

## **FREEDOM LAWS & THE ECONOMICS OF ETHNICITY**

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The debate over market/individual regulation and freedom is not a new discussion. However, a clear understanding of the freedoms (or the lack of freedoms) and their economic consequences on early black Americans provides an informative understanding to the freedoms (or the lack of freedoms), and their economic consequences on other, modern ethnic groups. Leon Litwick (1961) and Ira Berlin (1974) provide the most comprehensive historical accounts of free blacks in the north and south, respectively. This study attempts to build upon their successes by presenting one of the first national studies that combines the legal, demographic and economic experiences of free blacks, with an extended analysis of antebellum wealth inequality. In doing so, I investigate the link between the social asymmetry and economic asymmetry among early blacks and whites in the United States of America. For the empirical study, I used cross-sectional variables from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Sample (IPUMS), I developed informative conditional ratios, and I employ least squares statistical analyses. This study finds that economic differences among ethnic groups, as measured by differences between early blacks and whites, are intertwined with asymmetrical freedoms.

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## INTRODUCTION

The debate over market/individual regulation and freedom dates as far back as religious Holy documents, such as The Holy Bible. The Old Testament of The Holy Bible tells of Moses detailing the Ten Commandments, in Exodus 20:2-17. The Ten Commandments are God's basic instruction to his people. The Ten Commandments are seen as the paraphrased *controls* of individuals in markets and society, for those moved by Old Testament Biblical doctrine. One might interpret the New Testament of The Holy Bible as expressing a more *free* form of living, for instance, in passages such as Philippians 4:6-7<sup>1</sup> and Philippians 4:13: I am capable of doing "all things" through Christ Jesus who strengthens me (KJV The Holy Bible, p. 263).

Similarly, the debate of more regulation or relative freedom of immigrants has moved backed into the spotlight of America, at the start of 21<sup>st</sup> century, with large masses of Latino/Latina Americans migrating from Central America and South America to North America. Joseph Ferrie (1999) thoroughly documented the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century wave of immigrants to the United States of America from Europe. But before the Latino/Latina American immigration discussion commenced and before the European American immigration wave of the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, the regulation and freedom of black Americans was central to the governance issue of the United States of America. In many ways, a clear understanding of the freedoms (or the lack of freedoms) and their economic consequences on early black Americans provides an

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<sup>1</sup> "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (KJV The Holy Bible, p. 263)

understanding to the freedoms (or the lack of freedoms), and their economic consequences on other, modern ethnic groups.

The experience of blacks in America can be divided into three separate discussions, the experience of: (i) free blacks prior to the Civil War, (ii) slaves prior to emancipation and (iii) the experiences of all blacks after the Civil War. But the socioeconomic experiences of the latter two are linked to that of the former:

“In learning to deal with free blacks before the Civil War, ...whites developed institutions, standards of personal relations, and patterns of thought which they applied to all blacks after Emancipation. Segregation, black codes, the convict-lease system, and the various forms of peonage usually associated with post-bellum South all victimized the antebellum free Negro caste. When the Emancipation Proclamation and the Thirteenth Amendment freed all blacks, whites applied the panoply of attitudes and institutions they had long used to control the free Negro caste. In many instances, the magnitude of the Emancipation and the libertarian spirit that accompanied it forbade immediate reinstatement of the forms of white domination. But within a generation the web of constraints that had dominated the lives of antebellum free Negroes had been imposed on all Negroes. In many ways, freedom—not slavery—was the taproot of postwar...race relations” (Berlin, p. xiv)

In other words, the day after a slave is emancipated from an intergenerational experience of enslavement, what does that ex-slave do? What are his or her goals? Does the slave have a contemporaneous objective to supply labor and consume necessary commodities in a manner that highly discounts the future in order to survive on a day to day basis at the expense of future consumption, or does the slave have an intertemporal objective to store material possessions in a manner that minimizes current consumption, possibly below subsistence, in order to provide a better experience for his or her children? Prior to southern emancipation, some blacks were able to ponder on the same decisions.

Therefore, this paper focuses on the plight of the average antebellum free black American, which, in hindsight, illuminated the path of the average black American, after emancipation, as well as Americans of other ethnicities over time.

## **Outline**

The structure of the paper is as follows:

In the first section, I analyze *the legal structure in the United States of America* and its impact on the progression of free black rights and protections under the United States Constitution and the multiple levels of government dating back to the Colonial period.

In the second section, I analyze *the demographic dispersion of the free black population*.

In the third section, I present *the methods of economic analysis, results, and conclusions* from comparing the economic experiences of white Americans and ex-slaves to free black Americans.

Through these analyses, I intend to uncover the portion of the ethnic experience explained by institutional barriers and the portion of their experience explained by available socioeconomic choices. While a previous paper that I wrote provides a decomposition of these aggregate differences, this paper will provide one of the first comprehensive, synthesized analyses of the legal, demographic, and economic experiences of free Black Americans, most who are ex-slaves, compared to whites in the United States of America.

## **THE FEDERAL AND STATE LAWS IN THE LAWS IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, COLONIAL THROUGH THE CONSTITUTIONAL ERAS**

### **The Definition of a Free Black Citizen before the Emancipation Proclamation**

The free black was legally defined by his or her physical traits and source of social freedoms. Foremost, several states took the time and effort to write laws that provided a definition of a free black based on their family tree and physical traits, which were informally adopted nationally:

“Who was a Negro? During the Colonial era, only Virginia and North Carolina had bothered to define legally what made a person black. Both colonies carried the search for African ancestry back three generations, and at times, North Carolina legislators pecked into the fourth generation removed. Any free person with African parent, grandparent, greatgrandparent, and sometimes a great-great grandparent—that is, up to one-eighth or onesixteenth Negro—was deemed black and subject to laws regulating free Negroes. In rummaging through family trees to the third and fourth generation, Virginia and North Carolina gave legal force to the commonplace colonial notion that anyone who displayed the physical attributes of an African past...was to be considered black as a full-blooded Negro. Other colonies seemed to follow this rule, although none chose to write it into law” (Berlin, 1974, pp.97-98)

The source of social freedoms for free blacks was quite different than that of whites. Whites functioned in American society based on natural rights protected by clauses in the Constitution. However, the free black existed based on manumission:

"Manumission, or some related form of legal declaration of freedom, was conferred on favored individuals of meritorious services or because of sentimental or moral reason.... Slaves who were permitted to hire themselves out as laborers were sometimes able to save sufficient money to purchase their freedom from their masters. A significant number gained their freedom by escaping their owners and isolating themselves in remote localities in the South or by fleeing to free soil in the North or in Canada.... Free Negroes...were immigrants from foreign lands.... Offspring not only of members of the free Negro community but also from unions between free Negroes and non-Negroes (expanded the free Negro community)" (Zelinsky, 1950, pp.386-87).

The controversy on the citizenship status of free blacks in America can be traced back to the formation of America. Many federal and states decisions often conflicted on the protections of the free black American under the laws of governments. The legal turmoil around the status of free blacks can be best understood by dividing up the discussion into the early Colonial period and the Constitutional era. The latter can be further partitioned into an analysis of federal and state laws on free black citizenship.

### **The Colonial Era of Free Black Citizenship in the United States of America**

The experiences of free blacks in America date back to the Colonial Period. The initial absence of early Colonial laws that limited the rights of free blacks produced a temporary environment that welcomed free black social gains:

“Between the arrival of the first free blacks and the codification of slavery in 1660’s, colonial lawmakers hardly recognized them all. During these first forty years, some free Negroes enjoyed the full fruit of the new rich land. They earned money, accumulated property, and occasionally held minor offices....But as whites secured the bonds of racial slavery, the status of those blacks who remained free suffered. In the 1660’s, when slavery was given legal sanction, (for instance) Virginia legislators made a lasting judgment: free Negroes ‘ought not in all respects...be admitted to a full fruition of the exemptions and impunities of the English’ ” (Berlin, pp.4-5)

Upon the inception of Colonial state laws that articulated free black protections, levels of freedom differed depending on what state free blacks resided in:

“Colonial blacks codes were laced with inconsistencies. Although they (whites) often treated free blacks roughly, they left large areas where blacks enjoyed legal equalities with whites. For example, Virginia barred free Negroes from holding office, yet no other colony so acted. Maryland prohibited free Negroes from mustering with the militia, but no other Southern colony issued a similar ban, and some actually required Negro freemen to attend. South Carolina and Virginia sought to ensure white dominance by whipping blacks, ‘free or bond,’ who dared to raise a hand to strike a white, but they remained alone in this action....The black codes were a jumble whose haphazard construction reflected refusal, inability, or disinclination of whites to fix the free Negro’s status. This confusion gave free Negroes room to maneuver in a society that often was hostile to their very existence” (Berlin, pp.8-9).

### **The Era of the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights**

The status of free blacks in America, as with any American, is directly linked to his or her rights and protections as articulated in the Constitution, as interpreted by the courts, and as enforced by agents of federal, state and local governments. Article four, Section two and Paragraph one of the Constitution of the United States, adopted in 1787, provided the basis for citizenship of an American: “The citizens of each state shall be entitled to all privileges and immunities of citizens in the several states” (McKee, 1934, p.2). However, the literal interpretation of this clause could only be articulated, with sufficient enforcement powers, when individuals contested the actions of others based on this clause. McKee reports that such contests did occur and led to essentially two different interpretations, one based on property rights and another based on state-defined laws.

Foremost, the judge (Chase) in the 1797 Maryland case of Campbell vs. Morris first articulated the property-holding definition of citizenship:

“One of the great objects must occur to every person, which was enabling the citizens of several states to acquire and hold real property in any of the states, and deemed necessary, as each state was a sovereign, independent state, and the state had confederated only for the purpose of general defense and security, and to the general welfare....The court of the opinion it means that citizens have the peculiar advantage of acquiring and holding real as well as personal property, and that such property shall be protected and secured by the laws of the state is protected” (McKee, p.4).

Since free blacks were not denied the right to own property, this interpretation led to an inclusion of free blacks in the rights and protections of US citizens: “The free Negro’s only right that escaped unscathed was his ability to hold property—a striking commentary on the American idea of liberty” (Berlin, p.97). But “the words of Judge Chase are rarely encountered in judicial opinions and his concepts even less frequently in the arguments upon the operation of the clause of free Negroes in the period prior to 1860” (McKee, p.3). Instead, the state-defined laws on citizenship became dominant during this period. The judge (Washington) in the Federal Case, *Corfield vs. Coryell*, first articulated this definition of citizenship.

The judge states that citizenship rights “belong, of right, to the citizens of all free governments; and which have, at all times, been enjoyed by the citizens of the several states which compose this Union, from the time of their becoming free, independent, and sovereign...tedious...the enumerate...all comprehended under the following general heads: Protection by the government; the enjoyment of life and liberty, with right to acquire and possess property of every kind, and to pursue and obtain happiness and safety; subject nevertheless to such restraints as government may justly prescribe for the general purpose of the whole. The right of one citizen of one state to pass through, or to reside in any other state, for purposes of trade, agriculture, professional pursuits, or otherwise; to claim the benefit of the writ of habeas corpus; to institute and maintain actions of any kind in the courts of the state; to take, hold and dispose of property, either real or personal; and an exemption from higher taxes or impositions than are paid by the other citizens of the state; may be mentioned as of the particular privileges and immunities of citizens, which are clearly embraced by the general description of privileges deemed to be fundamental; to which may be added the elective franchise, as regulated and established by the laws or constitution of the state in which it is exercised” (McKee, p.5).

Essentially, “it only admitted those men who were citizens of right” (McKee, p.6). Therefore, it was left up to each state to define the citizenship status of free blacks.

### **The Era of the Federal Government in United States of America**

The federal government also weighed in on the issue of free black citizenship and their rights and privileges under the Constitution. The following summarizes key federal legislation, federal executive branch decisions and Supreme Court decisions.

Foremost, the United States Congress was actively involved in questions about the legal status of free blacks. Table 1a shows that Congress presented legislation often restricted or debated the restriction of free black citizenship rights on military and public service.

**Table 1a. Congressional Deliberations over the Status of Free Blacks in the US, 1790-1870**

Year	US Congressional Actions
1790	Restricted naturalization to whites
1792	Restricted participation in military to white males
1803	Allowed free blacks to serve as seamen
1810	Restricted postal mail carriers to whites
1820	Restricted new authorization of local control in Washington, DC to whites
1821-	Debated legal rights of free blacks
1840-	Debated reports of high 'idiot and insane' rates among Northern free blacks
1840-	Debated the expansion of slavery
1841	Deleted provisions that excluded free blacks from the federal land policies
1850-	Attached amendments to federal land policies the restricted free blacks from participation
1870	Adopted the 14th Amendment which recognized the rights of free blacks

**Source:** Information collected and compiled by James Curtis Jr (2002) from Litwick (1958, pp. 261-75)

The only exception of significance was that free blacks were allowed to serve as seamen in 1803. But federal legislation, such as the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act which “provided more severe penalties for those abetting fugitive slaves than the previous act of 1793 and made government officials responsible for the arrest of suspected slaves” (Wilkie, 1976, p.318), consistently inhibited free black rights as US citizens and led many to migrate to Canada, Africa and Central America. But Congress also displayed glimpses of opportunity for free black rights. For instance, the federal executive branch, through the Attorney General and Secretary of State offices, also participated in the debate over the rights of free blacks. For instance, early Attorney Generals contributed to the debate on the rights of free blacks to citizenship. Table 1b shows the varying opinions of Attorney Generals with regard to free black citizenship.



**Table 1b. Opinions on the Legal Status of Free Blacks by US Attorney Generals, 1821-1862**

Year	US Attorney General Opinions
1821	No free black rights to citizenship under the US Constitution Free black rights to citizenship were defined by state of residence
1822	SC state police powers that imprisoned foreign black seaman violated Constitution
1823	Free blacks were entitled to receive land payments for service in 1812 war No free black rights to serve in military
1829	SC state police powers that imprisoned foreign black seaman were lawful
1831	No free black rights to citizenship under the US Constitution
1843	Free black rights to citizenship were between the definition of alien and citizen Free blacks were entitled to benefit from federal land policies
1856	No free blacks entitlements to benefit from federal land policies No free black rights to citizenship under the US Constitution
1862	Free black rights to citizenship, vote and hold office

**Source:** Information collected and compiled by James Curtis Jr (2002) from Litwick (1958, pp. 273-75)

At a minimum, free blacks were citizens of their states throughout the period. In 1821, the Attorney General stated that the "free Negroes 'cannot be regarded, when beyond the Jurisdiction of the Government, as entitled to full rights of citizens'" (p.272). However, citizenship was defined as "'those who enjoyed the full and equal privileges of white citizens in the State of their residence,' (which) implied that Negroes could be so considered" (p.273). The ability of the free blacks to access federal land programs also commented on the citizenship status of free blacks. The decisions of Attorney Generals tended vary on land grant opportunities for free blacks until the interpretations of the Dred Scott decision close the door:

“Attorney-General H. S. Legare replied to an interrogation from the Secretary of the Treasury that free Negroes were qualified to secure land under the preemption law in 1841. That enactment provided that only citizens of the United States or aliens who had filed their declarations of intention to become a citizen could take land...He then proceeded to show that free Negroes were not aliens, and ended by proving them to be citizens. To avoid giving them full protection of the Constitution he classified them as denizens...Later Galeb Cushing, Attorney-General under President Pierce...allowed ‘that the better option is the colored persons are not’ citizens of the United State...(Furthermore) the general land office, after the Scott decision, cancelled some of the claims of free Negroes to the public land under the preemption law of 1841. It maintained that as free Negroes had been adjusted not to be citizens of the United States, they could legally acquire title under the 1841 set” (McKee, pp. 211-13)

The debate continued across federal administration among Secretaries of State over the passport eligibility of free blacks. Passports were symbolic of citizenship and protections from the US government. Table 2 shows that early United States Secretaries of State took different positions on the rights of free blacks to own passports.

**Table 2. Free Black Passport Policies by US Secretaries of State , 1839-1861**

Year	US Secretaries of State Passport Policies
1839	Rejected passport application from Philadelphia free black
1847	Allowed free blacks to attain alternative certificates to passports
1849	Allowed free blacks who served as foreign diplomats to attain passports
1856	Rejected passports to eleven free blacks Allowed free blacks to attain alternative certificates to passports
1857	Declared no foundation for passports to free blacks
1861	Allowed free blacks to obtain passports

**Source:** Information collected and compiled by James Curtis Jr (2002) from Litwick (1958, pp. 271-73)

There is evidence, threaded throughout the different tenures of the United States Secretaries of States, that free blacks received passports in 1834, 1836, 1849 and 1854 (p. 271). At a minimum, most Secretaries allowed free blacks to receive some documentation of birth and residence in the United States. These documents stated that free blacks "were born in the United States, are free, and that the government thereof would regard it to be its duty to protect them if wronged by a foreign service government, while within its jurisdiction for a legal and proper purpose" (p.272).

The federal courts made the final statement of the rights of free blacks before the Civil War. The majority opinion of the famous 1857 US Supreme Court decision, *Dred Scott vs. Sanford*, known as the Dred Scott decision, stated that there were no rights of free blacks that whites had to honor.

Paraphrasing what Chief Justice Roger Taney wrote: "'The African race in the United States even when free,' he wrote, 'are everywhere a degraded class, and exercise no political influence. The privileges they are allowed to enjoy, are accorded to them as a matter of kindness and benevolence rather than right...And where they are normally admitted by law to privileges of citizenship, they have no effectual power to defend them, and are permitted to be citizens by the sufferance of the white population and hold whatever rights they enjoy at their mercy.' Negroes are 'a separate and degraded people to whom the sovereignty of each state might accord or withhold such privileges as they

deemed proper.' Consequently, the framers of the Constitution had not regarded them as citizens and they 'were evidently not supposed to be included by the term citizens'" (p.274).

The dissent argued that at the time the founding documents were be written, several states gave free blacks the right the vote and, thus, were included in the interpretation of the 'people of the United States' who had certain protections under the law.

Paraphrasing what dissenting Justice Benjamin R. Curtis wrote: "At the time of the ratification of the Articles of Confederation, he pointed out, free Negroes were not only citizens in five states--New Hampshire, Massachusetts, New York, New Jersey, and North Carolina--but actually exercised the right of suffrage on equal terms with whites...Negroes, he concluded, 'were not only included in the body of *the people of the United States*, by whom the Constitution was ordained and established, but in at least five of the States they had the power to act, and doubtless did act, by their suffrages, upon the question of its adoption'" (p.277)

Nevertheless, the majority opinion led to immediate action by slaveholding states:

"The United States Supreme Court in the Dred Scott decision had eliminated the slender protection of constitutional guarantees by stripping free Negroes of their citizenship. Dred Scott new life into the expulsion movement...Under pressure from governor, the state's leading newspaper, white workingmen, and petitions from various public meetings, the legislature hastily ordered Negro freemen to leave the state by 1 January 1860...News from Arkansas shot through the South and sparked still another waive of assaults on the freemen's liberty" (Berlin, pp. 372-84).

### **State Laws in the United States of America**

Litwick (1958) found that "in the absence of any clear constitutional or judicial directive, the federal government and the individual states separately defined the legal status of ante-bellum free Negroes" (p.261). Restrictive federal decisions often had to be executed with resistance from northern states. This most evident in a case in Massachusetts where the state defied the 1850 Fugitive Slave Law:

"Shadrack, a Negro employee in a Boston coffee house, was arrested in February 15, 1851, on the charge of having escaped from slavery in the previous May. As the commissioner before whom he was brought was not ready to proceed, the case was

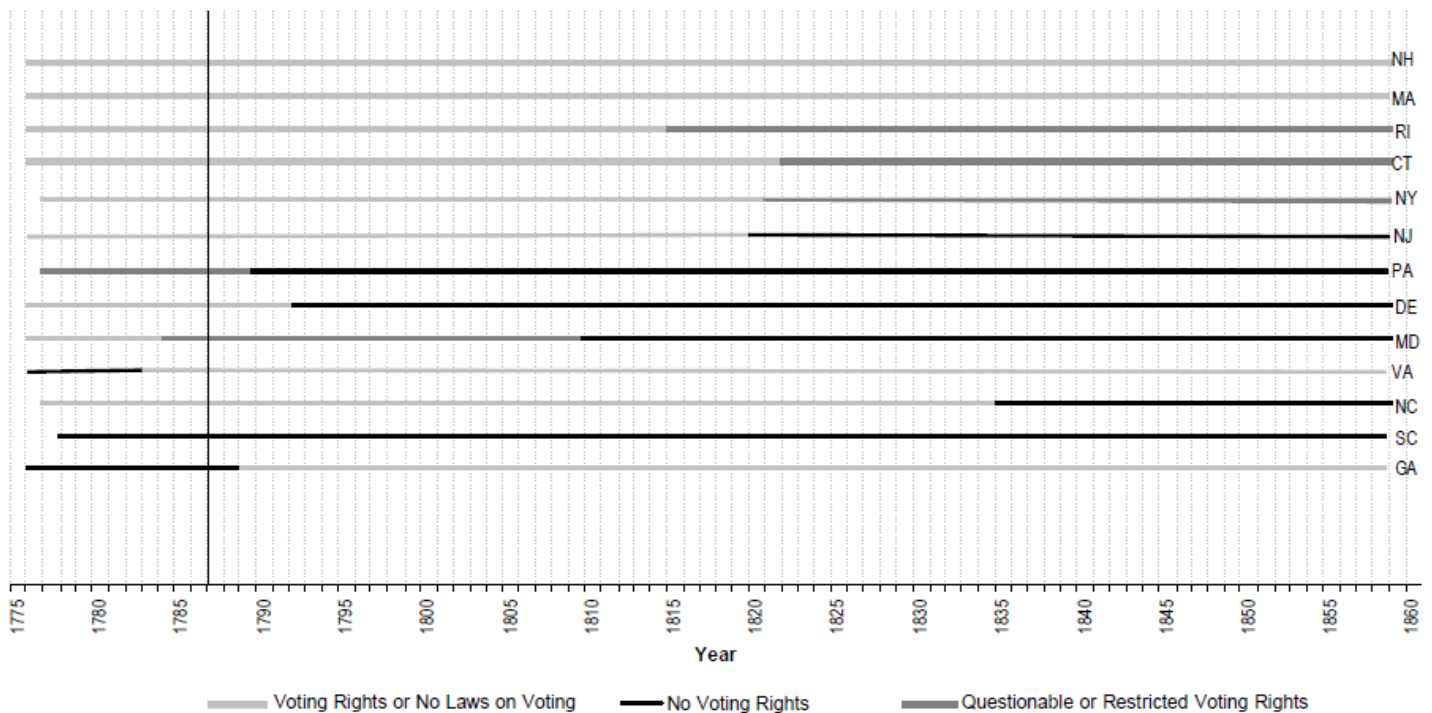
adjourned for three days. As Massachusetts had forbidden the use of her jails in fugitive cases Shadrack was detained in the United States courtroom at the courthouse. A mob of people broke into the building, rescued the prisoner and he escaped to Canada. The rescue caused great excitement in Washington and five of the rescuers were restricted and tried but the jury disagreed. The incident showed that the new law would be enforced with difficulty in Massachusetts" (Landon, pp.29-30).

Additionally, after the Dred Scott decision in 1857 and reciprocal to the actions of Arkansas, Massachusetts took the opportunity to enhance free black passport rights. "The Massachusetts Legislature decided that since the Dred Scott decision 'virtually denationalized' the state's Negro citizens, it would authorize its own Secretary of State to grant passports to any citizen of the Commonwealth 'what ever the color may be'" (Litwick, 1958, p.273).

Since the dominant interpretation of the United States Constitution left free black citizenship rights up to the individual states, it would be informative to measure the degree to which free black rights and privileges were protected. As a measure of citizenship rights, researchers often analyzed the voting rights of and entrance restrictions legally placed on free blacks.

Foremost, upon the adoption of the Constitution, the right to vote was not guaranteed in all states for free blacks. Figure 1a shows that much of the northeast never adopted laws that prohibited the right of free blacks to vote.

**Figure 1a. State Voting Rights as a Measure of US Citizenship for Free Blacks in the Original Thirteen States, 1776-1858**



**Source:** Information collected and compiled by James Curtis Jr (2002) from McKee (1934)

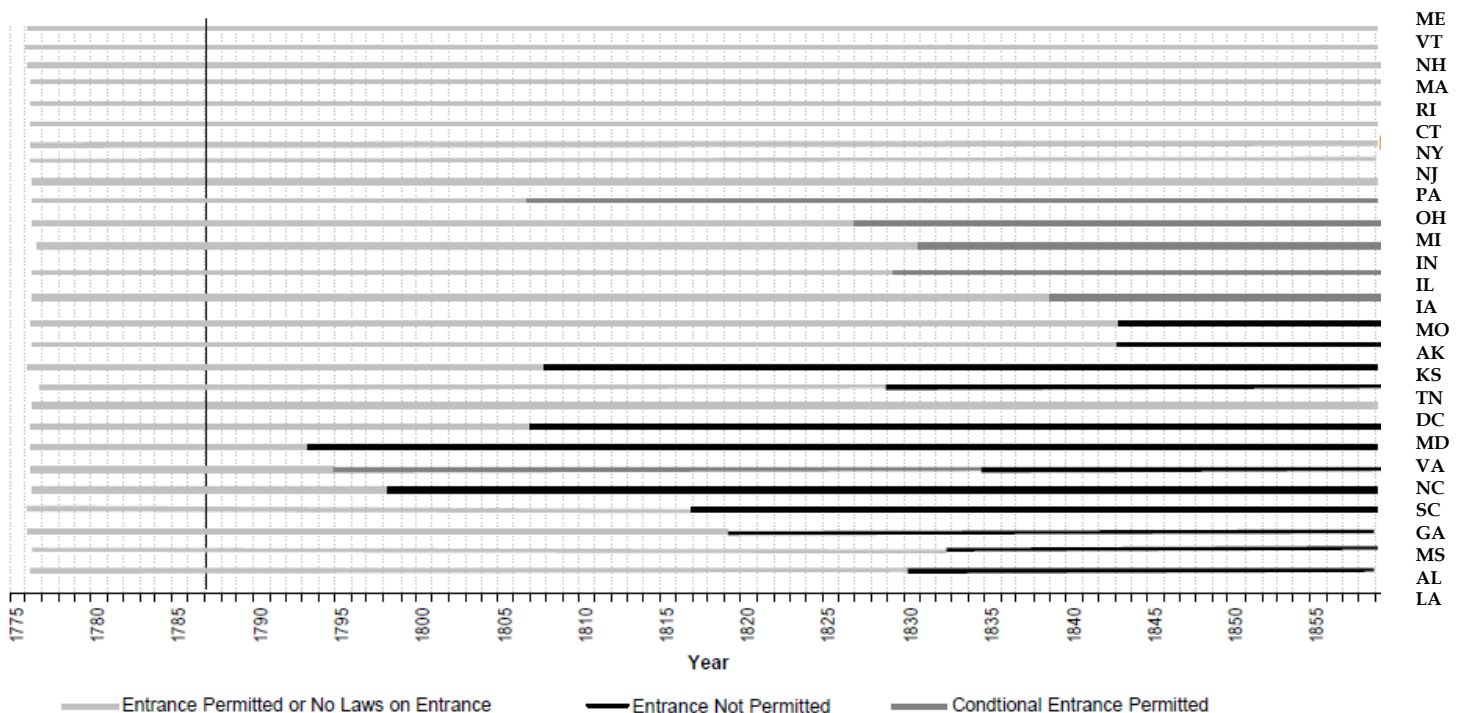
However, Connecticut (1814) and Rhode Island (1822) restricted the rights of free blacks to vote in manner that was reciprocal to northeastern gradual emancipation laws: free black adult exemptions from restrictions on voting rights did not carry over to their children. The mid-Atlantic states of New York (1777), New Jersey (1776) and Pennsylvania (1776) unanimously agreed to extend free black voting privileges prior to the adoption of the constitution. But a few years later, Pennsylvania (1790) and New Jersey (1820) reversed their laws while New York added documentation of freedom requirements in 1814 and additional property holding requirements in 1822 (McKee, p.4). The restrictions on voting privileges in the south varied near the adoption of the Constitution and become almost uniform directly before the Civil War. Georgia (1773), South Carolina (1778), Virginia (1773), and Delaware (1792) all prohibited free black suffrage. Figure 1a shows that Georgia (1789 and 1798) was the only one of these states to change their mind. North Carolina, which allowed free blacks the right to vote in 1776, later reversed their law in 1835.

