p.370). Reid's citation for mechanics supports Phillips observation (see Appendix B, Table B.3, below).

must have been extremely rare, slave breeding much more broadly defined - defined simply as the encouragement of natural increase - was a leading concern of slave-holders. This concern was exemplified by the South Carolina planter J.H.Hammond, who noted in his diary:

Ten years today since I took possession [of the plantation]. Great changes in that time. It is most melancholy to read that my negroes have in that period actually decreased in the course of nature. There have been 73 births and 82 deaths. I complained when I arrived here that this gang had increased only 9 in four years. Sa~~m~~e experience has taught me that I did great injustice. In my ten years [the slaves] have just decreased that much. And yet I have taken more pains to raise young negroes and nurse all than to do anything else. It has been p[reying?] on my mind and I have read, consulted with everyone and spared no exertion - but all in vain. The hand of fate appears to interpose and forbid prosperity to me. 15

Hammond's disappointments with slave increase - disappointments perhaps attributable to an unusually high average age among his slaves - were not the typical experience of Southern slave-holders. Indeed, federal censuses show that in the South as a whole natural increase among slaves averaged about 25 per cent per decade. They show, too, that, despite particularly high infant mortality among slaves, fertility ratios were substantially higher among slaves than among whites.<sup>16</sup>

The birth rates of both free white and slave women would have been determined by the mother's age at first and last birth and by the length of interval between births, while infant mortality would have been very much influenced by the quality of treatment afforded to pregnant women and to their infants. Collated information on certain of the above factors is very far from being abundant. It appears, however, that there were important similarities between slave and white mothers in their child spacing and age

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15. Hammond Diary, 5 Nov. 1841, James H.Hammond Papers (SCL).

16. According to the U.S. census, in 1850, the number of children aged 0 to 4 years per 1,000 women aged 15 to 39 years was for slaves 842 and for whites only 723. Similar fertility ratio contrasts occurred at other censuses, and within the 15 to 39 age group there was no significant difference in the age structure of the female white and slave populations. On the question of infant mortality see Gutman and Sutch in Reckoning with Slavery, pp.283-92, where the findings of several historians are reported. Gutman and Sutch attributed high slave infant mortality to the slave's "extreme poverty, low birth weights, and poor post-natal care" (Reckoning, p.292).

at last birth.<sup>17</sup> At the same time, there were clear differences between white and slave mothers in their age at birth of first child, and there were very probably substantial differences between whites and slaves in the treatment of pregnant women and of infants. These latter factors - the age of mothers at birth of first child, and the treatment of pregnant women and of infants - appear to be particularly important in indicating the degree of slave-holders' interest in slave rearing.

Fogel and Engerman's claims that masters fostered "prudish" behaviour among their slaves, and that the average age of slave women at the birth of their first surviving child was as old as 22.5 years, are surely invalid. Their 22.5 years statistic was based on a survey of probate records, with observations being arrived at by means of subtracting from each mother's age the age of her eldest identifiable child. As Gutman and Sutch have pointed out, however, by ignoring factors including the very high child mortality rate among slaves, the selling away of children (especially, it might be added, older children), and the listing of certain older children separately from their mothers, Fogel and Engerman's results necessarily contain a strong upward bias in the observed age of mothers at first birth.<sup>18</sup> In contrast with Fogel and Engerman's conclusion, evidence on the ages of female slaves traded from the Upper South, and evidence on the age-price peak for female slaves

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17. In a comparison between a sample of some 260 slave mothers and several hundred whites living in Hingham, Massachusetts, R.H.Steckel found average slave and white ages at birth of last child to be respectively about 38 and 40 years (R.H.Steckel, "The Economics of U.S. Slave and Southern Free White Fertility", unpublished paper, University of Chicago (1973), tables 2 and 3, p.8). The child spacing interval, at about 28 months, was very similar when the slave sample and the Hingham sample for the years 1641 to 1820 are compared, although - probably as a result of the increased practice of contraception by whites - the white child spacing interval lengthened by about 10 months in the 1820 to 1860 period. As Steckel points out, since breast feeding tends to inhibit conception, the slave and the pre-1820 white child spacing intervals are consistent with the absence of artificial contraceptive practices and with breast feeding during the infant's first 12 to 18 months (Steckel, pp.2,8,9,15; see also Fogel and Engerman, Time on the Cross, pp.136-7).

18. See Fogel and Engerman, Time on the Cross, I, pp.129-30, 137-8; and see Gutman and Sutch in Reckoning with Slavery, pp.139-40. On child mortality see Reckoning with Slavery, pp.283-92. Using the unsatisfactory method indicated above, Fogel and Engerman also analysed certain plantation journals and found an average of about 21.5 years for the age of mothers at the birth of their first surviving child (Time on the Cross, II, p.114). This result was ignored in Fogel and Engerman's primary volume.

(females of about 16 to 20 years being in the greatest demand), has already suggested that owners expected most slave girls to begin "breeding" by about their sixteenth year. Moreover, Herbert Gutman has recently analysed a substantial sample of plantation records and has reported that those records "can support a median age... [at birth of first child] of no more than 19 years".<sup>19</sup> Since it appears that in the ante-bellum period most women became fertile from about age 16.5, significantly older than today, it seems that slave women usually conceived within 12 to 18 months of becoming fertile.<sup>20</sup> Such a pattern contrasted with the mores of Southern white society where, in the ante-bellum period, the average age of females when first married was about 20.5 years, and at the birth of first child was probably about 21.5 to 22 years.<sup>21</sup> The superintendent of the 1850 federal census, although he observed that the census did not in any deliberate way collect information on slave marriages, seems to have been correct in remarking that marriages between slaves took place, "upon the average, much earlier than those of whites or free colored,

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19. Reckoning with Slavery, p.142; and see also Gutman, The Black Family, pp.50,114,124,160,171, and 607.
  20. On age at fertility in the ante-bellum period, see J.M.Tanner, Growth at Adolescence (Oxford, 1962), pp.152-3; and Gutman and Sutch in Reckoning with Slavery, pp.144-5. Tanner (pp.105-7) shows that age at fertility differs little as a result of race, and demonstrates that the decline in the age at menarche (and hence the age at beginning of fertility) is essentially the result of improvements in diet and in general socio-economic circumstances.
  21. A sample of 3,302 marriages contracted by South Carolina whites in the years 1858 and 1859 shows that about 55 per cent of females were 20 years or older when marrying for the first time; and shows that when second and any subsequent marriages are included 59.3 per cent of marriages were contracted by females aged 20 years or older (Reports and Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina Passed at the Annual Session of 1860 (Columbia, 1860), pp.87-9). Similarly, the 1850 census shows that, at South Carolina marriages (including second and subsequent unions) contracted by whites in 1849-50, just under 62 per cent of females were 20 years and older. The same census showed similar ages at marriage for Louisiana white females and rather higher ages for Kentucky females (Statistical View of...Seventh Census, p.111, Table CXII). The 1860 census showed for Kentucky an average age of women at marriage (including second and subsequent marriages) of 22.3 years (Population of the United States in 1860, p.xxxvi). Steckel, in his sample of Massachusetts whites, found that in the 1641 to 1820 period there was an average of about a 13 to 16 month delay between marriage and birth of first child, and found that in the 1821 to 1860 period the delay lengthened to about 18 months (Steckel, "The Economics", p.9, Table 4).

and...[were] probably more productive than either."<sup>22</sup>

The role of masters in encouraging early mating between slaves could in the ante-bellum period be seen at a wide range of levels, and in some instances, as the former Texas slave Katie Darling told her interviewer, slaves were very deliberately brought together to become spouses and to produce children.

"Niggers didn't cou't then like they do now. Massa [used to] pick out a po'tly man and a po'tly gal and just put 'em together. What he want am de stock", she explained.<sup>23</sup> The slave-holder G.B.Wallace of Virginia seems to have had a similar plan in mind when he asked his neighbour to "please be so good as to look out for me a breeding woman under 20 years of age - also a young active man".<sup>24</sup> It should be noted, however, that although sales would

eventually have disrupted many slave unions, slaves would often have played a considerable role in selecting their own mates. With the very numerous small slave-holdings on which mates were not available for all adult slaves, and where masters were not prepared to buy mates, it is likely that slaves quite commonly had an important degree of choice in finding off-plantation partners.<sup>25</sup> Again, it is probable that with substantial slave-holdings masters would usually have been willing to let the marriage market within the plantation, to a large extent, take its own course. Indeed, although miscarriages are a partial explanation, the gap between the onset of female fertility and the birth of first child - apparently a gap of some 12 to 18 months longer than the normal term of pregnancy - suggests that the slave marriage market had an important voluntary element.

With the pairing of slaves probably tending to have an important voluntary element, the master's encouragement of slave mating and of sustained breeding seems often to have been of an essentially indirect nature. Very commonly, it seems, masters, partly with a view towards natural increase, encouraged what

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22. Statistical View of...Seventh Census, p.92.

23. K.Darling in Rawick (ed.), The American Slave, Texas Narratives part I, p.279.

24. Wallace to Grinnan, 18 Apr. 1855, Grinnan Family Papers (UVA).

25. The extent of off-plantation marriages is discussed in part V of the present chapter.



despite the law was called slave marriage. On the question of the encouragement of slave marriage, the rules which Edward Spann Hammond set down for his overseers were, if a little more detailed than most, similar to those appearing in a great many planters' records. E.S.Hammond required that no slave from his plantation should marry without his, the owner's, permission, and added:

Marriage should be encouraged as it adds to the comfort, happiness and health of those who enter upon it, besides insuring a greater increase. No negro should be allowed, where it can possibly be obviated to have a wife not belonging to his master. Where sufficient cause can be shown on either side a marriage may be annulled, but the offending party must be severely punished. After such a separation the offending party should not be allowed to marry again for three years. As an encouragement to marriage, the first time any two get married a bounty of \$5 is to be invested in household articles, or an equivalent of articles should be given to them. If one of them has been married before the bounty should be \$2.50, or equivalent. A third marriage should not be allowed but in extreme cases, and in such cases, or where both have married before, no specific bounty should be given. 26

By providing that slaves should obtain his permission before marrying or divorcing, E.S.Hammond, like many other masters, sought to promote orderly arrangements between slaves and, of great importance from the master's point of view, by acting as the regulator of the slave family he sought to emphasise the slave's dependence upon him.<sup>27</sup> At the same time, Hammond and other masters were able to offer significant inducements towards early slave marriage and hence towards high slave birth rates. Marriage bounties given by masters; the availability of a cabin for newly-weds; and the continued incorporation of married slaves within the rudimentary subsistence arrangements of the plantation regime meant that - in contrast with free citizens who usually had to undertake a period of saving before being able to set up home - slaves had on economic grounds no reason to delay before marriage. On some holdings, furthermore, masters not only gave bounties to newly married couples but

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26. Silverton Plantation Rules, Edward Spann Hammond Papers (SCL).

27. On the need to obtain the master's permission before marrying or divorcing see also Stamp, The Peculiar Institution, pp.340-3; Blassingame, The Slave Community, pp.80-2; and Gutman, The Black Family, p.271.

emphasised their enthusiasm for natural increase by giving presents to the mothers of new-born children.<sup>28</sup>

That the great majority of North American slave-holders very much welcomed natural increase among their slaves can surely be in no doubt. Even so, there was among slave infants a massive rate of wastage. Indeed, it has already been seen that infant mortality was far higher among slaves than among whites. The massive mortality rates among slave infants - rates which appear to have been just as high in the exporting states as in the importing states - suggest that the slave rearing system worked very inefficiently; and, while the causes of the contrast between slave and free white infant mortality rates are not altogether clear, that contrast, together with other evidence already presented, suggests that no section of the South can have been given over essentially to systematic slave breeding. It appears, in fact, that masters might well have been prepared to accept a high rate of infant mortality in return for making economies in the diet and maintenance of slaves and in return for continuing, with relatively few concessions to their special needs, to employ pregnant women and nursing mothers in plantation field work.<sup>29</sup>

Contrary to Abolitionist claims, then, crop production does not, even in the exporting states, appear to have been subordinate to slave rearing. The Southern states, furthermore, cannot on any widespread scale have adopted specialist breeding farms, brought about slave polygamy, or resorted to the sort of "stock improvement" methods cited by their severest critics. At the same time, masters very much welcomed natural increase among their slaves and in a situation where slave sex ratios were usually balanced (so facilitating the pairing of slaves); where masters encouraged slaves to start families; where economic barriers against early marriage did not operate; and where contraceptive knowledge must have been almost completely lacking, very vigorous birth and natural increase rates obtained.

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28. On rewards to mothers of new-born infants see, for example, Stamp, The Peculiar Institution, pp.250-1.

29. On the overwork of pregnant women and nursing mothers see, for example, Genovese, Roll, Jordan, Roll, pp.497-9, and see Blassingame, The Slave Community, pp.93-4. On infant mortality generally, see Gutman and Sutch in Reckoning with Slavery, pp.282-92.

III THE DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIAL IMPACT OF THE SUGAR STAPLE: LOUISIANA

In sharp contrast with the vigorous natural increase of the North American slave population as a whole was the demographic history of slavery in the sugar producing parishes of Louisiana. As Table 9.1 indicates, those parishes persistently failed to sustain anything like the United States' average decennial slave natural increase rate. In the 1850 to 1860 period, despite importing at least 7,800 slaves, the group of Louisiana's 13 leading sugar producing parishes achieved a slave population growth, through the combination of natural increase and slave importations, of only 18.3 per cent - substantially below the South's average of a 23.4 per cent slave natural increase in that decade. When identifiable slave importations are discounted, it is apparent, even without making an adjustment for children born to the decade's imported slaves, that in the 1850s the natural increase rate of the 13 leading sugar parishes was not more than 7.6 per cent. Similar calculations for the 1820s, even before discounting children born to that decade's massive importation of over 18,000 slaves, indicate that the sugar parishes' natural increase was substantially below the Southern norm for that decade. Had increase on importations (and had certain other factors noted immediately after Table 9.1) been accounted for, the sugar parishes' natural increase rate for the 1820s would very probably have appeared as not more than about 5 per cent. The natural growth rates of the Louisiana sugar areas, while contrasting sharply with the United States' slave growth rate norm, were strikingly similar to those of the West Indies and of South America - areas where, like southern Louisiana, the sugar staple was predominant in plantation agriculture.<sup>30</sup>

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30. For evidence on slave natural growth rates in almost all parts of the West Indies and South America, see Curtin, Atlantic Slave Trade, pp.29-30, 36-44, 58-60, 62-4, 69-71, 77, 79, 80-4. Curtin notes that the demographic history of the sugar regions of the West Indies and South America tended to fall into a regular pattern. With the initial phase of settlement, the ratio of African slave importations to local slave population was very high. Then, as a region reached something like full crop production, its total slave population began to level off, with slave importations continuing but only at a rate sufficient to make up the deficit between births and deaths. Over time, the proportion of local-born slaves increased; the deficit between births and deaths diminished and then disappeared. (Barbados reached this latter stage in about 1810 and Jamaica by the 1840s.) From this point - late in the history of slaveholding in the individual region concerned - slave importations became insignificant, and a slight, and then a more rapid, natural increase appeared (see Curtin, pp.29-30).

TABLE 9.1 : ESTIMATES OF SLAVE NATURAL GROWTH RATES IN LOUISIANA'S PRINCIPAL SUGAR PRODUCING PARISHES: THE 1820s AND 1850s

|       | Slave Population of Principal Sugar Parishes <sup>a</sup> |                             |                   |                                     |  | U.S. Slave Population Natural Growth Rate |
|-------|---|-----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------------|--|---|
|       | Population at Start of Decade                             | Population at End of Decade | Crude Growth Rate | Estimated Importations <sup>b</sup> | Natural Growth Rate Not More Than <sup>c</sup> |   |
| 1820s | 19,599  | 42,632                      | 117.5%            | 18,470                              | 23.3%  | 31.2% <sup>d</sup>                        |
| 1850s | 73,829  | 87,340                      | 18.3%             | 7,874                               | 7.6%   | 23.4%                                     |

SOURCES AND NOTES:

Basic population statistics are derived from published federal censuses.

- a Represents the sugar parishes cited in Table 1.4 (p.42). Jefferson, St. Mary, and Terrebonne - parishes settled during the 1820s - did not appear in the 1820 census. The 1830 populations of these parishes are, however, included in the statistics and calculations presented above.
- b Importations totals are derived from "preliminary" totals as in Table 1.4. Imported slaves, after having been transferred during a particular decade, are assumed to have been subject to 35 per cent of that decade's mortality rate (see method described pp.86-7). In the present table no account is taken of any imported slaves who were aged 0 to 9 at the end of their decade of importation (i.e. at 1830 or at 1860). The age structure of importations into sugar parishes (see Table 1.4) suggests that in the parishes here examined such child transfers would not have been very numerous.
- c Growth rate cited will in fact be somewhat above actual natural growth rate. This is firstly because, by assuming that sugar parish survival rates were no lower than those for the U.S. generally, importations are probably underestimated. Secondly, none of the children aged 0 to 9 years at the end of the decade concerned are taken as having been imported or, more importantly, as having been born to slaves imported during that decade.
- d. Derived as in Table 2.10.

Several factors - most importantly it seems, the sex structure of domestic slave trade importations, the work regime of sugar plantations, and the disease environment of the sugar area - combined to determine the very low natural growth rates of the Louisiana sugar parishes. It has already, in Chapter I, been shown that the sex structure of slave importations into these parishes contrasted markedly with that of importations into the Lower South as a whole. The heavy male predominance in the domestic slave trade to the Louisiana sugar area meant, in fact, that in the principal reproductive age group - taken as being those from about 15 to 49 years of age - males made up some 57 per cent of the sugar area's slave population.<sup>31</sup> In the North American slave population as a whole sex ratios were almost evenly balanced and in that situation child births, each decade, compensated for a slave population death rate of at least some 15 per cent, and beyond that contributed an excess of births over deaths of some 25 per cent.<sup>32</sup> Over a decade, therefore, the combination of replacement and natural increase was normally equivalent to some 40 per cent of the slave population present at the start of that decade. With only about 43 rather than 50 per cent of the sugar area's reproductive population being female, the child-bearing potential of that area's slave population would, on the basis of sex ratios, have been only about 86 per cent of the United States' norm. Considered in isolation, the sex ratio of the sugar area's slave population would, then, have reduced that area's maximum potential natural growth rate from about 25 to about 19 per cent.

The fact that (as tables 1.4 and 2.2 have indicated) substantial numbers of females - and predominantly females soon to enter or newly entered into their child-bearing years - were imported into the sugar area of Louisiana very much suggests that natural increase was highly valued in the sugar

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31. Censuses show, for example, that of the sugar area's slaves aged 14 to 44 in 1820, 58 per cent were male; and show that of that area's 15 to 49 slave population of 1860, 57 per cent were male.

