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Southern Small Towns:
Society, Politics and Race Relations
in Clinton, Louisiana, 1824-1880

by

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Abstract

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Small towns fulfilled an important and unique role in southern life. After examining archival resources, public documents, and the architecture of the town of Clinton, Louisiana, two distinct but interlocking themes emerge. The first is the quest for order, respectability, and prosperity. The second is an outgrowth of those three goals, in that the social and economic infrastructure created by the townsfolk's activities acted as a catalyst to produce interactions that would not otherwise have occurred in a predominantly rural setting. Social, economic, and political interactions in small towns took place on a day-to-day and face-to-face basis. Village life allowed the citizens to interact with those outside their family groups and immediate neighbors for a broader social and economic base than country-dwellers yet did not provide the anonymity of large cities like New Orleans or Charleston.

In the years before the American Civil War, wealthy and middle-class whites dominated Clinton's society and economy.
By building railroads, establishing strong mercantile houses, and developing a varied corps of artisans, Clinton's elite made the town the center of a booming cotton region. One-third of the village's 1000 residents were slaves, and despite the lack of anonymity within the community, they were still able to create a semblance of a unique subculture away from whites' prying eyes. Following the Civil War, however, the small-town environment proved particularly stifling for the freed slaves, as white-supremacist attitudes prohibited free development of social and political organizations, with the notable exception of black churches. Whites in Clinton reacted violently to their loss of power, ultimately pursuing a massive campaign of terror against local Republicans during the contested presidential election of 1876.

Small-town life is not incongruous within the framework of southern history; in fact, these villages incorporated the best and worst features of the southern rural and urban milieus.
Acknowledgments

This dissertation began as my Senior Seminar research project, a course I took as a junior at Centenary College. My efforts in that course yielded a product worthy to be offered as a writing sample for graduate school applications, and it provided the skeleton for what is now Chapter 1. I owe an immeasurable debt of gratitude to my undergraduate advisor, Samuel C. Shepherd. As I cast about for a topic in Seminar, he reminded me of the historic small town—my hometown of Clinton—that sparked my love of history in the first place. Dr. Shepherd's wisdom and guidance have proved invaluable for over a decade, yet it is his friendship and unflagging support that have sustained our relationship through the years I have known him.

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I have many other intellectual debts to repay; perhaps acknowledgment here is the first step in that endeavor. Many professors at Centenary and Rice have helped me, guided me, and taught me to be a diligent historian and a decent person. Lee Morgan, Earl Labor, John Peek all shaped my critical
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### Table of Contents

List of Tables viii
List of Maps ix
List of Figures x
Introduction 1

Ch. 1: Creating Antebellum Clinton 12
Ch. 2: The Viability of Small-Town Slavery 54
Ch. 3: From Homefront to Battlefront 88
Ch. 4: The Transition from Slavery to Freedom 140
Ch. 5: Clinton's Culture of Violence 177

Conclusion 243
Epilogue 249
Appendix 266
Bibliography 271
List of Tables

Table 1: Occupation of Males, 1860 and 1870 21
Table 2: Wealth of Male Residents, 1860 24
Table 3: Types of Household 32
Table 4: 1860 White Population, by Age and Sex 33
Table 5: Birthplace, by Age and Gender 34
Table 6: Population of Four Louisiana Towns by Status 57
Table 7: Size of Slave Holdings, 1850-1860 58
Table 8: Population of Clinton by Age, Gender, and Status 69
List of Maps

Map 1: State of Louisiana 5
Map 2: Louisiana's Florida Parishes 5
Map 3: Town of Clinton 52
List of Figures

Fig. 1: Late 19th-century view of downtown Clinton  22
Fig. 2: Grave markers in Clinton's Jewish Cemetery  29
Fig. 3: Silliman Institute  40
Fig. 4: The old Masonic Hall  46
Fig. 5: East Feliciana Courthouse  250
Fig. 6: Lawyer's Row  250
Fig. 7: Corcoran Building  251
Fig. 8: Mayer Bros. Building  251
Fig. 9: Clinton Hotel  252
Fig. 10: St. Andrew's  252
Fig. 11: Ox-train; Methodist Church  253
Fig. 12: Marston House  253
Fig. 13: Hardcastle  254
Fig. 14: Stonehenge  254
Fig. 15: Durham Cottage  255
Fig. 16: Hope Terrace  255
Fig. 17: Brame-Bennett  256
Fig. 18: Cedar Hill  256
Fig. 19: Naumann-Chase House  257
Fig. 20: Hawford House  257
Fig. 21: Boatner-Record House  258
Fig. 22: E. Boatner House  258
Fig. 23: Powers-Wheat House  259
Fig. 24: Skipwith House  259
Fig. 25: Peters House  259
Fig. 26: Aull House 260
Fig. 27: Woodside House 260
Fig. 28: Wall House 261
Fig. 29: Converted Kitchen of Wall House 261
Fig. 30: Martin Hill 262
Fig. 31: The author as Virginia Pettis 264
Introduction

A traveler boarding a steamboat on the docks of New Orleans in 1860 and traveling up the mighty Mississippi would have a view of a vast flat expanse of land for almost a full day, broken only by occasional magnificent white plantation homes and the gentle roll of the levee. The passenger would have seen a cross-section of Louisiana's way of life, complete with wealthy planters returning home after a visit to "the City," merchants back from a recent purchasing trip, and black men shoveling coal into the engines or loading and unloading merchandise, cotton, and sugar at every landing. They would have beheld a similar scene twenty years before and twenty years after.

As the boat approached Baton Rouge—the state's second largest city, once and future capital—the traveler would start to notice a slight change in the landscape. Bluffs begin to appear on the eastern bank of the river, while the western bank remains a low, flat, alluvial flood plain. Twenty-five miles farther north from Baton Rouge, the boat would likely have docked at the small town of Port Hudson. Port Hudson was located high atop bluffs up to sixty feet above the river and on a narrow political peninsula between West Feliciana and East Baton Rouge Parishes that was created specifically to give East Feliciana an outlet to the Mississippi River.¹

Those three parishes make up the Bluffland Terrace region of Louisiana and comprise one of Louisiana's two areas of highest elevation. The bluffs were created by deposits of wind-blown sediment left by the Mississippi during the last ice age. This makes the soil extremely rich, though it is not quite as fertile as the alluvial plains of the Mississippi. In the western reaches of East Feliciana, closer to the Mississippi River, the soil supports mixed stands of oak, hickory, gum, and some cypress. East of the Comite River, which divides the parish nearly in half, the soil becomes sandier and supports large stands of pine. But even here the soil remains very fertile, and "not any part of this portion of East Feliciana can properly be called a pine woods country." Throughout the entire parish, corn and cotton are easily cultivated, and the traveler might even have seen sugar cane in the southwestern corner as he boarded the narrow-gauge railroad that led from Port Hudson to the parish's seat, Clinton.²

East Feliciana Parish lies in a region of Louisiana now known as the Florida Parishes. The area's early history

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4-5. I use the term "political peninsula" to refer to the random placement of parish boundaries. Port Hudson is not located on a geographic peninsula. In 1832 the state legislature "captured by Statute from East Baton Rouge" a narrow strip of river front property and annexed it to East Feliciana. By 1834 Port Hudson had already captured "three regular steam packets" that ventured up and down the Mississippi. Henry Skipwith, East Feliciana, Louisiana, Past and Present, Sketches of the Pioneers (New Orleans: Hopkins, 1892; reprint, Baton Rouge: Claitor's, 1957) p. 10.

witnessed remarkable political changes, for in less than 100 years between 1717 and 1812 (when Louisiana was admitted to the United States), residents of what is now East Feliciana Parish had lived under no fewer than five flags: Bourbon French, British, Spanish, the independent Republic of West Florida, and the United States. Lying east of the Mississippi River, west of the Pearl River, north of New Orleans, and south of the 31st parallel (the current boundary between Louisiana and Mississippi), the area was never under Napoleon's control, nor was it sold to the United States as a part of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803. In that year, Spain ceded most of Louisiana to the French, while Florida remained under Spanish control. The boundaries of the Florida panhandle stretched west to the Mississippi including the area of the Felicianas, and it lent that entire region of Louisiana its name. But, with rich soils and familiar rolling hills, East Feliciana and the Bluffland parishes were particularly attractive to settlers coming in from the British colonies, when that power gained control over Florida in 1763. The Spanish allowed British and American settlers to remain, provided they swear allegiance to the new government, and continued to give land grants to American settlers in West Florida as they would later do in Texas to men like Stephen F. Austin. In 1810 the Anglo-Americans of Feliciana territory drove the Spanish out and formed the independent Republic of West Florida. Waving their flag of independence—a solid blue field with a single white star
blazing in the center—the republic lasted for seventy-four days before American troops entered the area and raised the stars and stripes, forever annexing the Florida Parishes to the State of Louisiana.³

Now a part of the United States, the Parish of Feliciana, which means "happy land" in Spanish, was bordered north by the Mississippi state line, the Amite River to the east, and East Baton Rouge Parish in the south; and the parish seat was located at Jackson on Thompson's Creek. Due to the hazards and inconveniences of locating the seat of local government on one side of a navigable creek with high bluffs on either side, residents in the western portion of the parish requested a division, and two parishes, West and East, were created in 1823 from the one originally called Feliciana. The parish governing body, the Police Jury, of the eastern half had the parish surveyed to locate the center in order to establish a new seat of justice; in this way the jurors began the process that would lead to the founding of Clinton.⁴

At a site two miles from the geographic center of East Feliciana, on land owned by James Holmes and Susan Bostwick, Clinton was established and named after Governor DeWitt

⁴Rouzan, All Around the Square, pp. 2-4, 37-47; Peacock, "Historical Sketches," p. 265.
Clinton of New York. Holmes and Bostwick donated land for a courthouse, a jail, and a town spring. The duo also donated land to build the first courthouse. This building was burned by an arsonist in 1839, and a new, imposing Greek Revival style building was built on the same site; it still stands and is purported to be the oldest working courthouse in the state of Louisiana. The partners who owned the land had a large grid laid out, and the center of town retains to this day a regular block pattern. Within a year, there were two "stores and saloons" and a few residents.\(^5\)

This small town, which grew to about a thousand inhabitants by 1860, is the topic of this study. Most community studies, especially of the South, deal with counties or small geographic regions within a particular state. For example, Orville Vernon Burton's *In My Father's

\(^5\)Ibid., and Skipwith, *Sketches of the Pioneers*, pp 58-59. Skipwith incorrectly identifies John Bostwick (Sarah's husband) and George Sebor as the founders of Clinton. Mary Ann Bostwick Dunn, John and Susan's daughter, wrote to Skipwith after the original publication of his article on Clinton, asserting that John Bostwick alone was the "energetic business man" who fought to have the town located on the east side of the Comite River, which divides the parish roughly in half (M. A. Dunn to Skipwith, Dec. 21, 1890, typescript provided by Anne Reiley Jones, of copy owned by the late Josie O'Brien, and Skipwith, pp. 37-38). She asserts that "Seeber"—called 'Sebor' by Skipwith—was Bostwick's son-in-law and architect. She admits that James Holmes "was associated with my father in the sales of the lots," but she doesn't specify how. However, court records clearly indicate that James Holmes and Susan Bostwick were partners in this real estate venture. These records, dated 1828, were for the transfer of much of the property they still owned within Clinton's boundaries to Laura Ann and Mary Ann, the Bostwick children (East Feliciana Parish Conveyance Records, Book A, pp. 409-417). It seems likely that this transfer was a legal maneuver, perhaps to avoid taxes or debts; it is therefore also possible that Susan Bostwick was owner of the land on paper only, again as a means for John Bostwick to avoid some pecuniary embarrassment. Regardless, legally, Susan Bostwick and James Holmes were the owners of the land upon which Clinton was founded. According to his daughter, John Bostwick built the town's first house, owned the first store, and also owned a hotel.
House are Many Mansions looks at Edgefield, South Carolina; Robert Kenzer's *Kinship and Neighborhood in a Southern Community* examines Orange County, North Carolina; and John Mack Faragher's *Sugar Creek* explores the creation of a community on the Illinois prairie. All are masterful studies that provide insight into the formation of kinship networks, the interaction of social classes, and the development of community in those regions. The towns that grew up in those communities drift in and out of the story, having supporting roles at best with little development of character.

Historians and laymen alike tend to associate small-town life with New England, particularly during the colonial period, replete with images of the village green flanked by a stately town hall and a towering white church steeple. Kenneth Lockridge's classic *A New England Town* and Mary Ryan's masterwork *Cradle of the Middle Class* exemplify some of the town-based histories of northern states. Most southern historical studies have dealt with the plantation system, the white elite, slavery, or the white plainfolk. When southern historians study non-rural areas, the focus tends to be on the largest urban areas such as Charleston,

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Savannah, or New Orleans, though there are some exceptions. J. William Harris examines the interaction among white planters and plainfolk and how slavery affected those relationships in the small city of Augusta, Georgia, and its hinterland. Other historians have used small cities as a point of departure to study a particular aspect of southern life, such as Suzanne Lebsock's study of the world of women in Petersburg, Virginia.⁸

Small towns—those with a population of about 500 to 1500 inhabitants—have been largely ignored, relegated to local historical societies and genealogists. This is due, in part, to a misunderstanding of the pervasiveness of small towns in the South. Nearly every county or parish in every state had a courthouse town. With professionals, artisans, merchants, and public accommodations to service those who lived in the area, it is likely that most people visited such small towns regularly, even if they did not reside within corporation limits. Doubtless hundreds of thousands of nineteenth-century southerners frequented such villages, while rarely, if ever, venturing to one of the larger cities that ringed the South. Even public records tend to underestimate the number of small towns. The federal census compendium of 1860, for example, undercounts the number of small towns in

Louisiana by 17 percent, simply by neglecting the three villages in East Feliciana.⁹

But towns fulfilled an important and unique role in southern life. After examining archival resources, public documents, and the architecture of the town of Clinton, two distinct but interlocking themes emerge. The first is the quest for order, respectability, and prosperity. The second is an outgrowth of those three goals, in that the social and economic infrastructure created by the townsfolk's activities acted as a catalyst to produce interactions that would not otherwise have occurred in a predominantly rural setting. Social, economic, and political interactions in small towns took place on a day-to-day and face-to-face basis. Village life allowed the citizens to interact with those outside their family groups and immediate neighbors for a broader social and economic base than country-dwellers yet did not provide the anonymity of large cities like New Orleans or Charleston.

The first two chapters describe life in Clinton during the thirty-five years before the Civil War. Town dwellers in Clinton created a vibrant economy by drawing in agricultural produce not only from East Feliciana but also from Amite County, Mississippi, to the north, and St. Helena Parish to the east. Entrepreneurs aggressively worked to have Clinton become the economic center of its region, by building railroads and smooth plank roads and by concocting business

⁹Those three towns are Clinton, Jackson (the former parish seat of the old undivided Parish of Feliciana), and the river town Port Hudson.
schemes to bring more money into the town.\textsuperscript{10} As produce and money flowed in, so too did the people. Providing restaurants and liveries, churches and pool halls, lawyers and blacksmiths, the town attracted thousands of visitors each year, even though the tally of residents remained only about a thousand. Because of the small population and constant interaction with whites, the town's 300-odd slaves found it difficult to create their own distinct society. In fact, very little information remains about the lives of these Clintonians. In Chapter Two, disparate bits of information are culled together and supplemented by statistical data that portrays the patterns of slaveholding by local residents. Together, this information generates a fleeting glimpse of the slave culture that undoubtedly thrived in the town.

Chapter Three describes the way that Clinton was affected by the Civil War. The three decades of constant change and growth were brought to a dramatic halt. Ironically, those years of prosperity generated an infrastructure and population base that made the town attractive to the armies on both sides of the conflict and, consequently, led to its partial destruction.

Following the Civil War the white-dominated environment in Clinton remained stifling for the freed slaves, as white-supremacist attitudes prohibited free development of distinct and independent social and political organizations, with the

\textsuperscript{10}That road, Louisiana Hwy. 67, is still in use today between Clinton and Baton Rouge and is known locally as Plank Road.
notable exception of black churches and the reestablishment of African-American families. Chapter Four illustrates that the freedmen of the area carved out their own independent space wherever, whenever, and however possible, and in ingenious ways. The entrepreneurial spirit of the town's wealthy elite did not die after the war, but the relative poverty of the Reconstruction era due to the loss of thousands of dollars in slave property dampened the efficacy of their schemes. Near the end of Reconstruction, they blamed the freed population for their economic and social troubles, and the African American residents of Clinton faced the full brunt of whites' frustrations. The concluding chapter demonstrates how blacks who participated in political activities became scapegoats for all of the parish's problems, and how the fear generated by whites who terrorized blacks created more problems than it solved.
Chapter 1
Creating Antebellum Clinton

When Henry Marston, a younger son of a wealthy Massachusetts family, came to Louisiana in 1822 at the age of twenty-seven, the Parish of Feliciana was still very sparsely settled. But when the Parish was split in 1824 into East and West, the town of Clinton was carved out of the wilderness to create the new seat of justice. From a large tract of land in 1824 covered with trees and located near Pretty Creek, Clinton had grown into what one historian has categorized as a "fuddy-duddy town." No longer a frontier community by the coming of the Civil War, the town then had a full complement of churches, businesses, a railroad, and respectable residents. These respectable residents and enlightened entrepreneurs had turned this community into the business center for an area spanning thirty-miles or more to the north and east.

Early parish residents, such as Henry Marston, spent most of their time on their own plantations. Marston himself purchased a farm in February 1822 complete with 640 acres (20 under cultivation) and fewer than a dozen slaves. When the

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1Marston Diary, Sept. 1, 1874, Marston (Henry and Family) Papers, Louisiana State University, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collection.
2A version of chapter 2 of this dissertation was delivered at the Louisiana Historical Association conference in the mid-1990s. The commentator compared "fuddy-duddy" Clinton unfavorably to the more exciting exploits that occurred in Shreveport, Louisiana, which could still have been characterized as more representative of a frontier town in the 1850s.
young farmer needed to procure supplies for his bondsmen, he had to traverse three-quarters of the large parish to reach the port at Bayou Sara, located on the Mississippi River below the bluffs of St. Francisville. A planter who resided near Marston had a small store on his estate, but he was frequently away or did not carry the goods Marston desired to purchase. The young planter from Massachusetts made good use of his journeys to the river, however, and would stop at the parish seat to conduct legal affairs, such as registering the deed of his plantation. He occupied his time by working in the fields with his hands, visiting friends and neighbors, competing in marksmanship and hunting competitions, and attending the company muster of the local militia regiment. On June 15, 1825, Marston visited Clinton for the first time but was not impressed, and he continued to receive supplies from Bayou Sara. During the next six months, Marston recorded only one additional visit into the new town.

By the following year, however, Marston began paying more frequent visits to the new town. During March of 1826 the planter or one of his slaves went to Clinton at least three times for ploughs. Later that same year he went into town to resolve a legal dispute and to attend regimental

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3 Marston Diary, May 17, 26, June 8, 23, July 13, Aug. 11, 16, 21, Oct. 5, 6, 22, 1822. Jackson was roughly mid-way between St. Francisville and Marston's plantation. Marston complained about company musters: "I must say, that I do not believe a single man, knew more of the duty of a soldier after the review was over, than he did before," Oct. 28, 1822.

4 Marston frequently commented on his activities and experiences, but his record for that day simply noted "Visited our new seat of Justice for the first time." Had he been impressed with the town, he likely would have said so. Marston Diary, June 15, 20, July 16, Aug. 1, Nov. 30, 1825.
muster.  

Even if the town's resident population remained small, the amount of business transacted there continued to grow. The merchants in the village focused mainly on providing goods and services to smaller planters who lacked sufficient capital or credit to buy in large amounts directly from factors in New Orleans. Clinton would continue to serve this role throughout the nineteenth century, but once adequate transportation could be provided, the trade would soon become bi-directional. For larger orders in the 1820s and early 1830s, planters still relied on river transportation from New Orleans, and then overland from Bayou Sara, though as time passed, they turned more and more frequently to the shops in Clinton.  

But as planters increased their level of business activity in the village, more people moved in to provide necessary services, and the town grew. When Susan Bostwick and James Holmes donated small tracts of land for a Court House Square, a jail, and a communal spring, they prepared much of the surrounding land in orderly blocks divided into eight to eleven lots each. Looking at a plot map of Clinton, one is struck by the seemingly random directional placement of the lots in downtown Clinton, but upon further inspection it becomes clear that from the ground, the placement is quite

5Marston Diary, Mar. 1, 4, 31, Nov. 20, 27, Dec. 17, 18, 1826; Jan. 9, 1827.

6Marston Diary, Jan. 29, 1827 suggests a typical purchase from Bayou Sara: shipped four bales of cotton, "returned with two bbls of Pork (one for Mr E.W) one bag salt- two coils of bale rope (one for Mr W. W.) eight bolts of bagging (two for Mr W.W.) & sundry small articles for myself." See also, May 3, 28, Aug. 8, 13, 27, 1828.
neat. Every block around the courthouse has lots facing the main square, and where the flow of traffic did not fit the surveyed dimensions of the lots, time has corrected the pattern. Graded streets sixty feet wide criss-crossed the town, and wooden sidewalks would come to line them to allow for pedestrian traffic.

Throughout the antebellum period and beyond, residents and, later, the town council spent a great deal of time, effort, and money maintaining the streets and sidewalks of Clinton. All white males between eighteen and fifty who lived in Clinton, and black males between fifteen and sixty-five who lived or worked in Clinton, were required to work ten days per year for the upkeep of town streets or to purchase their service for a small fee. A yearly tax of five dollars replaced this direct service, and a committee comprised of the mayor, one alderman, and the town constable inspected the streets on a regular basis to ensure that they were well maintained. Eventually, the council decided to contract for the care of "all of the streets roads and bridges within the limits of the Corporation" rather than to have residents carry out those duties individually. The town

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7See Map No. 3. For lot direction changes, St. Helena Street offers a fine example. In Square 8 (south of St. Helena St., between Liberty and Church Streets), the plot map shows lots running east-west. Through the years, St. Helena Street developed into the town's Main Street, and so the buildings in that square all face St. Helena, which practically speaking, makes the lots run north-south. The courthouse is not in the center square when looking at the map, but it is on the highest point downtown.

8Town Council Minutes, June 21, 1855; Aug. 7, 1856; Jan. 24, June 17, Dec. 17, 1857; Mar. 29, Apr. 12, June 12, Sept. 23, 1858. Transcriptions of the council minutes courtesy of William DeMoss of the Clinton Police Department. Clinton was not formally incorporated until
leaders passed these ordinances out of a desire to provide
decent passageway to residents of the town. But the laws
were also intended to promote business by allowing convenient
travel into and out of the town when parish residents came in
for trade at the shops, for militia muster, or for court
days. Consequently, those who blocked traffic and created an
untidy appearance by tethering their horses to "any tree,
fence, ... or post" in the streets of Clinton were to be
fined two dollars per offense. The council went so far as to
remove the horse racks in the downtown area. Apparently, the
aldermen either received numerous complaints or realized that
business would be hindered if visitors were left without
adequate space to rest and water their horses, because only
one week later, the "removal of the horse racks was
indefinitely postponed."^9

As more white men moved into the parish with their
slaves to pursue cotton cultivation and chose to conduct
their business in Clinton, it generated a snowball effect of
immigration. Merchants, artisans, and professionals moved to
Clinton in order to supply the needs of a growing parish and
town population. Planters grew impatient with the extra
expense and delay of hauling manufactured items and bales of
cotton overland to the Bayou Sara in West Feliciana. In
fact, they began to experience many of the same problems that
residents in the western half of the Parish of Feliciana

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1852, consequently town council minutes are not available for the period
before 1854.

^9Town Council Minutes, June 24, July 1, 1857.
encountered in trying to get to the parish seat of Jackson, which prompted them to petition for separation in 1824. In 1830, for example, one of Henry Marston's slaves was detained in Bayou Sara "and also upset his wagon,--with more or less damage." Later that spring, he learned that one of his parcels shipped from Bayou Sara had been partially robbed of its contents.\(^\text{10}\)

Some of the larger planters of the area decided to ease their own shipping problems and increase the prosperity of their community. West Feliciana planter Edward McGehee opined that when muddied after a rain, Louisiana's dirt roads were "easy for a bird, practicable for a mule, but about impossible for anything on wheels." Planters soon cast their eyes on the newest innovation in transportation in the 1830s: the railroad. Incorporated by the Louisiana state legislature in 1833, the Clinton and Port Hudson Railroad (CPHRR) was capitalized at $100,000, with the potential to double investments. The railroad would eventually run for twenty-seven miles, including a short spur line to Jackson. Planned by the State Engineer and partially paid for by the state Board of Public Works, the railroad was to have a twenty-five year monopoly and tax exemption. Together with similar roads in the rural reaches of the state, such short lines formed 25 percent of Louisiana's antebellum railroads. Unlike later, more stable railroads that utilized a "T-shaped" rail nailed into crossties, CPHRR's tracks were made

\(^{10}\text{Marston Diary, Feb. 1, Apr. 14, 1830.}\)
of "strap-rails," which according to railroad historian Lawrence E. Estaville, Jr., were "vestiges of a cruder era" by the time of the Civil War. In this type of construction, thin iron strips were attached to a wooden rail. The strips often became deformed by the intense heat and pressure generated by passing railroad cars, and as such, the railroad was not entirely reliable. The rails underwent significant repairs and bridges were reinforced in 1850; the railroad's agent M. Harris boasted that "owing to its increased facilities for transportation, those who may desire to ship their Cotton by it, may feel the strongest assurance that their consignments will be transported to the River without encountering any delay whatever."\textsuperscript{11}

However, unreliable railroad service seemed more attractive to planters than hauling valuable cotton over treacherous roads. Even as the tracks provided an important service to the residents of Clinton and the surrounding area, due to the expenses involved with building the road, "it never did much" during its first decade; and the State of Louisiana laid claim to the road when company bonds and interest remained unpaid in 1841. It was sold at a sheriff's sale to local investors in the early 1850s, the state of Louisiana having lost over half a million dollars. By the

\textsuperscript{11}McGehee quote from Lawrence E. Estaville, Jr., Confederate Neckties: Louisiana Railroads in the Civil War (Ruston, La.: McGinty Publications) p. 81; see also pp. 4-5, 7-8, 10, 81-82, 90. Walter Frichard, ed., "A Forgotten Louisiana Engineer: G. W. R. Bayley and His 'History of the Railroads of Louisiana,' Louisiana Historical Quarterly (Oct. 1947), pp. 1123-25; M. Harris to "Dear Sir," Sept., 1850, Marston Papers, Box 1, fdr 10.
mid-1850s, however, the road began making money under the new management. A new engine lent an air of gaiety to the enterprise, and it was a frequent source of entertainment to travel to Port Hudson "on the cars." The creation of such infrastructure proved to be a double-edged sword for the residents of Clinton. On the one hand, the road fostered economic development by encouraging planters to bring their cotton into town to be shipped to the river. Therefore, a large percentage of the goods sold and purchased by residents of the parish were handled in Clinton. On the other hand, during the Civil War the railroad made Clinton very attractive as a shipping center for the Confederacy, and in turn, a target of the Union army. All but destroyed during the war, stockholders reorganized soon after the peace and rebuilt the railroad during Reconstruction. Although it was never wildly profitable, the Clinton and Port Hudson Railroad provided an important transportation resource to Clinton and its surrounding areas, evinced by the fact that eventually it became a part of the Louisville, New Orleans and Texas line and was still being operated as late as 1947.12

12 Port Hudson served as the entrepot between Clinton and New Orleans; over "30,000 bales of cotton, and 2,000 hogsheads of sugar" were shipped out of the town each year by 1851. Much of that passed through Clinton as well. Peacock, "Statistical and Historical Collection," p. 265; Pritchard, "A Forgotten Louisiana Engineer," p. 1124-25; Alexander Skarzinski purchased the railroad at the Sheriff's sale in March 1853, and sold it to stockholders in May of the same year. Clinton and Port Hudson Railroad Minute Book, 1852-1879, Louisiana State University, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collection; Henry Kirby Diary, passim, Taylor (Sereno) Papers, Louisiana State University, Louisiana and Lower Mississippi Valley Collection; Estaville, Confederate Neckties, pp. 8, 95.
Entrepreneurial planters bent on internal improvements also sought to build a railroad to Baton Rouge, and in fact, had the bed graded the distance of thirty miles. In his brief summary of the parish's attributes, James S. Peacock informed readers of *DeBow's Review* that "the rails were never laid, and it died an incipient death," replaced by a scheme for a plank road. The Baton Rouge and Clinton Plank Road Company was chartered in 1852 and company commissioners, including Henry Marston, began taking stock subscriptions.13 To this day, Louisiana Highway 67 bears the common name of "Plank Road" as a permanent testament to the drive of Clinton's planters and businessmen who desired to connect their small town to the larger world of enterprise and make Clinton a successful, prospering community.

The largest occupational group in Clinton during the antebellum period were skilled artisans. With a total parish-wide population of 14,000 people in 1850 (two-thirds of whom were slaves), artisans in Clinton supplied a large base with goods and services. To be sure, the largest plantations likely had blacksmiths, seamstresses, carpenters, and other tradespeople who supplied their fellow bondsmen with necessary items. But Clinton's eleven shoemakers doubtless provided their wares to the owners of local plantations. With eighteen carpenters, one might also surmise that Clinton was continuing to grow in 1860.

13Peacock, "Statistical and Historical Collection," p. 265; William S. Pike to Henry Marston, enclosing charter of BR&CPRCo. (missing), Sept. 10, 1852, Marston Papers, Box 2, fdr 12.
Business for carpenters throughout the parish must have been steady, as evinced by Obediah Thompson's ability to acquire enough land and slaves to document an occupational shift: from "carpenter" in 1850 to "planter" in 1860.\textsuperscript{14}

Table 1: Occupation of Males, 1860 and 1870\textsuperscript{15}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1860</th>
<th></th>
<th>1870</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farming</td>
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<td>4.1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercantile</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>30.4</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>20.4</td>
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<td>Professional</td>
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<td>17.6</td>
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<td>Skilled Labor</td>
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<td>33.9</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>26.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled Labor</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>22.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestics</td>
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<td>13</td>
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<td>2.9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Carpenters were, in fact, kept very busy throughout the antebellum period in Clinton. As planters managed to get

\textsuperscript{14} Peacock, "Statistical and Historical Collections," p. 266; 1850 and 1860 Censuses; L. M. Boatner Diary, Oct. 24, 1840, transcription courtesy of H. H. Forrester, original owned by Bertha Placimio. Boatner spent two days in Clinton and returned to his plantation, where "we gave out shoes to our negroes."

their plantations running efficiently and profitably, many chose to move into town for the social and cultural opportunities available. After the railroad was completed, which made shipping easier and allowed planters to do the majority of their business in Clinton rather than having to go to the small landing towns on the River, this change in location appeared even more attractive. Leaving overseers at their places in the country, men like Marston had commodious homes built in town. The 1840s saw a building boom in Clinton that has never really been matched, and the wealth of the planter and merchant classes left their imprint on the village that still remains. Clinton is known as one of the best community examples of Greek Revival architecture and still has its massive courthouse, complete with eight massive Doric columns on each side of its square verandah and an imposing copper-clad domed roof. The building rarely fails

Fig. 1. Late 19th-century view of downtown Clinton

16Image from East Feliciana Parish Sesquicentennial Committee, East Feliciana Parish, 1824-1974: "Land of Seven Springs and Seven Pastures" (n.p., 1974). The courthouse appears on the left. Note the row of large stores on the right and the large number of wagons with horses tethered to the courthouse fence.
to make pictorial accounts of Louisiana's antebellum architectural wonders.\textsuperscript{17}

Clinton attracted settlers because of its central location in a large cotton-producing region near the Mississippi River. Some residents managed to acquire very large estates, while many artisans and merchants who serviced the plantation communities attained middle class status by 1860. That year, census data differentiate and record the value of property in two distinct types: real and personal estates. Just over one-half of the adults who recorded the value of their estates had small aggregate wealth holdings (real and personal) of $5000 or less. This was fairly evenly divided between those of under $1000, those $1000 to $2499, and those between $2500 and $5000 indicating that at least among those who chose to record their estate value (only half did so) there was not a particularly large under class dominated by a tiny minority of wealthy men. To be sure, Clinton served as the principle residence of a large number of planters who left their plantations to be run by their adult children or overseers. Consequently, over 22 percent of Clinton's residents owned property valued at over $15,000; half of that number owned over $25,000 in property. The difference between the middle-class artisans and merchants who worked in Clinton and the planters who resided in town is determined by the value of slaves, which was listed in the personal estate column in the census. For example, Irish

\textsuperscript{17}See the epilogue and photo essay.
immigrant, cotton planter, and Judge John McVea was the wealthiest person in town, with $44,125 in real estate (1800 acres) and over $100,000 in personal property (97 slaves). Other attorneys maintained relatively high standards of living, particularly those who combined their legal activities with planting. Franklin Hardesty listed his occupation as "Planter & Atty" in 1860, and he had amassed $15,000 in 1100 acres of land and $70,000 invested in 81 slaves and other personal estate.  

Table 2: Wealth of Male Residents, 1860  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Real Estate</th>
<th>Prsn'l Estate</th>
<th>Total Estate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1-4999</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>29.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$1-499</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>$500-999</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$100-2499</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$2500-4999</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$5000-9999</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$10,000-14,999</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$15,000+</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Listed</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>58.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Although the table above includes only men, quite a few women acquired wealth under their own name, and some had accumulated a fairly large amount. Most of these women were

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18Joseph K. Menn, The Large Slaveholders of Louisiana, 1860, (New Orleans: Pelican, 1964). In order to be listed, the slaveholder must have owned at least 50 slaves; Hardesty and McVea were the only two residents of Clinton included. At least one other Clinton resident, Henry Marston, should have been included, but the census taker listed Marston's plantation and town slaves in two separate entries as he journeyed through the parish. Although the total number surpassed fifty, neither of the separate entries did so.

19Shaded areas are a breakdown of category one ($1-4999).
apparently widows who had probably inherited most of the value from their husbands' estates. Sarah Killian offers an excellent example. Living with her four daughters and one granddaughter, Killian possessed $25,000 worth of real estate and $12,000 in personal wealth.\footnote{During Reconstruction, Killian owned a hotel in downtown Clinton. The census does not indicate whether she was running the hotel in 1860.}

Pivotal to Clinton's prosperity were its many merchants, who formed the second largest occupational group in the village. In 1858 a business directory of the town called Clinton "one of the most important inland towns in Louisiana." The publishers of the directory counted twenty-five merchant houses, most dealing "in plantation supplies," but over seventy-five individuals and businesses were listed in its pages. The \textit{DeBow's Review} author James Peacock concluded that "indeed, there can be no doubt but there is a greater amount of business transacted in it, than any town of its size in the South."\footnote{A. Mygatt & Co's Business Directory "Clinton, Louisiana" (New Orleans, 1858), pp. 289-292; Peacock, "Statistical and Historical Collections," p. 265} By 1860 over 30 percent of all adult men in the town were engaged in a mercantile occupation as merchants or clerks. Even after the war, despite the economic loss of over three million dollars in slave property assets, almost 29 percent of adult white males remained in such jobs.\footnote{1860 Census, 1870 Census. If the newly freed slaves are included in the statistical analysis of occupation in 1870, only 20 percent were involved in mercantilistic activities. The high preponderance of unskilled labor among the African American population (22 percent of all adult males regardless of race) skewed the sample down. Therefore, for purposes of comparison before and after the war, figures for adult white males will be used unless otherwise specified.}
The key to the success of the large number of merchant houses and skilled artisans was immigration. Of the eleven shoemakers listed in the 1850 census, ten hailed from the German states, the remaining one from Switzerland. German immigrants were particularly well represented among Clinton's merchants as well, and many of them were Jewish. In his study of American Jewish communities, *The Eternal Stranger*, Benjamin Kaplan devotes one chapter to the community located in Clinton. Although Kaplan estimated 1845 to be the earliest date of arrival of German Jews, the diary of Mississippi planter L. M. Boater recorded their presence at least five years earlier. In his study of Jewish business in Louisiana, Elliott Ashkenazi discovered that many German Jewish immigrants tended to come from the same small Bavarian towns, and settled near relatives in Louisiana's towns and villages. These relatives frequently helped the young immigrants become established in business. The newcomers often became small-time merchants because their skills in this trade were more useful in a slave economy than were those of common day-laborers or subsistence farmers. Following a typical pattern of stem migration, individuals came to Clinton with a small amount of capital and began a peddling operation. Once they had generated enough money and a name for reliability, many of the Jewish immigrants opened their own merchant house in Clinton. Then other family members could be brought to the town to continue a more moderate peddling route. The pattern of stem migration is
supported by the large number of Jewish residents with a limited number of surnames. The vast majority of headstones in Clinton's Jewish cemetery bear the names of Adler, Bloom, Mayer (Meyer), Levy (Levi), Dryfus, Oppenheimer, Heyman, Block, and Wolf. Continuing this pattern, one of the wealthiest merchants, Abraham Levi, opened a cotton factorage in New Orleans in the late 1850s, leaving younger relatives to mind the store in Clinton.23

The Jewish community constituted a significant minority of the population, which makes Clinton unrepresentative of most small towns in the South. Although they never organized a synagogue, the community remained cohesive throughout the nineteenth century to the extent that even in 1876 Jewish merchants were both still devoted to their faith and secure enough with their position in the community to close their stores for Rosh Hashana, the Jewish new year. Kaplan found that of 960 residents of the town in 1900, nearly one-half (486) were foreign-born or first-generation children of immigrants, and he estimated that most of them were Jewish. This figure certainly overestimates the Jewish portion of the population. His count of 85 individuals in 1890 is closer to the mark, though that is probably an undercount. There were a number of Catholic German immigrants to Clinton as well.

and many of them were skilled artisans. In fact, 42 percent of the adult male population in Clinton were born overseas, the majority in the German states. Fully one-quarter of the white men in Clinton spoke German as their native language, and many of those were Jewish. Although unusual for small southern towns, this distinction likens Clinton to her larger cousins such as Savannah and New Orleans, where Jewish communities thrived on the trade generated by planters and farmers in the interior. Perhaps this demonstrates that the level of trade in Clinton was high relative to the population of the town, in order to attract such a large and lively merchant corps.

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24 The vast majority of German immigrants in Clinton hailed from Bavaria (24 total) and Baden (22 total); Manuscript Census, 1860. Kaplan, *Eternal Stranger*, p. 81-85; and Ben Kaplan, "A Study of Jewish Community Life in Three Louisiana Towns," 2 *The Southwestern Louisiana Journal* (Jan. 1958) pp. 50-64. Kaplan also suggests that they remained so cohesive due at least in part to marrying within their faith. He concludes "that the Jews in Clinton kept their Jewish identity as individuals, but as a group, there was very little indication of Jewish life and activity," p. 86. I would argue that maintaining an individual Jewish identity in a region with a significant Protestant majority constituted a de facto Jewish community. Kaplan himself notes that only after the Jewish families left Clinton after the turn of the century did young people begin to marry outside their own faith, p. 85. However, the headstones at the Jewish Cemetery in Clinton possibly demonstrate that the Jews in Clinton had begun to suffer in their faith from lack of an organized "Jewish communal life." Translated by Rabbi Yakov Polatsek, Executive Director of Torch: Torah and Outreach Resource of Houston, the headstones indicate a significant lack of sophistication or understanding of Hebrew. There are numerous grammatical and spelling errors in the Hebrew text on the markers, which Rabbi Polatsek suggests is very rare even in old Jewish cemeteries around the world. Perhaps these errors are due to the absence of a synagogue (the nearest was in St. Francisville) and hence instruction in Hebrew. Rabbi Polatsek suggested that the fault may in fact lie with commercial headstone companies in New Orleans, which possibly copied Hebrew symbols onto the marker without understanding the text. Personal interview with Rabbi Yakov Polatsek, Houston, Texas, May, 2002. Marston Diary, Sept. 19, 1876. Marston lists ten stores that were closed including "A. Mayer & Bros- Worms, B. Meyer, Meyer & bro"-—Israel, Diez, Weil, Hyman, Caro and Block."
The occupations of Clinton's citizens reflected that the town was not only the economic center of the parish, but also the judicial seat. Making up the largest professional group in town, thirteen attorneys called Clinton home, as well as the district attorney and the district court judge. The parish was renowned for the quality of the bar located there, and the attorneys often rode the circuit, serving clients in both Felicianas, East Baton Rouge, and St. Helena. James Peacock informed the readers of DeBow's Review, "it would seem invidious to particularize, but it has been acknowledged that no town can boast of an able set of men in every respect." Other professionals included four physicians, or

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one per 170 white residents of Clinton. This figure compares favorably to the state-wide ratio, which was one doctor per 568 inhabitants. Other physicians also resided in the rural areas of the parish and in Jackson.

A number of young men boarded with families not their own, perhaps in a kind of apprentice relationship. True to Clinton's eye for business, a number of these arrangements constituted clerks who lived with merchants. Most of these young men were in their teens or early twenties, had likely finished school, and were learning the trade of trade.

Living arrangements such as merchant apprenticeships created a different household arrangement in southern small towns compared with towns in the North. In Clinton on the eve of the Civil War, the average household contained 5.2 people. This average is consistent with the average size that family historian Mary Ryan discovered in two New York communities: 5.3 in Whitestown and 5.1 in Utica.26 Although Clinton included nine households with only one resident and another eleven with only two, there were seven households with over ten people in the town. The largest household was that of one local hotel keeper, Mrs. J. Mansker, containing Mrs. Mansker, her six children, and ten boarders. Although Clinton had become a well-established town by 1860, the large number of individuals living in boarding houses indicated that some of the town's population remained fairly unsettled.

No longer the frontier, Clinton had a number of nice middle-

26Ryan, Cradle of the Middle Class, p. 249. Ryan's averages for Whitestown and Utica are also for 1860.
class homes, but not all residents of the town were able to afford such accommodations.