Similarly, Maryland, which allowed free blacks to vote in 1776, initiated a gradual suffrage law in 1783 that allowed free black adults to maintain their voting rights but prohibited their children

from doing the same. But by 1810, any remaining free black voting rights in Maryland were completely eliminated. McKee argued that this was evidence of contradictions between Constitutional entitlements and state legislation on free black privileges as citizens: "Vermont (1790), Kentucky (1792) and Tennessee (1796) made no provision in their constitutions excluding Negroes from the suffrage. With Maine (1819), they were the only states which entered the Union, prior to Nebraska in 1867, which did not restrict the suffrage to whites...Kentucky and Tennessee subsequently enacted such a restriction" (Litwick, 1958, p262).

McKee (1934) argued that an examination of entrance laws was more compelling. He suggested that there exists a conflict between the dominant court interpretation of the United States Constitution and the state laws on free black restrictions to migrate or enter into other states. No northeastern states enacted entrance laws except Massachusetts (1788) and Connecticut (1833), which required some form of documentation of freedom. Similarly, in the mid-Atlantic, New Jersey (1798) also required some form of documentation; otherwise free blacks from any state free enter the region. But Figure 1b shows that the situation changed slightly for the Midwest.

**Figure 1b. State Entrance Laws as a Measure of US Citizenship for Free Blacks, 1776-1858**



**Source:** Information collected and compiled by James Curtis Jr (2002) from McKee (1934)

Ohio (1807), Illinois (1829), Michigan (1827), Indiana (1831) and Iowa (1839) required bonds for free blacks born in other states to enter their state. But Delaware (1807), which required some proof of freedom, was the only southern state that admitted free blacks from other states. North Carolina (1798), which initially allowed free blacks to enter with a bond, prohibited entrance in 1826, along with South Carolina (1800), Maryland (1807), Kentucky (1808), Georgia (1818), Mississippi (1819), Louisiana (1830), Tennessee (1831), Alabama (1832), Arkansas (1843) and Missouri (1843).

### **Summary of the Federal and State Laws in the United States of America**

Federal-level decisions tended to vary based upon the individuals in office, but state government, as the dominant interpretation of the Constitution uplifted, tended to have control over the degree to which free blacks had legally enforceable freedoms. Ultimately, the degree of restrictions on free blacks citizenship depended on the location and distance of a state from the least restrictive upper Northeast to the often most restrictive southern-most part of the south. Yet, citizenship restrictions tended not to interfere the property-holding rights of free blacks in any state.

### **THE DEMOGRAPHY OF FREE BLACK AMERICANS, COMPARED TO EX-SLAVES AND WHITE AMERICANS IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND FREE BLACKS IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES THROUGH 1870**

After accounting for the relatively exogenous legal factors, we can more clearly analyze the relatively endogenous factors that impact the demography and economy of antebellum free blacks. The following analysis of the free black demography is partitioned into a discussion of the free black population, geography, and the local density of Free Blacks. The discussion of the geography of Free Blacks includes a discussion of the aggregate density of Free Blacks; the migration of Free Blacks in the United States of America; the emigration of Free Blacks from the United States of America to Canada, Central America, and Africa, including Liberia; the geography of non-US Free Blacks with international citizenship in Europe, Central and South America (including the organization of the migration of Free Blacks to Liberia, and the organization of the state of Liberia), and the urban-rural 'choices' of non-US Free Black residencies.

### **The Population of Free Blacks in the United States of America and Foreign Countries**

Foremost, the enumerated free black population was smaller than the enumerated slave and white population in the US census. Table 4 shows that there was approximately one free black for every ten slaves and one free black for every fifty whites enumerated between 1790 and 1860.

But the enumerated population of free blacks in the United States still grew eight fold from the adoption of the Constitution to the Civil War: Table 4 shows that approximately 60,000 free blacks were enumerated in 1790—which constituted fewer than two percent of the enumerated population—and this figure grew to just under 500,000 by 1860— which was still fewer than two percent of the population.

While proportion of enumerated free blacks remained constant between 1790 and 1860, the proportion of slaves enumerated fell while the proportion of whites enumerated grew. Foremost, the enumerated slave population grew approximately six fold during this period: Table 4 shows that approximately 700,000 slaves were enumerated in 1790—which was about 18 percent of the population—and this figure grew to just under four million slaves in 1860—which was fewer than 13 percent of the population. Second, the enumerated white population grew nine fold during this time period: Table 3 shows that the census enumerated approximately three million whites in 1790—which was 80 percent of the population—and these figures grew to approximately 27 million whites and 86 percent of the total population by 1860.



**Table 3. US Population by Racial and Freedom Status, 1790-1870**

	1790	1800	1810	1820	1830	1840	1850	1860	1870
<b>Free Blacks</b>	<b>59,466</b>	<b>108,395</b>	<b>186,446</b>	<b>233,524</b>	<b>319,599</b>	<b>386,303</b>	<b>434,495</b>	<b>488,070</b>	-
<i>Percent of Total</i>	1.5%	2.0%	2.6%	2.4%	2.5%	2.3%	1.9%	1.6%	-
<u>Changes over the Decade</u>									
Change in Number of Free Blacks		48,929	78,051	47,078	86,075	66,704	48,192	53,575	
<i>Change in Percent of Free Blacks</i>		82.3%	72.0%	25.3%	36.9%	20.9%	12.5%	12.3%	
<i>Change in Percent of Total</i>		0.5%	0.5%	-0.2%	0.1%	-0.2%	-0.4%	-0.3%	
<u>Annualized Changes over the Decade</u>									
Change in Number of Free Blacks		4,893	7,805	4,708	8,608	6,670	4,819	5,358	
<i>Change in Percent of Free Blacks</i>		8.2%	7.2%	2.5%	3.7%	2.1%	1.2%	1.2%	
<b>Slaves</b>	<b>697,897</b>	<b>893,041</b>	<b>1,191,364</b>	<b>1,538,038</b>	<b>2,009,043</b>	<b>2,487,455</b>	<b>3,204,313</b>	<b>3,953,760</b>	-
<i>Percent of Total</i>	17.8%	16.8%	16.5%	16.0%	15.6%	14.6%	13.8%	12.6%	-
Change in Number of Slaves		195,144	298,323	346,674	471,005	478,412	716,858	749,447	
<i>Change in Percent of Slaves</i>		28.0%	33.4%	29.1%	30.6%	23.8%	28.8%	23.4%	
<i>Change in Percent of Total</i>		-0.9%	-0.4%	-0.5%	-0.3%	-1.0%	-0.8%	-1.2%	
<u>Annualized Changes over the Decade</u>									
Change in Number of Slaves		19,514	29,832	34,667	47,101	47,841	71,686	74,945	
<i>Change in Percent of Slaves</i>		2.8%	3.3%	2.9%	3.1%	2.4%	2.9%	2.3%	
<b>Tota Blacks</b>	<b>757,363</b>	<b>1,001,436</b>	<b>1,377,810</b>	<b>1,771,562</b>	<b>2,328,642</b>	<b>2,873,758</b>	<b>3,638,808</b>	<b>4,441,830</b>	<b>4,835,562</b>
<i>Percent of Total</i>	19.3%	18.9%	19.0%	18.4%	18.1%	16.8%	15.7%	14.1%	12.7%
<b>Whites</b>	<b>3,172,464</b>	<b>4,304,489</b>	<b>5,862,004</b>	<b>7,861,931</b>	<b>10,537,378</b>	<b>14,195,695</b>	<b>19,553,068</b>	<b>26,957,471</b>	<b>33,242,349</b>
<i>Percent of Total</i>	80.7%	81.1%	81.0%	81.6%	81.9%	83.2%	84.3%	85.7%	87.1%
<u>Changes over the Decade</u>									
Change in Number of Slaves		1,132,025	1,557,515	1,999,927	2,675,447	3,658,317	5,357,373	7,404,403	
<i>Change in Percent of Whites</i>		35.7%	36.2%	34.1%	34.0%	34.7%	37.7%	37.9%	
<i>Change in Percent of Total</i>		0.4%	-0.2%	0.6%	0.3%	1.3%	1.1%	1.4%	
<u>Annualized Changes over the Decade</u>									
Change in Number of Slaves		113,203	155,752	199,993	267,545	365,832	535,737	740,440	
<i>Change in Percent of Whites</i>		3.6%	3.6%	3.4%	3.4%	3.5%	3.8%	3.8%	
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,929,827</b>	<b>5,305,925</b>	<b>7,239,814</b>	<b>9,638,131</b>	<b>12,866,020</b>	<b>17,069,453</b>	<b>23,191,876</b>	<b>31,443,321</b>	<b>38,155,505</b>
<i>Ratio of free blacks to slaves</i>	7.9%	10.8%	13.5%	13.2%	13.7%	13.4%	11.9%	11.0%	-

**Source:** Level statistics from Cramer (1997), ICPSR; and growth statistics calculations by James Curtis Jr (2002)

This analysis confirms the findings of Berlin (1974): “ The rapid growth of the free Negro population which followed the Revolution abruptly ended during the early years of the nineteenth century....The proportion of free Negroes in the black and free population slowly slipped backward” (p. 135).

Berlin (1974) presents an informative list of the levels and changes in the state population by decade (pp. 136-37) but we can further speculate on the fertility, mortality, and emigration patterns of these populations by observing the annual growth rates of these populations. Note that since the source of the free black population was slaves, then changes in the laws on slavery also led to changes in the free black population. Table 3 shows that the annualized growth rates of the enumerated free black population fell from approximate 8 percent in 1790 to about 1 percent in 1860 while the annualized growth rates of the enumerated slave and white population remained constant between 2-3 percent, and 3-4 percent, respectively. Holding fertility and mortality (momentarily) constant, the declining annual growth rate in the free black population is likely due to the reduction in state laws that abolished slavery, emigration flows and the unstable localized legal environment in which the average free black attempted to socially and economically function.

### **The Geographic ‘Choices’ of Free Blacks in of United States of America and Foreign Countries**

Geographic ‘choices’, which were unbounded by the dominant constitutional interpretation yet constrained by Midwestern and southern state entrance laws, have potential implications on how free blacks, on average, were socially received by whites and their available set of employment opportunities. To fully dissect the discussion, it will be divided into following sections: the aggregate density, migration, emigration, and local density of free blacks.

#### *The Aggregate Density of Free Blacks in the United States of America, 1790 through 1860*

Foremost, the location of most free blacks was quite different than the location of most ex-slaves. Table 3 shows that ninety percent of the 1870 ex-slave population resided in the south but Tables 4a and 4b show that only 50-55 percent of free black population resided in the south during the antebellum period.

**Table 4a. Southeastern Population of Free Blacks, 1790-1860**

Year:	1790	1800	1810	1820	1830	1840	1850	1860
<b>Alabama</b>	-	-	-	571	1,572	2,039	2,265	2,690
<i>Percent of Total Population</i>	-	-	-	0.2%	0.5%	0.5%	0.5%	0.6%
<i>Annualized Change in Percent of Free Blacks</i>	-	-	-	-	17.5%	3.0%	1.1%	1.9%
<b>District of Columbia</b>	-	783	2,549	4,048	6,152	8,361	10,059	11,131
<i>Percent of Total Population</i>	-	0.7%	1.4%	1.7%	1.9%	2.2%	2.3%	2.3%
<i>Annualized Change in Percent of Free Blacks</i>	-	-	22.6%	5.9%	5.2%	3.6%	2.0%	1.1%
<b>Delaware</b>	3,899	8,268	13,136	12,958	15,855	16,919	18,073	19,829
<i>Percent of Total Population</i>	6.6%	7.6%	7.0%	5.5%	5.0%	4.4%	4.2%	4.1%
<i>Annualized Change in Percent of Free Blacks</i>	-	11.2%	5.9%	-0.1%	2.2%	0.7%	0.7%	1.0%
<b>Florida</b>	-	-	-	-	844	817	932	932
<i>Percent of Total Population</i>	-	-	-	-	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%
<i>Annualized Change in Percent of Free Blacks</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-0.3%	1.4%	0.0%
<b>Georgia</b>	398	1,019	1,801	1,763	2,486	2,753	2,931	3,500
<i>Percent of Total Population</i>	0.7%	0.9%	1.0%	0.8%	0.8%	0.7%	0.7%	0.7%
<i>Annualized Change in Percent of Free Blacks</i>	-	15.6%	7.7%	-0.2%	4.1%	1.1%	0.6%	1.9%
<b>Kentucky</b>	114	741	1,713	2,759	4,917	7,317	10,011	10,684
<i>Percent of Total Population</i>	0.2%	0.7%	0.9%	1.2%	1.5%	1.9%	2.3%	2.2%
<i>Annualized Change in Percent of Free Blacks</i>	-	55.0%	13.1%	6.1%	7.8%	4.9%	3.7%	0.7%
<b>Maryland</b>	8,043	19,587	33,927	39,730	52,938	62,078	74,723	83,942
<i>Percent of Total Population</i>	13.5%	18.1%	18.2%	17.0%	16.6%	16.1%	17.2%	17.2%
<i>Annualized Change in Percent of Free Blacks</i>	-	14.4%	7.3%	1.7%	3.3%	1.7%	2.0%	1.2%
<b>Mississippi</b>	-	182	240	458	519	1,366	930	773
<i>Percent of Total Population</i>	-	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%	0.4%	0.2%	0.2%
<i>Annualized Change in Percent of Free Blacks</i>	-	-	3.2%	9.1%	1.3%	16.3%	-3.2%	-1.7%
<b>North Carolina</b>	4,975	7,043	10,266	14,612	19,543	22,732	27,463	30,463
<i>Percent of Total Population</i>	8.4%	6.5%	5.5%	6.3%	6.1%	5.9%	6.3%	6.2%
<i>Annualized Change in Percent of Free Blacks</i>	-	4.2%	4.6%	4.2%	3.4%	1.6%	2.1%	1.1%
<b>South Carolina</b>	1,801	3,185	4,554	6,826	7,921	8,276	8,960	9,914
<i>Percent of Total Population</i>	3.0%	2.9%	2.4%	2.9%	2.5%	2.1%	2.1%	2.0%
<i>Annualized Change in Percent of Free Blacks</i>	-	7.7%	4.3%	5.0%	1.6%	0.4%	0.8%	1.1%
<b>Tennessee</b>	361	309	1,317	2,727	4,555	5,524	6,422	7,300
<i>Percent of Total Population</i>	0.6%	0.3%	0.7%	1.2%	1.4%	1.4%	1.5%	1.5%
<i>Annualized Change in Percent of Free Blacks</i>	-	-1.4%	32.6%	10.7%	6.7%	2.1%	1.6%	1.4%
<b>Virginia</b>	12,766	20,124	30,570	36,889	47,348	49,852	54,333	58,042
<i>Percent of Total Population</i>	21.5%	18.6%	16.4%	15.8%	14.8%	12.9%	12.5%	11.9%
<i>Annualized Change in Percent of Free Blacks</i>	-	5.8%	5.2%	2.1%	2.8%	0.5%	0.9%	0.7%
<b>Southeast Total</b>	32,357	61,241	100,073	123,341	164,650	188,034	217,102	239,200
<i>Percent of Total Population</i>	54.4%	56.5%	53.7%	52.8%	51.5%	48.7%	50.0%	49.0%
<i>Annualized Change in Percent of Free Blacks</i>	-	8.9%	6.3%	2.3%	3.3%	1.4%	1.5%	1.0%

**Source:** Level statistics from Cramer (1997), ICPSR; and change statistics calculations by James Curtis Jr (2002)

**Table 4b. Midwestern and Southwestern Population of Free Blacks, 1790-1860**

Year:	1790	1800	1810	1820	1830	1840	1850	1860
<b>Iowa</b>	-	-	-	-	-	172	333	1,069
<i>Percent of Total Population</i>	-	-	-	-	-	0.0%	0.1%	0.2%
<i>Annualized Change in Percent of Free Blacks</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	9.4%	22.1%
<b>Illinois</b>	-	-	613	457	1,637	3,598	5,436	7,628
<i>Percent of Total Population</i>	-	-	0.3%	0.2%	0.5%	0.9%	1.3%	1.6%
<i>Annualized Change in Percent of Free Blacks</i>	-	-	-	-2.5%	25.8%	12.0%	5.1%	4.0%
<b>Indiana</b>	-	163	393	1,230	3,629	7,165	11,262	11,428
<i>Percent of Total Population</i>	-	0.2%	0.2%	0.5%	1.1%	1.9%	2.6%	2.3%
<i>Annualized Change in Percent of Free Blacks</i>	-	-	14.1%	21.3%	19.5%	9.7%	5.7%	0.1%
<b>Michigan</b>	-	-	120	174	261	707	2,583	6,799
<i>Percent of Total Population</i>	-	-	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%	0.6%	1.4%
<i>Annualized Change in Percent of Free Blacks</i>	-	-	-	4.5%	5.0%	17.1%	26.5%	16.3%
<b>Minnesota</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	39	259
<i>Percent of Total Population</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.0%	0.1%
<i>Annualized Change in Percent of Free Blacks</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	56.4%
<b>Ohio</b>	-	337	1,899	4,723	9,568	17,342	25,279	36,673
<i>Percent of Total Population</i>	-	0.3%	1.0%	2.0%	3.0%	4.5%	5.8%	7.5%
<i>Annualized Change in Percent of Free Blacks</i>	-	-	46.4%	14.9%	10.3%	8.1%	4.6%	4.5%
<b>Wisconsin</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	635	1,171
<i>Percent of Total Population</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.1%	0.2%
<i>Annualized Change in Percent of Free Blacks</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8.4%
<b>MidwestTotal</b>	-	500	3,025	6,584	15,095	28,984	45,567	65,027
<i>Percent of Total Population</i>	-	0.5%	1.6%	2.8%	4.7%	7.5%	10.5%	13.3%
<i>Annualized Change in Percent of Free Blacks</i>	-	-	50.5%	11.8%	12.9%	9.2%	5.7%	4.3%
<b>Arkansas</b>	-	-	-	59	141	465	608	144
<i>Percent of Total Population</i>	-	-	-	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%
<i>Annualized Change in Percent of Free Blacks</i>	-	-	-	-	13.9%	23.0%	3.1%	-7.6%
<b>Louisiana</b>	-	-	7,585	10,476	16,710	25,502	17,462	18,647
<i>Percent of Total Population</i>	-	-	4.1%	4.5%	5.2%	6.6%	4.0%	3.8%
<i>Annualized Change in Percent of Free Blacks</i>	-	-	-	3.8%	6.0%	5.3%	-3.2%	0.7%
<b>Texas</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	397	355
<i>Percent of Total Population</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.1%	0.1%
<i>Annualized Change in Percent of Free Blacks</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-1.1%
<b>SouthwestTotal</b>	-	-	7,585	10,535	16,851	25,967	18,467	19,146
<i>Percent of Total Population</i>	-	-	4.1%	4.5%	5.3%	6.7%	4.3%	3.9%
<i>Annualized Change in Percent of Free Blacks</i>	-	-	-	3.9%	6.0%	5.4%	-2.9%	0.4%

**Source:** Level statistics from Cramer (1997), ICPSR; and change statistics calculations by James Curtis Jr (2002)

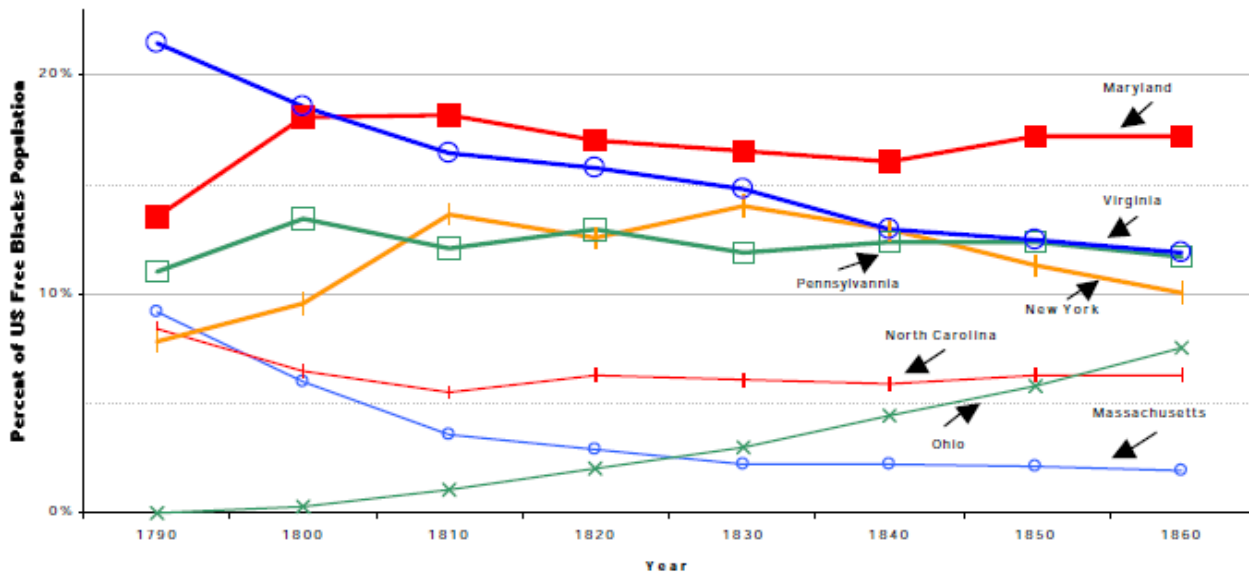
Zelinsky (1950) mapped out the geographic distribution of free blacks using US census data and found that free blacks were concentrated along the east coast. "The steady position (of free blacks was) maintained (in) states along the Atlantic Slope, which led the principal concentrations, is plainly demonstrated; these were areas that never lost their supremacy, and stand in sharp contrast to the great dwindling off in New England. Of the inland areas, only the Ohio Valley matured into a major population region" (Zelinsky, 1950, pp. 394-95).

Cramer (1997) and Steckel (2000) confirm the findings of Zelinsky and found that two out of three free blacks between New York and North Carolina. Zelinsky suggested that (i) economic push factors, such as agricultural depression led to lower demand for slave labor, led to higher rates of manumission and led to the large density of free blacks in upper south and (ii) economic pull factors, such as mining and manufacturing labor opportunities, led to the large population of free blacks in Pennsylvania.

"Large numbers of slaves obtained their freedom by means of manumission in Delaware, Maryland, Virginia and portions of North Carolina, but it was exceptional for a slave to be liberated voluntarily in the newer areas of the south. An economic explanation is obvious: the former regions were those which experienced a protracted agricultural depression after the American Revolution, and the period of the most rapid manumission coincided with the time of maximum economic distress. Slaves were a liability on the worn-out farms of the Upper South, but where they were in great demand, as in Arkansas, Mississippi, or western Tennessee, the prospects for manumission was dim, and the same can said for Louisiana" (Zelinsky , 1950, p.396).

But census data shows that free blacks were even more concentrated than the findings above. Figure 2a shows that, throughout the entire antebellum period, over fifty percent of the US free black population lived in the (modern) Mid-Atlantic region, which (today) includes New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia.

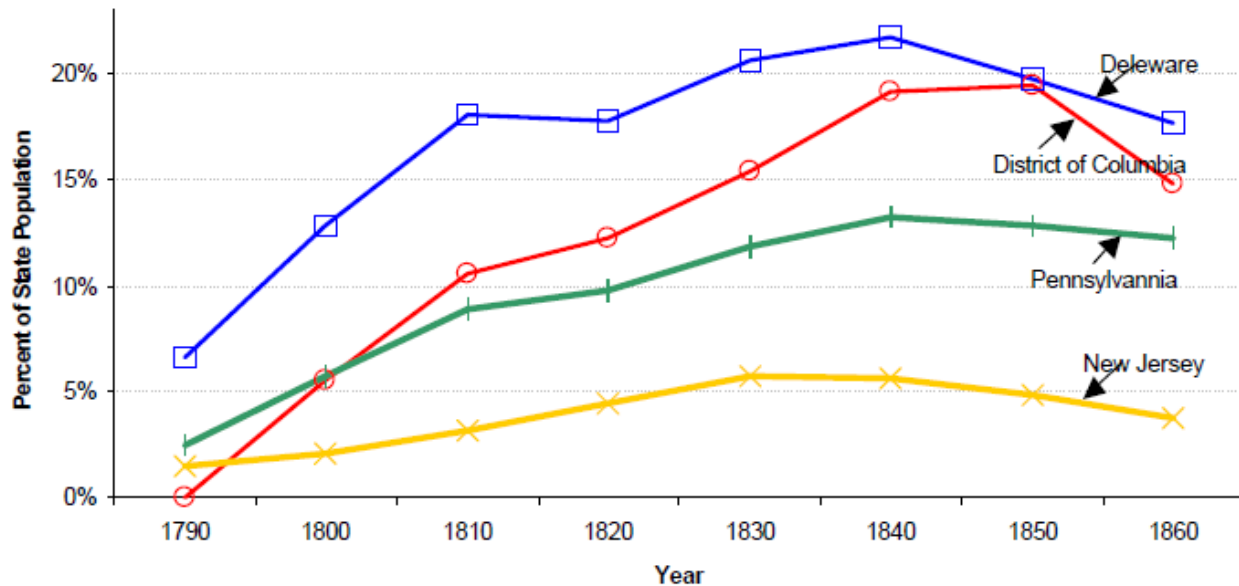
**Figure 2a. States with the Largest Percentage of Free Black Population as a Percentage of US Free Black Population, 1790 - 1860**



**Source:** Information collected and compiled by James Curtis Jr (2002)

Figure 2b also shows that the region produced the states with highest percentage of free blacks in the state population: free blacks in Delaware, Pennsylvania and the District of Columbia all exceeded ten percent of the state population throughout much of this period.

**Figure 2b. States with Largest Percentage of Free Black Population as a Percent of State Population, 1790-1860**



**Source:** Information collected and compiled by James Curtis Jr (2002)

The presence of the federal government in this region during politically favorable administrations was an additional economic pull factor potentially causing this concentration of free blacks.

*The Migration of Free Blacks in the United States of America, 1790 through 1860*

Furthermore, the aggregate growth of the free black population differed from the growth of free blacks in several developing regions. Table 3 shows that the free black population 8.4 percent grew annually in 1790 and fell continuously to 1.2 percent in 1860. This was quite consistent with the annual growth rates of free blacks in the Mid-Atlantic in Table 4c, which fell from 11.0 percent in 1800 to 0.4 percent in 1860, and the Southeast in Table 4a, which fell from 8.9 percent in 1800 to 1.0 percent in 1860.