32. Census evidence suggest that, in the 1820 to 1860 period, about 85 per cent of slaves alive at the beginning of a given decade survived to the end of that decade. The fact that censuses tended greatly to under-represent infant mortality is of no great importance in the present connection.

producing area. Nevertheless, the fertility ratios of slaves in the sugar parishes were exceptionally low. In 1860, for example, the ratio between children of 0 to 9 years and women of 15 to 49 years was, in the Southern states generally, 1,320 children per thousand women; in the importing states as a whole the ratio was 1,104 per thousand; and in the Louisiana sugar parishes the ratio was only 922 per thousand. The low fertility ratio of the sugar parishes resulted in part from the selective importation of adult slaves. Indeed, with the slave trade to the several importing states, factors including the Upper South's practice of selling slave women while sometimes retaining certain of the children of those women (a practice discussed in section V below); the traders' practice of purchasing large numbers of female slaves who were just under child-bearing age; and the trader's probable disinclination to buy and transport pregnant women, would have depressed Lower South fertility ratios. That, not only in 1860 but in the ante-bellum period generally, the sugar area's fertility ratio was lower than the ratio of other importing areas was to some extent a result of the fact (indicated in Table 2.3) that compared with other parts of the Lower South the sugar parishes included in their importations an exceptionally small proportion of children. Even by discounting imported adult slaves and thereby adjusting the sugar area's fertility ratio from 922 up to 1,068 per thousand, the fertility ratio of the sugar area remains, however, very markedly below the 1,320 per thousand Southern norm.<sup>33</sup> Such a situation suggests that, in addition to the effects of the sugar area's sex structure, the fertility ratios and natural increase rates of the area's slave population must, to an unusual extent, have been depressed by factors such as overwork and disease environment.

Chapter I has already drawn attention to the especially demanding labour regime of the sugar plantation, and has drawn attention to the assoc-

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33. In contrast, the fertility ratio of the importing states as whole, when subject to a similar partial adjustment - that is discounting adult but not child importations - rises far above the Southern norm (see p.90).

iation of that labour system with the domestic slave trade importation of predominantly male consignments comprising slaves of a particularly sturdy make-up. The strenuous nature of work involved in sugar production very probably took its toll on the slave population. Overwork of pregnant women and of young mothers nursing children would have tended to depress fertility ratios, while, for the slave population generally, overwork would have tended to reduce survival rates. In the 1850s, the extremely low survival rates of the sugar area's 40 years and over/50 years and over slave population cohorts (see Table 1.4) seem to reflect a combination of overwork and of a particularly harsh disease environment. That the disease environment of the sugar parishes was particularly hostile, contributing to the poor demographic performance of those parishes, is suggested by the area's exceptionally low survival rates for the 0 to 4 years/10 to 14 years slave cohorts (see Table 1.4), and, more generally, is suggested by the common association of unhealthy conditions with the sort of swampy terrain and humid climate which obtained in the Louisiana sugar area. The poor demographic performance of the Louisiana sugar parishes appears, then, to be explained by the combination of the area's disease environment and work regime together with the unbalanced sex ratios of the area's slave importations.

In addition to its effects on natural increase, the unbalanced sex ratios of domestic slave trade importations into the Louisiana sugar area had important effects on the character of the slave family in the sugar parishes. Predominantly male slave importations meant that in the sugar area many males could not find marriage partners - a situation which must have created a particularly difficult environment for the slave family, and which probably meant that attachment to marital ties was weaker in the Louisiana sugar area than in other agricultural sections of the South. Although he did not give any indication of the sex ratio on the slave-holding concerned, Herbert Gutman, in describing Louisiana's Sterling sugar plantation, touched upon the special circumstances of the slave family in Louisiana's sugar region. His finding that - according to a comparison of Sterling plantation records with the records of numerous non-sugar producing plantations - an

unusually high proportion of Sterling women had children outside of settled marital unions and by un-named fathers, is very probably explained by the relative scarcity of women on sugar plantations.<sup>34</sup> To varying extents according to the rate of importation into particular areas and at particular times, the consistently male-dominated Atlantic slave trade would also, like the domestic slave trade to the Louisiana sugar parishes, have weakened the slave family by creating shortages of women. In the pre-1808 period, then, the Atlantic slave trade would have imposed certain pressures on the North American slave family. The fact that the rate of Atlantic slave trade importation into North America was, during all or almost all of its duration, far lower than the common rate of importation into South America and into the West Indies meant, however, that the pressures created by the Atlantic slave trade would have been far less in North American than elsewhere in the Americas.<sup>35</sup>

#### IV THE DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIAL IMPACT OF THE SUGAR STAPLE: THE WEST INDIES AND SOUTH AMERICA

In recent years growing attention has been paid to the comparative study of the slave-holding systems which obtained in the Americas. An early study by Frank Tannenbaum (1947) maintained, on the basis of certain evidence relating to respect for the Latin American slave's humanity and relating to the South American slave's access to freedom, that Latin American slaves were better treated than were North American slaves. Tannenbaum's interpretation gained wide currency with the historians of North American slavery when it was incorporated in Elkins's important study of slavery (1959); and studies closely following Tannenbaum's guide lines have included H.S.Klein's

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34. See Gutman, The Black Family, pp.113-8. Gutman found that while slave children normally lived in two-parent families, and while plantation records normally named both a child's father and mother, as many as about one in five of children born on the Sterling plantation in the 1807 to 1855 period grew up in households headed by women who had all of their children by unnamed fathers. Here, he suggested, rather than in the South generally, was the male-absent slave household referred to by so many historians of slavery (Gutman, pp.115-6).

35. On rates of importation see Curtin, Atlantic Slave Trade, passim, and especially pp.87-93. For indications of North American slave sex ratios over the period 1658 to 1860 see Table 2.5 of the present study; and for indications of the sex ratios of more southerly regions see, for example, Blassingame, The Slave Community, pp.77-8.



comparative analysis of slavery in Virginia and Cuba (1967). At the same time, and increasingly from the late 1960s, there has been a counter-current as historians have pointed to the sharp contrast between the natural decrease of most South American and West Indian slave populations and the vigorous natural increase of the North American slave population. Historians, sometimes boldly, sometimes cautiously, have interpreted the low natural growth rates of West Indian and South American slave populations as indicating in those areas harsh slave treatment. G.W.Roberts (1957), in his study of Jamaica's population, saw harsh treatment as "greatly responsible" for the demographic failure of that island's slaves. Orlando Patterson (1967), in his study of the same island, again placed great emphasis on harsh treatment; and argued that, for much of the history of slavery in Jamaica, masters either discouraged or were apathetic towards slave natural increase, preferring instead to import slaves from Africa and to avoid the inconveniences of raising slave children.

Curtin (1969) - one of the first historians to pay direct and serious attention to the contrast between North American natural growth rates and growth rates of the rest of the Americas - was more cautious in his explanation of the West Indian and South America failure, making no positive differentiation between the contributions of sex ratios, disease environment, the seasoning of newly imported African slaves, and the general treatment of slaves.

C. Van Woodward, in a valuable survey of literature on comparative slave demography, took a somewhat similar position. Although a detailed discussion of the causes of the contrast between the natural growth rates of North American and those of the more southerly slave populations lies beyond the scope of the present study, some tentative observations, drawing on evidence obtained from Louisiana sugar parishes, can perhaps usefully be made.<sup>36</sup>

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36. F.Tannenbaum, *Slave and Citizen: The Negro in the Americas* (New York, 1946); Elkins, *Slavery*; H.S.Klein, *Slavery in the Americas: A Comparative Study of Virginia and Cuba* (Chicago, 1967); G.W.Roberts, *The Population of Jamaica* (Cambridge, 1957); p.223; H.O.Patterson, *The Sociology of Slavery: An Analysis of the Origins, Development and Structure of Negro Slave Society in Jamaica* (London, 1967), pp.94-109; Curtin, *Atlantic Slave Trade*, pp.28-30, 72-5, 89-93; C. Van Woodward, *American Counterpoint: Slavery and Racism in the North-South Dialogue* (Boston, 1964 and 1971), pp. 84-106. Recent valuable contributions on the growth rate issue appear in articles and editorial comments in Engerman and Genovese (eds.), Race and Slavery (1975).

The evidence of the Louisiana sugar parishes' domestic slave trade importation pattern - a pattern very different from that of the Lower South as a whole - indicates that the Louisiana sugar area chose systematically to maintain a predominantly male slave labour force. A similar policy seems to have been pursued in the West Indies and in South America - again areas where sugar was the most important crop. With male field hands everywhere commanding higher prices than females, traders throughout the Atlantic slave trade found it convenient to carry a preponderance of male slaves. In North America, where, normally, no pressing need for a predominantly male labour force was felt, a limited volume of Atlantic slave trade importations was, during the period of the area's contact with that traffic, absorbed into the local slave population with only a relatively moderate influence on the sex ratios of that population. By contrast, in the sugar producing areas of the West Indies and South America the preference for a predominantly male work force demanded an intensive rate of male-dominated Atlantic slave trade importations.<sup>37</sup> Such importations necessarily tended to depress natural growth rates. Louisiana evidence suggests, furthermore, that the regime of sugar production was especially debilitating, and suggests that the character of that labour system would have significantly contributed to the poor demographic performance of the West Indies and South America. The factor of disease environment, too, was probably important in depressing the Louisiana sugar area's survival rates below the North American norm; and in the West Indies and South America the disease environment factor would have been particularly important. This was not only because the tropics were probably

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37. Conrad and Klein indicate that Brazil's inter-regional slave trade of the 1850 to 1888 period carried a preponderance of male slaves to that country's booming coffee producing area. That preponderance does not seem to have been the result of the coffee area's special labour requirements so much as a result of the predominance of males in the sugar producing areas which, going through a period of economic crisis, provided the essential source of the internal traffic. Evidence on the sex ratio of Brazil's internal trade appears in R. Conrad, The Destruction of Brazilian Slavery, 1850-1888 (Berkeley, 1972) pp.64-9; and in H.S. Klein, "The Internal Slave Trade in Nineteenth Century Brazil: A Study of Slave Importations into Rio de Janeiro in 1852", Hispanic American Historical Review, LI (1971), pp.567-85.

less healthy than the American South. Beyond that, labour force preferences and the rigours of the sugar regime demanded intensive Atlantic slave trade importation rates; and newly imported Africans, whether brought to North or South America, suffered very high mortality rates on encountering the unfamiliar disease environment of the Americas.<sup>38</sup> It seems very possible, then, that sugar production, both in the broad sense of the climate and disease environment with which it was associated, and in terms of the labour force and work regime which it demanded, was responsible for a great part of the difference between North American and more southerly slave natural growth rates. At the same time, it has been noted, the slave importation patterns of the West Indies and South America would in those regions have imposed special strains on the slave family.

#### V FAMILY SEPARATIONS AND THE "PECULIAR INSTITUTION"

The strains resulting from the importation of male-dominated Atlantic slave trade cargoes would have been felt on a far more limited scale in North America than elsewhere in the Americas. It seems clear, furthermore, that "slave breeding" did not generally take such barbaric forms as to prevent in North America the development of meaningful slave family relationships. Nevertheless, the North American slave family - perhaps more than elsewhere in the Americas, and especially in the nineteenth century with the growth of a massive inter-regional slave trade - persistently felt the bitterness of family separations.

In the inter-regional slave trade of the United States, the interests of Lower South slave buyers, of Upper South slave sellers, and of traders were in a great many cases served by the separation of families. The trader's Lower South customers very commonly bought selected slaves for specific

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38. On the very high death rate among newly imported African slaves see, for example, M.Craton and J.Walvin, A Jamaican Plantation: The History of Worthy Park, 1670-1970 (London, 1970), pp.131-2; and see Menard, "The Maryland Slave Population, 1658 to 1730", pp.42, 45.

purposes - to work or train as field hands, to serve as domestic servants or as craftsmen, or to provide a spouse for a particular slave. Rather than seeking to purchase whole families, therefore, Lower South customers usually preferred to buy slaves separately and to select young adult slaves or children already capable of a substantial work load. In supplying the inter-regional slave trade, Upper South slave-holders would no doubt have been happy to dispose of chronically troublesome slaves, and the sale of such slaves is likely to have brought about numerous family separations. It has been seen, however, that the slave trade was far too extensive to have been to any great extent made up of unusually troublesome slaves. A far more important source of separations would have been the fact that, because of the very limited marriage market on many slave-holdings, off-plantation slave marriages would have been common. With the survival of such marriages depending on the actions not of a single owner but of two owners, those marriages would have been at particular risk of separation. Upper South masters who owned both the husband and wife of a particular slave union would often, with a view to natural increase, have been reluctant to separate the slaves concerned. At the same time, however - perhaps needing money to pay off debts or to advance some project - many masters would have reflected that natural increase brought only a long-term return on capital and, with prime young adults fetching the highest prices, would have been prepared to separate young slave spouses. The demand for slave children, particularly those of about 12 years and upwards, meant, too, that Upper South owners would often have been tempted to sell immature slaves away from their parents. Meanwhile, traders, after any whole family units had been purchased, would have found it financially advantageous to resort to separation whenever such a policy suited the requirements of a particular Lower South customer.

Fogel and Engerman have recently given some attention to family separations among American slaves, and, referring to the domestic slave

trade and planter migrations collectively, have argued that a mere 2 per cent of the marriages of slaves involved in the combined inter-regional movement were separated by that movement. They further argued that not more than 9 per cent of the inter-regional slave trade was made up of children aged under 13 years, and suggested that very few of those children were traded separately from surviving parents.<sup>39</sup> These calculations drew on an estimate of the relative importance of the slave trade and planter migration. In addition they employed a sample of New Orleans bills of sale, with child sales being counted, and with marriage separations being taken as all instances where a mother and offspring were sold together but without a father. Clearly, Fogel and Engerman's calculation must have greatly underestimated the actual extent of family separations occasioned by the inter-regional movement. This is firstly because, as the present study has shown, the New Orleans trade had a far smaller woman and child element than was the case in the domestic slave trade generally. Secondly, not all family separations are discernible by a count of children and of mother and offspring units. Thirdly, Fogel and Engerman not only ignored the fact that planter migrations could disturb off-plantation marriages and the offspring of those marriages, but they massively underestimated the domestic slave trade's importance in relation to that of planter migration.

Although Fogel and Engerman's estimate of the extent of family separations was unsatisfactory, a count of mother and offspring units sold in the trade - essentially the approach proposed by Fogel and Engerman - does provide a useful starting point for an estimate of slave trade separations. Instead of drawing on records of the New Orleans trade, however, the present study, in Table 9.2, employs a far more typical sample of the trade - that is to say the records of numerous slave dealers who were wholly or principally concerned with the inter-regional slave trade to states other than Louisiana.

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39. Fogel and Engerman, Time on the Cross, I, pp.49-52, and II, pp.48-51.

Table 9.2 suggests that the domestic slave trade to the cotton states of the Lower South brought about a considerable rate of slave marriage separation. In fact, groupings sold without a slave father and directly shown by traders as mother and offspring units accounted for an average of some 16 per cent of all slaves listed in the records employed in Table 9.2.<sup>40</sup> Groupings shown by traders as father, mother, and offspring units were, by contrast, extremely rare, not appearing at all in 10 of the 15 collections of trader's papers drawn upon; accounting for no more than about one per cent of the Glen, Totten, Omohundro, and Dickinson slaves; and, very exceptionally, accounting for as much as 11 per cent of the small F.E.Rives consignments. In the records consulted, no slaves were shown as being sold in father and offspring units. That groupings treated in Table 9.2 as mother and offspring units were indeed sold without fathers is indicated in part by the fact that each mother and offspring unit was sold at a collective price, no other slave contributing towards that price. Furthermore, according to the 11 record groups where either those selling to or buying from the trader are indicated, the overwhelming majority of clients, on the date of their disposing of or acquiring a mother and offspring group, neither bought nor sold an adult male slave.<sup>41</sup> Moreover, although a few mother and offspring units would have resulted from the death of fathers, child mortality rates, being far higher than those for prime adult males, would have corrected for any overcount of mother and offspring units. In practice, therefore, the mother and offspring units of Table 9.2 can be taken as being the result of forced marriage separations.

Using mother and offspring units as a starting point then, Table 9.2 provides an estimate of the extent of family separations arising out of the inter-regional slave trade. Firstly, the numbers of mother and offspring

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40. Groupings here taken as mother and offspring units appeared in traders' records as, for example, "Hagar and her child Jack", "Alice and two children", or "Phillis and infant".