In her study of families in communities in Oneida County, New York, Ryan examined not only the size of local households but also the form they took. She borrowed John Frost’s taxonomy from his own family study of Whitestown and divided households into five types: Simple Nuclear; Extended; Nuclear and Servants, Apprentices; Nuclear and Boarders; Combination (servants, boarders, extended kin).²⁷

Although the figures for Whitestown and Clinton are fairly comparable, they are not exact. In both cases, the simple nuclear households are the predominant type, but more so in Whitestown than in Clinton. The largest difference arose in the Nuclear and Boarders category: 23.5 percent of Clinton’s households met those criteria, compared with only

²⁷John Frost, "Families Within the Boundaries of the United Society of Whitestown, April 1813–July 1816," Manuscript Schedules (New York State census, 1855–1865); table located in Ryan, Cradle of the Middle Class, p. 249. The simple nuclear household contained one single family of two generations; the extended household included families of three or more generations, or two generations when family members present were not a part of the immediate family. The other classifications are self explanatory. One problem in tabulating this sort of data is that the census does not list familial relationships until 1880. It is therefore sometimes difficult to determine whether a child was a member of a particular family or a servant/apprentice. For example, in Household sixty-nine of the listing in Clinton for 1860, The Boehms had two children of their own. But included in their home was Otto Weldt, four years old. Was he an orphaned nephew or friend? Considering the child’s age, it was highly unlikely that he was an apprentice, so was listed in the Extended family category. A similar difficulty arose with the Green family (household 51). Mary A. and William H. Yarbrough, aged 16 and 14, lived with the Greens. It was impossible to determine if they were guests or apprentices, but based on their age, I placed them in the latter category. Frost provided data for 1855 and 1865. For the purposes of this comparison, I used the pre-war figures.

The designations included in the table refer to white households only. If slaves were included in the calculations, the proportion in the "Nuclear and Servants" and "Combination" categories would have been more significant. See Chapter 2.
10.7 percent in Whitestown. Again, this is likely due to the longer term of residence in the northern community, whereas Clinton was still a recent settlement in comparison.

Table 3: Types of Household

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Whitestown, NY</th>
<th>Clinton, LA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1855</td>
<td>1860</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear</td>
<td>65.1</td>
<td>53.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear, Servants/Apprentices</td>
<td>8.47</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear, Boarders</td>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combination</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Another factor indicating the slightly unsettled state of the population is the age and gender imbalance in the community. In 1860, males slightly outnumbered females among Clinton's residents. Men outnumbered women in every adult age cohort, and as age increases, so too did the proportion of men to women. Frontier areas typically had an over-abundance of adult males, as indicated by Clinton's older population. In the younger age cohorts, however, the natural increase of Clinton's married couples created a more balanced gender ratio. In fact, due to the establishment of several girls' boarding schools in Clinton during the antebellum period, girls outnumbered boys in the village by nearly 10 percent. The large number of school children further enhanced the relative youth of the village: fewer than 5 percent of the town in 1860 had reached the age of fifty, and the number rises to only 13 percent for individuals over
forty. But East Feliciana would eventually become known as a healthy region that contributed significantly to the longevity of its citizens. In 1890 local historian and Clinton booster Henry Skipwith gathered several lists of over two hundred residents of the parish who had lived past the age of 70. The youthfulness of the population in Clinton during the antebellum period likely offered an advantage during the town's early years, as energetic young men and women carved a busy community out of the wilderness. During the Civil War, however, this turned into a disadvantage when so many young men were called off to fight, and indeed the postwar population demonstrated the effects of war.\footnote{Skipwith, \textit{Sketches of the Pioneers}, pp. 25-28. For postwar white male population changes, see Chapter 5.}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th></th>
<th>Totals</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>%</td>
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<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
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<td>21-30</td>
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<td>98</td>
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<td>41-50</td>
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<td>10.0</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
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<td>51-60</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>3.9</td>
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<td>60+</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>0.4</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>673</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In an effort to combat the gender imbalance in early East Feliciana, some newly arrived bachelor planters and farmers traveled significant distances to court marriageable women. Henry Marston, for example, married A. F. Johnson,
twelve years his junior, whose family lived across the state line in Mississippi.\textsuperscript{29} As might be expected, then, most of the women who called Clinton home were born in Louisiana and Mississippi. In fact, 60 percent of all adult women were born in the states of the deep South. In comparison, only 37 percent of adult males were born in those same states. The male population of Clinton in 1860 was indicative of the expansion of cotton cultivation into the old southwest during the 1830s and 1840s. While 22 percent were born in Louisiana, over 20 percent were born in other southern states, and 15 percent listed the place of their nativity as being a northern state. Nearly two-fifths of the town's men were foreign-born. The majority of immigrants came from the German states, and the next largest contingent from various British possessions, particularly Ireland, placed a distant second.\textsuperscript{30}

Table 5: Birthplace, by Age and Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>United States</th>
<th>Adult Men</th>
<th>Adult Women</th>
<th>Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louisiana</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper South</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deep South</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North</td>
<td>27</td>
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<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sub-total</td>
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<td>115</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Foreign</th>
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<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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\textsuperscript{29} Marston Diary, Jan. 24, 1828.
\textsuperscript{30} See pp. 14-15, above.
But during the earliest days of settlement in Clinton, the town provided many more enticements than just commercial or court affairs. Coming to town often provided country dwellers with social activities and companionship that they otherwise lacked. For example, residents of Clinton founded a debating society to offer intellectual stimulation for well-read planters. The erudite Henry Marston was admitted to the society only eighteen months after he first stepped foot within the town limits, and he attended meetings regularly every fortnight. In contrast, the horsetrack was a traditional site for bonding among the male members of a community, and no doubt the locals were jubilant with the victory of a local pony over a horse brought down from Natchez, Mississippi, for the competition. Other social opportunities occurred occasionally, and town- and country-dwellers alike participated in such activities as singing schools. By late spring 1827, going to Clinton for supplies or socializing had become a commonplace event for planters who lived in the surrounding area.\textsuperscript{31}

Small southern towns provided several cultural benefits on a grander scale to those living in the area than individuals living in a purely rural setting might otherwise have been unable to take advantage of. The town of Clinton offered not only a relatively large concentration of people, but also a central meeting point for those who lived in the country. This created an economy of scale in population that

\textsuperscript{31}Marston Diary, Feb. 1, 6, 15, Mar. 10, 19, 24, Apr. 7, May 17, 25, June 12, 1827.
fostered institutions such as schools, fraternal organizations, and churches, and they were quite well regarded by those who participated.

Over 130 years after the founding of Clinton's first schools, a short article in a New Orleans magazine printed for the riders of public transportation that city asked, "Did You Know? ... The record [of educational development] is lost in most communities, but here and there the past reveals itself even as a mountain peak protruding above the ocean proves the solid depths beneath." The educational peak revealed in the Transit Riders Digest involved the transition from tuition-based schools to public schools in Clinton. The author particularly praised the heroic efforts of teacher Sally Munday, whose private academy was absorbed into the Louisiana Public School system in 1904.32

The earliest schools in Louisiana, however, were actually provided for during the first session of the Louisiana territorial legislature in 1805 by an act that allowed localities to sponsor lotteries to raise school funds. The legislature changed the plan several times over the next few decades in order to foster the establishment of educational institutions but to no avail, and few schools were created under the rubric of the state system of education. The state did provide appropriations to existing schools with the stipulation that they also provide a free education to the children of families who could not afford to

participate in the lotteries. The first academy in Clinton was established as early as January 1826. Several citizens drew up a set of regulations, which required semi-annual examinations of both male and female students but allowed only male students to participate in the public exhibition. Thomas F. Sale's contract as teacher required him to teach "spelling, reading, writing, arithmetick [sic] and, english grammar, with most of the branches of polite literature usually taught in Grammar Schools." Sale's payment came by subscription, but those individuals who "subscribe more than they can make with their own" children had the "liberty of sending others to make it up." The school was apparently organized under the early quasi-state supported system with five men who sat as a board of trustees to oversee the school as the law required, including the dynamic Henry Marston. For five years, the school received state subsidies, but for most of its existence the school functioned by charging tuition fees. It remained open, educating the young women of Clinton almost continually during the nineteenth century. Elizabeth Brown complained of her course work: "I have to study very hard at school[.] I get up at five o'clock in the morning and study until bedtime[.] My studies this year are Astronomy, Chemistry, History Philosophy Grammar, Arithmetic besides others." Excepting six years during Reconstruction,

33James William Mobley, "The Academy Movement in Louisiana," 30 Louisiana Historical Quarterly (July 1947) pp. 744-747. This work was completed as a Master's Thesis at Louisiana State University. Mobley served as East Feliciana Parish superintendent of education, and so a significant portion of his thesis is devoted to schools there.
the directors of the school persevered until the state took it over in 1904. This was the school run by the inestimable Sally Munday that was so highly touted in the New Orleans transit magazine.34

Beginning in 1833, the state legislature adopted a new program whereby subsidies were awarded directly to individuals who opened schools rather than to a parish committee, and many people took advantage of the opportunities thus presented until the legislature stopped the subsidies in 1842. The Clinton Female Academy took advantage of state subsidies for approximately six years. Many academies were unable to operate without state aid, so the persistence of the school at Clinton was a testament to its reputation for excellence.35

Not all local teachers were as dedicated as Sally Munday. Aaron Hulin informed friends in Ohio that he came to East Feliciana "solely to make cash, kalt!" Having fallen into debt, he found the position of schoolmaster to be very profitable. Paid two dollars per pupil, and boarded for free, Hulin expected to average at least fifty dollars per month. Hulin had the potential to earn a considerable amount

34Regulations for the Government of the Academy at Clinton, Jan. 2, 1826; Thomas P. Sale Contract, Dec. 22, 1827. Mobley indicates that the Clinton Female Academy was organized in 1828. It is unclear, but likely that Mobley refers to this academy "at Clinton," which was technically organized in 1826 but does not appear to have hired a teacher until 1828; Mobley, "Academy Movement in Louisiana," pp. 822-824. Brown does not specify which school she attended; based upon the date, however, one can only assume she studied at the Clinton Female Academy; E. A. Brown to [J. A. Collins], Apr. 20, 1844, Carpenter (George H. Family), Box 1, fdr 2, Louisiana State University, LLMVC.
35Mobley, "Academy Movement in Louisiana," pp. 749-751. According to Mobley, the Clinton school is one of only four that survived.
of money because the state of Louisiana experienced the flush economy of the early 1830s along with the rest of the nation. As people moved with their families into Louisiana in response to the cotton boom in the Old Southwest, the heads of families could afford the education they desired for their children. In fact, the number of academies statewide tripled between 1830 and the start of the Civil War.\textsuperscript{36}

About 1832, another tuition-supported girls' school added to the educational opportunities available in Clinton. Mary Wall, wife of a local Methodist minister who rode circuit, ran the school until 1872. She taught her classes at the Clinton Female Seminary in a small building near the Methodist Church that would one day be named in her memory. Wall and her assistant Clara Dunbar focused their energies on teaching "the common branches, algebra, geometry, Latin, English, rhetoric, composition, and Kane's \textit{Elements of Criticism}."\textsuperscript{37}

The Silliman Female Collegiate Institute opened its doors in 1852. Arguably more enduring than any other school in Clinton, with the possible exception of Munday's Academy, Silliman was named after its benefactor, planter William Silliman. The first principal was Sereno Taylor from Mississippi. As Taylor and his family moved into the school,

\textsuperscript{36}Hulin (Aaron) Letter, Dec. 16, 1835, Louisiana State University, LLMVC; MObley, "Academy Movement in Louisiana," p. 752.
\textsuperscript{37}MObley, "Academy Movement in Louisiana," p. 825; despite the name, a few boys were admitted to the school. The current Clinton United Methodist Church was named Mary Winans Wall Methodist Church when a new brick sanctuary was built in 1907. "Mary Winans Wall United Methodist Church," Church Histories, United Methodist Church, Louisiana Conference, available at Centenary College Archives.
workmen were busy trying to complete the second massive building and furnish the rooms. The first day of classes began on October 4, 1852, with a paltry eight students, but the enrollment grew almost daily and included boarders. Many of those new pupils were the children of Baptist congregants with whom Taylor had become acquainted during his organizational visits to Clinton before the institute opened. Among the new equipment provided at the new school were an organ, pianos, telescopes, and several items called simply "Apparatus" that were reported to be "an Electric Machine of great power, with suitable articles for experimenting. A superior Air Pump with necessary appendages. [and] A large Electro Magnetic machine."$^{38}$

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$^{38}$Sereno Taylor Diary, passim; "Annual Examination" program from Silliman Female Collegiate Institute, July 1855, Box 1, fdr 1, Hunter-Taylor Family Papers, Louisiana State University, LLMVC.

$^{39}$Lafayette Saunders built the Greek Revival building on the far left was built circa 1836 as a private residence. William Silliman built he
Less than two months after opening, Taylor hosted the academy's "First Public Examination," where the young ladies presented speeches, performed music, and faced quizzes on their year's studies. By the examination of July 1855, Silliman Female Collegiate Institute had grown to include over one hundred students and eight faculty. Besides organ and piano, students learned guitar, violin, harp, and accordion. Their studies included an ambitious program of "Reading, Defining, Elementary Arithmetic, English Grammar, Geography and Writing, Languages, Mathematics, Natural Science, Philosophy, History, government, and the Fine Arts."

The pupils worked eight to ten hours per day on their studies, all under the guidance of the principal whose motto was:

feed well—work briskly—recreate judiciously—avoid every meanness of your mis-schooled nature—reverence your Maker—honor your parents, and cultivate, vigorously and preservingly, all your physical, mental and moral capabilities for the glory of your Redeemer, and the benefit of your entire race.40

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middle building specifically for the school; it was rebuilt after being damaged by fire and then destroyed by a wind storm in 1857. The Silliman family donated the school to the Presbyterian Church in 1886. The building on the far right was completed in 1894 to serve as an auditorium. "Land of Seven Springs and Seven Pastures"; Mildred P. Worrell and Betty Lou Cain, Silliman, 2nd Edition (Clinton, LA: Pretty Creek Publishing, 2002); Marston Diary, May 23, June 16, 1857.

40Annual Examination program, Hunter-Taylor Papers. Taylor resigned only two months after the examination. His letters do not indicate exactly why, but he attempted to attract many of the students away from Silliman to a new school he founded in Mississippi City. He returned to Clinton during the Civil War (see Chapter 3). He was replaced by a Rev. Mr. McDonough, who came "very highly recommended," according to Trustee Henry Marston. Sereno Taylor to Stella and Eugene Hunter, Sept. 10, 1855; Sereno Taylor to [Stella Hunter], Sept. 25, 1855; Mary E. Taylor to [Stella Hunter] Feb. 2, 1856, Hunter-Taylor Papers; Marston Diary, Dec. 1, 1855.
The public examinations and concerts at Silliman, and at all the schools in Clinton, were a favored form of entertainment for many town residents. Although William Silliman donated a considerable portion of the money to establish the institute, it was organized as a stock company. The stockholders almost certainly appreciated these public performances not only for the entertainment value but also for the effect of free advertisement. The pupils who attended came from the finest families in Clinton and surrounding area. The Board of Trustees did not discriminate against the daughters of local Jewish merchants. Young women of the middle and planter classes rubbed elbows at Silliman, just as their fathers did in the streets and stores of Clinton.41

Several other schools appeared in Clinton before the Civil War. Eliza Mills opened a small school in 1855 at her commodious home known as Hope Terrace. Again, this school catered to a small cadre of young ladies whose family could afford the fees, and consequently it did not last through the deprivations of the Civil War. For the town's boys, several options were available in the 1850s. A Mr. Hill headed the Clinton Male Academy in 1856. The curriculum was apparently not as rigorous as that available at Silliman, and the headmaster did not consider public examinations de rigeur.

41For schools as entertainment, see for example, Marston Diary, June 1, 1855 (Silliman), July 26, 1856 (Mrs. Clifford's), July 29, 1856 (Centenary College in Jackson), Nov. 13, 1856 (Silliman); July 22, 1858 (Clifford's). Charter of the Silliman Collegiate Institute, [May, 1852], Marston Papers, Box 2, fdr 12.
Schoolmaster L. Dimbinsky, on the other hand, "was a great believer in exhibitions, never permitting his school to close without a long program in which practically ever pupil took part." Never a large school, many of the wealthiest planters in Clinton—including Henry Marston—left their sons' education to the Polish schoolteacher.42

Mrs. M. J. Clifford of the Feliciana Institute also required all of her pupils to read an original composition at the yearly examination in July. For $150 per session, Mrs. Clifford's scholars chose from an ambitious course of study that included all the traditional subjects plus "Physiology, Botany, Natural, Moral, and Intellectual Philosophy, ... Chemistry, Rhetoric, Elocution, French ... Music, Drawing, Painting, Needlework—plain and fancy—and Etiquette." Mrs. Clifford sought to produce well-educated, well-trained, and well-mannered women who had never been "allowed to be lost in the pursuit of studies never to be practiced at school, at home, or any where else."43 Regardless of where Clinton's children went to school, the record indicates that town residents were very proud of their educational institutions. These schools served as a mark of the town's wealth and refinement and generated considerable aplomb among Clinton's residents, bringing them one step closer to the renown and respectability they so craved.

42Mobley, "Academy Movement in Louisiana, pp. 828-829; Augustus East to [Mary East] June 26, July 9, 1856, Carpenter Papers, Box 1, fdr 2.
43"Prospectus of Feliciana Institute," Sept. 26, 1859, Knighton (Josiah, and Family) Papers, Merritt M. Shig Memorial Collection, Box 1, fdr 2, Louisiana State University, LLMVC.
While schools provided Clinton's children with a means of broadening their social interaction, the men in town found their own source of formalized socializing. Within two years of the town's founding, a group of Masons had gathered and petitioned the Grand Lodge of Mississippi for a charter. Not all of the men who joined the lodge lived in Clinton, but undoubtedly the men living in rural East Feliciana created their lodge in an effort to reclaim a bit of the older established civilizations they left behind when they moved to Louisiana. When Clinton was created, it provided an opportunity for a much closer central meeting place than either Jackson or St. Francisville. Due to splits within the state organization of Masonry, at one point during the late 1840s, there were in fact three separate lodges located in Clinton. The roots of these divisions likely grew in the fertile soils of New England, of southern states to the east, and of the principalities of Germany. As Masons immigrated to Clinton and its environs, each brought with them the traditions and sensibilities of their old home lodge. When the state Grand Lodge faced internal dissension over the various Rites within Masonry, these debates trickled down into local Masonic clubs. The Grand Lodge healed its breach in 1850, and two years later all Masons in Clinton had merged into Olive Lodge No. 52.44

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44H. H. Forrester, Jr., P.M., "Masonry in Clinton, Louisiana: A Brief History," manuscript approved by the organization, copy provided by author.
Olive Lodge met in a rented room above a local drugstore opposite the Courthouse Square. By 1859, however, the members had bought a considerable amount of town property downtown and contracted for the construction of a large three-story building that was to serve as lodge meeting hall, an academy for young men, and town hall. Paid for by issuing bonds, the imposing structure would not be completed before outbreak of the Civil War. Its first function, then, was as a hospital to Confederate war wounded, particularly during the siege of Port Hudson. Not until after the war did the building play host to school children, and many of the instructors were themselves Masons. The new building also served as a gathering place for the entire community when the lodge threw fancy-dress balls, suppers, and other entertainments. During the antebellum period, however, many of those social activities were held in the Courthouse, as it was the only public building large enough to accommodate such crowds. Unfortunately, after the war the proceeds of the academy were not enough to pay the bonds that were used to build the hall. When the Grand Lodge refused to help pay the debt, the building was relinquished to several bond holders, all Masons. The edifice continued to function as a school and lodge hall, but by the late 1890s it had become a cotton mill. Not built to withstand the strain of such machinery, the building was abandoned and destroyed during the Great Depression.  

Local men took advantage of the social opportunities offered not only by the Masons but also by the Independent Order of Odd Fellows. In fact, some men belonged to both secret fraternal organizations. Like the Masons, the Odd Fellows offered entertainment to local residents through balls and feasts. But fraternal organizations also provided benefits to members and their families, and evidence indicates that local lodges paid some benefits to members' widows or for the education of members' children. And like local schools, the lodges in Clinton were open to nearly all white men who desired to join. The roll includes the names of planters, merchants, and artisans, as well as Jews and Christians of all stripes. Therefore the Masons and Odd Fellows provided meaningful opportunities for the men of

829-831; Marston Diary, 1864, passim; Annie Sanderson Kilbourne, "War Times in and Around Clinton, Louisiana," 13 Louisiana Historical Quarterly (Jan. 1930) p. 66.
Clinton to commingle on a basis of equality regardless of religion or class.\textsuperscript{46}

Despite the potential for divisiveness, local churches also provided Clintonians with communal activities. Clinton was home to all four of the major Protestant denominations, namely, Methodist, Baptist, Presbyterian, and Episcopalian. The Methodist church was the first to be organized in East Feliciana, and it was serviced by circuit riders from Mississippi. Although the church was incorporated in 1847, the congregation was still served by circuit riders until 1857 when John Lusk became the first minister of the Clinton charge. Although open to the slaves who lived around the town, the Methodist church had few bond congregants who preferred to attend their own church.\textsuperscript{47}

The Presbyterian Church benefited from the generosity of William Silliman, benefactor of the Silliman Female Collegiate Institute. He provided nearly one-third of the total amount subscribed in 1856 to pay for the erection of a building. Henry Marston subscribed a smaller sum, although he was not a member of the congregation. Raised in the Unitarian tradition during his boyhood in New England, Marston held fast to his beliefs and occasionally scoffed

\textsuperscript{46}For example, A. B. Payne, I. D. Wall, I. L. Heyman, and A. Richert were all members of both fraternities. Forrester, "Masonry"; Independent Order of Odd Fellows Constitution and Account Book, Louisiana State University, LLMVC. Olive Lodge No. 52 currently has their own records dating to 1870 (from which Forrester wrote his account) and the I.O.O.F. records. Members voted not to allow access to the records of either organization for the purposes of research for this work.

\textsuperscript{47}Emma Lay Lane letter, Anderson (John Q.) Papers, Louisiana State University, LLMVC. See Chapter 2.
when ministers preached "on the Trinity—To my mind it was perfectly absurd." Out of step with the majority of churchgoers in Clinton, Marston did not have a church home. He therefore attended every church on a rotating basis. Several factors determined where Marston worshipped on any given Sunday: the Episcopal church often changed location, the Methodist church was served three out of four weeks per month, and the Baptist church enjoyed the membership of Marston's wife. If a traveling minister came to town, Marston likely attended his service, such as the discourse offered by a Reverend Hart of the F. W. Bible Society, who visited Clinton in June of 1857. The last week of October 1856 demonstrates well Marston's proclivities for church attendance. While the state Presbytery met in Clinton that week, he attended services every evening for six days; and he missed a seventh evening only because of rain. Four days later, he attended services at the Baptist church in the morning and the Methodist church in the evening. Although Mr. Marston was almost certainly an aberration—Mrs. Marston attended services only at her own Baptist church for the most part—it demonstrates Clinton's duality in the 1850s as an established and growing town while still remaining a small community. While there were several congregations in the village, several did not have their own buildings until late in the antebellum period or even after the war. Furthermore, even in the permanent churches, ministers were unable to hold services every week due to the responsibilities of riding
circuit—a responsibility that arose from the frontier-like conditions that still reigned in certain areas of the state during the antebellum period.\textsuperscript{48}

Episcopalians in Clinton first met for worship in 1842 and a decade later formed St. Andrew's. The Victorian gingerbread chapel was built in 1871 and is one of the most recognizable landmarks of Clinton's pantheon of buildings. St. Andrews's Church is a prime example of Clinton's ecumenicalism. Eliza Rhea Hardesty, who donated the land for the sanctuary building, was a member of the Baptist church. Several of the original stained-glass windows are purported to have been donated by Jewish merchants. And during the thirty years that St. Andrew's did not have its own church home, "early services were held in the parish Courthouse and in the Methodist and Presbyterian sanctuaries."\textsuperscript{49}

Furthermore, ecumenicalism among the town's residents, both Christian and Jewish, demonstrates the realities of nineteenth-century life, when religious services also served as a form of entertainment. Marston attended the Sunday school celebrations of various denominations whenever the opportunity arose. The 1856 celebration at the Baptist Church included prizes for the children and a dinner, which according to Marston "passed off[f] pleasantly."\textsuperscript{50}

\textsuperscript{48} Marston Diary, Nov. 21-30, 1856; June 21, 1857.
\textsuperscript{49} Mildred P. Worrell, "A History of the Episcopal Church in Clinton, Louisiana," presented Nov. 29, 1992 at St. Andrews Church, copy provided by the author.
\textsuperscript{50} Marston Diary, see for example, July 7, 1855 and July 5, 1856.
Churches also sponsored other activities such as a Junior Sons of Temperance organization. Adults formed a temperance club "composed of ladies & gentlemen" and took the name Washington Social Circle No. 5 in 1858. With the support of Clinton's Baptist and Methodist congregations, temperance gathered a significant following during the late 1850s. As part of their continuing effort to promote order and respectability, the town council presented a licensing law to voters in 1855. The measure passed and required shop owners who sold liquor by the class to purchase a license at the prohibitively high cost of one hundred dollars per year. The barkeep also had to present a petition signed by residents of the community, pay a $500 bond, and assent to "keep a quiet and orderly house" to receive his license. Clinton serviced a much larger population, however, than those who only resided within the corporation boundaries. Individuals continued to sell liquor and some allowed gambling. The town council reissued the laws prohibiting these activities and warned the wrong-doers to apply for the proper licenses or face prosecution by the District Attorney. The Aldermen were careful to single out druggists who had apparently been taking advantage of a loophole to sell liquor by the glass for "medicinal uses." Druggists who sold "spirits by the bottle and allow the same to be drank from day to day in their establishments by persons apparently in good health," ruled the council, were "acting in violation of the law." Ultimately, however, the town council was forced
to choose between order and respectability. The law remained in effect but "these laws are daily violated by the most respectable of our citizens and in the face of the officials of the town, state, and parish who manifest no disposition to execute the laws thereby suffering these violations to the great injury and prejudice of those who comply with the laws." Consequently, the aldermen decided to lower the licensing fees to a mere five to ten dollars, depending on the type of establishment. Having even moderate control over bars and gaming houses seemed preferable to both losing revenue and losing face when the retailers did not comply with the licensing laws.\(^5\)

The antebellum period witnessed a constant give and take among the goals of order, respectability, and prosperity in the town of Clinton. Town residents established various social organizations that brought them together to learn, to pray, and to play. At the same time investors and merchants developed commercial institutions that gave Clinton a strong economic base upon which to build their community. While these various facets of social and economic infra-structure allowed Clinton to grow and prosper during the antebellum period, these same features proved to be a detriment during the Civil War as they attracted combatants by the services they provided in the town. During Reconstruction, it proved nearly impossible to rebuild that same infrastructure.

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\(^5\)Marston Diary, July 5, 1856; Apr. 12, 19, 20, 1858. Town Council Minutes, Nov. 13 and 26, 1855; Aug. 20, and Dec. 20, 1857. Licenses cost $10 for selling liquor and maintaining card rooms; $5 for beer, billiard tables, and bowling alleys.
particularly after the end of slavery which before the war had provided Clinton's white inhabitants not only with a seemingly safe investment but also with the confidence of unopposed white superiority.
Chapter 2
The Viability of Small-Town Slavery

Though the center of a rural parish, Clinton itself was not rural; yet neither was it completely urban, as was New Orleans, only a day's travel away. This town, and other small towns across the state and region, occupied—demographically, economically, and culturally—a position between rural and urban. So too, did small-town slavery occupy a position between rural and urban slavery. Richard Wade, in his seminal work on urban slavery, Slavery in the Cities, studied the institution in ten of the South's largest cities but maintains that "in small as well as large towns ... slavery in the cities was fundamentally the same wherever it existed...."¹ Further, he argues that while early in the century the institution of slavery was growing in urban areas, by the 1850s it was in fact declining. But in making such assertions about small towns, Wade compromises his

¹Richard Wade, Slavery in the Cities, (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), ix. Wade studied Baltimore, Charleston, Louisville, Mobile, New Orleans, Norfolk, Richmond, St. Louis, Savannah, and Washington, D. C. The smallest was Norfolk with a population of 14,620 in 1860; the largest was New Orleans with 168,675 that same year. The Bureau of the Census currently identifies any area of 2,500 or more people as "urban," and less than 2,500 as rural (114th Ed. Statistical Abstract of the United States 1994 [Lanham, MD, 1994]). Historian Jacqueline Jones used the same designation for the Reconstruction period (Labor of Love, Labor of Sorrow [New York, 1985]). Slavery in Baton Rouge (with a total population of about 5,500), as described by William L. Richter, appears to be neither like Clinton, nor like New Orleans, but with more of the trappings of slavery in the latter city (*Slavery in Baton Rouge," 10 Louisiana History [Spring, 1969], pp. 127-45). For purposes of this paper, "urban" will refer to towns of 2,500 or more, "small town" will constitute towns of about 500 to 2,500 people, and "rural" will designate agricultural areas, e.g., plantations and farms.
argument. His monograph does not discuss small towns in the South, nor does his research reflect any study into the possibilities of uniqueness of the institution in smaller communities. While there may have been ten cities in the South with a population of 14,000 or more, there were many more small towns much closer in size to Clinton—probably at least one in every county in the South, i.e., the county seat. In the case of Clinton where slaves constituted one-third of the population, as well as other small Louisiana towns, Wade’s declension theory does not apply. To be sure, slavery in Clinton did mirror several urban patterns based on essential differences between life in a town of any size and life in an agricultural setting, including access to alcohol and a greater amount of free time. But much of the statistical evidence Wade uses to support his thesis does not correspond to the situation in Clinton during the 1850s. Furthermore, many of the dynamics of city life to which Wade ascribes the decline simply did not exist in this community, or at least were not as highly developed. So while Wade’s argument may indeed be true for the larger cities, it should not be pushed so far as to include smaller towns. Through an examination of Clinton, this study questions Wade’s casual disregard of potential differences between slavery in small towns and large (by southern standards) and examines and explains those differences.²

²In opposition to Wade’s thesis, Claudia Goldin has argued that an economic pull, rather than a sociological push is to blame for the decline in number of urban slaves. With the cotton boom of the 1850s
By 1850 Clinton was home to 1,027 people. Richard Wade argues that one of the clearest indications of the disintegration of urban slavery by this decade was a decline in the number of slaves. As cities grew, the proportion of slaves as a part of the population decreased, and in some cities the absolute number decreased as well; by 1860, only one in seven New Orleans residents was black. In the town of Clinton, however, the experience was quite the opposite. In 1850 there were 363 slaves in town, accounting for 35 percent of all residents. By 1860 the number of bondsmen reached 413 and increased to almost 40 percent of the population. Throughout the decade the town accounted for only 4 percent of the parish slave population, but the total investment in slaves was at least an estimated $146,000, or 30 percent of Clinton's reported wealth in 1850. Not only did their number

and the consequent rise in slave prices, city dwellers were unwilling or unable to outbid planters for slaves, particularly males, as there were cheaper alternative sources of labor. Claudia Goldin, *Urban Slavery in the American South, 1820-1860—A Quantitative History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976).

Even Clinton experienced some of this phenomenon of loss of male slaves, losing from 2 to 10 slaves in each ten-year age cohort between the 1850 and 1860 censuses, despite the relative dearth of alternative unskilled labor (e.g., 46 males ages 0-10 in 1850, but 36 males ages 11-20 in 1860, a net loss due to death or sale of 10 for that cohort). Overall, however, Clinton's slave population continued to grow throughout the 1850s, and less than one-half may be accounted for by additional births during the decade (even the overall number of males increased from 144 to 162 by 1860). This paper does not, therefore, quarrel with Goldin's economic analysis but seeks to find differences in the social make-up of cities and towns.

See Appendix for an explanation of all population figures and methods of data collection.

*Wade, Slavery in the Cities,* pp. 3, 16.

Joseph C. G. Kennedy, *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860* (4 vols.; Washington, D. C., 1866, reprint 1990), IV, p. 191; and Peacock, "Parish of East Feliciana, LA." p. 266. East Feliciana was home to 10,593 slaves—the eleventh largest slaveholding parish in the state. Peacock reported the investment in slaves as $3,834,927 for the parish.
increase, but slaves accounted for over 75 percent of the
town's population growth during the last decade of slavery.⁶

Table 6: Population of Four Louisiana Towns by Status

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<td>1850</td>
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<td>%</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>661</td>
<td>64.4</td>
<td>2262</td>
<td>63.6</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>363</td>
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<td>588</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>No.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>667</td>
<td>62.1</td>
<td>3693</td>
<td>68.0</td>
<td>980</td>
<td>69.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free Blks.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>488</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slaves</td>
<td>413</td>
<td>37.9</td>
<td>1247</td>
<td>23.0</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total:</td>
<td>1091</td>
<td>5428</td>
<td>1425</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>116375</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further evidence of the disintegration of slavery in the
cities, Wade suggests, may be found in the decreasing number
and percentage of slaveholders among the free population.⁷
Indeed, Clinton experienced a decline in the number of slave
owners, but by only two—hardly a significant decline. Even
so, the number of households with slaves remained fairly
constant throughout the decade.

Another indicator of the institution's decline as
described by Wade was a reduction in the size of individual
holdings. In New Orleans, for example, the number of slave

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⁶ Clinton's population grew by 64, 50 of whom were slaves.
⁷ Wade, *Slavery in the Cities*, pp. 20, 22.
owners with holdings of greater than ten fell by over one-half (from 237 to 103) from 1830 to 1860. In Clinton, however, the experience was again quite different from New Orleans. The number of people owning slaves in groups of ten or more increased by a third, from eight in 1850 to twelve in 1860. And by the latter date, over 42 percent of all slaves in the town lived in groups of ten or more slaves, up from about 35 percent the decade before. The greatest gain was made in groups of between ten and fourteen slaves, as in both 1850 and 1860, just over 25 percent lived in groups of fifteen or more. Therefore, while most slave owners owned five or fewer slaves, most blacks lived in groups of nine or more.\(^8\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size</th>
<th>1850 Holding</th>
<th>1850 Slaves</th>
<th>1860 Holding</th>
<th>1860 Slaves</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 &amp; less</td>
<td>50 69.4</td>
<td>128 35.3</td>
<td>44 61.1</td>
<td>118 29.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 &amp; less</td>
<td>59 81.9</td>
<td>192 52.8</td>
<td>55 76.4</td>
<td>194 47.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 &amp; more</td>
<td>8 11.1</td>
<td>126 34.7</td>
<td>12 16.7</td>
<td>174 42.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 &amp; more</td>
<td>5 6.9</td>
<td>93 25.6</td>
<td>6 8.3</td>
<td>109 26.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Throughout the 1850s, the top 10 percent of all slave owners held 29 percent of the town's bondsmen, a distribution of wealth in human property that is not terribly inequitable. Several of these larger slaveholders were among the political leaders of the town and the parish. Nine, or 38.1 percent,

\(^8\)Slaves in groups of over 30 were excluded from this analysis, as they probably worked on plantations while their masters lived in town.
of those identifiable as candidates for office or as parish or municipal officers either owned or had the benefit of the labor of at least five slaves in their household. This corresponds very closely with the number and size of holdings of all Clintonians: 37.5 percent of all slave owners held five or more slaves in 1850. Not all elected officials of those who ran for office, however, were slave owners. J. William Harris demonstrated that voters in the hinterlands around Augusta, Georgia, were willing to elect non-slaveholders to office, as were the residents of Clinton. An average of about 30 percent of elected officials in Harris's counties were non-slaveholders, and in Clinton they numbered 33 percent of candidates and officials.⁹

Clinton had a fairly vigorous two-party competition during the 1850s between the Democrats and the Whigs, the latter being supplanted by the American Party (Know-Nothings) by the time of the 1855 election. Slavery and abolitionism were very important topics in Clinton's politics. Two newspapers, the Know-Nothing American Patriot and the Feliciana Democrat, document the state election of 1855. Every issue of these papers includes at least one, and usually several, articles accusing the other party of being the true abolitionist faction. The American Patriot, for example, asserted "IT IS A FACT--That the Democrats in the free States have elected none but Abolitionists and Freesoilers"

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⁹Harris, Plain Folk and Gentry pp. 113-14, 208. These figures are not exactly comparable, however, as mine are for the town only and include candidates as well as those elected, while Harris's figures are for four counties and only elected officials.
to Congress. But the *Feliciana Democrat* countered that the Know-Nothings were "in league with the active enemies of the South."¹⁰ In turn, each tried to rebut the arguments made by the other paper. One accusation made by the *Patriot* was intended to be the ultimate charge to prove Democratic abolitionism: "Fred. Douglass, the negro lecturer on abolitionism, was opposed to Native Americanism," and claimed to be a Democrat. The "Old Fogy" newspaper, however, countered this by noting that he "may call himself a democrat...yet it would be difficult to make anyone in their senses really to believe it. ... We judge people by their acts, not by their professions."¹¹ Either the people believed both newspapers, or neither: the Democrats swept the state election among Clinton's voters, but the Know-Nothings captured the town council.

Hand-in-hand with southern Know-Nothings' fear of abolitionists was a dislike of certain classes of foreigners and northerners. The *Patriot* suggested that "the main support of Abolitionism in the North, is the influx of foreigners," and alleged that Parson Longstreet, a minister who had lately been dabbling in politics, "has proved conclusively" at a recent political barbecue "that foreigners are abolitionists, especially the English and Irish."¹² The editors, however, had little to fear from northerners. In

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¹⁰Clinton (La.) *American Patriot*, Aug. 11, 1855, hereinafter as *American Patriot*; and Clinton (La.) *Feliciana Democrat*, Apr. 14, 1855, hereinafter as *Feliciana Democrat*.


1850, for example, almost 40 percent (16 of 41) of Clinton's adult men who had been born in the North were slave owners, which accounted for over 20 percent of the slave-owning class. By 1860, only 36 percent of all northern-born Clinton men were slave owners, and they accounted for 14 percent of that group. Even so, the percentage of northern-born slaveholders corresponded very closely to their proportion of the population, as they represented only 15 percent in 1860.

Among the immigrant population, the Know-Nothing argument appears to have had at least some validity. In 1850, among adult males, foreigners accounted for 32 percent of the town's residents but represented only 13.5 percent of the slave owners. Only ten of the sixty-four foreign-born men owned slaves. The statistics did not increase over time. By 1860, while the percentage of foreign-born men among the population rose to 43 percent, they remained at only 14 percent of the slaveholders.

The xenophobic natives, however, probably would have been comforted to know that this low rate of slave ownership derived not from any innate abolitionist sentiment, but rather from economic reality. Of foreign immigrants who owned slaves, most were merchants, but those who did not own slaves were largely skilled artisans, especially shoemakers and blacksmiths. There were also a number of non-slave-owning merchants, but most were small-time and did not possess enough wealth to purchase many slaves; only two
foreign, non-slave-owning merchants in 1860 had aggregate wealth holdings of any significance (over $15,000).

Despite the Know-Nothings' fear of foreigners, they pointed out (after they lost the 1855 election) that they disliked only the poor, ignorant "vagabonds, criminals and other refuse" of foreign shores. They welcomed "good men, intelligent men, who throw off all allegiance whatever to every foreign power, prince or potentate...." Presumably, this included such illustrious citizens as Abraham Levi, a local merchant, owner of four slaves, and a German Jewish immigrant. The American Patriot editors occasionally thanked him for New Orleans or New York papers he brought to Clinton after his buying trips. It is ironic then, that the credit rating company R. G. Dun & Co. characterized Levi as "shrewd, illiterate, unprincipled, and successful."\textsuperscript{13} Apparently, this last characteristic alone was enough to distinguish one as a "good man" in the eyes of the Patriot editors.

One reason why the number of foreign-born slaveholders remained constant from 1850 to 1860 is that, as many immigrants came to Clinton, some of the more successful ones, like Abraham Levi, moved to New Orleans to establish cotton factorage firms. By retaining close contacts with the smaller town merchants, these newly established factors were able to virtually guarantee a market for their business.\textsuperscript{14}

\textsuperscript{13}American Patriot, Nov. 10 (quote) and Oct. 13, 1855; Ashkenazi, Business of Jews, pp. 1, 81 (2nd quote).
\textsuperscript{14}Ashkenazi, Business of Jews, pp. 70-75.
The local merchants in Clinton were more likely to own slaves than almost any other occupational group in town. One explanation is that by serving as supplier to planters in several parishes and Mississippi counties they were able to earn enough money to buy slaves. Another reason is that merchants would occasionally take a mortgage on slaves to pay for goods purchased on credit; in cases where the debtor defaulted, such merchants would thus become slave owners.\textsuperscript{15} Another large class of slave owners was attorneys. Henry Skipwith, nineteenth-century Clinton resident, journalist, and amateur historian, opined that "the East Feliciana bar stood unrivaled in Louisiana, as able, adroit and eloquent advocates," and their services were sought in many surrounding parishes, providing lucrative careers.\textsuperscript{16} In 1850 nine of the eleven lawyers in town owned slaves, and the remaining two lived in a household with slaves. The number of slave-owning lawyers remained constant throughout the decade, and twelve of the thirteen lawyers in 1860 benefited from slave labor in the household.

It is apparent that slaveholding was largely within the professional and commercial classes. Much like antebellum Alexandria, Louisiana, merchants and lawyers, plus physicians, hotel or tavern keepers, and widows accounted for the majority of the slave owners and owned a majority of the

\textsuperscript{15}\textit{Ibid.}, p.82. For a thorough discussion of the use of slaves as mortgage collateral in East Feliciana, see Richard H. Kilbourne, \textit{Debt, Investment, Slaves: Credit Relations in East Feliciana Parish, Louisiana, 1825-1885} (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1995).

\textsuperscript{16}\textit{Skipwith, Sketches of the Pioneers}, p. 60.
town's slaves. In Alexandria, 59 and 55 percent of slave owners in 1850 and 1860 respectively fell into one of those categories. In Clinton, those figures were 52 and 60 percent, and those five occupations owned 53 and 62 percent of the slaves. When absentee planters are added to the list in Clinton, the proportion jumps to 62 and 65 percent of all slave owners. Slaves owned by those six occupations increased from 70 in 1850 to 75 percent in 1860. This increase is probably due to an increased number of widows in the wake of the yellow fever epidemics in 1853 and 1855. Some few of the town's skilled artisans did own slaves, though this percentage decreased over time: they were 20 percent of the slave-owning cohort in 1850, but held only 12 percent of the slaves; by 1860, artisans represented only 7 percent of the slave owners and held only 3.4 percent of the slaves.  

With so few artisans in possession of slaves, it seems unlikely that many of Clinton's bondsmen were trained in those crafts. To be sure, to assign a particular trade to a slave is pure conjecture when using census material, but some inferences can be made. For example, James Gain, a carpenter, owned only one slave, an 18-year-old male. It is

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18 Skilled artisans in 1850: blacksmith, tailor, machinist, carpenter, engineer, watchmaker, printer, publisher; in 1860: architect, engineer, carpenter, mechanic (who owned ten of the fourteen slaves). What appears to have been "Gain" may in fact have been "Gair." Freedman John Gair is recorded in the 1870 census as a 28-year-old carpenter. Gair, who became a prominent leader among the Republicans in East Feliciana, may have been this 18-year-old slave.
possible that this slave was an apprentice carpenter. Other skilled slaves may have included two blacksmiths, a couple of seamstresses, and a few men who might have been trained as machinists or engineers.