**Table 4c. Northeastern and Mid-Atlantic Population of Free Blacks, 1790-1860**

<b>Year:</b>	<b>1790</b>	<b>1800</b>	<b>1810</b>	<b>1820</b>	<b>1830</b>	<b>1840</b>	<b>1850</b>	<b>1860</b>
<b>Connecticut</b>	<b>2,801</b>	<b>5,330</b>	<b>6,453</b>	<b>7,844</b>	<b>8,047</b>	<b>8,105</b>	<b>7,693</b>	<b>8,627</b>
<i>Percent of Total Population</i>	4.7%	4.9%	3.5%	3.4%	2.5%	2.1%	1.8%	1.8%
<i>Annualized Change in Percent of Free Blacks</i>	-	9.0%	2.1%	2.2%	0.3%	0.1%	-0.5%	1.2%
<b>Massachusetts</b>	<b>5,463</b>	<b>6,452</b>	<b>6,737</b>	<b>6,740</b>	<b>7,048</b>	<b>8,669</b>	<b>9,064</b>	<b>9,602</b>
<i>Percent of Total Population</i>	9.2%	6.0%	3.6%	2.9%	2.2%	2.2%	2.1%	2.0%
<i>Annualized Change in Percent of Free Blacks</i>	-	1.8%	0.4%	0.0%	0.5%	2.3%	0.5%	0.6%
<b>Maine</b>	<b>538</b>	<b>818</b>	<b>969</b>	<b>929</b>	<b>1,190</b>	<b>1,355</b>	<b>1,356</b>	<b>1,327</b>
<i>Percent of Total Population</i>	0.9%	0.8%	0.5%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.3%	0.3%
<i>Annualized Change in Percent of Free Blacks</i>	-	5.2%	1.8%	-0.4%	2.8%	1.4%	0.0%	-0.2%
<b>New Hampshire</b>	<b>630</b>	<b>856</b>	<b>970</b>	<b>786</b>	<b>604</b>	<b>537</b>	<b>520</b>	<b>494</b>
<i>Percent of Total Population</i>	1.1%	0.8%	0.5%	0.3%	0.2%	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
<i>Annualized Change in Percent of Free Blacks</i>	-	3.6%	1.3%	-1.9%	-2.3%	-1.1%	-0.3%	-0.5%
<b>Rhode Island</b>	<b>3,469</b>	<b>3,304</b>	<b>3,609</b>	<b>3,554</b>	<b>3,561</b>	<b>3,238</b>	<b>3,670</b>	<b>3,952</b>
<i>Percent of Total Population</i>	5.8%	3.0%	1.9%	1.5%	1.1%	0.8%	0.8%	0.8%
<i>Annualized Change in Percent of Free Blacks</i>	-	-0.5%	0.9%	-0.2%	0.0%	-0.9%	1.3%	0.8%
<b>Vermont</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>557</b>	<b>750</b>	<b>903</b>	<b>881</b>	<b>730</b>	<b>718</b>	<b>709</b>
<i>Percent of Total Population</i>	0.4%	0.5%	0.4%	0.4%	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%
<i>Annualized Change in Percent of Free Blacks</i>	-	11.8%	3.5%	2.0%	-0.2%	-1.7%	-0.2%	-0.1%
<b>NortheastTotal</b>	<b>13,156</b>	<b>17,317</b>	<b>19,488</b>	<b>20,756</b>	<b>21,331</b>	<b>22,634</b>	<b>23,021</b>	<b>24,711</b>
<i>Percent of Total Population</i>	<b>22.1%</b>	<b>16.0%</b>	<b>10.5%</b>	<b>8.9%</b>	<b>6.7%</b>	<b>5.9%</b>	<b>5.3%</b>	<b>5.1%</b>
<i>Annualized Change in Percent of Free Blacks</i>	-	<b>3.2%</b>	<b>1.3%</b>	<b>0.7%</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>0.6%</b>	<b>0.2%</b>	<b>0.7%</b>
<b>New Jersey</b>	<b>2,762</b>	<b>4,402</b>	<b>7,813</b>	<b>12,460</b>	<b>18,303</b>	<b>21,044</b>	<b>23,810</b>	<b>25,318</b>
<i>Percent of Total Population</i>	4.6%	4.1%	4.2%	5.3%	5.7%	5.4%	5.5%	5.2%
<i>Annualized Change in Percent of Free Blacks</i>	-	5.9%	7.7%	5.9%	4.7%	1.5%	1.3%	0.6%
<b>New York</b>	<b>4,654</b>	<b>10,374</b>	<b>25,333</b>	<b>29,279</b>	<b>44,870</b>	<b>50,027</b>	<b>49,069</b>	<b>49,005</b>
<i>Percent of Total Population</i>	7.8%	9.6%	13.6%	12.5%	14.0%	13.0%	11.3%	10.0%
<i>Annualized Change in Percent of Free Blacks</i>	-	12.3%	14.4%	1.6%	5.3%	1.1%	-0.2%	0.0%
<b>Pennsylvania</b>	<b>6,537</b>	<b>14,561</b>	<b>22,492</b>	<b>30,202</b>	<b>37,930</b>	<b>47,854</b>	<b>53,626</b>	<b>56,949</b>
<i>Percent of Total Population</i>	11.0%	13.4%	12.1%	12.9%	11.9%	12.4%	12.3%	11.7%
<i>Annualized Change in Percent of Free Blacks</i>	-	12.3%	5.4%	3.4%	2.6%	2.6%	1.2%	0.6%
<b>MidAtlanticTotal</b>	<b>13,953</b>	<b>29,337</b>	<b>55,638</b>	<b>71,941</b>	<b>101,103</b>	<b>118,925</b>	<b>126,505</b>	<b>131,272</b>
<i>Percent of Total Population</i>	<b>23.5%</b>	<b>27.1%</b>	<b>29.8%</b>	<b>30.8%</b>	<b>31.6%</b>	<b>30.8%</b>	<b>29.1%</b>	<b>26.9%</b>
<i>Annualized Change in Percent of Free Blacks</i>	-	<b>11.0%</b>	<b>9.0%</b>	<b>2.9%</b>	<b>4.1%</b>	<b>1.8%</b>	<b>0.6%</b>	<b>0.4%</b>

**Source:** Level statistics from Cramer (1997), ICPSR; and change statistics calculations by James Curtis Jr (2002)



Furthermore, Table 5a shows the more established free black population in the Northeast experienced a less dramatic decline in annual growth, which fell from 3.2 percent in 1800 to 0.7 percent in 1860. However, Table 5c shows that the developing population of free blacks in the Midwest experienced a more dramatic change in growth, which fell from 50.5 percent in 1810 to 4.3 percent in 1860, which was still above the national average. These patterns were consistent with the west: Table 4d shows that the developing western population of free blacks also grew at an even higher rate of 13-18 percent between 1840 and 1860.

**Table 4d. Western Population of Free Blacks, 1790-1860**

Year:	1790	1800	1810	1820	1830	1840	1850	1860
<b>California</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	962	4,086
<i>Percent of Total Population</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.2%	0.8%
<i>Annualized Change in Percent of Free Blacks</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	32.5%
<b>Colorado</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	46
<i>Percent of Total Population</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.0%
<i>Annualized Change in Percent of Free Blacks</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Dakota</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Percent of Total Population</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Annualized Change in Percent of Free Blacks</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Kansas</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	625
<i>Percent of Total Population</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.1%
<i>Annualized Change in Percent of Free Blacks</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Nebraska</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	67
<i>Percent of Total Population</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.0%
<i>Annualized Change in Percent of Free Blacks</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Missouri</b>	-	-	607	347	569	1,574	2,618	3,572
<i>Percent of Total Population</i>	-	-	0.3%	0.1%	0.2%	0.4%	0.6%	0.7%
<i>Annualized Change in Percent of Free Blacks</i>	-	-	-	-4.3%	6.4%	17.7%	6.6%	3.6%
<b>New Mexico</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	85
<i>Percent of Total Population</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.0%
<i>Annualized Change in Percent of Free Blacks</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Nevada</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	45
<i>Percent of Total Population</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.0%
<i>Annualized Change in Percent of Free Blacks</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Oregon</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	207	128
<i>Percent of Total Population</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.0%	0.0%
<i>Annualized Change in Percent of Free Blacks</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-3.8%
<b>Utah</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	30
<i>Percent of Total Population</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.0%
<i>Annualized Change in Percent of Free Blacks</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Washington</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	30
<i>Percent of Total Population</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.0%
<i>Annualized Change in Percent of Free Blacks</i>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>WestTotal</b>	-	-	607	347	569	1,574	3,787	8,714
<i>Percent of Total Population</i>	-	-	0.3%	0.1%	0.2%	0.4%	0.9%	1.8%
<i>Annualized Change in Percent of Free Blacks</i>	-	-	-	-4.3%	6.4%	17.7%	14.1%	13.0%

**Source:** Level statistics from Cramer (1997), ICPSR; and change statistics calculations by James Curtis Jr (2002)

Landon (1920) found that population increases in the Midwest and decreases in the parts of Northeast were consistent with intensified activities of the Underground Railroad under the new fugitive slave laws: "While the free Negro population of the North increased by nearly 30,000 in the decade after 1850, the gain was chiefly in three States, Ohio, Michigan and Illinois"(Landon, p.22). Zelinsky (1950), confirming much of the findings by Landon, suggests that the "strength of the abolition movement" enticed free blacks to move to Midwestern and Western states: "Migration, both legal and illegal, must have been especially vigorous in those areas where slave territory adjoined free soil" (Zelinsky, p.397). Conversely, enhanced enforcement of fugitive slaves laws in 1850 led to rapid changes in the population of Southwestern free blacks between 1840 and 1860, which grew annually 4-6 percent between 1820 and 1840 (see Table 4b), but led to a 2.9 percent annual decline of free blacks in the Southwest in 1850.

This analysis documents earlier evidence of an east-west current of free blacks prior to 1860 yet a strong antebellum eastern presence of free blacks that replicates much of the regional distribution of modern blacks. However, hostile federal and state laws limited their residential choices: "Nineteenth century Americans were on the move, pushing their way across the continent, building towns and cities at every junction. Free Negroes too shared this urge to travel, but immigration restrictions often stood in their way" (Berlin, p165).

#### *The Emigration of Free Blacks from the United States of America through 1860*

The analysis of the geography of free blacks in the United States would be incomplete without investigating the number and characteristics of free blacks that chose to migrate abroad:

"Many blacks saw little to distinguish the racism of the North from that of the South. Wealth blacks who sent their children north for an education often discovered that their wellqualified off-spring could not find employment in the free states. Without steady work, the benefits of Northern freedom dissolved into empty bitterness....After having seen 'the legal slavery of the South and the social savery of the North' observed a Liberia-bound black, he knew he could 'never be a free man in this country'" (Berlin, p168).

The characteristics of free black emigrants, if different from those who did not emigrate, also directly impact the analysis of the domestic free black experiences. Therefore, the following analysis will be divided up into free blacks that emigrated to Canada, Central America, and Africa. See Appendix A for a complete analysis of the geographic choices of free blacks within countries abroad.

Canada. The signing of the Fugitive Slave Act alone sent about 3,000 of the new black population to Canada in the first three months. "The Liberator of December 13, 1850, says: 'Probably not less than 3,000 have taken refuge in this country since the first of September. Only for the attitude of the north there would have been thousands more' (p.23).

Canada experienced a 25-50 percent growth in its black population during this period. "It is estimated that fifteen to twenty thousand Negroes entered Canada between 1850 and 1860, increasing the Negro population of the British provinces from about 40,000 to nearly 60,000. The greater part of the refugee population settled in southwestern part of the present province of Ontario" (Landon, p.22).

Free black migration patterns to the Midwest were consistent with the lines of the Underground Railroad that ended in Canada (Zelinsky, 1950). "States showing gains were bordering on Canada where the runaway slave or the free man of color in danger could flee when threatened" (Landon, p.22). Qualitative evidence shows that a large portion of free black emigrants to Canada previously resided in the north and Mid-Atlantic. On June 17, 1852, Henry Bibb, owner of The Voice of the Fugitive, reported "Numbers of free persons of color are arriving from Pennsylvania and the District of Columbia, Ohio and Indiana" (pp.23-24).

The economic experiences of the free black Canadian immigrants were diverse: Some were unskilled and poor while others were wealthy. "Two weeks after President Fillmore had signed the Fugitive Slave Bill a Pittsburgh dispatch to The Liberator stated that 'nearly all the waiters in the hotels have fled to Canada'(p.24). Then, on July 1, 1852, The Voice of the Fugitive reported "twenty-two from Indiana passed through to Amherstburg, with four fine covered wagons and eight horses. A few weeks ago six or eight such teams came from the same state into Canada. The Fugitive Slave Law is driving out brains and money" (p.28).

Central America. There is evidence that free blacks may have emigrated to Puerto Rico. Table 5 shows a large portion of the foreign-born population in Puerto Rico was black.

**Table 5. Slave and Free Black Population in Cuba and Puerto Rico, 1774-1899**

Year	Slave and Free Black Population	Percent of Total	Percent of Total Foreign Born
1774	74,088	42.9	
1792	139,133	33.8	
1817	313,204	56.6	
1827	393,434	55.8	
1841	593,419	58.8	
1856	?	50.7	
1877	480,116	33.4	
1899	479,843	34.6	
1860	282,775	48.5	52.8
1877	319,936	43.7	56.2
1887	323,623	40.5	44.4
1899	363,817	38.2	17.7

**Source:** Information collected and compiled by James Curtis Jr (2002) from Zelinsky (1949, pp.210-11)

This could be due to a small foreign-born white population, a large foreign-born slave population, or large foreign-born free black population. The previous analysis described the impact of the Fugitive Slave Act on Canada but an unanswered puzzle is the impact of the Fugitive Slave Act on the free black population on Puerto Rico.

Africa. Some free blacks opted to return to the birth land of their ancestors. Mechlinger (1916) reported that only 7,836, or less than two percent of the free black population in 1850, migrated to Africa up through 1852. The report of the Colonization Society shows that from 1820 to 1833 only 2,885 colored persons had been sent out by the Society. Of the 7,836 sent out of the United States up to 1852, 2,720 were born free, 204 purchased their freedom, 3,868 were emancipated in view of removing them to Liberia, and 1,044 were liberated Africans sent out by the United States Government (p.301). McPherson (1891) studied the organization of Liberia, a nation in Africa founded by free blacks in the United States.

Liberia. But by 1867, almost 19,000 US free blacks became citizens of Liberia. This accounts for less than four percent of the US black population in 1850. "11,909 emigrants had been sent over, 147 vessels; of these 4,541 were born free, 344 purchased freedom, and 5,957 were emancipated for the purpose of going to Liberia. Besides these 1,227 had been settled by the Maryland (Colonization) Society, and 5,722 recaptured Africans had been sent back by the United States Government" (p.44).

*The Geography of non-US Free Blacks with International Citizenship*

The geographical 'choices' of free blacks in the United States were consistent with free blacks abroad. Zelinsky (1949) found that slaves and free blacks were mainly located in the Antilles and Brazil. "The two most prominent clusters of Negro population have been in the American Mediterranean area and in Brazil; less obvious but still of great importance has been the concentration along the western side of South America which merges with former somewhere in Columbia. In the Guianas, Mexico, and around the Rio de la Plata we have lesser centers which have fluctuated in importance" (p.191). Zelinsky (1949) observed a concentration of blacks in Latin America similar to patterns plotted for US free blacks in Zelinsky (1950). Zelinsky (1949) finds evidence of a free black population in Latin America, though its magnitude was difficult to measure with precision.

He combined strong and weak datasets from port records, commercial accounts, bills of lading and plantation records to plot maps of the black slave and free population in Latin America from 1570 to 1940. "The data have been grouped, in order of preference, into five categories: good censuses, good estimates, poor censuses and estimates, informed guesses, and pure conjecture....The value of these maps has been vitiated by the necessity of ignoring the distinctions between Negro and mulatto or zambo and between slaves and freeman" (pp.186-87) The only extensive reports that distinguishes free blacks from slaves were from Cuba and Puerto Rico.

A key problem when observe data on race from the western hemisphere is that the definition of black is different in the northern and southern parts of the hemisphere. Being a descendent of black person is defined as black in the US while being a descendent of white person can be defined as white in places like Brazil: "Popular practice varies from the United States where one drop of Negro blood places an individual irrevocably in the Negro community to the Brazilian custom of allowing anyone with the extreme difficulty--even for the physical anthropologist--in the detection of Negro ancestry in a large proportion of cases, argues the acceptability of defining the Negro as a person considered by his society as belonging to a distinctly Negroid group. Although the physical criteria upon which this purely social formulation is base varies radically from one country to another, it is the social concept with which we wish to reckon rather than anthropometric category, and the universal adoption by census-takers of the social definition leaves but little choice" (p. 173).

Europe. He suggested that black Africans in the western hemisphere date back to the slave trade beginning with Portugal and Spain.

"The great involuntary movement of Negroes westward across the Atlantic to a labor market was begun by Portuguese traders supplying their own and the Spanish colonies and was continued by the French, Dutch, English, Bretons, Basques, Prussians, Danes, Swedes (and) New Englanders....By the time the transfer was concluded in the 19th Century the number involved made it easily the second largest of all recorded migrations, the first being, of course, the movement from Europe to Anglo-America. Two characteristics make this migration quite singular among important movements of population: (1) the fact that it was involuntary and almost wholly irreversible, and (2) the purely economic motivation of the movement. The exceptions to the phenomenon of irreversibility are quite minor and practically all included in the few thousands of people who were resettled in Liberia, the Bahian Negroes who returned to West Africa, and the Jamaica Maroons shipped back to Africa by the British via Nova Scotia" (p.157-158).

Central and South America. Additionally, since the enslavement of the native population failed, except in Mexico, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia, Zelinsky (1949) used spatial, population and human capital arguments to suggest that Africa was the next best choice. "Africans were the most obvious source of labor: the trip to America was relatively short, the numbers of Negroes were apparently inexhaustible and the Negro slave had already demonstrated his proficiency in Portugal and Spain" (p.157).

He found that blacks in Central and South America were the concentrated on the east, diluted and moved west.

"The routes by which the Negroes arrived can be easily inferred from the maps. The Antilles, and secondarily the Mexican, Columbian, and Venezuelan ports were the receiving points for shipment of slaves. Each of the major Brazilian ports saw a large influx of slave many of whom were sent directly into the back country after coastal sections had been filled up. The west coast population represents contributions from two sources: first and undoubtedly more important was the transport of slaves across the Isthmus and down the coast from the Caribbean and secondly, those who came down from the Rio de la Plata and across the continent to the coast, along which they traveled generally northward" (pp.195-96).

"The asymmetrical distribution of Negroes, with a vast preponderance on the Atlantic side of the region and relatively small number on the Pacific side, is only partly to be explained by an inequality in the natural endowments of these two divisions" (Zelinsky, 1949, p.205). However, free blacks were concentrated in the southwest and southeastern parts of Puerto Rico.

"The mystery of southwestern Puerto Rico becomes even more interesting, for it appears that the municipalities of this segment of the country contained what was by far the largest concentration of free colored persons in the land. Evidently there was some factor in the land tenure system or in the economic complexion of this area that made it particularly attractive for freed slaves" (p.211). "In addition to the great cluster in the Southwest, we find notable numbers of these people in the Cagus Valley and along the southeastern coast and the coast to the west of San Juan, which city, incidentally, seems to have been a primary goal of colored migrants even in this early date (p. 214).

Overall, the distribution of slaves and free blacks differed in Cuba and Puerto Rico. He suggested an economic motivation the migration pattern of blacks, where blacks voluntarily and involuntarily moved in the direction of economic opportunity.

"The distribution of Negroes would appear to be nothing more occult than the product of a forced transfer in response to certain economic situations plus the demographic career of the Negroes so introduced. The movement of slaves and free Negroes might be compared to the flow of a system of a stream down the slopes of an economic terrain" (p.197).

The motivations, which influenced migratory patterns of whites, also influenced the decisions made by free blacks.

"In Puerto Rico the discrepancy between the distributional pattern of slaves and that of free colored individuals was even more pronounced than in Cuba. The slaves were quite neatly concentrated around five major urban centers which were the capitals of the principal areas of plantation agriculture. There was also a distinctly minor cluster in the Caguas Valley, and the bulk of the remainder lived along the coast. The free colored population, on the other hand, shows little inclination to remain in the areas of former servitude....The set of factors--usually economic--determining the location of free colored persons was entirely different from that used in deciding where to employ slaves....These factors were much the same as those affecting white persons of similar economic status except insofar as they were modified by somewhat different social and legal status of former slaves" (p.214).

The Organization of the Migration to Liberia. Mechlinger (1916) found evidence that a few free blacks favored migration to Africa while many opposed such plans. "The Colonization movement was a failure. Although it did interest finally interest a number of free Negroes their concern in it did not materialize on account of the outbreak of the Civil War occurring soon



thereafter. On the whole, the movement never appealed to a large number of intelligent free people of color" (p.301).

Table 6a shows that free blacks organized many efforts to support and oppose migration to Africa. Free blacks, who supported migration to Africa, suggested that it was a better alternative to the lack of rights in the United States.

**Table 6a. Free Blacks Organization For and Against the African Colonization Movement, 1826 through 1856**

			Against		
Year	Organizer(s)	Locality/State	Year	Organizer(s)	Locality/State
-1826	Group meeting	Baltimore, MD	1830	1st Annual Convention	Philadelphia PA?
1832	Individual	Savannah, GA	1831	2nd Annual Convention	Philadelphia PA?
	Individual	Charleston, SC		group meeting	Baltimore, MD
	Individual	Tuscaloosa, AL		group meeting	Washington, DC
1834	Individual	New York City, NY		group meeting	Wilmington, DE
1848	Individual	New York City, NY		group meeting	Boston, MA
	group meeting	Dayton, OH		group meeting	Brooklyn, NY
1850	group meeting	Cincinnati, OH		group meeting	Hartford, CT
	Emigration Society	New York, NY		group meeting	New Haven, CT
1852	group meeting	Baltimore, MD		group meeting	Lyme, CT
1853	Individual	Hartford, CT		group meeting	Columbia, PA
	National Council			group meeting	Nantucket, RI
1854	Convention	Cleveland, OH	1832	group meeting	Lewiston, PA
1856	Convention	Chatham, Canada	1833	3rd Annual Convention	Philadelphia PA
			1839	group meeting	New York City, NY
			?	group meeting	Cincinnati, OH
			1845-46	group meeting	Cleveland, OH
			1847	group meeting	Boston, MA
			1849	group meeting	Columbus, OH
			1851	group meeting	Columbus, OH
				State Convention	Albany, NY
			1852	group meeting	Albany, NY
				State Convention	Cincinnati, OH
				group meeting	Rochester, NY
				group meeting	New Bedford, MA
				group meeting	Providence, RI
			1853	State Convention	Cincinnati, OH
				group meeting	Rochester, NY

**Source:** Information collected and compiled by James Curtis Jr (2002) from Mechlinger (1916, pp. 276-300)

Organizers in Baltimore in the 1820's suggested that "they were strangers, not citizens and that because of the difference in color and servitude of most of their race, they could not hope to

enjoy the immunities of freemen" (p.279). Supporters saw migration to African as a solution to the hostility free blacks experienced from state laws that threatened the few state rights they possessed.

Augustus Washington of Hartford "urged the free colored people to emigrate from the crowded cities to less populous parts of the United States, the Great West or to Africa, or to any place where they might secure an equality of rights and liberties with a mind unfettered and space in which to rise" (p.297). Organizers of the National Council in 1853 also supported mass migration of free blacks, but were also divided on the final destination.

"In (the convention) appeared three parties, one led by Doctor Delaney who desired to go to the Niger Valley in Africa, another by Whitfield, who interests seemed to be in Central America, and a third by Holly who showed a preference for Haiti...Delaney proceeded on his mission to Niger Valley in Africa. There he concluded a treaty with eight African kings, offering inducements to Negroes to emigrate. In the meantime James Redpath had gone to Haiti and accomplished some things that Holly failed to achieve...They (Redpath and Holly) succeeded in sending to Haiti as many as two thousand emigrants, the first sailing in 1861" (pp.300-01).

Note that Tables 6a and 6b shows that individual efforts changed to group efforts to organize black migration to Africa after the signing of the Fugitive Slave Act in 1850.

**Table 6b. The First Five Presidents of Liberia, 1848 through 1870**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Name of President</b>	<b>Birthplace</b>	<b>Birth Year</b>
1848	Joseph Jenkins Roberts	Norfolk, VA	1809
1856	Steven A. Benson	(raised in Liberia)	
1864	Daniel B. Warner	Baltimore, MD	1812
1868	James S. Payne	Richmond, VA	1819
1870	Edward James Roye	Newark, OH	1815

**Source:** Information collected and compiled by James Curtis Jr (2002) from McPherson (1891, pp. 29-45)

Free blacks opposed migration to Africa due to their historical attachment to the land, lack of accountability for slavery by slaveholders, and inconsistencies with the founding documents of the country.

"Because their ancestors not of their own accord were the first successful cultivators of the wilds of America, they felt themselves entitled to participate in the blessings of its

'luxuriant soil,' which their blood and sweat had moistened. They viewed with deep abhorrence the unmerited stigma attempted to be cast upon the reputation of the free people of color, 'that they are dangerous and useless part of the community,' when in the state of disfranchisement in which they lived, in the hour of danger, they 'ceased to remember their wrongs and rallied around the standard of their country.' They were determined never to separate themselves from the population of this country as they were brethren by 'ties of consanguinity of suffering, and of wrong'" (pp.277-78)

Several free blacks were skeptical of the goals of the philanthropists associated with efforts such American Colonization Society.

The meeting in Columbia, Pennsylvania, the leaders of which were Stephen Smith and James Richard, expressed the opinion that African colonization was a scheme of the Southern planters and wicked device of slaveholders who was desirous of riveting more firmly, and perpetuating more certainly, the fetters of slavery by ridding themselves of a population whose presence, influence and example had a tendency (as they supposed) to produce discontent among the slaves, and to furnish them with inducements to rebellion" (p287).

The efforts of free black groups to inform free blacks in America of their opposition to migration to Africa led minimal voluntary participation.

Organization of the State of Liberia. Liberia was organized with the assistance of the Colonization Society in America. Their efforts were similar to the first of such efforts in 1787 to relocate early blacks in England to Sierra Leone.

"After the celebrated decision of Lord Mansfield in the Somerset (1772), many slaves escaped to England, where they congregated in the dens of London....A movement in behalf of the oppressed race asserted itself at the University of Cambridge, in which Clarkson, Wilberforce, Granville Sharp and others took part. As a result of these efforts some four hundred Negroes sixty whites were landed at Sierra Leone in May, 1787 (p.15).

Other efforts were made transport free blacks from Massachusetts and Rhode Island to Sierra Leone in 1787 and 1815, respectively (pp.15-16). Liberia was successfully organized after efforts were led by the Colonization Society. The Colonization Society was organized on January 1, 1817 under the leadership of Dr. Robert Finley, a Presbyterian minister from New Jersey, and Col. Charles Marsh. Members of the Society traveled to Africa to locate a place to colonize free

blacks. During this period, important legislation was passed in the US that barred illegal slave smuggling.

"The importation of slaves had been strictly prohibited by the Act of Congress of March 2, 1807." However, after discovery of advertisements of "recaptured Africans" in Georgia, additional federal legislation, which barred such activities, was passed on March 3, 1819. "Provision was made for more stringent suppression of the slave trade: new cruisers were ordered and bounties awarded for captures; but the clause which proved so important to the embryo colony was that dealing with the captured cargoes: 'The President of the United States is hereby authorized to make such regulations and arrangements as he may deem expedient for the safe-keeping, support, and removal beyond the limits of the United States, of all such negroes, mulattoes, or persons of color as may be so delivered and brought within their jurisdiction; and to appoint a proper person or persons residing upon the coast of Africa as agent or agents for receiving the negroes, mulattoes, or persons of color, delivered from on board vessels seized in the prosecution of the slave trade by commanders of the United States armed vessels'....for years the resources of the Government were employed 'to colonize recaptured Africans, to build homes for them, to furnish them with farming utensils, to pay instructors to teach them, to purchase ships for their convenience, to build forts for their protection, to supply them with arms and munitions of war, to enlist troops to guard them, and to employ the army and navy in their defense'" (pp.22-23)

While members of the Society were tapped to lead efforts to locate places to transport illegally imported slaves back to Africa, they took advantage of this opportunity to locate places for potential free black colonization. "It is true...that the Government agency was separate from the colony....yet as a matter of fact the agency and colony were practically identical" (p.22).

The first trip to comply with the new act of Congress and, simultaneously, initiate the colonization activities of the Society took place in February of 1820.

US President James Monroe "proceeded to appoint two agents, the Rev. Samuel Bacon, already in the service of the Colonization Society, and John P. Bankson, as assistant and to charter the ship Elizabeth....For the expenses of the expedition \$33,000 was placed in the hands of Mr. Bacon. Dr. Samuel A. Crozier was appointed by the Society as its agent and representative; and eighty-six negroes from various states --thirty-three men, eighteen women, and the rest children, were embarked. On the 6th of February, 1820, the Mayflower of Liberia weighed anchor in New York harbor." They arrived in Sierra Leone on March 9, 1820 (pp.22-23).

Liberia declared itself as an independent nation in 1847. Prior to its independence, it was organized as the Commonwealth of Liberia, made up of several united settlements initiated by state colonization societies.

"The decade after 1832 is marked by the independent action of different State colonization societies....The Maryland Society first started an important settlement at Cape Palmas....Bassa Cove was settled by the joint action of the New York and Pennsylvania Societies; Greenville, on the Sinou river, by emigrants from Mississippi; and the Louisiana Society engaged in a similar enterprise...A plan was at length agreed upon by all except Maryland, by which colonies were united into the Commonwealth of Liberia whose government was controlled by a Board of Directors composed of Delegates from the State societies." Thomas Buchanan, a white man, and Joseph Jenkins Roberts, a black man, were the first Governors, respectively. (pp.28-29).