41. The Rives, Fields, Totten, and Walker records do not provide clients' names.

TABLE 9.2 INDICATIONS OF THE EXTENT OF FAMILY SEPARATIONS BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE INTER-REGIONAL SLAVE TRADE TO STATES OTHER THAN LOUISIANA: SLAVE DEALERS' RECORDS DRAWN FROM THE PERIOD 1817-1862

| Record Type                   | Slave Dealing Firm    | A<br>Total Number of Slaves in Trade Sample Consulted | B1 B2 B3 B4 B5 B6 B7<br>Estimated % of Column 1 Total Accounted for by: |      |   |                  |                          |                   | B7<br>% of Column A Totals Made up by Slaves Indicated in Columns B1 to B6 inclusive |  |  |  |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|---|---|------|---|------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|--|--|--|--|
|                               |                       |   | B1<br>Mothers in M + O/S Lots   |      | B2<br>Separated Fathers Estimated from M + O/S Lots |                  | B3<br>Ch in M + O/S Lots |                   |  | B4 B5 B6<br>Ch 0-7yrs Inclusive Sold Sep. Ch 8-11yrs Inclusive Sold Sep. Ch 12-14yrs Inclusive Sold Sep. |  |  |
|                               |                       |   |   |      |   |                  |                          |                   |  |  |  |  |
| S                             | Rives, P.E.           | 56  | 3.8   | 3.8  | 3.8   | ni               | ni                       | ni                | 11.4   | ++   |  |  |
| S                             | Fields, O.            | 53  | 13.2  | 13.2 | 13.2  | ni               | ni                       | ni                | 39.6   | ++   |  |  |
| S                             | Glen, T.              | 423   | 6.9   | 6.9  | 11.6  | 1.0 <sup>a</sup> | 9.7 <sup>a</sup>         | 11.2 <sup>a</sup> | 47.3   |  |  |  |
| P                             | Glen, T. (additional) | 132   | 7.6   | 7.6  | 12.9  | 1.0 <sup>b</sup> | 6.8 <sup>b</sup>         | 12.6 <sup>b</sup> | 48.5   |  |  |  |
| S                             | Totten, J.S.          | 173   | 7.5   | 7.5  | 10.4  | 0.0              | 6.4                      | 16.2              | 48.0   |  |  |  |
| P                             | Badrott, H.           | 58  | 13.8  | 13.8 | 15.5  | ni               | ni                       | ni                | 43.1   | ++   |  |  |
| P                             | Long, W.              | 100   | 5.0   | 5.0  | 8.0   | 5.8 <sup>c</sup> | 4.3 <sup>c</sup>         | 7.2 <sup>c</sup>  | 35.3   |  |  |  |
| S                             | Pittman, J.W.         | 10  | 0.0   | 0.0  | 0.0   | ni               | ni                       | ni                | 0.0  | ++   |  |  |
| S                             | Templeman, H.N.       | 107   | 5.6   | 5.6  | 6.5   | ni               | ni                       | ni                | 17.7   | ++   |  |  |
| S                             | Templeman & Goodwin   | 98  | 8.2   | 8.2  | 11.2  | 0.0 <sup>d</sup> | 4.8 <sup>d</sup>         | 14.3 <sup>d</sup> | 46.7   |  |  |  |
| S                             | Hughes & Downing      | 13  | 0.0   | 0.0  | 0.0   | ni               | ni                       | ni                | 0.0  | ++   |  |  |
| P(N)                          | Robards, L.C.         | 71  | 7.0   | 7.0  | 7.0   | 0.0              | 7.0                      | 11.3              | 39.3   |  |  |  |
| S                             | Walker, A. & A.T.     | 105   | 13.3  | 13.3 | 19.0  | ni               | ni                       | ni                | 45.6   | ++   |  |  |
| P                             | Ferguson, E.W.        | 37  | 8.1   | 8.1  | 8.1   | ni               | ni                       | ni                | 24.3   | ++   |  |  |
| S(N)                          | Omohundro, S & R.F.   | 360   | 5.3   | 5.3  | 8.9   | ni               | ni                       | ni                | 19.5   | ++   |  |  |
| S(N)                          | Dickinson & Bro.      | 6,889   | 7.7   | 7.7  | 12.9  | ni               | ni                       | ni                | 28.3   | ++   |  |  |
| Average of Percentages Quoted |                       |   | 7.1   | 7.1  | 9.3   | 1.3              | 6.5                      | 12.1              | 43.4   | e  |  |  |

SOURCES AND NOTES:

For individual slave dealing concerns, the records consulted, the routes traded, and the years to which cited statistics relate are indicated in Table 1.2. The single exception is with Dickinson and Bro., a Richmond slave auctioneering firm which was essentially concerned with supplying inter-regional traders but which, since it was also involved in Virginia's intra-state market, was excluded from Table 1.2. The Dickinson evidence is drawn from R.H. Dickinson and Bro., Slave Dealers' Account Book (AAS). Except for Dickinson, firms cited were trading rather than auctioneering concerns.

Trading concerns cited in Table 1.2 but omitted from the present table are J.R. White; J.A. Mitchell; and F.L. Whitehead. White is omitted because he was principally concerned with the Louisiana trade. Mitchell and Whitehead are omitted because, by merely listing slaves according to first name and surname (apparently the surname of the former owner) and by giving no indication of age or of child-parent relationships, their records provide no basis for estimating the extent of family separations.

- S Evidence derived from dealer's selling records. (For many of the main group of Glen sales, both purchasing and selling records are available.)
- P Evidence derived from dealer's purchasing records (see Table 1.2, note P).
- (N) Indicates resident urban dealers selling slaves to long-distance traders. (For background on the dealers concerned see pp. 164-70, 183). Some, in the case of Robards a substantial proportion, of the sales would have been to traders active in the Louisiana market.
- M+O/S Dealer's records indicate mother and certain offspring sold as unit and without father.
- Ch Children.
- Sep. Sold separately from both parents.
- ni Information on ages available for not more than about 5% of slaves in Column A entry.
- ++ An unknown number of child separations should be added.
- a,b,c,d. In the record groups on which these entries are based a substantial number of slaves - but not all slaves - are described according to age. Those described according to specific ages or described as "children" or "infants" - in practice "children" and "infants" of unspecified age were part of the mother and offspring lots already noted - numbered for "a" (Glen, main group) 196 slaves; for "b" (Glen, additional) 103 slaves; for "c" (Long) 69 slaves; and for "d" (Templeman & Goodwin) 42 slaves. The numbers of children of particular age groups (B4, B5, and B6) identified as having been sold separately from both parents are, therefore, taken, for "a", as percentages of a 196 slave total. Similar procedures are adopted for "b", "c", and "d".
- e The average for column B7 is taken as the sum of the averages cited for the six columns B1 to B6.

units are indicated in Column B1. It is then assumed that broadly similar factors to those which caused mother and offspring units to be separated from fathers and sold to the Lower South - the convenience of Upper South slave-holders and the need to suit the particular requirements of Lower South customers - would have determined that, from other slave families, fathers rather than mother and offspring would have been sold away. In Column B2, the number of fathers separated and sold to the Lower South is assumed to have been similar to the number of mother and offspring units sold away. The number of children recorded in mother and offspring units and experiencing separation from their fathers is indicated in Column B3. To these separations Columns B4 to B6 add, where a basis of evidence is available, children of under 15 years shown in the relevant dealer's records to have been sold separately from both parents.

The several slave dealers' records drawn upon suggest that slaves included in mother and offspring units and in separated father units accounted for a combined average total of some 23 or 24 per cent of the trade; and suggest that children of under 15 years and sold without either parent accounted for an average of something like a further 20 per cent of the trade. Further separations unidentified in Table 9.2 would also have taken place, such unidentified separations including cases where mothers were traded separately both from husband and from any surviving children. Table 9.2 suggests, therefore, that an average of at least some 43 per cent of slaves traded to the cotton states of the Lower South would, as a result of being sold into the trade, have experienced separation from a member or from members of the young family to which they belonged.

Separations in the trade to the Louisiana sugar parishes might perhaps have been less common than in the trade to the cotton area of the Lower South, and, relying to an important extent on mother and offspring units as a guide to the incidence of separations, would certainly have been more difficult to identify. Since the trade to the sugar parishes of Louisiana



accounted for only some 5 per cent of the total domestic slave trade, results reported in Table 9.2 are, however, not likely significantly to exaggerate the overall family separation rate among slaves traded.<sup>42</sup>

Moreover, the effects of family separations did not stop with the experience of the slaves who departed from the Lower South. For one child sold away from his family there might well have been - discounting more distant relatives - a mother, a father, and several siblings who also, by the sale of that child, experienced family separation. The loss of each slave sold away would also have been felt by the friends of that slave, while each family separation - even in families not directly affected by the sale - would have heightened the local slave community's sense of unease over the security of family relationships.<sup>43</sup>

In contrast with those traditions which allot to the trader the principal share of blame for family separations, it seems, furthermore, that in the great majority of cases the slave-holding public - more particularly Upper South slave-holders - were directly responsible for family separations. This is suggested by the fact that, in Table 9.2, the incidence of separations was almost as high in the four record groups marked "P" and describing slave lots as purchased by traders as it was in the remaining lots marked "S" and describing slave lots as sold by traders. Indeed, where, for particular slaves, the Glen records indicate both the trader's units of purchase and sale, almost without a single exception, the separations which occurred arose out of the trader's purchasing rather than his selling. A Washington D.C. trader encountered in the 1830s by Professor Ethan Andrews indicated the same pattern when he reported that in selling slaves he seldom

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42. On the volume of the trade to sugar areas see tables 1.4 and 1.5, and on the overall volume of the trade see tables 2.8 and 2.9. It should be noted that three of the slave dealing concerns included in Table 9.2, being resident urban firms selling slaves to long-distance traders, would in fact have sold some of their slaves to traders active in the Louisiana market. See note (N) attaching to Table 9.2.

43. For calculations on the number of slaves likely to have been directly affected by a typical separation see Gutman, Reckoning with Slavery, pp.126-7.

separated families, but that very often in receiving slaves from the public families were separated.<sup>44</sup> Nevertheless, evidence in Chapter X suggests that - except for partial family units of mother and young offspring, except that is for units which could without inconvenience be sold together - traders when they did receive family groupings were often prepared to separate them in sales.

It must be borne in mind, too, that family separations arising out of inter-regional slave transfers were not confined to movements by the slave trade. Planter migrations, in the very numerous instances where they disrupted off-plantation marriages, would also have caused family separations. In two letters sent by North Carolinians migrating to Mississippi with their gang of 91 slaves, the Brownrigg Papers contain fragments of documentation on such separations. A letter from Will Sparkman to his brother-in-law General R.T.Brownrigg of North Carolina contained a note that "George Rumbo [one of the migrating slave gang] says please buy his boy of B.White, and King [another slave migrant] says give his love to his father". A second letter contained the following messages written on behalf of slave migrants:

Dick says he sends his love to his wife and children and wishes you to buy them if possible. Jacob says he wishes his wife to come to Mississippi if you can purchase her. Arthur says tell Amy he is very well and his children also.

Even though several family separations are directly referred to in the two letters cited, it is very possible that extant letters document only a small part of the separations which took place as a result of the Sparkman-Brownrigg migration. Evidence relating to local sales of slaves will suggest, furthermore, that the incidence of family separations was probably higher when small slave-holders migrated with their slaves than when large slave-holders

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44. Andrews, Slavery and the Domestic Slave Trade, pp.145-8.

such as the Sparkmans and Brownriggs migrated.<sup>45</sup>

In addition to the inter-regional slave movement, the local and intra-regional transfer of slaves would also have endangered the unity of slave families. Not all such transfers~~x~~ - even with those involving the movement of fragments of families rather than of whole families - would have prevented further contact between the different divisions of the family concerned. Nevertheless, in many cases permanent separations would have occurred. Transfers involving selected slaves rather than whole slave gangs would have tended to have been particularly damaging to family unity. Judicial sales, a class of sales essentially local in character and usually disposing of whole plantation gangs rather than of selected slaves, were, then, probably less damaging to family unity than selective non-judicial sales. Indeed, records of a sample of Charleston auctioneers handling probate and other judicial sales - records relating to a total of 2,800 slaves, with the average slave-holding size being 60 slaves - suggest that from the slave gangs concerned a very substantial proportion of the slaves, some 45 per cent, were sold in father, mother, and offspring units, sometimes with older relatives added to those units.<sup>46</sup> A secondary sample of 350 slaves drawn from the same record groups provides a similar result for a group of gangs ranging from 10 to 30 slaves each and averaging 20 slaves per gang. These latter gangs averaging 20 slaves each were similar in size to the holdings on which the statistically typical Southern slave lived.<sup>47</sup> In both the primary and the secondary samples, most other slaves were adults sold either separately or in groups; and in both samples, with

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45. Sparkmans Brownrigg and Hoskins to Brownrigg, both letters dated 6 Nov. 1835, Brownrigg Family Papers (SHC). The American Anti-Slavery Society's publication Slavery and the Internal Slave Trade, pp.69-71, provides similar evidence on family separations arising out of planter migrations. On this issue see also Gutman in Reckoning with Slavery, p.104.

46. The Charleston auctioneers' records cited are the Hutson-Lee Collection of Slave Sale Handbills (SCHS) and the Alonzo J. White List Book of Slaves (SCHS).

47. See note 4 of the present chapter.

all slaves described by age, only about 2 per cent of slaves were children under 15 years of age sold without either parent. The policy, at substantial judicial sales, of selling in family lots combined the wellbeing of slaves with the practical interests of the slave-holding community. Almost 30 per cent of <sup>the</sup> typical slave-holding would, according to general statistics of the Southern slave population, have been made up of children under 8 years of age; and the typical plantation would also have contained certain superannuated slaves. These latter classes of slaves - classes not normally in any substantial demand as separate slaves - could, on long credit, advantageously be sold as members of family groups which included prime workers.

It appears, then, that most slaves sold at large judicial sales were not, by those sales, separated from their closest relatives. At the same time, however, both in the principal and in the secondary sample of Charleston sales cited, some 10 to 15 per cent of all slaves were sold in mother and offspring lots in which the youngest child was under 4 years of age. Such sale lots were probably in most cases the result of off-plantation marriages. It should be noted, furthermore, that very large numbers of small slave-holdings, consisting of only a few slaves each, would not have been of sufficient size to have supported on-plantation marriages. With such holdings, then, even sales of whole estates would often have taken a husband or wife away from the neighbourhood of that slave's off-plantation spouse, or would have separated children from their father. Apart from sales, further separations would also have occurred as a result of certain intra-regional planter migrations, transfers of slaves by means of gifts, and non-market divisions of estates between heirs.<sup>48</sup>

Although it is difficult to provide any round estimate of the number of family separations arising out of local transfers of slaves, it appears,

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48. On separations arising out of gifts and divisions see H.G. Gutman, "The World Two Cliometricians Made: A Review Essay of  $F + E = T/C$ ", Journal of Negro History, LX (1975), pp.183,188.

from the combination of local sales, inter-regional sales, and other transfers, that family separations must have directly affected the vast majority of the South's slave population. Furthermore, the responsibility for family separations lay essentially with the slave-holding public rather than, as the ante-bellum South very much tended to argue, with professional slave traders. Since it appears that the Southern slave population would have been based principally upon on-plantation rather than off-plantation marriages, it is probable that a great many family separations - particularly with selective sales to traders - would directly have divided on-plantation marriages.<sup>49</sup> At the same time, very large numbers of separations, in slave trade and other transfers, would have involved the members or offspring of off-plantation marriages. Any tendency, in selective sales of slaves, to have concentrated on members of off-plantation rather than on-plantation unions would have been most unlikely to have spring from a desire to sell slaves who would not have been deeply distressed at separation. Indeed, it will be seen that during Reconstruction and after the two-parent family was the almost universally accepted norm among ex-slaves. Such a situation suggests that the vast majority of all types of slave spouses, in on-plantation and in off-plantation unions, would have been strongly attached to their marriages. Rather than arising out of any consideration for the slave's emotional wellbeing, then, any policy of concentrating on the sale of members of off-plantation marriages would have been likely to have been the product of desires to avoid the latitude necessarily given to slaves who frequently visited their off-plantation families, and to avoid the disciplinary difficulties of continuing to own slaves whom the owner had separated

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49. That the South was typically based upon on-plantation marriages is suggested in the samples of evidence drawn from the Charleston auctioneers' records cited in note 46 above, and is suggested by the nature of the groupings of slaves in the probate records employed in this study. On these latter records see p.280, note 24. It has been seen (see note 4 of the present chapter) that the holding on which the typical Upper South slave lived contained only about 2 less slaves than that for typical slaves in the South generally. The potential for on-plantation marriages would, therefore, not have been much less in the Upper South than in the South generally.

from close relatives. Moreover, on the great majority of the very numerous occasions when masters, without selling either parent, sold slave children to the trader or to other buyers, those masters either directly brought about family separations or transferred slaves whom some former owner had already directly separated from parents.

Partly because they were often written for propagandist motives, published contemporary accounts of slave sales gave conflicting assessments of the slave's reaction to sale and separation. Such conflicting evidence is of limited value in an evaluation of the strength of the slave's attachment to the family institution. This is especially the case since, almost always, the sales described in contemporary publications were not those which represented the principal sources of family separations, and so were not the best basis upon which to judge the slave's reaction to the forced division of families. Well-advertised public judicial auctions of large slave gangs - auctions usually held in market squares, on court house steps, or at other public places - were the South's most conspicuous and most frequently described slave sales. Numerous contemporaries, even including some anti-slavery commentators like the British visitor Basil Hall, reported that most slaves showed little anxiety at such sales. That such appearances should quite often have been reported is not altogether surprising. At large judicial sales, it has been seen, most slaves would have been sold in family lots and would not have suffered separation from members of their households.<sup>50</sup>

Transfers of slaves from Upper South slave-holders to professional traders - transfers which with great regularity were the direct source of family separations - being in most cases private

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50. For Basil Hall's description of slave sales see his Travels in North America, I, p.201. Compare, however, Mortimer Thompson's slave auction account published by the American Anti-Slavery Society under the title Great Auction of Slaves at Savannah, Georgia, March 2nd and 3rd 1859 (New York, 1859), and compare another anti-slavery account, N.S.Dodge's A Charleston Vendue of 1842 (New York, 1867). These last two accounts both conceded that at the major probate sales which they described father, mother, and young offspring were usually sold together as family units. Mortimer and Dodge both maintained, however, that separations from friends and from those beyond the slave's immediate household brought deep distress.

transactions, were very rarely described in ante-bellum publications. Somewhat more frequently described were traders' sales at slave depots. After visiting one such pen, J.H.Ingraham, a Northerner attached to the pro-slavery cause, gave an account of the manner in which the slaves had been drawn up in ranks before him and offered for sale. He reported that the slaves he had seen had been very little concerned over their fate as the objects of sale, although, he added, "the women were constantly laughing and chattering with each other in suppressed voices, and appeared [compared with the men] to take, generally, a livelier interest in the transactions". Several factors should be considered in interpreting Ingraham's reported impressions. Believing that for Negroes life was a "mere animal existence, passed in physical exertion or enjoyment", Ingraham was not disposed towards detecting any signs of deep or perhaps partly concealed emotion on the part of the slaves being offered for sale. Ethan Andrews, a critic of slavery, after visiting an Alexandria, D.C., slave pen and witnessing scenes in most respects strikingly similar to those which Ingraham reported, was far less convinced that what he saw represented an indication of the slave's true feelings. Family separations, for most of the slaves offered to the public at speculators' pens, would have come not when the trader sold his slaves but when he made his purchases. Even though the fate of slave families did not usually rest with sales from slave traders, evidence in Chapter VII has nevertheless indicated that in order to obtain from his subjects satisfactory displays of "good and orderly behaviour", the trader, at his pen, was obliged to resort to a mixture of bribes, persuasions, threats, and punishments.<sup>51</sup>

As documentation of the slave's reaction to family separations, slave traders' correspondence records, despite their strong biases against the slave, are in many ways likely to be more valuable than published accounts

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51. On Ingraham see his South-West, by a Yankee, pp.192-7, and see also p.234 of the present study; for Andrews's account see his Slavery and the Domestic Slave Trade, pp.135-43.

of slave sales. Repeatedly, traders' letters refer to the problems arising out of the slave's deep distress at being separated from relatives and friends. One of Alexander Fitzhugh's slave girls, by "her hysterical low spirited situation" for a long time thwarted her owner's and the auctioneer R.H.Dickinson's efforts to have her sold away from her family. R.V.Tiffany reported that another slave girl sent to Dickinson for sale was "making so many complaints", claiming herself to be unsound, that the auctioneer would not warrant her healthy. Tiffany believed, however, that all her complaints were "pretentious and false representations (which) she is making with the hopes of returning (unsold) to King George (county) to live with her husband". The Oakes Papers show that the trader Ziba Oakes very frequently shared Dickinson's problems with the sale of separated slaves. A slave girl sent to Charleston to be sold by Oakes had already frustrated a Savannah slave dealer's efforts to sell her. The owner, A.G.Porter, explained that she had been sent for sale because "she displeased me in disobeying my orders and in her conduct in keeping things from me respecting her children". Porter felt that there was "no doubt she will try every way that she can invent... so I may take her back home". Nevertheless, Oakes was instructed to ignore the slave's complaints and shamming, and was told to gain her co-operation by the threat that if she did not alter her conduct she would be sent "further from home where she can never hear from any of her people again". A few days later, Oakes's agent McElveen bought a slave woman and reported: "The woman will complain but she is unwilling to leave (her husband). I think she will need correcting. I could not buy her husband". The Oakes Papers make frequent reference to runaways, with several letters recording the assumption that the fugitives concerned would try to make their way back to their families. This same assumption appeared in very large numbers of runaway advertisements published in newspapers. Some separated slaves showed their distress less dramatically. One such slave was Fatima who, after her husband had been sold away from her, persuaded her master to send a farewell message to the husband, a slave then lodged at Oakes's Negro jail. "As his so called



wife wishes to send some message", Oakes was asked by Fatima's owner to convey a short dictated letter to Tom, the husband. "Howdy and goodbye", Fatima's note ran,

for I never expect to see you again. Try to do the best you can, and if you have a good master behave properly to him, and try to think about your master in Heaven....I am very much distressed...at being separated from you. Remember me and I will think of you: write me when you are settled.