Wade notes that in cities, many slave owners would hire their slaves out to those who did not, or could not, own slaves. Still others allowed slaves to hire their own time, with the owners requiring payments from their slaves' earned wages. Larger cities had elaborate systems for controlling how and where slaves were hired out. Hiring out weakened the master-slave relationship and allowed the slaves some measure of independence, and this, Wade suggests, contributed to the decline of slavery in cities.\textsuperscript{19}

Slave owners in and around Clinton did, on occasion, hire slaves out to friends and neighbors, particularly during the 1820s and early 1830s before the planting community became well established. In June 1849, Lawrence Boatner, a planter in Amite County, Mississippi, noted in his diary that his cook Judy traveled un successfully to Clinton to hire herself to the local hotel keeper, R. C. Carman. We find out six years later why she was turned down when Carman advertised to sell his "splendid cook," who was head cook at his hotel for many years. He asserted that "there is not a better Cook in the Parish."\textsuperscript{20} Henry Marston rented slaves for the year or borrowed them for a few days until he had

\textsuperscript{19}Wade, \textit{Slavery in the Cities}, 38-52.

\textsuperscript{20}"Diary of Lawrence Marion Boatner," transcription in hands of H. H. Forrester, Clinton, Louisiana, June 8, 1849; \textit{American Patriot}, Sept. 8, 1855.
acquired a large enough labor force on his own. Town Council minutes provided the town Sexton $3.50 for each grave dug by a black man. Even if the Sexton utilized his own slave, the bondsman was technically being temporarily hired to the town as a grave digger.\textsuperscript{21} There was not, however, a systematic or organized city-wide mechanism for hiring slaves. And unlike New Orleans, Clinton had no system of oversight, no central hiring place, no 'help wanted' or 'position sought' advertisements.

The Clinton and Port Hudson Railroad, which connected Clinton with the Mississippi River, was not listed as a slave owner, as Wade found to be true of railroads based in larger cities. But this company offers the only evidence that slave hire was carried out in the town of Clinton. The single newspaper advertisement for a local runaway or stolen slave came from the railroad: the owner sought Albert, who was "mortgaged to the Clinton-Port Hudson Rail Road Co.," and had disappeared. But more significantly, one of the conditions of being a stockholder in the company was to "furnish for the use of the Rode [sic] one good able bodied hand" for at least one month per year, and the owner would receive twenty-five dollars in compensation per month for the hire, or be charged a thirty-five dollar penalty for failure to comply. The rules clearly state that the agents in Clinton and Port

\textsuperscript{21}See, for example, Marston Diary, Jan. 2, 1826, Marston wrote, "Yesterday being New Year's day I sent Fody & Judy with their child home to their master Mr E. Woodward. I commence the year with my old force, say eight hands in the field and one in the house." Town Council Minutes, Oct. 15, 1859.
Hudson would have charge of the slaves and were to dictate the bondsman's duties. Those duties likely ranged from porterage to stoking the engine. The railroad hired at least nine slaves during November, 1853, as the company reorganized its operations under a new private stock company. In October 1855 CPHRR's engine exploded, killing the engineer. Local planter and railroad agent Henry Marston recorded the explosion in his diary but mentions only the engineer's death. The newspapers, however, tell us that the fireman (stoker) was a "negro" named Major. He "was on the engine at the time, but escaped with being somewhat scalded and is out of danger." The job could in fact be dangerous and some slave owners were unhappy with this arrangement, for example, George Neafus, who feared for his property's health as he traveled back and forth to Port Hudson where yellow fever was beginning to appear. As a company stockholder, however, Neafus convinced his fellow investors to pay one-half of the cost of slave insurance to protect his own investment in slave property.\(^{22}\) Therein lies the difference between traditional slave hire and the system instituted by the CPHRR—even as masters temporarily relinquished direct control over the daily actions of their slaves, they were the owners of the company and therefore dictated the manner in which

\(^{22}\)See Chapter 1. Feliciana Democrat, June 30, 1855; Wade, Slavery in the Cities, 36; Marston Diary, Oct. 13, 1855; Feliciana Democrat, Oct. 13, 1855; American Patriot, Oct. 20, 1855. Also, Clinton and Port Hudson Railroad Minute Book, 1852-1879, Sept. 16, Oct. 21, 1853, Sept. 15, Oct. 6, 13, 1854. The board of directors incrementally reduced the payments to owners for slave hire from $25 to $20 and by June, 1855 down to $15.
slaves were treated and the type of activities in which they could be occupied.

The only other indication of the practice of hiring out can be found in ordinances promulgated by the Town of Clinton: for instance, the law requiring slaves to maintain city streets applied to all slaves "residing, or employed" in town to do the work.\(^{23}\) Whether this was only form or reflected actual practice is impossible to know. Evidence suggests that the practice of hiring out did exist in Clinton but was not nearly developed to the extent it was in larger cities. Therefore, one of the causes that Wade suggests for the disintegration of urban slavery did not significantly impact the institution in this small town.

By far the largest number of slaves in Clinton worked as domestics. The only two privately placed advertisements for slaves were for Carman's cook and for "THREE likely young NEGRO WOMEN," one of whom was a cook and washer, and one a young girl who could be trained as a domestic.\(^{24}\) This pattern is reflected in the sex and age ratios of the slaves in Clinton since most domestics were women, and this is one area where Wade's assertion regarding the similarity of cities and small towns rings true. Females were 58 percent of the town's slave population in 1850 and increased slightly to 61 percent in 1860. For those slaves of working age (11 to 50), fully

\(^{23}\) *American Patriot*, July 7, 1855.
\(^{24}\) *Ibid.*, May 12, 1855.
59 percent were women, and the number grew by another 3 percent in 1860.

Table 8: Population of Clinton by Age, Gender, and Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Free White</th>
<th>Free Black</th>
<th>Slave</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1850</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-20</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-59</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
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<td>60+</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1860</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-20</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>187</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-30</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-40</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41-50</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51-59</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60+</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These slaves would have performed the same domestic drudgery that those of their lot did all over the South, whether urban or rural: cleaning, cooking, sewing, and washing, among other duties. In Clinton, additional work was assigned to washerwomen by the town council when they made it illegal "to wash linen, or clothes of any description ... within fifty yards of the public spring under a penalty of ten dollars for each and every offence [sic]."\(^{25}\) Thus, slave women not only were forced by their masters to wash, but were

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\(^{25}\)P. B. Samford, ed., *Police Jury Code of the Parish of East Feliciana, Louisiana, Containing a Digest of the State Ordinances, of the Parish of East Feliciana, Having the Force of Laws, up to May 1, 1859, Inclusive* (Clinton, La.: G. W. Reese, 1859), p.102.
forced by the town, for health reasons, to haul water far way from the spring.

The sex imbalance almost certainly created problems for slave marriages. There were over one-and-a-half times as many women as men among the slaves of marrying age throughout the decade (21 to 40 for this analysis, see Table 3), leaving many black women without a mate in town. Some of this discrepancy may have been alleviated by relationships with white men. Population figures among the free population show that men outnumbered women in this age group 149 to 107 in 1850, though the figures had almost reached parity by 1860 (120 to 113). The higher proportion of white males and black females makes interracial sex likely, though local newspapers did not voice any outrage at the potential "amalgamation" or "mongrelization."\textsuperscript{26} Wade discovered similar population patterns in the South's larger cities. The number of mulatto children is the best evidence of miscegenous relations, but this is not to suggest that every relationship produced a child, nor that every mixed blood child was the result of white-black sex. After all, the child of a mulatto parent and a black parent was itself a mulatto. In 1850, there were twenty-six mulatto children under ten years of age, accounting for 25 percent of all slave children in that age group. By 1860, the number had dropped to twenty-three

mulatto children under ten, only 18 percent of slave children.

Wade points out that there was a much higher percentage of mulattos in southern cities than in rural areas of the region. This phenomenon he attributes to the sex imbalance in cities, the "physical proximity" of whites and blacks, and the fact that the practice had become so commonplace that officials would not, or could not, enforce laws against it. As Wade suggests, interracial relationships may have contributed to the instability of slave family life in cities. At 13 percent, the percentage of mulattos among the black population in Clinton was roughly equal to the southern average but reached nowhere near the almost 50 percent of New Orleans. But clearly, as the ratio of white women to white men of marriageable age in Clinton reached parity, the number of interracial relationships (or evidence of them) decreased.

Aside from remaining single, the only other option available to Clinton's excess female slave population was what was called an "abroad marriage" with a plantation slave. Here, the small town slave had an advantage over her big city counterpart: Clinton, and other small towns, were more closely linked to the countryside than were large urban areas, and abroad marriages were only one example of this connection. William Green, one of the editors of the American Patriot, owned two female slaves each of whom had an infant child. As the children were not mulatto, and since

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27Wade, Slavery in the Cities, pp. 122-24, 258-62. The southern average was 12 percent, but Wade suggests that this is a low figure.
Green owned no male slaves, these two women must have had visiting husbands, either from another household in town or from a nearby plantation. Clinton lawyer and absentee planter J. G. Kilbourne owned Comite Plantation several miles outside of Clinton. The overseer, T. H. Sessions, noted every time the slave Jourdan went to Clinton to visit his wife. Jourdan was able to ride a mule into town on occasion, and he often stayed in town two nights, returning to Comite on Monday morning.\(^{28}\)

The Comite Plantation diary shows, however, that there were many more ties between plantation and town slaves than abroad marriages. Usually at least once a week, and oftentimes several times a week, the bondsmen would go into town. The errands varied and included delivering cotton to the railroad, picking up shoes from a local shoemaker, driving cows to and from their master's town lot, as well as exchanging foodstuffs with Kilbourne. It is also possible that some items were brought in to sell to townspeople who did not have plantations or kitchen gardens to provide them with produce. Slaves also journeyed into town or other personal reasons: in October 1857 Kilbourne's slave Saphroney went to Clinton "to see her sister."\(^{29}\)

The diary of Lawrence Boatner, a planter in Amite County Mississippi, also suggests just how often slaves were able to come into Clinton. Before his marriage, Boatner usually went

\(^{28}\)See, for example, "Comite Plantation Diary," Jan. 17, 1857, Kilbourne Family Papers.

in himself, but by the late 1840s he often sent his slave Croppo to have blacksmithing done or wagon repairs made, to make deliveries, and once "with some chickens," perhaps for sale. Croppo even occasionally remained overnight, though where he stayed is unknown.\textsuperscript{30} Furthermore, town slaves were sometimes able to get out of the hustle and travel out into the country.\textsuperscript{31}

Henry Marston's diary illustrates the owner's side of this town-country connection. Marston traveled out to his plantation at least once a week, and most weeks two or three times. Only rarely did he mention his slaves in his diary, and then mostly to note when they were sick or recovering from an illness. Such entries suggest that, like many other planters, Marston probably acted as doctor on occasion.\textsuperscript{32} Yet he looked on his slaves with a casual distance. He reported the death of his slaves with the same equanimity that he recorded the death of a mule or a local white citizen. Only once in his diary did Marston demonstrate any emotion with regard to a slave: it came at the death of his seamstress Luckey, "a most faithful servant."\textsuperscript{33} To the absentee planter, removed from the more labor-intensive system of agricultural

\textsuperscript{30}"Boatner Diary," March 3, 10, Sep. 6, 1848, and Nov. 9, 1849 (quote).
\textsuperscript{31}See, for example, "Comite Plantation Diary," Nov. 25, 27, Dec. 4, 1857.
\textsuperscript{32}"Marston Diary," see, for example, Oct. 13, Nov. 13, 1855, Jan. 6, 14, 1856; for doctoring, see Dec. 11, 1855. Town doctors were summoned for plantation slaves who were too sick for Marston's aid, June 21, 1855. Others had their slaves travel to town to see the doctor, see "Comite Plantation Diary," Nov. 25, 27, 1857.
\textsuperscript{33}Marston Diary, Jan. 1, June 3, 1856, quotation on Oct. 12, 1856. Joe Gray Taylor suggested that "it was when death struck that the white, who left the records, was most aware of his attachment to the black," \textit{Negro Slavery in Louisiana}, p. 231.
slavery, the plantation slave was and remained only an agricultural work beast. Domestics, however, were more real and better known to him. It is they who would therefore be known to future generations as "faithful servants."

Domestic slaves were often treated less harshly than were plantation slaves. As runaway slave Harriet Jacobs noted about town life in North Carolina, "[b]ad as are the laws and customs in a slaveholding community, [her owner] deemed it prudent to keep up some outward show of decency."34 Wade suggests that the manner of punishing slaves in cities was another contributing factor in weakening the master-slave relationship and the urban institution. The owner could send his slave to be whipped by a public official, for a fee, and legal infractions would be punished by city officials as a matter of public safety, all of which created a "diffusion of power" in the urban milieu.35 While the jailer in Clinton would be paid one dollar for whipping a slave, the Police Jury Code specified that the fee was for those "sentenced to the punishment"—there is no indication that the masters could send slaves to the jail to be whipped for private infractions. Furthermore, while crimes committed by slaves in Clinton fell under the parameters of public, rather than private, correction, it does not appear to have been so pervasive a problem as to seriously undermine the master-slave relationship. Only a few indictments in the Seventh

35 Wade, Slavery in the Cities, pp. 93-105.
District Court accuse slaves of serious crimes, and minor crimes were to be tried before two justices of the peace and four slave owners.\textsuperscript{36}

Wade suggests that slave trials meted out only summary justice since the system presumed guilt, and punishments could be quite harsh. Daniel J. Flanigan, however, demonstrated in his 1979 article on criminal procedure that southern states generally afforded more procedural rights to slaves than had previously been suggested. While Louisiana was among the states with fewer procedural safeguards, slaves were allowed counsel and had the right of appeal.\textsuperscript{37} In Clinton slave trials appear to have embodied a sense of fairness and justice. Small-town social dynamics would have dictated that the jury of slave owners not punish their neighbor's slave too harshly, lest his own valuable property receive the same treatment in the future. Furthermore, masters did on occasion obtain legal aid for their slaves accused of a crime. The account book of local attorney J. G. Kilbourne has several notations for defending slaves, and there were at least ten other lawyers in town who might also have defended slaves.\textsuperscript{38}

\textsuperscript{36}Samford, Police Jury Code, p. 25. For capital crimes, ten slave owners were required. Taylor, Negro Slavery in Louisiana, p. 206; and Feliciana Democrat, March 15, 1856. The only Justice of the Peace records I have been able to locate contain no slave cases.


In December 1855 Clinton's papers documented "some excitement during the past week, among our citizens" over one of the few slave crimes reported in their pages that year. This case reveals the interaction of the town's free citizens, their sense of justice, and hints at the private social life of the bondsmen. Two slaves, one of whom was named Allen and belonged to local merchant George A. Neafus, were caught stealing from several stores. During the trial Allen was defended by Kilbourne, who charged Neafus $20 for his services. The jury convicted Allen and his accomplice, and they were sentenced to jail for thirty days with a whipping every other day. Following their month-long confinement, they were "to wear an iron for one year." Henry Marston sat on the jury and recorded in his diary: "Tried Mr. Neafus' boy for stealing & corrected him." This entry seems to indicate that Marston felt the sentence to be a fair one. Yet this was the same sentence given to a slave, Aaron, five years before for committing murder, under mitigating circumstances.39

The newspapers indicate why Allen's sentence was comparatively harsh and why the local residents were so concerned: "white men were engaged with the negroes in their depredations, but as negro testimony cannot avail against

white men, such characters cannot be reached by the law." The severity of the sentence was almost certainly meant to serve as a deterrent to slaves and whites from forming "organized association[s], leagued together for felonious purposes." According to the local papers, the offending whites were promptly driven out of town.\textsuperscript{40}

Urban slaves were often out of the sight and control of their masters while they were about town running errands or stealing a bit of free time for themselves. During the course of transacting their master's business, slaves invariably made acquaintance with whites of all classes and, Wade suggests, free blacks. Lower-class whites, free people of color, and slaves formed a kind of urban subculture that allowed bondsmen a sort of quasi-freedom, which contributed to the disintegration of urban slavery.\textsuperscript{41} The case outlined above indicates that this subculture existed in Clinton, at least to a limited degree. Rather than letting this culture destroy slavery within the town, however, the slave-owning citizens tried to destroy it. Slaves were harshly punished, the lower-class whites were driven out, and warnings were issued to "others who are believed to be deeply engaged in trafficking [sic] illegally with slaves."\textsuperscript{42} This is not to say that the subculture was utterly wiped out, since slaves were remarkably able to create and maintain their own culture, regardless of their circumstances. But rather than

\textsuperscript{40}American Patriot, Dec. 15, 1855; and Feliciana Democrat, Dec. 15, 1855.
\textsuperscript{41}Wade, Slavery in the Cities, pp. 143-79.
\textsuperscript{42}American Patriot, Dec. 15, 1855.
merely editorializing about the dangers posed to slavery by these extra-legal associations, Clinton's citizens took active steps to demolish any signs of independent social interaction among their slaves and other groups in town.\textsuperscript{43}

Further, a subculture such as Wade described could not develop in Clinton to the full extent of that in large cities because the third major social group, free people of color, was almost non-existent. Only three lived in Clinton in 1850, and by 1860 the number had fallen to one. This man, Clark Shelvin, was a slave owner himself; they were probably his wife and child, but Louisiana law had made manumission almost impossible after 1857.\textsuperscript{44} In any event, the free colored were numerically insignificant in Clinton during the 1850s.

An important aspect of this culture that existed "beyond the master's eye," to use Wade's phrase, was the use of alcohol. Whites feared grog shops for several reasons: they believed that insurrectionary plots were planned there, that stolen goods from masters were disposed of there, and that interaction with lower-class whites there instilled in slaves

\textsuperscript{43}One notable exception was the existence of a black church in Clinton. Worship services were the only places slaves could legally gather in groups of more than six (aside from work), Samford, Police Jury Code, pp. 100-01. I have found only one other reference to this church: Emma Lay Lane, a northerner married to an East Feliciana planter, commented in a letter home that the few blacks who attended her church were the carriage drivers, since "[t]he negroes have a church and minister of their own." John Q. Anderson, ed., "A Letter From a Yankee Bride in Ante-Bellum Louisiana," 1 Louisiana History, (Summer, 1960), p. 245. There were no complaints about the church in local newspapers (Cf. Wade, Slavery in the Cities, p. 82).

\textsuperscript{44}See Table 3. Taylor, Negro Slavery in Louisiana, p. 156; and Wade, Slavery in the Cities, p. 263.
a sense of equality. Whites also feared the actions a drunk
slave might pursue. As with other big city problems, this
alcohol-based recreation for slaves was not as great a factor
in Clinton, even though it did exist to a limited extent.

On two occasions in 1855, the editors of the Patriot
took issue with the accusations made by Baton Rouge
newspapers that Clinton was a corrupt town, full of vice.
The editors rebutted the charges, saying that "not more than
three years ago, thirteen groceries [grog shops] could be
counted in our midst. Now there is not one licensed rum-shop
in the place." Four months later, they reported that "[t]wo
years ago it was an every-day sight to see four or five
drunken men in the streets, now it is rare indeed if one is
seen in a week." In neither of these editorials was their
mention of drunken bondsmen. During the election campaign of
1855, however, Patriot editors Green and Dunn asserted that
the Democrats would rather vote for a foreigner "who makes
his livelihood by selling whisky [sic] to our negroes, and
cheating them out of corn stolen from their masters at
midnight," than vote for a Know-Nothing candidate. Although
they admit bondsmen had access to alcohol, it was more a
condemnation of foreigners and the Democratic Party than a
complaint about drunken slaves.

One reason that liquor was not an omnipresent threat in
Clinton was an 1853 no-license law, which discontinued the
granting of licenses for the sale of liquor by the glass. The issue came before the voters again in 1855. "A Citizen" urged Clintonians to vote against a license law again, pointing to the docket of Justice of the Peace R. C. Carman, which indicated that minor crimes and breaches of the peace had declined since the law was passed.\(^\text{47}\) Despite this warning, the license law was reinstated, and A. M. Hymann announced that "Health Again Prevails," now that he could once again sell liquor by the glass, ostensibly for medicinal purposes.\(^\text{48}\)

Henry Marston's diary also suggests that there was not a great deal of public drunkenness among the town's slave population. Marston was a strong supporter of the temperance movement; on more than one occasion he and his sons attended meetings of the Junior Sons of Temperance. He often noted the presence of "King Alcohol" and the deleterious effects "he" produced among his retainers. Marston marked the passage of the license law with his typical anti-alcohol remark "So we go" but made no mention of the possible rise in the number of drunken slaves.\(^\text{49}\)

But having a law to prevent the sale of small quantities of alcohol did not guarantee the cessation of liquor sales, even if the newspapers suggest that the law had produced a visible decrease in disorder. In December 1855 the town council passed an ordinance requesting planters to keep their

\(^\text{47}\)Ibid., Nov. 24, 1855.  
\(^\text{48}\)Feliciana Democrat, April 5, 1856.  
\(^\text{49}\)Marston Diary, June 20, 1856, June 1 (1st quote) and Nov. 28, 1855 (2nd quote). See also June 27, 1855 and Sept. 4, 1856.
slaves out of town during Christmas, allowing them to come to town, if necessary, during daylight hours only. A pass was to name all salable goods carried with the slave, and "on no account permit them to buy of any person or persons, or deal in any place, where whiskey has been known to have been disposed of to slaves."50

Legally, no slave could buy or sell any article without written permission from his or her master.51 Nor could masters allow their slaves to "keep an establishment for the sale of goods of any kind, separate from that of his or her master or mistress, for the benefit of his or her master or mistress unless" the owner posted $500 bond guaranteeing that no liquor would be sold to slaves. Similarly, no free blacks could own an establishment "where spirituous [sic] liquors are sold."52 It appears as though the numerous preventative legal measures taken by the police jury and town council, in addition to the relative ease with which small town officials would have been able to track offenders compared to larger cities, kept the incidence of public intoxication among slaves to a minimum.

The trade between slaves and white, both legal and illegal, included goods other than alcohol. Announcing in 1855 that "during the Christmas holidays, there will be a

50American Patriot, Dec. 29, 1855 (emphasis in original). The "Comite Plantation Diary" illustrates that this ordinance was ignored by 1857, if not before: all but three of the slaves were into town to celebrate. Two of them did not return until Dec. 30, and Jourdan finally returned on Dec. 31, gone a total of 7 days.
52Ibid., pp. 99, 113; see also p. 109.
large number of slaves in town for the purpose of trading," the editor of the Democrat published the new law on trading with slaves. The Patriot published the same law in a print two or three times regular size. This law prohibited teamsters and draymen from engaging in trade. Other slaves were permitted to trade, but their master's written permission was required, and such trade was to take place only during daylight hours; additionally, they could remain in shops for only five minutes. Whites in violation would be fined $50-500. The law was published so conspicuously because the editors believed that "this law beyond a doubt has been for some time past much abused by certain parties in our own town...."53 No doubt this abuse occurred most often when slaves came "into town from the country on Sunday morning to do any trading which their owners or persons having them in charge, may permit." The slaves who did so were required to "behave themselves civilly, and leave the town by 11 o'clock." Any slave who refused to leave town after being ordered to do so was to receive "twenty lashes on the bare back."54

But the above comment is one of only three that complained about illicit trading, and the only one that did not deal with alcohol. One can only speculate as to why crime and illegal trading was not a pervasive problem in Clinton. There may well have been as much crime in Clinton

proportionally as in larger cities. Justice of the Peace records, however, do not indicate that slave crime was an issue. The numerous preventative measures and lack of a highly developed subculture led by free blacks certainly proscribed much illegal activity. But the nature of life in a small town also contributed to keeping such activities to a minimum. As anyone who has lived in a small town can attest, it is simply more difficult to keep clandestine activities a secret. Though one's name may not be known, the face always is. Informal social controls in small towns are as active, if not more so, than formal legal controls. Those who did engage in illegal activities, white and black, found out just how harsh the social and legal sanctions could be, as already described. Richard Wade suggested that in large cities, "the bondsman could mix somewhat inconspicuously with other townspeople."55 The anonymity that cities afforded blacks could not be found in smaller towns like Clinton.

This relative lack of anonymity not only contributed to keeping the crime rate low, but also to limiting the number of runaways in town. The police jury code allowed that "black or colored persons styling themselves free, but who have not legal evidence to establish their freedom, shall be taken up ... and treated as runaway slaves."56 In a town that had so few free blacks, and 'free' colored person would be in question. Therefore, it was not likely that runaways from

55Wade, Slavery in the Cities, p. 143.
56Samford, Police Jury Code, p. 100.
within the parish would try to live in Clinton. New Orleans, one day's travel away via the Clinton and Port Hudson Railroad and the Mississippi River, was a more likely destination. For this reason, the police jury ordered that "all persons of color found on the Clinton and Port Hudson Rail Road, without a written permit, shall be deemed to be runaway slaves...."  

57 This was yet another matter to be heard before a justice of the peace; consequently, there is no information to be gleaned about the frequency of any such attempted escapes.

If the 1855 newspapers are any indication, there were few runaways from Clinton. Only two were advertised, one who belonged to a planter in West Baton Rouge Parish and Albert, who was mortgaged to CPHRR. At least six runaways were captured in East Feliciana parish and were brought to the jail in Clinton. These runaways came from as far away as South Carolina, and as nearby as Bayou Sara in West Feliciana. A lack of local advertisements does not, however, necessarily indicate a dearth of runaways. The lack of anonymity in small towns would have worked to the distinct advantage of owners of runaways. Boatner's diary indicates that instead of placing ads, a few fliers posted at local business establishments were an effective means of capturing runaway slaves who had not yet left the area.  

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57Ibid., p. 101.
58American Patriot, Jan. 3, June 2, 9, 16, 1855; and "Boatner Diary," Sep. 6, 1848.
Plantation owners who lived in town experienced problems with slaves who appeared to have run away. Had the master been present at the plantation, any appeals concerning treatment by the overseer could be handled swiftly; not so if the slave had to travel into town without a pass to make his appeal. Henry Marston retained a new overseer in 1856 who soon punished the slave Jack. While traveling into Clinton to protest his treatment, Jack was "shot by Broadaway (so reported)." Luckily Broadaway had used only squirrel shot, and Jack quickly recovered. Being mistaken for a runaway had potentially devastating effects; even so, Jack tried to run away again. This time, he was brought back by Mr. Jim Roger, who "charged [Marston] $5 for bringing him home—."59

J. G. Kilbourne experienced similar problems with slaves who ran away from his plantation near Clinton. His slave Dick ran away in late April 1857. Four pigs were missing from Kilbourne's stock at the quarterly report in July, and the overseer reported that he saw "where one was cleaned near the old house about the time Dick was in the woods." Apparently tired of hiding in the woods and stealing food, Dick went into town and turned himself in to Kilbourne. Dick may have hoped his master would intercede so that his punishment would be light. Sessions, the overseer, did not record any specific punishment but noted three days after Dick's return that the slave was still hoeing while all the

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59 Marston Diary, Nov. 18, 1856, May 1, 1857.
other slaves were on break eating dinner. From the available evidence, it appears that runaway slaves would only come into town when they were ready to return to work.

The social dynamics in such a small town were quite different from large urban centers. Being unable to easily pass as free in communities like Clinton, and not having a highly developed subculture of slaves and free blacks "beyond the master's eye," it was neither practical nor safe for runaway slaves to come into Clinton. They would have either remained in the woods around town or tried to make their way to New Orleans. This may be yet another factor contributing to the lower crime rate in Clinton.

Richard Wade's ideas on the disintegration of urban slavery, while they may be accurate for the largest cities of the South, simply do not apply to the institution in the small town of Clinton. Not only was the number of slaves in Clinton on the rise, but the myriad problems and factors contributing to the decline were not as pervasive in such a small town. Wade admits that newer towns "showed some vitality, but there is no reason to believe they would not have shared the same attrition as they expanded." Yet this denies small towns a distinctive identity and excludes those, like Clinton, with a fairly stable population. Informal social controls, stronger ties to their rural neighbors, and

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60 "Comite Plantation Diary," May 10, 27, July 5 (quote), and May 30, 1857.
61 See Wade, Slavery in the Cities, p. 215.
62 Ibid., p. 244.
a relative lack of anonymity in Clinton kept the ties that bound master and slave together from coming unraveled.
Chapter 3
From Homefront to Battlefront

Throughout the Confederacy, small towns played crucial roles during the Civil War. Before the war began they had served as transportation crossroads, supply depots, communications hubs, and population centers. These functions became even more pronounced in the wartime milieu. Clinton, Greensburg, and Port Hudson, Louisiana, and Summit and Liberty, Mississippi—all part of the area that became known as the District of Southwest Mississippi and Eastern Louisiana—performed these and other duties. As such they became pivotal to Rebel and Union war offensive and defensive strategies.

The experiences of those who lived in Clinton can be examined to learn how the war affected the social and economic lives of small-town southerners. Its proximity to two major scenes of battle and the largest port in the South perhaps made Clinton a more vital locale than some other towns of the same size elsewhere. Yet among those towns that were strategically important, the events that occurred in Clinton may be viewed as representative of small-town life during the southern rebellion. Clinton's wartime experiences can be roughly divided into three phases: first, an externally oriented preparation period lasting from secession until the occupation of Port Hudson in the summer of 1862; second, a time of increased activity in support of the river
garrison from the autumn of 1862 until the fall of Port
Hudson in July 1863; and third, a period of entrenchment as a
center of cavalry and partisan activities in the still-
contested territory away from the river, from the autumn of
1863 until April 1865.

Louisiana received her first call-to-arms from the
Confederate War Department on March 9, 1861. East Feliciana
Parish and Clinton threw themselves into preparing for war.
The first troops to set out from Clinton were the Hunter
Rifles, named for their major, S. Eugene Hunter, a local
attorney. They left town in late April 1861 with 160 men,
were sworn into state service on May 1, and were mustered
into confederate service on May 5 as the 4th Regiment
Louisiana Infantry in New Orleans.¹ Clinton's community had
grown increasingly cohesive during the 1840s and '50s and its
economic and social importance in the region grew. Despite
many differences, everyday informal interaction on the
streets and more formal commingling in such organizations as
the Masons and Odd Fellows had eroded much of the potential
for animosity between Clinton's diverse group of citizens.
Among the soldiers who marched off to war were merchants, an

¹John D. Winters, The Civil War in Louisiana, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana
State University Press, 1963). There were two companies of Hunter
Rifles, designated cos. A and G in the 4th Reg. "Note re Mr. White
entering the services," April 30, 1861, Hunter-Taylor Papers, Box 1, fdr
2; "Memorial Day at Clinton, La." in 10 Confederate Veteran (August,
1902), p. 351; Arthur W. Bergeron, Jr., Guide to Louisiana Confederate
Military Units, 1861-1865, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University
Press, 1989), pp. 79-81, Bergeron says regiment was organized at Camp
Moore, St. Helena Parish, on May 25, 1861. Following the war, the local
United Confederate Veterans camp was named for Hunter: "Clarence Bell,
architect, a tailor, attorneys, carriage makers, a bricklayer, a tinner; they were native Clintonians, former Yankees, immigrants from Europe; and their ages ranged from young men of eighteen to established family men in their forties—every make of citizen heeded the martial call of their newly established country.²

Once ensconced in their place at Camp Walker outside New Orleans, the soldiers settled into their routine. They rose for roll call at daylight and retired after a second roll call at 9 PM; meals consisted of crackers, beans, and pork, which they cooked themselves—doubtless a novel experience for some of the men. Major Hunter wrote to his wife Stella, at home in Clinton, that it is "a touching sight to see the boys [work]ing like negroes and laughing merrily [all the?] time. ... Everyone seems to love me, and to vie with each other in honoring 'the Cap'n.'" While still within their own state, the new graycoats were able to receive visitors and travel to and from home. John Morgan, a twenty-four-year old auctioneer from Clinton, reported that the company moved to a healthful, well-watered spot at Camp Moore, where "there is some one here every day from Clinton or near there so we are kept pretty well posted in what is going on there." The visitors brought clothing, flowers, foodstuffs, and letters from family and friends on the homesteads.³ In mid-June the

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²List of Hunter Rifles, n.d., Hunter-Taylor Papers, Box 1, fdr 8; East Feliciana Parish History Committee, The 1860 Census of East Feliciana Parish, (n.p., 1990), pp. 61-78.
³S. E. Hunter to Mrs. S. E. Hunter, May 2, 1861 [corner torn], Hunter-Taylor Papers, Box 1, fdr 2; John A. Morgan to "Dear Sister" [Addie
company was shipped out to Biloxi, and Hunter reported home that "good humor prevails to a considerable extent," especially since most were quickly recovering from the measles, which they had contracted while in camp. Again, the officers at least were able to receive visitors while on duty, as Stella Hunter joined her husband in late July.⁴

By then, however, the privileges enjoyed by officers had begun to create resentment among the enlisted men. John Morgan, for example, was annoyed that Major Hunter had been able to travel home upon hearing of illness in his family, while enlisted men were not granted furloughs for the same cause. Major Hunter did not help matters much by waiting four days or more after his return to deliver letters he had carried to camp from Clinton. Morgan told his leader that "he [Hunter] and the rest of the officers generally thought that a private did not have any humane feelings and were treated like dum [sic] brutes." Morgan finally confided to his sister that "as for my having a friend in him I believe as much of that as I please[.] one thing certain I never will call on him for any favors." Military discipline was beginning to overcome many of the ties of community between the officers and men of Clinton's first Confederate company.

Morgan], May 16 and 27, 1861 Morgan (John A.) Papers, Mss. 1712, 1753, fdr 2, LSU, LLMVC.

⁴ S. E. Hunter to "My dear wife," June 13, 1861, Emilie W. McVea to Stella Hunter, July 21, 1861, and John McVea to S. E. Hunter, August 15, 1861, Hunter-Taylor Papers, Box 1, fdr 2. Mrs. Hunter left her two sons in the charge of John and Emilie McVea in Clinton. Dr. Owen P. Langworthy of Clinton and John Morgan both stayed at Camp Moore to care for those who had been infected with measles. They both hoped to make one final trip home before rejoining the company in Biloxi. John A. Morgan to "Dear Sister" [H. A. Morgan] June 6, 1861, Morgan Papers.
Such local ties were not completely broken, however. When young Morgan tried to resign from the Hunter Rifles, he sought to join a new cavalry regiment being raised by fellow East Felicianian John Scott.⁵

But despite these later problems, enlistment in the first company to leave the town was a badge of honor for those who had volunteered. The obituary of 25-year-old William Marston reported that in his last communication with his family, "he expressed deep regret at not being able to reach home in time to join the company of Capt. Hunter" as one brother had already done; the youngest Marston son had volunteered in Kentucky where he was enrolled at Kentucky Military Institute.⁶

Those destined to see military action were not left behind for long after Hunter's company departed Clinton. James O. Fuqua, another prominent member of the bar in Clinton, raised a second company known as the East Feliciania Guards. This group was mustered into service as Co. A of the 16th Regiment, Louisiana Infantry at Camp Moore. Preston Pond, Jr., another of Clinton's numerous attorneys, was elected colonel of the 16th Reg.⁷ James H. Knighton, 21-year-

⁵John A. Morgan to "Dear Sister," July 27, Aug. 11, 1861. Morgan was able to travel home in September and was even allowed to share an officers' tent upon his return. John A. Morgan to "Dear Sister [H.A. Morgan] Sept. 21, 1861 and John A. Morgan to Addie Morgan, Sep. 29, 1861, Morgan Papers, fdr 2.
⁶Obituary of William J. Marston, Marston Papers, Box 3, fdr 25.
⁷John McVea to S. E. Hunter, Aug. 13, 1861, Hunter-Taylor Papers, Box 1, fdr 2; Bergeron, Louisiana Military Units, pp. 112-13. Two other units were formed in the spring of 1862: the Packwood Guards, part of the 14th La. Inf., and the Skipwith Guards (cum Gober's Regiment Mounted Infantry), part of the 27th La. Inf. "The Last Roll: Capt. George H. Packwood," 20 Confederate Veteran (October 1912), p. 478; Bergeron,
old son of a planter in the second ward southwest of Clinton and known by family and friends as Jimmie, was apparently a private in this company, and he presents a vastly different perspective of a soldier's life than that portrayed by Major Hunter. Knighton wrote to his mother after his departure from home that he had "never had such fun in my life." Soon he wrote to his sister that he was "well satisfied" but admitted that "a soldier's life is a hard one," and he wished "pease would be proclaimed tomorrow." Less than a week later he wrote to his father, Josiah Knighton, concerning life at Camp Neafus, complaining of the weather and his inability to stay clean. But to keep from presenting a public image of anything less than an uncomplaining true-blue Confederate, he requested that his father keep what he wrote confined "in the family as I do not want any reports to get out from me." Most soldiers did not want to be known as complainers. As in the 4th Regiment, enlisted men of the 16th such as Jimmie were not as lucky in seeing folks from home as were their officers—he was denied a furlough for Christmas and was being pressed to re-enlist after the expiration of his term in April 1862.

\footnote{\textit{Louisiana Military Units}, pp. 136-37. For the "Skipwith Guards," see also Mary Taylor Diary, Mar. 25, 1862, Hunter-Taylor Papers.}
\footnote{Jimmie H. Knighton to "Mother" [Salvia Knighton], Aug. 1, 1861; Jimmie H. Knighton to "Sister Maggie" [Margaret Knighton], Aug. 6, 1861; and Jimmie H. Knighton to "Dear Pa", Aug. 11, 1861, all in Knighton Papers, Box 1, fdr 3.}
\footnote{James H. Knighton to [Margaret Knighton], Dec. 9, 1861, Jan. 19, 1862, and James H. Knighton to [Salvia Knighton], Jan. 29, 1862, Knighton Papers, Box 1, fdr 3.}
In the winter and spring of 1862 Clinton's soldiers saw duty in the Teche region protecting the Atchafalaya River, in northern Mississippi, and in Tennessee. Friends in the different regiments were able to renew hometown acquaintances in other small towns such as Corinth, Mississippi, and Jackson, Tennessee; when possible, the rebels wrote home to relay news about friends and church brethren. Both regiments, however, were soon to see serious, bloody action in the Battle of Shiloh. Of the 575 men of the 4th Reg. who participated, 209 men were lost. Major Hunter led his troops into action after their Colonel, Henry Allen, was injured. He lost several men under his command to friendly fire as well as Yankee guns. Adding insult to injury, soon after the battle many of the remainder became very ill with diarrhea. The glory of war had certainly worn thin for Clinton's rebel soldiers. Hunter asked his wife to pray "that this terrible war should cease and peace again reign throughout the land." He went on to admit that the "boys are all looking forward anxiously to the time when they will be

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10Bergeron, *Louisiana Military Units*, pp. 80, 112-13; John A. Morgan to "Dear Sister" Mar. 11, 1862, Morgan Papers, fdr 2; S. E. Hunter to [Mrs. S. E., Hunter], Jan. 21, Mar. 19, and Mar. 26, 1862, Hunter-Taylor Papers, Box 1, fdr 3. He told his mother he was not afraid to go to war, but home and family was "dearer to me than any thing else on this earth."

11Report of Col. H. W. Allen to Col. ------, April 10, 1862, *Official Record of the War of the Rebellion*, ser. 1, vol. X, pt. 1, p. 488. On April 10, 1862, John Morgan wrote home that he was slightly wounded during the battle (he later sent the offending piece of buck shot home in a letter to his sister, May --, 1862) and that the company suffered losses of 10 killed, 23 wounded. Morgan to "Dear Sister," Morgan Papers, fdr. 2. The news was received in Clinton on April 9-10, that nine members of the Hunter Rifles were killed, 160 of the regiment wounded. Ellen Louise Power Diary, Apr. 9-10, 1862, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.
disbanded and they can return home. ... I am one of the 'boys' i assure you."12

Private Knighton's regiment saw little action during Shiloh, and his attitude toward the war vacillated depending on his most immediate desire—between his eagerness to see the excitement of battle and his yearning for home. On the one hand he regretted his lack of opportunity to be in the battle of Shiloh and reported that only seven or eight soldiers were wounded, one killed. On the other hand, ten days later he "received the mortifying inteligence [sic]" that he and his fellow Felicianians were "forced in against our will" to re-enlist for two additional years. He submitted, understanding that "our Country needs us now more than she ever did before" and trusting God to protect him. But young Knighton never had the opportunity to fight under the protection of God and country—he died of an undisclosed illness in a hospital in Jackson, Mississippi, a month after his last letter home.13

Upon receiving the same news, Col. Henry Allen of the 4th La. sent now Lt. Col. Hunter to Richmond to speak to Jefferson Davis about the forced re-enlistment. Private John Morgan supposed that the volunteers thus pressed into further services "will do the confederacy but little good. It would not have looked so hard if they had given us a chance to

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12Hunter lamented that "Poor [Capt. John T.] Hilliard was not buried unless the enemy dug a hole and put him in it." S. E. Hunter to [Mrs. S. E. Hunter], Apr. 14, 16, 1862, Hunter-Taylor Papers, Box 1, fdr 3.
13James H. Knighton to "Rod," Apr. 10, 1862; James H. Knighton to [Josiah Knighton], Apr. 20, 1862; and J. M. Doyle to Josiah Knighton, May 24, 1862, Knighton Papers, Box 1, fdr 3.
Volunteer.\textsuperscript{14} Whether they volunteered or not, this ensured that Clinton's young men would continue to see action in service of the Confederacy.

Those on the home front did not sit idly by while their soldiers went off to defend their new country. Of course, much of life's daily activities continued unabated during this first phase: children attended school, young ladies received piano lessons, worshipers went to church, women visited friends and relatives, couples were married.\textsuperscript{15} The war had not yet begun to intrude heavily into the everyday activities of the town's residents. But by participating in these everyday pursuits, Clintonians were not precluded from pursuing war work with vigor. During the first few months of the conflict, for example, citizens pledged $12,000 to aid the families of soldiers away at war. In fact, civic pride and obligation was so strong that even wealthy Unionists contributed to this fund.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{14}John A. Morgan to "Dear Sister," Apr. 18, 1862, Morgan Papers, fdr 2.
\textsuperscript{15}Eliza Mills to Henry Marston, bill for school tuition, Jan. 1, 1861, and M. Schwartz to Henry Marston, bill for music lessons, 1860-1861, Marston Papers, Box 3, fdrs 23 and 25; Sereno Taylor Diary, Jan. 19 and 25, 1862, Hunter-Taylor Papers (Sereno Taylor notes that attendance at the Baptist Church was increasing and the congregants paid "Good attention."); Emilie W. McVea to Stella Hunter, July 21, 28, 1861, and Hardee Hunter to "Mamma" [Mrs. S. E. Hunter], July 31, 1861, Hunter-Taylor Papers, Box 1, fdr 2; Power Diary (hereinafter Power Diary), January, \textit{passim}; and East Feliciana Parish Marriage Register, East Feliciana Parish Clerk of Court's Office (marriages averaged one to two per month through July 1861, but then no marriages took place until November of 1861. The number of marriages then reverted to the average of one or two per month); and Joseph Embree to Henry Marston, re: marriage of slaves Chaney and Peter, Aug. 10, 1861, Marston Papers, Box 3, fdr 25.