However, international trade laws made by Liberia were not enforceable until Liberia was either under the control of the US or itself. The latter occurred in 1847:

"Declaration of their full sovereignty...was adopted in Liberia by a popular vote, and a convention met on July 26, 1847, adopted a Declaration of Independence and new Constitution, closely modeled on the corresponding documents of the United States. In September the Constitution was ratified by vote of the people. Governor Roberts was elected to the office of President, upon which he entered January 3, 1848" (p.30).

"The form of government was, as has been seen, closely copied from that of the United States. There is the same tripartite division--executive, legislative and judicial. The President is elected every two years, on the first Tuesday in May. He is commander-in-chief of the army and navy; makes treaties with concurrence of two-thirds of the Senate, with whose advice he also appoints all public officers not otherwise provided by law. The legislative authority consists of a Senate and two members from each county, elected four years, and a House of Representatives holding office for two years; four members being apportioned to Montserado county, three to Bassa, one to each other county, with one additional representative for each 10,000 inhabitants. The judicial powers was vested in a Supreme Court with original jurisdiction in all cases affecting ambassadors and consuls and where the Republic is a party, and appellate jurisdiction in all other cases; and in subordinate courts to be established by the legislature (pp.37-38).

Note that the settlement initiated by the Maryland Society was annexed in 1857. "The Liberian Legislature by an Act of April 1857, formally received the colony into the Republic as 'Maryland County' (p.36).

The sovereignty of Liberia was recognized by England, France Belgium, Prussia, Brazil, US, Holland, Sweden, Norway, Hayti, Portugal, Denmark and Austria. Table 6b lists the first five presidents of Liberia. They faced numerous challenges as former free blacks in America converted to heads of state in Africa. For instance, they could not control their population since it was created for exported 'recaptured Africans,' they had border disputes, and the fifth President, Roye, face financial difficulty and was impeached.

McPherson acknowledged the different views on the creation of Liberia, including those who opposed it, as discussed by Mechlinger (1916).

Free blacks often opposed migration to Africa because they thought it was a way to remove free blacks who challenged the institution of slavery. These views confirmed by some members of Maryland and Virginia delegations. "John Randolph and of Roanoke (Virginia) and Robert Wright of Maryland, dwelt upon the desirability of removing the turbulent free-negro element and enhancing the value of property in slaves" (p.19).

But he supported the creation of Liberia as a better alternative to America for free blacks. "It is absurd to declaim about 'expatriation' and to declare such a movement. The whole course history reveals men leaving their homes under pressure of one cause or another, and striking out into new fields. The western course of migration has reached its uttermost limit, and the tide must turn in other directions" (p.60). He suggested the free blacks should "follow the line of least resistance and turn their steps to the home of their forefathers" (p.61).

The Local Residency 'Choices' of Free Blacks. A significant difference between the United States of America and South America was that South American blacks were more urban than US blacks: "The evidence...favors the belief that they are perhaps less rural than their cousins in the United States" (Zelinsky, 1949, p.207). The study of Cuba and Puerto Rico was complicated by "the British seizure of Habana in 1763, the civil wars that devastated Cuba in the 1860's and various hurricanes" (p.218). He found that slaves and free blacks in Cuba were more urban than other blacks in Central and South America.

Although the largest agglomerations of Negroes have been in and around Habana and Santiago de Cuba, there does not appear to be that strikingly littoral distributional pattern that obtains for Latin America as a whole....There has been a strikingly irregularity in the

distribution of free as compared with slave Negroes in the 19th Century: there were relatively few free individuals in the Occidente, a moderate number in the Centro, and an excessively large number in the Oriente, especially in the Manzanillo area, which is difficult to account for" (pp.208-09).

He also suggests that the relatively smaller size of Puerto Rico may have resulted in a distribution of the black population where black Puerto Ricans were not quite as urban as black Cubans.

"Negroes and mulattoes do not appear to participate to any usual extent in the notable cityward migrations. Because of the small size of the island it is difficult to find significant regional variations in its racial composition...there is one region where the change is particularly striking. In the southwestern corner of the Island, especially in the municipalities of San German and Sabana, the colored population has decreased both absolutely and relatively from its condition in 1867, or as early as 1828, when it was dominant in this area and when this was one of the principal concentrations of colored population" (pp.210-211).

#### *Summary of the Emigration of Free Blacks in the United States of America*

In sum, approximately one in ten 1850 US free blacks emigrated between 1850 and 1860: About four to five percent emigrated to Canada, another four percent of free blacks emigrated to Africa, and some even emigrated to Central America. The economic position of free blacks that emigrated to Canada varied as much as those that did not emigrate. If the Canadian experience is consistent with free blacks emigrants to other countries, concerns about selection bias in the study of domestic free blacks should be minimized and the role of federal and state laws on emigration patterns should be examined more closely.

#### **The Local Residency ‘Choices’ of Free Blacks**

The local residency decisions tended to differ for blacks and whites. Wilkie (1972a, 1976b) combines slaves and free blacks for a comparison local residential ‘choices’ among blacks and whites: In 1790, blacks were more urban than whites in all regions except the southeast, but by 1860, whites had become three times more urban than blacks. She suggested that increased competition from immigrants in labor markets and the passage of the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act led to a decline of (northern) urban blacks. However, the black population can be disaggregated in order to compare urban-rural ‘choices’ (i) among free blacks and slaves, and (ii) among free blacks and whites. Foremost, Wilkie (1972a; 1976b) found that slaves tended to live in the rural south while free blacks tended to live in the urban north—as intuition might suggest. Zelinsky

(1950) found that significant populations of rural free blacks only existed in Delaware, New Jersey and Maryland.

Second, Wilkie (1972a, 1976b), Berlin (1974), Curry (1981), and Steckel (2000b) confirmed the findings of Zelinsky (1950): Free blacks were more urban than whites.

"Throughout the pre-Civil War period, the free black population in both the North and the South was more urban than either the white or slave population. In 1790, 12 percent of the free black population was urban which was twice as high a percentage as that for the white population and over four times as high as that for slaves. By 1860, over one-third of the free black population lived in urban areas, compared to one-fifth of the white population and only 4 percent of the slave population" (Wilkie 1976b; p.314).

In fact, "urban freeman also tended to congregate in the large cities for the same reasons they preferred urban to rural life" (Berlin, p.175). Economic pull factors such as "economic (and manumission) opportunities (which) were much superior for landless and ownerless Negroes in cities than they were in the countryside," and economic push factors such as "social isolation" which pushed free blacks out of rural areas led to the relative urbanization of free blacks (p.388).

### **Summary of the Demography of Free Blacks**

The demographic choices of free black population were limited because they awkwardly operated under some of the freedoms of whites and, yet, many of the constraints of slaves:

"The line between slavery and freedom was not imaginary....No matter how hard whites squeezed black liberty, the irreducible difference between freedom and slavery remained. Freedom allowed blacks to reap the rewards of their own labor, to develop a far richer social life, and enjoy the many intangible benefits of liberty. With hard work, skill, and luck, some free Negroes climbed off the floor of Southern society, acquired wealth and social standing....Yet neither were they free....Free Negroes balanced precariously between abject slavery, which they rejected, and full freedom, which was denied them. Their world straddled one of hell's elusive boundaries: (Berlin, pp. xiii-xiv).

The asymmetrical enforcement of hostile and favorable federal laws by states that were respectively hostile to or in favor of free black rights and protections under the Constitution directly impacted the demographic choices of free blacks. Since federal decisions about the rights of free blacks had to be filtered through the preference of states in which a free black



resided, areas that chose to enforce federal decisions which reduced the rights of free blacks (i.e., the 1850 Fugitive Slave Act) experienced large declines in the free black population, such as Louisiana in the Southwestern. Conversely, areas that chose to defy such laws (i.e., via the Underground Railroad) experienced growth in the area's free black population, such as Ohio in the Midwest and Canada. Overall, while the legal and social status of free blacks was significantly better than slaves but not quite equal to that of whites, free blacks attempted to overcome asymmetrical enforcement of federal laws by structuring the location of their households to provide a basic foundation for *the pursuit of happiness*.

### **THE ECONOMIC ANALYSIS OF THE CONDITION OF FREE BLACKS IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA COMPARED TO EX-SLAVES AND WHITE AMERICANS IN THE MID 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY**

Several anecdotal studies on free blacks in the labor market show that the poor legal and social conditions made it difficult for free blacks to be economically competitive. For instance, free blacks had to compete with slaves, whites and immigrants for employment.

“The preference of employers for white or slave labor forced free Negroes to underbid whites and work on the same terms as slaves. By accepting lower wages and longer hours, many free Negroes found employment, but they aroused the ire of white workingmen, who complained that free Negroes depressed their standard of living” (Berlin, p.229). Immigration put free Negroes in the same position: “The influx of Irish and German workers...sped the exclusion of Negro freeman from many occupations. The competition free Negro workers faced from newly arrived immigrants in Baltimore was a typical example of how white immigrants limited the free Negro's opportunities” (p.231).

They tended to earn wages and income that were much less than whites. One local study shows that: “Racial prejudice relegated many free Negro workers to the meanest drudgery at the lowest pay...Even at these low levels of employment, free Negroes were often paid less than whites. The standard wage for day laborers in the Norfolk shipyards (for example) was one dollar, but free Negro workers rarely earned more than seventy-five cents a day” (Berlin, p.227).

But studying racial differences in factor market supply decisions and prices, as reflected in the literature on labor supply, wages and income, presents only a subset of the factors that determine the accumulation and storage of assets over the lifetime of black and white households. Therefore, this study will focus on differences in wealth between blacks and whites in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

### **Related Studies: A Review of the Literature on the Study of Free Blacks**

The source of antebellum free black-white wealth differences has not studied. Researchers (e.g., Bodenhorn (1999), Eggert (1997), Hershberg (1997), Berlin (1974), Litwick (1961), Jackson (1939), and DuBois (1899)) and Philadelphia abolitionist society studies in 1849 and 1838 attempted to address free black-white wealth differences often using a piece-meal approach. Foremost, Leon Litwick (1961) and Ira Berlin (1979) provided a historical account for experience of northern and southern free blacks, respectively. After surveying past research efforts, compiling county records and compiling census manuscripts, Berlin found that free blacks in several states possessed more property over time. But these results are obscured by the aggregate measures of wealth. For instance, he found that the aggregate wealth of free blacks living in fifteen counties in Georgia nearly doubled between 1850 and 1860. But we do not know why their wealth increased because correlations with explanatory variables were not calculated.

Luther Jackson (1939) also analyzed the property and real estate wealth of free blacks in the South. He used tax books, deeds, orders, legislative petitions, agricultural manuscripts and census manuscripts from Virginia to show that the amount of property held by free blacks in 1830 tripled by 1860. Even though Jackson provided a brief statistical analysis, the inference of his study is limited to Virginia and he did not employ methods to explain what drove his observations.

Bodenhorn (1999a) used 1860 US census data to analyze southern wealth differences among darker and lighter free blacks. Based on censored quantile regression results using data from Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, Kentucky and Louisiana, mulattos had wealth advantage to darker free blacks. Similarly, Bodenhorn (1999b) employs data stature of darker and lighter free blacks. He also found that mulattos had an advantage to darker free blacks when analyzing stature data from Virginia. While Bodenhorn did employ modern statistical analyses, inference from this study is limited to several states.

Some research has also been conducted on free black wealth in localities within Pennsylvania. Gerald Eggert (1997) linked US Census records of blacks in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania from 1850-60 to estimate property values of free blacks. He found stagnant wealth among a large percentage of the population but growth among those who did not migrate. However, his study did not compare results to migrants and was limited to one locality. Theodore Hershberg (1997) employed abolition society data on the socioeconomic conditions of free blacks in Philadelphia to show that real and personal wealth fell ten percent between 1838 and 1847.

Similarly, W. E. B. Dubois (1899) used these records and tax receipts to show that free blacks in Philadelphia often held less property than whites. However, Hershberg and Dubois do not use the analytical tools needed to fully explain their results. Their studies lack a full description of the data collection procedures in their research. To analyze the link between these social conditions and economic outcomes of free blacks, I employ wealth and cross-sectional variables from the 1850, 1860 and 1870 Integrated Public Use Microdata Samples (IPUMS).

**Descriptive Statistics: An Analysis of the IPUMS Data Employed for the Study of the Economic Condition of Free Blacks in United States of America, Compared to Ex-slaves and White Americans**

This study uses data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Sample (IPUMS). IPUMS data are based on national representative samples and supplemental over-samples of minorities from the population schedules of the US census manuscripts. The US conducted its first census in 1790 and its first modern census in 1850. By 1850, the census had improved such that we can now investigate the past with new insights. Modern census data is a rich set of cross-sectional, individual-level data on American families and individuals.

Magnuson (1995a) and Steckel (1991) recommend that researchers pay careful attention to enumeration the procedures before investigating this data. Magnuson reports that the U.S. Census is not a “pure reflection of general societal trends”(p. 11). The census is composed of questions, which have and have not persisted over time. Between 1790 and 1840, the unit of enumeration was the household, based on given set of characteristics, i.e. Colored-Male-Over Age 16. The 1850 U.S. Census was considered the first modern Census when the unit was changed to the individual. Magnuson also noted that a proposed slave schedule would have collected extensive information on the ancestors of modern-day African Americas. In 1840, Congress formed the Census Board that unsuccessfully recommended a slave schedule for the 1850 U.S. Census--which would have included the names of slaves, birthplace of slaves and number of children (Magnuson 1995a, p.19).

Steckel reminds us that the original purpose of the US census was for taxation and US House of Representatives appropriations. However, a “growing desire for statistical information, curiosity about society, and heightened interest in international and regional comparisons led to expanded collection by the federal census” (Steckel 1991, pp.582-83). Steckel suggested that the likelihood of error increases as early census data is more disaggregated. He noted that under-enumeration, over-enumeration and misreporting are errors that affect the quality of census data and led to the creation of the Census Bureau.

Some of these errors may be attributed to the poor training of early enumerators and lower quality of early census administration. He found that larger households, lower-educated persons and persons with poor English-language skills tended to be omitted from the census. Steckel (1991) provided several examples of underenumeration in census data collected on blacks. He recommended using census comparisons, census matching, and consistency checks to evaluate errors and improve the quality of samples from the early census.

This study analyzes US census samples from the 1850-70. These census manuscripts contain responses to important socioeconomic inquiries including age, sex, color, marriage status, literacy, whether the individual attended school during the year, occupation, state or country of birth, value of real estate, and value of personal estate (1860 and 1870 only).

Real estate value was enumerated based on guidelines specified in the Circular to Marshals. It specified that "under heading 8 insert the value of real estate owned by each individual enumerated. You are to obtain the value of real estate by inquiry of each individual who was supposed to own real estate, be the same located where it may, and insert the amount in dollars. No abatement of the value is to be made on account of any lien or encumbrance thereon in the nature of debt" (Magnuson 1995b, p347) Personal estate value was also enumerated based on guidelines that specified "Personal estate is to be inclusive of all bonds, stocks, mortgages, notes, live stock, plate, jewels, or furniture, but exclusive of wearing apparel" (p.349)

Economists have conducted an extensive amount of research based on national samples from the early US census manuscripts (see e.g. Ferrie 1999, 1994; Steckel 1990; Becker and Tomes 1986 and Soltow 1975, 1972). The sample studied in this paper was restricted to heads of households. Investigating the wealth from a random sample of household heads is more productive than investigating a random sample of individuals. Wealth is often used to purchase durable goods and durables are more likely to benefit the entire household rather than one individual in a household. Furthermore, census enumerators tended to sum up the wealth of a household and report it under the head of household. The final sample includes a 1-in-100 random sample from the 1850-70 censuses and supplemental samples of 1-in-50 blacks in 1860 and 1870. The racial breakdown of the pooled sample is 21,416 blacks and 154,569 whites.

Prior to 1865, blacks were not only stratified by skin color--black and mulatto--but they also functioned based on heterogeneous legal rights. Blacks were either bounded in slavery or free, contingent on appropriate documentation. The 1850 and 1860 IPUMS samples only include free blacks. As reported earlier, no detailed individual-level data is

available on slaves. Thus, averages of wealth and property holding in the descriptive statistics were weighted based on (i) the size of the free black population relative to slave population in 1850 and 1860 and (ii) the assumption that slaves had no personal and real estate. Blacks were 15.7 percent of the US population in 1850 and 14.2 percent of the population in 1860 (Cramer 1997). But free blacks represented 11.9 percent and 11.0 percent of the black population, respectively. The unweighted averages in 1850 and 1860 represent the experience of (i) the average free black and (ii) the average black if slaves were freed earlier.

The decade before the Civil War was a ripe environment for economic prosperity. Thomas Weiss (1992) found that Gross Domestic Product (GDP) grew by 1.96 percent between 1850 and 1860--higher than any other decade in the pre-war era. He suggested that although perishable output and shelter were the primary components of the gain, residual output also increased significantly. The residual was “the portion of output beyond apparent basic necessities...this was the output needed for industrialization, and of course provided as well the discretionary items that are the fruits of economic progress. In this light, Americans were advancing in style” (Gallman, p.30).

#### *Macroeconomic Factors Impacting the Experience of Free Blacks in the United States of America*

The decade immediately before the Civil War was a ripe environment for economic prosperity among free blacks.

“The industrial revolution in the United States was well underway by the 1850’s but the end points of the time period were not marked by unusual prosperity or depression. Gold discoveries and growing agricultural exports to Europe contributed to economic growth from the late 1840’s to the middle of the decade. The upswing was halted by the Panic of 1857, a financial convulsion from which recovery was substantially complete by 1860” (Steckel 1990, p.374).

After making state-level adjustments to agricultural labor force, Weiss (1992) found the growth of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was higher in the decade before the Civil War than any other decade in the period. Table 7b shows that perishable output and shelter were the primary components of the gain. But the residual increased significantly. The residual was “the portion output beyond apparent basic necessities...this was the output needed for industrialization, and of course provided as well the discretionary items that are the fruits of economic progress. In this light, Americans were advancing in style” (Galman, p.30).

**Table 7a. Average Annualized Rates of Growth of Per Capita Gross Domestic Product and Components (1840 Prices)**

Decade	Growth in GDP	Perishable Output	Non-Perishable Output			
			Shelter	Home Manufacturing	Farm Improvements	Residual
1800-10	0.52	0.24	0.53	-0.03	1.80	1.16
1810-20	0.27	0.00	0.83	-0.01	-0.63	0.85
1820-30	0.72	0.23	2.16	-0.16	-1.01	1.65
1830-40	1.15	0.22	2.20	-0.46	-0.70	2.74
1840-50	0.93	0.44	-0.75	0.42	0.81	2.02
1850-60	1.96	1.58	0.96	-0.41	-2.12	3.10

**Source:** Information collected and compiled by James Curtis Jr (2002) from Gallman (p. 31)

*The Descriptive Statistics of the IPUMS Data Employed to Study Free Blacks in the United States of America*

Tables 7b-1, 7c-2 and 7d-3 describe the means of the variables in the IPUMS sample:

**Table 7b-1. The Sample Means of the IPUMS Data, 1850 through 1870**

Race:	Black					White			Overall		
	1850		1860		1870	1850	1860	1870	1850	1860	1870
Year:	Free	All	Free	All	All						
<b>Wealth Variables</b>											
Personal Estate			208	(23)	53		1,404	1,112		1,363	880
Real Estate	171	(20)	277	(30)	71	1,336	1,975	2,436	1,311	1,916	1,919
Total Estate			484	(53)	124		3,379	3,548		3,280	2,799
Price-Adjusted Personal Estate			215	(24)	34		1,506	741		1,462	586
Price-Adjusted Real Estate	189	(22)	286	(31)	47	1,486	2,050	1,643	1,458	1,990	1,294
Price-Adjusted Total Estate			501	(55)	81		3,556	2,384		3,452	1,880
Personal Estate > 0			0.551	(0.061)	0.211		0.811	0.703		0.801	0.595
Real Estate > 0	0.194	(0.023)	0.245	(0.027)	0.067	0.531	0.557	0.546	0.524	0.546	0.441
Total Estate > 0			0.585	(0.064)	0.235		0.838	0.758		0.829	0.643
Farm ownership	0.114	(0.014)	0.119	(0.013)	0.194	0.506	0.445	0.410	0.498	0.434	0.363
<b>Wealth Ratio (to Whites)</b>											
Personal Estate			0.148	(0.016)	0.048					0.97	0.79
Real Estate	0.128	(0.015)	0.140	(0.015)	0.029				0.98	0.97	0.79
Total Estate			0.143	(0.016)	0.035					0.97	0.79
Price-Adjusted Personal Estate			0.143	(0.016)	0.046					0.97	0.79
Price-Adjusted Real Estate	0.127	(0.015)	0.139	(0.015)	0.029				0.98	0.97	0.79
Price-Adjusted Total Estate			0.141	(0.015)	0.034					0.97	0.79
Personal Estate > 0			0.679	(0.075)	0.300					0.99	0.85
Real Estate > 0	0.366	(0.043)	0.440	(0.048)	0.122				0.99	0.98	0.81
Total Estate > 0			0.698	(0.077)	0.310					0.99	0.85
Farm ownership	0.225	(0.027)	0.267	(0.029)	0.473				0.98	0.98	0.88
<b>Race Variables</b>											
Black	1.000		1.000		1.000	-	-	-	0.022	0.032	0.217
Black	0.677		0.635		0.881	-	-	-	0.015	0.020	0.191
Mulatto	0.323		0.365		0.119	-	-	-	0.007	0.012	0.026
White	-		-		-	1.000	1.000	1.000	0.978	0.966	0.781
Other	-		-		-	-	-	-	-	0.002	0.002
Chinese	-		-		-	-	-	-	-	0.001	0.001
Indian	-		-		-	-	-	-	-	0.001	0.001
<b>Schooling Variables</b>											
Literacy	0.527		0.583		0.146	0.903	0.913	0.885	0.895	0.902	0.724
<b>Occupation Variables</b>											
Labor Force Participation	0.656		0.823		0.890	0.873	0.910	0.887	0.868	0.907	0.888
Unskilled	0.371		0.509		0.705	0.100	0.146	0.230	0.106	0.158	0.333
Skilled	0.166		0.191		0.071	0.218	0.233	0.227	0.217	0.232	0.193
White-Collar	0.018		0.019		0.009	0.085	0.107	0.119	0.083	0.104	0.095
Farmer	0.107		0.112		0.187	0.475	0.431	0.395	0.467	0.420	0.349
Student or Retired	-		0.001		0.000	0.000	0.002	0.009	0.000	0.002	0.007
Other	0.338		0.167		0.027	0.122	0.082	0.020	0.127	0.085	0.022

**Source:** Information collected, calculated and compiled by James Curtis Jr (2002); IPUMS

**Table 7b-2. The Sample Means of the IPUMS Data, 1850 through 1870**

Race:	Free Blacks			Whites			Overall		
Year:	1850	1860	1870	1850	1860	1870	1850	1860	1870
<b>Demographic Variables</b>									
Male	0.750	0.727	0.820	0.910	0.908	0.893	0.907	0.902	0.877
Number of persons in the household	4.581	4.684	4.705	5.532	5.267	5.166	5.511	5.247	5.064
Number of families in the household	1.295	1.263	1.194	1.382	1.354	1.371	1.380	1.352	1.335
Married	0.639	0.613	0.716	0.830	0.822	0.818	0.826	0.814	0.794
Number of children > 0	0.688	0.715	0.746	0.818	0.810	0.804	0.815	0.806	0.790
Number of children	2.023	2.117	2.233	2.819	2.619	2.504	2.802	2.600	2.442
Number of children under 5 years old	0.589	0.553	0.682	0.752	0.750	0.662	0.748	0.742	0.665
Youngest child	4.916	5.675	4.413	5.239	5.173	5.750	5.232	5.187	5.452
Oldest child	9.366	10.521	9.462	11.372	10.852	11.317	11.328	10.834	10.899
Age	42.450	42.890	39.839	41.525	41.384	42.806	41.546	41.424	42.146
< 20 years old	0.009	0.007	0.018	0.003	0.004	0.004	0.003	0.004	0.007
20-29 years old	0.182	0.176	0.258	0.197	0.195	0.172	0.197	0.194	0.191
30-39 years old	0.274	0.254	0.248	0.301	0.304	0.276	0.300	0.302	0.270
40-49 years old	0.225	0.244	0.214	0.231	0.233	0.243	0.231	0.233	0.236
50-59 years old	0.171	0.170	0.146	0.149	0.151	0.172	0.149	0.151	0.166
60-69 years old	0.085	0.093	0.080	0.082	0.080	0.093	0.082	0.080	0.090
70-79 years old	0.035	0.035	0.026	0.029	0.027	0.033	0.029	0.028	0.032
80-89 years old	0.009	0.018	0.007	0.007	0.006	0.006	0.007	0.006	0.006
90+ years old	0.009	0.004	0.003	0.001	0.001	0.000	0.001	0.001	0.001
<b>Region Variables</b>									
Rural	0.621	0.615	0.863	0.802	0.753	0.718	0.798	0.749	0.749
Metropolitan area	0.224	0.258	0.066	0.122	0.172	0.196	0.125	0.175	0.168
Slave state	0.528	0.525	0.908	0.286	0.255	0.249	0.291	0.263	0.391
Northeast	0.054	0.050	0.006	0.145	0.121	0.106	0.143	0.118	0.084
Mid-Atlantic	0.304	0.253	0.033	0.293	0.276	0.252	0.293	0.275	0.204
Midwest	0.113	0.153	0.052	0.263	0.320	0.361	0.260	0.314	0.294
Southeast	0.493	0.474	0.747	0.256	0.215	0.208	0.261	0.223	0.324
Southwest	0.035	0.050	0.161	0.031	0.040	0.041	0.031	0.040	0.067
West	0.001	0.019	0.002	0.012	0.028	0.032	0.012	0.030	0.027
Moved to Northeast	0.023	0.023	0.003	0.023	0.029	0.031	0.023	0.029	0.025
Moved to Mid-Atlantic	0.097	0.079	0.012	0.106	0.117	0.109	0.106	0.116	0.088
Moved to Midwest	0.102	0.118	0.037	0.210	0.244	0.251	0.208	0.239	0.204
Moved to Southwest	0.010	0.013	0.102	0.026	0.033	0.033	0.026	0.033	0.048
Moved to Southeast	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.025	0.026	0.027	0.025	0.025	0.023
Moved to West	0.001	0.016	0.002	0.009	0.025	0.029	0.009	0.025	0.024
Stayed in Northeast	0.031	0.028	0.003	0.123	0.092	0.075	0.121	0.089	0.059
Stayed in Mid-Atlantic	0.207	0.174	0.021	0.187	0.158	0.144	0.188	0.158	0.117
Stayed in Midwest	0.010	0.035	0.015	0.053	0.076	0.110	0.052	0.075	0.090
Stayed in Southwest	0.025	0.038	0.058	0.005	0.006	0.008	0.005	0.007	0.019
Stayed in Southeast	0.486	0.469	0.741	0.230	0.190	0.180	0.236	0.198	0.302
Stayed in West	-	0.002	0.000	0.004	0.004	0.003	0.004	0.005	0.003

**Source:** Information collected, calculated and compiled by James Curtis Jr (2002); IPUMS



**Table 7b-3. The Sample Means of the IPUMS Data, 1850 through 1870**

Race:	Free Blacks			Whites			Overall		
Year:	1850	1860	1870	1850	1860	1870	1850	1860	1870
<b>Region Variables (continued)</b>									
Migrated to a different state	0.340	0.343	0.359	0.545	0.594	0.597	0.540	0.586	0.546
Migrated to a different region	0.241	0.255	0.162	0.398	0.474	0.479	0.395	0.467	0.411
Born in Northeast	0.035	0.038	0.004	0.174	0.134	0.108	0.171	0.130	0.085
Born in Mid-Atlantic	0.225	0.197	0.024	0.266	0.242	0.223	0.265	0.240	0.179
Born in Midwest	0.012	0.037	0.020	0.058	0.084	0.120	0.057	0.083	0.099
Born in Southeast	0.682	0.669	0.886	0.325	0.274	0.254	0.333	0.286	0.391
Born in Southwest	0.026	0.041	0.063	0.005	0.007	0.009	0.006	0.008	0.021
Born in West	-	0.002	0.000	0.004	0.004	0.003	0.004	0.005	0.003
Born in other US Territory	0.001	0.001	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.000
Born in foreign country	0.019	0.015	0.002	0.168	0.256	0.282	0.165	0.248	0.222
<b>Price Index</b>									
Regional Price Index	88.45	93.53	158.32	90.15	97.46	149.86	90.11	97.34	151.69
Number of Observations	773	1,703	18,940	34,671	51,776	68,122	35,444	53,594	87,227

**Source:** Information collected, calculated and compiled by James Curtis Jr (2002); IPUMS

Five years after emancipation, blacks made gains in the total wealth. Total wealth includes the value of personal and other wealth. The value of southern total estate was inflated by the value of slaves. Slave owners included the value of slaves in their personal estate.