Your wife Fatima. 52

The claim that slaves typically felt deep distress at family separations is very strongly supported by evidence in Herbert Gutman's recent publication, The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom. From studies of the records of numerous large plantations, Gutman argued that the two-parent family was very much the norm among American slaves. That, even in off-plantation marriages, the two-parent family survived and very much predominated is demonstrated by Gutman's finding that immediately after slavery the vast majority of blacks must have lived in two-parent households. Indeed, Gutman found that in the year or so after the Civil War there was a massive rate of registration of continuing ex-slave marriages. He found too that in a substantial sample of North Carolina counties very extensive records surviving for the 1867 to 1890 period showed that the per capita rate of registration of new marriages was just as high for blacks as for whites. From plantation records and from registers of continuing ex-slave marriages he found that long marriages had been possible and, indeed, very common under slavery. He found, for example, that of Rockbridge county, Virginia, blacks aged 40 or older in 1866 and registering their continuing ex-slave marriages in that year, nearly two-thirds had by the time of registering been married for at least twenty years. The pattern of long-marriages was found to have extended to all classes of slaves and across all of the various geographical

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52. Fitzhugh to (Dickinson), 24 Feb.1846, and Tiffy to Dickinson, 7 Feb. 1847, Chase Papers (AAS); Porter to Oakes, 17 and 26 Jan.1854, McEwen to Oakes, 7 Feb.1854, Fatima (by Edwards) to Oakes, 14 Apr.1857, Oakes Papers (BPL). For a discussion of runaway advertisements published in newspapers see, for example, Blassingame, The Slave Community, pp.108-9.

areas which Gutman studied. Gutman demonstrated too that on plantations of sufficient size extensive intra-generational and inter-generational kinship ties developed. Slave naming practices, Gutman argued, seem only to be explicable in terms of the slave's awareness of and attachment to these kinship ties. Rather than suggesting a common tendency for first names to have been arbitrarily imposed on slaves by their masters, the choice of names tended to arise out of the slave's kinship network. It was very common for slave sons, particularly first or second sons, to be named after their fathers; and, very commonly, children were named after siblings who had died or been sold away, or were named after grandparents or other relatives. It was, however - in contrast it seems with the practices of white society - extremely rare for daughters to be named after their mothers. Slave naming practices, Gutman argued, indicated that while the law of slavery recognised only the master's right to slaves descended through the maternal line, slaves clung to much more meaningful kinship networks. Among the slaves on the plantations he studied, Gutman found too a very striking absence of endogamy. The almost complete absence of the practice of marrying those as close as first cousins, as Gutman pointed out, again showed an awareness of kinship, as well as indicating that breeding among slaves was not indiscriminate.<sup>53</sup>

Despite great pressures, then, the slave family must have operated as a profoundly meaningful social institution. It has been seen that "slave breeding" did not take such a form as to prevent an emotionally rewarding slave family life. Furthermore, while family separations must everywhere in

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53. On two-parent families see Black Family, pp.9-11, 47, 124, 156, 160, 180, and see also, in the present chapter, discussions of judicial sales; on the registration of continuing ex-slave marriages see Black Family, pp.9-11 (Virginia), 14-7 (N.Carolina), and 18-24 (Mississippi); on the registration of new N.Carolina marriages see Black Family, pp.425-6; on the length of slave marriages see Black Family, pp.9-11, 14-7, 18-24, 50, 124 and 153; on naming practices see Black Family, pp.93-5, 122-9, 178-80, 185-203; and on kinship ties and exogamy see Black Family, pp.87-93, 113-4, 131, 133-4, 137-8, and 171.

the South, and particularly in the exporting states, have had a deeply disturbing effect upon the slave community, it was still possible for very large numbers of slaves to have long-lasting marriages. Indeed, in the exporting states the slave's statistical chance of being sold away to the trader fell progressively and very markedly after about age 24. In those states then - although an earlier marriage might have been forcibly broken, although a spouse might still be prematurely lost through a local sale or through some other factor, and even though offspring might well be sold away - slaves from their mid-20s had a substantial chance of their marriage running its course. The rate of slave movement to the Lower South was in the 1820 to 1860 period very rapid, so that a great many slaves living in the Lower South would have experienced marriage separation as a result of the trade. After arriving in the Lower South, however, imported slaves, like native Lower South slaves, would have had a favourable chance of experiencing a long-lasting marriage.

The survival under slavery of strong family attachments and traditions must have meant that family separations were keenly felt. As separations show, the slave-holders as a class, although they encouraged the early setting up of slave marriages, cannot be regarded as having been the protectors of those marriages or of the slave family. The very high incidence of slave sales and of family separations must have created profound distrust between slaves and the slave-holding community.

CHAPTER X

THE CHARACTER AND STATUS OF THE SLAVE TRADER

The defenders of slavery, as James Sterling wrote, found it difficult to weave the domestic slave trade "handsomely in among the amenities of the patriarchal institution". Spokesmen for the ante-bellum South, when challenged on the significance of the trade, tended to dismiss that traffic as being of very limited extent and tended to maintain that the trader was a creature of the basest character, shunned by the great mass of Southern society. In contrast, the critics of slavery argued that any ostracism of the trader stemmed, not from deeply held moral objections to the trader and his profession, but stemmed in some cases from a disdain for the small-scale practitioners of the trade - a disdain similar to that which operated against petty traffickers of all kinds - and stemmed more generally from a desire to employ the trader as a scapegoat for some of the more glaring ills of the "peculiar institution".<sup>1</sup>

The problem of discerning the ante-bellum South's attitudes towards the trader was taken up by Frederic Bancroft, the standard authority on the trade. Bancroft maintained that, although in the Old South slave-holders had been sensitive to the evils of the trade, the degree of their real compassion had, over the years, been greatly exaggerated so as to permit the establishment of the notion that "whatever was bad about... [the trade] was hated by all good Southerners". From these origins, he suggested, "it early had become a fully credited tradition, implicitly accepted generation after generation, that 'all traders were hated'". Drawing upon and adapting the main strands of Abolitionist argumentation, Bancroft maintained, however, that in practice social ostracism was reserved for that group of speculators who operated on

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1. Sterling, Letters, pp.292-3. For detailed Abolitionist statements on the status of the trader, see American Anti-Slavery Society, Slavery and the Internal Slave Trade, pp.67-9; (T.D.Weld), American Slavery As It Is, pp.174-5; Goodell, The American Slave Code, pp.45-6.

a regular but relatively small-scale basis. This latter type of speculator, the 'nigger trader', was [he continued] made a scapegoat for the conspicuous evils of slave selling, while the large traders, the small speculators, and occasional sellers for gain or current expenses, the 'brokers', the auctioneers, the general agents, the commission merchants and others were virtually ignored. Thus [he concluded] there were traders and traders besides 'nigger traders'.

At one point, by suggesting that in the 1850s "the extreme prejudice against the interstate trade had abated", Bancroft implied that a genuine stigma had at certain periods attached to the slave trade as a whole. Elsewhere, he argued that those traders who met with ostracism did so to a great extent because of their supposed dishonesty. His overall conclusion was that

Honest and fairly humane trading of itself, especially if on a large scale, seems never to have lowered the standing of a man of good family, and it always improved that of a man of humble origin....When traders prospered, were honest, thrifty and bought plantations, like Forrest [the trader and Confederate general], the Woolfolks [extensive Maryland-based traders], Isaac Franklin [a trader encountered at several points in the present study],<sup>2</sup> and many others, they enjoyed the essentials of respectability.

Bancroft's interpretation of the status of the trader - especially since his analysis of the volume of the trade and the extent of slave trade separations was inconclusive - was open to challenge and to changes of emphasis. Indeed, using certain of the elements found in Bancroft's interpretation, the historian W.H. Stephenson arrived at an assessment of the trader's status which was essentially favourable to the South. Stephenson argued that the slave trade and the separation of slave families had been very widely deprecated in the South, and argued that the traffic in slaves had been grudgingly tolerated only because adjustments in labour arrangements were from time to time necessary. While he was prepared to concede that numbers of resident professional traders who dealt in slaves on a "generous scale", and who invested their profits in what the South saw as "legitimate planting" activities, were able to approach social respectability, Stephenson chose to emphasise the claim that most traders laboured under a marked

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2. Bancroft, Slave Trading, pp.366-7, 381, 369, 398, 375, 376-8.

social stigma.<sup>3</sup>

In the context of data which has already been presented in order to document the nature and extent of the trade, an assessment of evidence concerning the attitudes of the trader and the responses of the South to the trader will make possible some evaluation of those conflicting traditions which relate to the character and status of the Negro speculator.

## I

Despite the fact that they routinely participated in the separation of black families, traders were in many cases family men, married with young children.<sup>4</sup> Traders' letters frequently demonstrate that their chosen field of speculation did not necessarily prevent strong attachments to their own white families. Indeed, some traders saw their speculations and the extensive travel which their business involved as sacrifices made in order to foster the well-being of their families. Typical of many affectionate letters between traders and their wives is a letter written by Obediah Fields on his selling trip of 1822. In that letter Fields told his wife:

You may look for...[my return] between this [late November] and Christmas as it is out of my power to say in a day or two of the time, but my dear you may rest assured that it will be as soon as possible. Kiss my dear little children and tell them their Pap will soon be home. Give my complements to mother....I am yours with all the affection in my breast till death.

A letter surviving from a selling trip of 1825 again shows Fields's tenderness towards his "dear loving wife" and towards his children. In a letter of 1834, the trader J.A.Mitchell told his children that they should be "good boys and girls" and should "go to school and learn their books" so that they would be able to "show par how smart they have been in his absence". Mitchell, like Fields, told his wife of his great impatience to dispose of the remainder of

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3. Stephenson, Isaac Franklin, pp.6, 30-3, 93; and Stephenson, A Basic History of the Old South (Princeton, 1959), Chapter VII.

4. For some examples of slave traders' family ties, see Appendix A.

his slave gang so that he could get home to see her and the children. In 1836, the grave illness of his wife caused the speculator Samuel Logan to lament: "In my family sphere, I am utterly ruined as my children are to raise and they cannot be raised as she would have done it." The same letter, however, expressed no sympathy for the members of a slave family in his possession. Logan informed his partner: "I have determined to send...[for sale in the Lower South] my woman Fan, about 30 years old, a daughter about 10, and a boy about 6, as they are so villanous and triffling that I cant keep them". In place of these slaves and to secure the well-being of his own children, Logan planned to buy two slaves, "that is, a cook woman, and a girl that can nurse your namesake and help to take care of my other little children". The young slave trader John D.Badgett, in Georgia on a selling trip with his brother, did not forget his mother and family back home in Virginia. In a letter of 1860, he asked his father to "give my love to Mar and all the family. Tell Mar that I want to see her very bad and that I will come home as soon as I can."<sup>5</sup>

Occasionally traders outlined their concept of duty to family. The North Carolina trader T.W.Burton, on his slave selling expeditions, frequently wrote of his restlessness to return home to his wife and family. In 1846, he made plans to take his family, when the slave selling season was over, on a vacation trip to Texas. The vacation, he explained to his trading partner, would help in the upbringing of his children.

I am quite willing [to go on the trip, he wrote] and think it my duty as it will be a great schooling for my children when young. My object is pleasure in this life not riches as I know my incompetence to take care of property if I had it. I therefore wish to be content with a competency and [shall] let my children work for themselves and earn their living and then they will be better prepared to take care of...[property].

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5. Fields to Fields, 29 Nov. 1822, 8 Aug.1825, Fields Papers (DU); Mitchell to Mitchell, 10 Dec. 1834, Reid Papers (UVA); Logan to Meek, 9 Nov. 1836, Negro Collection (AU); Badgett to Badgett, 12 Feb.1860, Badgett Papers (NCA).

The trader Isaac Jarratt seems to have seen his role very much as the provider for his family. When the business of trading took Jarratt away from his family, his wife frequently complained of his long absences. He explained to his wife, however, that he was obliged to make sacrifices for the long-term good of the family. Writing from Alabama, Jarratt, in December 1835, informed his wife:

Mr. Beverly Barksdale is here. He was married about ten days before he left home. He has some 50 negroes to sell and I have [only] 18. You complain of my absence. What do you think of the situation with Mrs. Barksdale. She cant expect him until April or May. We both [he explained] are toiling for our wives and their little ones.

In February 1837, the trader returned to the subject of his duties as the head of his family.

I was candid [he wrote to his wife] and never will make another negro trading trip without your approbation unless a kind Providence should frown upon my labours and make it actually necessary that I should leave home to make a support for my family. In that case [he concluded] I would resort to any Honest calling for the comfort of my family. 6

Except when slaves caused him particular inconvenience, the speculator does not usually appear to have adopted practices of brutal physical ill-treatment. Harsh physical treatment, potentially damaging to his property, was after all not in the trader's best interests. Occasionally a trader was struck by the talents of a slave in his possession. One such slave was bought by the trader A.J. McElveen.

I have bought the boy Isaac for 1100 [McElveen reported]. I think him very prime....He is a general house servant... a first rate cook...and [a] splendid carriage driver. He is also a fine painter and varnisher and the boy says he can make a fine pannel door....Also he performs well on the violin and other musical instruments....He is a genius and its strange to say I think he is smarter than I am.

With slaves generally given little opportunity to develop their talents, however, the trader was able to proceed on the supposition that the Negro

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6. Burton to Long, 19 Jan. 1846, Long Papers (NCA); Jarratt to Jarratt, 1 Dec. 1835, 15 Feb. 1837, Jarratt-Puryear Family Papers (DU).



was a dull-witted creature. McElveen, describing a slave purchased a few months before the highly talented Isaac had been bought, reported: "The fellow may appear simple but he is got as good sense as the most of negros." Armed with such attitudes, the trader would sometimes fall into a pseudo-paternal role. The slave monger Isaac Jarratt usually, in concluding letters to his wife, assumed a patriarchal role towards his "people" and asked her to remember him to his slaves on his home plantation. With the slave Edward, A.J. McElveen adopted the temporary role of protector. Edward's owner had requested that, if possible, McElveen should have the slave sold "to leave the state" of South Carolina. The trader, however, informed his partner that

If properly managed... [Edward] will be a fine boy. Do not have him punished if you can help it. He is very easy frightened.... He cant stand punishment or confinement.... If you can sell him in the city do so. His wife is there. 7

The Millennial Trumpeter appears to have misrepresented the character of a substantial portion of the trading fraternity in characterising the trader as

One of those whose eyes dwell with delight on [the] lacerated bodies of helpless men, women and children; whose soul feels diabolical raptures at the chains, ... hand cuffs, and cart whips for inflicting tortures on weeping mothers torn from helpless babies, and on husbands and wives torn asunder forever.

Nevertheless, the trader judged his slaves on the basis of how well they complied with his own interests. Ziba Oakes, the Charleston trader, was, therefore, no doubt willing to accept the advice that, in order to get a good price for a woman offered to him for sale, he would have to "whip her to make her talk right". Similarly, with the slave Edward, the firm of Dickinson & Hill appears to have accepted the owner's advice to "get him to talk right" by whipping him "a few times". The independent behaviour of two female slaves decided the trader J.J. Toler that he should adopt "Dr.

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7. McElveen to Oakes, 19 Jan. 1854, 7 Nov. 1853, Oakes Papers (BPL); Jarratt to Jarratt, 1 Mar., 9 Nov. 1835, Jarratt-Purveyer Papers (DU); McElveen to Oakes, 9 Aug. 1853, Oakes Papers (BPL).

Hall's medicine". Toler angrily reported to his partner:

I had [the two slaves sold]...but they went to putting on their complaints and they refused them and of course let them go without making a sale of them....Rough talking wont do....I will have to use some of Dr.Hall's medicine of North Carolina. You know what kind of medicine that is. I dont want you to sell them to anybody back there for if you do they will always brake up your sales from bad talking. They want braking and I had as well brake them as anybody.

Insubordinate behaviour from a woman purchased by the slave monger Tyre Glen convinced Glen that the woman concerned was "the darndest nigger on occasion", and led him to explain: "I dont like whipping a sick negro though if she cuts any more capers I shall flog her severely." Similarly, with A.J.McElveen, a trader who, as we have seen, could sometimes recommend mild treatment of slaves, infractions of an established code of slave management were strongly opposed. Having heard that the slave Joe had been recaptured, McElveen declared: "I want to give him 100 lashes as soon as I come down as he had no cause for leaving me. He ran away from work and nothing else. Dont believe anything he tells you."<sup>8</sup>

On some occasions traders gave a degree of consideration to the sentiments of slaves, although, as an exchange between the speculators J.A.Weatherly and Ziba Oakes indicates, there was in the trade no uniformity of opinion on this matter. Weatherly's letter informed Oakes:

As to your own views about Mary [a slave sent to Oakes for sale], I think as I always have thought that about such things you are too sensitive. Another cause of uneasiness with you and to your business seems to me to be too great a desire to please negroes. By allowing them to visit their friends in your office, you give them trouble, and also [give] annoyance to purchasers.