\textsuperscript{16}Winters, \textit{Civil War in Louisiana}, p. 36. Henry Marston, a wealthy local planter living in Clinton, was a unionist at heart but had sons fighting in the war, and so even he subscribed. Henry Marston to W. W. Chapman, receipt for $50, Apr. 25, 1861, Marston Papers, Box 3, fdr 24. Joseph Embree received credit of $82.20 toward his subscription to the
Despite this local support, the majority of citizens' endeavors during this phase were externally oriented, meant to support the Confederacy and home-town boys at the front. One of the primary activities was the production of clothing. The Central Committee of the Parish provided "75 pairs Drawers and 75 Under Shirts" for an unspecified unit in September 1861. William H. Potter, writing for the Committee, was very proud of their record of having supplied "part of Captain Scott's company with underclothing and [we] are prepared to supply the rest if they need it." A few days later, the Committee issued ten dollars cash and a draft for $37.50 to John Callaghan for making "Soldiers clothing at the Masonic hall," a common center of community activities. Many women volunteered their time there and even brought work home with them in order to complete the necessary garments.17 The Campaign Sewing Society called upon the Clinton Sewing Society to help provide "Cot Comforts Pillow & Cases Sheets old linen Bandages Night shirts Lint Brandy Wine & any Luxury which would be palatable to the sick" for the men of Scott's Battalion, many of whom were from East Feliciana. Even Ellen Louise Power, recently recovered from a bout of typhoid fever in January 1862, spent a great deal of her free time

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knitting. Local women continued their efforts throughout this phase, sending underwear, socks, and shirts as quickly as they could be made—both during their free time and during organized activities at the Masonic Hall or Courthouse.\(^{18}\)

During the first half of this phase, goods appear to have been readily available for purchase in Clinton's stores. Fresh vegetables like sweet potatoes and agricultural products such as honey and buttermilk were available during the fall of 1861. As late as December of that year, one resident's bill of goods included both necessities and extras: buttons, shoes, muslin, ribbons, thread, coal oil, blankets, gloves, combs, salt, and tobacco, among other goods.\(^{19}\) Families at home were anxious to share with their soldiers at the front the products that were accessible at home, and vice versa. Maj. Eugene Hunter relayed many thanks to family friend Mrs. Chapman for sending "a pair of her nice, warm, woolen socks" and to his wife for a beautiful pair of slippers she made for him. Jimmy Knighton, encamped at Berwick City in south Louisiana, requested that his mother send him new socks, but he also promised to send up a barrel of oranges. Occasionally, the soldiers were able to return a favor and supply their families at home. One young soldier


\(^{19}\)John McVeau to S. E. Hunter, Aug. 13, 1861, Hunter-Taylor Papers, Box 1, fdr 2. J. G. D'Armond to Henry Marston, bill of goods, December, 1861, Marston Papers, Box 3, fdr 25.
with his regiment near Vicksburg learned that ink was not available in Clinton and promised to send some home to his mother at his first opportunity. Factors in New Orleans even requested planters to send local agricultural products to the city because of the scarcity of goods there.\textsuperscript{20}

As early as May 1861, Maj. Hunter had encouraged his wife to seek the aid of friends when necessary: "You have friends and should not suffer. Think what I have given up just to fight for those who stay home! It is your right and you should demand it as such." But it was not until the late spring of 1862 that goods became more difficult to procure. "Having so nearly sold out as to be unable to realise even one-fourth of our daily expenses out of our present business," local merchants Bloom, Kahn & Co. were required to dissolve their firm until more "goods can be purchased, at living prices."\textsuperscript{21}

Material items were not the only commodity to gradually dry up during Clinton's first period as a Confederate town;

\textsuperscript{20}James H. Knighton to [Margaret Knighton], Dec. 9, 1861, Knighton Papers, Box 1, fdr 3. S. E. Hunter to [Mrs. S. E. Hunter], Mar. 3, Apr. 16, 1862, Hunter-Taylor Papers, Box 1, fdr 3. Hunter informed his wife that the new slippers "are now in use in the sick room of your wounded brother [Bunyan Taylor, injured at Shiloh]. Little you thought that such would be the case when your busy fingers were working them. Granville Alspaugh to [Mrs. A. E. Alspaugh], July 2, 1862, Knox (J.P. and Family) Papers, LSU, LLMVC, Box 1, fdr 1. Payne & Kemp to Henry Marston, May 21, 1861, Marston Papers, Box 3, fdr 25. The factors requested him to "make arrangements with some one in your neighborhood to supply us with from 15 to 25 [lbs] butter every week, we can get none hardly here."

\textsuperscript{21}S. E. Hunter to Mrs. S. E. Hunter, May 8, 1861, Hunter-Taylor Papers, Box 1, fdr 2. Commercial Circular of Bloom, Kahn & Co., May 5, 1862, Marston Papers, Box 3, fdr 27. May 5 was probably too soon after the fall of New Orleans for its occupation to have affected commercial supply lines to Clinton, but its loss to the Confederacy in late April 1862 could only have exacerbated any shortages already occurring.
leisure activities and fun also became harder to find. The townsfolk were able to enjoy the occasional concert at one of the local schools. But young ladies particularly missed the usual round of gaiety. Ellen Power began a diary in January 1862; during February, she mentioned rehearsing tableaux in Clinton where she "met a good many of the girls, spent the evening very pleasantly, but did not do much at rehearsing." The event came off on the 21st and was well attended despite rainy weather. In March, Power mentioned a picnic and fishing, and a week later she attended a candy pulling. But after bad news reports regarding the battle of Shiloh, where several of her acquaintances in the 4th Reg. were killed, the mood of her diary shifts. She began altering old dresses to wear and reported more about the war in her diary. After New Orleans fell to Union forces, she declared "every one is almost wild with excitement. Some cry give up, but I think the southerners will die before they will submit to the Yankee invaders." On the last day of April 1862, she lamented that it "seems so unnatural not to hear of any picnics [sic] or May parties for tomorrow, but so it is, there are but few thinking of such things."23

Family and especially church ties were the greatest guarantee that goods and entertainment could be found and shared. Sereno Taylor, a Baptist minister and Eugene Hunter's father-in-law, received five or six pounds of butter

22Mary Taylor Diary, Feb. 27, 1862, Hunter-Taylor Papers; Power Diary, January 29, Feb. 20-22, Mar. 11, 19, 1862.
23Power Diary, April 10, 15, 22, 30, 1862
from a fellow congregant in May. This generous friend also supplied the Taylors and Hunters with beef, sweet potatoes, and meal. Still others sent honey and mutton, in addition to more beef, meal, and butter. Rev. Taylor also received a free necktie from "Sister D'Armond" to match a suit he had just purchased from her husband's store.\(^{24}\) He kept busy preaching at various churches, attending "Servants'" meetings, and visiting school children. His family entertained guests and enjoyed playing and listening to music.\(^{25}\) As the war edged closer, however, Taylor's activities, like those of his fellow townsmen, became more oriented toward the war, such as visiting soldiers in the hospital.

From the excitement of volunteering for and outfitting a new company to send off to war, to the lamentations of a young lady regretting the demise of the traditional May-day parties, the first period of Confederate involvement in Clinton drew to a close. It began as local citizens looked out from their community to support their new nation; but as the war pressed closer and closer toward home, they were required to find a role to play within their own town lines. At this point, they filled only a supporting role to the beleaguered soldiers at Port Hudson. Yet this support was

\(^{24}\)Sereno Taylor Diary, May 10, 26, 1862, and Mary Taylor Diary, May, June, and July, 1862, passim. "Sister D'Armond" is almost certainly Susan D'Armond, wife of local merchant J. G. D'Armond. 
\(^{25}\)For Taylor's activities see, for example, Sereno Taylor Diary, Jan., 19, 25, May 16, 1862; Jan. 8, 1862; Jan. 27, Feb. 5, 1862; Jan. 25, May 7, 8, 1862; and Jan. 8, Feb. 5, May 20, 1862. See also Mary Taylor Diary, passim, Hunter-Taylor Papers.
indispensable for the Confederate battlement, and Clintonians would face many hardships because of their willingness to act.

Confederate forces needed a strong position south of Vicksburg and north of Union-occupied New Orleans, but the Rebels had already lost Baton Rouge. Port Hudson, easily defensible high atop its cliff and located mere miles below access into the Red River, seemed the logical choice. Since the 1840s, Clinton and Port Hudson had been connected by a railroad, which served the planters of the parish who sent cotton to New Orleans and received goods from their factors. The port handled about 30,000 bales of cotton and 2,000 hogshead of sugar annually.\textsuperscript{26} Due to this tie to the growing bastion at Port Hudson, Clinton became a vital link in the Confederate supply chain. Assistant Adjutant General John A. Buckner made this explicit in the communication that ordered the occupation of the bluff town, beginning with moving "three days' subsistence for 4,000 men" through Clinton. General Daniel Ruggles, in charge of the troops at Port Hudson, was also ordered to "gather all the transportation possible for use on the railroad" for the army to utilize.\textsuperscript{27}

Men and materiel were transported through Clinton throughout the fall of 1862. Preston Pond, Jr., colonel of the 16th Infantry Regiment, resigned his commission soon

\textsuperscript{26}Edward Cunningham, The Port Hudson Campaign, 1862-1863, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1963), pp. 4-8.
\textsuperscript{27}John A. Buckner, A.A.G., General Orders No. 23, Aug. 15, 1862, OR, ser 1, vol XV, p. 800, §§3 and 4. See also General Orders No. 20, Aug. 4, 1862, ibid., p. 795.
after the Battle of Shiloh. He returned to the town by September and wrote to Richmond, urging the Adjutant and Inspector General to fortify and hold Port Hudson at all costs. He felt that by making the bluffs a stronghold, ties with the West could be preserved and provision supplies could be maintained. Pond explained further, "Independent of other and larger considerations, we have a large or are collecting a large amount of ordnance and ordnance stores here, and there are only about 1,200 men to defend the place . . . which is imminent at any moment, unless Butler's spies are all asleep or he himself is a coward." The ordnance supplies in Clinton were varied: Federals learned in February 1863 that a gun factory there had been destroyed by fire, and cannon bound for Port Hudson, notably a 128-pounder, were shipped on the railroad for the river defenses.28

Clinton also served as a major transportation and distribution center for the Confederacy's most precious

28Preston Pond, Jr. to Gen. S. Cooper, Sep. 21, 1862, ibid., p. 808-809. In July, others had seen the stationing of troops in Clinton as useless: Clinton attorney D. C. Hardee suggested that moving troops to Clinton from Jackson "is attended with some expense, without much profit." He further believed that troops would be better utilized catching runaways and "preventing intercourse between our people and the enemy." D. C. Hardee to James O. Puqua, July 27, 1862, ibid., p. 787-88. Hardee was soon appointed to do just that as provost marshal in Clinton. R.M. Hoee, A.A.G., General Orders No. 2, Sep. 8, 1862, ibid., p. 805-06. For the gun factory, see Nathaniel P. Banks to H. W. Halleck, OR, ser 1, vol XV, p. 1104-05; it seems likely that the fire was accidental, as no one in the Federal forces claimed the glory for the conflagration. In November 1862, machinery that had been brought to Clinton following the Federal attack on Baton Rouge burned—it is unclear whether this was machinery for producing ordnance or cloth; Mary E. Taylor Diary, Nov. 20, 1862. One cannon came through in October 1862 and a second in January 1863. F. Jay Taylor, ed., Reluctant Rebel: The Secret Diary of Robert Patrick, 1861-1865 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1959), Oct. 21, 1862, p. 46; and Baton Rouge Weekly Gazette and Comet, Feb. 4, 1863.
commodity: soldiers. The town was almost midpoint between the Mississippi River and one of Louisiana's largest troop-musterling and training centers, Camp Moore in neighboring St. Helena Parish. Many of the soldiers who marched from Camp Moore toward Port Hudson found that the last third of their journey was by rail. At times the cars were loaded with soldiers, filling the insides, covering the roof and open cars, even hanging off the engine. Major General Franklin Gardner himself rode the railroad to Port Hudson when he assumed command of Port Hudson in December 1862. 29 William C. Porter, an Arkansas native and member of the 16th Regiment, and his mates had traversed "32 miles of the best road and the poorest country in the southern Confederacy." When he passed through Clinton, however, he remarked that the town was "a pretty little place." This ebb and flow of troops served at times to bolster the morale of the townsfolk. One Clinton woman remarked as Albert Rust's brigade marched through town on their way to Port Hudson, "These are the ones to whip the Yankees. Kill a half dozen for me boys." The

29 Gen. Earl VanDorn to Gen. Breckinridge, Aug. 13, 1862, ibid., p. 797. Troops sometimes moved through Clinton in the opposite direction. See John A. Buckner, A.A.G., General Orders No. 25, Aug. 18, 1862, ibid., p. 800-01 and Special Orders No. 128, May 6, 1863, ibid., p. 1076. Camp Moore was located near the Jackson and Great Northern Railroad, which could take troops to points north. Charles East, ed., The Civil War Diary of Sarah Morgan (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1991), p. 53n. The portion of St. Helena where the camp was located was taken to form part of Tangipahoa Parish during Reconstruction. Goins and Caldwell, Historical Atlas of Louisiana, Map 38. For soldiers hanging off the cars, see Sarah Morgan Diary, Apr. 8, 1863, p. 453. For Gardner on the railroad, see Cunningham, Port Hudson Campaign, p. 19.
soldier smiled "but thought her patriotic zeal had got a little higher than was necessary." 30

Others were not so enamored with transportation facilities in East Feliciana. That same month, one officer at Port Hudson reported that local bridges were badly in need of repair and suggested that items to be sent from Vicksburg be moved by river since "Transportation by way of Clinton is tedious & uncertain, and as the season advances the roads become bad."  Diarist Sarah Morgan, who refugeed to Clinton following the bombardment of Baton Rouge, recorded thirteen stops in twenty miles of track—five times to clear brush from the telegraph lines—and remarked that at one point, the cars even traveled backwards to pick up a passenger who had missed the train. A companion informed her that the railroad was very accommodating to its passengers and stopped during the summer to let passengers pick blackberries that grew along the tracks. Military timetables suffered occasionally because of the frequent stops, or because the train had run off its tracks. Consequently, some soldiers dubbed the train the "tri-weekly," as it "would go to Clinton one week and try weakly to get back the next." 31 Despite these inconveniences, the Clinton and Port Hudson Railroad remained one of the most

important strategic transportation links in the Florida Parishes.

As early as July of 1862, East Felicianians wrote to General Daniel Ruggles reporting that they were "seriously threatened by the enemy from" Baton Rouge, who came to "arrest citizens, and compel them to take the oath of allegiance, or carry them to prison, burn residences, quarters, and sugar-houses, plunder planters of all stock, provisions, cotton, corn, sugar, and some of their servants...." Local citizens had given their sons, their crops, and their money for the Cause, and they urged Ruggles to send Confederate troops. These troops could stop Yankee raids; further, the Florida Parishes also offered excellent bluffs for a defensive stance and prospects for "favorable offensive movements" against garrisons in Baton Rouge and south Louisiana. 32

Atop one of these bluffs Confederate troops fortified the town of Port Hudson. After inspection of the troops there in January of 1863, Charles M. Fauntleroy of the Inspector General's office recognized that Clinton, lying "on the line of communication with Camp Moore," was in the area "most liable to molestation by the enemy" and needed to be protected. Consequently, included in the troops for the defenses of Port Hudson were soldiers stationed in and near Clinton. They consisted mostly of cavalry troops and pickets, though infantry and artillery garrisons were

32A. G. Carter and John C. Miller to Daniel Ruggles, July 13, 1862, OR, ser 1, vol 15, pp. 777-78.
positioned there for a short period of time. They were utilized to protect the supply- and telegraph lines into and from Clinton.\footnote{Col. Charles M. Fauntleroy to Gen. J. E. Johnson, Jan. 12, 1863, OR, ser 1, vol XV, pp. 943-45; Frank Gardner to J. R. Waddy, Jan. 7, 1863, \textit{ibid.}, p. 933; Frank Gardner to J. R. Waddy, Feb. 6, 1863, \textit{ibid.}, p. 971; Special Orders No. 17, Jan. 14, 1863, \textit{ibid.}, p. 948-49. For Clinton's role as telegraphing station, see for example, \textemdash to Daniel Ruggles, July 9, 1862, \textit{ibid.}, p. 775; and Daniel Ruggles to M. Jeff. Thompson, Aug. 21, [1862], \textit{ibid.}, p. 803. The number of troops in Clinton during this period is never made quite clear in the \textit{Official Record}, but nothing indicates that it was much larger than the 1,200 that Preston Pond had found inadequate; see note 29 above and accompanying text.}

The town would need that protection through the spring of 1863. Union General Nathaniel Banks, in his attempt to drive the Confederates out of their stronghold at Port Hudson, sent troops out from occupied Baton Rouge toward Clinton several times, beginning in March 1862. By striking supply lines up the Atchafalaya River from the Teche Region, down the Red River from Texas and northwest Louisiana, and through Clinton, which connected Port Hudson to the eastern Confederacy, Banks hoped to starve the Rebels off the high bluffs overlooking the Mississippi. If his troops were successful, Banks asserted, the Confederates "must come out of their intrenchments to fight us," thus preventing the slaughter of Union troops that would result from a direct attack on the garrison.\footnote{Nathaniel P. Banks to H. W. Halleck, Feb. 12, 1863, \textit{ibid.}, pp. 240-42.} The Rebels received conflicting intelligence throughout the first two weeks of March. At one point, they learned that Banks intended to attack the town with 8,000 troops. Cavalry commander Lt. Col. Gantt was
ordered to harass Union troops if they marched on Clinton and keep the general at Port Hudson apprised of all movements. The next day, reports suggested that Banks planned to send 10,000 or more soldiers into Clinton and perhaps run gunboats past Port Hudson. The Record does not indicate whether troops were actually sent into the town at that time, but the land forces retreated to Baton Rouge when the Federal fleet failed to steam past Rebel guns atop the bluffs.35

Banks's master plan failed, but Clinton had not seen the last of Union troops. In May and June 1863 the town faced the full force of Colonel Benjamin Grierson's Sixth Illinois Cavalry. The gallant colonel had marauded three states in late April–Tennessee, Mississippi, and Louisiana—in a fierce effort that came to be known as "Grierson's Raid." One participant boldly asserted that it was "the first of the great federal cavalry raids of the Civil War, and one of the most brilliantly successful."36 His troops left a trail of destruction in their path, and Clinton was no exception to Grierson's energetic prosecution of his orders.

Confederate Colonel John Logan and his cavalry regiment of about 1,200 men were in the area around Clinton to protect the railroad and telegraph lines and to harass the enemy

35J. C. Pemberton to Franklin Gardner, Mar. 10, 1863, ibid., pp. 269-70; --- --- A.A.G., to Lt. Col. Gantt, Mar. 10, 1863, ibid., pp. 1008-09; Franklin Gardner to J. C. Pemberton, Mar. 11, 1863 (two reports), ibid., p. 270; Franklin Gardner to J. C. Pemberton, Mar. 14, 1863, ibid., p. 271; Franklin Gardner to J. R. Waddy, Mar. 18, 1863, ibid., pp. 276-77; and Cunningham, Port Hudson Campaign, pp. 59-72, passim.
lines between Baton Rouge and Port Hudson. His efforts included attacking Union forces, destroying their wagon trains, and any other activity that might draw Federal troops from Port Hudson. Although he informed his superior that his troops had not accomplished a great deal, Logan boasted that from his headquarters in Clinton, he "ha[s] so far prevented the enemy's making raids into the country." Meanwhile, Grierson was charged with guarding the Federal rear against Logan's advances, skirmishes, and ambushes. During the first week of May, Colonel W. R. Miles was frustrated at failing to capture Grierson "with his command of Yankee marauders" due to conflicting orders delaying his departure and sending him serially to Clinton, Osyka, Mississippi, Tickfaw Bridge, Port Hudson and then Olive Branch near Clinton—all in the course of one week. The next week, a portion of Grierson's command was sent to destroy the railroad between Clinton and Port Hudson. The report to the Assistant Adjutant General praised the horsemen: "most admirably did [Captain Pierce] and his men acquit themselves of the arduous duty assigned them. . . . he succeeded in

37 John L. Logan to Joseph E. Johnston, May 19, 1863, OR, ser 1, vol XXVI, pt 1, p. 180; Union estimates ranged from 1,500 to 2,000; Bruce Dinges, "The Making of a Cavalryman: Benjamin H. Grierson and the Civil War Along the Mississippi, 1861-1865." (Ph.D. diss., Rice University, 1978), p. 426; Banks informed the Secretary of War that the rebels had 2,500 cavalry at Clinton; Nathaniel Banks to Secretary of War, Apr. 6, 1865 [sic] report of May 27, 1863, OR, ser 1, vol XXVI, pt 1, pp. 6-21. N. A. M. Dudley to [George B.] Halstead, May 14, 1863, ibid., pp. 34-35; [T. Friend Willson] to A. R. Witt, May 14, 1863, OR, ser 1, vol XXVI, pt 2, p. 3; John L. Logan to Franklin Gardner, May 21, 1863, OR, ser 1, vol XXVI, pt 1, p. 179.
destroying 300 yards of the road and cut the Clinton telegraph wire in several places."³⁸

Early on the morning of June 3, 1863, Grierson left Port Hudson with about 1,200 cavalry and mounted infantry and some artillery in an attempt to dislodge Logan's forces from Clinton. Grierson's men met Confederate troops under Colonel Thomas R. Stockdale less than a mile outside of town. While en route to the parish seat, the Union officer was erroneously informed by a young slave that Logan had left Clinton the day before. He was surprised then, when the Confederate cavalryman burst out of the town and appeared in the midst of the fight. The Federals quickly ran out of ammunition, and after a fight of three hours were forced to retreat.³⁹ Townsfolk were extremely uneasy while the first skirmishes of Grierson's raid on Clinton raged on. Clintonians on the war front in Mississippi were equally upset, and Major Hunter of the 4th Louisiana stressed to his wife that "[i]t is not the place to fight, and the Federals should not have been allowed to come so close to the town before the fight began." ⁴⁰

⁴⁰ Eugene Hunter to Stella [Hunter], June 13, 1863, Hunter-Taylor Papers.
Two days later, Assistant Adjutant General Richard B. Irwin ordered Union General Halburt E. Paine to attack Logan's Rebel force at Clinton with a full brigade, two artillery batteries, and Grierson's cavalry. Forced to march in the hot southern sun, many bluecoated infantrymen fell out from heat exhaustion. In the wake of these losses to the climate, Paine marched his troops at night, which considerably slowed his assault. Learning of the intended attack, Logan was able to evacuate Clinton without meeting his foe. He attempted to justify his actions to his general, and asserted "I have met his cavalry and whipped it. But, of course, will have to retire before a heavy column of infantry and artillery" estimated at 4,000 strong. He further argued that with reinforcements of 10,000 men, he could end the siege of Port Hudson and drive the invading army from south Louisiana. General Johnston responded that Logan "ought not to be driven back by 4,000 Eastern troops. When you find the enemy too strong, fall back only so far as may be necessary, hindering and retarding his advance." Johnston's orders came too late, however, and Logan left Clinton with his troops and most of his stores.

42 John Logan to Joseph E. Johnston, June 7, 1863, OR, ser 1, vol XXVI, pt 1, p. 181; Johnston to Logan, June 8, 1863, ibid., pt 2, p. 39.
When Grierson entered town on June 7, he found a bit of grain and 500 barrels of rum. Pursuant to orders, Grierson destroyed the railroad depot and bridge, "a locomotive, machine shops, woolen and cartridge manufactories, a large quantity of ammunition, several hundred hides," and other government property. They also succeeding in cutting the telegraph line between Port Hudson and Clinton. The town's multifaceted role as a distribution, transportation, and communication center, therefore, was the factor directly precipitating the Federal attack. Despite the damage Grierson and his men caused in the town, his ultimate goal was not met, as Logan returned to the vicinity of Clinton within a week. And while General Paine reported that "some of the inhabitants seemed altogether despondent," he also noted that "others exhibited in their demeanor, as well as language, great confidence that their army would fall upon us before the capture of Port Hudson." The destruction meted out by Grierson's men indicates how important the small town had become as a camp ground and as a supply depot. Logan had been able to evacuate with the majority of his stores, yet

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43Dinges, Making of a Cavalryman, pp. 432-435; Surby, Richard W., Grierson Raids, and Hatch's Sixty-four Days March... (Chicago: Rounds and James, 1865), pp. 138-39; Halbert B. Paine to Richard B. Irwin, June 9, 1863, OR, ser 1, vol XXVI, pt 1, pp. 126-27; and B. H. Grierson to Richard B. Irwin, June 12, 1863, ibid., pp. 134-37; William H. Leckie and Shirley A Leckie, Unlikely Warriors: General Benjamin H. Grierson and His Family, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1984), pp. 100-101; and John L. Logan to B. S. Ewell, June 16, 1863, OR, ser 1, vol XXVI, pt 1, pp. 181-82. The telegraph lines were a frequent point of attack; see for example, the diary of Port Hudson telegrapher John D. Austen, East Baton Rouge Parish-Regional Collection [sic], Port Hudson, Box 1, folder 30, Center for Regional Studies of Southeastern Louisiana University.
Federal troops managed to destroy machinery, ammunition, and other goods.

Not all of the men in uniform were transient cavalrmen or invading Yankees. Among the troops that passed through town bound for Port Hudson were Clinton's own boys in the 4th Louisiana Regiment, and they were among the first to fortify that place. The soldiers faced rough conditions in their new camp but amused themselves while in camp with drinking, gambling, reading, and playing games. At least one soldier "liked to remain there" despite the hardships, "because I could come home once a week." Though still a part of active military life, the men of the 4th La. were able to enjoy some of the comforts of home while they were stationed at Port Hudson. Robert Patrick, a member of Hunter's Rifles, traveled home to have his laundry done, to purchase items unavailable in camp, to flirt with young belles, and of course to visit family.44

Morale in Clinton perked up with their gallant young Confederates stationed so near. The entertainment scene increased along with morale. In late November, for example, townsfolk presented two widely attended concerts to benefit sick and wounded soldiers. Robert Patrick, Col. Hunter, and

44Reluctant Rebel, for drinking see p. 48; for gambling and reading see p. 99, for games, see p. 59; for going home, see pp. 45, 52, 60-61, 73; Patrick traveled home regardless of whether he had received permission from his superior officers. The dearth of letters home from the men of this regiment are further proof that the soldiers went home as often as possible. After Maj. Gen. Gardner took command in January 1863, however, permission to go outside the lines at Port Hudson became harder to obtain; Reluctant Rebel, p. 74. The 4th La. left Port Hudson for Jackson and Vicksburg, Miss. the first week of May, 1863; ibid., p. 111n.
other soldiers even made a special trip to attend. The participants' talents varied considerably, but the men enjoyed watching the ladies perform regardless: Patrick effervesced over one young lady, "her heaving bosom and swelling bust were exhibited to the greatest advantage on this momentous occasion."\textsuperscript{45}

After Port Hudson was garrisoned, the residents of Clinton could at last see the pomp and circumstance of military life, and this served as a popular form of entertainment throughout the fall. Much to the dismay of the Confederate Inspector General, young ladies especially enjoyed the spectacle of Port Hudson and visited the garrison whenever opportunity arose. Baton Rougean Sarah Morgan, who spent time in Clinton and at nearby Linwood Plantation, traveled to the bluff-top town on the train cars and on one occasion scoffed at a group of "the fastest set of girls that I have seen for some time" who publicly boasted of their beaux at camp. Ellen Power toured the battlements and reveled in her diary, "We saw how the guns were all mounted & the balls, the powder magazines, & plenty of soldiers. I was very much pleased with my trip." She was disappointed in October when drill was canceled after she had traveled the distance to see it but was delighted in late December when "We had a fine time [...] saw them drill and heard some music."\textsuperscript{46}

\textsuperscript{45}Reluctant Rebel, pp. 60-61, Mary Hunter Diary, Nov. 26, 1862, Hunter-Taylor Papers; Power Diary, Nov. 25, 1862.
\textsuperscript{46}Col. Charles M. Fauntleroy to Gen. J. E. Johnson, Jan. 12, 1863, OR, Ser 1, vol XV, pp. 943-45; Sarah Morgan Diary, Oct. 19, 1862, p. 311;
As Federal threats and local hardships increased and furloughs home decreased, however, Clintonians appeared to grow increasingly despondent. After a visit home, Robert Patrick wrote to a friend: "everything [there] presents a cheerless and gloomy appearance and even the dogs and little negroes look downcast and forsaken. The piano is never heard and of my old violin, I can only say that she lies unstrung.

. . ."47 By the time spring arrived, however, entertainment options once again abounded. Ellen Power was disappointed that she had missed a "splendid" concert on March 9. She made up for the loss over the next few weeks, however, by attending a candy pulling, a "fishing frolic," various parties, and by enjoying the occasional serenade. Although Miss Power did not attend, the traditional May Party returned in 1863 complete with evening dance.48 Eugene Hunter playfully chided his wife Stella for her increasing social activities when he wrote in March, "I would have been pleased to have formed one of your party at the pic nic.... I am so proud that you can enjoy yourself. I would be much more uneasy and unhappy if you moping at home." A month later, a friend assured Mrs. Hunter that he did not disdain their "pleasant parties" in town "for I was once young myself...." In May, while stationed in Mississippi, he had to travel to Clinton "to get all of the stragglers" of his regiment, and

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48 Power Diary, Mar. 9, 18, 20, Apr. 7, 11, May 1, 1863. See also Sarah Morgan Diary, Apr. 12, 1863 for candy pulling.
his fellow officers requested that he bring back other men as well.49

But Clinton also saw the more dismal side of the war when hospitals opened to ease the overcrowding in camp sick houses at Port Hudson. Several hospitals were set up, one at the Silliman Female Collegiate Institute, one at the Masonic Hall, one at "the Corner," and one at the Carriage house. Casualties from the bluff garrison began arriving in late August 1862, and the numbers swelled throughout the period of occupation there. The Institute was taken for the sick soldiers on August 21; by the 24th, eighty-two men were being cared for. Reverend Sereno Taylor visited the wounded rebels at the school and Masonic Hall almost daily, praying and preaching. On September 28 he reported that of 550 cases, only 7 men had died.50 But the numbers continued to swell. The Institute's two stories and the attic all housed soldiers, and in the two lower floors at least, "most [were] on beds." On Halloween, he reported 101 soldiers at the Masonic Hall, "including sick & nurses," and the next day he found 55 men in four rooms at the Corner Hospital. The mortality rate among the Rebels rose with the rate of admission. By December, Robert Patrick reported that "There is a great deal of sickness among the soldiers now and they are dying right fast at the hospitals in Clinton." When

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49Eugene Hunter to Stella Hunter, Mar. 18, 1863; A. Parker Champlin[?] to Stella Hunter, Apr. 23, 1863; George [Taylor?] to S. E. Hunter, May 24, 1863, Hunter-Taylor Collection.

Grierson entered the town in June of 1863, he learned that several hundred sick and wounded had been moved to Osyka the day before; he found only about twenty Rebels who had been too critical to move. But he also found in the sick houses seven of his own men, wounded in the skirmish a few days previous.\textsuperscript{51}

Many individual homes were also used to nurture convalescent soldiers, as families took them in, singly or in pairs. Clinton's women would tend to the wounded at the various hospitals in town, then come home to care for those boarding with their family. This required significant efforts to prepare bed-clothing and provide food. Those involved with caring for the men, such as Stella Hunter, even recruited others to take charge of soldiers ready to be released from the hospital.\textsuperscript{52} Women who did not directly aid the ailing Confederates helped by sewing comforters and knitting socks.\textsuperscript{53}

During this second phase of the war experience, Clintonians continued to have shortages of provisions. Clinton's wartime economy was further burdened by the escalating influx of soldiers and civilians alike. Like Scarlett O'Hara fleeing the besieged city of Atlanta to the

\textsuperscript{51}Sereno Taylor Diary, Oct. 26, 28, and 31, Hunter-Taylor Papers; on the 29th, he visited 123 soldiers during the day. \textit{Reluctant Rebel}, p. 63; see also Sereno Taylor Diary, Nov. 16, 27, 1862. Clinton's Confederate Cemetery is owned by the state. Clearly labeled on state maps, it is included in a table of "Public Recreational Areas" \textit{Louisiana Official Highway Map}, (La. Dept. of Transportation, 1994).
\textsuperscript{52}Mary Taylor Diary, Aug.-Dec. 1862, \textit{passim}, especially Aug. 28 and Nov. 24, 1862, Hunter-Taylor Papers.
\textsuperscript{53}Ibid., and Power Diary, Nov. 10, Dec. 26, 1862.
relative safety of the plantation Tara, thousands of southerners fled their homes to other, more secure towns. Clinton was near to river cities and towns such as Baton Rouge and Port Hudson that were continually under threat of bombardment by Federal gunboats. With a number of rooming houses and the perception of abundant provisions, Clinton seemed an attractive choice for these refugees who lacked families or friends in the safer countryside. But despite Confederate Col. John Logan's assertion that the region was "very wealthy," with "a large amount of stock" and "large crops of corn and potatoes for the army," by this time General Gardner found it difficult to procure supplies.54 Several merchants who decided to flee their beleaguered hometowns moved into Clinton with the stock of supplies from their store in addition to their families. Although the civilian population took advantage of these opportunities, such goods as shoes and cloth remained scarce; the items that remained available were almost prohibitively expensive.55 One young refugee complained bitterly to her diary:

54John L. Logan to Joseph E. Johnston, May 29, 1863, OR, ser 1, vol XXVI, pt 1, p. 180; Cunningham, Port Hudson Campaign, p. 35. By June the soldiers at Port Hudson were eating mule and horse meat; ibid., p. 99, and "Confederate Telegrapher's Diary," July 4, 1863. The previous summer, A. G. Carter and John C. Miller of nearby Jackson in East Feliciana reported that farmers had planted "three times the ordinary amount of corn" (979,316 bushels in 1850), so the lack of supplies is curious; Carter and Miller to Ruggles, July 13, 1862, p. 777.
55As merchants fled Federal-occupied Baton Rouge, one businessman there complained "They have skedaddled, vamosed, evaporated, gone up. ...have given up the ghost...," (Baton Rouge) Weekly Gazette and Comet, Nov. 12, 1862. Power Diary, Aug. 22, Sep. 8, 10, 1862. As elsewhere in the Confederacy, women made do by spinning and weaving themselves; Sep. 11, 1862. A pair of gaiters without heels commanded ten dollars, Jan. 29, 1863. Emma Lane informed her brother in the Confederate service that a pair of nice pants like he had was selling at twenty dollars per pair; Lane to "My Dear Brother Willie" [Lay], Dec. 13, 1862, Anderson Papers.
Ouf! What a country! Next time I go shopping, I mean to ask some clerk, out of curiosity, what they do sell in Clinton. The following is a list of a few of the articles that shop keepers [sic] actually laugh at you, if you ask for. Glasses, flour, soap, starch, coffee, candles, matches, shoes, combs, guitar strings, bird seed-in short, everything I have heretofore considered as necessary to existence.

Instead, she was living on cornbread. When spring reached the town, the diarist's family had "more money than they could use in ordinary times" but could find nothing to buy. They had eaten no pork or potatoes for a week, poultry and flour were "unheard of," and the only meat they had was "obtained once as a favor." A few days later, they were living on one egg each and cornbread with syrup. Sarah complained that "To be hungry is there [Clinton] an every day occurrence." While the town had enjoyed a free supply of agricultural goods from the countryside and manufactured items from New Orleans before the war, the disruption of supply lines and farm production began to severely limit the availability of goods during the war.

Items that did come to hand were shared when practicable. Again, as during the first days of shortages, ties of family, community, and religion were the most certain means of obtaining food and goods that families could not produce themselves in sufficient quantity. Robert Patrick was able to scrape the salt from pork barrels that held provisions at Port Hudson. After boiling the brine, he obtained "about half a peck of very good salt." The

56 Sarah Morgan Diary, Sep. 4, 1862, Mar. 14, 31, 1863. See also, Power Diary, Jan. 6, 8, 29, 1863.
industrious Patrick also made candles and sent tallow and thirteen yards of flannel to his mother in Clinton. He received gifts from home as well, including light bread, which in January was the "first flour I have seen for some time," onions, and mutton.\(^57\) Lt. Col. Eugene Hunter "furiously enjoyed" a pleasant Christmas dinner in the encampment at Port Hudson, courtesy of a "box of good things" his wife sent him. He shared his goodies with his fellow officers, and the group supplemented Mrs. Hunter's gifts with fresh pork and wild ducks.\(^58\) Stella Hunter, wife of one of the local companies' commanding officer, and her father Sereno Taylor, a Baptist minister, continued to be particularly blessed with gifts. While some friends and congregants sent clothing, others sent "a pail full of sweet potatoes," butter, peanuts, and beef.\(^59\)

Without such close ties of friends and families, refugees who came to Clinton from Baton Rouge, Port Hudson, Bayou Sara and other towns threatened by the Federals suffered even more from the local shortages. Because of her detailed diary, Sarah Morgan is probably Clinton's most famous refugee. Early in the Morgan family sojourn in Clinton, Sarah complained that she "prefer[red] solitude where I can do as I please without being observed. Here we

\(^{57}\)For items Patrick sent to Clinton, see \textit{Reluctant Rebel}, pp. 51, 53 (quote), 78, 94. For items from Clinton to Patrick, see pp. 81 (quote), 94.

\(^{58}\)Eugene Hunter to Stella Hunter, Dec. 25, 1862, Hunter-Taylor Papers.

\(^{59}\)Mary Taylor Diary, Sep. 5, Nov. 12, Dec. 8, 1862 (clothing included a dress, yarn for socks, and 4 yds of homemade jeans); Sep. 9, Nov. 28, 1862, June 11, 1863; "Sister Smith" was particularly generous with butter and beef, May 27, June 3, 18, 24, 30, 1863.
are as well known by people we never before heard of, as though we were fellow citizens; the whisper, 'These are the Miss Morgans' being by no means unusual." Sara had the opportunity to move out to the country with friends while her mother, by necessity, remained in Clinton. The young writer complained of the treatment her family received from the towns residents: "The inhabitants of that abode of bliss would not put themselves out to sell them [her family] a mouthful to keep them from starving, such is their idea of Christianity."¹⁰ Sarah Morgan's ambivalent attitude toward her plight, and the larger problems faced by her family, is doubtless like that of thousands of other refugees throughout the South. On one hand she resented being forced out of her home and being treated from the outset in the new town as though she were an intimate acquaintance. In fact, she sneered at being treated "as though we were fellow citizens" and rejected the residents' advances to be drawn into the community. Yet when her family was treated as though there were outsiders, she conveniently forgot this lost opportunity and blamed the community itself for failing to take care of those in their midst.

Faced with the hardships of being driven from their homes, refugees also were forced to contend with substandard living conditions in their adopted communities. Having left her home in Baton Rouge when the bombing began in August 1862 and then from the plantation home of a family friend, Morgan

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¹⁰Sarah Morgan Diary, Aug. 30, 1862, Mar. 31, 1863.
was understandably morose. Though she admitted that Clinton was "rather a pretty place," she labeled the town a "straggling village" and was disappointed by the numerous hills, muddy streets, and lack of pavement. She found her hotel uncomfortable, having to share "a bare unfurnished, dirty, room without shutter or anything else," not even a balcony, with three adults, four children, and a servant. In February 1863 Robert Patrick recorded that his mother had several boarders, "in fact, every house in town is a boarding house and still there is not enough to supply the demands." In the privacy of her diary, Miss Morgan unleashed her misery and anger at being a refugee and placed all fault squarely upon the small town in which she found herself living. "Heaven save me from the misery of living in" Clinton, she cried only days after arriving. She was bored by the lack of activity and insulted by the townsfolk's keen interest and prior knowledge of her family and their situation. She was especially hurt by the rumor that she and her family were Yankee sympathizers who had entertained the Federals in Baton Rouge on a daily basis and given special dinners in their honor. Morgan asserted that though Clintonians accused Baton Rouge of being a Yankee town because a few residents there took the oath, "not one can be compared to some loyal citizens of this small burg," but she

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61 Ibid., pp. 244, 242-43; Reluctant Rebel, p. 95.
gave no details.\textsuperscript{62} She was further annoyed by numerous war-
time inconveniences that she apparently believed were unique
to Clinton: "Bless this village!" she exclaimed in
September, "It is the meanest place for news that I ever was
in." By October, she was calling the place "odious" and
"vile," and claimed that she hated "Clinton a thousand times
more than I do the Yankees." Miss Morgan agreed with one
friend that "when the Lord had finished all the world and all
the people, he had some scraps left, and just thought he'd
'batch' up Clinton with them."\textsuperscript{63} When faced with the prospect
of moving on to Augusta, Georgia, she reveled at the though
of getting out of Clinton, but she also confessed that
"Perhaps I shall not like Augusta either; a stranger in a
strange city is not usually enchanted with everything one
beholds."\textsuperscript{64}

By the time Port Hudson fell on July 7, 1863, Clinton
had experienced the war by sending her boys off to fight,
receiving them home again as gallant defenders of their own
region, caring for wounded soldiers from East Feliciana and
elsewhere, and suffering the raids of Yankee invaders.
During the last phase of the Civil War in Clinton, from July
1863 to April 1865, Clintonians would serve as temporary
headquarters for both Confederate and Union troops. As the

\textsuperscript{62}Ibid., pp. 244, 251, 261. At one point, she claimed even to prefer
the "daily alarms we had when under Yankee rule in Baton Rouge" to the
monotony of life in Clinton, p. 263.
\textsuperscript{63}Ibid., pp. 261, 310, 317, 316.
\textsuperscript{64}Ibid., Feb. 22, 1863. When the Morgans finally left Clinton, they
traveled to New Orleans, where they stayed with Sarah's oldest brother
for the duration of the war.
hub of partisan and cavalry activity on both sides, the town would continue to serve as an important rallying center for the western half of the Florida Parishes. But amid this increase in activity, provisions became even harder to procure and alternate means of acquiring them became even more tempting.

