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# Mississippi 1817: A Sociological and Economic Analysis

by *W. B. Hamilton*

The Mississippi that was granted statehood in what Churchill used to call the Great Republic can be portrayed on a small canvas. The portion that did not belong to the Indians consisted of the old Natchez District plus the piney woods and sandy plains south of the road from Natchez to Ft. Stoddert in Alabama. Not many people lived north of the 32<sup>nd</sup> parallel of latitude, nor south of the 31<sup>st</sup>. In fact, not a great many lived between them. A census made late in 1816, whose takers would have strained every effort to inflate the figures, counted about 47,000 of every color, except "Indians not taxed." Possibly by late 1817 they numbered about one-fifth of the population of the Jackson metropolitan area 150 years later.

Let us analyze this little society. What were the origins of its members? We cannot say with accuracy, because no one except aliens was required to state whence he came. The latter came mostly from the British isles. The direct immigrants from Africa, who, appropriately enough, were not called aliens in Mississippi, probably came from the Gulf of Guinea. There was a small strain of French and French Huguenots in the ruling class and some French-speaking people, at least, on the coast; and there were enough Germans to mention. Courtesy of North Carolina, there was a colony of allegedly Gaelic-speaking Scots. The settlers came, white and colored alike, in colonies from Pennsylvania, Connecticut, and New Jersey. It is highly likely, however, that most of them came from the Southern states on the seaboard. In short, from the varieties of West Africans with

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This article was originally published in the November 1967 sesquicentennial edition of *The Journal of Mississippi History*. Some of the language may be offensive because the article is a product of its time and place. The article is reprinted verbatim to reflect the scholarship as it was presented at the time.

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their quite differing physical characteristics and character traits to the conglomeration that DeFoe satirized in "The Trueborn Englishmen," Mississippi began with quite a mixture.

There was a wide spectrum of color, too. The Choctaws contributed blood to the Negroes and the lower strata of whites (or vice versa), and individuals from all the social classes of whites practiced miscegenation with the Negroes. It became increasingly difficult to do so, but men of means sometimes tried to emancipate their mulatto children and see that they were cared for.<sup>1</sup> The census schedules run only to white, free colored, and slaves, the red not being counted.

TABLE 1  
COLOR  
Natchez District

<i>Census</i>	<i>White</i>	<i>Colored</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Percent Colored</i>
1792	2,672	2,034	4,706	43.22
1800	4,445	3,222	7,667	42.02
1810	15,630	14,423	30,053	47.99
1816	16,905	18,265	35,170	54.77
1820	21,620	26,326	47,946	54.91
East of Pearl River				
1816	8,542	3,175	11,717	27.10
1820	20,556	6,946	27,502	25.26
Total State				
1816	25,447	21,440	46,887	45.73
1820	42,176	33,272	75,448	44.10

*Source:* Spanish census 1792 under date of April 27, 1793, in transcripts in Mississippi Archives from the Archivs General de las Indias, Papeles Procedentes de Cuba; U. S. Censuses, sometimes supplemented or

<sup>1</sup> William Winans's MS Journal, October, 1822, and his MS Autobiography, *circa* 1825; Petition of sundry citizens of Jefferson County *in re*. M. Hagins, n.d.; Petition of Hugue Dubroca, October 26, 1813; Petition of William Barland, December, 1814 (all the petitions are to the legislature, all in Mississippi Territorial Archives, Series D, Volume 38); MS Journal of the House, M. T., December 29, 1813. All of foregoing in Mississippi Department of Archives and History; Will of James Fitzgerald, June 20, 1812, copy in Bisland Papers, Mt. Repose, Adams Co.; Will of Anne Savage, September 12, 1793; note about will of Timothy Terrell—both in Edith Wyatt Moore Transcripts, Duke Library.

corrected by schedules in [Mississippi Territorial Archives], Ser. A, Vol. 25, [Mississippi Department of Archives and History] where also is found the special census of 1816. The latter is printed in *The Territorial Papers of the United States*, ed. Clarence E. Carter, VI, 730.

For statistical purposes, we lump the colored together and find that in the Natchez District, for which we have five analytical censuses up to 1820, the percentage of colored, which was 43 in 1792, rose by 1817 to over half the population. The figure for the entire state was toned down by the great influx of whites into the east, where only a fourth were colored (see Table 1), but the presence of rapidly growing numbers of persons of color meant, as we can see with our 20-20 hindsight, that Mississippi was headed for acute social, economic, and political problems.

Statistical trends in Mississippi on age, sex, and rate of increase are made difficult to assess by the fact that large numbers of immigrants were pouring across the borders—borders boasting of no check points, no Ellis Island, so that we can only guess at their numbers. As for age, any theory that adults would predominate in a frontier migration is scarcely borne out by the figures. In the United States as a whole, 50 percent of the population in 1790 and 1800 was below sixteen years old, and by 1830 the figure had dropped to 45.<sup>2</sup> The whites in the [Mississippi Territory] were slightly younger than that in 1800, at 51 plus percent, and in 1820 still stood just over 50 in the Natchez District. East of Pearl River, the terminus of a huge and sudden immigration, they were very young: 53 percent under sixteen. The Natchez District in 1810 had been an exception. The children fell to 48 percent, for reasons unknown to me. We died young indeed in those days, but I am not aware of any unusual incidence of children's diseases in the decade from 1800 to 1810. It might be supposed that an influx of young men on the prowl for jobs and rich wives might have driven down the percentage. The percentage of persons in the prime range of sixteen to twenty-five did indeed go up 5 percent, but that of the females rose nearly that much too. The percentage of aged whites—that is, over twenty-five!—declined slightly from decade to decade, hovering around 30 percent for the entire twenty years. The colored population, for which we cannot show a trend because we lack data, was in 1820 perhaps slightly older than the white, but in measurable figures (see Table 2) for both entire groups, hardly enough so to be remarkable.

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<sup>2</sup> Conrad and Irene B. Taeuber, *Changing Population of the United States* (New York: Wiley [c. 1958]), 27.

TABLE 2

## AGE

## Age Distribution of Whites

Area &	Census	First Age		Second Age		Third Age	
		No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
Natchez Dist.	1792	1,209	45.25	1,143	42.78	320	11.98
		Under 16		16 thru 25		26 and over	
		No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
Natchez Dist.	1800	2,293	51.59	721	16.22	1,431	32.19
" "	1810	7,501	47.99	3,405	21.79	4,724	30.22
" "	1820	10,827	50.08	43,431	20.09	6,450	29.83
East of Pearl	1820	10,889	52.97	4,008	19.50	5,659	27.53
		Under 21		21 and over			
		No.	Percent	No.	Percent		
Natchez Dist.	1816	10,165	60.13	6,740	39.87		

## Age Distribution of Colored

Area &	Census	First Age		Second Age		Third Age	
		No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
Natchez Dist.	1792	724	35.59	1,170	57.52	140	6.88
		Under 14		14 thru 25		26 and over	
		No.	Percent	No.	Percent	No.	Percent
Natchez Dist.	1820	10,725	40.74	7,495	28.47	8,106	30.79
East of Pearl	1820	3,139	45.19	2,026	29.17	1,781	25.64

*Source:* Same as Table 1.