Traders, it has already been argued, were not the principal instigaters of family separations. Nevertheless, where family ties did exist among slaves purchased for the trade, the maintenance of those ties, particularly with

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8. Millenial Trumpeter, cited in Brown, Narrative of William Brown, p.36; Wright to Oakes, 28 Mar.1857, Oakes Papers (BPL); Campbell to Dickinson, 8 Feb.1850, Dickinson Papers (CHS); Toler to Ferguson, 27 Dec.1858, Ferguson Papers (NCA); Glen to Jarratt, 4 Mar. 1832, Jarratt-Puryear Papers (DU); McElveen to Oakes, 8 Sept. 1856, Oakes Papers (BPL).

older children and with adults, was often regarded by the trader as an insupportable inconvenience. Thus, the trader T.W.Burton who, it has been seen, had affection for his own family, was not prepared to respect a recent attachment between two members of his slave gang. Having arrived in Alabama, Burton reported that Barbara and Tom "has taken up with each other as man and wife though when I have an opportunity of selling either of them they go certain." Burton was as good as his word and a month later sold Barbara and in so doing separated her from Tom. Another trader, Thomas Williams, was not prepared to respect a much longer established "marriage" and proposed, by "giving her a good paddling", to reconcile one of his slaves to separation from her husband.<sup>9</sup>

Many traders were quite willing to buy women with small children and, as Chapter IX has suggested, after purchasing such units, rarely divided them. Clearly, however, the speculator J.W.Pittman was reluctant to take such a unit to the Lower South. "I did intend to leave Nancy's child", he wrote, "but she made such a damned fuss I had to let her take it. I could of got \$50", he added, if the child had been sold separately. Family separations were routine incidents of the trade and, whether brought about by planters or traders, the speculator generally had no difficulty in accepting them. John Armfield, Isaac Franklin's principal partner, reported that when husband and wife were separated by the trade, "sometimes they don't mind it a great while but at other times they take on right smart, for a long time." Such "taking on" was, however, not allowed to interfere with the operation of the trade.<sup>10</sup>

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9. Weatherly to Oakes, 7 Aug. 1856, Oakes Papers (BPL); Burton to Long, 20 Feb., 24 Mar. 1845, Long Papers (NCA); Williams to Dickinson, 22 June 1847, Chase Papers (AAS).

10. Pittman to Williamson, 20 May 1835 (LC); Andrews, Slavery and the Domestic Slave Trade, p.148.

It has already, in Chapter IV, been argued that traders cannot generally have based their business to any great extent on selling, as "young and likely Negroes", slaves known to have been unsound or to have been convicted of crimes. Nevertheless, examples of grievances over sharp practice by traders can of course be found. An accusation of sharp practice occurred, for example, after the planter Henry Turner of Louisiana bought forty-four slaves, an exceptionally large purchase, at the agreed price of "\$2000 per pair of male and female". Turner, who "trusted to his [the trader Rice C. Ballard's] promise to send first rate hands", had left the selection of the slaves to the trader and had had them collected from Ballard by an agent. Subsequently, however, Turner felt that he had been cheated in some of his purchases, and sent back Henrietta "who was unsound"; Elias who was in some way unsatisfactory; Nelson, "an idiot"; as well as two other slaves who were "older by several years than was represented on their bill of sale". The trader agreed to exchange both Henrietta and Elias, but refused to give satisfaction over the three other slaves who had been returned.<sup>11</sup>

The papers of the Charleston slave dealer Ziba Oakes include a great many letters from customers, with a few of these letters being complaints arising out of the purchase of unsound slaves. In 1853, for example, C.Gyles complained that Oakes had sold him a slave woman who had for two years before the sale suffered from a fallen womb condition. The slave woman testified that Oakes had known of her unsound condition when he sold her. Not all malpractice originated with the trader, however. In April 1854, T.L.Gelzer reported to Oakes that he was "sorry to inform [him]...the woman Dulcina...,purchased...in December last, has proved unsound." The woman was "very well disposed" but, since Gelzer maintained that a physician had pronounced her incurable and unsound at the time of purchase, Oakes was

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11. Testimony of John M.Pelton, 11 Oct.1841, Quitman Family Papers (SHC).

called upon to reimburse the money which he had received for the slave. It appears that in this case the client sought to dupe the trader. Oakes's colleague, McElveen, reported to him: "You will see from the enclosed letters that... [Gelzer's] are false representations sent to deceive you....Dr. Witherspoon did not give Mr. Gelzer any such information as he asserted."<sup>12</sup>

When clients bought from traders and, indeed, when traders bought from slave-holders, they often obtained bills of sale which, in addition to guaranteeing title, also gave a warrant of the slave's physical and mental soundness. Bills of sale of all types were the subject of many legal disputes, but since traders, when they knew a slave to be unsound, often took the precaution of guaranteeing title only, it appears that full warrants of soundness did provide the customer with a valuable guarantee against sharp practice.<sup>13</sup> As U.B. Phillips observed, traders are unlikely to have been "full of the milk of human kindness", for such men would not have entered the profession of Negro speculation. A great many traders, however, established themselves on a regular basis in a particular market and must have found their interests served by building up a reputation for honest dealing. J.F. Moses, trading at Lumpkin, Georgia, declared his intention to sustain such a reputation. His advertisement of 1859 announced that he had

Just arrived in Lumpkin from Virginia, with a likely lot of about 40 [slaves]....He has sold over 200 negroes in this section, mostly in this county, [the advertisement continued] and flatters himself that he has so far given satisfaction to his purchasers. Being a regular trader in this market he has nothing to gain by misrepresentation, and will, therefore, warrant every negro sold to come up to the bill, squarely and completely.

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12. Gyles to Oakes, 20 Sept. 1853, Gelzer to Oakes, 12 Apr. 1854, McElveen to Oakes, 11 Sept. 1854, Oakes Papers (BPL).
13. On such guarantees see, for example, Browning to Boyd, 26 Dec. 1848 and 2 Jan. 1849, Boyd Papers (DU), in which Browning told his partner that giving compensation on a slave who had died was "bad but better than a law suit"; see law suit in Burton to Long, 20 Feb. 1846, Long Papers (NCA); see decision not to guarantee slave's soundness, in Toler to Ferguson, 4 Mar. 1859, Ferguson Papers (NCA); and see Bland to Mitchell, 9 Jan. 1836, Mitchell Papers (DU), in which Mitchell, a trader, "very honestly and honourably" refunded money on an unsound slave who had been fully guaranteed.

Similarly, commenting to his trading associate on a complaint from a client, A.J. McElveen wrote that, on the health of slaves sold, "I dont deceive no man if I am aware of the fact." Indeed, the numerous traders' correspondence collections which have been consulted provide remarkably few instances of self-congratulation on the successful duping or the planned deception of customers by traders.<sup>14</sup>

Most slave traders, despite the misery to which they were a party, were probably a good deal less brutal and more honest than tradition tends to suggest. In the ante-bellum South, the business of producing and marketing cotton, and, indeed, the whole basis of economic life was highly speculative: slave traders, like the bankers who often provided them with capital, must have regarded the traffic in slaves as an integral part of the massive speculative opportunities offered by the rapidly expanding South.<sup>15</sup>

## II

By a study of the economic returns produced by the trader's speculations, Robert Evans sought to provide evidence on the social status of the slave trader. The statistics which Evans produced and the methods which he employed in calculating rates of return on investment have, in Chapter VII, already been examined and, indeed, criticised. From his statistical results, Evans arrived at two principal conclusions. Firstly, he concluded that the rates of return on capital invested in the slave trade were, except for the period 1830 to 1835, not significantly different from rates of return on planting investments; so that investors in the slave trade, he maintained, could not have been subject to "sufficient dis-approbation to require a compensating differential in their rates of return". Secondly, after

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14. Phillips, Life and Labor, p.138; B.W.Korn, "Jews and Negro History", illustration facing p.180; McElveen to Oakes, 27 Oct. 1853, Oakes Papers (BPL).

15. On bankers' loans to traders, see Chapter IV.

examining fragments of evidence on wages paid to certain individuals involved in the trade, Evans concluded that, even though factors "such as time away from home, variability of income, etc." forced wages up, the "trader's labour income" was so high compared with that of other occupations that "a major portion [of that labour income] can only be explained as a compensating differential resulting from the disrepute in which the occupation was held". Drawing these two conclusions together, Evans offered the following interpretation of the Negro speculator's social standing:

It may [he argued], have been easy for the community to rationalise investment in it [the trade] as somehow necessary, but to shun the practitioner who could be blamed for the attendant evils, separation of families, etc., which, while not necessary to the trade, were determined less by the insensitivity of the trader than by the market preferences of the community.

The evidence which Evans presented was, however, far from being sufficient to justify the overall interpretation which he suggested.<sup>16</sup>

Evans was correct in observing that his statistics relating to rates of return on slave-holding and slave trading investments - statistics summarised in Table 10.1 of the present study - did not support the conclusion that there was any powerful stigma attached to investment in the trade.<sup>17</sup> At the same time, however, his conclusion relating to returns on labour was surely ill-founded. Evans provided only the very scantiest of evidence on the wage rates, or "labour returns", of the trade, and wrongly assumed that investors in the trade relied to a substantial extent upon hired labour. From his unrepresentative instances of "labour costs", he assumed that such costs constituted a fairly constant 50 per cent share of the basic net profits on slave sales. Such a theory assumes that in years of the trade's

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16. Evans, "Some Economic Aspects", pp.332, 334-5.

17. Historians have disputed Evans's specific statistics on rates of return from slave-holding (see, for example, T.P.Govan in Universities-National Bureau Committee for Economic Research, Aspects of Labour Economics (Princeton, 1962), pp.243-6); but recent historians have very much tended to agree that in the 1820 to 1860 period slave-holding was highly profitable. On slave-holding profits see Chapter VIII, above; and for a discussion of Evans's statistics on returns from slave trading investments see Chapter VII, above.

expansion wages paid to hired assistants would have risen to massive levels, totally out of proportion to the \$45.50 which Tyre Glen, in the prosperous 1834-5 season, paid to an assistant for work extending over 41 days.<sup>18</sup>

Scattered instances of labour costs, and Evans's unrealistic division between "returns on investment" and "returns on labour" provide no satisfactory basis for the conclusion that a marked social stigma operated against the practitioners of the trade.

TABLE 10.1: SUMMARY ON EVANS'S STATISTICS RELATING TO RETURNS ON SLAVE-HOLDING AND SLAVE TRADING INVESTMENTS

| Years     | Annual Percentage Rates of Return on Invested Capital |                            |             |
|-----------|---|----------------------------|-------------|
|           | Upper South Slave-holdings                            | Lower South Slave-holdings | Slave Trade |
| 1830-1835 | 10.5  | 12.0                       | 45.8        |
| 1836-1840 | 9.5   | No estimate                | 11.8        |
| 1841-1845 | 14.3  | 18.5                       | 16.6        |
| 1846-1850 | 12.6  | 17.0                       | 20.4        |
| 1851-1855 | 13.8  | 12.0                       | 17.8        |
| 1856-1860 | 11.3  | 10.3                       | 11.8        |

SOURCE: Evans, "Some Economic Aspects", p.232, Table V.

While the percentage rates of return from the trade do not in themselves appear to provide conclusive evidence on the social status of the trader, it is clear that considerable wealth could be accumulated in the business of Negro speculation. In 1859, for example, Phillip Thomas informed his partner that "Robertson of the [slave trading] firm Smith & Robertson is dead... [and] has left Lewis Smith his fortune of \$175,000." Williams, an important slave dealer based in the Washington, D.C., area, boasted that he had made \$30,000 in a few months; and Franklin & Armfield are said to have made \$33,000 in 1829.<sup>19</sup> Table 7.1 in Chapter VII suggests that, for a season's trading, profits of \$30,000 and over were exceptionally high and applied only to trading firms of the first rank. As Table 7.1 shows, however, J.R.White, in the 1840s and 1850s, several times achieved gross season profits exceeding

18. See p.259, above.

19. Thomas to Finney, 24 Dec.1859, Finney Papers (DU); Williams and Franklin & Armfield, cited in Collins, Domestic Slave Trade, p.29.



\$20,000; and over a two year period in the 1850s Bolton & Dickens, clearly a firm of very considerable importance, received gross profits well in excess of \$130,000. Table 7.1 suggests that for trading firms of middle rank gross seasonal profits of \$5,000 to \$8,000 - giving each partner some \$2,500 to \$4,000 - were not uncommon. Some indication of the extent of traders' accumulated real and personal estate holdings is given in Appendix A, which relates to a sample of South Carolina traders and is based on information contained in the federal censuses of 1850 and 1860. Of the two censuses, only that of 1860 gave evidence on both real and personal estate. The available information suggests that over the 1850s substantial increases quite commonly took place in the real estate of the traders concerned, and personal estate entries usually reveal the traders as men of substantial means.

In his article on the slave trade, Robert Evans provided surveys of both the wages of skilled mechanical tradesmen and the salaries of superintendents, presidents, and other leading officials of railway companies; and from these income statistics, Evans found that in the late ante-bellum period \$1,000 per year was a good income for skilled mechanics, with \$1,800 being a good salary for important railway officials.<sup>20</sup> Evidence presented in Table 7.1 of the present study suggests, then, that, except in years of usually slack trading demand, the incomes of the majority of full-time traders very probably exceeded those of the groups mentioned above. It should be noted, however, that for the traders, unlike the mechanics and railway officials, incomes represented the return on very extensive capital investment. The income levels of middling and large-scale traders must very often have meant that, among the citizens of their local community, traders ranked high in economic importance.

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20. Evans, "Some Economic Aspects", pp.333, 334, (Tables VII and IX).

III

The considerable incomes of many traders, rather than being associated with any very rigid stigma against the trader, very probably served as levers for social advancement. Certainly, the huge extent of the trade meant that business contacts between traders and slave-holders were routine features of ante-bellum life. A traffic on such a scale as has been described in this study, with slave-holders apparently to a great extent selling to the trader by means of deliberate "speculations" rather than by "involuntary sales", and with their sales to the trader directly producing a massive rate of family separations, was surely inconsistent with any genuine and widespread revulsion against the character of the trader and the business of slave trading.

That numbers of Southerners, when selling their slaves, made some effort to allow them to maintain family and local connections is shown by the inclusion, in certain slave selling advertisements, of such phrases as "will not be sold beyond the boundaries of the state". William Calderhead, working on the Maryland slave trade, found that

During the period 1809-1839, in the Maryland Gazette, approximately one advertisement in four that sold slaves not in an estate or court sale declared specifically that those slaves were not to be sold beyond Maryland. 21

This evidence should, however, not necessarily be taken to mean that as many as one in four masters were opposed to the trader. A great number of the restrictive advertisements which appeared in newspapers probably related to individual, specially favoured slaves; so that many of the restrictions would have represented special concessions to particular slaves rather than necessarily representing opposition to the trader. Furthermore, it was extremely rare for advertisements which barred out-of-state sales specifically to refer to a disinclination to sell to traders; and, indeed, with

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21. Calderhead, "How Extensive", p.53.

individual slaves, restrictive clauses, were they to have been of any real benefit in maintaining ties with family and friends, would have applied equally to sales both to traders and to visiting planters. More important perhaps, newspaper advertisements do not provide a balanced sample of non-judicial sales. With traders combing the states for suitable slaves, owners who, in order to find purchasers for their slaves, found it necessary to advertise in newspapers would have been especially likely to have been those whose slaves, perhaps because of their age, were not suited to the trade - or to have been precisely that section of the community which was opposed to the sale of slaves to traders. The evidence of newspaper advertisements does not, then, suggest any very widespread practical opposition to the trader.

Had there been within the South any broadly based opposition to the inter-regional trade in slaves, that opposition would surely have led, in individual states, to extended prohibitions of the importation or exportation of slaves by traders. Such legislation was within the constitutional powers of individual states. In practice, however, very few prohibitions of the inter-state slave trade were introduced and, Chapter VII has shown, those prohibitions which were introduced were usually short lived. Moreover, all prohibitions which were introduced sprang essentially from considerations of practical self-interest, with moral opposition to the trade being a factor of little importance.

The absence of any extensive practical opposition to the trader is further, though indirectly, indicated by the character of the many slave traders' correspondence collections which have been examined in the course of prosecuting the present study. In correspondence between trading associates a wide range of slave buying and selling problems was discussed. Much reference was made to fluctuations in the price of cotton and of slaves; to the number of competing traders active in particular markets; to the problems of obtaining satisfactory terms of sale; and to the slow business of disposing of slaves. From all of the traders' letters examined, however,

only two items have been found which refer to the possibility of particular slave-holders, on the basis of principle, being unwilling to sell to traders. Firstly, in the E.W.Ferguson Papers, a substantial collection of trading correspondence, a colleague on one occasion reported to Ferguson: "I went out to the sale yesterday but they would not let a trader have the negroes". Secondly, in the R.H.Dickinson Papers, a letter of H.M.Nelson informed Dickinson, the prominent Richmond slave dealer, that, having recently bought two slaves from a local citizen, he had sent one of them to Dickinson for sale to the trade. "It has occurred to me, however," Nelson added, "that her master was possibly induced to sell her by supposing she was to come to me and not to traders." He therefore asked that Dickinson should refrain from reselling the slave until the original master's wishes had been ascertained. Since traders, in their correspondence, complained of the various frustrations of their traffic, they would surely, had practical opposition from a substantial section of slave-holding society been experienced, have dwelt upon the annoyances which such a situation presented. As it was, however, in the correspondence of traders of various types, almost no complaints of planter opposition have been found.<sup>22</sup>

#### IV

Newspaper advertisements, census returns, and other record groups used in identifying the South Carolina traders referred to in Chapter III and elsewhere in this study were generally not such as to provide information on any public offices which those traders might have held. From available information on those traders who were active in South Carolina during and immediately before the 1850s, it is clear, however, that a career in Negro speculation was no bar to the holding of public office and of positions of

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22. Eutsler to Ferguson, 14 Apr. 1856, Ferguson Papers (NCA); Nelson to Dickinson, 19 Feb. 1850, Dickinson Papers (CHS).

public importance. The slave traders Alexander McDonald, J.S.Riggs, Thomas Ryan, and Ziba Oakes - as well as A.J.Salinas, who was very probably a trader - were all for some part of the 1845 to 1865 period aldermen of Charleston, South Carolina.<sup>23</sup> In addition, Ryan was a director of the Bank of the State of South Carolina (1857 to 1865), as well as being, in 1861, a trustee of the Palmetto Savings Institution, and being a vice-present of that latter bank in 1865; Oakes was a director of the South-Western Railroad Bank (from 1860 to 1865); Thomas N. Gadsden, another trader, was a director of the People's Bank of Charleston (1853 to 1855); and McDonald was a director of the Bank of the State of South Carolina (1838 to 1845).<sup>24</sup> Although the Charleston career of the trader Alexander McDonald ended in confusion, it is clear that he had been a citizen of considerable importance. Eliza M.Coldough, in a South Carolina court case, testified that McDonald had been

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23. McDonald is known to have held office in 1845; Riggs in 1859-60 and in 1865; Ryan in 1859-60 and in 1865 to 1868; Salinas in 1865; and Oakes in 1865 to 1868. See H.P.Walker (ed.), Ordinances of the City of Charleston from the 19 August 1844 to the 14 September 1854 (Charleston, 1854); W.R.Horsen (ed.), Ordinances of the City of Charleston 14 September 1854 to December 1 1859 (Charleston, 1859); and G.Pillsbury (ed.), Ordinances of the City of Charleston from December 1 1859 to September 6 1870 (Charleston, 1871). The last publication indicates that records of ordinances and lists of aldermen for 1 Dec.1859 to 12 Oct. 1865 were "lost or destroyed". Aldermanic positions held in that period are, therefore, not noticed in the present study. Except for McDonald, all South Carolina traders cited in part IV of the present chapter are documented in Table 3.2. The slave trading activities of McDonald are documented in many slave purchasing advertisements extending over the 1830 to 1845 period and in many of the New Orleans coastal manifests which are housed at the National Archives. An advertisement which appeared in the Charleston Courier of 7 July 1835, and which ran for several months, announced: "Negros wanted. Cash will be given for any number of Negroes from 10 to 25 years of age. Persons having such to dispose of will do well by calling on Alexander McDonald... [to] obtain the highest cash prices for their slaves." Advertisements, in the 1830s and early 1840s, often cited both Alexander McDonald and Hugh, his brother.