Although this last and most active phase of the war in Clinton began in the fall of 1863 and winter of 1864, troop movements were initially relatively quiet. In August of 1863 the Office of Chief of Engineers of the Union forces based in New Orleans fruitlessly recommended that "at least a division of troops" be stationed at Clinton. In theory this would both reduce troops required at other points on the east side of the river, including Baton Rouge, Port Hudson, and Plaquemine, and create discipline among the soldiers by being concentrated at one point.

Rumors of Union activities, real or proposed, abounded throughout Clinton. Attorney and former regimental officer Preston Pond wrote to the commanding officer at federally occupied Port Hudson with his concerns about rumors that the Yankees planned "a general devastating raid" in response to guerrilla warfare. Pond assured the general that the soldiers were not "upheld and sustained by the popular feeling and favor." He admitted that the people would generally support the actions of legitimate warfare but asserted that for Union troops to act out against civilians in this case "would appear to the world, an act of frenzied
retribution against the innocent." General Nathaniel P. Banks, commanding United States forces from New Orleans responded that the officer at Port Hudson would be well within his rights not only to lash out against those "men pursuing irregular courses of war" but also to invade the region providing them—even if unwillingly—with supplies. Banks urged the citizens of Clinton to reestablish a legitimate (read Union) government and take up arms to protect their homes. Until then, he averred, "Federal troops will not only not protect, but they [Clintonians] may look for the destruction of their property by them." 65

The pleading nature of one letter and the belligerent response of the other did not set the tone for either the Confederate or Union forces as they rode back and forth across the Florida Parishes in the months to come. By late fall, Clinton and the surrounding area hosted a garrison of 3,000 to 4,000 Confederate cavalry. Federal officials believed that this growing Rebel force was being amassed to invade Union strongholds at Baton Rouge or Port Hudson. But only one month later, Confederate Colonel Edward Dillon, Commander of the District of Southwestern Mississippi and Eastern Louisiana, indicated that the region was not so well defended when he requested permission for F. P. Powers to muster a regiment to protect the district from Yankee raids,

as they "really have nothing but Scott's cavalry, which is nothing, to keep them from raiding the country for cotton."  

Correspondence between officers on both sides of the conflict were rife with spy reports, conjecture, and assumptions, and such reports were bolstered by the continual capture of prisoners, a few at a time. Commanding officers were convinced of the other side's impending plans to invade their own stronghold. But in April, upon touring his new command district, Col. John S. Scott found that he had "only 604 guns" stationed far from the river, and "in perfect inactivity." He recalled all troops to Clinton for a brigade rendezvous, which he hoped would bring in stragglers and "inspirit [sic] the desponding" citizens.  

The town's infrastructure continued to make the community attractive for Confederate operations. So much so, in fact, that for a while it served as the site of a Brigade command for the District of Southwestern Mississippi and

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67 See, for example, correspondence of January 1864: (Union) P. St. George Cooke to C. P. Stone, Jan. 13, 16, 27, 1864, OR, Ser 1, Vol XXXIV, pt 2, pp. 71, 91, 164; Cooke to Ullman, Jan. 14, 1864, ibid., p. 77; (Confederate) Edward Dillon to T. M. Jack, Jan. 28, 1864, ibid., p. 921; Dillon to S. D. Lee, Jan. 29, 1864, ibid., pp. 923-25; R. Taylor to Boggs, Jan. 30, 1864, ibid., p. 929. Such reports may be found throughout 1864 and 1865. Indeed, the Official Record indicates that several spies were working for the Union army, including women; Albert J. Myer to Canby, July 18, 1864, OR, Ser I, vol XL1, pt 2, pp. 229-30, ibid., pt 4, p. 519. George Washington Cable spent much of his service time in the Florida Parishes and wrote a fictionalized account of his experiences there in *The Cavalier*. The heroine of his novel was a female spy.  
Eastern Louisiana. Despite a relative dearth of troops, Clinton was enmeshed in periodic skirmishes throughout the campaign season of 1864. In May, for example, Scott's troops fought Union soldiers at Olive Branch and were repulsed to within five miles of the town. Although Scott reported to his superiors that he had only 550 men, some Federal reports placed the number at 200-300, others at 2,000-3,000. An expedition in July pushed Scott's troops seven miles beyond Clinton. The ambitious colonel used Clinton as his base of operations to attack Federal positions along the Mississippi River. In retaliation, Union generals sent troops toward Clinton to try to flush out the pesky cavalryman, to capture and destroy supply depots, "and any other damage that it may be in your power to inflict." While the town was burned several times during the war, the goal of the invaders was not to dominate but rather simply to drive Scott out; they returned to their garrison in Baton Rouge a few days later. Control over the town vacillated between Union and Confederate commanders during the rest of the year, as expeditions aimed toward Clinton and the resulting skirmishes

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took place in August, October, November, and December of 1864, and even continued into the spring of 1865.\textsuperscript{71}

A common target of the Federal troops was the telegraph lines that ran into Clinton. As one of the westernmost points retaining telegraph contact with the Confederate capitol at Richmond, Clinton was an important relay point for communication with the generals commanding troops in the Trans-Mississippi region. A soldier from Clinton would ride to the river and communicate via semaphore to his counterpart in Kirby Smith's command on the west side of the Mississippi.\textsuperscript{72} With war escalating in the East and with both


\textsuperscript{72}For cutting the telegraph, see, Ullman to Birge, May 4, 1864, OR, Ser. 1, vol XXXIV, pt 3, p. 436; Ullman to J. Schuyler Crosby, \textit{ibid.}, pp. 436-37, and Canby to S. A. Hurlbut, Feb. 22, 1865, OR, Ser. I, vol XLVIII, pt 2, pp. 940-41. For use of telegraph for Trans-Mississippi communication, see, for example, S. D. Lee to Kirby Smith, July 16, 1864, P. Ellis, Jr., to J. S. Scott to Kirby Smith, Maury to Liddell,
Baton Rouge and New Orleans in Federal hands, the Rebels had few other incentives to keep a large force in the Florida Parishes, except to harass Union positions. Yet this was a vital communication corridor and is perhaps why the Confederates wished to maintain a presence there. Although Scott had ambitious plans to drive the invading army out of southeastern Louisiana, the Confederacy was unwilling to commit the required manpower so far away.\(^73\)

As early as January 1864 Confederate officers had reported that "the idea seems to prevail generally that the Government has given up the country," despite the presence of troops throughout the Florida Parishes, including Clinton. In fact, the colonel in command believed that the presence of soldiers, the irregular impressment of supplies, and the subsequent delinquent payment on the part of the commissary department caused this breach of trust. He argued to his superior that "the payment of these claims would do much toward the restoration of confidence on the part of the people." Three months later, however, Scott continued to report on "the unpardonable manner in which the commissary and quartermaster's departments have been managed here."\(^74\)

The actions of the Rebel commanders did not buoy the hopes of local civilians. There were constant rumors circulating in

\(^73\)See, for example, Scott to George B. Hodge, OR, Ser. I, vol XXXIX, pt 1, pp. 838-42.

Clinton about impending Federal attacks, with the fear lasting at times a week or more. By the spring of 1865 Confederate troops had become so adept at evacuating when the Federals neared, that Union General Frank J. Herron reported to his superiors that the locals expected the rebels to abandon the entire area between Baton Rouge and Vicksburg, "and it is noticeable just at this time that there is a strong disposition on the part of almost every one outside our lines to get on good terms with the Federal authorities."  

By far the most serious problem facing civilians, soldiers, and their commanders in the region, particularly in Clinton, was the procurement of supplies. Here, again, family and church ties remained pivotal in feeding those who lived in town with produce from the country. Historian Samuel Hyde argues that the common experience of deprivation "forced neighbors to rely on one another to an unprecedented degree" during this late phase of the war. Everything from tallow, butter, and fresh meat to peas, watermelons, and strawberries were given to friends, as well as such rarities as real coffee. But despite this form of assistance, many citizens in Clinton and the surrounding countryside found that goods remained both scarce and expensive. In August 1863 residents were given the opportunity to purchase the "the clothing &c of the deceased soldiers at the Silliman

75For fear of attack, see Henry Marston, Jr. Diary, November (passim) 1864, Marston Papers. F. J. Herron to S. A. Hurlbut, Mar. 14, 1865, OR, Ser. I, vol XLVIII, pt 1, p. 128.
Hospital" in town.76 Once the town became a part of the battlefront, the old network simply could not keep pace with the demand for supplies, and residents of the area were forced to turn to other, illicit means to procure necessities for themselves and their families.

In order to combat the constant need for supplies, many citizens of Clinton took advantage of the proximity of the Federals in Baton Rouge and Port Hudson to trade cotton. A few residents received permission from the government to travel through the lines, as did East Felicianian W. D. Winter, "to get supplies for the families of soldiers and for the State guard." School teacher Clara Dunbar, caring for her three motherless grandchildren while her son was off at war, requested permission from President Jefferson Davis to trade a few bales of cotton for necessities. She argued that the "Government has been sending cotton to the enemy's lines and getting clothes for her (government) children, speculators have been getting rich on government permits rich people have sent their hundred bales with or without a permit. ... I would not ask, but knowing as I do that thousands of bales have been sent why not these little ones have their share [sic]." Her letter was referred to the Secretary of War by Davis's secretary, and her request was

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denied on the basis that his department lacked the authority to grant such permission.\footnote{S. D. Lee to John S. Scott, May 27, 1864, OR, Ser. I, vol XXXIX, pt 2, p. 627, relaying permission from Louisiana's Confederate governor, Henry W. Allen. Clara Dunbar to Jefferson Davis, Sep. 5, 1864, DNA, M437, r125, f785-90. In a second request, dated Nov. 15, 1864, she was again denied. DNA, RG109, Letters Rec'd by Confederate Sec. of War, 9-D-1865.}

Some Clintonians deplored this trade entirely. Parish judge John McVea informed General Stephen D. Lee that this trade not only benefited the enemy by giving them a marketable good to sell in Europe, but also demoralized local citizens. He asserts that prior to the beginning of trade across the lines, goods and food were available, if not varied or abundant. He gave cloth as example, as homespun had been relatively inexpensive and considered fashionable. "As soon as the trade was permitted with Baton Rouge," he opined, "the looms stopped and homespun went out of fashion." Furthermore, Confederate currency became severely depressed. Confederate officials agreed with McVea's analysis and in an open letter to the "Citizens of Southeast Miss. and East La." Commanding General George B. Hodge reported that the Government will apply "the closest scrutiny" to prevent the cotton trade by unauthorized civilians. Although the Confederacy occasionally needed to "exchange cotton for army supplies," the activity did not "justify private trade with the enemy, nor will it be tolerated." He soon reported to President Davis that "the good citizens I think will sustain me, and I will take care of the vicious ones. I shall use
vigorous measures to suppress the illegal cotton trade, and think I shall in a great measure succeed."\textsuperscript{78}

Hodge's plan for success counted on the use of cavalry troops to suppress the illicit exchanges, but this scheme presented problems of its own. The biggest impediment is that some of the soldiers in his district had gone without pay for eighteen months. He reported to the president, "This is I am told often made an excuse and pretext by the pickets for allowing cotton to pass in small quantities for a bribe." The general even suggested that when cotton is legally traded by the government, a surplus ought to be obtained to sell to loyal Confederates in the area. But the "mania for illicit trade" was a difficult one to suppress, as even ladies and gentlemen of "the most respectable families" offered him bribes to violate the law. Federal officer T. J. Linnekin reported to his superior that a Confederate lieutenant smuggled goods himself into Clinton for sale. In fact, a Union report indicated that Confederate forces east of the Jackson & New Orleans Rail Road were there "with instructions to encourage smuggling.... At nearly all the small towns

and villages in this country, ... they have an officer with a small squad of men stationed to assist the smugglers."  

Further confusion was created by the constant invasion of northern soldiers into East Feliciana and the town of Clinton. While officially within Union lines, some might have taken advantage of the opportunity to exchange cotton. On at least two occasions, people were indicted for stealing and selling cotton. William Hunt, H. Frank Stafford, Stephen Simmons, and Calvin Rogillio all claimed that they believed the cotton was owned by individuals who had deserted the Confederacy or by cotton speculators and were therefore justified in their actions. In response to this temptation, Col. Scott ordered his subordinates that "in case parties made any attempt to pass cotton during the temporary occupation of the country by the enemy, to shoot the driver and teams and burn the cotton and wagons."  

The proximity of the Union lines created another economic problem, the effects of which would cause the most tremendous social repercussions of the war. The African Americans who lived and worked as slaves in Clinton, Jackson, and the surrounding countryside took advantage of the brief occasions of Federal occupation to flee their masters and seek the benefits of freedom. Officers often viewed the

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slaves as an object of war, as did Union General Frank Herron. After the raid into Clinton in August 1864, he reported that "We brought ten or twelve bales of cotton and a number of head of cattle, also quite a number of negroes." Others, including A. L. Lee, regarded slaves as a nuisance. Still others were confused by the requirements of caring for the new freedmen, as one inquired whether contraband were to be considered an exception to the rule forbidding entry into Federal lines.\textsuperscript{81} The Clinton correspondent of a Mobile, Alabama, newspaper claimed that the escaped slaves were "dying at a fearful rate, from diseases brought on by exposure, want and inattention" in contraband camps at Port Hudson and Baton Rouge. The writer, called "Crescent," also reported that "a negro boy" returned from the Baton Rouge camp "thoroughly disgusted with Yankee freedom, and asked his master to take him back."\textsuperscript{82} Regardless of the veracity of this report, Crescent unintentionally revealed that hundreds, perhaps thousands of slaves had taken advantage of the presence of Federal troops to grasp their freedom.

The people of Clinton faced a myriad of other social disturbances within their community. As though having several hundred to several thousand troops camping in the immediate vicinity and the constant threat of invasion were...


\textsuperscript{82}"Crescent," Dec. 24, 1864 in (Mobile) \textit{Advertiser and Register}, Jan. 8, 1865; see also the letter from Crescent dated Jan. 3, 1865 in \textit{ibid.}, Jan. 18, 1865.
not disruptive enough, the conflict between the civil and military authorities created still more problems. J. D. A. Kirkland was indicted in March of 1864 for "resisting an officer executing an order of the court" after he ordered one of his soldiers to report to duty rather than allow him to be arrested by the Sheriff. Kirkland responded that he and his troops were preparing for a supposed Federal attack, and he refused to have his soldier captured by the Federals while in civil confinement. Several other Confederate officers faced such indictments, but no record of the outcome is available. 83

Some enterprising citizens were indicted for keeping grog shops and selling liquor without a license or for distilling liquor from grain. Continuing their quest to maintain an orderly community, even in the face of the disorder of war, local officials brought forth such complaints in no fewer than twenty cases. Of the extant records, well over half of those available from 1863 to 1865 were filed for these offenses. No doubt the shops served the whims of the soldiers who were constantly about, and at least two defendants used wartime exigencies as a defense. Frederick Schurer, a shoemaker by trade, explained that he had "lost nearly all he had by fire," and "seeing others engaged in retailing liquor, he thought it would not be wrong in him to do the same." Furthermore, he had "never refused

aid & comfort to the sick and wounded soldier who asked it ... and pray[ed] the favorable consideration of the Judge."84

Military officials, however, seem to have committed the greatest abuses when crossing the line between wartime and civilian procedure. In a long letter to Governor Allen, local attorney and former Confederate officer Preston Pond pointed out the "grossly illegal manner" of impressment and the "high-handed and lawless manner in which Confederate officers have violated and are still violating the rights of persons...in this State." The abuses he reported include citizens being taken to Mississippi and being "executed without trial." "The pretext," Pond reported, "is that the civil tribunals are too slow; they are neither sufficiently fast nor reckless for the purposes and wishes of many military commanders, who are neither the wisest nor the purest men which the country affords." Similarly, private property was taken without any semblance of due process.85 Pond had sent a similar letter to President Davis, who responded that "efforts will be made by the appointment of suitable persons for the duty" to investigate and pay claims. The recently appointed George B. Hodge had this duty added to his campaign to end the illegal cotton trade.86

84Criminal Cases, 5th Jud. Dist. Court, passim; State v. Frederick Schurer, case No. 10, Dec. 15, 1863.
86Davis to Pond, June 7, 1864, Letterbook copy, Louisiana Historical Association, Davis Papers, Tulane University, reel 1, f331-32; and Crist, Lynda, et.al., eds., The Papers of Jefferson Davis, vol. 10 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1999) pp. 452-53.
Despite the social upheaval caused by the increased military activity in and around their town during this last phase of the Civil War, Clintonians were still able to garner a modicum of normalcy through their relationships with friends and family. Although these relationships were strained in the economic sphere, socially they remained intact. Citizens continued to visit one another's homes, and the homecoming of a soldier on furlough was particular cause for celebration. Young people continued to have picnics and parties. In April 1864 the town enjoyed the spectacle of a tournament, whereby twenty Knights "(the young men now about Clinton, including principally the boys who are at their homes now on furlough) who were to take off a ring two inches in diameter suspended in the air by a wire with a lance six feet in length." Even the children had their routines continue, even if they were affected by the war. In August 1863 Reverend Sereno Taylor led some children in a concert, but it was held at the hospital for the wounded soldiers. Mary Wall, the principal of Clinton Female Seminary, sighed that "We are having school even in these troubled times," but she had to make concessions to the wartime economy. Consequently she charged six bushels of corn or money to buy the equivalent for tuition each month. Music lessons and the

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87See, for example, Mary E. Taylor Diary, Hunter-Taylor Papers, Sep. 15, 1863, and passim; and James Marston Diary, Marston Family Papers, Apr. 7, 1864, passim.
use of the piano required the payment of eight additional
bushels.\textsuperscript{88}

Clinton provided an infrastructure for transportation,
communication, and supply storage that made it an attractive
and useful place for Confederate military operations. The
willing population also provided the new country with the
necessary manpower to wage its ill-conceived battle for
independence. Yet this same conglomeration of men and
materiel also made it an attractive target for Federal troops
once they had established their strongholds along the
Mississippi River. Despite the shortages, inconveniences,
and fears created by the war going on in their midst, the
residents of Clinton called upon their prewar ties of family,
church, and friends to maintain their community. While
Clinton remained the homefront, these ties sustained the
residents of the town. But when troops bivouacked there and
Clinton became part of the battlefront of the Confederacy, a
significant minority of the population were compelled to
search for subsistence outside their traditional network of
kin and co-religionists by turning to cotton speculation and
smuggling. In the years following the war, Clintonians black
and white would face drastic changes. In certain cases, the
old ties held, but in other, more dramatic and sometimes
fatal ways, the villagers of Clinton failed to make the
transition into a free, democratic, and peaceful society.

\textsuperscript{88}Wall to [Jeptha] McKinney, Mar. 9, 1865 and Wall to James A. Williams,
Oct. 31, 1864, McKinney (Jeptha) Papers, Merritt M. Shilg Memorial
Collection, Box 2, fdr 10, Louisiana State University, Louisiana and
Lower Mississippi Valley Collection.
Chapter 4

The Transition from Slavery to Freedom

The Civil War brought great changes to the social and economic structure of the South, and the town of Clinton did not escape them. Utilized as a staging front and as a transportation and materiel depot, Clinton had been attractive to both Confederate and Federal troops during the conflict. Burned at least twice, the face of the physical landscape of the town had changed. But as the inevitable consequence of war, the faces of its people changed as well. The first major change in population wrought by the war and its aftermath was a decrease in population of almost 15 percent, to 930 individuals.¹ Despite the absolute decline, the town's white population remained relatively stable in its makeup; the total decline from the prewar enumeration amounted to only 5.4 percent. The most dramatic change was wrought among the cohort of white men of age to serve in the Confederate Army, which decreased by over 25 percent by 1870.²

¹Manuscript Census Returns, Ninth Census of the United States, 1870, East Feliciana Parish, Louisiana, Schedule 1.
²The war cohort was calculated using the following figures: 1850, white men aged 15-50, n=184; 1860, white men aged 20-60, n=137; Δn=-47 or -25.5%. The age range in 1870 includes the 35 year span in 1860 plus those who came of age (15-19) during the war. These ages represent the cohort of all men eligible and therefore most likely to serve, and it is inclusive, i.e., the figures are not limited to those who actually served. A portion of this loss is almost certainly due to attrition by natural death or emigration. However, the same cohort among white women decreased by only 15 percent during the same decade, indicating that the war took a significant toll on Clinton's white men.
But a more significant change altered the lives of fully one-third of Clinton's residents. With the emancipation of the southern states' slaves finally complete in 1865, Clintonians, both black and white, were forced to evolve a new set of social, economic, and political mores. The road to freedom was traveled joyfully and willfully by some, reluctantly and sometimes violently by others, but Clinton's townsfolk marched forward. Aided by the Freedmen's Bureau, whose main outpost in East Feliciana was located at Clinton, locals began to forge a more open biracial community, by circumstance if not by choice. By 1870 the town had changed and matured as the war took its toll and as freedmen began to assert their identity, reestablish their families, and take advantage of the opportunities afforded by life in a bustling town. Yet the population still retained characteristics of its early pattern of settlement.

This chapter traces the first three years of development within the free African-American community and describes the interactions between former masters and former slaves during this era of change. Planters often saw the rise in social status of their former bondmen as a necessary decline in their own social status. Consequently, whites sometimes responded by trying to forcefully and physically reassert their supremacy over blacks. The town setting in Clinton tended to exacerbate such altercations because blacks' newly acquired freedom of movement was painfully and at times dramatically obvious as they maneuvered through the village.
But African-Americans refused to yield their freedoms, and in fact, were determined to make the best of all that freedom had to offer through establishing a vibrant, educated, and hard-working community.

The Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, or the Freedmen's Bureau, was established by the Federal government ostensibly in order to facilitate the transition from slavery to freedom throughout the South. Fully one-third of the town's population before the war had been held as property by their fellow Clintonians. This vital group of freedmen in Clinton and the surrounding area utilized the Freedmen's Bureau both economically and socially in order to meet a key goal following the end of hostilities: "to escape from the oppression of slavery while keeping their families intact." In fact, within five years after the war, the vast majority of African Americans residing in Clinton, almost 75 percent, lived in some type of family setting. In July 1865


4Manuscript Census Returns, 1870. 74.1 percent of Clinton's black residents lived within a family culture of some sort. Families were identified by household and family numbers, then by last name. Minors living with a married couple or an unmarried woman with a different surname were still considered as living within an identifiable family structure.

For the first time in 1870, the town of Clinton was clearly designated within the Federal census returns, but the techniques used to delineate the town's residents in earlier manuscripts would have been valid for the 1870 enumeration. A word of caution: the 1870 census is notorious for being inaccurate. Small changes in the town's makeup reflected in the census may or may not be valid. However, when large changes are indicated the trend is likely accurate, though the margin of error cannot be specifically determined. Furthermore, the census-taker in 1870 was James DeGrey—a conscientious former Union officer and Freedmen's Bureau agent at Clinton—who likely did his work competently. Finally, the 1870 census is the best and most accurate information
Thomas Conway, the head of the Freedmen's Bureau in Louisiana, informed Clinton bureau agent G. W. Bridges that, while freedmen were allowed to choose their employer, they were required to work in some manner. Conway was careful to assert, however, that families must be allowed to stay together. As Clinton's new bureau agent in June 1866, James DeGrey conscientiously worked to keep the families of freedmen together.

Freedmen utilized the bureau's assistance in a number of different ways to maintain the integrity of their families. Often, this meant calling on the bureau to help formalize or strengthen the bonds of the nuclear family. A former slave named Katie cared for her aged father since his former master was no longer required to do so. When she sought the bureau's aid, agent DeGrey wrote to her brother Charles Houston and sister Pheba Houston to compel them to share the burden, "as it's not fair for her to support the burden alone." Caring for destitute or ill relatives was not uncommon but was often emotionally and financially taxing. DeGrey frequently required relatives to support destitute, and particularly elderly, freedmen, but in August 1866 families informed him that "now they refuse to do so as they have not the provision, and depent [sic] on the planters for support themselves." During difficult economic times in the winter of 1867-1868, DeGrey reported to superiors that probably 2,000 freedmen were without jobs or rations, and

available despite any potential or actual inaccuracies in the data. All calculations are my own.
"these go from one place to another, getting a meal here and there from relatives and friends." Based on this information, he took the opportunity to request that the Freedmen's Bureau supply provisions to the planters so that they might afford to hire and feed workers.\textsuperscript{5}

Still other freedpeople asked for assistance in keeping their family together by requesting the bureau agent to compel spouses to return to their marriage. DeGrey chastised freedman Ben Franklin for beating his wife and stepdaughter. He further advised the former slave that "You must take your own home in consideration first" when making purchases, rather than spending hard-earned wages on frivolities for himself. Finally, the agent reminded Franklin, "you cant [sic] send your wife off, with the prospect of getting an other one, on short notice, if you do, you will have me to deal with," and then encouraged him, "I want you to be good to your wife." Sometimes, freedmen tried to assert their new-found freedom by leaving their pre-emancipation spouses to take up with another. Lucy Roger's husband Caesar charged that she "neglect[ed] your household duties, and that you wash and otherwise care for [your lover] Ned Dixon...to the neglect of Caesar" and admonished her "Let me hear no more of this shameful business." At one point, the agent threatened one man who had been charged with abandonment that he would

"send troops after you" if the freedman didn't appear with
"The woman Phillis that you [now] have as a wife." 6

There are numerous possible explanations as to why many
marriages broke apart so soon after emancipation. Undoubtedly,
many couples were unhappy in their marriage even before
the war—if either love had simply faded or it had been a
marriage at the behest of their master rather than their
hearts. Another strong possibility is that the system of
abroad marriages (where spouses were owned by different
masters and lived on different plantations or farms, or in
the case of towns, where one spouse lived on a plantation and
the other in town) created a breakdown in the marital
relationship. Perhaps a freedman or -woman had become
attracted to a new, more prosperous or more attractive mate;
or possibly a couple who had lived apart during slavery had
come to learn upon their recent cohabitation that
compatibility could not be sustained in the long-term.
Regardless of the reason, it follows that the majority of
complainants were women. Female laborers were paid
considerably lower wages than their male counterparts for the

6DeGrey to Ben Franklin, Aug. 8, 1866, DNA, RG105, ser 1546, Letters
Sent, vol 1; DeGrey to Lucy Rogers, Sep. 7, 1867, ibid., vol 2; and
DeGrey to Deamon Carter, July 17, 1867, ibid., vol 1. For abandonment,
see also, DeGrey to Tom Hives, June 6, 1866; DeGrey to Aaron Graham,
June 24, 1867 Complaints of Hester Barbee vs. Simon Barbee and Edward
Moore vs. Matilda Moore, Dec. 21, 1867, DNA, RG105, ser 1546, Letters
Sent, vol 1.; and DeGrey to Clem Morris, May 4, 1867, DNA, RG105, ser
1546, Letters Sent, vol 2. On at least one occasion, however, agent
DeGrey sought to reunite a family torn apart by the system of slavery
rather than by simple abandonment, when he informed the African-American
community that Mary Wilburn sought her mother Charlotte Walker who had
formerly been a slave in East Texas. DeGrey to G. J. Blunt, Feb. 10,
1868, ibid., vol 3.
same amount of work, and in addition women had the added burden of housekeeping. It is possible, therefore, that women would be more willing to stay in even an unhappy marriage in order to provide for their children.

The Freedmen's Bureau also assisted in protecting the black family from undue influence on the part of whites who no longer had control over their former laborers. In one instance, a landowner tried to reassert his pre-emancipation power of deciding whether a black man would be allowed to live with his wife. Freedman Burl Dennis informed the bureau agent that his wife had been turned off the plantation, although she had already worked there for at least one month. Agent DeGrey admitted that there were a few exceptions to the rule, but unless specific charges were given against Mrs. Dennis, she should be allowed to live with her husband. Furthermore, this was just cause should Dennis want to leave the plantation, "and he will be sustained in it," unless Dennis's wife was allowed to either work on the plantation or at least "stay in her husbands [sic] cabin."\(^7\)

Newly emancipated African Americans also applied this protection from the bureau against outside (white) influences in order to protect their children. Parents reclaimed children who had been bound out in cases where the individual had "not properly clothed and fed the children" and "abused

and ill-treated them."⁸ One of the first complaints registered with DeGrey when he became the new agent was from a freedman who wished to have a fellow laborer arrested for whipping his son.⁹ Only a few days later, Matilda Hives reported her employer Frank Olivars for beating her child "unmercifully." DeGrey informed Olivars that he had "no right to practice such cruelties on the freed people. Such works will not be tolerated...." Freedman Jessey Jackson reported John Powels for assault and battery, threatening to cut his throat, and beating his children. Growing incensed by whites' treatment of the former slaves, the agent responded even more forcefully this time, asserting that "undoubtedly you are well aware that your state laws will not uphold you, in committing assault & battery on either white or black. And much less will the Bureau of freedmen [sic], submit to such outrage on the freedmen."¹⁰

After only a short time in the area, DeGrey came to observe "I find as a general thing, that the whites are very - abusive to the blacks, but the blacks must not say one word, if they do so, some one is ready to cut their throats; or shoot them." In letters to planters charged with

⁸DeGrey to M. Chapman, May 20, 1867, DNA, RG105, ser 1546, Letters Sent, vol 2; see also DeGrey to Arm Stone May 18,1867, ibid.; and DeGrey to J. L. DeLee, Esqr, July 18, 1866, DNA, RG105, ser 1546, Letters Sent, vol 1.
⁹David W. Pipes to "Capt. Hayes", June 3, 1866; and DeGrey to Pipes, June 3, 1866, DNA, RG105, ser 1546, letters Sent, vol 1. The complaint was submitted through the planter, Pipes, to the agent, a Capt. Hayes; but James DeGrey had assumed control in May 1866. DNA, RG105, inventory for Clinton, La.
¹⁰DeGrey to Frank Olivars, Esqr., June 7, 1866, and DeGrey to Powels, June 12, 1866, DNA, RG105, ser 1546, Letters Sent, vol 1.
maltreatment, he tried to impress upon them that "you must try and get along without harsh treatment, because such things would not work to your advantage if reported to Head Qrs." Early on, DeGrey had begun to make keen observations on local race relations, and to make a direct threat such as reporting a planter to military authorities constituted a bold statement to make to a planter already charged with violence. But this demonstrates the agent's increasing frustration as he realized his impotence in preventing whites from mistreating the freedmen in Clinton and its environs.11

Despite such admonitions, whites in East Feliciana found it difficult to adjust to their lack of control and continued to physically and verbally abuse freedmen who tried to exercise their newly acquired rights and privileges of freedom. For example, less than a year after he arrived in Clinton, DeGrey recorded a complaint from freedman Sylvester Perry who charged that while in town, landowner P. C. Butler had kicked him in the face. Perry had previously agreed to work on Butler's plantation, but two weeks later he had not moved to the farm and was accosted by the planter. When Perry threatened to report the incident to the Freedman's Bureau, Butler replied:

God damn you, I don't care for the Captain [DeGrey], I will give you Captain damn your hell-fired soul, to hell, damn, these free niggers are getting too independant [sic] they think they have not got to work for the whites I will kill every damned free nigger. [Butler continued to beat Perry with a brick bat, tried to choke him, and threatened him:] God damn you, if you

11DeGrey to Edward Stony, Esqr., July 1, 1866, and DeGrey to Joshua Thomas, June 23, 1866, ibid.
say one word about this to any one I will put you to death. I will kill you, God dam [sic] you if you don't go to work for me to-morrow morning or leave town.

This case demonstrates the unique way that racial animosity was exacerbated by the atmosphere of social interaction that occurred within small towns during the post-emancipation period. Before the war, there would have been no question where, when, or for whom Perry would have worked. If slaves went into town, they were required to have a pass from their master or overseer. Likewise, if they were to conduct business at a mercantile store, either by purchasing items or selling plantation produce, bondmen were required to have a pass stating specifically the items to be bought or sold.

Butler's reaction to the freedman Perry was a perfect example of the whites' loss of control over the black population. Here was Perry, a former slave, in town of his own volition. Not only was the freedman not working on Butler's plantation despite Butler's need for the labor, Perry was in fact not working at all. He was "sitting on the steps of Emanuel Levi," a local merchant's store, likely having exercised his right to purchase goods without the express consent of any white man. In other words, the entire situation brought home to Butler in one crashing moment his inability to legally control the class of former slaves who were now "too independant" and "think they have not got to work for the whites."

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In some cases, DeGrey urged former slaves who filed complaints to utilize the civil authorities, as in the Perry case. Butler was arrested and had to post $100 bond until the next court. The agent told one freedwoman who had been choked, "you have a right to have John Williams and make him pay damages for assaulting you. Make your application to civil authority—"\(^\text{13}\) Consequently, many freedmen took advantage of their new legal status to file charges in Clinton's civil courts. The local justice of the peace heard complaints and issued bonds for individuals charged with having committed a violent crime. DeGrey was more likely to refer cases between freedmen to the courts than between a freedman and a white man. Among the most common charges involving freedmen were assault cases, but the majority of those cases were white-on-black assaults. The charges ranged from threats to murder.\(^\text{14}\) In one egregious case, DeGrey had three individuals arrested for the murder of a black man and the attempted murder of a black woman. He lamented that the justice of the peace simply "endeavored to smoothe [sic] the whole thing over" rather than actually question the witnesses. "I have not the slightest doubt," asserted the


\(^{14}\)Records of the Justice of the Peace, Clinton, Louisiana. Loose records filed in the office of Clerk of Court, East Feliciana Parish, Hon. Debbie Hudnall, Clerk. See, for example, bond of James C. Anderson, June 13, 1868; Emanuel Williams vs. John H. Stone July 1, 1867; and Josephine Gair vs. James H. Graham, Aug. 23, 1869. The local JPs were H. B. Chase, also the town's mayor, and Norwood Tildon, a druggist; both were white.
agent to his superior officers, "that if Browder [the accused] is allowed to be tried by a civil tribunal that he will go unpunished...." DeGrey even went so far as to urge that the Justice be removed from office, as he refused to "interfere between the master and his slave." The bureau agent's prediction proved accurate when William Browder was acquitted of murder a few weeks later.15

By the following year, the situation had become even more tense and the civil authorities even less responsive. In the case of P. C. Butler having beaten the freedman Sylvester Perry, the white man's aggression had been directed toward the black, but it was also a passive affront to the authority of the Freedmen's Bureau. Lieutenant DeGrey had been in the nearby town of Jackson conducting business during the assault, and Perry challenged his attacker that "if Captain [sic] DeGrey had been in town he would not have dared to have kicked me."16 By November 1868 white planters were no longer passively antagonistic toward the Bureau. The new agent, H. E. Barton, suggested to a freedwoman named Louisa that she press charges in the justice of the peace court against Dr. Felix DeLee for striking her. In response,

Mr. DeLee accosted me in front of my office, and after relating his side and view of the case in a quiet and friendly manner, stepped back a pace or two, and cocking a Pistol which he held concealed in his Coat Pocket, he abused me in a most violent manner, saying, "I'll [sic] fix you, you God Damned, low lived, sneaking Yankee Son

15DeGrey to George P. Schayer, May 1867; DeGrey to Schayer, May 17, 1867; DeGrey to Schayer, June 3, 1867, DNA, RG105, ser 1546, Letters Sent, vol 2.
of a Bitch! You've reported some others and meddled in their affairs, God Damn you, and this is the last of it."17

DeLee's reaction demonstrates that the planters in the area around Clinton blamed the actions of the "Yankee" agent in fomenting trouble among the freed population. Barton had only been the bureau agent in Clinton for a few months, and perhaps was fulfilling his duties more vigorously than had his predecessor. Whether DeGrey had become less vigilant, had given up, or had been co-opted into the society of white planter elites cannot be parsed out from the record. Regardless, planters now included the new bureau agent in their disapprobation and increasing violence. Furthermore, Agent Barton also learned this his heretofore presumed ally, the civil authorities, were little more than a sham. In his diatribe against the bureau, DeLee had also informed Barton that the justice of the peace (and mayor of Clinton) Henry B. Chase "had told him that my reporting such cases to the Civil Authorities was a mere farce as it all ended there at his office." Consequently, Barton requested that the Adjutant General's office send protection because he was now unable to get local protection "from the Civil Authorities, as they are all without exception Ex confederate Officers."18

Despite this environment of escalating violence, the freed community was able to establish their families and a community. Almost 75 percent of African Americans in Clinton

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18Ibid.
appear to have been living in some sort of family unit. Although many black families were encompassed within a white household, such as domestic servants and their children living in the home of their white employer, a large number were independent African-American households. One indicator of this fact is the large proportion of freedwomen whose occupation was listed as "Keeping House" in the census of 1870. One-third of all black women fifteen years of age and older did not engage in a specific occupation beyond caring for their own household. As a point of comparison, among the town's white women, four of every ten were "keeping house." The single largest occupation listed by the town's black women was domestic servant. Almost to a person, this meant the woman lived in a white household, often with her own family. Conversely, all eight "washer-women" lived within an exclusively black household. This indicates that these women had a degree of choice in living arrangements not necessarily available to women who worked for whites as general domestics. Furthermore, it also indicates that these women may have already begun to forge identities for themselves as individuals and as members of a group distinct

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19870 Census. See Table X, Female Occupation, 1870. This corresponds to similar numbers in the South's larger cities studied by economic historian Claudia Goldin in "Female Labor Force Participation: The Origin of Black and White Differences, 1870 and 1880," 37 Journal of Economic History (March 1977), pp. 87-108. Jones notes, however, that women who were simply 'keeping house' might also have taken in boarders, or sold vegetables or eggs in an effort to contribute to the family finances, Jones, Labor of Love, p. 73.

20This percentage is deceptive low, as, another 16 percent of white women were "without occupation" and almost 20 percent were "attending school," which is skewed because of the operation of a girls' boarding school.
from the white community. This should not be overstated, however, for the choice of occupations available to freedwomen was limited, and they would certainly have been dependent upon a largely white clientele for payment.21

Another key element in the black community's development was the continuation of the black church. Slaves living in and around Clinton before the war had at least one church of their own headed by a black minister. Emma Lane, a young planter's wife who moved to Clinton from Connecticut shortly before the war, reported to her northern relatives that the only black worshippers at her church were the carriage drivers, while the others attended the slave church.22 Only one year after the end of hostilities a group of freedmen purchased for fifty dollars one acre of land located near Pretty Creek in Clinton upon which to hold their religious services. Whether Mt. Zion Methodist Church was newly formed or was a continuation of the old slave church cannot be ascertained. But the congregation met on their new land under a brush arbor and "later in a make shift building," until the freedmen had raised money to finally build a more permanent structure in 1889.23 The makeshift building likely served double-duty as the local black schoolhouse, which the

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21Similarly, Jacqueline Jones argues that plantation women would often leave former masters in order "to escape from the confinement of the place where they had lived as slaves." Labor of Love, p. 51. See also p. 53.
22Emma Lay Lane to "My Dear Mrs. Rogers," Oct. 11, 1857, Anderson Papers, Box 2, fdr 18.
23*History Mt. Zion United Methodist Church, Clinton, Louisiana,* copy provided by Delsia Marshall, church secretary. The congregation utilized this structure until 1949.
bureau agent H. E. Barton described as a "Frame building, well covered but the miserable boarding at the sides allows the wind and rain easy access." The actual construction of a church so soon after emancipation indicates the strength of the black church in Clinton.

Another indicator of the widespread influence of the churches was their ability to disseminate information. When Lieutenant DeGrey was called upon to help locate the mother of a freedwoman separated from her during slavery, he contacted the black churches in Jackson and Clinton to "enquire from your congregation at prayer meeting next Sabbath." This letter indicates that there may have been as many as three or even five African-American churches in Clinton.25

Churches were an important part of the communication system in the freed community due to the high rate of illiteracy among blacks. The former bondmen tried to be rid of this legacy of the slave system by taking advantage of opportunities available through the Freedman's Bureau to gain an education, at least for their children if not for themselves. Schools for freedmen were established in each of the three major towns in East Feliciana as well as on several plantations throughout the parish, though not necessarily

25 DeGrey to G. J. Blunt, Feb. 10, 1868, DNA, RG105, ser 1546, Letters Sent, vol 3. DeGrey sent several copies to various leaders in the black community. Another letter dated the next day was sent to five men in Clinton for announcement at "next prayer meeting." Those men were John Brooks, P. Yarborough, Andrew Nero, Marshall Smith, and Prince Poole.
under the auspices of the Freedmen's Bureau. During Agent DeGrey's first summer in the parish, he complained about the non-bureau Port Hudson school, which was taught by a freedman named Harrison. The tutor had never taught or even attended a school himself. "The school at Port Hudson," the agent claimed, "is about as good as no School." 26 In Jackson, a sorrier state of affairs than poor pedagogy reigned. In July, G. T. Ruby, the African-American teacher at the bureau school there, was pulled from his home past midnight by a group of twenty or more "ruffians" threatening "to cut his G-- D----- Yankee black heart out of him." DeGrey requested troops to search for the man's body, as he was presumed dead. "[T]he freedmen are very badly scared," reported the agent, "and are no wise disposed to search for the body of Ruby they fear that if they were caught, they would share the same fate." Although the search party eventually learned that Ruby had not been killed, the bureau agent wanted Federal troops to remain in Jackson "to protect the colored school" in response to white citizens' claims that "'they will be G--D--- if they [sic] will ever be another nigar [sic] school started there.'" 27

In contrast, the school for blacks in Clinton was more successful and averaged about fifty pupils daily. Here, too, the white community was "bitter towards the school and the school teacher" but did not act out its dissatisfaction. The

26Retained copy, School Report for June 1866, DNA, RG105, ser 1553, Monthly School Reports of Agent.
teacher, Louise Maude Skinner, was well liked by the black community and made her wages by selling tickets at $1.50 per student per month, preferring to "run the risk of making her salary" rather than taking a guaranteed sum. The ticket method of payment, rather than the basic salary, also provided incentive for the teacher to do good work, and Skinner regularly made more than the standard seventy-five dollars per month. The students there made "rapid progress" in reading, geography, and mathematics.28

The main problem hindering a sustainable school in Clinton was the freedpeople's lack of funds. Clinton had a long tradition of quality schools for white children, but all had been privately run. Consequently, the freedmen were expected to provide for their children's education themselves. Until crops could be gathered, the former bondmen had no money to expend to build or to rent a school building, purchase books, or pay a teacher. In January 1867 Louise Skinner reopened her school after a five month break, and attendance gradually returned to the high levels of the previous summer.29 While the majority of students were still studying easy lessons, one quarter had advanced into the more challenging readers.