On average, the value of black total wealth, adjusted by regional prices, was \$124 in 1870 while whites held \$3,548 in total estate. Total estate wealth grew by 47 percent between 1860 and 1870 among blacks while white total estate wealth fell 33 percent between 1860 and 1870. See the empirical results section for a complete discussion of black-white wealth differences.

Black-white differences in schooling and employment were also quite large in 1870. 14.6 percent of the black population was literate while 88.5 percent of the white population could read and write. While 89 percent of both, blacks and whites, were employed, occupation concentrations were different. In 1870, 70.5 percent of blacks had unskilled jobs, compared to 23 percent of whites. In contrast, 18.8 percent of blacks were either white-collar workers or farmers, compared to 53.8 percent of whites.

White occupational concentrations changed quite dramatically between 1850 and 1870. The portion of white unskilled workers grew 46.2 percent between 1850 and 1860 and

57.3 percent between 1860 and 1870 while the portion of white-collar worker grew less dramatically during this period. The portion of white-collar workers grew 25.8 percent between 1850 and 1860 and 12.1 percent between 1860 and 1870. Simultaneously, the portion of white farmers fell 9.3 percent between 1850 and 1860 and 8.4 percent between 1860 and 1870. Naturally, this coincided with a continual decline in farm ownership among whites over the twenty-year period.

Blacks and whites were also different demographically in 1870. 18 percent of black households had female heads while only 10.7 percent of white households had female heads. Similarly, only 71.6 percent of black household heads were married while 81.8 percent of white household heads were married. White households also had more residents, including children. Furthermore, the average age of the white household head, youngest child and oldest child is older than the average ages of the black household head, youngest child and oldest child, respectively. White demographics gradually changed over the twenty-year period. The number of persons in a household, number households with children and number of children all fell. Simultaneously, the number of white male and white married household heads fell. Among free blacks, the proportion that was male and married also fell between 1850 and 1860.

Regional differences were also quite large in 1870. The only dramatic regional differences among whites prior to 1870 were changes in the western and foreign-born population. 12 percent of whites lived in west in 1850. This portion of the population grew by 129 percent between 1850 and 1860 and 12 percent between 1860 and 1870. Additionally, Joseph Ferrie reports that the portion of white foreign-born population grew by 52 percent between 1850 and 1860 and 10 percent between 1860 and 1870 (1999). 1850 and 1860 free blacks were regionally different than whites and all blacks in 1870. Only one-in-two free blacks lived in slave states, with the remaining plurality living in the Mid-Atlantic. More than one-in-three free blacks lived in urban areas between 1850 and 1860—significantly larger than whites and all blacks in 1870. One-in-three free blacks were also born outside of the southeast region in 1850 and 1860. Furthermore, 34 percent of free blacks migrated to a different state in 1850 and 1860 and over seventy percent of these migrants migrated to a new region. Only one-in-four whites lived in former slave states while nine out of ten blacks lived in former slave states. As a result blacks were more likely to live in rural areas than whites (86.3 percent of blacks to 71.8 percent of whites). This occurred because whites were more regionally mobile than blacks. 35.9 percent of blacks migrated from their birth state and 45 percent these migrants reside in a new region. However, 59.7 percent of whites migrated from their birth state and 80 percent of these migrants changed regions. The key regional difference may be that only 11.4 percent of blacks were born outside the Southeast

while the largest birth segment among whites was foreign-born (28.2 percent). Joseph Ferrie conducts a thorough analysis of the immigrant experience during this period (1999).

Five years after emancipation, blacks, on average, held \$71 in real estate wealth while whites held \$2,437. These estimates are consistent with the estimates of Soltow (1972; 1975). Although Soltow (1972) only collected a sample of 393 non-whites in 1870, he found their average wealth was \$73, compared to \$2,661 among whites. Soltow (1975) found similar differences in free black and white wealth using a sample of 151 blacks. He conducted one of the first in-depth studies of mid-nineteenth century wealth accumulation patterns using the census population schedules. Note that these schedules were originally are stored on microfilms. He spun the microfilm half-turns to collect random, cross-sectional samples from 1850-1870. He found that average black wealth in 1870 was \$74 while average white wealth in \$2,691.

Given that blacks held only 2.9 percent of the average white real estate wealth in 1870--up from the 1.5 percent in 1850 and 1860, the fact that the growth of real estate wealth favored blacks over this time period may not be surprising. Among blacks, average real estate wealth, adjusted by regional prices, grew by 28 percent between 1850 and 1860 and 33 percent between 1860 and 1870. Among whites, price adjusted real estate wealth also grew by 28 percent between 1850 and 1860 but fell by 25 percent between 1860 and 1870. This white wealth recession was primarily due to the losses incurred by the southern whites after the Civil War.

Property-holding patterns were similar to real estate wealth patterns. Only 6.7 percent of blacks in 1870 held property (or a positive value of real estate wealth) while 54.6 percent of whites held property in 1870. The growth in black property-holders outpaced the growth of black real estate wealth. Blacks property holders grew 17 percent between 1850 and 1860 and 148 percent between 1860 and 1870. Among whites, property holders grew by five percent between 1850 and 1860 and fell two percent between 1860 and 1870. Overall, the ratio of black to white property holders was 12.2 percent in 1870, up from 4.3 percent in 1850 and 4.8 percent in 1860.

Blacks made similar gains in the total estate. Total estate includes the value of personal estate and real estate. The value of southern total estate was inflated by the value of slaves. Slave owners included the value of slaves in their personal estate. On average, the value of black total estate wealth, adjusted by regional prices, was \$124 in 1870 while whites held \$3,548 in total estate. Total estate wealth grew by 47 percent between 1860 and 1870 among blacks while white total estate wealth fell 33 percent between 1860 and 1870. Black total estate holders (or blacks possessing a positive value of total estate wealth) grew by 265 percent to 23.5 percent in 1870 while white total estate holders fell by 9.6 percent to 75.8 percent in 1870. Overall, the ratio of

black to white total estate wealth was 3.5 percent while the ratio of black to white total estate holders was 31 percent in 1870.

These descriptive statistics document the general improvements in the condition of the average black relative to the average white after the abolition of slavery.

### **Economic Theory: The Economic Expectations before Investigating Evidence in the Data**

The Study of Wealth. Wealth is the accumulation of material resources that have market value for current or future consumption. Furthermore, savings, initial wealth and the compounded rate of return on the invested savings and initial wealth determine wealth. The following section describes universal and group-based expectations, based on economic theory, in the areas of economic growth (including wealth, property and savings), economic inequality, and comparative economic outcomes. Wealth, property, and measures of classical economic choice characteristic will be employed to measure outcomes, compared to expectations.

Economic Growth and the Parabolic Property Ownership Expectations. To analyze the relationship between age and property, I employ methods developed by Lee Soltow (1975). He expected the old to hold more property than the young : He found that plots of individuals holding property across age groups shows a "very rapid rise in the probability of ownership in the first 10 years of adulthood with a tapering affect appearing thereafter" (Soltow, p.28). He suggests that this concavity was affected by the income and savings decisions and distribution of the population.

Soltow used estimates of non-property-holders to develop a parabolic model of property holding over different age rages. This theoretical parabolic behavior is based on an assumption that proportion of non-property-holders is fixed across age groups. Soltow expects that 79.3 percent of thirty year-olds who did not hold property in their twenties will not hold property for the same reason as the 79.3 percent who did not hold property when they were in their twenties:

"The .793 is a quantification of the importance of all those characteristics inhibiting ownership, such as lack of knowledge of available land or credit, inability to speak or write English or possibly read any other language, unwillingness to accept the obligations of ownership, inability to save because of low income or high consumption, legarthy because of sickness or poor health, and so on. If quantification of .79 were to operate for the group from age 30 to 39, one would expect the .793 of the property-less at age 30 to remain property-less. Thus,  $1-(.793)^2$  would own property in the 30-39 group" (Soltow, 1972, p.30).

"The strength of America's system, as seen by nineteenth century writer, was that an individual had the opportunity to improve his position over time. This opportunity meant that he was not placed in a fixed position in society. He might have had to work hard, but he could expect betterment in his wealth status. We can capture this phenomenon by studying the participation rate (proportion of men who held property) of peoples of different ages in a given year. Sure this rate, as measured by (real estate holding) or (total estate holding) must be higher for the old than for the young....If the majority of individuals in the economy are to experience betterment in economic position during their lifetimes, more and more should rise above the level of being poor, above some minimum wealth amount" (p.27).

Economic Growth and the Linear Growth in Wealth Expectations. To analyze the relationship between age and wealth, I employ additional methods that were first employed by Soltow (1975). He plotted age-wealth coordinates and expected a positive relationship: "Material betterment dominated the economic thinking men. Those with wealth expected to have more each year as they grew older; accumulation was a sign or index of recognition of an individual's past economic activities. Wealth mirrors the past better than income since the pleasures of past consumption may be forgotten. It is only saving from past income that is now reflected in one's wealth" (Soltow, 1975, p.69).

Soltow did, in fact, observe a linear relationship between estate values and age. The parabolic effect of age on property holding was not present when observing average wealth at different ages. "The group average rises strongly from 20-29 to 30-39 and then has its greatest thrust in going from 30-39 to the 40-49 group. The average tapers off but continues to rise rather surprisingly into old age. There is certainly no strong parabolic effect, as can be seen in...the proportion of men with property" (p.70). He also suggested that the stability of the 1850 pattern was "proof that the age patterns were established decades before the 1850 and the concepts of economic betterment must have been pervasive" (Soltow, 1975, pp.74-75).

Economic Growth and the Savings Rate Expectations. Finally, I use the method proposed by Soltow (1975) to analyze savings using wealth annualized at each age. Soltow used the differences in wealth at each age to observe the continuity of savings that continued through old ages. Furthermore, Soltow found the average annual savings rate was about 5 percent. This was obtained by [1] averaging the increase in wealth per age groups 20-69 or 90 percent of the adult male population  $\{(582+804+311+303)/4 = 500\}$ , [2] annualizing the average increase per age group or decade  $\{500/10=50\}$ , and [3] dividing the average annual increase in wealth by the average wealth in 1850  $\{50/1001=.05\}$ . Note that this finding of 5 percent is the average for

individuals. Since households possess more wealth than individuals, this rate is expected to much be smaller in the forthcoming empirical analysis. "The difference between in wealth levels from one year to the next gives an index of saving for a year" (pp.71-72).

Classical Characteristic Premium Expectations. *Schooling*. Jacob Mincer (1974) described a direct relationship between schooling and earnings:

“it is equally correct to say that the distribution of earnings is determined by the distribution of accumulated human capital and of rates of return to human capital investment or that the distribution of earnings is determined by the distribution of ability and opportunity. Or, putting it in a causal hierarchy, the distribution of accumulated human capital is a proximate determinant of the distribution of earnings, and is treated that way in this study. In turn, ability and opportunity determine the distribution of human capital. (Mincer 1974, p.138)”

*Skill*. Classical economic theory suggests workers are paid their additions to production. This produces an expectation of higher wages for higher skilled workers and lower wages for lower skilled workers. Holding constant the intertemporal rate of return to saved wages, holding constant differences in initial wealth, and holding constant the number of working hours (see James Curtis Jr, December 2002), it is reasonable expect higher wealth among higher skilled employees.

*Economic Geography*. Johann Heinrich Von Thünen (1966, Wikimedia 2004) was the first to describe the reasoning behind local residency decisions in the book entitled, “The Isolated State”:

In his theory of "The Isolated State", he started out from Adam Smith's idea of "economic man": that the farmer is expected to maximize his profit ("economic rent") from his farmland. Von Thünen, as a landlord, knew that such returns depend on an optimal use of the land surfaces and the transport costs. In concentrating on the effects of these two variables on profits, removal of other factors results in a homogeneous - and isolated - state.

Transport cost depends on the distance from the market and different kind of products. The gain from farming per unit area (locational rent) decreases with increasing distance from the market. The minimum price of a commodity is calculated by locational rent, transport costs and fixed production costs - the profit is then the difference between the costs and the fixed market price. Idealized pattern of agricultural land use zones in von Thünen's model. Locational rent, a term used by von Thünen in his argument, is to be

understood as the equivalent to land value. It corresponds to the maximum amount a farmer could pay for using the land, without making losses. It can be defined as the equation below:

$L = Y ((P - C) - DF)$  (such that) L: Locational rent, Y: Yield, P: Market price of the crop, C: Production cost of the crop, D: Distance from the market, and F: Transport cost.

...since locational rent falls with increasing distance from the market, the amount each farmer is willing to pay for agricultural land will shrink and the price of land will eventually decline. Von Thünen concluded that the cultivation of a crop is only worthwhile within certain distances from the city: beyond that, either the cost of the land becomes too high, with increasing distances transport costs also increase, or, if there is another product having greater yield or lower transport costs. After a distance from the market (the city) the production of a crop becomes unprofitable, either because its profits drop to zero or the profits earned by other crops are higher, as von Thünen calculated them for products having different intensities...: For each product there is a certain distance from the city where its production would be worthwhile. Locational rent is the highest possible amount one will pay for the use of the land for a certain cultivation, and is a relative indicator of competitiveness of it in the market.

**Weaknesses & Criticism:** The model was developed in an isolated state and did not take into consideration differences in sites (local physical conditions). It can be modified by relaxing some of the conditions set forth by Von Thunen: differential transportation costs... Like many other models in geography, von Thünen's model was criticized frequently due to its restrictive nature. The basic conditions of the model, however, could be approximated by slight modifications of the respective reality” (Wikimedia 2004).

Ultimately, the location of residence depended on the return from the trade of the head of household, conditional on the cost of transportation. Hypothetically, those enslaved, or once enslaved, received the lowest concurrent return from their trade and sought the best opportunity [and earliest opportunity] to enhance their returns. Among those that were not able to secure immediate, sustainable property and wealth, this likely required long distance travel and residence to more socially receptive, locally dense communities, away from the physically, psychologically and economic suppressive spatial areas. This produces the likelihood of group-specific expectations if groups had different mean professions and different ranges in professional opportunities. This analysis likely applies for slave state-free state residency decisions, regional residency decisions, and migration decisions described in the results.

Convergence to Equality Expectations. To measure economic inequality and compare differences in economic outcomes, I analyze differences in differences in mean wealth between blacks and whites, and property ownership between blacks and whites. The following ratios measure differences in wealth and differences in property ownership among two comparison groups to obtain comparative returns to classical characteristic choices. Foremost, the **comparative wealth ratio** is

[Equation 1.1] 
$$\frac{W_{XJT}}{W_{XJ'T}}$$

where  $W_{XJT}$  is the mean wealth of the members of group J who made investment X at time T.

The comparative wealth ratio ignores differences in wealth levels and measures the return to classical characteristic choices among groups. For instance, the ratio measures the schooling premium for blacks relative to the schooling premium for whites. If the ratio is less than one, then blacks with many years of schooling may have lower levels of wealth relative to whites with proportional years of schooling, and, thus, the returns to schooling among whites outpace the returns to schooling among blacks, in terms of wealth.

Similarly, the **comparative property ownership ratio** is

[Equation 1.2] 
$$\frac{\rho_{XJT}}{\rho_{XJ'T}}$$

where  $\rho_{XJT}$  is the percentage of the members of group J who own property and made investment X at time T.

The comparative property ownership ratio can be interpreted the same as the comparative wealth ratio. The comparative property ownership ratio measures the impact of classical characteristics on property ownership of group J to the impact of classical characteristics of property ownership of group J'. For instance, the ratio measures the schooling premium of blacks relative to the whites. If the ratio is less than one, then blacks with many years of schooling may own less property relative to whites with proportional years of property, and, thus, the returns to schooling among whites with many years of schooling outpace the returns to schooling among blacks with proportional years of schooling, in terms of property ownership.

Motivations for Multivariate Analysis. To observe of combined effect of laws, demography and economic geography of the economic outcomes of whites and blacks, I employed standard minimization of the sum of squared errors and conducted non-linear multivariate analysis on the



logarithmic total wealth of whites and blacks in 1860 and 1870. Previous papers provide theoretical motivation for econometric modeling choices, which are similar to this presentation. Logarithmic wealth is regressed against proxy variables for earnings and savings, proxy variables for initial wealth, and household formation variables. Including slave state-free state residency variables and regional residency variables could lead to multicollinearity, due to possible endogeneity. The directions of the predictions of estimated coefficients, which are statistically significant at a 95 percent level of significance, were summarized in the results section.

**RESULTS**

**The Mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century Age and Property Profiles of Whites and Free Blacks in the United States of America**

In 1850, Table 8ab-1 shows that between 35.8 – 67.1 percent of whites were real estate property holders across different age groups while only 14.3 - 28.0 percent of free blacks were real estate property holders across age groups.

**Table 8ab-1. Real Estate Property-Holding Patterns by Age Group and Race, 1850-1860**

Age Group	1850 Real Estate Holders							1860-1850 Difference
	Whites			Free Blacks			White-Free Black Difference	
	Actual	Theoretical	Difference	Actual	Theoretical	Difference		
20-29	0.358	0.358	-	0.163	0.163	-		
30-39	0.512	0.588	(0.076)	0.151	0.300	(0.149)	0.073	(0.009)
40-49	0.586	0.735	(0.149)	0.195	0.414	(0.218)	0.070	(0.046)
50-59	0.630	0.830	(0.200)	0.280	0.509	(0.229)	0.029	0.014
60-69	0.671	0.891	(0.220)	0.258	0.589	(0.332)	0.112	(0.044)
70-79	0.609	0.930	(0.321)	0.222	0.656	(0.434)	0.113	0.066
80-89	0.460	0.955	(0.495)	0.143	0.712	(0.570)	0.075	0.055

Age Group	1860 Real Estate Holders						
	Whites			Free Blacks			White-Free Black Difference
	Actual	Theoretical	Difference	Actual	Theoretical	Difference	
20-29	0.369	0.369	-	0.175	0.175	-	
30-39	0.531	0.602	(0.071)	0.185	0.319	(0.134)	0.064
40-49	0.632	0.749	(0.117)	0.297	0.438	(0.141)	0.024
50-59	0.696	0.842	(0.146)	0.347	0.536	(0.190)	0.044
60-69	0.725	0.900	(0.175)	0.375	0.617	(0.242)	0.068
70-79	0.681	0.937	(0.256)	0.250	0.684	(0.434)	0.179
80-89	0.684	0.960	(0.276)	0.333	0.739	(0.406)	0.130

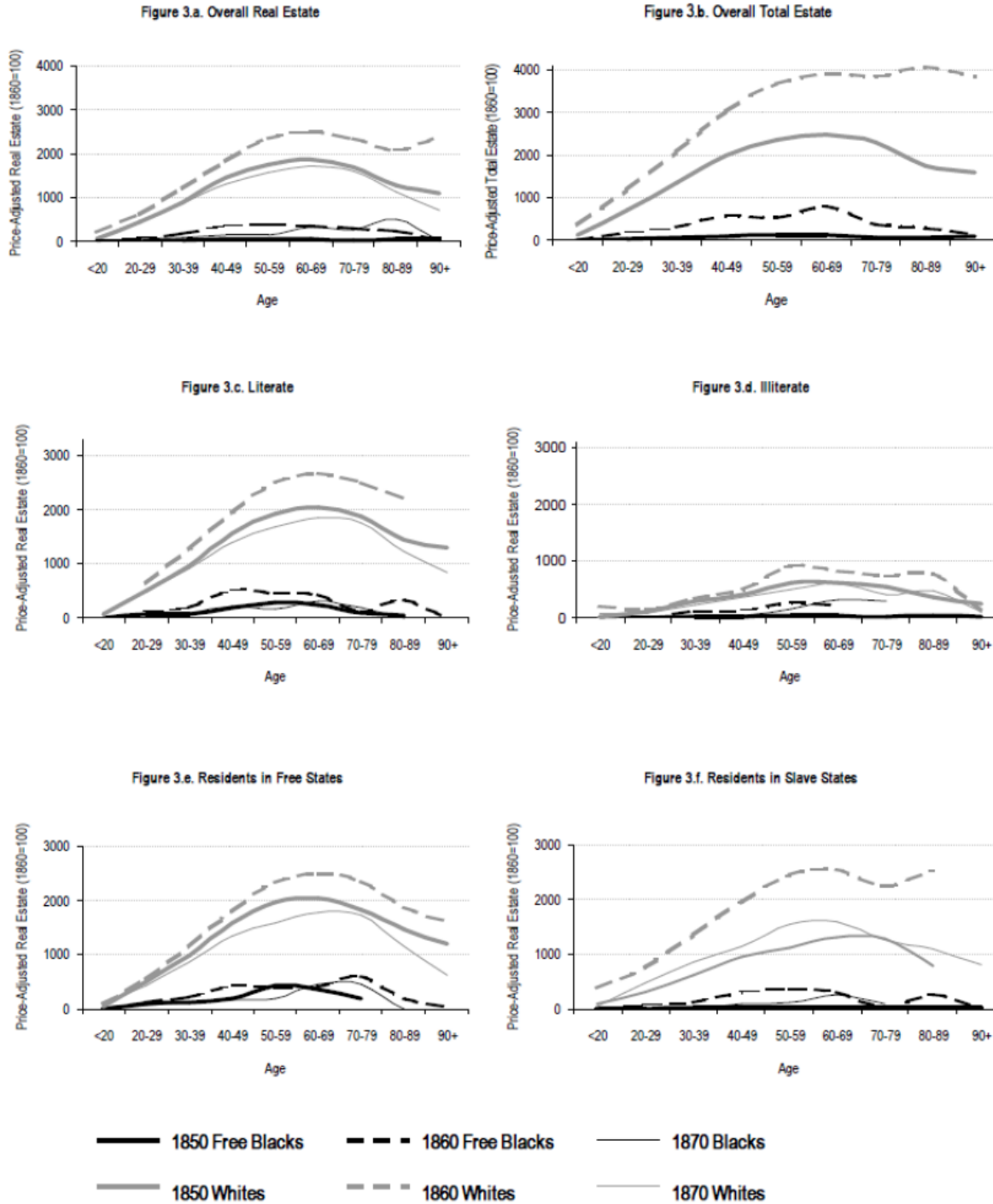
**Source:** Information collected, calculated and compiled by James Curtis Jr (2002); IPUMS

The proportion grew to 36.9 - 72.5 percent for whites and 17.5-37.5 percent for free blacks in 1860. Furthermore, when comparing actual to fixed proportions among free blacks and whites, the actual white proportion of property-holders across age groups was closer to the white fixed or theoretical proportions in 1850 and 1860. This suggests that the events which prevent holding property across age groups were relatively more fixed for whites than free blacks. Instead, enforcement of laws that reduced the rights of free blacks, such as the Fugitive Slave Act, had a direct impact on the capacity of the average free black to hold property, producing relatively more random patterns of holding property across all ages. When comparing white-free black differences in 1850 and 1860, Table 7a shows that white-free black differences fell for younger members of the age distribution but grew for the older members of the distribution.

### **The Mid-19<sup>th</sup> Century Age and Wealth Profiles of Whites and Blacks in the United States of America**

Figures 3a-f are plots of the age-wealth profiles by race, year and cross section. Figure 3b plots total wealth and shows the least amount of dissaving occurring among whites.

Figures 3a-f. Age-Wealth Profiles of Whites and Blacks, 1850 through 1870



Source: Information collected, calculated and compiled by James Curtis Jr (2002); IPUMS

However, when comparing to blacks and the real estate wealth of whites and blacks, dissaving is definite reality at older ages. Masson (1986), Mirer (1979) and Shorrocks (1975) found cross-sectional age-wealth profiles that were concave only when they did not control for factors such as cohort and mortality differences.

Furthermore, the difference between black and white age-wealth profiles is quite dramatic: The distance between black and white profiles tends to peak in the fifties. Finally, Figures 3c-f show that the dominant wealth possession of whites remained across time, education and region.

These profiles are preliminary evidence that making choices to improve education and social surrounding did not provide a clear wealth reward. The local definition of free black rights had diluted any attempts to make individual economic gains.

**The Mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century Savings of Whites and Free Blacks in the United States of America**

Table 8c shows that white households (3.6 percent) saved less real estate wealth, annually, than free black households (3.8 percent) in 1850.

**Table 8c-1. Wealth Accumulation Patterns by Age Group and Race, 1850-1860**

Age Group	1850 Real Estate Wealth				1860 Real Estate Wealth				1860 Total Wealth			
	Whites		Free Blacks		Whites		Free Blacks		Whites		Free Blacks	
	Average	Change	Average	Change	Average	Change	Average	Change	Average	Change	Average	Change
20-29	515		49		726		90		1,476		169	
30-39	1,043	528	79	30	1,480	754	146	56	2,619	1,144	275	105
40-49	1,792	750	134	55	2,519	1,039	312	166	4,430	1,811	449	175
50-59	2,273	480	370	236	3,417	897	416	104	5,625	1,194	581	132
60-69	2,675	402	336	(34)	3,432	15	342	(74)	5,475	(150)	1,165	583
70-79	2,403	(272)	1,021	685	3,600	168	158	(184)	6,178	704	236	(929)
80-89	3,228	825	498	(523)	3,718	118	360	203	6,612	434	392	156
20-69 Average		540		72		676		63		1,000		249
Overall Average		1,486		189		2,050		286		3,556		501
Savings Rate		3.6%		3.8%		3.3%		2.2%		2.8%		5.0%

**Source:** Information collected, calculated and compiled by James Curtis Jr (2002); IPUMS

But by 1860, free black households (2.2 percent) saved less real estate wealth than white households (3.3 percent). This result is picking up the economic push effects of enhanced enforcement of controversial fugitive slave laws. But, in terms of total wealth, free black

households (5.0 percent) were saving more than whites in 1860 (2.8). This is both attributed to the low level of wealth in free blacks started from and possibly the desire for descendants to have an enriched economic experience.

**The Mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century Schooling and Wealth of Whites and Blacks in the United States of America**

Jacob Mincer (1974) described a direct relationship between schooling and earnings. When comparing the real estate wealth of literate and illiterate free blacks, literate free blacks outperformed illiterate free blacks. These results held when comparing differences in other and total forms of wealth among literate and illiterate free blacks. Table 8a-2 shows that literate free blacks possessed \$520 in nominal total wealth in 1860 prior to emancipation.