24. J.M.Lesesne, The Bank of the State of South Carolina: A General and Political History (Columbia, S.C., 1970), p.189; W.A.Clark, The History of Banking Institutions Organised in South Carolina Prior to 1860 (Columbia, S.C., 1922), pp.185-6, 198, 213, 254, 173.

a director of the Bank of South Carolina, that he enjoyed the confidence of the public and was reputed to be a man of large means and responsible for all his engagements... [but that] to the great surprise of everyone, about the year 184[5] he had suddenly and clandestinely left the state and went no-one knows where, leaving a large amount of debts and little or nothing out of which they could be satisfied.

Another witness, Samuel Mayrant, gave similar testimony, observing that "up to the time of his leaving his credit was very high - His leaving took everyone by surprise".<sup>25</sup>

The speculator T.N.Gadsden came from a family of high repute and according to Bancroft, the historian of the slave trade, in Charleston, "a community where old families of high character were numerous few stood higher than the Gadsdens". T.N.Gadsden's relatives included a bishop; a prominent lawyer; and James Gadsden, soldier, planter, railroad president, Minister to Mexico, and negotiator of the Gadsden Purchase. Less is known of the trader Ziba Oakes's family, but there is no doubt that he became one of Charleston's most prominent citizens. Apart from being a bank director and alderman, he became highly influential in South Carolina masonic circles. The Charleston City directory of 1855 shows that in that year Oakes was an officer in the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Free Masons of South Carolina, serving on several committees including the Charity Committee. In the same year, Oakes was a Companion and the Grand Treasurer of the Grand Royal Arch Chapter of South Carolina Masons.<sup>26</sup>

The public career and social standing of the South Carolinian Thomas C. Weatherly - who as Chapter III has shown, was, with Joseph A. Weatherly, active in the slave trade during the 1850s - can surely not have been damaged by his activity as a Negro trader. Indeed, his success in public life was probably made possible precisely by the profits of the trade. The Biographical Directory of the Senate of South Carolina records that Thomas Christopher Weatherly was

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25. Sumter District Equity Court (S.C.) Green et al. v. McDonald et al., 1866, Bill 415 (SCA). See also that court's Coldough v. Coldough, 1849, Bill 347, and 1852, Bill 348 (SCA).
26. On Gadsden, see Bancroft, Slave Trading, pp.167-9; and on Oakes's masonic activities, see The Charleston City and General Business Directory for 1855 (Charleston, 1855), p.25.

born in Marlboro district, South Carolina, in 1818 and was a "merchant and planter" at Bennettsville in that district; that he served as tax collector (1842 to 1845), Sheriff (1845 to 1849), Member of the South Carolina House of Representatives (1852 to 1854, and 1862 to 1866), Member of the state Senate (1866-7 and 1874 to 1876); that he was a delegate both at the state's Constitutional Convention of 1865 and at the Taxpayer's Convention of 1871; that he was called to Washington to confer with President Johnson during the latter's conflict with the Republican Party; that he was a member of the Methodist Church, an organising member of the Sons of Temperance, a mason who helped to select the site of the first masonic lodge erected in Marlboro district; and that he died in 1878. The History of Marlboro County, first published in 1897, fails to record Weatherly's slave trading activity and, indeed, for the period starting with his brief term as sheriff, makes no mention of any participation by Weatherly in business affairs. The county history does, however, provide a glowing tribute to Weatherly.

T.C.Weatherly, so prominent in Marlboro affairs and so long one of its most popular citizens, began his business career in Clio as a salesman with Mr.McDaniel, but soon formed a partnership with Mr.J.L.McColl, which continued until he was elected sheriff at Marlboro [in 1845], when he sold out to Mr.McColl and moved to Bennettsville, in the vicinity of which place he lived until his death. He served the public and the state legislature for many years. A man of quick mind, ready action, public spirit and generous impulse, he exercised a large influence. 27

In some circumstances, particularly during the Reconstruction period, the attainment of high public office cannot be taken as an indicator of the office-holder's respectability within the white society of his locality. The political success of Joseph Crews, a slave trader in the late 1850s, was not achieved as a result of any widespread respect within the white community; but was instead the result of a very striking opportunism which, after the

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27. E.B.Reynolds and J.R.Faunt, Biographical Directory of the Senate of South Carolina, 1776-1964 (Columbia, S.C., 1964), p.330; J.A.W.Thomas, A History of Marlboro County, With Traditions and Sketches of Numerous Families (Atlanta, 1897; Baltimore, 1971), p.146.

Civil War, saw the conversion of Crews from Negro speculator to organiser of Negro Republican militias, "scalawag" Republican Representative for the Laurens district of South Carolina, and, it seems, political racketeer. The South Carolina sub-committee of the Congressional Commission which was established in order to enquire into the Ku Klux conspiracy and into conditions in the South during Reconstruction turned up a great deal of evidence on the political career of Crews and, not surprisingly, this evidence shows that, as a "scalawag" politician, he was intensely unpopular in the white community. Indeed, Crews's career ended in 1875 with his death at the hands of a white lynch mob. In 1871, the sub-committee's witness Joel Foster testified that, as a politician, "Joe Crews is understood to do a great deal of dirty work. I dont think his own party, or anybody else has much confidence in him as a man of integrity." The witness W.D.Simpson informed the sub-committee: "It is understood that he has been perfectly unscrupulous as a legislator. He has very little ability but some shrewdness".<sup>28</sup>

Although the sub-committee heard of intense white opposition to Crews as a politician and heard strong criticisms of the standards of integrity which, in the pre-Civil War period, Crews adopted as a businessman, no criticism was levelled against the "scalawag" specifically on the basis of his participation in the slave trade. Joel Foster, cited earlier, made no mention of Crews's slave trading activity. Another witness, M.C.Butler, asked to name any harsh slave masters who had joined the Republicans, cited a certain "Mr. Robertson", and added: "Another is Joseph Crews; he used to be a negro-trader...and was not a very humane one at that." Butler, however, was interested in the inconsistency of Crews's attitude towards blacks, rather than being interested in condemning the career of slave trading which Crews

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28. Evidence on Crews appears in Testimony Taken by the Joint Select Committee to Inquire into the Conditions of the Affairs in the Late Insurrectionary States, 13 volumes (Washington, 1872; New York, 1968). For the testimony of Foster, see IV, p.829; and for that of Simpson, see V, p.1315. On the lynching of Crews, see J.S.Reynolds, Reconstruction in South Carolina, 1865-1877 (Columbia, S.C., 1905), pp.311-3; and on an unsuccessful lynching attempt of 1871, see Testimony, IV, pp.1145-9.



had formerly followed. W.D.Simpson, a witness already cited, testified:

Before the war he [Crews] was a sort of merchant there [in Laurens]. Sometime before the war he failed in merchandise and became a negro-trader. There was no harm in him then, I suppose, so far as being a disturber of the peace was concerned. He was regarded as rather unscrupulous in pecuniary matters and left a good many debts unpaid; but immediately after the war he became connected with the negro element.

Simpson added that before the war Crews had not been considered respectable.

I do not say people denounced him as a villain, but (Simpson recalled) they had little confidence in his pecuniary integrity. Crews is a curious combination. He seems a good hearted fellow, very accommodating, although people have not much confidence in his integrity, high integrity; yet he was kind to everybody and accommodating, and would do anything for anybody nearly that wanted anything done; he would send of and do it.

Crews, truly "a curious combination", seems in the pre-Civil War period to have failed to command a high reputation in his community, not because the business of slave trading itself set him at any significant disadvantage in society, but because the manner in which he conducted his merchandising and his Negro speculation raised very serious doubts about his honesty.<sup>29</sup>

The Virginia and North Carolina traders cited in Table 1.2 provide several examples of speculators who held important positions in their local community, and, indeed, who held such positions in far less controversial circumstances than did Joseph Crews of South Carolina. The public career of Francis Everod Rives, a Virginian who in the 1817 to 1820 period and possibly for considerably longer was fully and openly involved in the slave trade to Natchez, was particularly successful. From 1821 to 1831 he served in the Virginia House of Delegates; and from 1831 to 1836, and again from 1848 to 1851, he served in the state Senate. Between these periods in state office, Rives served, from 1837 to 1841 as a Member of the United States's House of Representatives, and served in 1847-8 as Mayor of Petersburg, Virginia. In

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29. See Testimony, IV, p.1212, for Butler's evidence; and V, pp.1307, 1314, for Simpson's evidence. For information of Joseph Crews, I am indebted to Adrian Nichols of Hull University.

addition to his extremely profitable slave trading activity - which in 1817 to 1819 yielded annual gross profits of some 60 to 90 per cent - Rives became engaged in planting, in the building and management of railroads in North Carolina and in Virginia, and in the development of internal improvements in his home state.<sup>30</sup>

Floyd L. Whitehead of Lovington, Nelson county, Virginia, with his partner "captain Lofftus", was active during the 1830s in the Virginia to Natchez slave trade, and was also prominent in public life. In 1843, Richard Pollard urged Whitehead, who was "acquainted with all the voters of the county", to stand for office, apparently for the state legislature. Although Whitehead's fate at that election is not known, it is clear that he was a successful candidate at more than one election. In November 1845, Sterling Claiborne's letter informed him:

I have known you for a great length of time [in your capacities] as a citizen, a merchant, as a magistrate, as a sheriff, as a member of the legislature representing the county of Nelson in which I live, and...at all times and under all circumstances the public opinion has been very favourable to you.

A letter from O. Loving indicated that in late 1844 or early 1845 Whitehead was introduced to the President and to the Vice-President of the United States. Very probably, an attempt to gain federal office explains this meeting. An undated memorandum signed by members of the legislature of Virginia and addressed to President Polk recommended Whitehead for "consideration in the appointment of officers in the public departments" and added:

Mr. Whitehead is a gentleman of great intelligence, highminded and honourable. He possesses fine business qualities, an energetic character, persevering and laborious habits and great moral worth. 31

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30. On his slave trading activities, see contracts signed by Rives and see trading accounts in the Rives Papers (DU); on his trading profits see Table 7.1; and on his public career see archivist's notes to the Rives Papers and see L.F. Kennedy *et al.* (eds.), Biographical Directory of the American Congress, 1774-1971 (Washington, D.C., 1971), p.1613.
31. Pollard to Whitehead, 16 July 1843; Claiborne to Whitehead, 14 Nov. 1845; Loving to Whitehead, 26 Feb. 1845; legislators to Polk (no date), Whitehead Papers (UVA). On Whitehead's trading activity see Table 1.2 and see Chapter VII, and for further information see collections of Whitehead Papers (SHC and UVA).

The Virginian W.A.J.Finney, a slave trader already encountered at several points in this study, although he was probably less prominent than either Rives or Whitehead, also appears to have been a well-respected and influential citizen. An affidavit of January 1863 indicates that Finney served as a Justice of the Peace, and several letters testify to his influence in local affairs. In 1865, a letter from A.H.McCleish asked him to use his influence in encouraging neighbours to contribute to the provisioning of troops; two years later the president of the Lynchburg and Danville Railroad asked Finney to join the railroad committee and so to encourage the taking out of subscriptions; and in 1876 Finney's neighbour G.C.Cabell, then a Representative in the United States Congress, urged him to use his influence to get a good delegate sent from their county to the state Convention.<sup>32</sup>

The North Carolinian William Long, active in the slave trade in the 1840s, was clearly a man of considerable standing. Over the 1852 to 1856 period, Long served as Representative in his state legislature, and in 1864 he was elected to the state Senate. His re-election in 1868, no doubt because of his Confederate associations, was declared invalid. In addition to his political career, Long was also a prominent tobacco planter and, in combination with his neighbour Abisha Slade, was credited with being the first to use charcoal in the curing of tobacco. The process produced "bright" tobacco and is said significantly to have contributed to the prosperity of the North Carolina tobacco planting community.<sup>33</sup> In 1853, Long headed a list of some sixty members of the Gswell County Agricultural Society, and in the same year he served as a delegate representing that county association

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32. Affidavit, 27 Jan.1863, McCleish to Finney, 28 Feb.1865, Finney Papers (DU); president of railroad to Finney, 25 Jan. 1867, Reid Papers (UVA); Cabell to Finney, 2 Aug.1876, Finney Papers (DU).

33. The foregoing information on Long is drawn from an archivist's notes relating to the Long Papers (NCA).

at the meeting of the North Carolina State Agricultural Society. In 1867, he founded the Border Agricultural Society of Virginia and North Carolina.<sup>34</sup>

The traders Tyre Glen and Isaac Jarratt who, as earlier chapters have shown, in the 1830s, carried large numbers of slaves from North Carolina to Alabama, also appear to have been well respected in their local community. Both Glen and Jarratt were active and, it seems, influential in local Whig politics. A letter of 1840 indicates that in that year Jarratt attended a Whig meeting in Philadelphia. In 1852, Glen's neighbour James T. Moorehead, a member of the state legislature and later a United States Congressman, wrote to James Brookes, who was then serving in the federal Congress:

I take this pleasure in introducing to your acquaintance Tyre Glen Esq. of this state - Tyre Glen is a gentleman of high standing among us, a genuine Whig - ... [with good] business habits. He visits your city upon a matter of business - and any civilities shown to him will be duly appreciated.

That the support of Glen and Jarratt was considered to be valuable in local politics is shown by M. Willows's letter of January 1852. Willows wrote that Sheppeard had fought hard for the Whig cause, and

Our party ought to rally around him. I think [he told Glen, that] with the aid of Jarratt we can give Sheppeard a start whether he wants the nomination or not.... I wish you would see Isaac [Jarratt] between now and court and see what can be done for Sheppeard. 35

The Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 led to the fusion of Northern anti-slavery forces under the Republican banner, and led to the destruction of the Whig Party in North Carolina. In these circumstances, Glen, like a great many other North Carolinians, turned to the American or Know-Nothing Party, and in 1858 Glen appears to have been influential among North Carolina members of that party. In that year, the Washington publisher Charles V. Fenton

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34. Information on these societies is drawn from documents dated 8 Oct. 1853 and 1 Oct. 1870, Long Papers (NCA). Long's trading activities are referred to in Chapter V, and elsewhere in this study.

35. Jarratt to Jarratt, 11 Oct. 1840, Jarratt-Purveyer Papers (DU); Moorehead to Brookes, 21 Sept. 1852, Willows to Glen, 25 Jan. 1852, Glen Papers (DU).

informed Glen:

You have been mentioned to me as a man having much influence in your county and state. You have also been described to me as thoroughly imbued with American principles, and as one who would be glad of an opportunity to exercise your influence in promoting the circulation of an American paper.

Letters of 1859 and 1864 show that Glen was highly regarded by the prominent politician John A. Gilmer who from 1846 to 1856 served as Senator in the North Carolina legislature, and who from 1857 to 1861 served as an American Party Member of the United States Congress. In February 1859, Gilmer, on Glen's behalf, consulted "several eminent lawyers at Washington, members of Congress", and gained the opinion that Glen's property rights extended to a river which ran through his lands. In 1864, in a letter concerning the entry of Glen's son into the Naval School, Gilmer informed the Secretary of the Confederate Navy that the youth was "a young gentleman of high character and very respectable parentage". Glen was a man of substantial property, with interests including flour milling, textile processing, and distilling; and in 1864 he had a plantation worked by 42 slaves. In addition, he was, during the 1850s, a director of the Yadkin River Navigation Company.<sup>36</sup>

Involvement in the slave trade extended to the highest levels of the North Carolina establishment. In the winter of 1838-9, the state Governor E. B. Dudley made final arrangements to send out a gang of slaves for sale in Alabama, and in January 1839 F. Johnson wrote to him from Mobile:

I had the pleasure of receiving your letter on yesterday stating that you would probably have time to visit your plantation in time to send the negroes out by the time mentioned in my letter to you. No doubt if they suspected your intentions they would give you trouble....I have mentioned to several that it is probable I will have the disposal of some likely men this winter, and there has been several enquiries on the subject....I think negroes are more in request than when I wrote to you.

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36. Williams to Glen, 25 Jan. 1852; Fenton to Glen, 14 Apr. 1858; Gilmer to Glen, 6 Mar. 1859 and 9 Sept. 1864, Glen Papers (DU). On Glen's various economic activities, see Martin to Glen, 17 Jan. 1848; patent certificate, 28 Nov. 1855; and petition to Confederate Secretary of War, 1864, Glen Papers (DU). On the Yadkin Navigation Company, see reports to Governor Bragg, 20 Oct. 1855 and 5 Mar., 2 June, and 10 July 1858, Governor's Papers (NCA).

Although Governor Dudley acted not as a slave trader but as a slave-owner disposing of his property, the result for the slaves concerned was probably not greatly different from what would have been the case had they been sent to the South by a regular trader. D.S.Reid - North Carolina state Senator from 1835 to 1842, United States Congressman from 1843 to 1847 and again from 1853 to 1859, and North Carolina state Governor from 1850 to 1852 - entered more fully into the business of slave trading. In February 1844, his nephew Samuel F.Adams, then a Congressman, wrote to him with information on their joint slave trading activities. Adams explained that he expected, the next day, to set out for Alabama with a gang of slaves. He understood that

Negro men are selling in that state for 900 and 1000 each, and others in proportion. If so (he added) we shall do well on this trip as I received a letter today from Richmond informing me that men were worth \$700 there which is at least 100 on the head higher than when I left.