28DeGrey to A. G. Studer, July 7, 1866, DNA, RG105, ser 1546, Letters Sent; and Retained copies, School Reports for June and July 1866, ser 1553, School Reports of Agent.
29Retained copies, School Reports for August 1866 through February of 1867, RG105, ser 1553, School Reports of Agent; and District Superintendent's Monthly School-Report, DNA, RG105, ser 1552, Monthly School Reports of District Superintendent.
The strong desire for education in the African-American community was evident by April, after agricultural demands slackened, when the school swelled to a daily average of sixty-four students. With the exception of the schoolhouse rent, which was paid by the bureau, the endeavor was funded entirely by freedmen; those who could not afford the tuition promised to pay in the fall after the year's crop was gathered. DeGrey seemed proud to report that the students "are improving remarkably." At the end of the term the young students at Clinton's black school held an examination that was, according to the bureau agent, "one of the most gratifying spectacles to the advocates of education that could have been witnessed. It is almost [sic] incredible to believe that pupils, under nine months tuition could possibly become so proficient in their studies."  

Although the unquenchable desire for education burned within the freed community of Clinton, the legacy of slavery continued to undermine their pursuit of education. First, the failure of crops "rendered the freedmen so destitute that they are unable to furnish means for the support of a teacher" in Clinton, and no one was willing to volunteer their pedagogical services. Though "those who have families can hardly supply them with the necessaries of life,"

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30 Retained copy, School Report for April 1867, DNA, RG105, ser 1553, School Reports of Agent. In the February 1868 longhand School Report, ser 1553, DeGrey pointed out that East Feliciana freedmen's schools had never received northern charitable aid.
31 Retained copy, School Report for July 1867, DNA, RG105, ser 1553, School Reports of Agent. DeGrey had written "advocates of learning" but crossed learning, and interlineated "education"; these are retained draft copies.
families whenever possible would send their children at least to sabbath schools. When a young black woman named Sallie D’Armond opened a school in Clinton in January, she averaged only eleven students a day for months.\textsuperscript{32} Bureau agent George Dunwell reported in May 1868 that he could have fifty adult pupils at a night school in Clinton alone, if only the funds were available to pay the teacher.\textsuperscript{33} But a few months later, newly appointed agent Henry E. Barton had observed that the "public sentiment" to the schools was "Politically, bad." Planters and merchants had begun forcing laborers "to join the democracy [i.e., the Democratic Party]," and "are also compelled to withdraw their children from the Bureau Schools" schools in order to retain their jobs.\textsuperscript{34}

Whites' political coercion of the black population, however, involved a much broader range of issues than just education and had been going on from the moment freedmen began to utilize their newfound political voice. Due to the large free-black population before the war and the length of Union occupation in many areas of the state, Louisiana was home to many of the South's most politically active blacks during Reconstruction. In the more rural and more Confederate portions of the state, however, freedmen continued to face many barriers to effective political

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{32} Retained copy, School Reports of Nov., Dec. 1867, Jan. and Feb. 1868, DNA, RG105, ser 1553, School Reports of Agent.
\textsuperscript{33} Retained copy, longhand School report for May 1868, DNA, RG105, ser 1553, School Reports of Agent.
\textsuperscript{34} District Superintendent's Monthly School Report for Aug. 1868, DNA, RG105, ser 1552, School Reports of Superintendent; and Annual School Report of Sep 15, 1868, \textit{ibid.}, ser 1546, Letters Sent.
\end{footnotesize}
participation. The willingness of the freedmen to utilize the civil authorities early on indicated their desire to become active members of the polity, complete with all the attendant rights and obligations citizenship implied. Yet the evidence demonstrates that freedmen faced continuing and escalating intimidation and violence, particularly when they tried to test the political waters after the tidal wave of emancipation had ostensibly swept away the old order.35

Louisiana was among the first southern states to attempt forming a new Unionist government and wrote a "free-state" constitution emancipating slaves in 1864. Following the bloody race riot of July 30, 1866, in New Orleans, which occurred because of efforts to provide suffrage for black citizens of the state, Louisiana failed to win readmission to the Union and had to begin again under the system of Congressional Reconstruction.36 Pursuant to the procedures laid out in the Reconstruction Act of 1867, Louisiana held an election in order to assemble yet another constitutional convention. In this law, the Republicans in Congress had ordained the manner in which the rebellious states could re-enter the Union: in short, they had to assemble a convention to incorporate black suffrage in a new constitution and to ratify the Fourteenth Amendment. Military personnel in each of the newly created five military districts were to register

qualified voters, including African Americans, to select delegates to this constitutional convention. Former Confederates and those whites who had "given aid or comfort" to the rebellious South were to be excluded from the voting rolls under the provisions of the Fourteenth Amendment.\(^{37}\)

During the late spring and summer of 1867, many black men took advantage of the opportunity to become registered voters. In April, freedmen believed that "they must immediately register themselves; and numbers of them left their work, in some cases a whole day, for that purpose," which on some plantations upset the labor balance during spring planting. DeGrey, of the Freedmen's Bureau, quickly informed the potential voters that they were able to register when they chose and encouraged them "to come to town at such times as would not interfere with the interests of their employers or themselves." Although 300 freedmen had registered in East Feliciana as of May 10, 1867, this was but a small portion of the several thousand adult male freedmen in the parish.\(^{38}\)

The registration of the freedmen continued throughout the late spring, and planters used various forms of intimidation and subterfuge in an effort to prevent blacks from registering. DeGrey informed his superiors that the

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\(^{37}\)Foner, *Reconstruction*, pp. 274-77, 253; and United States Constitution, Amendment 14, Section 3.

\(^{38}\)In May 1867, for example, David Riley, a planter near Port Hudson, requested agent DeGrey to speak to his laborers, as they had been losing one to two days of work each week by going to political meetings in the town, Riley to DeGrey, May 20, 1867, DNA, RG105, ser 1549, Unregistered Letters Received. *Trimonthly Report*, May 10, 1867, DNA, RG105, ser 1546, Letters Sent, vol 2.
landowners "poison their [freedmen's] minds with all sorts of nonsensical and treasonable reports; they will tell them, that all who register will be obliged to join the army, that they will be taxed, fifteen, twenty and fifty dollars each," and any other stories they could concoct.\textsuperscript{39} White men, most of whom as former Confederates had not yet been officially readmitted into the body politic, utilized every opportunity to prevent their former slaves from claiming the right that only white men had once had.

Matters soon became even more disturbing to the whites, for agents of the Freedmen's Bureau were actively encouraged by their superiors to instruct freedmen in the electoral process "so they may vote intelligently," i.e., Republican. On July 4 General Cyrus Hamlin of New Orleans spoke to an gathering of freedmen in Clinton "on the duties as citizens." The assembly of freedmen, according to DeGrey "was the largest ever witnessed in this town."\textsuperscript{40} To whites who observed the rally, both the gathering itself and the topic of the address were undoubtedly vivid reminders of the power, control, and property they had lost as a result of the war—and even more upsetting, a visible reminder of who had gained political power.

It is perhaps, then, not surprising that whites reacted violently to the perceived affront to their sense of social

\textsuperscript{39}DeGrey to G. F. Shayer, May 20, 1867, DNA, RG105, ser 1550, Trimonthly Reports.

\textsuperscript{40}For voting instructions, see letter of W. H. Sterling June 6, 1867, DNA, RG105, Registered Letters Received, vol 1. DeGrey to Schayer, July 10, 1867, DNA, RG105, ser 1550, Trimonthly Reports.
and political propriety. What is remarkable, however, is that some of the former elite recognized, even at the time, that their reactions could create many more problems than they solved. In one instance, DeGrey reported having been assaulted by a local man "who called him into a grocery, and three [sic] drew his revolver on him, stating that he had had his eye on him for some time, and that he would kill him, and all other Yankee S--s of b---hs, in the place." The brother of the angry southerner later went to the Bureau office and threatened to kill DeGrey if he reported the incident, "that the affair would make too much political capital." Finally, the man threatened that "one of the two [he or DeGrey] must die" if the matter was reported. DeGrey obviously did report the incident, and both brothers were ordered to stand trial in New Orleans.\footnote{J. N. Berthiaume to L. O. Parker, Aug. 4, 1867; and endorsement of J. A. Mower, Aug. 10, 1867, DNA, RG105, ser 1548, Registers of Letters Received, vol 1.} The notion that these two parties (Federal authority on one hand versus white defiance on the other) could not live together was prevalent throughout Clinton. But there were in fact three factions in the community—whites, blacks, and the Freedmen's Bureau somewhere in between—each vying for some measure of power or, at the very least, that eternal and elusive sense of stability. The two brothers' threats demonstrate that the whites of East Feliciana were bitter and realized that there were no legal means of undoing the changes wrought by the war; only illicit means of influence, namely intimidation and threats, were
available to them in order to forward their agenda. But the realization that this provided additional "political capital" to the parties in power only served to frustrate the hardened rebels even further. As time passed, the temptation of whites toward corruption and intimidation of Freedmen would come to far outweigh the potential for political equality, though the atmosphere in Clinton and the surrounding area remained relatively peaceful through the political machinations creating a new constitution and the election of 1867 and 1868.

By the summer of 1867 freedmen had been participating in political gatherings for several months. As the fall elections grew closer, black political activity in this racially charged atmosphere began to take on a more sinister quality in the minds of the white residents of Clinton and its hinterland. In August the New Orleans Times began to report on the Republican club meetings among the freedmen in East Feliciana and supposed "negro insubordination." When local papers copied the article, residents of Clinton and the surrounding countryside became agitated, but DeGrey asserted that the article "was the first they had heard of the coming 'insurrection.'" In contrast, he described a recent barbecue thrown by and for the freedmen of East Feliciana, where he "did not notice one single quarrel during the day" among the more than 4,000 freedmen who attended. "This was a striking contrast with the barbecues of the whites before the war," he pointed out, "when more or less persons were killed at each
gathering." DeGrey's observation was almost certainly hyperbole as biased in favor of the freedmen as it was against the whites. But it also demonstrates that blacks had eagerly taken advantage of the opportunities offered to them in freedom to gather together to discuss their new political rights. Furthermore, they also adopted the political conventions of the day, forming clubs, hosting speakers, and holding barbecues.

Historian Eric Foner has argued that deep-seated fears of slave rebellion not only carried over from the antebellum period into Reconstruction, but were exacerbated by blacks' new rights and by whites' lack of control. "[I]nsurrection panics," he asserts, "underscored what might be called the ' politicization' of everyday life that followed the demise of slavery."43

Based on the Times article, the rising tide of rumors, and the freedmen's insistence upon holding segregated, blacks-only political meetings, widespread fears of an insurrection arose in East Feliciana during the fall of 1867. The first local reports of a potential uprising filtered into the Freedmen's Bureau office in September. Two planters reported that freedmen were "holding club-meetings, carrying fire-arms thereto, stationing guards at the entrance to the building," and possibly firing shots during the night. Under slavery, bondmen were not allowed to have mass meetings among

42DeGrey to William H. Webster, Aug. 30, 1867, DNA, RG105, ser 1550, Trimonthly Reports.
43Foner, Reconstruction, p. 122.
themselves without the supervision of whites. Now, the freedmen were holding their own meetings, which they attended armed. Fearing insurrection, the planters asked bureau agent DeGrey to stop their former slaves from meeting in that manner. The activities of the freedmen in this case offer a prime example of the "politicization" of normal activities in the minds of local whites. With whites afraid of "insubordinate" blacks, many freedmen felt compelled to carry arms to protect themselves, which in turn only fueled whites' fears of an impending uprising. DeGrey informed the complainants that blacks had every right to hold meetings and could not be prevented from doing so unless they broke the law. Yet the agent also took the opportunity to advise the freedmen that "they should behave themselves in a proper manner avoiding all contact with troublesome whites and they would get along much better."44

Freedmen throughout the parish, including the towns of Jackson and Clinton, had in fact begun forming "Lincoln Republican Clubs" in August 1867, as reported by the New Orleans Times, and whites continued to protest to the Freedmen's Bureau about the assemblies. Under slavery such meetings had been prohibited outright, and now blacks were gathering without any white supervision at all. At a meeting in nearby Jackson they were "armed &c and obstructed the streets by placing their pickets [and] guards." The freedmen countered that the few among their number who had brought

44Sep. 19, 1867 "Daily Journal", DNA, RG105, ser 1556.
guns were "country folk" and did so only to protect themselves, and that none of them had any evil intent toward whites. DeGrey informed the mayor of the town that "I know of some here who feel alarmed when they see a negro with a gun and they are assured that evil will grow out of it," but he insisted that the former slaves were now citizens, had every right to meet, and could exclude anyone they chose. The agent also threatened that anyone who attempted to break up the next meeting would be tried by a military tribunal. The following week, DeGrey requested an additional twenty soldiers in an effort to quell anticipated "serious trouble between the whites and freedmen" before the election.45

As the election loomed on the horizon, agent DeGrey reported to military authorities that he assumed the electorate would choose a freedman to attend the constitutional convention, "as there is not one white man who is competent and can take the oath. The Civil Offices of the parish must necessarily be filled by freedmen as there are no whites." The New Orleans Daily Delta would later report that perhaps as many as one-half of the white men of Louisiana had been prevented from voting in the September election. Historian Samuel C. Hyde points out, however, that "hopelessness and disgust" among whites likely kept many who could

45DeGrey to Mayor Hughes, Aug. 15, 1867, and DeGrey to L. D. Watkins, Aug. 22, 1867, DNA, RG105, ser 1546, vol. 2. For early examples of fears of blacks with guns, see for example, Ira Hardesty, a young freedman laboring on a plantation near Clinton, was driven off the farm "on account of carrying firearms," but was allowed back only after intervention on his behalf from the Freedmen’s Bureau. DeGrey to John Stone, June 30, 1866 DNA, RG105, ser 1546, Letters Sent.
legally have voted away from the polls in the landslide approval of the constitutional convention. Furthermore, Eric Foner argues in his masterful study of the Reconstruction era that many whites who might have voted chose to stay away from the polls in an effort to undermine the election by assuring that the required proportion of voters did not participate. Conversely, voter turn-out among African-Americans ranged from 70 to 90 percent.\textsuperscript{46}

The despair evinced by white planters and their racial compatriots carried over more deliberately into race and labor relations during the month of the election. Although some Union troops had remained in the area following their discharge from the service, according to the Freedman's Bureau agent, they proved to "need reconstructing even more than the 'natives,' and very few of these can either read or write." Regardless of the large number of "natives" who had been disenfranchised—officials reported that only twelve whites voted in the election—local whites placed "several conservative candidates" on the ballot. Furthermore, the planters of the parish used "every exertion to discourage them [their black workers] from voting the Radical ticket," and many residents of the area began expecting trouble at the election.\textsuperscript{47}

\textsuperscript{46}DeGrey to William H. Webster, Sep. 10, 1867, DNA, RG105, ser 1550, Trimonthly Reports of Operations Sent; Hyde, Pistols and Politics, p. 156; Foner, Reconstruction, p. 314.
\textsuperscript{47}DeGrey to Webster, Sep. 10, 1867; DeGrey to L. O. Parker, Sep. 20, 1867; and DeGrey to J. M. Lee, Sep. 30, 1867, DNA, RG105, ser 1550, Trimonthly Reports. Unfortunately, this quote from DeGrey provides the only tantalizing information on northern soldiers who remained in Clinton after they were mustered out of service. Who they were, how
On the day of the constitutional convention election, although the former slaves faced little physical violence from their employers, many potential black voters found that their efforts to vote were thwarted. "Missmanagement in makeing [sic] out the poll-books" prevented a number of freedmen from voting in their assigned wards. Some of them walked to several wards but failed to find their names on the voters' lists. Those who came into Clinton to resolve the confusion and perchance to cast a ballot found that the registrar of voters was not there. Furthermore, "colored election commissioners" reported to the Freedmen's Bureau that planters actively prevented their laborers from voting. In certain instances, the planters informed the freedmen that the election had been postponed. In other cases, whites told their employees that the polls did not open until 4 PM, when in fact the polls closed at that hour. Ultimately, however, the freedmen "one and all, who had an opertunity [sic] to vote, cast the same ticked [sic] viz-'for a convention... .'" The white pre-war elite of Clinton and East Feliciana Parish could only gather twelve votes among them, while the blacks were able to elect two freedmen from their own parish.48

Only a few years prior, as slaves, black men had had no more legal right to participate in the body politic than other forms of living property such as horses or cattle.

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48DeGrey to J. M. Lee, Sep. 30, 1867, DNA, RG105, ser 1550, Trimonthly Reports. One of these delegates was John H. Gair, a man who would come to figure prominently in black political efforts in East Feliciana Parish during the next decade, see Chapter 5.
Thousands of planters and plain folk alike had lost fortunes, sons, and brothers in a war that was waged largely to maintain this strange species of property called slavery. Southern statesmen such as Jefferson Davis argued that the war was also fought to uphold traditional American political ideals as outlined in the Constitution of 1789, such as states' rights and self-determination among white men through the polls.49 Having made their sacrifice and having lost their own avenue for political participation (at least temporarily), planters utilized as much of their coercive power as they could muster in order to maintain their dominant position. Whites' attempts to undermine the newly won rights of black men to vote were at this point still largely individual efforts directed toward freedmen in their employ. Although they managed to prevent a few black men from voting, their efforts were largely ineffective. Yet they were still willing at this point to accede the validity of the election. Whites in East Feliciana would not stoop to the extremes of physical violence for several years to come.

After the fall elections in 1867, DeGrey reported to his superiors that the unstable social and political situation had calmed somewhat: "the fears of the whites of 'an uprising and general massacree [sic]' by the freedmen, has gradually subsided and planters now leave their homes without navy and other huge revolvers strapped around them." Tellingly, DeGrey mentioned that "The discussion of politics among the

49See, for example, Jefferson Davis, Rise and Fall of the Confederate Government, (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1881)
two parties, has died away and nothing is now heard of the ways and means of reconstruction."\textsuperscript{50} After casting their votes in favor of creating a new state constitution that would, in theory, guarantee their right to vote in future elections, the freedmen's fears that their white employers would engage in extreme violence to prevent black participation apparently subsided. Likewise, as black men gathered together in fewer secret political meetings and returned to the fields to work, the attitude of planters in and around Clinton toward their laborers, for a short time, became more relaxed.

Tensions eased in the wake of the turbulence created by blacks' participation in the electoral process, but a new crisis in race relations emerged not long afterward, reviving fears of insurrection. The cotton crop of 1867 was almost a complete failure, leaving thousands of freedmen in the area surrounding Clinton destitute, starving, and without prospects for jobs in the coming year. In regular reports throughout the year, Freedmen's Bureau agent James DeGrey hinted at the impending economic crisis to his superiors, and he spread the blame, accusing both planters and laborers of contributing to the problem. In April 1867 planters were behind in the planting, supposedly because freedmen would not work as hard as they should during the week and would stop working at noon on Saturday regardless of the amount of work remaining. Already, DeGrey noted the potential for problems

\textsuperscript{50}DeGrey to J. M. Lee, Oct. 10, 1867, DNA, RG105, ser 1550, Trimonthly Reports.
for those laborers who were working on shares. Rains and the appearance of the worm contributed to the "gloomy prospects of the crops." Throughout the summer, DeGrey felt that the freedmen had been fairly well treated, but by the early fall he noted that the planters were taking out their frustrations over the bad crop on the laborers, calling them lazy and discharging them from the plantations. Furthermore, he reported that "I find that there is one hundred and thirty five (135) percent more consumers than producers among the colored people of this parish," which would leave a large number of freedmen in debt to their employers. The agent faced an uphill battle trying to prevent landowners from turning the laborers out of their homes.51

Blaming the planters for the lack of effort expended by the freedmen, DeGrey argued:

When the worm was destroying the cotton plant, the planters, invariably, so discouraged their laborers by telling them that they would be so much in debt at the end of the year, and that as soon as the cotton was gathered they would not keep them any longer &c., that the freedmen became indifferent as to the result and went to work simply because they were obliged to. .... [T]hey [planters] as near as I can judge are the ones in fault, having planted too much land for the number of hands they had to cultivate it.52

Conversely, within two months the Bureau agent had decided that blame should rest squarely upon the lazy shoulders of the freedmen,

51DeGrey to William H. Sterling, Apr. 20, 1867; DeGrey to William H. Webster, Aug. 10, 20, Sep. 10, 20, 1867; DeGrey to J. M. Lee, Nov. 10, 1867, DNA, RG105, ser 1550, Trimonthly Reports. For further reports of the crop failure, see all Trimonthly reports during the fall/winter of 1867-68.
52DeGrey to J. M. Lee, Sep. 30, 1867, DNA, RG105, se. 1550, Trimonthly Reports.
as they would not, as a general rule, be dictated to either by their employers or their agents; in fact they will not have a white person dictate to them. This, naturally causes planters who have their all invested to have ill-feelings towards their hands. I find where the freedmen have worked according to agreement they are on the most cordial terms with their employers.

He later noted matter-of-factly that "This class of lazy colored people will not find much hospitality in this parish." By the end of the year, losses among planters varied from $100 to $10,000; because freedmen "did just as they pleased, minding no one, the result is, they have ruined themselves and their employers."53 Doubtless, the freedmen, the planters, and the weather all share the blame for the devastating crop failure during 1867. As black laborers tried to assert their autonomy, planters became increasingly frustrated and treated the freedmen with disrespect, which set off a cycle of discouragement and fear.

After the intimidation exercised during the convention election died down, so too did fears of insurrection, but as economic problems came into focus, whites' fear of their former slaves reached a new pitch. In mid November, freedman Gabriel Arnold reported to DeGrey that a planter had accused him of being the ringleader of a supposed plot "to kill the white people and take possession of their property." The agent commanded the planter to report anyone who had suggested "such outrageous proceedings" so that he might bring them to trial.54 The reports made by agent DeGrey to

53DeGrey to J. M. Lee, Nov. 10, 20, 1867, DNA, RG105, ser 1550, Trimonthly Reports; see also DeGrey to Lee, Dec. 10, 31, 1867
54DeGrey to Sam'l Hall, Nov. 15, 1867, ibid., ser 1546, Letters Sent.
his superiors are revealing, in that during the early fall, whites’ fears revolved around very nebulous notions of freedmen meeting during the night without supervision by any whites. Details of a purported uprising that included killing whites in order to take their property did not emerge until after the freedmen had learned that their year’s labor would bring them no return, and would, in fact, leave many of them in debt. DeGrey realized that these reports of insurrection were largely unfounded, but he also recognized that the whites’ oppression of blacks due to irrational fears had the potential to become a self-fulfilling prophecy. He informed the Adjutant General’s office that:

The great clammer [sic] made by some of the white citizens of this Parish in regard to the uprising of the colored people, is wholly without a shadow of reason. Those who fear the ‘massacre’ [sic] are such creatures who during the war were either concealed in swamps or donned their wives apparel [sic] to escape duty in the army. Men who have been through the war fear no ‘uprising’ but those others who delight in alarming women about massacres by negroes &c, are the very ones who will, eventually, have the colored people so exasperated by their base and cowardly action, that they may defend themselves, when these very same wretches who are now tied to the apron strings of women will be the very first to desert them.\(^{55}\)

As the economic crisis in Clinton and its hinterland continued, so too did the fears of insurrection. Throughout November and December 1867, DeGrey continued to receive occasional reports that blacks were forming “a conspiracy to murder the whites.” By the end of the year, rumors suggested that freedmen had developed a “secret organization numbering

\(^{55}\)DeGrey to J. M. Lee, Dec. 10, 1867, DNA, RG105, ser 1550, Trimonthly Reports.
twelve or thirteen hundred" that hoped to take over the plantations. All rumors of uprising were unfounded, however, and in 1868 the freedmen reluctantly resumed laboring for white planters under unfavorable contracts.\(^{56}\)

Although the feared insurrection never materialized, the whites of East Feliciana continued to resent blacks' participation in political activities. By the end of 1867, whites were faced with the enormity of African-American political power in a way that they had never before conceived. Not only had the majority-black Republican Party carried the day in favor of convening a new constitutional convention, but the men sent to represent East Feliciana were two black men: John Gair from Clinton and Richard Lewis. A carpenter and former slave, Gair would become very active in Republican politics in the Felicianas, and he would pay dearly for those activities in the years to come.\(^{57}\)

By the summer of 1868, the residents of Clinton had braved war, deprivation, and racial and political turmoil. But the black community had begun to develop the strong visible institutions of family and church. They had asserted their own claims on independence by demanding education and political participation. Despite individual whites' efforts to keep their former bondmen "in their proper place" by ruse

\(^{56}\)No name, Nov. 16, 1867, and Register of Complaints: Dr. S. Hall vs. Jesse (col) and Frank Shropshire, Dec. 18, 1867, DNA, RG105, ser 1546, Letters Sent, vol 1.

and intimidation, the town had not sunk to the depraved depths of the white and black combatants in the race riots of larger cities. Perhaps the smaller population and personal relationships among the residents of the town kept such outrageous violence in relative check, at least initially. But the white residents of Clinton and the surrounding area took notice of the strength of the united Republican African-American political front that became evident during their first overt political activities of 1867. The former ruling elite would soon mirror that unity and strength, but they would do so gradually—slowly growing bolder, more confident, and more belligerent in their efforts to regain power. During the next decade, white impotence and black assertiveness would converge into a storm of violence during the presidential election of 1876. That violence would help to bring down Republican rule not only in Louisiana, but across the South. Many formerly friendly relationships would be strained to the breaking point, and blacks would be both segregated and relegated to positions of drudgery and servitude for nearly a century after.
Chapter 5

Clinton's Culture of Violence

On October 11, 1875, Dr. J. W. Sanders rose and ate breakfast at his normal hour. Soon after eating, he was called away from home to care for a patient. He remained busy with his patient all morning and returned home a little after noon, having had nothing to eat or drink since his morning meal. Following his routine, immediately after walking in the back door of his home Sanders drank from the water bucket that his servant had been instructed to have ready at all times. That servant, a young mulatto woman named Cathrine "Babe" Matthews, had prepared the pail for him that morning, half-filled the gourd with water and watched for her employer's return. As he drank from the ladle, she gave Sanders a "peculiar," angry look; so odd was the expression that the doctor asked his wife if she and Cathrine had been in a row; they had not. But soon, Sanders "felt a burning pain" in his stomach. "I felt as if fire had been introduced to every part of my insides, and immediately I commenced vomiting, with an intense thirst," he later recalled. Between his thirst and the emesis, Sanders drank five or six gallons of water. At least four doctors came to the aid of their fellow practitioner, and Sanders was at one point or another "seen by almost every physician in the
parish." As he lay in bed, near death, all agreed on the diagnosis. Sanders had been poisoned.¹

The doctor's symptoms—burning of the mouth and throat, diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal cramps—allowed only one conclusion: arsenic.² Sanders's attending physician, Dr. O. P. Langworthy, took a sample of the suspicious water to his son, also a practicing doctor. The Drs. Langworthy consulted their copy of the United States Dispensatory and Powne's Chemistry to discover the proper tests. Although more sophisticated tests had been developed by 1876, the materials were not locally available. The Langworthys' tests with nitrate of silver and sulphate of copper, "the best tests that we could possibly make, living here in Clinton," both demonstrated presence of arsenic. They carefully duplicated the tests, with the same result, and both doctors were "perfectly satisfied at the time that there was arsenic in the fluid."³

³HSCR, Dr. O. P. Langworthy, pp. 422-423 and 440. Several reliable tests for arsenic were developed in the 19th century, particularly after the death of Napoleon, supposedly by arsenic, "Arsenic Poisoning", grand-illusions.com/napoleon/nap02.htm, March 5, 2002. Dr. Langworthy and son utilized two tests, both traditional tests for arsenic. The first utilizes silver nitrate and ammonia, which produces a yellow solution; the second utilizes copper sulphate and ammonia, which produces a blue solution. G. Svehla, Vogel's Qualitative Inorganic Analysis, 6th Edition (London: Longman Scientific & Technical; New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1979), pp. 84-85. Dr. Langworthy's initial testimony exactly comports with the expected results. In his recall testimony, however, after rechecking the U.S. Dispensatory the doctor amended his
Suspicion immediately fell upon the young servant woman. Matthews was about eighteen years old, mulatto, and recognized to be intelligent. She had left Sanders's home after he fell ill, and rumors indicated that she had taken all of her possessions with her. She returned later that day, however, confessed, and was arrested. Fully aware of her employer's habit of drinking from the water pail when returning from a house call, she watched out the window for his return. In an effort to prevent poisoning the entire family, rather than pollute the entire water bucket Matthews placed the poison only in the half-filled dipper just as she saw Sanders enter the yard and waited to watch him take the ill-fated sip, presumably the cause for the "peculiar," angry look that the doctor noticed from her as he drank. After her arrest, Matthews signed an affidavit that implicated a young black man named John George and a prominent black Republican leader named John Gair, Matthews's brother-in-law, both of whom had recently been run out of town. The woman accused George of having given her the vial of poison at the behest of Gair and Robert Ray, Gair's brother-in-law and the current Republican state representative from East Feliciana. She

statement to say that the solution with sulphate of copper was green, which casts some doubt on the tests. According to Langworthy, a Judge Campbell testified before another investigatory committee in New Orleans (testimony not found) that the case of poisoning was rather dubious. The doctor argued emphatically that the poisoning was real, contradicting Campbell's testimony. Langworthy protested that Campbell, in town only days after the poisoning, was well satisfied at the time with the tests and the condition of the alleged victim. Another factor casting a shadow of doubt over the reality of the attempt to poison him was Dr. Sanders's almost immediate reaction after having drunk the supposedly tainted water; even after consuming a toxic dose, "the effect is not immediate but typically is delayed by 2-24 hours." Sanders did not die from his exposure. Dyro, "Arsenic" p. 2.
offered up a motive for George and Gair by suggesting that Dr. Sanders had been "instrumental in driving off both of them and others." The clerk of court, A. S. Lanier, took Matthews to Parish Judge T. B. Lyons to have her affidavit sworn; then about 8 o'clock that night, Lanier took her downtown to the sheriff's office for safekeeping.4

Clerk Lanier and Deputy Sheriff J. P. Monahan kept watch over Matthews that night at her request "because she thought she would have better protection"; Monahan reported that he agreed to her pleas because he feared "that some violence would be done to her." Only the night patrolman on his rounds disturbed them during their nocturnal guard duty. Lanier and Monahan discouraged Matthews from speaking, but she felt very anxious and was disposed to talk. She insisted that her brother-in-law had little to do with it, that fault rested on the shoulders of the young man John George. Yet the accused expressed some satisfaction that the conspirators should also face punishment. Lanier left her after dawn on

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The timeline of these events is pieced together from many individuals' testimony. The reports are often unclear and occasionally contradictory. Many witnesses seem to have lost a day in the retelling of their story, particularly among the members of the posse that went to Baton Rouge. The key to unraveling the inconsistencies is found in the testimony of Moses Baird and E. C. Godfrey who informed the committee that the posse stayed overnight in the capitol city waiting for the warrant for Gair. The dates presented here are the best estimation of the outline of events possible from the evidence.
the morning of the 12th in the charge of other men. Matthews had never been placed in jail, and Clerk Lanier had no idea who was in charge of caring for the accused woman that day. He "understood that she was in the custody of the people."

Meanwhile, Deputy Sheriff W. E. Norwood set off to Baton Rouge late on the evening of the 11th with a warrant for the arrest of John George, believed to be in that city. The posse of six men arrived in the capital just after dawn on October 12th, stabled their horses, and retired to a local restaurant for breakfast while a detective named Hubbs went in search of George. Hubbs returned to report that George had fled to Mississippi, but Gair was in town. Moses Baird, a member of the posse sent after the accused men, telegraphed home to inform the locals that Gair was there in Baton Rouge, not in New Orleans as his sister-in-law had suggested, and that the deputy sheriff and his men were returning empty handed. A quick response informed Baird that a warrant for Gair's arrest was on its way to Baton Rouge, so the men put up in a hotel for the night to await the warrant.

Early on the 13th, Deputy Nash arrived with a warrant for John Gair. Gair, a "light-colored man," was young, had a wife and child, and was considered even by the white population to be "smart & active," a "good deal more than

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5This deputy is variously identified as B. L. Nash and W. N. Nash in the testimonies of C. R. Collins and W.E. Woodward. Henry Marston also identified a prominent black Republican named Nash. Neither B. L. nor W. N. appear in the census for the town of Clinton in 1870; both Nashes in the census are white.
average bright." 6 He had been chased out of Clinton the summer before, and testimony indicates that the white community had several grievances against him. Not only was he a charismatic political leader among the parish's black Republicans, but he also refused to be cowed by the planter elite in Clinton. Deputy Sheriff J. P. Monahan implied that Gair had been involved in several riots during the summer of 1875, making "himself very obnoxious here to the people." He had also broken the yellow fever quarantine around Clinton that summer and upon his arrest threatened to "'burn the damn town down,' turn the parish over, and turn up-side-down everything in general." 7 Dr. Sanders had supposedly been instrumental in forcing the Republican leader to leave the parish, and the poison attempt was assumed to be Gair's retribution.

After Nash arrived with the warrant for Gair, the sheriff's posse ventured out around noon to arrest him. Jones and Godfrey spotted the black man near the East Baton Rouge Parish Courthouse and called for him to stop. When he saw the posse approach, Gair drew two pistols, fled toward the river, hopped on a skiff, and began drifting with the mighty Mississippi's current. Deputies fired several shots at the man, and unable to steer the skiff, Gair returned to shore to give himself up. Someone telegraphed to Clinton

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6 *HSCR*, C. R. Collins, p. 381. The quotations were from Mr. Joyce's questions, to which Collins responded in the affirmative.

7 *HSCR*, J. P. Monahan, p. 395. Monahan also claimed that Gair "took a white man on the corner of Packwood's store [downtown] ... without any intimation, and abused him, shook his fist in his face, and, I believe, drew a pistol on him."
that their prey had been captured. After Woodward bought some whiskey and cigars for his charge, the posse retrieved their horses about 2 or 3 o'clock and started home to Clinton.

Although Woodward testified that Gair "all along seemed to think he was going to be killed," they journeyed together peacefully for several miles, and few words were exchanged. The brush was thick on both sides of the road they traveled, and night began to fall. Only one carriage passed them. Carrying the familiar faces of two leading citizens of Clinton, the carriage did not seem to be the harbinger of anything untoward. The passengers claimed that no trouble was brewing between that point and town; but curiously, the driver quickly turned around and began to follow the posse.

At dusk, the party crossed the parish line where the peace changed quickly to anger, impotency, and terror for the small band of riders. Out of the woods on the side of the road came a large group of seventy-five to one hundred men, some on foot, most on horseback, all armed with shotguns, rifles, or pistols. These men closed ranks in front of and behind the sheriff's men and, said Moses Baird, "hemmed us in." Baird remembered hearing one marauder call out to his

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8The testimony on this matter differs. C. R. Collins testifies that Deputy Sheriff Woodward sent a telegraph to Clinton; Woodward admits that a telegraph was sent, but denies that any member of his posse placed the order. No record of the telegraphic transmission was available by 1877. Telegrapher J. E. Mansker testified that records are retained for only 6 months, besides which, the information was likely not a regular message, but simply a conversation between the operators. HSCK, Collins, p. 375; Woodward, p. 401; Mansker, p. 431.
9John George, having fled to Mississippi, was not arrested.
brethren, "Men of East Feliciana, this is the man who has burned your houses and gin-houses, and he has attempted to murder your citizens." Otherwise, there was just a lot of general noise, swearing, and "hallooing." E. C. Godfrey testified that "the first thing that I can remember I was looking down a pistol." The mob disarmed the posse of their weapons, threatening Deputy Woodward, "God damn you, if you don't do it I will blow your God damn brains out." The lawmen protested little. "There were so many we thought it useless," Collins later demurred, "We were overpowered." Gair begged the Sheriff Deputy to protect him, but Woodward replied that he "was unable to do so; my life was threatened; the parties told me they would kill me if I did not give him up; I could not do any more for him." The young black man was loudly cursed as he was dragged from his horse. He begged for his life; he prayed to the Lord for mercy.

His prayers went unanswered. As seven or eight men led the posse about 150 yards farther down the road, the main body of the mob tied Gair to a tree. Collins knew what was about to happen and was glad to be taken down the road; "we did not care to see it anyhow." After five minutes, two volleys were fired, estimated to be about 150 shots; "he was perforated," suggested one of the posse. Gair's body was left there by the side of the road where he had been snatched

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10 HSCR, Baird, p. 418; Jones, p. 415; Godfrey, p. 421
11 HSCR, Woodward, p. 400; Collins, p. 376. Most of the posse were able to pick up their guns at the drugstore in town, where members of the mob group had apparently left them; Morgan, p. 433.
12 HSCR, Collins, p. 376.
from the lawmen that had been sent to bring him to justice. Moses Baird of the posse reported that Deputy Sheriff Woodward had been injured when disarmed, and that after the shots were fired at Gair, the deputy began to cry, saying "they could not have treated a dog in that way." The members of the posse later testified that they had no prior knowledge of the attack, nor had they participated in the hail of gunfire, despite other testimony to the contrary.

The temporary lawmen returned quickly to Clinton but without their charge. Woodward reported to the parish judge what had happened. Collins went to check on his store, then home for supper, and so saw few of the "good many men [who] come into town that night." He was therefore unable to say if they were the same men who shot Gair. They likely were. When Collins returned to his store that evening, he "saw a woman hanging by moonlight." Babe Matthews had been taken from the sheriff's office and hung from a tree on the southeast corner of the courthouse square. Few others noticed the victim that night, and she hung there till daylight.

In the wake of the violence and fraud during the election of 1876, Congress sent a committee to Louisiana to

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13 HSCR, Baird, p. 421. Woodward also testified that his hand had been cut when his gun was taken away.
14 A Senate committee meeting in New Orleans also heard some testimony on the lynching of John Gair, and one witness testified that Woodward had himself fired shots at the restrained prisoner. A. S. Lanier, Clerk of Court, also testified that Woodward and his posse were among the crowd that killed Gair. The telegraph message of Gair's arrest that was sent to Clinton before the posse left Baton Rouge led Mr. Joyce of the House committee to suspect collusion between the posse and the mob. HSCR, Woodward, p. 399; Collins, p. 376.
investigate the reports of brutality. A three-man subcommittee was sent to East Feliciana Parish, and they heard testimony at the courthouse in Clinton. The only Republican on the small panel sent to Clinton was Charles H. Joyce of Vermont. When the evidence came to light that Matthews's body had hung from a tree for nearly twelve hours, Joyce was aghast: "How in the name of heaven could those men come here to this court-house without anybody knowing it and seeing it, right here in the heart of this village?" he asked Collins disbelievingly. The answer lay buried in the testimony of Dr. Sanders, the intended victim of Gair's alleged plot. He portrayed Gair as a "bully." Although he had no "positive information" about the actions of the lynch mob, he condoned their endeavors:

I think, sir, where a cold-blooded attempt at murder was attempted upon me, that I had friends who would not submit to it. I was certain of it. I understood from that that Gair would be killed. I was thoroughly satisfied that he had poisoned me, and that he would be killed. ... I hadn't no doubts about his instigating it. I was decidedly in favor of his being killed at the time.

It did not strike this physician as incongruous to support the vicious murder of two people for an attempted poisoning, one of whom (Gair) had, at most, only the uncorroborated testimony of a supposed accomplice against him. Likewise, those who perpetrated this crime showed little concern that their actions might be punished but were, instead, simply

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16HSCR Collins, p. 380 (Joyce quote); Sanders, p. 394.
intent on ridding themselves of a man whom they believed to
be dangerous. In fact, this series of incidents can be
understood only by putting them in historical context.

The young servant woman Matthews had become entangled in
a vicious and rapidly escalating cycle of violence that had
been going on in the parish since the elections of 1868. Not
only her alleged actions, but also her relationship to a
prominent black leader had led her to the courthouse. The
town's willingness to condemn to death any African-American
who stepped out of his or her prescribed place resulted in
her hanging. And the deaf ears of those who were "decidedly
in favor" of those actions allowed Babe Matthews to swing
from that tree all night in order to serve as a message to
all of her race that drastic changes were dawning, just as
the sun was dawning over the rolling hills of East Feliciana
Parish to light her body. But despite these warnings, black
Republicans in and around Clinton were not quickly subdued,
and Matthews was not the last to die at the hands of a white
mob.

The acting sheriff had seen the faces of many members of
the mob that kidnapped Gair and likely strung up Matthews,
even in the low twilight. Despite their reluctance to talk,
when the Congressional sub-committee came to hear testimony
eighteen months later, residents of the town and the
surrounding countryside were forced to confront the culture
of violence that had enveloped their community. The names of
over forty-five individuals who participated in the lynching
of John Gair were provided during the investigation of January 1877. But the residents of East Feliciana saw their actions on the night of October 13, 1875, as an acceptable risk and as a proportional response to the actions of black men and women who had forgotten their place. No one was ever brought to justice for the crimes committed on that night.

The murders of Gair and Matthews in October 1875 marked the peak of violence and intimidation against blacks in East Feliciana, and it would continue at a fevered pitch until after the presidential election of 1876. But the modus operandi of the perpetrators varied dramatically from the economic threats and individual altercations described in the previous chapter. During the early years of Reconstruction, the newly freed slaves stood up for their human rights and took advantage of the opportunities offered by freedom. Planters and other whites tried to regain control of the freedmen in social and economic matters in order to reassert white superiority over blacks.

During the debate regarding the convening of a constitutional convention in 1867 and 1868, the developing political status of blacks evoked an ambiguous response from whites. Most realized that the Republicans and pro-reform individuals would win support for a new constitution, and few white men voted. Yet most white men continued their efforts

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17Henry Marston commented in his diary, "None but Negroes voted," and complained a week later that "The Negro Convention out & out Radical ticket has been elected in the two Parishes by about 700 majority," Sep. 27 and Oct. 4, 1867. Clinton was also in the midst of a yellow fever epidemic, which no doubt left residents of either race in a less than conciliatory mood, see Marston, Oct., 1867, passim.
to thwart the political activities of blacks by abusing personal and economic relationships. With the advent of full black political participation in the presidential election of 1868, whites shifted tactics from the individualized social-control endeavors of early Reconstruction to a unified effort at undermining African-American political power. Historian Gilles Vandal argues that violence allowed whites to prevent the enforced changes of Reconstruction. Furthermore, the old elite class used brutality as "an instrument of self-preservation" and "a way to re-establish common values and a new sense of community." Vandal uses this language to describe the incredible violence that wracked the northwestern Louisiana parish of Caddo throughout the Reconstruction period. The events surrounding the elections of 1868 induced the first true bloodbath there—the most severe of all outbreaks in Caddo Parish—wherein 154 blacks were murdered during the course of the year.\(^1\)

In comparison to Caddo, East Feliciana Parish remained relatively peaceful, though the level of force utilized by whites against blacks would not reach its peak until 1875. Much was at stake in the elections of 1868. The first election, held in April, contained ballots for ratification of the new state constitution and for election of state officials under that constitution, should it be ratified.