**Table 8a-2. Mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century Schooling and Mean Wealth of Whites and Blacks**

	Overall			Free Blacks			All Blacks			Whites		
Literate	1850	1860	1870	1850	1860	1870	1850	1860	1870	1850	1860	1870
Real Estate Wealth	1,030	1,568	1,872	133	316	206	1,042	1,597	1,953			
Other Wealth		1,001	753		204	98		1,019	785			
Total Wealth		2,569	2,625		520	304		2,616	2,737			
<u>Price-Adjusted (1860=100)</u>												
Real Estate Wealth	1,142	1,616	1,265	149	325	135	1,155	1,646	1,320			
Other Wealth		1,062	504		209	64		1,081	525			
Total Wealth		2,678	1,769		534	199		2,727	1,845			
Sample	31,393	47,808	62,284	406	992	2,761	30,987	46,745	59,401			
Illiterate	1850	1860	1870	1850	1860	1870	1850	1860	1870	1850	1860	1870
Real Estate Wealth	263	412	212	93	151	31	282	458	586			
Other Wealth		295	105		121	41		324	236			
Total Wealth		708	317		273	72		782	823			
<u>Price-Adjusted (1860=100)</u>												
Real Estate Wealth	296	436	143	105	160	20	317	483	398			
Other Wealth		320	70		133	26		352	159			
Total Wealth		756	213		293	46		836	556			
Sample	3,709	5,251	24,073	365	710	16,175	3,344	4,497	7,855			

**Source:** Information collected, calculated and compiled by James Curtis Jr (2002); IPUMS

This was higher than the \$273 possessed by illiterate free blacks. Note that literate free blacks were equally likely as illiterate free blacks to hold real estate or other forms of property. However, literate blacks had 19.9 percent (520/2616) of literate white total wealth while illiterate free blacks had 34.9 percent (273/782) of illiterate white wealth in 1860. These results may imply that the penalty for illiteracy was so severe that the wealth of illiterate whites was relatively closer to wealth of illiterate free blacks than wealth among literate free blacks and whites. This is accredited to a nineteenth century racial asymmetrical skill-bias in favor literate whites: Free blacks and whites were proportionately penalized but not proportionately rewarded for education. Furthermore, when we ignore differences in wealth levels among free blacks and whites, literacy did not provide free blacks an advantage relative to whites.

Overall, investing time and resources in education does not guarantee economic equality if factors such as initial resources vastly differ. These results also imply that illiteracy penalized free blacks in manner similar to whites more than literacy benefited free blacks relative to whites. This analysis directly links the asymmetrical enforcement of federal statutes by states, which affect the rights of free blacks, to asymmetrical wealth returns to the optimal wealth generating characteristics, such as literacy.

*The Mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century Schooling and Real Estate of Blacks: A Comparison of Black Americans over Time*

Real estate wealth differences favored literate blacks before and after emancipation. Table 8a-2 shows that literate free blacks possessed nominal real estate wealth amounts of \$133 in 1850 and \$316 in 1860. This was higher than the \$93 possessed by illiterate free blacks in 1850 and \$151 possessed by illiterate free blacks in 1860. Table 8a also shows that the literate-illiterate ratio of average real estate wealth among free blacks grew from 1.3 in 1850 and 2.0 in 1860. This may be preliminary evidence of a growing penalty for illiteracy. Literate free blacks were also more likely to hold real estate property than illiterate free blacks even then proportion of literate free black property holders remained constant. Table 8b-2 shows that 20 percent of literate free blacks in 1850 and 25 percent of literate free blacks in 1860 owned positive amounts of real estate wealth.

**Table 8b-2. Mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century Schooling and Mean Property Ownership of Whites and Blacks**

	Overall			Free Blacks			All Blacks			Whites		
	1850	1860	1870	1850	1860	1870	1850	1860	1870	1850	1860	1870
<b>Literate</b>												
Real Property Holders	0.54	0.56	0.54	0.20	0.25	0.15	0.54	0.57	0.56			
Other Property Holders		0.81	0.70		0.54	0.28		0.81	0.72			
Real or Other Property Holders		0.84	0.75		0.58	0.32		0.84	0.77			
Sample	31,393	47,808	62,284	406	992	2,761	30,987	46,745	59,401			
<b>Illiterate</b>												
Real Property Holders	0.36	0.36	0.17	0.18	0.23	0.05	0.38	0.39	0.41			
Other Property Holders		0.72	0.31		0.56	0.20		0.75	0.55			
Real or Other Property Holders		0.75	0.35		0.60	0.22		0.77	0.62			
Sample	3,709	5,251	24,073	365	710	16,175	3,344	4,497	7,855			

**Source:** Information collected, calculated and compiled by James Curtis Jr (2002); IPUMS

This was greater than the 18 percent of illiterate free blacks in 1850 and 23 percent of illiterate free blacks in 1860 that possessed positive amounts of real estate wealth. Table 8c shows that the ratio of literate free black real estate holders (per hundred literate free blacks) to the number of illiterate free black real estate holders (per hundred illiterate free blacks) remained constant at 1.1 in 1850 and 1860.

By 1870, the return to literacy among blacks grew dramatically. Table 8c-2 shows that the ratio of literate to illiterate average real estate wealth for all blacks—which includes ex-slaves who held little or no real estate property—grew to 6.8.

**Table 8c-2. Mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century Comparative Wealth Ratios and Comparative Property Ownership Ratios of Whites and Blacks, Based on Schooling**

	All Blacks			Whites			Black-White Ratio		
	1850	1860	1870	1850	1860	1870	1850	1860	1870
<u>i) Literate/Illiterate Mean Wealth Ratio</u>									
Real Estate	1.4	2.0	6.8	3.6	3.4	3.3	0.4	0.6	2.0
Other		1.6	2.4		3.1	3.3		0.5	0.7
Total		1.8	4.3		3.3	3.3		0.6	1.3
<u>ii) Literate/Illiterate Mean Property-Holding Ratio</u>									
Real Estate	1.1	1.1	2.7	1.4	1.5	1.4	0.8	0.7	2.0
Other		1.0	1.4		1.1	1.3		0.9	1.1
Total		1.0	1.5		1.1	1.3		0.9	1.2

**Source:** Information collected, calculated and compiled by James Curtis Jr (2002); IPUMS

This implies that, on average, literate ex-slaves possessed seven dollars for every dollar of real estate wealth owned by an illiterate ex-slave. Yet the relative sample sizes suggest that approximately one in seven (2761/18936) blacks were able to take advantage of the large literacy premium in 1870. Slave owner discouragement of educating slaves caused illiterate ex-slaves to be severely handicapped in the wealth accumulation process.

Similarly, Table 8c-2 shows that the ratio of literate black real estate holders (per hundred literate blacks) to illiterate blacks real estate property holders (per hundred illiterate blacks) was 2.7—for every illiterate black real estate holder (per hundred illiterate blacks), there were three literate black real estate holders (per hundred literate blacks).

*The Mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century Schooling and Real Estate: A Comparison of White and Black Americans over Time*

When comparing average real estate wealth of free blacks to the average real estate wealth of whites by literacy before emancipation, illiterate white wealth was closer to illiterate free black wealth than literate black wealth to literate white wealth. Using wealth means in Table 8a-2, literate free blacks had 12.8 percent (133/1042) of the average real estate wealth among literate whites in 1850 and grew to 19.8 percent (316/1597) of the average real estate wealth among literate whites in 1860. But illiterate free blacks had 33.0 percent (93/282) of the average real estate wealth among illiterate whites in 1850 and 1860 (151/458). The penalty for illiteracy in the



nineteenth century caused illiterate whites and blacks to have a relatively closer economic experience than literates. This is quite similar to a skill-biased economy that rewards college education and penalizes high school drop-outs discussed in the 1980's by Juhn, Murphy and Pierce (1991) but with a caveat: the nineteenth century skill bias was racially asymmetrical in favor of whites.

The relatively closer economic experience of free black and white illiterates was observed when analyzing the proportion of free black real estate holders relative to white real estate holders. The ratio of literate free black real estate holders (per hundred literate free blacks) to literate white real estate holders (per hundred literate whites) was approximately 1:3 (0.20 : 0.54) in 1850 and 2:5 (0.25 : 0.57) in 1860. Among illiterates, the ratio rose to approximately 1:2 (0.18 : 0.38) in 1850 and 6:10 (0.23 : 0.39) in 1860.

By 1870, the ratio of black to white average real estate wealth and property holders fell significantly with the inclusion of ex-slaves in the sample but a distinct literacy advantage emerged. Using wealth means from Table 8a-2, 1870 literate blacks held 10.5 percent (206/1953) of the real estate wealth of literate whites while illiterate blacks held 5.3 percent (31/586) of the real estate wealth of illiterate whites. Similarly, using the percentage of property holders in Table 8b-2, the ratio of literate black real estate property holders (per hundred literate blacks) to literate white property holders (per hundred literate whites) was approximately 1:4 (0.15 : 0.56). Among illiterates, the ratio was approximately 1:8 (0.05 : 0.41) in 1870. A relative racially symmetrical literacy advantage was after emancipation even though literate blacks still possessed real estate wealth that was significantly below literate whites.

Using the *comparative wealth ratio* for real estate wealth, we can ignore the absolute differences in black and white real estate wealth and ascertain the literacy advantages in the presence of wealth constraints. Since the ratio in Table 8c was less than one in 1850 (0.4) and 1860 (0.6), whites obtained higher return to literacy than free blacks. In 1870, the ratio in Table 8c-2 grew to 2.0 which implies that blacks receive a higher return literacy in the presence wealth constraints than whites. This may suggest that (i) higher skilled occupations that pay higher wages and (ii) higher yield investment opportunities that are normally available to more educated individuals were not made available to blacks until their rights were more fully enforced, such as those provided by federal government after 1865.

Similar results were obtained using the *comparative property ownership ratio* for real estate property in Table 8c-2. Since the statistic was below one in 1850 (0.8) and 1860 (0.7), whites obtained higher return to literacy than free blacks. The statistic grew to 2.0 in 1870, again,

suggesting a dramatic growth in the literacy premium for blacks once individual rights were protected under the force of law.

*The Mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century Schooling and Other Wealth of Blacks: A Comparison of Black Americans over Time*

Literate blacks also had nominal advantages but relative disadvantages in terms of other measures of wealth before and after emancipation. Table 8a-2 shows that literate free blacks possessed \$204 in nominal other wealth in 1860 prior to emancipation. This was higher than the \$121 possessed by illiterate free blacks. Thus, free blacks in free states possessed 160 percent of other forms of wealth owned by illiterate free blacks. However, literate free blacks were approximately equally as likely as illiterate free blacks to hold other forms of property. Table 8b-2 shows that 54 percent of literate free blacks that possessed positive amounts of other wealth in 1860. This was only slightly lower than the 56 percent of illiterate free blacks that possessed positive amounts of other wealth in 1860.

The combinations of these results suggests illiterate free blacks per hundred are equally as likely to hold other forms property but the literate free blacks use their enhanced knowledge to grow the value of their property larger than the value of illiterate property. By 1870, the return to literacy grew dramatically. Table 8c-2 shows that the ratio of literate to illiterate other forms of wealth for all blacks—which includes ex-slaves who held little or no real estate property—grew to 2.4. This implies that literate ex-slaves possessed two dollars for every dollar of wealth owned by an illiterate ex-slave. Similarly, Table 8c shows that the ratio of literate black property holders (per hundred literate blacks) to illiterate property holders (per hundred illiterate blacks) was 1.4.

*The Mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century Schooling and Real Estate: A Comparison of White and Black Americans over Time*

The closer economic experiences of illiterate blacks and whites persisted when comparing other wealth of blacks to the other wealth of whites before and after emancipation. Using wealth means in Table 8a-2, literate blacks had 20.0 percent (204/1019) of literate white other wealth in 1860 and 12.5 percent (98/785) of literate white wealth in 1870. However, illiterate free blacks had 37.3 percent (121/324) of illiterate white wealth in 1860 and 17.6 percent (41/236) of illiterate white wealth in 1870.

These results confirm a penalty for illiteracy was so severe that the other forms of wealth of illiterate whites was relatively closer to wealth of illiterate blacks than blacks and whites who

could read and write. This may also explain the closer experience of illiterate property holders when analyzing the proportion of blacks holding other forms of property relative to whites holding other forms of property. The ratio of literate blacks (per hundred literate blacks) to literate whites (per hundred literate whites) with other forms of property was approximately 2:3 (0.54 : 0.81) in 1860 and 1:3 (0.28 : 0.72) and 1870. Among illiterates the ratio rose to approximately 3:4 (0.56 : 0.75) in 1860 and 1:3 (0.20 : 0.55) in 1870.

Using the *comparative wealth ratio* for other forms of wealth, we can ignore the absolute differences in black and white wealth and ascertain the literacy advantages in the presence of wealth constraints. Since the ratio in Table 8c-2 was less than one in 1860 (0.5) and 1870 (0.7), whites obtained higher returns to literacy than blacks. Similar results were obtained using the *comparative property ownership ratio* for other forms of property. Since the ratio reported in Table 8c-2 was less than one in 1860 (0.9) and approximately equal to one in 1870 (1.1), whites obtained higher or equal returns to literacy than blacks before and after emancipation.

*The Mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century Schooling and Total Wealth of Blacks: A Comparison of Black Americans over Time*

When summing up real estate and other forms of wealth, empirical results show that literate blacks were better off before and after emancipation. Table 8a-2 shows that literate free blacks possessed \$520 in nominal total wealth in 1860 prior to emancipation. This was higher than the \$273 possessed by illiterate free blacks. However, literate free blacks were equally likely as illiterate free blacks to hold real estate or other forms of property. Table 8b-2 shows that 58 percent of literate free blacks that possessed positive amounts of total wealth in 1860. This was only slightly lower than the 60 percent of illiterate free blacks that possessed positive amounts of total wealth in 1860. The combination of these results suggests illiterate free blacks are about equally as likely to hold property but the literate free blacks use their knowledge to grow the value of their property larger than illiterate property. By 1870, the return to literacy grew dramatically. Table 8c-2 shows that the ratio of literate to illiterate real estate wealth for all blacks—which includes ex-slaves who held little or no real estate property—grew to 4.3. This implies that literate ex-slaves possessed four dollars for every dollar of total wealth owned by an illiterate ex-slave. Similarly, Table 8c-2 shows that the ratio of literate black total property holders (per hundred literate blacks) to illiterate black total property holders (per hundred illiterate blacks) was 1.5—for every literate free black real estate holder, there were two illiterate free black real estate holders.

*The Mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century Schooling and Total Wealth: A Comparison of White and Black Americans over Time*

The closer economic experiences of illiterate blacks and whites persisted even when comparing total wealth of blacks to the total wealth of whites before, but reversed after emancipation. Using wealth means in Table 8a-2, literate blacks had 19.9 percent (520/2616) of literate white total wealth while illiterate free blacks had 34.9 percent (273/782) of illiterate white wealth in 1860. By 1870, things had reversed such that literate free blacks had 11.1 percent (304/2737) of literate white wealth while illiterate free blacks had 8.7 percent (72/832) of illiterate white wealth. These results may imply that the penalty for illiteracy was so severe that the wealth of illiterate whites was relatively closer to wealth of illiterate blacks than blacks and whites who could read and write before emancipation, but legal enforcement of rights improved the returns to literacy after emancipation.

Similarly, this illiteracy penalty was observed when analyzing the proportion of blacks holding property relative to whites. The ratio of literate blacks (per hundred literate blacks) to literate whites (per hundred literate whites) with property was approximately 2:3 (0.58 : 0.84) the ratio rose to approximately 3:4 (0.60 : 0.77) among illiterates in 1860. By 1870, the literate ratio of 2:5 (0.32 : 0.77) exceeded the illiterate ratio of 1:3 (0.22 : 0.62) in 1870.

Using the *comparative wealth ratio* for other forms of wealth, we can ignore the absolute differences in black and white wealth and ascertain the literacy advantages in the presence of wealth constraints. Since the ratio in Table 8c-2 was less than one in 1860 (0.6) and 1870 (1.3), whites obtained higher returns to literacy than free blacks before emancipation and literate ex-slave obtained a higher return to literacy than ex-slaves. Again, the penalty for illiteracy was so severe that the wealth of illiterate whites was relatively closer to wealth of illiterate blacks than blacks and whites who could read and write before emancipation, but legal enforcement rights improved the returns to literacy after emancipation. Similar results were obtained using the *comparative property ownership ratio* for other forms of property. Since the ratio reported in Table 8c-2 was less than one in 1860 (0.9) and greater than one in 1870 (1.2), whites obtained higher returns to literacy than blacks before emancipation and reversed after emancipation.

Once the equal enforcement of laws began to converge more rapidly, with the mass emancipation of Southern slaves, some blacks, with schooling advantages, observed returns to schooling, in the black community, that were greater than the returns to schooling of whites, with schooling advantages in the white community. This schooling premium advantage observed after the emancipation of slaves was, in part, due to combining blacks with longer histories of

emancipation, and with maximum free market experiences, and the plurality of blacks with shorter histories of emancipation, and with minimum free market experiences. This uncompensated change in social standing may be preliminary evidence of the sources of greater inequality and skewed media documentations of social unrest observed among disenfranchised groups throughout history.

### **The Mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century Skill and Wealth of Whites and Blacks in the United States of America**

Table 9a shows that white-collar free black possessed nominal total wealth amounts of \$2,278 in 1860--largest among any skill category.

**Table 9a. Mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century Skill and Mean Wealth of Whites and Blacks**

Type of Wealth	1850				1860				1870			
	Unskilled	Skilled	W. Collar	Farmers	Unskilled	Skilled	W. Collar	Farmers	Unskilled	Skilled	W. Collar	Farmers
<b>BLACKS</b>												
Real Estate	57	137		725	85	360	1,091	1,015	29	133	1,236	102
Other					79	106	1,187	1,025	25	57	632	128
Total					164	467	2,278	2,040	54	190	1,868	230
<u>Adjusted for Regional Prices</u>												
Real Estate	63	155		802	89	377	1,074	1,042	19	86	795	67
Other					83	115	1,192	1,054	16	37	409	81
Total					172	492	2,266	2,096	35	122	1,204	148
Sample Size	315	100	14	83	917	276	33	191	13489	1211	173	3547
<b>WHITES</b>												
Real Estate	174	583	3,020	1,704	268	857	3,736	2,768	871	1,152	5,150	3,022
Other					196	455	3,451	1,888	381	490	3,590	1,014
Total					464	1,313	7,187	4,656	1,252	1,642	8,740	4,035
<u>Adjusted for Regional Prices</u>												
Real Estate	191	644	3,357	1,900	275	875	3,853	2,893	582	771	3,451	2,053
Other					207	473	3,643	2,051	252	326	2,383	681
Total					481	1,348	7,496	4,944	834	1,097	5,834	2,734
Sample Size	3,534	7,497	2,936	16,468	7,717	11,928	5,517	22,301	15,932	15,184	8,137	26,886
<b>BLACK TO WHITE RATIO</b>												
Real Estate	0.33	0.24		0.43	0.32	0.42	0.29	0.37	0.03	0.12	0.24	0.03
Other					0.40	0.23	0.34	0.54	0.07	0.12	0.18	0.13
Total					0.35	0.36	0.32	0.44	0.04	0.12	0.21	0.06

**Source:** Information collected, calculated and compiled by James Curtis Jr (2002); IPUMS

Using the 1860 wealth ratios in Tables 9a, total wealth among white-collar free blacks was approximately the same as the total wealth of free black farmers (or \$2,040) in 1860. But skilled blacks had twenty percent (or \$467) and unskilled free blacks only had ten percent (or \$164) of the total wealth held by free black farmers in 1860.

Tables 9a through 9c show that the relative total wealth advantage of white-collar free blacks was also observed using real estate and other forms of wealth for measuring differences among occupational skill groups within the free black community in 1860. However, free black farmers held a higher proportion of white wealth and property than free blacks in any other occupations.

When ignoring differences in levels, free blacks earned a higher premium to farming than whites. Overall, the agricultural economy forced free black farmers to own some amount of wealth and property that ultimately exceeded the average wealth of most other professions except white-collar workers. But, since farming land was in rural areas, more free blacks could not realize these economic benefits due to *social isolation* and vigorous enforcement of fugitive slave laws that often occurred in these areas<sup>21</sup>. <sup>21</sup> See note 11. See Appendix G for complete analysis.

*The Mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century Skill and Wealth of Blacks: A Comparison among Black Americans over Time*

Wealth differences favored white-collar blacks before and after emancipation. Table 9a shows that white-collar free black possessed nominal total wealth amounts of \$2,278 in 1860--largest among any skill category. Using the 1860 wealth ratios in Table 9a, total estate wealth among white-collar free blacks was approximately the same as the real estate wealth of free black farmers (\$2,040) in 1860 while skilled blacks had twenty percent (\$467) and unskilled free blacks only had ten percent (\$164) of the total wealth held by free black farmers in 1860. Tables 9a through 9c shows that the relative total wealth advantage of white-collar free blacks was also observed using real estate and other forms of wealth for measuring differences among occupational skill groups within the free black community in 1860.

As might be expected, however, Table 9b shows that free black farmers held more real estate property than free blacks in other occupational skill groups in 1860.

**Table 9b. Mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century Skill and Mean Property Ownership of Whites and Blacks**

Type of Property	1850				1860				1870			
	Unskilled	Skilled	W. Collar	Farmers	Unskilled	Skilled	W. Collar	Farmers	Unskilled	Skilled	W. Collar	Farmers
<b>BLACKS</b>												
Real Estate	0.14	0.25		0.54	0.17	0.28	0.27	0.60	0.04	0.16	0.29	0.14
Other					0.53	0.57	0.70	0.89	0.14	0.23	0.45	0.48
Real Estate or Other					0.55	0.62	0.73	0.91	0.16	0.31	0.51	0.51
Sample Size	315	100	14	83	917	276	33	191	13489	1211	173	3547
<b>WHITES</b>												
Real Estate	0.19	0.40	0.50	0.71	0.24	0.40	0.55	0.78	0.33	0.40	0.54	0.76
Other					0.64	0.74	0.84	0.94	0.48	0.60	0.78	0.89
Real Estate or Other					0.68	0.77	0.87	0.96	0.56	0.67	0.82	0.92
Sample Size	3,534	7,497	2,936	16,468	7,717	11,928	5,517	22,301	15,932	15,184	8,137	26,886
<b>BLACK TO WHITE RATIO</b>												
Real Estate	0.76	0.63		0.76	0.71	0.71	0.50	0.77	0.11	0.41	0.53	0.18
Other					0.82	0.78	0.83	0.95	0.29	0.39	0.57	0.54
Real Estate or Other					0.82	0.80	0.84	0.95	0.28	0.46	0.63	0.55

**Source:** Information collected, calculated and compiled by James Curtis Jr (2002); IPUMS

Table 9b shows that unskilled free blacks held approximately 30 percent of real estate property held by free black farmers (per hundred free black framers and unskilled workers). Skilled and white-collar workers held 50 percent of the real estate property held by free black farmers (per hundred free blacks framers, skilled workers and white-collar workers). Table 9b shows that the relative real estate wealth advantage of free black farmers was also observed using other forms of wealth and total wealth for measuring differences among occupational skill groups within the free black community in 1860.

By 1870, white-collar free blacks made significant advances relative other free blacks with other occupational skills. Table 8f shows that white-collar free black possessed nominal real estate wealth amounts of \$1236 in 1870--largest among any skill category. Using the 1870 wealth ratios in Table 9c, real estate wealth among white-collar free blacks was significantly greater than the real estate wealth of free black farmers (\$102) in 1870. Additionally, skilled blacks held 130 percent (\$133) while unskilled free blacks only had thirty percent (\$29) of the real estate wealth held by free black farmers in 1860. Table 9c shows that the relative real estate wealth



advantage of white-collar blacks was also observed using other forms of wealth and total wealth for measuring differences among occupational skill groups within the ex-slave community in 1870.

Similarly, white-collar blacks often held more real estate property than blacks in other occupational skill groups in 1870. Table 9c shows that the ratio of unskilled blacks to black farmers who held real estate property was 0.3 (per hundred black farmers and unskilled workers).

**Table 9c. Mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century Comparative Wealth Ratios and Comparative Property Ownership Ratios of Whites and Blacks, Based on Skill**

	All Blacks			Whites			Black-White Ratio		
	1850	1860	1870	1850	1860	1870	1850	1860	1870
<u>i) Unskilled/Farmer Mean Wealth Ratio</u>									
Real Estate	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.8	0.9	1.0
Other		0.1	0.2		0.1	0.4		0.8	0.5
Total		0.1	0.2		0.1	0.3		0.8	0.8
<u>ii) Skilled/Farmer Mean Wealth Ratio</u>									
Real Estate	0.2	0.4	1.3	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.6	1.2	3.4
Other		0.1	0.5		0.2	0.5		0.5	0.9
Total		0.2	0.8		0.3	0.4		0.9	2.1
<u>iii) White-Collar/Farmer Mean Wealth Ratio</u>									
Real Estate		1.0	11.9	1.8	1.3	1.7		0.8	7.1
Other		1.1	5.0		1.8	3.5		0.6	1.4
Total		1.1	8.1		1.5	2.1		0.7	3.8
<u>iv) Unskilled/Farmer Mean Property -Holding Ratio</u>									
Real Estate	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4	1.0	0.9	0.6
Other		0.6	0.3		0.7	0.5		0.9	0.5
Total		0.6	0.3		0.7	0.6		0.9	0.5
<u>v) Skilled/Farmer Mean Property -Holding Ratio</u>									
Real Estate	0.5	0.5	1.2	0.6	0.5	0.5	0.8	0.9	2.2
Other		0.6	0.5		0.8	0.7		0.8	0.7
Total		0.7	0.6		0.8	0.7		0.8	0.8
<u>vi) White-Collar/Farmer Mean Property -Holding Ratio</u>									
Real Estate		0.5	2.1	0.7	0.7	0.7		0.7	2.9
Other		0.8	0.9		0.9	0.9		0.9	1.1
Total		0.8	1.0		0.9	0.9		0.9	1.1

**Source:** Information collected, calculated and compiled by James Curtis Jr (2002); IPUMS

However, the ratio of skilled blacks to black farmers who held real estate property was 1.2 (per hundred blacks farmers and skilled workers), and the ratio of white-collar blacks to black farmers who held real estate property was 2.1 (per hundred blacks farmers and white-collar workers). Table 9c shows that the relative real estate wealth advantage of free black farmers was also diluted to approximately that of black farmers using other forms of wealth and total wealth for measuring differences among occupational skill groups within the black community in 1870.

*The Mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century Skill and Wealth: A Comparison of White and Black Americans over Time*

A black farmer premium was observed when comparing average wealth of free blacks to average wealth of whites by occupational skill before emancipation. Using wealth means in Table 9a, free black farmers had 37 percent of the average white farmer real estate wealth, 54 percent of the average white farmer other wealth, and 44 percent of the average white farmer total wealth in 1860—approximately equal or higher proportions than any other free black occupation. The free black farmer advantage relative to white farmers was observed when analyzing other and total measures of wealth.

The free black farmer premium was even clearer when observing the ratio of free black to white property holders by occupational skill. The ratio of free black farmer property holders (per hundred free black farmers) to white farmer property holders (per hundred white farmers) was 0.77 for real estate wealth holders, and 0.95 for other and total wealth holders in 1860. Even though white-collar free blacks had nominal advantages it was diminished when comparing their wealth to whites, possibly due to the lack of opportunity to serve white clients and limits to serve lower income free blacks, causing a reduced wealth potential of white-collar free blacks relative to white-collar whites.

By 1870, black white-collar workers had a wealth advantage when observing the ratio of black to white average real estate wealth and property holders. Using wealth means from Table 9a, 1870 white-collar blacks held 24 percent of the real estate wealth, 18 percent of other wealth and 21 percent of total wealth held by white-collar whites. This was larger than the black proportion of white wealth held by unskilled workers, skilled workers and farmers.

Similarly, using the percentage of property holders in Table 9b, the ratio of white-collar black property holders (per hundred white-collar blacks) to white-collar white property holders (per hundred white-collar whites) was 0.53 for real estate property holders, and 0.57 for other property holders and 0.63 for total property holders in 1860.

Using the *comparative wealth ratio* for real estate wealth, we can ignore the absolute differences in black and white real estate wealth and ascertain the occupational skill advantages in the presence of wealth constraints. In 1860, since the ratio in Table 9c was less than one when comparing unskilled, skilled and white and white-collar workers to farmers, for all measures of wealth, whites had a higher return to unskilled, skilled and white-collar occupations relative to farming than blacks. By 1870, since the ratio was near equal or greater than one for all measures of wealth, black skilled and white-collar workers had a higher to farming than whites.

Similar results were obtained using the *comparative property ownership ratio* for real estate property in Table 9b. In 1860, since the ratio was less than one when comparing unskilled, skilled and white-collar workers to farmers, for all measures of property holding, whites had a higher return to these occupations relative to farming than blacks. By 1870, since the ratio was greater than one for all measures of wealth, black white-collar workers had a higher to farming than whites.

As the mode of production in the United States of America evolved away from overt slavery, the question many economists still seek an answer to is: how to grow the economy, in a manner that stabilizes sovereignty and seemingly comparative advantage in social standards, for the maximum amount of time, with minimum exploitation of labor. The answer is hypothetically in the technology sector, although I speculate that the questionable security of complex, minimally-investigated, modern technology, with language comprehension restricted to a sub-set of skilled programmers, has bolstered 21<sup>st</sup> century investments in security labor among firms, governments and citizenry.