*Comment:* Author does not know [...] what Spanish ages mean; he assumes young, middle, old, in order, which would indicate raw and new society had relatively small young bracket, especially for colored. Data available for age in 1816 in only three counties east of Pearl River: Pike, 62 plus percent under 21, Marion 58 plus, and Jackson 58 plus.

As for sex, the tale seems different, simple, and, for the white girls, sad. (See Tables 3 and 4.) The figure for births is said to have favored males, nationally, and in 1830, the date for which I have a guess, female children constituted about 48.78 percent of the total children.<sup>3</sup> Mississippi

<sup>3</sup> Taeuber, *Changing Population*, 28.

whites did slightly better at the outset except in Spanish times: over 49 percent of the children were female in 1800. By 1820, in the Natchez District, they were slightly under, at 48.6. The white female children, then, survived infancy quite as well as the males. After sixteen, in the young adult stage, they lost ground fast. They ran, by decades, from 40.5 to 44.5 to 44.4 percent of that age group. In the total white population over twenty-five years old, they lost even more ground: 35.5, 34, 36.4 percent. Nationally, say authorities, in the thirties age range they should have amounted to over 48 percent.<sup>4</sup> Was the Mississippi deficit because of an excess of male immigration? One tends to doubt it, because of the

TABLE 3  
SEX  
Natchez District

Census	White Males	Percent	White Females	Percent
1792	1,491	55.80	1,181	44.20
1800	2,518	56.65	1,927	43.35
1810	8,822	56.44	6,808	43.56
1816	9,029	53.41	7,876	46.59
1820	12,082	55.88	9,538	44.12
Census	Colored Males	Percent	Colored Females	Percent
1792	1,194	58.70	840	41.30
1820	13,609	51.69	12,717	48.31
East of Pearl River				
Census	White Males	Percent	White Females	Percent
1820	11,204	54.50	9,352	45.50
Census	Colored Males	Percent	Colored Females	Percent
1820	3,480	50.10	3,466	49.90

*Source:* Same as [Table] 1.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

TABLE 4  
AGE AND SEX  
Natchez District Only  
Spanish Census 1792

Color	Sex	Age	Number	Percent of Sex	Percent of Females in Group
White	male	1st	629	42.19	
White	female	1st	580	49.11	47.97
White	male	2nd	666	44.67	
White	female	2nd	477	40.39	41.73
White	male	3rd	196	13.14	
White	female	3rd	124	10.50	38.75
Colored	male	1st	374	31.32	
Colored	female	1st	350	41.67	48.34
Colored	male	2nd	733	61.39	
Colored	female	2nd	437	52.02	37.35
Colored	male	3rd	87	7.29	
Colored	female	3rd	53	6.31	37.86
Census of 1800					
White males under 10			860	34.15	
White females under 10			811	42.09	48.53
White males under 16			1,167	46.34	
White females under 16			1,126	58.43	49.11
White males 16–25			429	17.04	
White females 16–25			292	15.15	40.50
White males 26 plus			922	36.62	
White females 26 plus			509	26.41	35.57
Census of 1810					
White males under 10			2,721	30.84	
White females under 10			2,657	39.03	49.40
White males under 16			3,815	43.24	
White females under 16			3,686	54.14	49.14

White males 16–25	1,890	21.42	
White females 16–25	1,515	22.25	44.49
White males 26 plus	3,117	35.33	
White females 26 plus	1,607	23.60	34.02
Census of 1816			
White males under 21	5,116	56.66	
White females under 21	5,049	64.11	49.43
White males 21 plus	3,913	43.34	
White females 21 plus	2,827	35.89	41.94
Census of 1820			
White males under 10	4,000	33.11	
White females under 10	3,661	38.38	47.79
White males under 16	5,569	46.09	
White females under 16	5,258	55.13	48.56
White males 16–25	2,413	19.97	
White females 16–25	1,930	20.23	44.44
White males 26 plus	4,100	33.93	
White females 26 plus	2,350	24.64	36.43
Negro males under 14	5,523	40.58	
Negro females under 14	5,202	40.91	48.50
Negro males 14–25	3,654	26.85	
Negro females 14–25	3,841	30.20	51.25
Negro males 26 plus	4,432	32.57	
Negro females 26 plus	3,674	28.89	45.32

East of Pearl River

Census of 1820

Color	Sex	Age	Number	Percent of Sex	Percent of Females in Group
White	males	under 10	4,104	36.63	
White	females	under 10	3,559	38.06	46.44
White	males	under 16	5,751	51.33	
White	females	under 16	5,138	54.94	47.19
White	males	16–25	2,147	19.16	

White females 16–25	1,861	19.90	46.43
White males 26 plus	3,306	29.51	
White females 26 plus	2,353	25.16	41.58
Negro males under 14	1,580	45.40	
Negro females under 14	1,559	44.98	49.67
Negro males 14–25	1,008	28.97	
Negro females 14–25	1,018	29.37	50.25
Negro males 26 plus	892	25.63	
Negro females 26 plus	889	25.65	49.92

*Source:* Same as Table 1.

constancy of the childhood figure and because east of the Pearl, the site of mass immigration, they showed some better in 1820, at over 46 percent in the prime age range, and 41.5 percent over twenty-five. One can only jump to the conclusion that, since they married at fifteen and sixteen, the hazards of pregnancy and childbirth claimed their toll, and that white women could not survive the diseases of the time as well as whites males. Colored women, to judge from the Spanish census, did no better, but with much larger figures in 1820, the story is significantly different. Of the colored children under fourteen in the Natchez District, 48.5 percent were females. By that time, they had already gone to work, and some of the females had started bearing children. Yet between fourteen and twenty-five the females outnumbered the males—over 51 percent, and they triumphantly survived the white women over twenty-five (36.4 percent of that age group) at 45 percent of their color in that bracket. East of [the] Pearl, their proportions are even more astounding. Under fourteen, nearly a half of the colored were females. In the next bracket they numbered 50 percent, and after twenty-five, after years of child-bearing and working in the fields, they still constituted about half their color—or colors. How does one explain this? Well, admittedly there was supposed to be a prejudice against the importation of adult male slaves. The populace was afraid of them, and even put forward proposals, from time to time, to prohibit their importation. The proposals were not acted upon, however, nor honored in practice. Were colored women more immune to the ravages of puerperal or malarial fevers than white women? Not knowing the answer, we should,

being Calvinist, flippantly say that hard work is good for you, and pass on to the next subject, if it were not for the fact that the white women worked hard too. There were more drudges than colonels' ladies.