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\(^1\)The dichotomy between social control versus political control is succinctly argued by Gilles Vandal in "The Policy of Violence in Caddo Parish, 1865-1884," 32 Louisiana History (Spring, 1991), pp. 159-182, quote is p. 159, murder statistics on p. 164. See also Poner, Reconstruction, pp. 341-342.
African-American support was imperative for the vitality of
the Republican campaign. Although the state party was split
between two factions, many of the political activities of the
previous fall, including speeches, public gatherings, and
encouragement by Freedmen's Bureau officials, continued
throughout the spring campaign.\textsuperscript{19}

Clinton's black residents, whether tenant farmer,
sharecropper, or artisan, turned out for their Republican
party in April, voted in favor of the new constitution, and
selected convention delegate John H. Gair to represent them
in the state House of Representatives. Gair would become a
very active member of the House. He was one of three blacks
to serve on the Federal Relations Committee, and he chaired
the constitution committee, one of only four black men to
chair one of the twenty-one appointive committees. By 1870
he had become chair of the House Committee on Internal
Improvements.\textsuperscript{20}

In response to these incursions not only of black
political participation but also of political power, whites
sought to assert their own control in whatever meager form
they could. The complaint of Amos Taylor offers an example
of petty retaliation on the part of East Feliciana's

\textsuperscript{19}Joe Gray Taylor, \textit{Louisiana Reconstructed, 1863-1877}, (Baton Rouge:
Louisiana State University Press, 1974). Taylor describes the split
between Henry Clay Warmoth and Oscar J. Dunn (who ultimately won the
election) and James G. Taliaferro and Francis E. Dumas. Dunn and Dumas
were both African-Americans. Warmoth was a northerner; Taliaferro was
considered to be more 'radical' than Warmoth, but was a native
Louisianian. According to Taylor, Conservatives supported Taliaferro in
order to take advantage of the split and because he was home grown. See
pp. 156-158

\textsuperscript{20}Vincent, \textit{Black Legislators}, pp. 228, 83-86.
outnumbered Democrats. Having received supplies from the Freedmen's Bureau, Taylor sought out justice of the peace Norwood Tilden to ascribe an affidavit, who charged Taylor one dollar for the service. When Taylor confronted Tilden over the charge, the justice replied "emphatically" that "he knew his business and that he would charge as much as he d-d pleased, and also informed Taylor that had he voted the Democratic ticket he would not have charged him a cent, but as he had voted against his interests he would act toward him and others in the same way."21 Although the Democrats failed to regain official political control in the state, they were often able to stymie the efforts of white and black Republicans to garner a reasonable standard of living.

In the midst of the April 1868 state election campaign, numerous reports came in to the Freedmen's Bureau office of laborers being thrown off plantations for attending Republican political meetings in Clinton. Here again, Clinton's role as a gathering place for all the residents of the parish served to foment the disaffection between planters and freedmen. As the former slaves took advantage of their freedom of movement to travel into the town, the whites' resentment continued to grow. The bureau agent DeGrey again informed employers that freedmen had every right to attend meetings and further chastised employers for requiring laborers to toil on Sundays.

Faced with defeat in the election, some Democratic planters refused to dole out provisions that had been contracted for at the beginning of the year because freedmen had voted Republican. DeGrey averred that the former slaves "cannot procure supplies from any one, as most of the white people would like to see the freedmen starve." These freedmen not only faced starvation, but also the prospect of losing their crops, which had already been planted. Officials in New Orleans responded that these men would be allowed to return to their positions, and that the Bureau would oversee the disposition of the crop to ensure that the freedmen would receive their claim.²²

During the summer months, several cases of belligerence were reported at the Freedmen's Bureau office in Clinton. In one instance, a planter shot and killed laborer Daniel Brooks, who was in the process of "stealing potatoes from the field."²³ Such activities were not uncommon under slavery, as bondmen and women sought to supplant their meager rations. But as a result of whites' heightened sensibilities due to overt black action and political turmoil, what might have been overlooked or have generated a moderate punishment in years past instead ended with murder. But still, this

²²DeGrey to D. Barfield, April 6, 1868 and DeGrey to William H. Sterling, May 5, 1868 (two letters of this date on the same subject; quote is from the first), DNA, RG105, Ser. 1546, Letters Sent, vol 3. See also DeGrey to L. H. Warren, May 5, 1868, Ser. 1548, vol 2. Dawson notes that Clinton was one of a handful of towns where freedmen were particularly hard-hit by destitution and lack of supplies, Freedmen's Bureau, p. 70.
²³Dunwell to L. H. Warren, June 13 (quote) and 9, 1868, DNA, RG105, Ser. 1546, Letters Sent, Vol. 3.
incident demonstrates that the violence evinced during the year tended to be individualized and aimed at restoring order and white dominance, while political intimidation continued to be economic rather than physical.

The Republican party nominated war-hero Ulysses S. Grant for the nation's highest office, and he bolstered his campaign in the fall of 1868 with conservative northern support as a moderating force against the more "Radical" elements of the party. Black Republicans in Louisiana rallied behind their party, which supported extending suffrage to southern blacks, and behind Grant, whose election slogan was "Let Us Have Peace." Conversely, Democratic running mates Horatio Seymour and Frank Blair did little to garner support among northern Democrats or moderate Republicans. In fact, vice-presidential candidate Blair publicly supported the repeal of the Reconstruction Acts and the removal of federal troops from the South, which appealed to southern Democrats. Louisiana's Democrats saw Blair's statements as the answer to their political prayers; they devoted themselves to carrying the election for Seymour and Blair.24

As the presidential election loomed closer, planters shifted away from individualized threats and began to unite their efforts at economic intimidation. The state Democratic Central Committee sent out a circular particularly condemning white Republicans as more debased than "even the most

implacable and ill-disposed of the negro population." The authors of the circular encouraged all planters to "withdraw from them all countenance, association and patronage, and thwart every effort they may make to maintain a business and social foothold among you." State legislative investigators found the most damning evidence of this policy in a set of resolutions designed by a group of East Felicianola planters. These conservatives pledged "not to employ for the future any freedman who shall hereafter vote the Radical ticket, nor will we rent lands, advance supplies, or assist in any manner any such persons" and required a certificate confirming that the laborer cast a Democratic vote (or at the very least, no vote at all) in order to be hired. A second resolution promised to boycott "any professional man" or "merchant who does not bind himself to be governed by the above regulations."\(^{25}\) With the second Resolution, white planters forced town-dwellers to participate in this form of

\(^{25}\)Report of Joint Committee of the General Assembly of Louisiana on the Conduct of the Late Elections, and the Condition of Peace and Order in the State (New Orleans: A. L. Lee, 1869), p. 7-8. Henry Marston attended a planter's meeting that tried to regulate hiring practices as early as December 1867, and complaints of dismissal were recorded shortly following the spring elections, but he later comments that he "Attended the Association for the first time" in late August, suggesting that the 1867 group was very loosely organized, while the Association was more cohesive.; Marston Diary, Dec. 17, 1867, and Aug. 27, 1868. The copy of the resolutions printed in the Report is not dated. The Freedmen's Bureau agent apparently did not become aware of such an arrangement until mid September 1867. Freedmen's Bureau Agent Barton reported on September 21 that "The Planters and Merchants of this Parish have bound themselves not to employ any Freedman who uphold political doctrine at variance with their own," and the freedmen viewed "the coming year with fear and dread." Doubtless Barton was referring to the planters' association. [Barton] to [Warren], Sep. 21, 1868, DNA, RG105, Ser. 1546, Letters Sent, vol 1. It is likely that the association gathered more strict adherents as the level of black political power grew.
intimidation even if they would otherwise have remained uninvolved because they owned no farmland and hired no tenant laborers. The planters expressly involved merchants and other whites who resided in town as a part of the conservative plot, willing or unwilling. This then forced black men who were not farmers, but rather, worked in Clinton as skilled artisans, household servants, or day laborers, to cast votes that went against their own desires or best interests in order to protect their economic stability.

The vast majority of the nearly 9,500 blacks who lived in East Feliciana were farm laborers. In Clinton, however, black men carried out the same jobs in freedom that they had under slavery. Of the 67 African-American men who made Clinton their home in 1870, only 3 might be classified as professionals (2 ministers and a teacher). Ten men had been trained as artisans, all with skills that would be in demand in a town setting and might attract customers from a wide area, including 5 blacksmiths, 4 carpenters, and a wheelwright. As was common throughout the South, the majority of the artisans were mulatto. All the remaining men, almost 81 percent, were unskilled labor, domestics, or without an occupation. Only 12 of the total could read, while even fewer could write, and most of those were the skilled or professional men. Similarly, only 16 possessed any real or personal property, which ranged from a mere $50 up to $1500. One-half of those with a recorded estate value were unskilled laborers or domestics, but by far the
wealthiest members of the African-American community were the artisans, with the mulatto carpenter John Gair topping the list. With a population composed predominantly of unskilled laborers and only a small number owning appreciable property, few men among the African-Americans in Clinton could afford to counter the economic forces arrayed against them, nor could their community do so for an extended period of time.26

Because so many of East Feliciana's former bondmen were particularly susceptible to economic intimidation, freedmen began filing more complaints against their employers by the fall of 1868. Planters either turned them off their farms or made inequitable settlements after crops were harvested in response to the former bondmen participating in political meetings. J. B. Plummer threatened to "ruin them [the freedmen] completely as he has them entirely under his thumb" if they voted Republican. The new Freedmen's Bureau agent H. E. Barton was unsure of what action to take to remedy the situation because he believed that no lawyer "would or could" gain "justice" for the laborers. In August, Barton complained to his superiors about planters dismissing laborers "for alleged breaking of agreement but almost invariably in looking at the matter carefully, I have found, that the real cause was a refusal on the part of the laborer to subscribe and bind himself to some political movement."

Furthermore, reporting such maltreatment often made matters

261870 U. S. Census. There were many more women than men in Clinton in 1870—continuing the trend that began before freedom—but none had any property that they were willing to disclose to the census-taker (even among the large number of employed women).
worse and prompted whites to threaten not only their black employees but also Bureau officials. After being reported for beating one of his laborers, Felix DeLee pulled a pistol on Agent Barton who reported that DeLee "abused me in a most violent manner, saying, 'Ill [sic] fix you, you God Damned, low lived, sneaking Yankee Son of a Bitch! You've reported some others and meddled in their affairs, God Damn you, and this is the last of it.'" DeLee confirmed Barton's suspicions about the local justice system by informing him that Clinton's mayor and justice of the peace H. B. Chase admitted that reporting cases to "Civil Authorities was a mere farce as it all ended there at his office."

Race, politics, economic status, and social control were all tied together and were evident in the white Democratic scheme to prevent a large Republican vote in East Feliciana. Considering the level of tension among whites and the susceptibility of blacks to economic coercion, it is not surprising that a state joint committee found "a frightful record" when it investigated the conduct of the 1868 presidential election. Their report catalogues brutality piled upon brutality throughout the state, including race riots when "great numbers of colored men and white Republicans were slaughtered successively" in Orleans, St. Landry, Bossier, Caddo, Jefferson, and St. Bernard Parishes. Allen W. Trelease, historian of the Ku Klux Klan, found

evidence of organized para-military groups in most areas of the state, but the plantation parishes along the river were less likely to have such terrorist clubs. In the eastern half of the Florida Parishes, the Ku Klux Klan became very active, riding patrol, administering threats and beatings, and monitoring the polls on election day. The economic campaign of the East Feliciana planters’ association proved nearly as effective as the KKK’s "campaign of terror" in Franklinton, Washington Parish. Regardless of the purported motive for any mode of intimidation, argues Trelease, "the whole operation was obviously and almost exclusively political."²⁸

Whether affiliated with a larger group or not, the planters’ association was certainly political in motive, mostly economic in method, and highly effective. The Joint Committee of the state legislature that reported on the 1868 election named East Feliciana as one of twenty-six parishes where "the election was simply a sham and a nullity."²⁹ Over

²⁸ Those parishes were St. Helena, St. Tammany, and Washington Allen W. Trelease, White Terror: The Ku Klux Klan Conspiracy and Southern Reconstruction, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1995), pp. 127-128. Samuel C. Hyde differentiates carefully between the two most popular white superiority organizations in Louisiana, the KKK and the Knights of the White Camellia: "Whereas the former combined fealty to white superiority with a determination to terrorize its enemies into submission, the latter incorporated a similar commitment to white supremacy into a political and economic agenda"; pp. 164-65. Trelease notes this general difference, but tends to lump the groups together based on motive rather than method; see pp. 127-136. Based on Hyde’s phenotypes, the band of planters based in Clinton would have constituted a branch of the KWC. But Hyde also states that the KWC "openly admitted their affiliation," p. 163. No one in East Feliciana admitted such, nor did the Joint Committee Report from the state legislature accuse the association of the affiliation.

²⁹ P. 19. There were 50 parishes in Louisiana by the end of 1868. Goins and Caldwell, Historical Atlas of Louisiana, Maps 43-44.
2,400 men registered to vote in the November election. With approximately 1,685 voters registered as Republicans, that party would have an estimated majority of 953 votes. But only 644 votes were cast for Grant and Colfax throughout the entire parish, while Seymour and Blair received over 1,400 ballots. The Supervisor of Registration stationed in Clinton later testified that he had expected about 1,800 men to vote Republican.

To bolster the pocketbook intimidation that had been carried out through the summer and the campaign season of 1868, a few white men chose to cover their bets with election-day threats. A few white men brandished pistols near the ballot boxes in Clinton, warning that "every d----d radical son of a b---h that voted the radical ticket would have his head blown off." Even Clinton's town constable strongly suggested, while shaking his fist, that the supervisor of registration not distribute Republican ballots. Still others defrauded illiterate freedmen by handing them Democratic ballots, all the while insisting that they were Republican. By the end of their investigation, the Joint Committee estimated that about 1,300 Republican votes had been stolen by fraud and intimidation in East Feliciana.30

The small vote generated for the Grant-Colfax ticket within the parish is indicative of the effectiveness of the occasional violence and the campaign of economic coercion. Yet East Feliciana represents a middle ground among

Louisiana's parishes. Unlike the true river parishes with the highest proportion of black residents, which Allen Trelease found had little violence, there was at least some level of organized intimidation in Clinton and its environs. But unlike the nearby piney woods parishes or the Red River region, organized para-military groups had not yet established a strong foothold. For example, among seven parishes that experienced the most brutality, the Republican candidate received no votes; adding another eight parishes, Grant garnered a total of ten votes. Therefore, despite a new constitution that limited white suffrage and an active Republican party, Democratic candidates Seymour and Blair won Louisiana's electoral votes.\textsuperscript{31} So the limited, but extant, Republican vote in East Feliciana demonstrates that although planters were trying to undermine Republican political power, they had not yet succeeded. Conservative whites would learn this lesson and before the end of Reconstruction would come to remedy their failure.\textsuperscript{32}

Democratic activities aimed at undermining black political participation in 1868 were an amalgam of tactics and motivations, as the activities shifted from solitary social interaction to more unified political interaction. First, at some point during the fall canvassing, the planters formed their association and resolved to follow certain hiring and purchasing practices as outlined in the published regulations. Yet the actual implementation of those policies

\textsuperscript{31}White, \textit{Freedmen's Bureau in Louisiana}, pp. 149-151.
\textsuperscript{32}Trelease, \textit{White Terror}, pp. 135-136.
remained in the hands of individual plantation owners and were carried out on a case-by-case basis as in the years immediately after the war. To be sure, there was violence, as demonstrated by the Freedmen's Bureau "List of Murders and outrages," which notes several assaults in the months leading up to the election, but the level of violence pales in comparison to the heights that would be reached in less than a decade.\textsuperscript{33} Secondly, on one hand, the policies of the planters' association were directed at all Republicans, regardless of race. On the other hand, Republicanism in Louisiana was inextricably linked to race, and planters often expressed racial animosity when dealing with political situations. Planter DeWitt Carter, for example, attacked two of his laborers in September and then commandeered control of the entire cotton crop despite the protests of the workers in his employ. Only days after the presidential election, those men and Agent Barton of the Freedmen's Bureau confronted Carter, who "rose from the chair in which he had been seated and said, 'Don't you contradict me God Damn you! I'll kill you, Ill [sic] grind you in the dust.'" Carter's sister rushed to offer him a revolver, and his mother insisted that he "wouldnt [sic] take that much from a white man, much less from a low bred nigger."\textsuperscript{34}

Such stringent racial attitudes remained the norm among whites in Clinton and the surrounding area. Although Clinton

\textsuperscript{33}Joint Committee Report, pp. 302-314. One incident was reported in September, five in October, and eight in November.

\textsuperscript{34}H. E. Barton to B. I. Hutchins, Nov. 12, 1868, DNA, RG105, Ser. 1546, Letters Sent, vol 4.
was the site of much brutal interaction between political
adversaries, the town itself remained almost exclusively
under the control of whites. The population of the village
had always been about two-thirds white, and the black
population was largely female. Consequently, the level of
political control among black men living in Clinton was
considerably weaker than their country brothers. Not until
1874 was a black man elected to serve on the town council.35
But as the seat of justice, officers that served the parish—
such as sheriff, recorder, and tax collector—carried out
those duties and asserted their authority before residents of
the town.

Faced with not only what to them were the demoralizing
ideas of African-American political participation or a local
black representative down in New Orleans, white residents of
Clinton were forced to deal with black superiority, thanks to
electoral politics, in a manner they had never before
conceived. In his study of Reconstruction in Louisiana,
historian Joe Gray Taylor argues that many white Republicans
in the state began to move into the Democratic camp "as
Republicanism and the Negro became more and more insepar-
able."36

John C. Reily was the epitome of the carpetbagger
stereotype. He came to Louisiana as a missionary in 1866
from Blairstown, New Jersey, and purchased a plantation.
Although he never abandoned the Republican Party, Reiley

35Town Council Minutes, July 27, 1874.
36Taylor, Reconstruction in Louisiana, p. 183.
faced intimidation from white conservatives only during the elections of 1868 and 1876. Black Republicans sought his assistance after being turned off their farms for voting Republican in 1868, and he hired them as hands on his own plantation. But as more Democrats were restored to their political rights and as the novelty and shock of black political participation began to wear off, elections gradually became more peaceful, if still hotly contested.37

Appalled by the unfair elections of 1868, Congress passed the Enforcement Act of 1870, which put the force of the federal government behind upholding peaceable local elections. The law provided for non-discrimination during registration and balloting and for federal prosecution of those charged with disturbing elections.38 During the midterm election in the fall of 1870, the Republican Party of Louisiana split into two factions: the Radical Custom House wing, headed by U. S. Marshal Stephen B. Packard and President Grant's brother-in-law James F. Casey, and the Warmoth ring. Warmoth performed many of the duties of the campaign himself that fall, and his faction won a sweeping victory at the election. John Gair did not return to the state legislature that year, but he did not retire from politics just yet. Locally, "the canvass was very vigorously conducted," as Democrats took advantage of the split in the

38Taylor, *Reconstruction in Louisiana*, p. 183; and Foner, *Reconstruction*, pp. 455-56
Republican state party; several Democratic candidates won election to office.\textsuperscript{39}

By the 1872 election, the balance of power between the two Republican factions in the state had begun to shift. Each faction had developed their supporters with the liberal use of patronage—Warmoth wielded state appointments, the Custom House Ring controlled federal jobs. But in allying with conservative members of the state legislature against the "Radical" Republicans and by vetoing a few bill important to radical members of the party, Warmoth had lost a considerable amount of respectability in the eyes of many Republicans, both black and white. Furthermore, Warmoth's government was wracked with scandal, both fiscal and political, and the election of 1872 offered a faint glimmer of true reform.\textsuperscript{40} During the campaign, the Custom House faction continued to support Grant in his bid for re-election. Warmoth joined forces with the new Liberal Republicans who gathered steam by opposing Grant's nomination by the national party. Louisiana Democrats vaguely hoped for a fusion with one faction of the Liberal Republicans, but their extremely racist attitudes would likely limit the support they would receive from blacks.\textsuperscript{41}

\textsuperscript{39}Taylor, \textit{Reconstruction in Louisiana}, pp. 183-187, 210; Vincent, \textit{Black Legislators}, pp. 113-115, 230-231. Democrats were elected to at least three positions: T. J. Fugua for sheriff, L. M. Pipkin as parish judge, and H. L. Pond for state legislature. The parish's second representative was Republican C. F. Houston, HSCR, D. J. Wedge, p. 440.

\textsuperscript{40}Taylor, \textit{Reconstruction in Louisiana}, pp. 212-15, 227. The Custom House Ring were not themselves innocent of the same charges.

\textsuperscript{41}Taylor, \textit{Reconstruction in Louisiana}, pp. 220-231. Taylor notes that the Democrats were quite reactionary in their beliefs, and were already being called "Bourbon, because they had learned nothing and forgotten
Democrats finally managed to form a coalition with the Reform and Liberal Republican Parties, with Democrat John McEnery, a true Bourbon Democrat, heading the ticket. Governor Warmoth supported this "Fusion" ticket, and brought his considerable power to bear on the electoral machinery of the state to influence the outcome of the election, from refusing to register blacks to reducing the number of parish polling places. The actual outcome of the election was very unclear, owing to numerous cases of fraud throughout the state. More fraud ensued in trying to differentiate among the various sets of returns. Two assembled legislatures and a gubernatorial impeachment later, the Grant administration recognized the Custom-House Republicans as the victors. Although a few Fusionists gained seats in the state capitol, a Republican remained in the Governor's mansion.42

The factionalism of the state party reached to the local level in East Feliciana as well, and Republican politics in Clinton offers a fairly accurate picture of what was happening statewide within the Republican Party. John Gair represented the Warmoth clan in East Feliciana, while James Law from the western portion of the parish supported the Packard ring. The local Democratic newspaper remarked derisively that "without comprehending the full force of the problems which the struggle involved, these leaders have been

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drifting along with the current of events." Since Warmoth and his followers had alienated so many black Republicans, James Law had the support of a majority of the parish's party faithful, according to the newspaper report. But Gair was a more charismatic political leader, and he understood, as the Patriot-Democrat noted, that "the game of politics don't depend entirely on numbers, but that political skill can beat mere numbers to death." As Warmoth-men had done all over the state, Gair managed to gain control of the local "party machinery" and easily commandeered the local Convention, which met in Clinton on August 24th.44

The reporter for the Patriot-Democrat had a three-fold purpose when he filed his article. On the first and most basic level, he was reporting local political news and covering the parish Republican convention. Secondly, he was attempting to ridicule the inexperience and relative lack of education of the black Republican delegates at that meeting and to besmirch chairman John Gair's reputation as an able party leader. The author castigated the black politicians for their "ridiculous childs play" that created "such a mess of 'pints' of order" that observers did not know how "the

43 (Clinton) Patriot-Democrat, Aug. 27, 1872.
44 Ibid. The Patriot-Democrat article later suggests that "Gair, Ray & Co." were ostensibly with the Radical Republicans, "with Packard, and the Grant Oligarchy" that supported Kellogg in the gubernatorial race, but that their preference really lay with P. B. S. Pinchback (Warmoth's African-American lieutenant governor). It seems, therefore, that Gair utilized his position as a friend of the Warmoth ring to gain power but allied with the Custom House men to gain support. The coalitions in Reconstruction Louisiana shifted frequently and dramatically. It is impossible to make out exactly where Gair and his compatriots stood in the political spectrum from this very biased opposition report.
tangled skein could ever be unraveled." The reporter portrayed Gair as the master of this confusion, so that no one could garner support against him; any attempts to do so provoked an "intemperate harangue" from the chair that undermined the opposition's stance.\textsuperscript{45}

Thirdly, and most significantly, by portraying Gair as a shrewd manipulator, the white reporter was suggesting to local blacks that their interests were not being represented by the Republican Party, but rather, they were being taken advantage of as loyal party men to support the naked ambition of a few leaders. The same issue of the \emph{Patriot-Democrat} contained an editorial remarking upon "the evidences of kind feeling" shown the newspaper "by the colored people. We take this as the evidence of a general kindly disposition toward the whites." The editor then encouraged a peaceful election, without "strife between the two races." By insisting that race relations were not strained, and by showing that Republicans did not have the best interests of all freedmen at heart, doubtless the editor of the \emph{Patriot-Democrat} was attempting to dilute the power of the Republican Party in East Feliciana Parish. The reporter opined that "the bone and sinew of the party, the men who had struggled for it and with it during the last four years, were left out in the cold," while corrupt members of the Warmoth ring "who had fattened on the favors, of the State administration were able to control the whole thing. We have taken the pains to show

\textsuperscript{45}Ibid.
up these things in order to show the colored people, how completely a majority can be put under foot by shrewd political management." This remark was prophetic, but it would come to fruition most clearly in 1875 and 1876, when white Democrats would come to undermine the black Republican majority in the parish.\textsuperscript{46}

By the reporter's account, nominations proceeded as "the Boss" Gair intended. Whether Gair controlled the convention as completely as the \textit{Patriot-Democrat} suggested is impossible to determine without other evidence. But the results indicate that Gair's party machinery was very effective. Republicans continued to increase their power in East Feliciana's local politics during that election. Gair's brothers-in-law were both elected, Robert Ray as Sheriff and T. M. J. Clark as Parish Recorder. John Gair himself was chosen for the state legislature, as was James Law, a position that the local newspaper suggested was a conciliation or a buy-off of Gair's opposition. All were black Republicans. The parish judge, Hughes, was a Fusionist candidate, and received a number of votes from the African-American community, but white Democrat D. J. Wedge regarded him as a Republican. Only one Democrat gained a major local office, when F. A. Moore carried the parish for District Attorney.\textsuperscript{47}

During this relatively peaceful period between the elections of 1868 and 1876, the residents of Clinton were

\textsuperscript{46}\textit{Tbid.}

\textsuperscript{47}\textit{HSCR, Wedge, pp. 440-441.}
still concerned with the quest for stability (besides attempts to reassert their claims of white superiority) and for prosperity. Many of the old concerns for maintaining a well-ordered town remained though some cropped up with a new sense of urgency. One of the townsfolk's perennial fears—fire—had come to fruition during the Civil War, when much of the town burned in at least two conflagrations, one accidental, one set by invading Union troops. The Board of Aldermen revisited this issue during Reconstruction. Committees inspected and removed baking ovens, blacksmith shops, and other fire hazards; they installed cisterns and pumps at the Courthouse Square; and they gave the Phoenix Fire Company both money and access to town property to store a fire engine. And enterprising men like elderly Henry Marston, who sought to earn extra money now that his sons controlled his plantations, became the agent for fire insurance companies. 48

In addition to protecting buildings from fire, the town council also sought to beautify the town's buildings, public areas, and marketplaces by continuing to maintain well drained streets and sturdy sidewalks. Town ordinances required residents and business owners to keep the sidewalks in front of their property in "good order and condition." If

48 Town Council Minutes, Sep. 29, 1869; Oct. 18, 1870; Apr. 28, May 12, and Aug. 11, 1873; May 4, 1874; July 28, 1875. The firefighters formed their organization in November, 1872 and became the Phoenix hook and ladder company in 1875, see Marston Diary, Nov. 25, 1874 and Town Council Minutes, Oct. 22, 1875. Marston was the agent for three separate companies, and there was at least one other man in town who sold policies from a fourth company. See, for example, Marston Diary, May 8, 1874
the owner did not do so, the town had the power and authority to make the repairs and bill the offending party.⁴⁹

By keeping these streets and sidewalks free of roaming farm animals, the town council hoped to promote a sense of propriety or elegance, and the town "hog law" became a contentious issue. In place since 1858, this law prevented individuals from allowing their hogs and goats to run around at large and charged one dollar for collecting the animal and twenty cents per day for holding it. Although the town council believed that the law should be enforced, residents of Clinton were annoyed by the inconvenience. The law was put in place and repealed on a regular basis throughout Reconstruction.⁵⁰ Henry Marston was distressed and annoyed in 1871 to learn that nine of his shoats had been taken to the town holding pen, and that he might, in fact, lose eight of the twelve that had been born because of the "obnoxious" law. When he went to the town pen to collect them, he found that at least three of his shoats had escaped from there. The enforcement of the law at times created ridiculous situations at the town pen and agitated the citizens whose animals were captured. In July, 1871, Marston recorded that "the scene at

⁴⁹Town Council Minutes, Dec. 1, 1869
⁵⁰Town Council Minutes, Aug. 17, 1866 (enforced); Aug. 29, 1866 (suspended); May 9, 1867 (motion for repeal); May 15, 1867 (repealed); Aug. 2, 1870 (reenacted); Sep. 28, 1870 (suspended until Dec. 1, then "rigidly enforced"); Mar. 1, 1871 (reaffirmed); June 26, 1871 (pen built to retain animals found at large); June 27, 1871 (cattle not allowed to graze on Courthouse lawn at night); Sep. 14, 1871 (denies petition of town citizens requesting repeal of law regarding cattle); Oct. 30, 1871 ("after mature reflection and consideration we believe that the health, cleanliness, safety of her citizens and good order of the town demands that said ordinance be enforced"); Dec. 18, 1872 (hog and cow laws repealed)
the corporation cow lot this morning was exciting & amusing-- Some 18 head were pinned last night-- Down with the Corporation was the general cry-- I was compelled to pay 50 cts to have one of our cows liberated." 51 Although Clinton's aldermen had the best interests of the town at heart, they could not completely overcome the self-interest and convenience that the village's residents required. Although many residents retained close ties to the countryside, which provided a large amount of produce to town dwellers, farm animals were a common site on the streets of small southern towns. Pigs, goats, chickens, and cows were prevalent throughout the village, even within the corporate limits. Natural reproduction of such animals provided milk, meat, and eggs for the residents of a town where poverty had taken hold after the Civil War.

In a bow to the desire for convenience in acquiring foodstuffs and in an effort to generate revenue for the town, the Clinton town council proposed building a town market house in December, 1869. Bids were taken in the spring of 1871, and the building completed by the end of June that year. Paid for by selling corporation bonds, it finally opened to the public in October "for the sale of all meats, fish, poultry, milk, vegetables, fruits, etc. intended for the daily supply of the town." To insure that hawker sold their wares at the market and not door-to-door or on the streets, a fine of five to fifty dollars was to be charged;

51Marston Diary, Jan. 18-21, 1871; July 24, 1871.
to rent a stall, a small fee of less than forty cents per day was charged, depending on the type of goods sold; these charges were soon lowered to $1.50 to $2.50 per month. The only exception that allowed sellers to avoid the markethouse applied to those who sold small amounts of pork or beef. The market house not only provided Clintonians with a centralized location to complete their daily shopping, but also assured purchasers of a certain level of quality. Butchers, particularly, were required to maintain clean stalls and display the brands of the slaughtered animals, lest he be forbidden from the market and hence, from the legal sale of his goods.\textsuperscript{52}

While many such efforts at restoring the town to prosperity were purely local affairs, the old pre-war entrepreneurial spirit returned to the residents of Clinton in one significant way: the railroad. In 1869, the town council sponsored delegates to attend a railroad meeting in nearby Liberty, Mississippi.\textsuperscript{53} When the New Orleans, Baton Rouge and Vicksburg Railroad was proposed, Clinton's town council relished the opportunity to get directly connected to The City. Aldermen proposed a voluntary tax to generate $10,000 in revenue and a perpetual tax exemption upon company property to lure the railroad to Clinton, but it was to be paid "upon the express condition that said ... railroad shall touch the town of Clinton." The tax upon all personal and

\textsuperscript{52}Town Council Minutes, Dec. 8, 1869; Nov. 11, 1870; Mar. 1, 1871; Mar. 17, 1871; May 15, 1871; June 26, 1871; Sep. 21, 1871 (quote); December 9, 1871; May 5, 1873; June 12, 1876.

\textsuperscript{53}Town Council Minutes, July 27, 1869.
real property passed unanimously, and the board of directors of the railroad accepted the donation. However, there is no indication that this railroad ever built tracks through Clinton.\textsuperscript{54}

The council tried again, this time supporting the local Clinton and Port Hudson Rail Road. The Clinton and Port Hudson Railroad, built before the Civil War, had been attacked by Union troops several times during the conflict. Prior to the war, the railroad had been used to transport cotton and manufactured items to and from New Orleans via Port Hudson, located on a bluff above the Mississippi River. During the war, it served as a key method of transporting troops from the staging grounds in eastern Louisiana to the garrison at Port Hudson and goods from the trans-Mississippi west to the eastern fronts. With moderate repairs the railroad reopened in 1867, but the quality of the tracks never fully recovered from the ill-treatment received during the war. The line, however, remained an important method of transporting cotton to market until the river shifted course away from the bluffs at Port Hudson. The town floated another $10,000 in corporation bonds to rebuild the road and provide "proper engine, cars, and coaches." Again, voters

\textsuperscript{54}Town Council Minutes, Mar. 24, 1870; Feb. 6, 1871; Aug. 21, 1871; Sep. 14, 1871. Henry Marston's diary indicates that these endeavors did not emanate exclusively from the town council, and residents of the are met to discuss attracting a railroad to Clinton. When their first attempt apparently failed, the local committee requested the directors of the railroad company to subrogate their claim on the pledged money to any company who would complete a road. There were even barbecues held to generate interest. Marston Diaries, Apr. 15, 29, 1871; June 10, 1871, Sep. 9, 1871. The parish also passed a railroad tax totaling $50,000.
approved the bond issue, with only 9 negative votes out of 127. The company was never as successful after the war as it was during the antebellum period. Ownership changed hands several times, and eventually the Louisville, New Orleans and Texas Railroad purchased the line. When the Yazoo & Mississippi Valley Railroad came to East Feliciana in 1886, the tracks passed to the west of the parish seat, which deprived Clinton of needed capital investment and spurred the growth of several other small towns in the parish. The antebellum planters' ambitions to connect the cotton patches of East Feliciana to the markets of New Orleans thrived for several decades, but failed to help bring about economic recovery after the collapse of the slave plantation system. On one hand, railroads helped to generate new economically vibrant small towns throughout the South, but when older, established towns like Clinton failed to attract new lines their economies were likely to stagnate.

Among the poor tenant farmers or sharecroppers of East Feliciana, who bore much of the brunt of economic instability in the postwar era, one convenient way of earning a little extra cash became quite common: selling seed cotton. Before cotton had been ginned to remove the seeds—and therefore, before land owners could claim their share of the harvested crop—poor farmers might sneak off to an unethical or indebted merchant to sell a portion of their fluffy staple and earn a

55 Town Council Minutes, Sep. 14, 1871; Marston Diaries, Oct. 19, 1871; Esterville, Confederate Neckties, pp. 94-95. It is unclear whether this money was $10,000 subrogated from the New Orleans, Baton Rouge, & Vicksburg or if this was a separate bond issue.
little illicit cash. As early as 1869, the town fathers recognized this problem and local ordinances designated particular times for the sale or trade of seed cotton. The law prohibited anyone with the town limits from receiving "at their store, house, or outhouses, any seed cotton, after dark or before daylight in the morning." Those who were caught engaged in selling seed cotton outside daylight hours were charged a hefty fine.\textsuperscript{56} Town ordinances were rarely passed in a prophylactic manner, with the exception of health ordinances instituting yellow fever quarantines.\textsuperscript{57} The specificity of this ruling, then, indicates that the extra-legal trade was not uncommon and that planters had voiced their complaints to the men in charge. Underprivileged individuals, black or white, might also steal cotton under cover of darkness from cotton plants grown in small gardens in town. Cotton patches, even small ones, provided an important means of gaining specie in the cash-poor economy of the postwar South. The loss of a few pounds might make a significant impact on a family's bottom line.\textsuperscript{58} But the theft of seed cotton would have a much greater political impact than economic in the years to come, when such activities became a pivotal factor in renewing, sustaining, and justifying brutality against freedmen.

\textsuperscript{56}Town Council Minutes, Sep. 15, 1869
\textsuperscript{57}See, for example, Town Council Minutes, Sep.- Oct., 1870 and 1873.
\textsuperscript{58}Henry Marston generated a 570 pound bale of cotton from a patch of just over an acre on his property in 1875. Diary, Nov. 27, 1875.
The election of 1874 saw a renewal of political violence in East Feliciana Parish, and the beginning of the earnest escalation of brutality. That year, the Republican Party in Louisiana remained in a state of confusion. A large segment of the state's white population had never acceded to the validity of the Radical Kellogg's installation as governor by the Grant administration after the contested election results of 1872. In August, various anti-Republican forces met in what historian Joe Gray Taylor labeled a White League convention, which called for white men to be elected in order to correct what they saw as the inept management of state government. They also claimed that the federal Civil Rights Acts were unconstitutional. Only after further consideration did this conservative movement include a few black men as candidates in order not to alienate all African-American voters. In early August Republicans held a "mass meeting" in Clinton where black and white speakers, including Gair and Ray, advocated the Civil Rights laws.59

But the white residents of the parish met in Clinton three weeks later and appointed twenty delegates to the White League convention. Upon their return, a "mass meeting" of whites occurred in Clinton, where Democrats and other conservatives "ratified the Platform & formed a 'White League Club.'" Although the diarist Marston chose not to attend the

59Taylor, Reconstruction in Louisiana, pp. 297-299; Marston Diary, Aug. 1, 1874.
meeting, he reported that "some violent speeches were made." With the convening of these two meetings and the support they generated, the principle of white organization and overt resistance to black civil rights became established in Clinton. The formation of the White League lit a fire under the cauldron of organized mass violence against blacks. Remaining at a low simmer for about a year, the violence would erupt into a boil the following summer, and the temperature would not cool until after white Democrats had returned to power.

The violence and intimidation that blacks faced in East Feliciana Parish during 1874 did not even amount to the same level of trouble they faced in 1868. In fact, a portion of the brutal acts committed could be linked directly to the factionalism in local Republican politics. Republicans Pierce Butler and James Law from the western half of the parish were both charged with shooting at men in the towns of Jackson and Port Hudson, respectively. Although the Republicans began preparing for the election as early as April, 1874, they remained split. At a Republican meeting in Clinton, delegates fell into "a knock-down and drag-out" fight, a far cry from the 1872 convention, where the paper reported that "no disturbance occurred." At another mass meeting in August, Gair and Ray spoke to the assembled crowd, but "Law took no part." In the end, Robert Ray was returned.

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60 Marston Diary, Aug. 20 and Sep. 8, 1974. The intent of the first meeting's planners had originally been to appoint five men but a larger delegation was chosen.
to the legislature, but Gair was defeated in his bid for the Senate. Several Democrats did win during the election, including T. B. Lyons as parish judge, and W. H. Pipes as state legislator.\(^{61}\)

With a strong Republican majority in the parish, several hundred black voters voted for Democratic candidates rather than voting a straight Republican ticket. Local lawyer D. J. Wedge asserted that those freedmen who voted Democratic did so because they "were abused by the [R]epublicans." The prevalence of "scratch" ballots during this election—where voters scratched out a Republican candidate and wrote in the name of a Democratic candidate—became a pivotal element of white conservatives' defense when Congress investigated the landslide Democratic victory that would come in 1876. Republican leaders encouraged the freedmen not to defect from voting a straight ticket, and this plea developed a new sense of urgency after serious racial violence erupted that fall.\(^{62}\)

If it is possible to trace this eruption to a single source, several citizens of Clinton claimed that a threat

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\(^{61}\)Taylor, Reconstruction in Louisiana, pp. 297-299; Marston Diary, Apr. 25, 1874 (on this date, the African-American community "held a mass meeting to choose a Parish Executive Committee"); Aug. 1, 1874. Other mass meeting were held in town on Sep. 12, Oct. 20, 28, 31, 1874. Local attorney D. J. Wedge reported that Gair "bolted" from the Republican party altogether after his defeat. If this were true, it would perhaps have proved the Patriot-Democrat's assertion in 1872 that Gair didn't care for the party, only the power it could give him. However, despite Gair's defeat in his bid for the Republican senate nomination, he continued to speak at party rallies such as this one. \(\text{HSCR, Wedge, p. 441; and Patriot-Democrat, Aug. 27, 1872.}\) According to figures offered by Mr. Joyce during Wedge's first testimony (p. 255), the Republican majority was almost double to Democratic vote (1,688 R; 847 D).