### **The Mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century Economic Geography of Whites and Blacks in the United States of America**

Johann Heinrich Von Thünen (1966, Wikimedia 2004) was the first to describe the reasoning behind local residency decisions in the book entitled, "The Isolated State". Ultimately, the location of residence depended on the return from the trade of the head of household, conditional on the cost of transportation. Hypothetically, those enslaved, or once enslaved, received the lowest concurrent return from their trade and sought the best opportunity [and earliest opportunity] to enhance their returns. Among those that were not able to secure immediate, sustainable property and wealth, this likely required long distance travel and residence to more socially receptive, locally dense communities, away from the physically, psychologically and economic suppressive spatial areas. This produces the likelihood of group-specific expectations if groups had different mean professions and different ranges in professional opportunities. This

analysis likely applies for slave state-free state residency decisions, regional residency decisions, and migration decisions described below.

***The Mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century State Slavery Laws and Wealth of Whites and Blacks in the United States of America***

Free blacks in free states had nominal real estate wealth and property advantages relative to free blacks in slave states. Table 10a shows that free blacks, living in slave states, possessed \$380 in nominal total wealth in 1860 prior to emancipation.

**Table 10a. Mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century State Slave Laws and Mean Wealth of Whites and Blacks**

	Overall			Free Blacks			Whites		
	1850	1860	1870	1850	1860	1870	1850	1860	1870
<b>Slave States</b>									
Real Estate Wealth	839	1,373	651	83	189	33	870	1,456	1,282
Other Wealth		1,784	317		191	42		1,895	598
Total Wealth		3,157	967		380	75		3,351	1,880
<u>Price-Adjusted (1860=100)</u>									
Real Estate Wealth	973	1,545	406	95	206	20	1,010	1,639	800
Other Wealth		2,011	198		205	26		2,137	374
Total Wealth		3,556	604		411	47		3,776	1,173
Sample	10,174	13,732	33,991	408	893	17,188	9,766	12,834	16,798
<b>Free States</b>									
Real Estate Wealth	994	1,482	1,902	150	312	288	1,007	1,511	1,963
Other Wealth		633	738		146	121		645	761
Total Wealth		2,115	2,640		458	408		2,156	2,725
<u>Price-Adjusted (1860=100)</u>									
Real Estate Wealth	1,085	1,483	1,307	165	313	197	1,099	1,512	1,349
Other Wealth		631	503		146	83		643	519
Total Wealth		2,114	1,810		458	280		2,155	1,868
Sample	24,928	39,327	52,366	363	809	1,748	24,565	38,408	50,458

**Source:** Information collected, calculated and compiled by James Curtis Jr (2002); IPUMS

This was lower than the \$458 possessed by free black in free states. Using wealth means in Table 10a, free blacks in slave states had 11.3 percent (380/3351) of white total wealth in slave states in 1860 while free blacks had 21.2 percent (458/2156) of white total wealth in free states. Even when ignoring differences in total wealth levels among blacks and whites, blacks earned a higher

premium for living in free states than whites. Note that free blacks in Louisiana, which engaged in philanthropic slave-owning activities in order to by free slaves, caused other measures of average wealth in slave states to exceed average other wealth in free states in 1860.

Overall, these results confirm that reduced legal barriers, greater social receptiveness and enhanced economic opportunities contributed to the wealth advantages of free blacks in free states.

*The Mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century State Slave Laws and Real Estate Wealth in the United States of America: A Comparison among Black Americans over Time*

First consider real estate wealth differences of blacks living in free states versus blacks living in slave states before and after emancipation. Table 8b shows that free blacks living in slave states possessed nominal real estate wealth amounts of \$83 in 1850 and \$189 in 1860. This was substantially lower than the \$150 (1850) and \$312 (1860) possessed by free blacks in free states. Additionally, the ratio of free state-slave state wealth among free blacks did not change much prior to emancipation: Table 10b also shows that the free state-slave state ratio of average real estate wealth among free blacks remained relatively constant at 1.7 in 1850 and 1.5 in 1860. When adjusted for regional prices, the differences here are not significant. Free blacks in slave states held \$95 and \$206 in 1850 and 1860, respectively, while free blacks in free states held \$165 and \$313 in price-adjusted real estate wealth. Free blacks in free states were also more likely to hold real estate than free blacks in slave states. Table 9b shows that 22 percent of free blacks in 1850 and 29 percent of free blacks in 1860, who lived in free states, owned positive amounts of real estate wealth.

**Table 10b. Mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century Skill and Mean Property Ownership of Whites and Blacks**

	Overall			Free Blacks			All Blacks			Whites		
	1850	1860	1870	1850	1860	1870	1850	1860	1870	1850	1860	1870
<b>Slave</b>												
Real Property Holders	0.51	0.53	0.28	0.17	0.21	0.05	0.52	0.55	0.51			
Other Property Holders		0.84	0.44		0.56	0.20		0.86	0.69			
Real or Other Property Holders		0.86	0.47		0.59	0.21		0.88	0.73			
Sample	10,174	13,732	33,991	408	893	17,188	9,766	12,834	16,798			
<b>Free</b>												
Real Property Holders	0.52	0.55	0.54	0.22	0.29	0.24	0.53	0.55	0.55			
Other Property Holders		0.79	0.69		0.54	0.36		0.79	0.70			
Real or Other Property Holders		0.82	0.75		0.58	0.45		0.82	0.76			
Sample	24,928	39,327	52,366	363	809	1,748	24,565	38,408	50,458			

**Source:** Information collected, calculated and compiled by James Curtis Jr (2002); IPUMS

This was greater than the 17 percent of free blacks in 1850 and 21 percent of free blacks in 1860 that lived in slave states and possessed positive amounts of real estate wealth. Table 11b shows that the ratio of free black real estate holders (per hundred free blacks in free states) to the number of real estate holders (per hundred free blacks in slave states) also remained relatively constant at 1.3 in 1850 and 1.4 in 1860. By 1870, the return to living in free states grew dramatically. Table 10c shows that the ratio of free state to slave state average real estate wealth for all blacks—which includes ex-slaves who held little or no real estate property—grew to 9.6.

**Table 10c. Mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century Comparative Wealth Ratios and Comparative Property Ownership Ratios of Whites and Blacks, Based on State Slave Laws**

	All Blacks			Whites			Black-White Ratio		
	1850	1860	1870	1850	1860	1870	1850	1860	1870
<b>i) Free/Slave Mean Wealth Ratio</b>									
Real Estate	1.7	1.5	9.6	1.1	0.9	1.7	1.6	1.6	5.7
Other		0.7	3.1		0.3	1.4		2.4	2.3
Total		1.1	6.0		0.6	1.6		2.0	3.8
<b>ii) Free/Slave Mean Property-Holding Ratio</b>									
Real Estate	1.3	1.4	4.9	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.3	1.4	4.5
Other		1.0	1.9		0.9	1.0		1.1	1.8
Total		1.0	2.1		0.9	1.0		1.1	2.0

**Source:** Information collected, calculated and compiled by James Curtis Jr (2002); IPUMS

This implies that, on average, ex-slaves living in free states possessed ten dollars for every dollar of real estate wealth owned by an ex-slave living in a slave state. Yet the relative sample sizes suggest that approximately one in ten (1748/17188) blacks took advantage of the large free state premium in 1870. Similarly, Table 10c shows that the ratio of black property holders per hundred in free states to property holders per hundred in slave states was 4.9—for every free black real estate holder (per hundred free blacks) in a slave state, there were five (per hundred free blacks) who owned real estate in free states.

*The Mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century State Slavery Laws and Real Estate Wealth in the United States of America: A Comparison of White and Black Americans over Time*

The real estate wealth advantage of blacks in free states was observed when comparing the average real estate wealth of blacks to average real estate wealth of whites before and after emancipation. Using wealth means in Table 10a, free blacks in slave states had 9.5 percent (83/870) of white real estate wealth in 1850 and 13.0 percent (189/1456) of white real estate wealth in 1860. The situation was better for free blacks living in free states: Free blacks had 9.8 percent (150/1007) of white real estate wealth in 1850 and 20.6 percent (312/1511) of white real estate wealth in 1860. White nominal real estate wealth was larger in free states than slave states in 1850 and 1860. However, 1860 whites in slave states (\$1639) had slightly more price-adjusted real estate wealth whites in free states (\$1512). Unpaid labor in the south began to provide

macroeconomic advantages in 1860 to southern real estate holders due to the lower price environment.

The proportion of free black property holders, living in free states, relative to white property holders, living in free states exceeded the same proportion for slave states. Using results in Table 10b the ratio of free black property holders (per hundred free blacks) to white property holders (per hundred whites) in slave states was approximately 1:3 (0.17:0.52) in 1850 and 2:5 (0.21 : 0.55) in 1860. In free states, the ratios rose to approximately 2:5 (0.22 : 0.53) in 1850 and 1:2 (0.29 : 0.55) in 1860.

By 1870, the ratio of black to white average real estate wealth and property holders fell significantly with the inclusion of ex-slaves in the sample but the advantage of free states remained. Using wealth means from Table 10a, 1870 blacks living in slave states held 2.6 percent (33/1282) of the real estate wealth of whites while blacks living in free states held 14.7 percent (288/1963) of the real estate wealth of whites. Similarly, using the percentage of property holders, the ratio of black real estate property holders (per hundred free blacks) to white property holders (per hundred whites) was approximately 1:10 (0.05:0.51) in slave states and approximately 2:5 (0.24:0.55) in free states in 1870.

Using the *comparative wealth ratio* for real estate wealth, we can ignore the absolute differences in black and white real estate wealth and ascertain the advantages to living in free states in the presence of wealth constraints. Since the ratio in Table 10b exceeds one in 1850 (1.6) and 1860 (1.6), free blacks obtained higher return to living in free states versus living in slave states than whites living in free states. The ratio in Table 10c grew to 5.7 in 1870 suggesting a dramatic growth in the premium to living in free states after emancipation. This interesting result may suggest that federal-level emancipation guidelines were not fully executed in the former slave states causing higher returns to living in free states, which were already complying with state-level emancipation guidelines. Similar results were obtained using the *comparative property ownership ratio* for real estate property in Table 10c. Since the ratio exceeds one in 1850 (1.3) and 1860 (1.4), free blacks obtained higher return to living in free states vs. slave states than whites living in free states. The ratio grew to 4.5 in 1870, again, suggesting a dramatic growth in the premium to living in free states after emancipation.

*The Mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century State Slave Laws and Other Wealth in the United States of America: A Comparison among Black Americans over Time*



A surprising empirical result was that blacks in slave states had advantages in other measures of wealth before emancipation. However, these advantages were reversed after emancipation. Table 10a shows that free blacks, living in slave states, possessed \$189 in nominal other wealth in 1860 prior to emancipation. This was slightly higher than the \$146 possessed by free blacks in free states. Thus, free blacks in free states possessed 70 percent of the wealth of free blacks in slave states in 1860. When adjusted for regional prices, the differences here are not significant. Free blacks in slave states held \$191 in 1860 while free blacks in free states held \$146 in price-adjusted real estate wealth.

Free blacks in slave states were also more likely to hold other property than free blacks in free states. Table 10b shows that 56 percent of free blacks, living in slave states, possessed positive amounts of other wealth in 1860. This was slightly greater than 54 percent of free blacks who lived in slave states in 1860 and possessed positive amounts of other wealth.

These surprising results were driven by large free black wealth in the southwest. A majority of blacks resided in the south in 1860 and 1870 and a large number of 1860 free blacks in the southwestern sample were mulatto ‘owners’ of slaves. Free black ‘ownership’ of slaves was not uncommon. “The census records show that the majority of the Negro slaves were such from the point of view of philanthropy. In many instances, the husband purchased the wife or vice versa.... Most of such Negro proprietors lived in Louisiana, South Carolina, Maryland and Virginia” (Woodson 1924, pp.v-viii).

However, by 1870, the return to living in free states grew dramatically. Table 10c shows that the ratio of free state to slave state real estate wealth for all blacks—which includes ex-slaves who held little or no real estate property—grew to 3.1. This implies that ex-slaves, living in free states, possessed three dollars for every dollar of wealth owned by an ex-slave living in a slave state. Similarly, Table 11b shows that the ratio of black property holders (per hundred free blacks) in free states to property holders (per hundred free blacks) in slave states was 1.9—for every free black real estate holder (per hundred free blacks) in a slave state, there were two free black real estate holders (per hundred free blacks) in free states.

*The Mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century State Slavery Laws and Other Wealth in the United States of America: A Comparison of White and Black Americans over Time*

The free state advantage was observed when comparing other wealth of blacks to other wealth of whites before and after emancipation. Using wealth means in Table 10a, free blacks in slave states had 10.1 percent (191/1895) of white real estate wealth in 1860 and 7.0 percent (42/598) of

white real estate wealth in 1870. The situation was better for free blacks living in free states: Free blacks had 22.6 percent (146/645) of white real estate wealth in 1860 and 15.9 percent (121/761) of white real estate wealth in 1870.

The proportion of free blacks holding other forms of property and living in free states relative to whites holding other forms of property and living in free states exceeded the same proportion for slave states. The ratio of free blacks (per hundred free blacks) to whites (per hundred whites) with other forms of property in slave states was approximately 2:3 (0.56 : 0.86) in 1860 and 1:3 (0.20 : 0.69) in 1870. In free states, the ratio rose to approximately 2:3 (0.54 : 0.79) in 1860 and 1:2 (0.36 : 0.70) in 1870.

Using the *comparative wealth ratio* for other forms of wealth, we can ignore the absolute differences in black and white wealth and ascertain the advantages to living in free states in the presence of wealth constraints. Since the ratio in Table 10c exceeds one in 1860 (2.4) and 1870 (2.3), free blacks obtained higher returns to living in free states versus living slave states than whites living in free states. Similar results were obtained using the *comparative property ownership ratio* for other forms of property. Since the ratio reported in Table 10c exceeds one in 1860 (1.1) and 1870 (1.8), free blacks obtained higher returns to living in free states versus living in slave states than whites living in free states.

*The Mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century State Slave Laws and Total Wealth in the United States of America: A Comparison among Black Americans over Time*

When summing up real estate and other forms of wealth, empirical results show that blacks in free states were better off before and after emancipation. Table 10a shows that free blacks, living in slave states, possessed \$380 in nominal total wealth in 1860 prior to emancipation. This was lower than the \$458 possessed by free black in free states. This produces 1.1 to 1.0 ratio of free black wealth in free states to free black wealth in slave states in 1860. Note that free blacks in free states were equally likely to hold total property as free blacks in slave states. Table 10b shows that 59 percent of free blacks, living in slave states, possessed positive amounts of total wealth in 1860. This was approximately the same as the 58 percent of free blacks that lived in slave states in 1860 and possessed positive amounts of total wealth. Again, the results were driven by large free black wealth in the southwest where a large number of 1860 free blacks in the southwestern sample were mulatto 'owners' of slaves.

By 1870, the return to living in free states grew dramatically. Table 10c shows that the ratio of free state to slave state real estate wealth for all blacks—which includes ex-slaves who held little

or no real estate property—grew to 6.0. This implies that ex-slaves, living in free states, possessed six dollars for every dollar of total wealth owned by an ex-slave living in a slave state. Similarly, Table 10c shows that the ratio of black total property holders (per hundred blacks) in free states to total property holders (per hundred blacks) in slave states was 2.1—for every free black real estate holder in a slave state, there were two free black real estate holders in free states.

*The Mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century State Slavery Laws and Total Wealth in the United States of America: A Comparison of White and Black Americans over Time*

The free state advantage was observed when comparing total wealth of blacks to total wealth of whites before and after emancipation. Using wealth means in Table 10a, free blacks in slave states had 11.3 percent (380/3351) of white total wealth in 1860 and 4.0 percent (75/1880) of white total wealth in 1870. The situation was better for free blacks living in free states: Free blacks had 21.2 percent (458/2156) of white total wealth in 1860 and 15.0 percent (408/2725) of white real estate wealth in 1870.

The proportion of free black total property holders, living in free states, relative to white total property holders, living in free states exceeded the same proportion for slave states. The ratio of free black total property holders (per hundred free blacks) to white total property holders (per hundred whites) in slave states was approximately 2:3 (0.59 : 0.88) in 1860 and 1:4 (0.21 : 0.73) in 1870. In free states, the ratio rose to approximately 7:10 (0.58 : 0.82) in 1860 and 6:10 (0.45 : 0.76) in 1870.

Using the *comparative wealth ratio* for total wealth, we can ignore the absolute differences in black and white wealth and ascertain the advantages to living in free states in the presence of wealth constraints. Since the ratio in Table 10a exceeds one in 1860 (2.0) and 1870 (3.8), free blacks obtained higher returns to living in free states versus living in slave states than whites living in free states. Similar results were obtained using the *comparative property ownership ratio* for total property. Since the ratio reported in Table 10c exceeds one in 1860 (1.1) and 1870 (2.0), free blacks obtained higher return to living in free states versus living in slave states than whites living in free states. *This is initial evidence of symmetry between the socio-economic environment and socio-economic outcomes.*

*The Mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century Regions and Wealth of Whites and Blacks in the United States of America*

Underground railroad activities sparked average real estate wealth advantages for mid-western free blacks in 1850. Table 11a shows that mid-western free blacks possessed \$500 in average real estate wealth.

**Table 11a. Mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century Regions and Mean Wealth of Whites and Blacks**

Type of Wealth	1850					1860						1870					
	NE	MA	MW	SE	SW	NE	MA	MW	SE	SW	West	NE	MA	MW	SE	SW	West
<b>BLACKS</b>																	
Real Estate	494	146	500	59	411	378	219	453	125	1,364	245	737	404	400	37	26	465
Other						202	111	172	103	1,772	248	278	146	141	42	48	208
Total						579	331	625	229	3,137	493	1,015	551	541	79	74	673
<u>Adjusted for Regional Prices</u>																	
Real Estate	520	162	543	69	467	347	226	453	144	1,364	245	455	266	290	23	17	312
Other						185	115	172	119	1,772	248	172	96	102	26	32	140
Total						532	341	625	263	3,137	493	627	362	392	49	50	452
Sample Size	42	235	87	381	27	86	431	260	808	86	32	116	622	983	14,149	3,040	30
<b>WHITES</b>																	
Real Estate	1,296	1,595	1,011	1,283	2,627	1,532	2,062	1,782	2,284	3,539	645	2,307	2,915	2,615	1,760	1,619	2,513
Other						869	874	630	3,198	3,664	789	1,746	1,351	950	794	754	1,474
Total						2,401	2,936	2,413	5,482	7,203	1,434	4,052	4,266	3,565	2,554	2,373	3,987
<u>Adjusted for Regional Prices</u>																	
Real Estate	1,364	1,772	1,099	1,492	2,985	1,406	2,126	1,782	2,625	3,539	645	1,424	1,918	1,895	1,086	1,087	1,687
Other						797	902	630	3,676	3,664	789	1,078	889	688	490	506	989
Total						2,203	3,027	2,413	6,301	7,203	1,434	2,501	2,807	2,583	1,576	1,593	2,676
Sample Size	5,041	10,153	9,128	8,859	1,059	6,256	14,281	16,561	11,153	2,051	1,474	7,214	17,192	24,597	14,146	2,794	2,179
<b>BLACK TO WHITE RATIO</b>																	
Real Estate	0.38	0.09	0.49	0.05	0.16	0.25	0.11	0.25	0.05	0.39	0.38	0.32	0.14	0.15	0.02	0.02	0.19
Other						0.23	0.13	0.27	0.03	0.48	0.31	0.16	0.11	0.15	0.05	0.06	0.14
Total						0.24	0.11	0.26	0.04	0.44	0.34	0.25	0.13	0.15	0.03	0.03	0.17

**Source:** Information collected, calculated and compiled by James Curtis Jr (2002); IPUMS

The average real estate wealth of free blacks in other regions was \$494 in the northeast, \$411 in the southwest, \$146 in the mid-Atlantic, and \$59 in the southeast. When comparing free blacks

to whites, Table 11b shows that Midwestern free blacks owned 49 percent of mid-western white real estate wealth—the highest proportion among all regions.

**Table 11b. Mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century Skill and Mean Property Ownership of Whites and Blacks**

Type of Property	1850					1860						1870					
	NE	MA	MW	SE	SW	NE	MA	MW	SE	SW	West	NE	MA	MW	SE	SW	West
<b>BLACKS</b>																	
Real Estate	0.19	0.17	0.38	0.16	0.30	0.29	0.23	0.38	0.20	0.34	0.31	0.34	0.22	0.24	0.05	0.04	0.30
Other						0.51	0.50	0.65	0.56	0.52	0.38	0.32	0.30	0.41	0.18	0.25	0.40
Real Estate or Other						0.59	0.53	0.68	0.59	0.60	0.44	0.47	0.39	0.48	0.20	0.26	0.47
Sample Size	42	235	87	381	27	86	431	260	808	86	32	116	622	983	14,149	3,040	30
<b>WHITES</b>																	
Real Estate	0.53	0.47	0.61	0.54	0.45	0.55	0.48	0.64	0.56	0.55	0.36	0.54	0.47	0.63	0.52	0.48	0.49
Other						0.74	0.75	0.86	0.87	0.82	0.60	0.62	0.65	0.77	0.70	0.67	0.61
Real Estate or Other						0.79	0.78	0.89	0.89	0.85	0.64	0.70	0.71	0.83	0.74	0.71	0.68
Sample Size	5,041	10,153	9,128	8,859	1,059	6,256	14,281	16,561	11,153	2,051	1,474	7,214	17,192	24,597	14,146	2,794	2,179
<b>BLACK TO WHITE RATIO</b>																	
Real Estate	0.36	0.37	0.62	0.29	0.66	0.52	0.47	0.59	0.35	0.61	0.86	0.62	0.46	0.39	0.10	0.08	0.62
Other						0.69	0.66	0.75	0.64	0.64	0.63	0.51	0.45	0.53	0.26	0.37	0.65
Real Estate or Other						0.75	0.68	0.77	0.66	0.71	0.69	0.67	0.55	0.58	0.27	0.37	0.68

**Source:** Information collected, calculated and compiled by James Curtis Jr (2002); IPUMS

The other 1850 free black-white wealth proportions were 38 percent in the northeast, 19 percent in the southwest, nine percent in the mid-Atlantic, and five percent in the southeastern. Furthermore, when ignoring differences in levels, mid-western and western free blacks higher premiums for living those regions than whites. In 1860, Southwestern free blacks, that were philanthropic owners of slaves, temporarily surpassed the wealth free blacks in other regions. By 1870, Table 11a shows that northeastern blacks possessed the largest amount of average wealth. Throughout the analysis, southeastern blacks persisted with the lowest amounts of wealth.

*The Mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century Regions and Total Wealth in the United States of America: A Comparison among Black Americans over Time*

While free blacks in multiple regions were somewhat successful in accumulating wealth prior to emancipation, northeastern blacks had the largest amount of wealth after emancipation. Table 11a shows that northeastern free black possessed nominal real estate wealth amounts of \$494 in 1850, which was approximately the same as the real estate wealth possessed by Midwestern free blacks (\$500) and slightly greater than the average wealth held by Southwestern free blacks. The average real estate wealth in these regions was significantly greater that obtained by Southeastern free blacks (\$59). Real estate property holding patterns by region followed similar patterns. 19 percent of Northeastern free blacks held positive amounts of real estate wealth in 1850. But this was significantly lower than the 38 percent of Midwestern free blacks that owned real estate property. Note that southwestern free blacks (30 percent) were also relatively successful in owning property.

By 1860, the wealth differences remained the same except for growth in wealth among Southwest free blacks, possessing \$3,137 in total wealth. Using the 1860 wealth means in Table 11a, Northeastern free blacks had \$378 in real estate wealth, which was slightly lower than the real estate wealth of Midwestern free blacks (\$453). Again, Southeastern free blacks accumulated the lowest amount of wealth at \$125. Note that a significant number of free blacks moved to the west by 1860 and they possessed approximately ninety percent of the total wealth (\$493) owned by Northeastern free blacks.

Other and total forms of wealth followed similar patterns. Real estate property holding patterns in 1860 were consistent with 1850. Additionally, free blacks living in regions that were successful in accumulating real estate property in 1860, such as the Midwest (38 percent), the Southwest (34 percent) and the Northeast (29 percent), were also successful in accumulating other and total forms of property.

All forms of wealth among Southwestern free blacks grew dramatically between 1850 and 1860. Stricter enforcement of discriminatory refugee slave laws, as required under the controversial 1850 Fugitive Slave Act, may have invigorated philanthropic efforts of free black slave owners in the Southwest. A large number of 1860 free blacks in the southwestern sample were mulatto 'owners' of slaves. Free black 'ownership' of slaves was not uncommon. "The census records show that the majority of the Negro slaves were such from the point of view of philanthropy. In many instances, the husband purchased the wife or vice versa.... Most of such Negro proprietors lived in Louisiana, South Carolina, Maryland and Virginia" (Woodson 1924, pp.v-viii).

By 1870, the average wealth of Northeastern free blacks was significantly greater than the average wealth of free blacks in other regions. Table 11a shows that the average nominal real estate wealth of Northeastern free blacks was \$737 in 1870. Using the 1870 wealth ratios in Table 10d-f, average real estate wealth among Mid-Atlantic (\$404), Midwestern (\$400) and Western (\$466) free blacks was 60-70 percent of the average wealth of Northeastern free blacks. The average real estate wealth of Southeastern (\$37) and Southwestern (\$26) fell to less than ten percent of Northeastern free black wealth. These patterns held for other and total forms of wealth: Blacks living in former slaves states had fewer opportunities to accumulate wealth than blacks living in free states.

Similarly, northeastern blacks held more real estate property than free blacks in other regions groups in 1870. When comparing other and total wealth Northeastern blacks (47 percent), along with Midwestern blacks (48 percent) and Western blacks (47 percent), were more likely to hold total property in 1870. Again, Southeastern blacks (20 percent) and Southwestern blacks (26 percent) were least likely to own any forms of property.

*The Mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century Regions and Total Wealth in the United States of America: A Comparison of White and Black Americans over Time*

The poverty of Southeastern blacks, compare to blacks in other regions, was observed when comparing average wealth of free blacks to average wealth of whites by region before and after emancipation. Using 1850 wealth means in Table 11a, Northeastern free blacks possessed 38 percent of Northeastern white real estate wealth while Midwestern free blacks owned 49 percent of Midwestern white real estate wealth.

However, Southeastern free blacks held only 5 percent of Southeastern white real estate wealth. By 1860, Southwestern free blacks held 39 percent of Southeastern white real estate wealth possibly due to abolition activities of free black slave owners and Western free blacks possessed 38 percent Western white real estate wealth possibly due to property gains from westward expansion. Northeastern and Midwestern free blacks trailed behind Western free blacks, holding only 25 percent of the average real estate wealth among whites. Other and total forms of wealth followed similar patterns: Westward blacks held higher proportion of white wealth than eastern free blacks.

Property-holding followed similar patterns. Table 11b shows that the 1850 ratio of Southwestern free black real estate property owners (per hundred Southwestern free blacks) to Southwestern white real estate property owners (per hundred Southwestern whites) was 0.66—for every two

free black real estate property owners (per hundred free blacks), there are three white real estate property owners (per hundred whites) in the Southwest. The Midwestern ratio was similar in 1850 at 0.62 while the Southeastern ratio was 0.29. By 1860, the ratio grew to 0.61 in the Southwest and 0.59 in the Midwest.

Note that westward migration allowed Western free blacks to achieve nearly proportional property-holding patterns to Western whites. When observing other and total forms of wealth, the ratios differed by less than ten percentage points across regions in 1860. By 1870, Northeastern blacks had a clear advantage when observing the ratio of black to white average real estate wealth and property holders. Using wealth means from Table 11a, 1870 Northeastern blacks held 32 percent of the real estate wealth, 16 percent of other wealth and 25 percent of total wealth held by Northeastern whites. This was larger than the free black proportion of white total wealth held by Western blacks (17 percent) and Midwestern (blacks 15 percent). Southeastern blacks (3 percent) persisted as the region with the lowest wealth opportunities for blacks. Similarly, the large Southwestern free black advantage in 1860 fell to the low wealth levels of Southeastern blacks after emancipation. This large change may be further evidence that Southwestern free black wealth was bolstered by the value of slaves held for philanthropic purposes.