There was by the time of statehood a redistribution of population under way. Within the Natchez District, whereas the center of population had almost as late as 1810 been Adams County, the rate of increase in the three counties to the north and the two to the south was larger than that of Adams, and Adams, as the censuses of 1816 and 1820 revealed, was not only losing white population relatively (nearly 9 percent between 1810 and 1820), but was actually incurring a small absolute loss, while all the other counties enjoyed absolute gains. Wilkinson gained more proportionately. (See Table 5.) The rate of increase in the District was, however, slowing down. (See Table 6.) Whereas it had been over 250 percent from 1800 to 1810 for the whites, and practically 350 for the colored, it fell in the next decade to 38 and 82 percent respectively, in round numbers. The Choctaw Cession of 1805 of the region east of the Pearl River and to a small extent the West Florida acquisition on the Gulf Coast in 1812 gave a pronounced twist to the population story. Immigrants were pouring in. The increase in the East from 1816 to 1820 alone was 140 percent for whites and 118 for colored. The center of population, particularly white population, was shifting rapidly, east by south.

TABLE 5  
INTERNAL MOVEMENT POPULATION IN NATCHEZ DISTRICT

County	White 1810	Percent Whites	White 1820	Percent Whites	Total 1810	Percent Total	Total 1820	Percent Total
Adams	4,255	27.22	4,005	18.52	10,002	33.28	12,076	25.19
Jefferson	2,189	14.01	3,154	14.59	4,001	13.31	6,822	14.23
Claiborne	1,552	9.93	2,840	13.14	3,102	10.32	5,963	12.44
Warren	622	3.98	1,401	6.48	1,114	3.71	2,693	5.62
Franklin	1,268	8.11	2,277	10.53	2,016	6.71	3,821	7.97
Amite	3,312	21.19	4,006	18.53	4,750	15.81	6,853	14.29
Wilkinson	2,432	15.56	3,937	18.21	5,068	16.86	9,718	20.27
Totals	15,630		21,620		30,053		47,946	

Source: U.S. Censuses

TABLE 6  
PERCENTAGE OF GROWTH

Natchez District							
Color	1792	1800	Increase	Percent	1810	Increase	Percent
White	2,672	4,445	1,773	66.35	15,630	11,185	251.63
Colored	2,034	3,154	1,120	55.06	14,443	11,289	357.93
Color	1816		Increase	Percent	1820	Increase	Percent
White	16,905		1,275	8.16	21,620	4,715	27.89
Colored	18,265		3,822	26.46	26,326	8,061	44.13
Color	1820 over 1810		Increase	Percent			
White			5,990	38.32			
Colored			11,880	82.25			
East of Pearl River							
Color	1816		1820		Increase	Percent	
White	8,542		20,556		12,014	140.65	
Colored	3,175		6,946		3,771	118.77	
Entire State							
Color	1810		1820		Increase	Percent	
White	23,024		42,176		19,152	83.18	
Colored	17,088		33,272		16,184	94.71	

*Source:* As in Table 1.

*Comment:* A few of the people in the 1820 boundaries of Mississippi were probably counted with Alabama in 1810. The increase east of the Pearl is not figured here for 1810 to 1820, as the percentage would be so large as to be meaningless. [Editor's note: Present-day Alabama would have been included in the 1810 census of the Mississippi Territory.]

Thereby hangs the central political tale. One of the main trends we could extrapolate into statehood from Mississippi's colonial history would be political sectionalism, east, west, north, south. Sectionalism does not need a large area in which to thrive. Before the Spanish had even departed you could raise terrific noise over the animosities of the people in one creek bottom against those in another. Or it could be city versus the country. A man living a thousand yards back from some shacks on Natchez Bluff, if he owed someone in one of the shacks money, could raise the good ole cry of country versus the city. In 1802 and 1803 a country party (backing

in part the real estate aspirations of one John Foster) took the territorial capital and tried to take the county seat away from the hamlet of Natchez and establish them at a wide place in the road called Washington, six miles inland.<sup>5</sup> As late as 1810 Washington boasted 334 free white inhabitants of all ages, and 190 other souls. Natchez, incorporated as a city in 1803, counted in 1810 1500 inhabitants, about a third of them colored; ten years later it had amassed 2,184 persons all told. This row broke out ever and again, for example in 1808, in 1815, when there was a Natchez ticket and a Washington ticket in the race of assemblymen,<sup>6</sup> and was going strong in 1817.<sup>7</sup> In 1815 the Assembly almost moved the territorial capital to Bay St. Louis.<sup>8</sup> This battle raged until the capital was moved to Jackson in 1821 and then on beyond.

Sectionalism on a grand scale helped shape the state itself. The Mississippi Territory, it is unnecessary to say, eventually included all of what is now Alabama. Sheer distance served just as well to alienate east and west as proximity did on the bank of the Mississippi. As early as 1803 settlers in the Tombigbee valley petitioned Congress for a government separate from that three hundred miles away across a "howling wilderness," declaring that the inhabitants of the two settlements were different in manners, customs, and interests.<sup>9</sup> In 1809, the secession movement in the East was particularly busy. Again they petitioned: the East was a mere "cypher" in the government, and they prayed for the establishment of a new government over all territory east of the Pearl River.<sup>10</sup> Thereupon the Territorial House forwarded a countermemorial which viewed "with the most marked disapprobation the objects and

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<sup>5</sup> Charles S. Sydnor, *A Gentleman of the Old Natchez Region: Benjamin L. C. Wailes* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1938), 28-29; Act of February 1, 1802, *The Statutes of the Mississippi Territory, Revised and Digested by Authority of the General Assembly*. By the honorable Harry Toulmin, one of the United States Judges for the Mississippi Territory (Natchez: Samuel Terrell, 1807), 14; Act of March 12, 1803, *Mississippi [sic] Herald*, May 28, 1803; Petition of citizens to the Legislature, October 27, 1803, M.T.A., Ser. D, vol. 36.

<sup>6</sup> Natchez *Washington Republican*, May 10, May 17, 1815; three petitions to the General Assembly, without date, M.T.A., Ser. D, vol. 39.

<sup>7</sup> Natchez *Washington Republican* and *Natchez Intelligencer*, January 15, 19, 1817.