It is not clear whether Reid himself, on some occasions, directly carried out the work of an itinerant trader, but from Adams's reference to "this trip" it appears that Reid and his nephew were involved in the trade on something like a regular basis.<sup>37</sup>

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The extent of the trade and the character of sales to traders, the lack of practical opposition to the slave traffic, and the elevated public positions of many Negro speculators suggest that despite traditions to the contrary, the great mass of traders did not face ostracism. For the South, the stereotype of the trader as social outcast must surely have had as one of its most important roles the convenient explanation of slavery to the

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37. Johnson to Dudley, 3 Jan.1839, Governor's Papers (NCA); Adams to Reid, 26 Feb.1844, David S.Reid Papers (DU). On Reid, see Biographical Directory of the American Congress, pp.1596-7. On Adams's relationship to Reid, see Adams to Reid, 28 Mar.1853, Reid Papers (NCA).

outside world. In discussions with those from beyond the South, the trader provided a scapegoat who could be blamed for many of the worst features of slavery, while the Southern community at large, portrayed as selflessly resisting the speculator's financial temptations, could be presented as the guardian of the highest ideals of ante-bellum paternalism.

In addition to those condemnations which are found in the propaganda which the South directed at the outside world, severe reproaches against the trader were occasionally found in statements made by Southerners to Southern audiences. Hezekiah Niles's Weekly Register, published in Baltimore, contained in the period of his editorship (1811 to 1836) numerous critical references to slave traders. On 19 May 1821, for example, the following item appeared in the Register:

Liberation! A miserable black man, bought from one of the lower counties of Maryland to Baltimore, and sold to a dealer in human flesh for transportation, cut his own throat and died at the moment when he was about to be delivered over to the blood-merchant, through his agent, a peace officer!

Niles, a Quaker and a cautious advocate of some form of gradual abolition, did not, however, seek to make a scapegoat of the trader or to claim that the speculator was shunned by society. Indeed, he "blushed for the honor and art of printing" when he reflected that newspapers regularly published advertisements openly avowing the slave trade and "soliciting business with the indifference of dealers in horses".<sup>38</sup>

J.H.Hammond - a leading South Carolina planter, politician, and pro-slavery publicist - in a letter to one of his neighbours, referred to the trading fraternity with much the same language as Niles employed. In the letter in question, however, Hammond drew his inspiration, not from consistently held moral principle, but from self-interest. Having been approached as a possible purchaser for his neighbour's gang of 59 slaves, he offered \$15,000 for the slaves, and told the neighbour, W.R.Hodgson,

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38. Register, 19 July 1812.

I rated them at about 10 per cent under the negro trader's prices and at 10 per cent less than they would bring I think if sold separately as the trader sells. But this of course you would not think of doing nor would anyone who was not a monster - or a negro trader.

A letter of 24 January 1847 shows, nevertheless, that Hodgson had little difficulty in disposing of the slave gang to another planter, and at \$4,000 more than Hammond had offered. Hammond, always, as his letters show, a keen businessman, appears in fact to have brought forth the stereotype of the "monstrous" trader as a device by which to try to extract bargain prices for the slaves. In contrast with his condemnation of the trader, Hammond in practice made very numerous purchases from the speculating fraternity. Fragmentary records show that the traders from whom he purchased included S.F.Slatte, Joseph Woods, Ansley Davis, H.N.Templeman (as well as Templeman, Omohundro & Co.), John W.Forward, Solomon Davis, J.Hull, Thomas Ryan, and T.N.Gadsden. Despite his avowed revulsion against selling "separately", at least half of Hammond's recorded purchases from traders - being of "separate" slaves aged from 8 to 14 years - are likely to have involved forced family separations.<sup>39</sup>

While Hammond's condemnation of the trader was surely inspired by self-interest, his characterisation of the trader as "monster" suggests that such a stereotype, as well as appearing frequently in the propaganda which the South directed at the outside world, might have had some currency within pro-slavery Southern society. Since the purchase of slaves usually represented the largest financial outlay which planters made, and since the qualities,

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39. Hammond to Hodgson, 16 Nov.1846 and 24 Jan.1847, James H.Hammond Papers (DU). On Hammond's purchases, see James H.Hammond Collection of Bills of Sale (SCL); see Hammond diaries (especially April 1843 and January 1844) and correspondence between Gadsden and Hammond, Apr. to Oct. 1843, James H.Hammond Papers (SCL). For documentation on the trading activities of Hammond's suppliers, see tables 1.1, 1.2, and 3.2; Goodell, American Slave Code, p.40; and Hammond's diary entry of 10 Apr.1843 - an entry in which, without further comment, Forward, Hull, and Ryan were listed as "traders" and as suppliers to Hammond.



temperament, and health of slaves could not be fully determined before purchases were effected, there were reasons for planters to proceed with caution when purchasing from the trader. Similarly, planters, even after sounding out several rival traders, might feel that they were being offered too little for the slaves whom they wished to sell. To the extent that the traditional propaganda characterisation of the trader carried over into the South's own domestic discussion of slavery, however, that characterisation was probably in the main - as with external propaganda stereotypes - attributable to anxieties and double-standards associated with the trade. For Southerners to have conceded that they sold to traders and separated families simply in order to make profits would have been to have admitted to themselves that the principal argument advanced in slavery's defence, the supposedly benevolent mission of the "peculiar institution", was a sham. Slave-holders in the South - and the Southern tradition thereafter - claimed, then, that sales to the trader, rather than constituting deliberate "speculations", were transactions honourably entered into under the pressure of special circumstances. The slave-holder's rationalisation of slave sales seems to have allowed the South to condemn a semi-mythical group of traders as being dishonest and ruthlessly speculative, and, at the same time, seems to have allowed them to deal "honourably" with the balance of the trading fraternity. It appears that these rationalisations avoided the necessity of ostracising any very substantial portion of the slave trading profession.

### CONCLUSION

The inter-regional slave trade, with its history as an important vehicle of population movement extending back to the late eighteenth century, reached its fullest development in the period 1820 to 1860, and in that latter forty year period accounted for fully 60 to 70 per cent of some one million net inter-regional slave movements. While historians have tended to place particular emphasis on the New Orleans trade, the traffic to that city - a traffic influenced by the specialist demands of Louisiana sugar planters, and based to a great extent on coastal and river supplying routes - was in important respects not typical of the trade as a whole. Essentially, the trade responded to the labour demands of the Lower South's cotton producers and, for the most part, trading operated on the basis of overland routes. In a traffic which supported slave merchants ranging from petty and part-time traders to major resident urban "brokers", the essential foundation was the itinerant trader who purchased directly from on-going slave-holdings. Far from being shunned by the public at large, traders, in practice, often enjoyed considerable prestige and frequently achieved prominence in the public life of their communities.

The long-distance trade of the Southern states was by no means the only vehicle by which slaves were transferred from owner to owner. Indeed, the volume of local and intra-regional sales must have been considerably greater than that of inter-regional sales. At the same time, the rate of family separations would have been highest with long-distance sales; and at least some 40 per cent of slaves traded inter-regionally would, by their forced participation in that traffic, have been separated from a husband or wife, or, in the case of children, from one or both parents. Inter-regional sales, furthermore, were essentially speculative in character, arising, in the main, not from any severe financial pressures bearing upon Upper South slave-holders, but from the temptations of high slave prices. Sales to the trade brought very considerable supplements to the incomes of Upper South slave-holders, but,

it seems, were not essential for the economic survival of those slave-holders. Although the Upper South acted for Lower South planters as a major source of labour, the exporting states, with the exception perhaps of a few isolated slave-holders, did not operate on the basis of a slave breeding system employing "stock rearing" methods.

The very high incidence of slave sales meant that over 50 per cent of slave children living in the Upper South in 1820 and surviving to middle age would, during their lifetime, have been sold at least once. The chance of being separated from a relative was even higher, and the great majority of slaves living during the 1820 to 1860 period would have been separated from off-spring, spouse, brother, sister, or parent. Sales and separations were, then, very far from being exceptional occurrences. Indeed, over the 1820 to 1860 period, the typical Upper South slave, living on a holding of some 18 slaves, would have found that, on average, his master sold a slave to the trade about every six years. On large plantations the rate would usually have been considerably higher. Each sale, whether or not it brought family separation to a particular slave, would have emphasised the master's arbitrary influence over the continuity of slave families.

Even in the face of such sales, the pro-slavery school, and slave-holders generally, claimed the "peculiar institution" to be a benevolent system. The master's racial attitudes induced him to make such claims in some earnest. Masters, assuming that blacks, when left to their own devices, were incapable of achieving anything more than a confused subsistence, could congratulate themselves on providing slaves with livelihoods, shelter, and discipline. At the same time, not taking the slave's emotions seriously, very large numbers of masters were able, with little hesitation, to speculate with their human property.

With all the sales, separations, and hardships which had to be undergone, the slave family, nevertheless, operated as a profoundly meaningful institution. Long-lasting marriages were possible and, indeed, must have been very common.

Emotional attachments to the ties of family must have been strong. In such circumstances family separations would have been bitterly felt; and bitterness arising out of family separations must very much have heightened the slave's consciousness of his oppressed condition. The enormously pervasive system of "Negro speculation" must, then, have worked powerfully against the slave's inward acceptance of those submissive values which, by physical coercion and by education in racial etiquette, the slave-holder sought to impose upon his human chattels.

**APPENDICES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY**

APPENDIX A CENSUS INFORMATION ON "DOCUMENTED" TRADERS ACTIVE IN SOUTH CAROLINA IN THE PERIOD 1850-1860 AND LOCATED IN THE SOUTH CAROLINA CENSUS RETURNS FOR 1850 AND/OR 1860

| Trader            | Year | District | Occupation Given in Census | Age | Estate |          | Place of Birth | P   | Located at Census |
|-------------------|------|----------|----------------------------|-----|--------|----------|----------------|-----|-------------------|
|                   |      |          |                            |     | Real   | Personal |                |     |                   |
| Parks, J.T.       | 1850 | Abbe.    | Merchant                   | 22  | 0.6    | -        | GA             | V   | Greenwood (V)     |
| "                 | 1860 | "        | Farmer                     | 30  | 11     | 41       | "              | V   | "                 |
| Vance, A.         | 1850 | "        | "                          | 43  | -      | -        | "              | V 3 | "                 |
| "                 | 1860 | "        | Farmer                     | -   | 75     | 125      | SC             | V 3 | "                 |
| Merrimon, L.D.    | 1850 | "        | Merchant                   | 38  | 2      | -        | VA             | -   | "                 |
| "                 | 1860 | "        | Farmer                     | 47  | 13     | 52       | NC (?)         | -   | "                 |
| Suber, J.V.       | 1850 | "        | Farmer                     | 26  | -      | -        | "              | V 1 | Abbe. (D)         |
| Mosely, T.P.      | 1850 | "        | Speculator                 | 35  | -      | -        | "              | V   | Cokesbury (V)     |
| Boozer, D.N.      | 1860 | "        | Trader                     | 28  | -      | -        | SC             | -   | Greenwood (V)     |
| Clinkscales, J.W. | 1860 | "        | "                          | 35  | 1      | 52       | "              | -   | "                 |
| Seaborn, G.       | 1850 | Ande.    | Farmer                     | 52  | 12     | -        | "              | V 9 | Ande. (D)         |
| "                 | 1860 | "        | "                          | 62  | 33     | 58       | "              | V 6 | "                 |
| Cobb, E.M.        | 1860 | "        | Speculator                 | 38  | -      | -        | "              | V 7 | "                 |
| McBride, M.       | 1850 | Chur.    | Broker                     | 32  | 3      | -        | I              | -   | Charleston (C)    |
| Gadsden, T.N.     | 1850 | "        | "                          | 46  | 50     | -        | SC             | V 7 | "                 |
| "                 | 1860 | "        | "                          | 50  | -      | -        | "              | -   | "                 |
| Oakes, Z.B.       | 1850 | "        | "                          | 42  | 4      | -        | ME             | V 4 | "                 |
| "                 | 1860 | "        | "                          | 53  | 62     | 50       | SC (?)         | V 3 | "                 |
| Ryan, T.          | 1850 | "        | Broker                     | 49  | 24     | -        | I              | V 6 | "                 |
| "                 | 1860 | "        | "                          | 60  | 30     | 6        | "              | V 4 | "                 |
| Ryan, W.B.        | 1850 | "        | Clerk to Ryan, T.          | 27  | -      | -        | SC             | -   | "                 |
| "                 | 1860 | "        | Broker                     | 36  | 5      | 1        | "              | -   | "                 |
| Nipson, F.        | 1860 | "        | "                          | 33  | 0.5    | 4        | SC             | (?) | "                 |
| Mordecai, B.      | 1860 | "        | "                          | 50  | 65     | 27       | "              | V 7 | "                 |
| Lipford, J.C.     | 1850 | Ches.    | Farmer                     | 34  | -      | -        | "              | V 6 | Ches. (D)         |
| "                 | 1860 | "        | N/S/P                      | 46  | 23     | 32       | "              | V 5 | "                 |
| Pride, C.J.       | 1860 | "        | Farmer                     | 32  | 1      | 9        | "              | V 3 | "                 |
| Spires, W.        | 1850 | Edge.    | S. Trader                  | 28  | 0      | -        | "              | -   | Hamburg (V)       |
| "                 | 1860 | "        | N. Trader                  | 40  | 5      | 28       | "              | V 2 | "                 |
| Adkins, T.        | 1850 | "        | S. Trader                  | 45  | 1      | -        | "              | V 1 | "                 |
| Adkins, T.B.      | 1850 | "        | Clerk for Trader           | 24  | -      | -        | "              | -   | "                 |
| Owings, R.M.      | 1850 | "        | Cotton B                   | 25  | -      | -        | "              | -   | "                 |
| "                 | 1860 | "        | N. Trader                  | 33  | 2      | 19       | "              | V   | "                 |
| Gardiner, W.O.    | 1860 | "        | "                          | 46  | -      | 23       | "              | -   | "                 |
| Houston, J.A.     | 1850 | "        | Farmer                     | 40  | 3      | -        | SC             | V 2 | Edge. (D)         |
| "                 | 1860 | "        | N. Trader                  | 51  | -      | 10       | "              | V 3 | Hamburg (V)       |
| Teague, E.F.      | 1850 | "        | Physician                  | 32  | 2      | -        | "              | V 2 | Edgefield (V)     |
| Teague, A.G.      | 1850 | "        | "                          | 38  | 1      | -        | "              | V   | "                 |
| "                 | 1860 | "        | "                          | 47  | 3      | 15       | "              | V 2 | "                 |
| Warren, C.        | 1850 | "        | Farmer                     | 40  | 2      | -        | "              | V 6 | Edge. (D)         |
| Addison, J.A.     | 1860 | "        | "                          | 31  | 4      | 13       | "              | V 1 | Edgefield (V)     |
| Culbreth, H.C.    | 1860 | "        | "                          | 44  | 4      | 40       | SC             | V 6 | Edge. (D)         |
| Hughes, D.        | 1850 | Pair.    | Speculator                 | 24  | -      | -        | "              | -   | "                 |
| Sampson, S.       | 1850 | Geor.    | Merchant                   | 30  | 1      | -        | "              | V 2 | Georgetown (C)    |
| "                 | 1860 | "        | "                          | 40  | 4      | 40       | "              | V 6 | "                 |
| Kelly, E.         | 1850 | Gree.    | Farmer                     | 29  | -      | -        | "              | -   | Gree. (D)         |
| Irvine, E.S.      | 1850 | "        | Merchant                   | 40  | 1      | -        | NC             | V 1 | Greenville (V)    |
| "                 | 1860 | "        | Farmer                     | 52  | 70     | 62       | "              | V 5 | "                 |
| Irvine, O.B.      | 1860 | "        | Physician                  | 58  | 81     | 53       | "              | -   | "                 |
| Ford, J.W.        | 1860 | Kern.    | "                          | 42  | 50     | 100      | TN             | -   | Kern. (D)         |
| Page, J.          | 1860 | "        | N. Spec.                   | 43  | 1      | 35       | SC             | -   | Camden (V)        |
| Cureton, J.E.     | 1850 | Lanc.    | "                          | 24  | -      | -        | "              | -   | Lanc. (D)         |
| "                 | 1860 | "        | "                          | 34  | 8      | 25       | "              | -   | Lancaster (V)     |
| Crews, J.         | 1860 | Laur.    | Merchant                   | 37  | 7      | -        | NC             | V 4 | Laurens (V)       |
| Nickels, R.J.     | 1860 | "        | N. Trader                  | 36  | 4      | -        | SC             | -   | Laur. (D)         |
| Steedman, R.      | 1850 | Lexi.    | Farmer                     | 35  | 4      | -        | SC             | V 8 | Lexi. (D)         |
| "                 | 1860 | "        | "                          | 45  | 15     | 35       | "              | V 8 | "                 |
| Fox, W.H.         | 1860 | "        | N. Trader                  | 40  | 2      | 8        | "              | -   | "                 |
| Weatherly, T.C.   | 1860 | Marl.    | Farmer                     | 42  | 50     | 125      | "              | V 7 | Bennettsville (V) |
| Holeman, R.B.     | 1850 | Newb.    | "                          | 29  | 14     | -        | "              | V 3 | Newb. (D)         |
| Hydrick, A.J.     | 1850 | Oran.    | Planter                    | 28  | 3      | -        | "              | V   | Oran. (D)         |
| "                 | 1860 | "        | "                          | 39  | 25     | 50       | "              | V   | "                 |
| Ellis, W.L.       | 1860 | "        | "                          | 22  | -      | -        | "              | -   | Oran. (V)         |
| Satterwhite, J.A. | 1850 | Rich.    | Merchant                   | 43  | -      | -        | "              | -   | Columbia (C)      |
| Sharp, J.M.E.     | 1850 | "        | "                          | 33  | -      | -        | "              | -   | "                 |
| Logan, C.         | 1850 | "        | Shoe M.                    | 31  | -      | -        | I              | -   | "                 |
| "                 | 1860 | "        | N. Trader                  | -   | 6      | 20       | "              | -   | "                 |
| Forayth, A.       | 1850 | "        | Merchant                   | 27  | -      | -        | "              | -   | "                 |
| "                 | 1860 | "        | "                          | 39  | 5      | 40       | "              | -   | "                 |
| Belaer, L.H.      | 1850 | Sumt.    | Planter                    | 26  | -      | -        | SC             | -   | Sumt. (D)         |
| Burkett, H.G.     | 1850 | "        | Overseer                   | 34  | -      | -        | "              | -   | "                 |
| "                 | 1860 | "        | Farmer                     | 46  | -      | -        | "              | -   | "                 |
| McElveen, E.      | 1850 | "        | Planter                    | 45  | 0.4    | -        | "              | V 8 | "                 |
| "                 | 1860 | Clar.    | Farmer                     | 47  | 2      | 4        | "              | V 6 | Clar. (D)         |
| Dinkins, T.J.     | 1850 | Sumt.    | Merchant                   | 42  | 1      | -        | "              | V 5 | Sumt. (D)         |
| Nettles, W.J.     | 1850 | Vill.    | Farmer                     | 34  | 0.8    | -        | "              | V 6 | Vill. (D)         |
| "                 | 1860 | "        | "                          | 44  | 7      | 18       | "              | V 6 | "                 |

APPENDIX A (Continued)

SOURCES AND NOTES: Information is derived from manuscript census returns for South Carolina districts, 1850 and 1860.