Similarly, using the percentage of property holders in Table 11b, the ratio of Northeastern free black property holders (per hundred Northeastern free blacks) to Northeastern white property holders (per hundred Northeastern whites) was 0.62 for real estate property holders, and 0.51 for other property holders and 0.67 for total property holders in 1870. These ratios were approximately the same as the proportion of Western black to white property holders.

Using the *comparative wealth ratio* for real estate wealth, we can ignore the absolute differences in black and white real estate wealth and ascertain the advantages of urban residence in the presence of wealth constraints. Since the statistic in Table 11c was less than one for all forms of wealth in 1850 and 1860 when comparing Southeastern wealth and Mid-Atlantic wealth to Northeastern wealth, whites had advantages to living in the Northeast relative free blacks.



**Table 10c. Mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century Comparative Wealth Ratios and Comparative Property Ownership Ratios of Whites and Blacks, Based on Regions**

	All Blacks			Whites			Black-White Ratio		
	1850	1860	1870	1850	1860	1870	1850	1860	1870
<u>i) Mid-Atlantic/Northeast Region Mean Wealth Ratio</u>									
Real Estate	0.3	0.7	0.6	1.3	1.5	1.3	0.2	0.4	0.4
Other		0.6	0.6		1.1	0.8		0.5	0.7
Total		0.6	0.6		1.4	1.1		0.5	0.5
<u>ii) Midwest/Northeast Region Mean Wealth Ratio</u>									
Real Estate	1.0	1.3	0.6	0.8	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.0	0.5
Other		0.9	0.6		0.8	0.6		1.2	0.9
Total		1.2	0.6		1.1	1.0		1.1	0.6
<u>iii) Southeast/Northeast Region Mean Wealth Ratio</u>									
Real Estate	0.1	0.4	0.1	1.1	1.9	0.8	0.1	0.2	0.1
Other		0.6	0.2		4.6	0.5		0.1	0.3
Total		0.5	0.1		2.9	0.6		0.2	0.1
<u>iv) Southwest/Northeast Region Mean Wealth Ratio</u>									
Real Estate	0.9	3.9	0.0	2.2	2.5	0.8	0.4	1.6	0.0
Other		9.6	0.2		4.6	0.5		2.1	0.4
Total		5.9	0.1		3.3	0.6		1.8	0.1
<u>v) West/Northeast Region Mean Wealth Ratio</u>									
Real Estate	-	0.7	0.7	0.4	0.5	1.2	-	1.5	0.6
Other	-	1.3	0.8		1.0	0.9		1.4	0.9
Total	-	0.9	0.7		0.7	1.1		1.4	0.7
<u>vi) Mid-Atlantic/Northeast Region Mean Property -Holding Ratio</u>									
Real Estate	0.9	0.8	0.7	0.9	0.9	0.9	1.0	0.9	0.7
Other		1.0	0.9		1.0	1.1		1.0	0.9
Real or Other		0.9	0.8		1.0	1.0		0.9	0.8
<u>vii) Midwest/Northeast Region Mean Property -Holding Ratio</u>									
Real Estate	2.0	1.3	0.7	1.1	1.2	1.2	1.7	1.1	0.6
Other		1.3	1.3		1.2	1.2		1.1	1.0
Real or Other		1.1	1.0		1.1	1.2		1.0	0.9
<u>viii) Southeast/Northeast Region Mean Property -Holding Ratio</u>									
Real Estate	0.8	0.7	0.2	1.0	1.0	1.0	0.8	0.7	0.2
Other		1.1	0.6		1.2	1.1		0.9	0.5
Real or Other		1.0	0.4		1.1	1.1		0.9	0.4
<u>ix) Southwest/Northeast Region Mean Property -Holding Ratio</u>									
Real Estate	1.6	1.2	0.1	0.8	1.0	0.9	1.9	1.2	0.1
Other		1.0	0.8		1.1	1.1		0.9	0.7
Real or Other		1.0	0.6		1.1	1.0		1.0	0.6
<u>x) West/Northeast Region Mean Property -Holding Ratio</u>									
Real Estate	-	1.1	0.9	0.7	0.7	0.9	-	1.6	1.0
Other		0.7	1.3		0.8	1.0		0.9	1.3
Real or Other		0.7	1.0		0.8	1.0		0.9	1.0

Source: Information collected, calculated and compiled by James Curtis Jr (2002); IPUMS

However, since the statistic was greater than one for all forms of wealth when comparing Midwestern wealth and Western wealth to Northeastern wealth in 1850 and 1860, free blacks had advantages to living in the Midwest and West relative to whites. Note that the 1860 Southwestern free black advantage was driven by free black slave owners who resided in Louisiana. By 1870, the statistic was less than one for all measures of wealth and all regions relative to the Northeast. Thus, not only whites have advantages to living in other regions but blacks had wealth advantages to living in the Northeast.

Similar results were obtained using the *comparative property ownership ratio* for real estate property in Table 11c. Since the statistic was near equal or greater than one in 1850 and 1860 when comparing the wealth of all regions but the Southeast relative to Northeastern wealth, blacks had near equal advantages of holding property in all regions except in the Southeast. Since the statistic was greater than one in the west and less than one in all regions in 1870, blacks had advantages to living in West and Northeast relative to whites in most instances.

*This is further evidence of the symmetry between the socio-economic environment and socio-economic outcomes. Overall, a negative correlation between free black wealth and regions with present or past legalized slavery emerged: Regions with no history of slavery had the wealthiest free blacks (such as the Midwest and West); free blacks in regions that once legalized slavery but abolished these practices had slightly lower levels of wealth (such as the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic); and free blacks residing in regions where slavery was still legal had the lowest amounts of wealth (such as the Southeast), with the unusual phenomenon of 'very successful' Southwest free black farmers and, likely, owners of free black slaves. Furthermore, we can ignore the selection bias in the Midwest: only free blacks with significant resources could establish citizenship their states due to hefty bond requirements.*

### ***The Mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century Migration and Wealth of Whites and Blacks in the United States of America***

Free blacks that migrated out their state of birth (migrants) consistently had wealth advantages when analyzing all forms of wealth. Free black migrants possessed more wealth and property than free blacks that stayed (stayers). Free black migrants also had a higher proportion of white migrant wealth and property relative to the proportion possessed by free black stayers. Additionally, when ignoring differences in wealth levels, free blacks earned higher premium to migrating than whites. Overall, changing regions, before and after emancipation, was crucial for blacks to accumulate significant amounts of wealth. To the contrary, whites that stayed in their state of birth possessed higher wealth returns than migrants. This may further imply whites with

longer histories of legal enforced citizenship and larger intergenerational transfers were more successful growing their wealth by staying. But blacks grew wealth by migrating to places with the smallest legal barriers, that were more social receptive and possessed the greatest economic opportunities.

*The Mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century Migration and Real Estate Wealth in the United States of America: A Comparison among Black Americans over Time*

Real estate wealth differences favored blacks that migrated from their state of birth across regions before and after emancipation. Table 12a-1 shows that free black migrants (individuals who migrated from their state of birth across regions) possessed nominal real estate wealth amounts of \$184 in 1850 and \$348 in 1860.

**Table 12a-1. Mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century Between-Region Migration and Mean Wealth of Whites and Blacks**

	Overall			Free Blacks			All Blacks			Whites		
Between Region Migrants	1850	1860	1870	1850	1860	1870	1850	1860	1870	1850	1860	1870
Real Estate Wealth	1,099	1,637	2,172	445	385	192	1,108	1,662	2,366			
Other Wealth		905	916		241	101		919	995			
Total Wealth		2,542	3,088		627	293		2,581	3,361			
<u>Price-Adjusted (1860=100)</u>												
Real Estate Wealth	1,217	1,659	1,510	483	384	133	1,227	1,685	1,645			
Other Wealth		924	632		241	69		937	687			
Total Wealth		2,583	2,142		626	201		2,622	2,332			
Sample	14,000	25,020	35,849	186	435	3,069	13,814	24,540	32,653			
<u>Stayers</u>												
Real Estate Wealth	1,448	2,161	1,742	84	239	48	1,487	2,256	2,501			
Other Wealth		1,765	855		196	44		1,842	1,219			
Total Wealth		3,926	2,597		436	92		4,098	3,720			
<u>Price-Adjusted (1860=100)</u>												
Real Estate Wealth	1,615	2,279	1,142	96	252	30	1,658	2,379	1,641			
Other Wealth		1,933	555		206	28		2,018	791			
Total Wealth		4,213	1,697		458	58		4,398	2,432			
Sample	21,444	28,574	51,378	587	1,268	15,871	20,857	27,236	35,469			

**Source:** Information collected, calculated and compiled by James Curtis Jr (2002); IPUMS

**Table 12a-2. Mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century Between-State Migration and Mean Wealth of Whites and Blacks**

	Overall			Free Blacks		All Blacks	Whites		
	1850	1860	1870	1850	1860	1870	1850	1860	1870
<b>Between State Migrants</b>									
Real Estate Wealth	815	1,288	1,433	184	348	86	824	1,308	1,666
Other Wealth		809	569		238	67		821	656
Total Wealth		2,097	2,003		587	153		2,129	2,322
<u>Price-Adjusted (1860=100)</u>									
Real Estate Wealth	904	1,318	994	204	353	57	914	1,339	1,156
Other Wealth		850	391		246	44		862	450
Total Wealth		2,168	1,385		599	101		2,201	1,606
Sample	19,004	31,127	47,131	261	584	6,805	18,743	30,496	40,193
<b>Stayers</b>									
Real Estate Wealth	1,107	1,690	1,380	79	195	39	1,141	1,776	1,983
Other Wealth		1,104	576		134	40		1,160	817
Total Wealth		2,794	1,956		329	79		2,936	2,799
<u>Price-Adjusted (1860=100)</u>									
Real Estate Wealth	1,228	1,755	902	89	206	25	1,265	1,845	1,296
Other Wealth		1,185	373		141	25		1,245	530
Total Wealth		2,941	1,275		347	50		3,090	1,826
Sample	16,098	21,932	39,226	510	1,118	12,131	15,588	20,746	27,063

**Source:** Information collected, calculated and compiled by James Curtis Jr (2002); IPUMS

This was higher than the \$79 possessed by free black who did not migrate from their state of birth across regions (stayers) in 1850 and \$195 possessed by free black stayers in 1860. Table 12c also shows that the migrant-stayer ratio of average real estate wealth among free blacks grew was 5.0 in 1850 and 1.5 in 1860.

Free black migrants were also more likely to hold real estate than free black stayers. Table 12b-1 shows that 26 percent of free black migrants in 1850 and 32 percent of free black migrants in 1860 owned positive amounts of real estate wealth.

**Table 12b-1. Mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century Between-Region and Mean Property Ownership of Whites and Blacks**

	Overall			Free Blacks			All Blacks			Whites		
	1850	1860	1870	1850	1860	1870	1850	1860	1870	1850	1860	1870
<b>Between Region Migrants</b>												
Real Property Holders	0.49	0.50	0.49	0.26	0.32	0.12	0.49	0.51	0.52			
Other Property Holders		0.76	0.63		0.59	0.32		0.77	0.66			
Real or Other Property Holders		0.79	0.69		0.63	0.36		0.80	0.73			
<b>Sample</b>	14,000	25,020	35,849	186	435	3,069	13,814	24,540	32,653			
<b>Stayers</b>	1850	1860	1870	1850	1860	1870	1850	1860	1870			
Real Property Holders	0.55	0.59	0.41	0.17	0.22	0.06	0.56	0.60	0.57			
Other Property Holders		0.84	0.57		0.54	0.19		0.85	0.74			
Real or Other Property Holders		0.86	0.61		0.57	0.21		0.88	0.79			
<b>Sample</b>	21,444	28,574	51,378	587	1,268	15,871	20,857	27,236	35,469			

**Source:** Information collected, calculated and compiled by James Curtis Jr (2002); IPUMS

**Table 12b-2. Mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century Between-State Migration & Mean Property Ownership of Whites & Blacks**

	Overall			Free Blacks			All Blacks			Whites		
	1850	1860	1870	1850	1860	1870	1850	1860	1870	1850	1860	1870
<b>Between State Migrants</b>												
Real Property Holders	0.50	0.52	0.46	0.24	0.29	0.09	0.50	0.52	0.53			
Other Property Holders		0.78	0.62		0.57	0.27		0.79	0.68			
Real or Other Property Holders		0.81	0.67		0.61	0.30		0.81	0.74			
<b>Sample</b>	19,004	31,127	47,131	261	584	6,805	18,743	30,496	40,193			
<b>Stayers</b>	1850	1860	1870	1850	1860	1870	1850	1860	1870			
Real Property Holders	0.54	0.58	0.41	0.17	0.22	0.06	0.55	0.60	0.56			
Other Property Holders		0.82	0.56		0.54	0.18		0.84	0.73			
Real or Other Property Holders		0.85	0.60		0.57	0.20		0.87	0.78			
<b>Sample</b>	16,098	21,932	39,226	510	1,118	12,131	15,588	20,746	27,063			

**Source:** Information collected, calculated and compiled by James Curtis Jr (2002); IPUMS

This was greater than the 17 percent of free black stayers in 1850 and 22 percent of free black stayers in 1860 that possessed positive amounts of real estate wealth. Table 12c shows that the ratio of migrant free black real estate holders (per hundred free black migrants) to the number of

stayer free black real estate holders (per hundred free black stayers) remained constant at 1.5 in 1850 and 1860.

**Table 12c. Mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century Comparative Wealth Ratios and Comparative Property Ownership Ratios of Whites and Blacks, Based on Migration**

	All Blacks			Whites			Black-White Ratio		
	1850	1860	1870	1850	1860	1870	1850	1860	1870
<b>i) Regional Migrant/Non-Migrant Mean Wealth Ratio</b>									
Real Estate	5.0	1.5	4.4	0.7	0.7	1.0	6.8	2.2	4.4
Other		1.2	2.5		0.5	0.9		2.5	2.9
Total		1.4	3.5		0.6	1.0		2.3	3.6
<b>ii) Regional Migrant/Non-Migrant Mean Property -Holding Ratio</b>									
Real Estate	1.5	1.5	2.0	0.9	0.8	0.9	1.8	1.7	2.2
Other		1.1	1.7		0.9	0.9		1.2	1.9
Total		1.1	1.7		0.9	0.9		1.2	1.8

**Source:** Information collected, calculated and compiled by James Curtis Jr (2002); IPUMS

Between 1860 and 1870, the return to migration among blacks grew dramatically. Table 12c shows that the ratio of migrant to stayer average real estate wealth for all blacks—which includes ex-slaves who held little or no real estate property—grew to 4.4. This implies that, on average, ex-slave migrants possessed four dollars for every dollar of real estate wealth owned by ex-slave stayers. Yet the relative sample sizes suggest that approximately one in six (3069/18936) took advantage of the large migration premium in 1870. Pessimistic calculations of the expected gains, due to negative experiences from enslavement, may have contributed to the low level of migration.

Similarly, Table 12c shows that the ratio of migrant black real estate holders (per hundred black migrants) to stayer black property holders (per hundred black stayers) was 2.0—for every stayer black real estate holder (per hundred black stayers), were two migrant black real estate holders (per hundred black migrants).

*The Mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century Migration and Real Estate Wealth in the United States of America: A Comparison of White and Black Americans over Time*

The migration premium was observed when comparing average real estate wealth of free blacks to average real estate wealth of whites by migratory status before emancipation. Using wealth means in Table 12a-1, free black migrants had 40.2 percent (445/1108) of the average real estate wealth among white migrants in 1850 and 23.2 percent (385/1662) of the average real estate wealth among white migrants in 1860. But free black stayers had 5.6 percent (84/1487) of the average real estate wealth among white stayers in 1850 and 10.6 percent (239/2256) of the average real estate wealth among white stayers in 1860.

The migration premium was also observed when analyzing the proportion of free black real estate holders relative to white real estate holders. The ratio of migrant free black real estate holders (per hundred free black migrants) to migrant white real estate holders (per hundred white migrants) was approximately 1:2 (0.26 : 0.49) in 1850 and 6:10 (0.32 : 0.51) in 1860. Among stayers the ratio fell to approximately 3:10 (0.17 : 0.56) in 1850 and 1:3 (0.22 : 0.60) in 1860.

By 1870, the ratio of black to white average real estate wealth and property holders fell significantly with the inclusion of ex-slaves in the sample but the migration premium remained. Using wealth means from Table 12a-1, 1870 black migrants held 8.1 percent (192/2366) of the real estate wealth of white migrants while black stayers held 1.9 percent (48/2501) of the real estate wealth of white stayers. Similarly, using the percentage of property holders in Table 9e, the ratio of migrant black real estate property holders (per hundred black migrants) to migrant white property holders (per hundred white migrants) was approximately 1:4 (0.12 : 0.52). Among stayers, the ratio was approximately 1:9 (0.06 : 0.57) in 1870.

Using the *comparative wealth ratio* for real estate wealth, we can ignore the absolute differences in black and white real estate wealth and ascertain the advantages of migration in the presence of wealth constraints. Since the ratio in Table 12c was greater than one in 1850 (6.8) and 1860 (2.2), free blacks obtained higher return to migrating than whites. The ratio in Table 10c rose to 4.4 in 1870. Similar results were obtained using the *comparative property ownership ratio* for real estate property in Table 12c. Since the ratio was greater than one in 1850 (1.8) and 1860 (1.7), blacks obtained higher return to migration than free blacks. The ratio grew to 2.2 in 1870, again, suggesting a dramatic growth in the migration premium for blacks that live where his basic rights are protected.

*The Mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century Migration and Other Wealth in the United States of America: A Comparison among Black Americans over Time*

Blacks that migrated also experienced a premium in terms of other measures of wealth before and after emancipation. Table 12a-1 shows that free black migrants possessed \$241 in nominal other wealth in 1860. This was higher than the \$196 possessed by free black stayers. Free black migrants were also more likely to hold other forms of property. Table 12a-1 shows that 59 percent of free black migrants that possessed positive amounts of other wealth in 1860. This was only slightly higher than the 54 percent of free black stayers that possessed positive amounts of other wealth in 1860.

Similarly, Table 12b shows that the ratio of migrant black property holders (per hundred black migrants) to stayer black property holders (per hundred black stayers) was 1.7 (up from 1.1 in 1860).

By 1870, the return to migration grew dramatically. Table 12c shows that the ratio of migrant to stayer other forms of wealth for all blacks—which includes ex-slaves who held little or no real estate property—grew (from 1.2 in 1860) to 2.5. This implies that migrant ex-slaves possessed three dollars for every dollar of wealth owned by an ex-slave stayers.

*The Mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century Migration and Other Wealth in the United States of America: A Comparison of White and Black Americans over Time*

The migration premium existed even when comparing other wealth of blacks to whites before and after emancipation. Using wealth means in Table 12a-1, black migrants had 26.2 percent (241/919) of white migrant other wealth in 1860 and 10.2 percent (101/995) of white migrant wealth in 1870. However, free blacks stayers had 6.6 percent (121/1842) of white stayers' wealth in 1860 and 3.6 percent (44/1219) of white stayers' wealth in 1870.

This migration penalty was observed when analyzing the proportion of blacks holding other forms of property relative to whites holding other forms of property. The ratio of black migrants (per hundred black migrants) to white migrants (per hundred white stayers) with other forms of property was approximately 2:3 (0.59 : 0.77) in 1860 and 1:2 (0.32 : 0.66) in 1870. Among stayers, the ratio fell to approximately 2:3 (0.54 : 0.85) in 1860 and 1:4 (0.19 : 0.74) in 1870.

Using the *comparative wealth ratio* for other forms of wealth, we can ignore the absolute differences in black and white wealth and ascertain the advantages to migration in the presence of wealth constraints. Since the ratio in Table 12c was greater than one in 1860 (2.5) and 1870 (2.9), blacks obtained higher returns to migration than whites. Again, migrating to places with the smallest legal barriers, that were more social friendly and possessed the greatest economic opportunities. Similar results were obtained using the *comparative property ownership ratio* for



other forms of property. Since the ratio reported in Table 12c was greater than one in 1860 (1.2) and greater than one in 1870 (1.9), blacks obtained higher returns to migration than blacks before and after emancipation.

*The Mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century Migration and Total Wealth in the United States of America: A Comparison among Black Americans over Time*

When summing up real estate and other forms of wealth, empirical results show that migrant blacks were better off before and after emancipation. Table 12a-1 shows that free black migrants possessed \$627 in nominal total wealth in 1860 prior to emancipation. This was higher than the \$436 possessed by free black stayers. This produces 1.4 to 1.0 ratio of migrant free black wealth to stayer free black wealth in 1860. Free black migrants were also more likely to hold real estate or other (total) forms of property. Table 12a-1 shows that 63 percent of free black migrants that possessed positive amounts of total wealth in 1860. This was higher than the 57 percent of free black stayers that possessed positive amounts of total wealth in 1860.

By 1870, the return to migration grew dramatically. Table 12c shows that the ratio of migrant to stayer real estate wealth for all blacks—which includes ex-slaves who held little or no real estate property—grew to 3.5. This implies that ex-slave migrants possessed four dollars for every dollar of total wealth owned by an ex-slave stayer. Similarly, Table 12c shows that the ratio of migrant black total property holders (per hundred black migrants) to stayer black total property holders (per hundred black stayers) was 1.7—for every migrant free black real estate holder, there were two stayer free black real estate holders.

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The migration premium persisted even when comparing total wealth of blacks to the total wealth of whites before and after emancipation. Using wealth means in Table 12a-1, black migrants had 23.9 percent (626/2622) of white migrant total wealth in 1860 and 10.6 percent (436/4098) of white stayer wealth in 1870 while free black stayers had 8.6 percent (201/2332) of white stayer wealth in 1860 and 2.5 percent (92/3720) of white stayer wealth in 1870.

Advantages to migration were also observed when analyzing the proportion of blacks holding total property relative to whites holding total property. Using Table 12b-1, the ratio of black migrants (per hundred black migrants) to white migrants (per hundred white migrants) with total

property was approximately 3:4 (0.63 : 0.80) in 1860 and 1:2 (0.36 : 0.73) in 1870. Among stayers the ratio fell to 2:3 (0.57 : 0.88) in 1860 and 1:4 (0.21 : 0.79) in 1870.

Using the *comparative wealth ratio* for total wealth, we can ignore the absolute differences in black and white wealth and ascertain the advantages to migration in the presence of wealth constraints. Since the ratio in Table 12c was greater than one in 1860 (1.4) and 1870 (3.5), blacks obtained higher returns to migrating whites before and after emancipation. Similar results were obtained using the *comparative property ownership ratio* for total property. Since the statistic reported in Table 12c was greater than one in 1860 (1.1) and greater than one in 1870 (1.7), blacks again obtained higher returns to migrating than whites before and after emancipation.

*This further confirms symmetry between the socio-economic environment and socio-economic outcomes, and suggests that changing states and changing regions, before and after emancipation, was crucial for blacks to accumulate significant amounts of wealth. To the contrary, whites who stayed in their state of birth possessed higher wealth returns than migrants. This may further imply whites, with longer histories of legal enforced citizenship and larger intergenerational transfers, were more successful growing their wealth by staying. Note that this would exclude the large mass of immigrants from Ireland, England and Germany who grew wealth like blacks, by migrating to places with the smallest legal barriers, that were more social receptive and possessed the greatest economic opportunities.*

### **Non-Linear Least Squares Multivariate Analysis of Logarithmic Total Wealth of Whites and Blacks in 1860 and 1870**

Table 13 shows logarithmic wealth is regressed against proxy variables for earnings and savings, proxy variables for initial wealth, and household formation variables. Results, which had a 95 percent level of significance, are summarized below.

Savings, Schooling and Skill. *Savings.* Results show higher, statistically significant, diminishing increases in wealth savings with age among whites, compared to blacks, in 1860 and 1870. *Schooling.* Similarly, results show higher returns to schooling, for whites relative to blacks, in 1860 and 1870, holding all other variables constant; however, these results were not statistically significant for free blacks in 1860. *Skill.* Farmers had statistically significant higher levels of wealth relative to other professions in 1860 and 1870, with the exceptions of white student-retirees in 1870 and black white-collar professionals in 1870.

Economic Geography. *Slave State Status.* Results described in the ratio analysis were also evident in the multivariate analysis: In 1860, before mass emancipation of Southern slaves,

Southern whites possessed statistically significant wealth, at rates greater than other whites. In 1860, free black wealth coefficients are statistically insignificant. However, after mass emancipation of Southern slaves, blacks and whites, in 1870, who resided in the South, possessed statistically significant wealth which was less than other blacks and whites elsewhere. *Regional Status.* These results also are confirmed when comparing regions. *Migration Status.* Results described in the ratio analysis were also evident in the multivariate analysis: Whites which remained in their birth states had statistically significant higher levels of wealth compared to whites who migrated in 1860 and 1870; however, blacks who migrated in 1860 and 1870 had statistically significant relative to blacks who migrated.

**Table 13. OLS Estimates Based on Log Real Total Wealth by Race, 1860-70**

Race:	Whites				Blacks			
	1860		1870		1860		1870	
Year:	Slave State	Region	Slave State	Region	Slave State	Region	Slave State	Region
OLS Regression with:								
Constant	1.14	1.01	0.13	(0.18)	2.30	2.61	1.89	2.22
Literacy	1.02	1.02	1.14	1.12	0.25	0.21	0.34	0.35
Slave State	0.18		(0.97)		0.01		(1.38)	
Migrated to the Region	(0.50)	(0.66)	(0.34)	(0.50)	0.39	0.26	0.26	0.21
Rural	0.82	0.73	0.71	0.58	0.26	0.30	0.17	0.17
Age	0.14	0.14	0.18	0.18	0.09	0.09	0.04	0.04
Age Squared	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Number of Children	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.02)	(0.03)	0.01	0.00	0.03	0.03
Number of Household Members	0.11	0.11	0.10	0.10	0.05	0.04	0.05	0.06
Married	0.24	0.19	0.02	0.02	0.48	0.47	0.33	0.34
<u>Occupational Skill</u>								
Unskilled	(2.86)	(2.79)	(2.71)	(2.66)	(2.93)	(2.86)	(1.64)	(1.64)
Skilled	(1.72)	(1.64)	(1.97)	(1.88)	(2.18)	(2.13)	(0.95)	(0.95)
White Collar	(0.05)	(0.01)	(0.11)	(0.08)	(0.91)	(0.97)	0.45	0.46
Student/Retired	(0.10)	(0.09)	0.32	0.32	(5.51)	(5.63)	(1.34)	(1.34)
Other Skill	(2.37)	(2.36)	(2.76)	(2.71)	(3.20)	(3.22)	(1.73)	(1.73)
<u>Region</u>								
MidAtlantic		0.05		0.14		(0.39)		(0.50)
Midwest		0.44		0.59		(0.06)		(0.25)
Southeast		0.29		(0.68)		(0.43)		(1.73)
South Central		0.68		(0.48)		0.65		(1.68)
West		(0.30)		0.09		(1.20)		(0.18)

**Source:** Information collected, calculated and compiled by James Curtis Jr (2002); IPUMS; Dependent variable is natural log of total wealth adjusted for regional prices; Estimated

parameters in bold are statistically significant with a 95 percent level of confidence. Farmers and Northeast are the excluded variables.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

While the legal and social status of free blacks was significantly better than slaves, their status did not equal that of whites. Yet free blacks did attempt to overcome the social conditions by structuring their households to provide a basic foundation for *the pursuit of happiness* even though free black constraints to generating wealth were observed when analyzing differences in the returns to all of the optimal wealth-generating choices. Changing states and regions, was one of the crucial steps for free blacks to accumulate significant amounts of wealth. Yet unequal entrance laws and barriers prevented free blacks from having a full range of residential and, as a result, economic opportunities. In sum, asymmetrical legal and social constraints, rooted by a contradiction between the dominant interpretation of the United States Constitution and state laws, led to asymmetrical economic experiences among free blacks and whites during the antebellum period. Furthermore, the intertemporal expectation of converging wealth experiences is severely diminished, not only by initial wealth deficits in the free black community, but also by intertemporal social and legal constraints on economic choices to overcome these deficits.

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