<sup>8</sup> MS Journal of the House, 1815, 310. Mississippi Archives.

<sup>9</sup> Referred Nov. 25, 1803. Clarence Edwin Carter (ed.), *The Territorial Papers of the United States*, V and VI: *The Territory of Mississippi, 1798-1817* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1937-1938), V, 290-292.

<sup>10</sup> Petition enclosed in Harry Toulmin to Joseph B. Varnum, Fort Stoddert, May 20, 1809. *Ibid.*, V, 732-737.

views of said Petitioners . . . .”<sup>11</sup> In November, the residents of the lower Tombigbee and Alabama river bottoms sent delegates to a convention, which again petitioned against a state of such vast extent as that of the Mississippi Territory and prescribed for their area a very democratic government.<sup>12</sup> The territorial delegate to Congress, George Poindexter, representing Natchez District sentiment at the time, “felt it my incumbent duty to resist with firmness the attempt to divide the territory,”<sup>13</sup> and was able to prevent Congressional action on the prayers from the East.

In 1812, Poindexter got a bill through the House for admission as one state, but the Senate stopped him. The Senate, indeed, was adamant on the subject, and the matter slept, or rather stewed, while the territory was busy with the bloody Creeks under Tecumseh. When it had gotten its wind back and could resume the sectional paper war, a remarkable change was evident. The Natchez people read the untaken census figures. With the coming of peace, immigration resumed with redoubled vigor. Citizens east of Pearl proclaimed that they now outnumbered the west, especially in free whites, and asked for a reapportionment of the territorial legislature.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, in an election in 1815 Madison County, in the bend of the Tennessee, had cast more votes than Claiborne, Adams, and Wilkinson, on the River, combined.<sup>15</sup> The special census of 1816 confirmed the handwriting on the wall for the old ruling section. Whereas in the Natchez District there were 17,000 whites, the section east of Pearl now in Mississippi counted 8500 and the Alabama side 19,500.<sup>16</sup> Madison County alone turned in 10,000 free whites.

The sections simply reversed themselves. In 1815 the entire Adams County delegation in the Assembly voted against a resolution requesting admission as a state without division,<sup>17</sup> while politicians in the southeast, scenting the sweet smell of power and in control of a convention at John

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<sup>11</sup> July 5, 1809. Resolution in *Ibid.*, VI, 4.

<sup>12</sup> Two documents: A petition [Nov. 11, 1809] and a Memorial, referred December 26, 1809. *Ibid.*, VI, 26-30.

<sup>13</sup> Circular by Poindexter in the *Weekly Chronicle* (Natchez), June 25, 1810.

<sup>14</sup> Petition to Congress, referred December 14, 1815, *Territorial Papers U.S.*, VI, 601-605.

<sup>15</sup> MS election returns. M.T.A., Ser. A, vol. 23.

<sup>16</sup> These figures are of course in round numbers and differ slightly from those used above for the Census of 1816. The printed census (*Territorial Papers U.S.*, VI, 730), for example, gives for Greene County 996 whites, 729 slaves. The MS schedule in M.T.A., Ser. A, vol. 25, gives 1135 whites and 384 slaves—more believable figures.

<sup>17</sup> MS Journal House, 1815, Nov. 27, 1815, 123. In Mississippi Archives. The memorial is in *Territorial Papers U.S.*, VI, 593-94.

Ford's on the Pearl River in October, 1816, adopted a memorial praying admission as a whole.<sup>18</sup> When a majority of the legislature took the same stand,<sup>19</sup> thirteen alarmed members from the river counties sent off a counter memorial: "It would seem evident that there ever will be two great and distinct interests in this Territory. We have formed the Deliberate opinion that Nature never intended the present Limits of this Territory to be embraced in one state . . . ,"<sup>20</sup> and so on.

The territorial delegate to Congress, Dr. William Lattimore, was in reasonable control in Washington, was inclined to be fair to all sides, and was therefore indignant when the Convention at Ford's sent Judge Harry Toulmin to Washington as their special representative. Having come to the conclusion that the Senate, which favored division at the Tombigbee, would never admit the entire area as a single state, Lattimore<sup>21</sup> worked out the compromise which governed the settlement, leaving the Pascagoula River counties in Mississippi. A bill settling the limits and authorizing the western half to form a constitution and apply for admission was signed on March 1. The applicant was admitted on December 10, 1817.

How, and how well, did the people sustain themselves? As to "how," the climate, the geography, the richness of the loess soil on the river, and the nature of the immigrants all directed that the economy should be agricultural. There were considerable herds of cattle: In the Natchez District the Spanish census of 1792 listed more than 15,000 head, and the tax assessors in 1805 counted more than 26,500.<sup>22</sup> In the eastern side of the territory a larger part of the economy rested on cattle-raising, a business especially profitable when large army garrisons were in the area. Cattle-raising was regulated by law, and there were efforts to quarantine

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<sup>18</sup> The Journal of the Convention, held October 29, 1816, was printed in the *Natchez Washington Republican and Natchez Intelligencer*, November 27, 1816, and reprinted in *Territorial Papers U.S.*, VI, 708-717.

<sup>19</sup> December 6, 1816. *Ibid.*, VI, 731-32.

<sup>20</sup> December 6, 1816. *Ibid.*, VI, 732-735. See also Memorial to Congress, referred January 8, 1817, from members of the assembly, mostly easterners, against division (*ibid.*, VI, 744-46), memorial from seventy-eight inhabitants living west of Pearl for division; referred February 14, 1817 (*ibid.*, VI, 765-766); letters to the editor for division, *Natchez Washington Republican and Natchez Intelligencer*, November 6, 13, 20; December 11, 1816.

<sup>21</sup> Letter to the editor, *Ibid.*, May 29, 1816. In fact, Lattimore's long series of letters to Andrew Marschalk, editor of the *Natchez Washington Republican and Natchez Intelligencer*, give a fine blow-by-blow account of the long preliminaries to statehood and the one printed in the issue of March 3, 1817, constitutes a history of the question.

<sup>22</sup> [Mississippi Territorial Archives], Ser. D, vol. 17.

the territory against disease.<sup>23</sup> Timber was plentiful, for the river counties boasted the fastest-growing hardwood soil in the world, and the east had great, beautiful pine forests. Evidence on the marketing of timber is quite sparse, but not non-existent.