- Traders** All traders listed in Appendix C are documented in Table 3.2. It has not, however, been possible, from South Carolina census returns, to find information on all of the traders who are included in Table 3.2. Those traders who bought in South Carolina but were normally resident elsewhere have only rarely been located in census records. Additionally, the itinerant life of most traders, both in the buying and in the selling phases of their business, made it difficult to locate in census records many of those traders who were normally resident in South Carolina.
- Estate** Of the two censuses used, only that of 1860 gives information on the value of the personal estate of those enumerated. In Appendix C estate values are given in thousands of dollars.
- F** Provides information on the trader's family.
- W** Indicates wife, and the number following is the number of children in the trader's household. The census does not indicate family relationships, but basic relationships are assumed on the basis of the age and sex of those whites enumerated as being resident in trader's household.
- V** Village  
**C** City  
**D** District (probably rural)  
**I** Ireland  
**M/S/F** "Merchant, Speculating, and Farming"  
**S.Trader** Slave Trader  
**N.Trader** Negro Trader  
**N.Spec.** Negro Speculator  
**Cotton B** Cotton Buyer  
**Shoe M.** Shoe Maker

APPENDIX B, TABLE B.1 INDEX OF SLAVE PRICES ACCORDING TO TRADE CIRCULARS AND REPORTS, 1846-1861\*

| Market             | Year     | Month    | Source      | No.1 Men<br>About 19-25<br>Years Old | Pair/<br>Ordinary<br>Men | Best Boys<br>About 15-18<br>Years Old | Best Boys<br>About 10-14<br>Years Old | No.1 Women<br>About 16-20<br>Years Old | Pair/<br>Ordinary<br>Women | Best Girls<br>About 10-15<br>Years Old | Women with<br>One or Two<br>Children | Families<br>"Fancies"<br>"Scrubs" |                          |
|--------------------|----------|----------|-------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|----------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| RICHMOND<br>PRICES | 1846     | 23 June  | 1A          | 550- 625 a                           |                          |                                       | 375- 500 h                            | 425- 475 a                             |                            | 275- 350 n                             | Sell well                            |                                   |                          |
|                    |          | 22 Aug.  | 1A          | 650- 725 a                           |                          |                                       | 425- 525 h                            | 500- 550 a                             |                            | 300- 375n                              | Sell well                            |                                   |                          |
|                    | 1847     | 14 Mar.  | 1B          | 650- 725                             |                          |                                       |                                       | 525- (?)                               |                            |  | Sell well                            |                                   |                          |
|                    |          | 24 May   | 1B          | 675- 7(50)                           |                          |                                       |                                       | 525- 575                               |                            |  |                                      |                                   |                          |
|                    | 1848     | 13 Nov.  | 2C          | 700- 725 a                           |                          | 550- 600 b                            | 500 c                                 | 600                                    |                            | 425- 500 c                             | Sell well                            |                                   |                          |
|                    |          | 23 Nov.  | 3C          | 700                                  | 600- 650                 |                                       |                                       | 575- 600                               |                            |  |                                      |                                   |                          |
|                    |          | 7 Dec.   | 3C          | 700- 725                             |                          |                                       |                                       | 575- 600                               |                            |  |                                      |                                   |                          |
|                    | 1849     | 20 Sept. | 1E          | 750- 800                             |                          |                                       | 450- 675 i                            |  |                            |  |                                      |                                   |                          |
|                    |          | 26 Nov.  | 4D          | 850- 860                             |                          |                                       |                                       | 580- 660                               |                            |  |                                      |                                   |                          |
|                    | 1850     | 30 Oct.  | 1E          | 825- 850 a                           | 775                      |                                       | 375- 800 l                            | 650- 750 g                             |                            |  | 375- 650 m                           | IP                                |                          |
|                    | 1853     | - May    | 1P          | 1150-1200                            |                          |                                       | 450- 950 l                            | 300- 900                               |                            |  | 425- 750 m                           |                                   |                          |
|                    |          | (Oct.?)  | 5X          | 1200-1300                            | 950-1050                 |                                       | 375- 950 m                            | 800-1000                               |                            |  | 350- 850 m                           |                                   |                          |
|                    |          | 12 Dec.  | 6O          | 1150-1250                            | 950-1100                 |                                       |                                       |  | 850- 950e                  |  |                                      |                                   |                          |
|                    | 1854     | 23 Sept. | 1H          | 1100-1150                            |                          | 850-1000                              | 650- 800 c                            | 900- 950                               |                            |  | 525- 800                             | 950- 975                          |                          |
|                    |          | 26 Sept. | 1P          | 1200-1250                            | 1000-1075                |                                       |                                       | 900-1050 a                             |                            |  |                                      |                                   |                          |
|                    |          | 13 Oct.  | 1P          | 950-1050 b                           |                          |                                       | 450-1000 l                            | 950-1000 a                             |                            |  | 400- 850 m                           | IP                                |                          |
|                    | 1856     | 21 May   | 1I          | 1200-1300                            |                          | 850-1150                              | 600- 820                              | 900-1000                               |                            |  | 575- 850                             |                                   |                          |
|                    | 1857     | 1 Sept.  | 7K          | 1250-1450 a                          | 1000-1150                | 1100-1200 f                           | 500-1075 m                            | 1050-1225 a                            | 850-1025                   |  | 500-1000 m                           | IP                                | Families/<br>Scrubs (IP) |
|                    | 1858     | 8 Jan.   | 9M          | 1000-1150                            |                          |                                       |                                       | 800-1000                               |                            |  |                                      |                                   |                          |
|                    |          | 22 Jan.  | 9M          | 1100-1200                            | 975-1050                 | 1000-1125                             | 750- 900 c                            | 1000-1050                              | 900                        |  |                                      | 1000                              |                          |
|                    |          | 3 Apr.   | 9K          | 1250                                 | 1150                     |                                       |                                       | 1150                                   | 1000                       |  |                                      |                                   | Fancies(SW)              |
|                    |          | 5 May    | 9K          | 1050-1300                            | 800-1000                 | 1000-1150 f                           | 425- 950 m                            | 900-1150                               | 750- 875                   |  | 400- 900 m                           |                                   |                          |
|                    |          | 7 May    | 9M          | 1000-1200                            |                          |                                       |                                       | 900-1000                               |                            |  | 450- 500 o                           |                                   |                          |
|                    |          | 14 Aug.  | 12L         | 1200-1350                            | 1050-1200                | 1050-1200                             | 850-1050 c                            | 1050-1150                              |                            |  | 850-1000 c                           |                                   |                          |
|                    |          | 14 Oct.  | 9J          | (?) -1350 a                          |                          |                                       | 500-1150 m                            | (?) -1250 a                            |                            |  | 500-1150 m                           | IP                                |                          |
|                    |          | 20 Dec.  | 9L          | 1375-1475                            | 1200-1300                | 1200-1350                             | 900-1200 c                            | 1200-1300 d                            |                            |  |                                      | 1100-1300a                        | Scrubs(I/O)              |
|                    |          | 20 Dec.  | 3I          | 1400-1500                            |                          | 1050-1350                             | 850-1050 c                            | 1200-1350                              |                            |  | 700-1150                             | 1250-1350                         | Families(RD)             |
|                    | 1859     | 12 Jan.  | 4O          | 1500-1520                            | 1000-1100                |                                       |                                       | 1300-1350                              |                            |  |                                      |                                   |                          |
|                    |          | 2 Feb.   | 4O          | 1500-1575                            |                          |                                       |                                       | 1250-1380                              |                            |  |                                      |                                   |                          |
|                    |          | 7 Feb.   | 9L          | 1400-1525                            | (?) -1350                | 1075-(?)                              | 850-1100 c                            | 1200-1300                              |                            |  | 900-1100 c                           | 1100-1275                         |                          |
|                    |          | 15 Feb.  | 9M          |                                      |                          |                                       |                                       | 1300                                   |                            |  |                                      |                                   | Fancies                  |
|                    |          | 15 Feb.  |             |                                      |                          |                                       |                                       |  |                            |  |                                      |                                   | 1550-1680                |
|                    | 25 Feb.  | 9L       | 1400-1500   |                                      |                          |                                       | 1250-1300 d                           |  |                            |  |                                      | Families(SV)                      |                          |
|                    | 26 Feb.  | 9L       |             |                                      |                          | 1050-1125 j                           | 1200-1300                             |  |                            |  |                                      | Fancies 1600                      |                          |
|                    | 26 Jul.  | 4O       | 1450-1525   |                                      |                          |                                       | 1300-1400                             |  |                            |  | 1200-1300                            | Fancies 1325                      |                          |
|                    | 29 Jul.  | 10X      | 1450-1500   |                                      |                          | 1250-1425                             | 1100-1200 c                           |  |                            | 1000-1100 c                            |                                      |                                   |                          |
|                    | 24 Dec.  | 4I       | 1400-1500   |                                      |                          | 1350-1450                             | 900-1300                              |  |                            | 900-1150                               | Sell well                            |                                   |                          |
| 1860               | 13 Jan.  | 2L       | 1550-1625   | 1350-1500                            |                          |                                       | 1400-1525                             | 1250-1350                              |                            |  | Sell well                            |                                   |                          |
|                    | 14 Jan.  | 8I       | 1500-1650   |                                      |                          | 1350-1450                             | 850-1300                              |  |                            | 850-1300                               | 1350-1650                            |                                   |                          |
|                    | 20 Jan.  | 2L       | 1500-1600   |                                      |                          |                                       | 1400-1475 d                           |  |                            |  |                                      |                                   |                          |
|                    | 31 Jan.  | 2L       | 1550-1650   |                                      |                          |                                       | 1450-1475 d                           |  |                            |  |                                      |                                   |                          |
|                    | 26 June  | 4I       | 1550-1600   |                                      |                          | 1200-1450                             | 875-1150                              |  |                            | 800-1250                               |                                      | Families(SV)                      |                          |
|                    | 14 Jul.  | 4I       | 1500-1600   |                                      |                          | 1300-1450                             | 900-1250                              |  |                            | 900-1250 c                             | RD                                   |                                   |                          |
|                    | 20 Jul.  | 11N      | 1450-1625 a | 1100-1200                            |                          |                                       | 575-1275 m                            | 900-1100                               |                            | 575-1275 m                             | 1250-1450                            |                                   |                          |
|                    | 11 Sept. | 11Y      | 1400-1550 a | 1100-1200                            |                          |                                       | 400-1100 m                            | 1250-1400 a                            | 1100-1150                  | 400-1100 m                             | 1300-1400                            |                                   |                          |
| 1861               | 5 Jan.   | 11N      | 900-1000 a  | 750- 800                             |                          |                                       | 275- 850 m                            | 750- 850 a                             |                            | 275- 850 m                             |                                      |                                   |                          |
| MEMPHIS            | 1849     | 3 Dec.   | 1P          | 850- 900                             | 775- 825                 |                                       | 675- 725 j                            |  |                            | 650- 700 k                             | Dull                                 |                                   |                          |
| PORT<br>GIBSON(MI) | 1849     | 24 Dec.  | 1P          | 900- 950                             |                          | 775- 850                              |                                       |  |                            | 675- 750 j                             |                                      |                                   |                          |
| NATCHEZ            | 1849     | 24 Dec.  | 1P          | 950-1000                             |                          |                                       |                                       |  |                            |  |                                      |                                   |                          |
| MONT-<br>GONERY    | 1856     | 7 Nov.   | 13Q         | 1100-1400                            |                          |                                       |                                       | 950-1150                               |                            |  |                                      |                                   |                          |



APPENDIX B, TABLE B.1: SOURCES AND NOTES

SOURCES:

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| 1. Harris-Brady Papers   | (UVA) |
| 2 R.R.Reid Papers  | (UVA) |
| 3 J.Dickinson Papers   | (DU)  |
| 4 W.A.J.Finney Papers  | (DU)  |
| 5 Cited in F.L.Olmsted<br>(Ed. A.M.Schlesinger)<br><u>The Cotton Kingdom</u> (New York,1953) p.595 |       |
| 6 J.A.Jordan Papers  | (DU)  |
| 7 J.W.Bond Papers  | (NCA) |
| 8 Dickinson and Washington Papers  | (DU)  |
| 9 E.W.Ferguson Papers  | (NCA) |
| 10 Cited in Bancroft, <u>Slave Trading</u> , p.117 note 52   |       |
| 11 D.M.Pulliam Papers  | (DU)  |
| 12 S.O.Wood Papers   | (DU)  |
| 13 Z.B.Oakes Papers  | (BPL) |

GENERAL NOTES:

- \* Prices quoted are in dollars and, unless otherwise stated, are for field hands
- SW "Sell Well"
- SVW "Sell exceedingly well just now"
- RD "Rather dull and hard to sell"
- IP "Sell in their usual proportions" to other classes
- I/O "Inferior and old Negroes rarely sell in this market to the expectation of owners"
- a Upper price specifically relates to "Extra No.1"
- b Quote is for lower part of age range
- c Quote is for upper part of age range
- d "Best black girls"
- e "Second class and yellow girls"

AUCTIONEERING AND TRADING FIRMS PROVIDING MARKET QUOTATIONS:

(Information is derived from a trade circular unless "letter" indicated below)

- |                                |                                  |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| A Sidnum Grady                 | M Toler & Ferguson (letter)      |
| B Hodges, Ray & Pulliam        | N Betts & Gregory                |
| C B.Davis/J.Dickinson (letter) | O Finney & Thomas (letter)       |
| D N.B. & C.B. Hill             | P J.B.Moon/[J.Brady] (letter)    |
| E Pulliam & Slade              | Q Burch, Kirkland & Co. (letter) |
| F Pulliam & Davis              | X Unspecified Richmond firm      |
| G S.Omohundro (letter)         |                                  |
| H R.H. Dickinson, Bros.        |                                  |
| I Dickinson, Hill & Co.        |                                  |
| J Pulliam & Betts              |                                  |
| K D.M.Pulliam                  |                                  |
| L Hector Davis                 |                                  |

NOTE ON HEIGHT:

Where original sources do not give age or general slave type, references to height are taken as an approximate guide to age. Boys quoted as 5'3" and over, boys as below 5'3", and girls as below 4'11", are taken as having been aged 15-18 yrs, 10-14 yrs, and 10-15 yrs respectively. This is based on source 1B (24 May 1847) which gives boys 5'3" as 16 yrs; gives girls 5'3" as 22 yrs; girls 5'0" as 18 yrs; and girls 4'11" as 16 yrs. Where height is used as a guide, the references which follow are used.

- |                |               |
|----------------|---------------|
| f 5'6"         | l 4'0" - 5'3" |
| g 5'0" - 5'6"  | m 4'0" - 5'0" |
| h 4'9" - 5'3"  | n 4'5" - 4'7" |
| i 4'6" - 5'3"  | o 4'0"        |
| j 4'10" - 5'0" |               |
| k 4'9" - 5'0"  |               |

APPENDIX B, TABLE B.2 THE TYRE GLEN SLAVE PRICE INDEX\*

The following reproduces verbatim an undated manuscript in the Tyre Glen Papers (DU):

Pfafftown District Forsythe Co. N.C.  
Scale of Valuation of Slaves

| Ages<br>Years old | Valuation |    |     |
|-------------------|-----------|----|-----|
| 1                 | \$100     | 27 | 775 |
| 2                 | 125       | 28 | 700 |
| 3                 | 150       | 29 | 675 |
| 4                 | 175       | 30 | 650 |
| 5                 | 200       | 31 | 625 |
| 6                 | 225       | 32 | 600 |
| 7                 | 250       | 33 | 575 |
| 8                 | 300       | 34 | 550 |
| 9                 | 350       | 35 | 525 |
| 10                | 400       | 36 | 500 |
| 11                | 450       | 37 | 475 |
| 12                | 500       | 38 | 450 |
| 13                | 550       | 39 | 425 |
| 14                | 600       | 40 | 400 |
| 16                | 650       | 41 | 375 |
| 17                | 750       | 42 | 350 |
| 18                | 800       | 43 | 325 |
| 19                | 850       | 44 | 300 |
| 20                | 900       | 45 | 225 |
| 21                | 875       | 48 | 200 |
| 22                | 850       | 49 | 175 |
| 23                | 825       | 50 | 150 |
| 24                | 800       | 55 | 100 |
| 25                | 775       | 60 | 50  |
| 26                | 750       |    |     |

\* The Glen index appears, from the price levels indicated (compare Appendix B.1), and from a reference to Forsythe county - a county which was created in 1849 - to date from the early 1850s. Although most of the trading evidence in the Tyre Glen Papers relates to the 1830s, it is clear that in the 1850s Glen still took an active interest in the trade (see, for example, correspondence with J.A.Bitting cited on p.150, above).

APPENDIX B, TABLE B.3 THE RICHARD R. REID SLAVE PRICE INDEX

The following reproduces verbatim an undated, unsigned manuscript in the Richard R. Reid Papers (UVA):

Prices of different classes of negroes

|          |            |     |
|----------|------------|-----|
| Males    | 50+        | 200 |
| Female   | 50+        | 100 |
| Male     | 40+        | 300 |
| Female   | 40+        | 200 |
| Male     | 30+        | 450 |
| Female   | 30+        | 250 |
| Male     | 16+        | 500 |
| Female   | 16+        | 350 |
| Male     | 12+        | 400 |
| Female   | 12+        | 300 |
| Male     | 8+         | 250 |
| Female   | 8+         | 200 |
| Male     | 4+         | 150 |
| Female   | 4+         | 130 |
| Male     | 1+         | 100 |
| Female   | 1+         | 90  |
| Male     | birth to 1 | 60  |
| Female   | birth to 1 | 50  |
| Mechanic |            | 800 |

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