It was unfortunately the search for a staple crop that preoccupied the territory. When the Spanish moved into the area in 1778, one of their first steps was to provide for the inspection and governmental purchase of tobacco,<sup>24</sup> of which the production in 1787 was nearly 590,000 pounds.<sup>25</sup> But Mississippi tobacco was not of first quality; its growers prepared it for market carelessly and fraudulently; and the Spanish permitted competition from Kentucky. By 1792, production was down to 75,000 pounds, the planters were ruined, and the Spanish governor had to protect them from their creditors.<sup>26</sup> The planters tried to fill the void with indigo, but it was messy in its preparation, polluting water courses and attracting even larger hordes of flies than usual, and it required capital for equipment. In 1793 insects ravaged almost the entire crop.<sup>27</sup> The royal government had finally to suspend executions against debtors for five years.<sup>28</sup> All this set up an alignment of planter versus merchant which directed the course of territorial politics.<sup>29</sup>

In this extremity, cotton came to the rescue and fastened its tyranny

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<sup>23</sup> Acts of September 21, 1799, for example, Toulmin's *Digest*, 377-378. House bill prohibiting driving of cattle into the territory at all: MS House Journal, November 12, 26, 1814, in Mississippi Archives.

<sup>24</sup> Juan Dellavillebeuvre to Bernardo de Galvez, Ft. Panmure, December 12, 1778. *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XVIII (March, 1932), 547.

<sup>25</sup> A. P. Whitaker, *The Mississippi Question, 1795-1803* (New York: D. Appleton Company, 1934), 281, n. 26.

<sup>26</sup> Exact figure 74,895 lbs. (Spanish census). Some of the documents are: Decree of July 18, 1791, copy in Claiborne Papers, Mississippi Archives (printed, with liberties, in J. F. H. Claiborne, *Mississippi, as a Province, Territory and State . . .* (Jackson: Power & Barksdale, 1880 [really 1881]), 139; testimony of Ebenezer Rees, in *Brooks v. Montgomery*, December 3, 1806, W. B. Hamilton, *Anglo-American Law on the Frontier . . .* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1953), 244; Representation of the Planters to Gayoso (I think November 20, 1792), copy in Claiborne Papers, Mississippi Archives (botched up by Claiborne, *Mississippi*, 139-140); Decree of Carondelet, February 13, 1792, and a memorial and proposal by the merchants, n.d., and decree of Carondelet and Vidal, October 18, 1792, and order signed by Gayoso and the merchants, December 5, 1792—all in Spanish records in Adams County Courthouse, Book F.

<sup>27</sup> Sydnor, *Wailles*, 12-13.

<sup>28</sup> Charles Gayarré, *History of Louisiana: The Spanish Domination* (New York: Redfield, 1854), 332-334; Claiborne, *Mississippi*, 137.

<sup>29</sup> W. B. Hamilton, "Politics in the Mississippi Territory," *Huntington Library Quarterly*, XI (May, 1948), 277 ff.

on the colony and then the state. The Whitney-type cotton-gin arrived in 1795. By 1797 cotton was clearly the staple crop.<sup>30</sup> Having learned nothing from experience, the planters and ginnerers practiced frauds in the marketing of this product, and both the Spanish and territorial governments had to try to regulate and inspect the trade.<sup>31</sup>

Nevertheless, by the opening years of the nineteenth century the economy was beginning to struggle out of debt. There are no reliable figures on production. (See Table 7.)

TABLE 7  
PRODUCTION OF COTTON

Year	Bales	Year	Bales
1800–1801	2,000	1809–1810	4,000
1801–1802	2,500	1810–1811	3,000
1802–1803	3,101	1811–1812	4,000
1803–1804	2,500	1812–1813	7,000
1804–1805	3,000	1813–1814	6,101
1805–1806	5,000	1814–1815	19,101
1806–1807	3,500	1815–1816	28,238
1807–1808	4,000	1816–1817	24,000
1808–1809	5,600		

Source: James L. Watkins, *King Cotton: A Historical and Statistical Review, 1790-1908* (New York: J. L. Watkins & Sons, 1908), 163, 166, 138.

Comment: Source of his figures unknown, perhaps from port records; they must be received with reserve, and he does not give the weight of the bales, which are usually reduced by reliable statisticians to a uniform 500 pounds. In the Mississippi Territory, the weight ranged from 250 to 350. In 1811, one planter shipped to Philadelphia fifty bales weighing 16,204 pounds—an average of just over 317 pounds per bale. Accounts in Bisland Papers.

Perhaps the figure in 1800 was around 1,200,000 pounds,<sup>32</sup> and the

<sup>30</sup> William Dunbar to John Ross, August 21, 1797, Extracts [by Wailes] from the Letter Book of William Dunbar . . . , Wailes Papers, Library of Congress; Andrew Ellicott, *Journal* . . . (Philadelphia: Thomas Dobson, 1803), 134.

<sup>31</sup> W. B. Hamilton, "Early Cotton Regulation in the Lower Mississippi Valley," *Agricultural History*, XV (January, 1941), 20-25.

<sup>32</sup> William Dunbar's charge to a grand jury, 1800. Mrs. Dunbar Rowland (ed.), *Life, Letters and Papers of William Dunbar* (Jackson: Mississippi Historical Society, 1930), 108; Daniel Clark, a planter, quoted in *American State Papers, Miscellaneous*, I, 709.

price was around twenty-two cents. (See Table 8.) Production probably increased, although the price fell in the next few years, and the Territory's economic condition grew less dismal. The creditors could move in to sue, with the opening of American courts.

Then disaster struck, first from international politics and then from disease and floods. President Jefferson's embargo immediately impounded the cotton in storage<sup>33</sup> (if the planter had anywhere to store it). The courts immediately began to stay executions, and the Congress and the Legislature were bombarded with petitions for suspension of payments on land and debts. This went on for years, as the British blockade of the Continent of Europe, then their presence in the Gulf, and the Creek rising in the east made the situation worse. The price of cotton sank to twelve and even eight cents. In 1811, 1812, 1813,<sup>34</sup> and 1815,<sup>35</sup> there were floods that destroyed crops and buildings and drowned cattle.

In 1811 there appeared in the upland variety of cotton then planted a disease called the rot. One account dramatized its effects by saying that one plantation on which the production was seventy-five bales fell to forty in 1811, twenty-four in 1812, forty in 1813, fifty-four in 1814, forty-two in 1815 and 1816; and fifty-one in 1817.<sup>36</sup>

By 1814 a disease-resistant strain was being imported from Tennessee,<sup>37</sup> which, however, had a shorter fiber, was hard to gin, and ripened too tightly in its boll, reducing the amount that could be picked in a given time. Even then Tennessee was being supplanted by a variety introduced from Mexico and improved by the planters around Petit Gulf [Rodney], from which it took its name, under the leadership of Rush Nutt.<sup>38</sup>

There used, in my day, to be a custom in Mississippi when there was a depression in the price of cotton to talk more loudly than ever of

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<sup>33</sup> Thomas Rodney to George Poindexter, Feb. 3, 1808. Claiborne Papers, B, Mississippi Archives.

<sup>34</sup> Winthrop Sargent's meteorological observations, printed in *Natchez Washington Republican and Natchez Intelligencer*, January 24, 1816.

<sup>35</sup> John W. Monette, "The Mississippi Floods," *Publications of Mississippi Historical Society*, VII (1903), 443. Monette said the 1815 flood was possibly higher than any since 1782.

<sup>36</sup> *State Gazette*, Oct. 31, 1818. B. L. C. Wailes, in *Report on the Agriculture and Geology of Mississippi* (Jackson: E. Barksdale, State Printer, 1854), 144-145, attributed the rot to an insect.

<sup>37</sup> Seed advertisement of John Henderson, *Natchez Mississippi Republican*, March 23, 1814.

<sup>38</sup> Wailes, *Agriculture and Geology*, 143; Claiborne, *Mississippi*, 141. William Dunbar planted some of the Mexican cotton experimentally, beginning in 1807; Dunbar to Green & Wainwright of Liverpool, Natchez, October 2, 1807; Samuel Postlethwaite (son-in-law) to same, November 22, 1810, and to Chew and Relf of New Orleans, November 21, 1810. Rowland (ed.), *Dunbar*, 356, 390, 388.

diversification of crops and enterprise. It is therefore rather comforting to find that this custom is hallowed by ancient usage. So it was in territorial days. Manufacturing and sheep-raising were suggested.<sup>39</sup> But all this was quickly forgotten, in the immemorial way, and the court of King Cotton once more crowded with courtiers, when the depression lifted swiftly in 1815, thanks to the end of the war [War of 1812]. By October of that year, the price was twenty-seven cents; two years later, it was twenty-nine. (See Table 8.) There is evidence that productivity per hand was increasing markedly. Whereas two witnesses hostile to each other agreed that a hand could produce from 500 to 800 pounds circa 1800, Sydnor in his *Slavery* (p. 13) put it at 2,000 or more in the 1830s.

TABLE 8  
PRICE OF COTTON

	When	Where	Price	New Orleans weight- ed average
a.	1797	Natchez	20	
b.	1797, June	New Orleans	15	
c.	1799, May	New Orleans	25	
d.	1799, Dec.	New Orleans	28?	
e.	1800, Feb.	Natchez	25	
f.	1800	Natchez	22-23	
f.	1800	New Orleans	25-26	
g.	1801, Feb.	Natchez	21-22	
g.	1801, Feb.	New Orleans	24	
h.	1802, Sept.	New Orleans	19-20	14.7
	1803			15.0
	1804			19.8
	1805			23.3
	1806			21.8
i.j.	1807	Natchez	17	16.4
k.	1808, Mar.	Natchez	16	13.6
l.	1808, Mar.	New Orleans	12	

<sup>39</sup> *Louisiana and Mississippi Almanac for . . . 1813* (Natchez: Zadok Cramer, 1813), 47.

m.	1808, June	Natchez	14	
m.	1808, June	New Orleans	15	
n.	1808, July		12-½-14	
o.	1808, Aug.		12-14	
p.	1808, Nov.		12-14	
q.	1809, May	Natchez	10-13	13.6
r.	1809	Miss.	c. 15	
	1810			14.7
s.	1811, June	Philadelphia	13 (i.e., 10 at N.O.)	8.9
t.	1808-1811	Natchez	7-9	
u.	1812	New Orleans	10	
	1813			15.5
v.	1814	Port Gibson	11-½	16.9
w.	1815, Oct.	New Orleans	30	27.3
w.	1815, Oct.	Natchez	c. 27	
	1816			25.4
x.	1817, Jan.	Natchez	23	29.8
y.	1817, May	Natchez	26	
y.	1817, May	New Orleans	29	
z.	1817, Oct.	Natchez	26	
z.	1817, Oct.	New Orleans	30-32	

*Source:* The weighted averages by year at New Orleans are from L. C. Gray, *History of Agriculture in the Southern United States to 1860* (2 vols.; Washington: Carnegie Institution, 1933), II, 1027. The others, by letter: a. Supposed authority of Daniel Clark, Jr. for average price "lately," *A. S. P., Miscellaneous*, I, 709. b. Baily, *Journal of a Tour*, 310. He said this was low, usual price 20-25. c. John Steele to Samuel Steele, Natchez, May 24, 1799. Duke MSS. d. Same to same, December 12. Ibid. e. N. Hunter to W. C. C. Claiborne, Philadelphia, February 4, 1800. *Territorial Papers U. S.*, V, 101. f. James Hall, "History of Mississippi Territory," *Publications Mississippi Historical Society*, IX, 562. g. Green's *Impartial Observer*, February 21, 1801. h. *Mississippi Herald*, September 28, 1802. i. *Mississippi Messenger*, November 19, 1807. j. Ibid., November 26, 1807. k. and l. Ibid., March 24, 1808. m. Ibid., November 28, 1807. k. and l. Ibid., March 24, 1808. m. Ibid., November 28, 1807. n. Ibid., July 8, 1808. o. Ibid., August 10, 1808. p. Ibid., November 23, 1808. q. Rodney to C. Rodney, May 2, 1809. *Pennsylvania Magazine of Biography and History*, XLV (1916), 180. r. Figures in Steward's Book, Coles Creek

Circuit, Methodist Church, quoted in John G. Jones, *Concise History of the Introduction of Protestantism into Mississippi and the Southwest* (St. Louis: P. M. Pinckard, 1866), 112. s. Joseph Lewis to Harman Blennerhassett, Philadelphia, June 21, 1811. Blennerhassett Papers, Library of Congress t. Petition of the inhabitants, September, 1811. *Territorial Papers U.S.*, VI, 226. u. Gray, *History of Agriculture in the Southern United States to 1860*, II, 681-692. v. Account of Blennerhassett with J. MacQuillen of Port Gibson, Blennerhassett Papers, Library of Congress. w. David Holmes to White Turpin, New Orleans, October 21, 1815. M.S.A., Ser. N, vol. 30 (Wailes Papers). x. John Bisland to William Bisland, January 7, 1817. Bisland Papers. y. Same to same, May 5, 1817. *Ibid.* z. Same to Mr. James \_\_\_\_\_, "Mt. Airwell," October 25, 1817. *Ibid.*

The planters began to borrow more money to buy more land to grow more cotton to pay for more slaves to grow more . . . , and so on. They were mining and wrecking the soil. The loess soil of the Natchez District was harder to wreck than the clay hills of northern Mississippi, but the despoilers were by 1817 on their way. As Benjamin Wailes said in 1841, "We seem to have inherited from the pioneers of the land the principle of destruction, which they brought with them into the wilds which they invaded to conquer and subdue."<sup>40</sup> A traveler in 1817 found the land between [Old] Greenville [Jefferson County] and Natchez already pretty well worn and gullied.<sup>41</sup> Someone had written of "worn out cotton fields" four or five years earlier.<sup>42</sup> By the 1830s, J. H. Ingraham could give an alarming picture of the effects of leaching and erosion, with constant cultivation, when the soil in a heavy rain "dissolves like ice under a summer's sun. By degrees, acre after acre . . . presents a wild scene of frightful precipices and yawning chasms, which are increased in depth and destructively enlarged after every rain. . . . Natchez itself is nearly isolated by a deep ravine."<sup>43</sup> Some farmers attempted in our period, as they did later, to take measures to retain and renew the soil. William Dunbar is said to have adopted the practice of circular plowing on a hill

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<sup>40</sup> Quoted by Sydnor, *Wailes*, 156.

<sup>41</sup> Henry Bradshaw Fearon, *A Narrative of a Journey . . .* (London: Longman, et al., 1818), 317. The Committee on Ways and Means of the House of Representatives reported in 1823 that the lands around Natchez had deteriorated from long cultivation. MS Journal House, 6th session, January 14, 1823. Mississippi Archives.

<sup>42</sup> *Louisiana and Mississippi Almanac for . . . 1813*, 47.

<sup>43</sup> Joseph Holt Ingraham, *The Southwest by a Yankee*, 2 vols. (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1835), II, 86-87.

to retard gullying,<sup>44</sup> and so are Francis Surget and Rush Nutt<sup>45</sup> and James Green, who used an instrument to take the level of the land.<sup>46</sup> Mostly, however, the practice was to mine the soil out, leave it to erode, desert the buildings, and move on.

There can be little doubt that the system was bad for the economy of the state. The question of profits for the individual is another matter, and of that more in a moment, but if he was making profits, very little of them were being reinvested in enterprises that would in the long run benefit the society as a whole, such as banks, reforestation, fertilizer and soil conservation, drainage, manufacturies, ships, roads, schools, public health, and insurance companies. It was all take and no give. Any profits, or apparent profits, were reinvested in more land to mine, or in slaves who bred for the owner more slaves to sell and for future society frightfully expensive problems of the drag of unskilled labor, of education, and of poverty and ignorance. Or some of the profits were spent on luxury goods imported, usually from abroad. The territory did not even feed itself or distill its own liquor, since it imported whiskey, pork, wheat and flour, and corn from the Ohio Valley. The balance of payments may not have been as grim as it was in the days when everyone ran a car and farm machine made in Detroit and run on gasoline from Texas, but it was bad enough.

As to the profitableness of slavery for the owner, the question has spawned a voluminous literature. To mention only two authors, whose footnotes will serve as guides to some of the rest, the late Charles Sydnor, in his *Slavery in Mississippi*,<sup>47</sup> concluded it was not profitable, whilst Kenneth Stampp, writing twenty years later, came down hard on the side of profitableness.<sup>48</sup> Depends on how you keep the books. Anyway, in 1820, the new state had about thirteen and a quarter millions tied up in laborers who were perishable, and for whom the owner had to pay social security for the aged and small children—maintenance, medicare, and shelter—none of them, it is true, on any lavish scale. On the other hand, with any luck the laborer was self-perpetuating, and there might even

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<sup>44</sup> Edward Turner to Wailes, April 14, 1859. M.S.A., Ser. N, vol. 30.

<sup>45</sup> Claiborne, *Mississippi*, 141.

<sup>46</sup> Letter in the *Ariel* (Natchez), March 7, 1829.

<sup>47</sup> Charles Sydnor, *Slavery in Mississippi* (New York: D. Appleton-Century, [1933]), chapter viii.

<sup>48</sup> Kenneth Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956), chapter ix. See citations to more recent literature on the subject in Charles B. Dew, "Two Approaches to Southern History," *South Atlantic Quarterly*, LXVI (Summer, 1967), 316-318.

be a surplus for sale or rent.

For some persons, the system provided the good life, balls and teas, leisure, books, imported wall paper and furniture and wine. In 1801, for example, with costs translated into the price of cotton, twelve and a half pounds would fetch a gallon of French brandy; forty-five would get you a case of claret; two and a half pounds, a pound of coffee; seventeen and a half, a pound of a tea favored by a Scot immigrant; and exactly the same amount, a yard of cashmere cloth favored by his lady; or a hundred and seventy-five pounds would bring a table service of Queensware from England.<sup>49</sup> A businessman could afford to have an organ built for his house, at \$1000. The little village of Natchez, drawing on the settlements on St. Catherine's and Second Creek, could support a theater for both visiting and amateur performances, a jockey club and several race tracks, the Mississippi Society for the Acquirement and Dissemination of Useful Knowledge, and several ephemeral schools.<sup>50</sup> Some planters, too, could engage Philadelphia architects and English landscape-artists and gardeners, and build for themselves stately mansions, as we are fortunately able to see with our own eyes.

How many people shared in these amenities? Without statistics, we can dismiss a lot of them. Obviously the slaves, a majority of the population, although they had security of sorts otherwise lived the life of the desperately poor. The majority of the white inhabitants outside the Natchez District had no schools, no great houses, few luxuries, and a poor pastoral economy. In the Natchez District, Williams Winans in 1815 lived in a sixteen-foot log cabin, with a floor of unplanned planks and one window, which had no glass. He later duplicated this on the other side of a dog-trot. Thus sheltered, he declared himself fully as well-housed as nine-tenths of the citizenry.<sup>51</sup> Winans at that time owned a quarter section of land and seven slaves. Many whites seem to have owned nothing. In drawing data from the tax assessors' rolls we have to remember how modest people are about their possessions when interrogated by a tax assessor, and that all the data may not have been preserved to be assembled. Furthermore, the last rolls we are using are those for 1815, the end of a depression. In

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<sup>49</sup> Advertisements in *Green's Impartial Observer*, January 24, 1801, and bills in the Bisland Papers from Mt. Repose. I used twenty cents for cotton as easier to divide.

<sup>50</sup> See my "The Southwestern Frontier, 1795-1817: An Essay in Social History," *Journal of Southern History*, X (November, 1944), 389-403; and Sydnor's *Wailes*, chapter i.

<sup>51</sup> Winans's Autobiography. Mississippi Archives.

addition, some persons were squatting on land for which their titles were not yet cleared, or for which they had not started paying the government. They would probably not claim ownership for tax purposes. Finally, many owners had property in several counties, not to mention Louisiana, which means they swell the figures for any single county, appearing in the census for one county, but on the tax rolls of say, three.

In short, with no faith in the figures, we shall try to see what they say for Adams-Franklin and Jefferson counties (see Table 9), using ownership in 1815, but the census of 1816 for adult white males only. There were more people, who were more prosperous, in that year than in the previous

TABLE 9

## Ownership in Two Counties, 1805–1815

County	Census 1816			Assessors Rolls 1815			
	Adult White Males	Land- owners	Per cent	Plus town lots	Per cent	Slave- owners	Per cent
Adams	1,022	348	34.05	540	52.84	620	60.67
Jefferson	540	245	45.37	264	48.89	257	47.59
Adams and Franklin (created 1809)	1,367	453	33.14	656	47.99	749	54.79
				Assessors Rolls 1805			
	Land- owners			Plus town lots		Slave- owners	
Adams	314			414		301	
Jefferson	201			234		144	

*Source:* Assessors' Rolls, [Mississippi Territorial Archives], Series B, vols. 17 and 23.

one, but the skewing of our figures may be offset by the fact that adult white males did not own all the property, anyway. Women held large estates, and there was small ownership by free persons of color, such as "Free Mary," who was assessed in 1815 for four slaves, and the twelve Barland colored children, none of whom owned less than 320 acres. Furthermore, when we figure ownership on adults, we miss a number of

males under twenty-one who were already heads of families. With these caveats and qualifications, we can say that at least 60 percent of the adult white males owned no farming land and that, counting town lots, less than half owned real estate. Furthermore, the absolute numbers of owners of country land had remained just about static since 1805. Because the pre-emptioners already squatting in 1805 had not been permitted to begin purchase in 1805, there was a large increase in holders of between 50 and 349 acres paying taxes by 1815, but this is meaningless if it is interpreted as a spread of landholding. The growth of large estates—over 1000 acres—was at a temporary standstill between 1805 and 1815 (50-52 in Adams-Franklin, 33-31 in Jefferson), and male taxpayers owning no land were increasing (Adams-Franklin: 304-385). The number of persons owning only town lots in Adams nearly doubled (75-141).

The ownership of slaves, on the other hand, was increasing and spreading, but at a lesser rate than the total white population—160 percent in Adams-Franklin, half that percentage in Jefferson. Slave ownership in 1815 was 60 percent of the white adult males, 37 percent of the white adults, in Adams. But in Adams-Franklin in 1815 as in 1805, considerably more than half of the slave owners held five or less. The proportion of owners of larger numbers was growing, however, especially of owners of ten and more. In Jefferson County, for example, three-quarters of the owners held five or less in 1805 and less than 10 percent ten or more, whereas in 1815 more than half the owners held more than five, and the larger owners had nearly tripled in proportion and had quintupled in absolute numbers. (See Table 10.)

TABLE 10  
Size of Slave Ownership

County	Year	Number Owners	1-5		6-9		10 and more	
			Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent		
Adams	1805	301	194	64.45	54	17.94	53	17.61
Adams-Franklin	1815	749	436	58.21	124	16.56	189	25.23
Jefferson	1805	144	107	74.30	24	16.67	13	9.03
Jefferson	1815	257	115	44.75	69	26.85	73	28.40

Source: Assessors' Rolls, [Mississippi Territorial Archives], Series B, vols. 17 and 23.

Aside from the artisans and small tradesmen of Natchez, who were these propertyless people? What did they do? What happened to them? If the pattern in other plantation areas was followed, the poor whites ultimately found themselves unwelcome, and moved on like the Oakies, but it is wiser simply to say that the history of the Natchez yeomen, to use a pleasant-sounding word, remains to be written. A Natchez lawyer, generalizing from his abstract work, drew the generalization that the later trend in the District was toward the assembling of large estates out of small farms.<sup>52</sup> The trend may have begun before statehood: an account of the holdings of Thomas Marston Green, deceased, in Jefferson County showed his holdings were built up out of grants to a dozen persons.<sup>53</sup>

One final economic tendency of the entire colonial period: the Mississippian expected the imperial government to set him up in business and to support his institutions. The settler expected British, Spanish, and American governments to give him land, to protect him from his creditors, and to forgive his debts and his unlawful intrusions upon the public lands. He expected the federal government to build his trunk roads and to protect him from the Indians and the Spaniards, upon whom he was forever intruding. He talked bravely of education as necessary in a democracy—that is, for the white minority; he was forbidden to teach more than half the population. It was the federal government, however, to which he looked for support for common schools and for his college. The feds obliged, and the Mississippians wasted or pillaged the sixteenth sections.<sup>54</sup> They even went so far as to ask for, and get from Congress, a subsidy for a Baptist Church at Woodville. This was too much for President Madison; he vetoed the Act.

Such were some of the economic and sociological patterns set by 1817. The child is father to the man. Yes, Virginia, there *were* magnolias and dogwood, and redbud, and miles of fences of Cherokee roses. The mockingbirds sang; I have no doubt the moon shone on lovers, but my documents do not say so. There were leisurely visits in the handsome houses, teeming with servants. In the months just before statehood, a Scot planter who had been there for thirty years found life good. Mississippi was

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<sup>52</sup> Gerard Brandon, "Historic Adams County," *Publications of Mississippi Historical Society*, II (1899), 215.

<sup>53</sup> Petition of J. Taylor, attorney for his widow, August 21, 1813. *Washington Republican*, August 25, 1813.

<sup>54</sup> See W. B. Hamilton, "Jefferson College and Education in Mississippi, 1798-1817," *Journal of Mississippi History*, III (October, 1941), 259-276.

“the land of promise, flowing with milk and honey.”<sup>55</sup> Eighteen-seventeen was “. . . the finest season I ever saw, peace and plenty, and the mony [sic] plenty . . . I think more of this Country and America than I ever did . . . [and] I thank the Great God that appointed my habitation in this place.”<sup>56</sup> And, undaunted by the recent long depression, he went out and bought another 100 acres of that good earth,<sup>57</sup> so he could grow more cotton, to buy more slaves, to buy more land, to . . .

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<sup>55</sup> John Bisland to James \_\_\_\_\_, Mt. Airwell, October 25, 1817. Bisland Papers.

<sup>56</sup> Same to William Bisland, May 5 1817. Bisland Papers.

<sup>57</sup> Bisland paid \$600 for the 100 acres, planted seventeen of them in cotton that brought him \$500 in one season. Letter to James \_\_\_\_\_ above. I have used an unfair example, because Bisland was a diversifier, raising cattle, food, and feed.