\(^{62}\)\(\text{HSCR, Wedge, p. 441. For further testimony on "scratch tickets," see HSCR, W. L. Brown, p. 309; W. O. Hines, p. 314; Kite Edwards, p. 348; Alexander Poole, p. 263; Adam Sensley, p. 275; William Hansbury, p. 287; Aaron Robinson, p. 264; Marston Diary, Nov. 1, 1874.}\)
made by Robert Skipwith against Lewis Jones, a police juror and president of the local Republican Club, was the first rumble. During Reconstruction in Louisiana the state legislature made several tax increases to cover the expenses of such new institutions as public schools. Many Louisianians chafed under these new tax burdens, particularly white conservatives who tried to bring down the Kellogg government by refusing to pay taxes. The Tax Resistance movement was unsuccessful, but claims of corruption and misuse of funds throughout the terms of Warmoth and Kellogg kept taxpayers in a state of unrest. Lewis Jones had voted in favor of a 5-mill tax for the parish, and many whites in the area were unhappy with his choice. In an offhand, drunken remark, Skipwith proclaimed that Jones should be given 500 lashes in retribution. When the African-American community learned of the threat, dozens of armed men flocked to Lewis's home and placed pickets on the road near his house in order to protect one of their black Republican leaders from a potentially fatal beating. In town, news of the assembly was received as "reports of Negroes being encamped for some ill purpose." Four to five hundred white men gathered together and rode out the Jones's property in the fourth ward of the parish. George Norwood accompanied the white riders, which included a large group of "young men that

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63Taylor, Reconstruction in Louisiana, pp. 274-276, 310. HSCR, Marston, James DeGrey, and George T. Norwood all suggested that the Luis Jones affair began the escalation of violence. It is ironic that so much uproar developed over a tax of one-half of one percent, because town residents overwhelmingly approved that level of tax twice to aid local railroads. See above.
were wild and reckless, and they wanted to go to the negro camp and shoot into them." Representatives of the black and white factions hashed out their differences, and bloodshed was narrowly averted. Marston opined that "if there had been one gun fired there would in all probability been twenty or thirty or fifty of our people killed." 64

The following May, Jones and several of his supporters were brought to trial on charges of riot. To begin with, whites were exasperated that the majority of jurors on both the grand and petit juries were black. This offended their sensibilities of fair justices, as whites assumed a black jury would be more lenient. 65 At the indictment hearing, the district judge, named Dewing, had given a very strong statement against armed gatherings such as the one that developed to protect Jones. But adding further credence to notions of bias, the judge entered a milder charge to the petit jury than conservatives expected. When the jury acquitted all of the accused, whites were dissatisfied. The conservative white men of Clinton and the surrounding area then "commenced...a kind of knock-down arrangement on several plantations through the parish and even in the town of Clinton," reported the young carpetbagger and former Freedmen's Bureau agent James DeGrey. On at least two occasions, when black men traveled into Clinton, they were

64 HSCR, John Stone, p. 447; George T. Norwood, pp. 480-481; James DeGrey, p. 463; Marston, p. 443; Marston Diary, Sep. 20, 21, 1874.
65 Marston Diary, May 18, 24, 1875. Whites conveniently ignored the fact that a majority white jury would have been biased against the defendants.
accosted and beaten by groups of young whites five or six strong.\textsuperscript{66}

One of the men beaten by a group of townsfolk was the newly elected parish recorder T. M. J. Clark. Black Republican leaders had likely never felt particularly secure in their office, despite the lull in overt violence against them after the election of 1868. Clark's brother-in-law Gair had already been shot at in October shortly before the mid-term elections. The day after the election, intoxicated men in Clinton got into fights and fired shots at each other. Therefore, the beating of a legally elected official in the parish seat painted a picture all too clearly for Republican officials that their leadership was not well received by the white population. State legislator Robert Ray purportedly made remarks after the beating of Clark that he would defend himself with deadly force against any such attack made on him, but this only further incited white animosity against the black leader. In a repeat of the Jones affair, white men carrying various weapons descended on Clinton supposedly to protect themselves against a rumored "negro riot."\textsuperscript{67}

In fact, by riding collectively in this manner, whites only made more likely a show of violence against them as blacks might be forced to act in self defense. White and black Republicans alike were warned to stay off the streets as armed riders sought Ray. That night the most prominent

\textsuperscript{66}HSCR, Norwood, p. 480; DeGrey, p. 463;
\textsuperscript{67}HSCR, DeGrey, p. 463; Marston Diary, Oct. 17, 18, Nov. 4, 1874, and July 24-26, 1875
black leaders in Clinton—John Gair, Robert Ray, T. M. J. Clark, and Sheriff Henry Smith—were forced to flee the town, fearing for their lives. White riders equipped with weapons roamed the town for at least two days, an event likely not seen in Clinton since the Civil War. Finally the three to four hundred white conservatives present in Clinton passed several resolutions that held Gair, Smith, and a few others responsible for the uproar. These resolutions were published in the local newspaper in an effort, supposedly, to prevent any future riotous outbreaks. In fact, the whites would be responsible for escalating raising the bar on brutality, not the blacks. Sheriff Smith soon returned to town, but the other men traveled to the city to meet with Governor Kellogg, but there is no indication of what action the Governor took. When Clark returned to town two weeks later, the White League "ordered [him] to leave in 24 hours," according to one local chronicler.68

Such action on the part of the parish's white citizens demonstrates that they were growing increasingly tired of blacks' political power and assertiveness. The Jones affair, according to local plantation owner George Norwood, "was seized upon by certain men who claimed to be leaders of the democratic party in East Feliciana as a pretext to carry the

68HSCR, DeGrey, pp. 463-464; Marston Diary, July 27-31, Aug. 15, 1875. DeGrey only says that Clark was given twenty-four hours to leave. The New Orleans Times reported that the White League gave the ultimatum, suggesting that "his room was preferable to his company." Even the white deputy sheriff (Woodward) delivered one of these notices. N.O. Times, Aug. 13, 1875.
election" in 1876.\textsuperscript{69} Claims of Republican malfeasance of office bolstered white rationales for driving black Republican leaders out of Clinton. For example, according to local planter and attorney J. G. Kilbourne, Gair, Ray, and Smith had contrived a method to bring fees to a Republican justice of the peace living in Clinton in 1874. Rather than taking offenders before the justice of the peace in the appropriate ward Sheriff Smith would bring them to Clinton, thereby increasing the fees received by the town justice. In many cases, claimed Kilbourne, the charges were completely contrived, and upon paying a six or seven dollar fee, the defendant was released.\textsuperscript{70} Kilbourne recites a litany of charges against the "incompetent" black officials: Ray once attacked Smith with a knife, and Smith chased Ray from his office with a shotgun. The coroner, freedman Adam Sensley, was unable to read the arrest warrant against Smith. Gair then interfered to undermine the entire attempt at justice. Smith himself was known to be illiterate, and state legislator Ray, though literate, "could barely write." Kilbourne concluded that "the conduct of these men was such that it made the execution of the law a complete farce. No one had any confidence in them."\textsuperscript{71}

Local whites also accused Sheriff Smith of tampering with juries to acquit African-American defendants. When the

\textsuperscript{69}HSCR, Norwood, p. 480.  
\textsuperscript{70}Kilbourne does not identify the justice of the peace by name, nor does he admit the likelihood that accusations of acts of violence by whites against blacks were not "contrived" but real. \textit{HSCR}, J. G. Kilbourne, p. 457.  
\textsuperscript{71}HSCR, Kilbourne, pp. 457-458.
district court opened in early October, 1875, news reports were being broadcast throughout Louisiana of race riots in Friar's Point, Mississippi, where blacks were purportedly threatening to burn the town. No doubt conservatives in Clinton heard these reports and were reminded of the 'race riots' that they had feared the previous year. These men also blamed Sheriff Smith and Judge Dewing for blacks having "become obstreperous toward white people" after Lewis Jones and his compatriots were not convicted for rioting. Consequently, the White League decided to intimidate Smith, the only important black leader remaining in Clinton, and drive him out of town.72

As usual for the first day of court, a large number of people were in town. When court began a group of white men began making noise just outside the door of the courtroom. Smith ordered the men to be quiet, but they continued to talk. The local paper opined that "Henry saw a good opportunity of making an exhibition of his official prerogative and he did so. ... Henry was mad, and gritted his teeth." This statement is indicative of the disrespect that whites showed not only Smith, but the office of sheriff. The paper called the sheriff by his first name, but the white judge by his last; furthermore, the comments blatantly ridiculed the man, demonstrating that the ineffectiveness of

72HSCR, John Morton, p. 339; Judge New of the House subcommittee inquired of Morton, an African-American man, whether the rumors about Smith fixing juries was true. Morton denies ever hearing reports of that. N.O. Times, Oct. 6, 1875; HSCR, A. S. Lanier, p. 277. For reports on the race riot in Mississippi, see e.g., the N.O. Times, Oct. 6, 1875 and N.O. Daily Picayune, Oct. 7, 1875.
the justice system was due more to disrespect by whites who saw him as "a standing insult" than to ineptitude by legal officials.73

There are several different accounts of what happened next. The Clinton Democrat claimed that Smith ran down the stairs and drew his gun. Smith himself reported that Alexander Skipwith kicked him and threatened "to kill me and that blue-bellied son of a b---h," the judge; and after going downstairs Skipwith and others drew their revolvers. Observer John Reily suggested that Smith "fell and slipped," firing his pistol in the process. The statements are too varied to make a single determination as to what happened, except that white men were disrupting the proceedings of the court, and in the process of attending to his duty to quiet them Alexander Skipwith charged Smith with jury tampering. The sheriff then went downstairs and outside the courthouse, where he was shot at several dozen times. One bullet hit him in the thigh.74

After conversing with local attorneys D. C. Hardee and J. A. Norwood, Judge Dewing adjourned the court sine die. The local advisors suggested that news of the shooting would create an uprising, but "word of adjournment would stop

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74Ibid., and HSCR, John Reily, p. 299. Alexander Skipwith charges that Smith took umbrage at Skipwith's assertion that he was packing the grand jury, and a fight ensued. Henry Marston recorded this as the cause of the fight. HSCR, Skipwith, p. 249; Marston Diary, Oct. 7, 1875. The New Orleans Times took a flippant attitude toward the first reports coming from Sheriff Smith. The headline on Oct. 9 read "MORE WAR RUMORS. THEY COME FROM SHERIFF SMITH OF EAST FELICIANA—HIS PERIODICAL REPORT ABOUT OPPRESSIONS, ETC." By the 15th, the headline read: "WAR IN THE COUNTRY. Riots and Bloodshed in East Feliciana."
them."75 Dewing informed the acting governor that the court could not complete its duties "or its process enforced in the then temper of the public mind, and [he] decided to adjourn. Dewing denied that he was "roughly dealt with," as clerk of court A. S. Lanier later testified. Dewing left town on the railroad the day after the shooting and according to Hardee, requested an escort because he feared violence, but Dewing did not later admit to this fear. The report among citizens in Clinton was that Dewing did in fact request a guard, which indicated to them "that he considered his life in danger."

An inveterate news gather, Henry Marston further suggested to his diary that "The notice to the Judge must have been the work of a preconcerted arrangement-- I have been informed that Mr. J. A. Norwood is the individual who notified Judge Dewing that his services could be dispensed with." A former member of the White League later recalled that one of their number stood in the court and announced "Fellow citizens and taxpayers of the Parish of East Feliciana, I forthwith dissolve this court into thin air, Judge Dewing, a Committee will wait on you."76

Irrespective of the actual danger Dewing faced, the public perception undoubtedly was that Dewing feared for his


76 Ibid., and HSCR, Hardee, p. 374; Marston Diary, Oct. 7-8, 1875.
life and fled the town without completing his duties as
district judge. The planning involved seemed obvious to
observers, even if the participants later denied pre-
meditation. But the confluence of events cannot be mere
coincidence. Smith was shot on October 7th, Dewing left town
on the 8th, Jones resigned his police jury position on the
9th, Dr. Sanders was poisoned on the 11th, Gair was arrested
on the 13th, and Matthews was hung during the late night or
early morning hours of the 13th and 14th. 77

With the coming of the White League to Clinton,
organized, centralized, and planned violence had finally
become ensconced in East Feliciana. Now that they had tasted
success by driving all major Republican black leaders out of
the area, white Democrats felt compelled to completely
reassert their power. With all legitimate law enforcement
gone and a white, conservative deputy sheriff in charge,
whites could lash out against freedmen with impunity, and
with little fear of punishment. When Sheriff Smith made his
report to acting governor C. C. Antoine after reaching New
Orleans, he exclaimed that "the loyal people there are at the
mercy of an armed mob." His lament was prophetic. 78

For the next year, the black population in and around
Clinton lived in fear for their lives. The key to the

77 Town officials were obviously expecting trouble, because they
unanimously approved a "volunteer police" force on August 9th. The town
council also reimbursed town residents on October 22nd for almost 40
meals, corn and oats, and gunpowder "furnished in time of trouble." One
possible implication is that the town council not only knew about the
attack on Gair, but supported it. (Town Council Minutes). Marston
Diary, Oct. 7-14, 1875.
78 N. O. Times, Oct. 12, 1875.
success of the Democrats' wave of intimidation was not only the actual violence but also the "rumours upon rumours in regard to political movement" that Henry Marston deplored. The testimony taken during the congressional investigation is rife with hearsay, rumor, and conflicting accusations. This provided Democrats with effective cover to prevent prosecution under either local or federal laws. George Norwood counted himself among the large group of conservative whites who deplored the violent tactics of die hard Democrats and bulldozers. He admitted under oath that he had heard no distinct plans by the Democrats to intimidate blacks for political reasons, but had "just heard it talked around." 79

One of the most enduring rumors about the violence in East Feliciana during 1875 and 1876 concerns stealing cotton. As described above, theft of seed cotton was a grave concern during Reconstruction, particularly due to the poverty of the region as a whole. Newspaper reports in 1875 suggest that the buying and selling of seed cotton was rampant throughout the cotton-growing parishes, particularly in the Felicianas. Bands of armed men then rode around punishing freedmen for stealing the cotton and burning the stores of white men who purchased it. Modern historians such as Joe Gray Taylor and George Rable have nodded to these reports, but rightly

79Marston Diary, Oct. 17, 1875; HSCR, George T. Norwood, p. 485. I generally use Democrat and conservative interchangeably for variety. Although most whites in town wished to overthrow Republican rule, many, if not most, favored doing so peacefully. According to Norwood, they were nearly as cowed as blacks were by the belligerent Democrats who would impugn any whites' character by labeling them as a "Radical" if they spoke out against violence and intimidation.
question their veracity. As Taylor opines, "it seems strange that action on such a matter was taken just before the election." Even locals who stopped to consider these claims in 1875 and 1876 understood that stealing seed cotton "was an outrage on the people—to let a man's crop be taken off at night when he was in his bed," but Norwood averred that it "was dragged into this affair as a side issue to satisfy the minds of the people." When black Republican leader E. A. Rigley testified before the House subcommittee, he stated that while there were many claims of cotton stealing, "I don't believe there is a case on record where a man has been brought up for stealing cotton, but there has been several killed and lynched."

The plan set in motion was an ingenious one. Fed up with supposed inept Republican rule, whites drove out all local black leaders including the sheriff. These white conservatives then felt compelled to create extra-legal vigilante teams known as bulldozers to dispense justice in a region where the courts, in effect, no longer existed.

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80See, for example, N.O. Daily Picayune, Oct. 8, 1875. Taylor, Louisiana Reconstructed, pp. 387-388; Rable, But There Was No Peace, pp. 178-179; HSCR, Norwood, p. 482; Rigley, p. 490.

81The bulldozers and the White League were apparently one and the same, according to the testimony of K. Cross. HSCR, Cross, p. 269. Norwood testified that the idea of using extra-legal intimidation in a quasi-political manner was suggested by Jackson resident and parish tax collector Col. Frank Powers. Powers had visited Grant Parish the year before and claimed that the method "worked like a charm over there." Colfax, the parish seat of Grant Parish (named after President Ulysses Grant and his vice-president Schuyler Colfax) was the site of one of the bloodiest race riots in the country parishes, where over seventy African-Americans were killed. Only nine men were brought to trial, half were acquitted, and the remainder were shortly released after the Supreme Court of the United States ruled that the federal government could not prosecute crimes that were punishable under state laws. This ruling seriously undercut the government's ability to enforce the
Their exploits were fueled by rumors and vague comments that could easily be construed, but not proved, as political, thereby intimidating freedmen from exercising their freedom of choice during the upcoming election of 1876. For example, Judge New confronted attorney D. C. Hardee during his testimony with an alleged statement of Hardee's that "the bull-dozing and the killing here would go on for forty years." Hardee protested that he had actually said that "disorder would continue to prevail here under the government we had, and that we would have to look for a good governor in order to get order and peace." Depending on the tone and manner of such a statement, whoever heard it could derive several different meanings. Together with such ambiguous comments containing malevolent undertones, the violence that whites purported to be unrelated to politics might easily be construed as a warning against voting anything other than the Democratic ticket.82

Theft of seed cotton was not the only crime that might evoke a night-time visit from the Bulldozers. Theft of any

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82 HSCR, Hardee, p. 373.
sort, particularly of livestock, was the most common reason
given for riding out against a freedman. Again, the theft of
farm animals not only stole livelihood from the rightful
owner, but also either food or future gains. When rumors
circulated that a freedman had stolen livestock or cotton, a
small band of bulldozers culled from the 300-plus member
organization would pay a fearsome call. Freedman Bill King
lived three miles from Clinton, and he received a visit from
a group of vigilantes in July 1876. When asked if he was
frightened, he admitted that he was, particularly because
"they came on me in my sleep, and I was sort of stunned."83
Arguing that "there was no security for colored men or white
persons, in their persons or in their property," K. Cross and
his fellows proceeded to dole out justice to groggy and
frightened blacks. During Cross's examination, the
Republican Mr. Joyce listed almost thirty victims of the
Bulldozers: men and women who were shot at, hung, whipped,
and driven from their homes. Cross denied knowledge of most
and gave excuses for many of the others. Other regulators
assured the congressmen that the armed men only rode out to
dispense justice, and that given the option to take a
whipping or wait in jail until the judge decided to return,
the accused would readily choose the former.84

83 HSCR, Bill King, pp. 283-285
84 HSCR, Cross, p. 268-270. Joyce was obviously sympathetic toward the
freedmen and their plight. He was often shocked at the level of
brutality and the extent of 'ignorance' demonstrated by witnesses.
Judge New, on the other hand, was much more lenient toward his fellow
Democrats. During Cross's testimony, for example, he offered the
following justification: "If there had been any political lynching, or
Another class of individuals that received threats and beatings from the Bulldozers included those who crossed the racial boundary. On the most basic level, that might include simple issues of status. John Skipwith, for example, found on one occasion that several of his employees had used his mules to go to Clinton rather than work in the fields. Skipwith claims that he "hadn't seen them, hadn't opened my mouth to any of them," but the freedmen reported him to a small contingent of federal troops that had been sent to Clinton from Baton Rouge. In response, Skipwith dashed one in the head with a pistol, because "he cursed me and I didn't propose to take it." Ultimately assertion of political rights in the faces of whites determined to thwart black power proved to be the demise of John Gair and Babe Matthews. Another man who crossed the racial divide was J. Harrold,

if the purpose of the organization had been so far perverted as to interfere with men who had not been guilty of any crime" but simply disagreed with the Democratic agenda, as an officer in the association, Cross would have known. The witness agreed that yes, he would have known if that were the case. HSCR, Cross, p. 271. George Norwood identified Cross as the true leader of the ultra-violent Democratic faction. Other leaders included Powers, Joseph A. Norwood, Joe Jones, and Dr. Sanders, the man Gair was accused of poisoning; Jones was a member of the posse that arrested Gair.

For further reports of individual visits from the bulldozers, see, e.g., HSCR, Alfred Hazard, pp. 290-291, questions about two men killed near Jackson in separate incidents; William S. Norsworthy, pp. 293-294, a young man had a rope put around his neck and was dragged by a horse, another man shot at due to a rumor about hog stealing; F. D. Wood and A. C. Woodward, pp. 295-296, about two girls nearly hung for stealing, supposed to be an angry crowd of blacks who threatened the girls; K. A. Cross (on recall), pp. 390-391, Reiley, a white Republican, had a sawmill and gin burned in 1875 by an arsonist, implied to be committed by black men; Lawrence Mahoney, pp. 405-406, chastised three people by whipping for stealing pork and flour; Thomas J. Lipscombe, p. 410, reports about Joe Johnson, a black constable in East Baton Rouge, "charged with stealing a hog." These are only a few of the many events described in the Sub-Committee testimonies. The testimony for East Feliciana alone comprises 250 pages.

85HSCR, John R. Skipwith, p. 425.
whose servant was whipped by the regulators. William Kent and others from East Feliciana explained that it was because Harrold had been "keeping her as his wife, his colored wife ... and he had made himself very obnoxious to the community" by preferring her over his "lawful wife." When the black woman supposedly threatened Mrs. Harrold, the white community responded to defend her honor, "and to see that this woman was not allowed to walk over her [Mrs. Harrold] in that style." After the white men had administered "a good genteel whipping" to the freedwoman, she left the area. But Kent claimed no knowledge of Harrold being threatened with hanging by men carrying shotguns and pistols.\textsuperscript{86}

In light of the beatings and threats administered throughout the spring of 1876, Republicans in East Feliciana did not believe it to be safe to organize Republican clubs in any ward of the parish. Freedmen Zeke Glover, for example, was whipped for having read Republican newspapers to his fellow party members and for trying to organize a Republican club. E. A. Ridgley [Rigsby?], another Gair brother-in-law, was threatened twice and heard that all Republican leaders would be run out of the parish or killed. He was all too aware that the regulators were willing to make good on their threat. As a leader in the 5th Ward Republican club, he chose to leave town. Returning secretly for one month in

\textsuperscript{86}HSCR, Kent, pp. 426-427; Stanhope Cain, p. 430. Henry Clay East reported that Z. T. Sparkman was charged with a similar offense. East admits about forty regulators paid Sparkman a visit but denies that Sparkman was ever beaten or warned to leave the parish as other reports had indicated. pp. 427-429.
October in an attempt to form a club, he "found it was a matter of impossibility." A former Republican confessed to him at that point that he made speeches on behalf of the Democrats in an effort "to save the colored people from being murdered and killed like they were a few months ago." Monroe Meyers, an African American, "was taken out from my house one night," accused of being "a radical president of the republican party [sic]." When he admitted that it was true, they instructed Meyers to desist, which he agreed to do "if they didn't do anything to me. Instead, he joined the local Democratic club because he "wanted to lie comfortably and happy, and I wanted to lay down in peace and get up in peace. I had a family, and I wanted to maintain them." So in the course of an evening Meyers, an eight-year president of his ward Republican club became the president of the local Democratic club. When a company of the 13th United States Infantry came to Clinton in July of 1876, Captain Benjamin Rogers found "that the darkies were completely cowed, and that they did not dare to hold any republican meetings, and that they were being forced to join democratic clubs and would be compelled to vote the democratic ticket whether they wished or not."\(^8\)

When black men assembled at Democratic meetings, they heard that men who voted Republican would be forced to leave the parish. That the Democrats were not going to stand four

\(^8\)HSCR, Marston, p. 443; Capt. Benjamin H. Rogers, p. 242; E. A. Rigley, pp. 488-490; Meyers, pp. 493-494 (Meyers had fled to New Orleans and feared to return home because of his testimony).
more years of Republican rule. William Hansbury claims that he did not vote Democratic against his will: "I seen that I was protected by voting the democratic ticket; and I done so, and voted with all my heart, and tried my best to beat the Republican party." Rumors came out of these meetings about the Democratic "'shot-gun policy'; ... The negroes all understood what that meant," suggested Henry Marston during his testimony. Nathan Morgan reported that he did not the Democratic club based on threats from whites; "it was my own color" who suggested it as a way to protect himself. And although members of the regulators offered as proof that their night rides were unconnected to politics that they were active in the spring, long before the actual election, freedman Aaron McKenzie reported that he was beaten only a week before the election by some young men who made him angry at a Democratic rally. The only excuse his tormentors gave was "My big toe," and they warned him not to report it in Clinton.88

During the campaign, Republicans throughout the South felt abandoned by their Northern allies. In East Feliciana, freedman Nathan Morgan complained that he voted Democratic against his will because "I didn't see anybody else going around making speeches but them. I heard they said that we must go with them and try them four years." Weary of the struggle and fed up with corruption, the national Republican convention nominated Ohio's Rutherford B. Hayes on a weak

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platform that promoted "honest and capable local self government," which Reconstruction historian Eric Foner astutely recognizes as "code words" for the end of Reconstruction. Northern Republicans did little or nothing to support their fellow partisans in the four "unredeemed," or still contested states in the South. In Florida, North and South Carolina, and Louisiana, the Republican Party still controlled the state government, and therefore also controlled the election machinery.  

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In each of these states chicanery, intimidation, and violence carried the day. Where intimidation such as that described above did not keep black voters away from the polls, white Democrats stuffed ballot boxes for their man, Samuel J. Tilden. A wealthy, prominent businessman and governor of New York, Tilden campaigned strongly on ending the economic depression and political corruption. Ironically, Tilden's campaign created some of the most blatant and widespread political corruption in American presidential politics. 90 Such irregularities in several areas of the South created doubt about the validity of the votes cast, and the presidential election of 1876 is one of the nation's most notorious balloting fiascoes. The violence committed in East Feliciana proved to be an important factor in that debacle.

The election results were alarmingly close. Initial counts indicated that the Democrat Tilden had won a fairly

89 HSC, Nathan Morgan, pp. 449-451; Foner, Reconstruction, pp. 564-575.
90 Foner, Reconstruction, pp. 565-575.
large majority. But Hayes, if he won three of the four unredeemed southern states including Louisiana, would carry the election. Rival returns from Florida, South Carolina, and Louisiana were submitted declaring either Hayes or Tilden the legitimate winner in their state, depending upon which party prepared the returns. Congress chose to form an Electoral Commission to weigh the merits of the conflicting returns. Voting along party lines, the Commission with a Republican majority of one, all of the returns were certified in favor of Hayes. By promising to recognize the Democratic state governments in Louisiana and South Carolina and making other concessions to "home rule," the Republicans gained the White House with much further significant Democratic protest.\footnote{Foner, Reconstruction, pp. 575-581.}

With this deal the Democratic candidate for Governor of Louisiana, former Confederate General Francis T. Nichols, who was missing an arm and a leg from the War, was guaranteed his position at the head of Louisiana's state government. During the campaign, Nichols had canvassed the state making speeches to large crowds of blacks and whites, promising to protect black political rights. Nichols and the state Democratic candidates spoke to a large crowd in Clinton in late September 1876. Henry Marston had the opportunity to meet the maimed General, and he was "agreeably impressed." The following day, the people formed a procession at the Depot in the southwest corner and marched through town to the Barbecue
grounds just north of the village. After the citizens enjoyed their dinner, the political speeches began; at 80 years of age, Henry Marston stayed for only two. The first speaker, he remarked, "was in some respects complimentary to the Radical party & its candidate--admitting him to be 'honest.'" But Marston had little respect for the second speaker, as his speech "was perfectly humbuggery in its character, making the negroes think that they were in every respect our equals socially & politically excepting in marrying." Marston later related that in his opinion, the strongly pro-black but otherwise conservative speeches made that day were quite influential in the election. He believes many blacks put great trust in the sentiments expressed that day.92

In an ironic twist to the violence evinced in so many southern states during the election of 1876, election day in Clinton and at the other polls in the parish was widely regarded as the most peaceful election in over a decade. Marston recorded in his diary, "The Election passed off very quietly."93 When the ballots in the parish were counted, the vote was almost unanimously in favor of the Democratic party. The votes cast for the Republican party remained in the low single digits. This was hard to believe from a majority-

92Marston Diary, Sep. 27-28, 1876; HSCR, Marston, pp. 443-444.
93Marston Diary, Nov. 7, 1867; see also HSCR, passim. In the House sub-committee investigation in Clinton, nearly every person who testified, white and black, admitted that the election day was quiet. See, for example, Pearce C. Butler, p. 246; A. S. Skipwith, p. 247; Joseph Israel, p. 250; and Jesse Harrison (col.), p.259. These are four of the first six witnesses; the other two did not testify regarding election day.
black parish where U. S. Army officials estimated that two-thirds of the black population of the parish actually preferred the Republican ticket. The Louisiana State Returning Boards took the lack of Republican ballots as prima facia evidence of tampering and disqualified the entire parish vote.  

While black Republicans claimed to have voted Democratic because they had been warned "if I did not go to the polls and give an account of myself that the footboard and the head-board of my coffin would be nailed." A few said that they chose to vote Democratic because they wanted a change, such as lower taxes, better schools, or a proper court system. Democrats supported this line of argument, and insisted that their efforts at persuasion during the campaign had been very effective, and they pointed at the occasional Democratic scratches on Republican ballots in the 1872 and 1874 were simply the first steps this dramatic change.  

Freedman Nelson Barton portrayed the 1876 election day as "very quite and nice and pretty." But the relative peace of election day actually served to undermine the efforts of the Democratic party to gain control and spawned the

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94 HSCR, Capt. Benjamin H. Rogers, 13th U. S. Infantry, pp. 242-244; and Marston, "Diaries," Nov. 8 and Dec. 7, 1876. After "Redemption" took hold in Louisiana that year, no Republican was elected to represent East Feliciana Parish in the state legislature until Thomas McVea (who had only recently switched from Democrat) in 2000; Suzanne Hughes, "Membership in the Louisiana House of Representatives, 1880-2004," House Legislative Services, Louisiana House of Representatives.  
investigation that made public so much of the violence that occurred in Clinton and the surrounding parish. The seeds of racial peace that were harvested on election day were sown in the soil of white resentment and cultivated by violence and intimidation during the preceding decade. That unparalleled community observer Henry Marston remarked that the violence committed by the regulators might have been justified as a response to property depredations committed by blacks. But while political intimidation may not have been the object, it was certainly the effect of bulldozing. The memoirs of former bulldozer Philip H. Jones proves Marston's point, and supports historian Allen Trelease's argument that even apparent non-political violence did have basic political motivation. Jones asserted that the regulators organized to fight the political power of black Republicans and their white compatriots. African-American elected officials "brought humiliation to the Southern people," he exclaimed. "White men were arrested by negro sheriffs and constables, and placed in jail under negro jailers' former owners had to submit to insolence from their former slaves, which sometimes resulted in tragedy." To rid themselves of these indignities, bands of white men came together to "keep the negroes who furnished the [Republican] votes away from the polls." When they rode out at night, confronting black men, "the effect was magical, the negroes were intimidated, their
attitude changed, their former subservience was resumed, and results were showed at the polls."  

Even though no one was ever officially charged with the crimes perpetrated against Dr. Sanders, Gair, Matthews, Smith, and the dozens of nameless freedmen, the depredations were publicized in Louisiana newspapers. Other newspapers around the country picked up the stories and decried the treatment of southern blacks at the hands of their former owners. Henry Marston first learned of Zeke Glover's beating by reading the Chicago Times. But the whole story came to light due to ironic circumstances: East Feliciana's election of 1876 was one of the most peaceful election days experienced in a decade. Somewhere between the lynchings of the year before and the peace of election day 1876 lay the answer to this paradox: a culture of violence had so permeated the citizens of Clinton and the surrounding parish that no violence was necessary to produce the desired outcome in balloting.

One further ironic twist left Clinton in a similar situation to the Confederacy during the last months of the Civil War. The Confederacy had been founded with slavery as its "cornerstone," to use Vice President Alexander Stephens's phrase. But by the end of the war, the Confederate Congress, forced to choose between slavery and independence, chose to free slaves who volunteered to fight for the southern states.

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97 HSCR, Marston, p. 443.
Likewise, Clintonians betrayed fifty years of their own history to redeem the parish from Republican rule. The town fathers and residents of Clinton had spent decades creating a beautiful, sophisticated, orderly, and prosperous community. But in order to reinstate their own superiority, the whites of Clinton chose instead disorder, violence, and outright deceit to achieve their ends. As one of the oldest residents of the parish, Henry Marston loved his adopted hometown and fought to keep the old spirit alive. But by the end of Reconstruction, he was disconsolate when he realized "we are losing our reputation as a law-abiding Parish."98

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98Marston Diaries, Oct. 8, 1875.
Conclusion

During the antebellum period in Clinton, order, respectability, and prosperity had been the basis for building a strong and vibrant white community. The bedrock that undergirded these three pillars of success was the unquestioned belief in white superiority and the legal system of slavery. The economic infrastructure of the town—cotton, trade, railroads—all derived from the peculiar institution. Furthermore, the profits generated by this system also promoted vibrant social and educational opportunities for whites that were located in the town but provided entertainment for the entire area surrounding it.

After the Civil War decimated the land and much of the economic structure in East Feliciana, white Clintonians faced the added shock of freedom for the thousands of slaves who had resided in the parish. Whites responded in various ways to the new social structure, from denial to violence. Over time, a contingent of the white population banded together in an attempt to rebuild their community principles of order, respectability, and prosperity. Some of these unions, such as the stockholders who rebuilt the Clinton and Port Hudson Railroad, were driven by positive motives. Near the end of Reconstruction, however, some of the connections turned fierce and even bloody.

Unable to recapture their pre-war levels of economic success, some whites felt that they were forced to choose
between order and respectability. By this time, for many "order" had come to mean the return to white supremacy. In their eyes, the parish had already lost a considerable level of its prior esteem by supposed domination of inept and ignorant freedmen. When the former white elite felt compelled to make the final choice, they sacrificed respectability to return to white supremacy. By a brutal organized effort, white "bulldozers" undermined black political participation and returned their own kind to power in East Feliciana. If the town was to be rebuilt, these violently inclined whites were insistent that it be rebuilt according to their own plan, a plan that would keep the African-American residents of the town at the bottom of the social and economic structure. In the process, the very land upon which stood the pride of the entire parish—the beautiful and massive courthouse—became stained by the blood of blacks' power and whites' vengeance.

In *Pistols and Politics: The Dilemma of Democracy in Louisiana's Florida Parishes, 1810-1899*, Samuel C. Hyde, Jr. masterfully analyzes the relationship between planters and yeomen farmers and the roles of violence and democracy in the Florida Parishes. The Civil War, Hyde argues, broke the planter-class stranglehold on power in these parishes, including East Feliciana. For a brief period after the war poor and yeoman-class whites and African Americans experienced a period of inclusive democracy. By the end of Reconstruction, however, violence had begun to temper that
democratic spirit in the historically more prosperous parishes. In the areas nearest the Mississippi River (East and West Feliciana and East Baton Rouge), Hyde concludes that "despite severely chaotic conditions during Reconstruction, the return of the antebellum elite to most positions of authority in the plantation parishes allowed for the restoration of stability." In contrast, the poorer parishes to the east saw a steady rise in violence even after Reconstruction, as the large non-planter class refused to allow the pre-war elite to again dominate the region either politically or economically.¹

Hyde's evaluation of the plantation parishes, however, is most persuasive only in comparison to the continued violence evinced in such areas as so-called "bloody" Tangipahoa Parish. Hyde casually dismisses the violence of the Reconstruction era in East Feliciana with the phrase: "despite chaotic conditions." When narrowing the focus to the local level, such as East Feliciana and its parish seat Clinton, analysis demonstrates that the turn toward violence in the years after the war was dramatic and created widespread fear. Whites were willing to strike out with unrestrained fury against any black man or woman who tested the boundaries that had been imposed upon them by the institution of slavery, the drudgery of agricultural labor, and the bigotry of white supremacists. The fear spawned by planters seeking to restore stability would affect

¹Hyde, Pistols and Politics, passim, quote p. 200.
generations of blacks in Clinton and the surrounding neighborhood; fear that limited and challenged participatory democracy in profound ways, despite the relative stability of the power brokers in the parish.

Prosperity eluded the residents of Clinton for over a decade after Redemption in Louisiana restored peace to the parish. White families continued to rent land to black tenants and sharecroppers. Even as late as 1940, over half of the parish's farmers were classified as tenants. The merchants who had flourished by the plantation trade before the war still managed to make a living by furnishing land owners and the freedmen but could not match their former standard of living. Only in the 1890s did a brief flicker of prosperity return to Clinton. In 1886, the Louisville, New Orleans, and Texas Railroad built a new track in the western portion of the parish, and it was connected to the old Clinton and Port Hudson Railroad, which provided Clinton with a more modern transportation network by which to ship cotton to market. A brick factory opened in 1891, which had a daily production rate of up to 30,000 bricks. Almost ninety locals purchased stock in the East Feliciana Cotton Factory as early as 1867, but the endeavor never built up enough steam until a cotton mill opened in the former Masonic Hall in the 1890s. A cottonseed oil plant accompanied the mill.3

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2Goins and Caldwell, Historical Atlas of Louisiana, Map 86.
3"History of East Feliciana Parish," in East Feliciana Parish Resources and Facilities, newspaper clipping, [1966], p. 20 (copy provided by Mildred P Worrell). This brief history was part of a booster pamphlet printed in a local newspaper in Clinton. Although there are a few errors of fact or interpretation in the missive, for the most part it is
By 1900 the parish produced 20,000 bales of the fluffy white staple valued at one million dollars. Merchants in town celebrated their newly re-found prosperity, but it was short lived. The boll weevil hit East Feliciana Parish between 1907 and 1909, decimating the economy of the region more fully than had the Civil War. In 1920 local farmers produced fewer than 5,500 bales of cotton. No longer able to make a living, many people left Clinton to find work elsewhere. The Jewish merchant population of the town left within the decade. Other businesses came to Clinton during the early twentieth century, including a coffee-roasting factory, a soft drink bottler, and sawmills. Only the sawmills managed to survive the Depression.

Despite the many economic and social problems in Clinton during Reconstruction, the town had maintained a population of over 1100 in 1890. By 1940, however, the population had fallen to under one thousand. During Huey P. Long's service as governor, the state highway department paved Plan Road between Clinton and Baton Rouge, and many people were attracted to the small-town atmosphere in Clinton, and the town began to grow again.

Reliable. For list of stockholders in E. F Cotton Factory, see Henry Marston Papers, Box 5, fdr 4; see also Marston Diary, Apr. 5, 1867. The record does not indicate whether the factory in Clinton in the 1890s is the same as that from 1867. Considering the long time between, they likely were not connected. However, this only further supports the contention that the local economy could not support much industry during Reconstruction, but it had a brief renewal in the last decade of the century.

Kaplan, Eternal Stranger, p. 83.

"History of East Feliciana," East Feliciana Parish Resources and Facilities, p. 20; Betty Lou Cain, "Clinton...For Fond Remembrance,"
Once a wilderness blessed by fertile soils and a clear-running spring, Clinton became the parish seat of East Feliciana just as settlers began to flow into the area like the swift waters of Pretty Creek, which marks the town’s western boundary. With the spread of cotton cultivation, the flow of settlers became a flood and the town of Clinton became an island of civility and prosperity. This prosperity lasted only a few decades until torn apart by the dual tidal waves of the Civil War and Reconstruction. Those forces gradually eroded the town's three goals of order, respectability, and prosperity, and the former “glory” of those antebellum days of cotton and slavery were never recaptured, despite whites’ extreme attempts to do so. The town is still far enough way from Baton Rouge so that it is not considered a suburb, but many of the present-day 2,000-plus residents work in the capital city. Today the famous courthouse in Clinton no longer entertains those who would wish to hang young women from the boughs of the surrounding oak trees. Instead it is enlivened by the occasional market day, festival, or heated election. As people meander under those oaks, few know of the history that they share with the residents who came before them.

(privately published, n.d.) pp. 49, 52 (copy provided by Mildred P. Worrell).
Epilogue and Photo Essay

Clinton’s Historical Legacy

Despite the myriad problems associated with the Civil War and its aftermath, antebellum Clinton has had a tremendous impact on the town’s modern economy. Clinton earned a degree of notoriety and of prosperity during the mid-twentieth century as the scene of a number major motion pictures. *Horse Soldiers* (1959) starring John Wayne, Alvarez Kelly (1966) with William Holden and Richard Widmark, and *Sounder* (1972) starring Cicely Tyson, Paul Winfied, and Taj Mahal, were all filmed in whole or in part in the town and the surrounding area. Most notably, Clinton served as the court house town of William Faulkner's famed Yoknapatawpha County in both *Desire in the Dust* (1960) and in *The Long Hot Summer* (1958), which starred Paul Newman, Joanne Woodward, Orson Welles, and Angela Lansbury. Newman won the Best Actor Award at the Cannes Film Festival for his portrayal of Ben Quick, based on one of Faulker's Snopes characters. *Blaze*, a movie depicting the love affair between Louisiana Governor Earl Long (Newman) and stripper Blaze Starr (Lolita Davidovich), filmed scenes in Clinton as well. John Wayne and William Holden have also starred in two movies that were filmed in Clinton and East Feliciana.¹

¹From a list compiled by the Clinton Sesquicentennial Committee.; <www.eonline.com/facts/people/bio/> of Paul Newman, Aug. 1, 2002.
The lion's share of this fame can be traced to the beautiful buildings that infuse Clinton with the image—at least in popular stereotype—of the quintessential southern community. In fact, one aspect of the town's history may easily be traced through the edifices that line its streets. At the center of this image is the famed Courthouse Square. The host for a large and well-respected bar during the nineteenth century, the image of the Courthouse has come to represent not only Clinton but the entire parish of East Feliciana as well. Lawyer's Row, a graceful line of five 1840s Greek Revival-style buildings face the Courthouse from across Woodville Street to the north.²

²Courthouse and Lawyer’s Row photos courtesy of H. T. Jackson.
The social and economic history of the town may also be seen in several other public structures. The Corcoran Building (1835) is one of the oldest buildings in Clinton. Located on Main Street in the next block east of the courthouse, this substantial building is representative of the rapid growth of the new parish seat after its founding in 1824. Over time, mercantile stores would become much larger and more ostentatious, such as the Mayer Brothers' store. When Clinton reveled in its brief respite from recession during the 1890s, these general merchants ambitiously paid "cash for cotton," but when the Jewish retailers abandoned the moribund town after the boll weevil arrived, the Mayer brothers were a part of the exodus.
The Clinton hotel was a massive structure built in the late 1830s. Located on a northeast diagonal across from the courthouse, the hotel and its annex succumbed to Clinton's pervasive fear, fire, at the turn of the century. The many visitors who journeyed into Clinton—perhaps to enroll their daughter at Silliman (see fig. 3), or to sell their cotton crop, or to attend to a lawsuit being heard across the street in the courthouse—supported this hotel and several others throughout the nineteenth century. Today, only a few individuals open their homes as a bed-and-breakfast to the occasional overnight visitor; most visitors arrive in Clinton as daytrippers from Baton Rouge or St. Francisville.³

The religious life of early Clinton is not so easily discerned from the buildings located there now, as most congregations have rebuilt their sanctuaries several times. Perhaps the most charming church is the Victorian-style St. Andrews Episcopal Church (1871).³

³Corcoran and St. Andrew’s photographs courtesy of H. T. Jackson. Mayer Brothers letter head from the Knox (J. P. and Family) Papers, Louisiana State University, LLMVC; Clinton Hotel photo courtesy of Anne O’Brien.
Fig. 11: Ox-train; Methodist Church (far left)

located on Church Street south of downtown. The only extant photo of the first Methodist Church building also shows an ox-train laden with massive logs passing through the streets of Clinton.

In addition to the Clinton Hotel, the Marston House offers an excellent example of one of the few dual public and private dwellings in Clinton. Begun in the mid 1830s by the Union Bank of New Orleans, which planned to open a branch in the village, the Marston house is one of the most recognizable buildings in town after the Courthouse Square. When the Union Bank fell on hard times, Henry Marston offered to complete the Greek-Revival structure if he were allowed the top floor as his residence. To this day, the

Fig. 12: Marston House
building contains a large iron-doored vault and sits atop a hill overlooking Bank Street, but it bears the name of the planter who lived there for over forty years.\textsuperscript{4}

Several other planters built large mansions in Clinton during the early nineteenth century. Dr. Wilmer Stone, who moved to Clinton from Maryland, purchased Hardcastle for his young family. Franklin Hardesty became the proprietor when he married Ophelia C. Stone after she was widowed. The building was razed in the mid-twentieth century.\textsuperscript{5}

\begin{figure}[h]
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\includegraphics[width=0.45\textwidth]{fig13}
\includegraphics[width=0.45\textwidth]{fig14}
\caption{Hardcastle \hspace{2cm} Stonehenge}
\end{figure}

Ophelia's son John H. Stone, a prominent local attorney after the Civil War, was one of the leaders of the White League and was purported to have participated in the assassination of John Gair. Stone married the daughter of Judge John McVea, an Irish immigrant who became immensely wealthy as a planter, and the couple later inherited Stonehenge. Judge Lafayette Saunders had the home built in 1837, at the same time the Marston House was under

\textsuperscript{4}Land of Seven Springs and Seven Pastures\textsuperscript{*}; photo courtesy of H. T. Jackson.

\textsuperscript{5}Land of Seven Springs and Seven Pastures\textsuperscript{*}; HSCR, J. S. Jones, p. 415. Photo courtesy of the Clinton Development Association.
construction. The bricks for the home were made by slaves on site. Left-over bricks were utilized to build a more moderate middle-class home a block away known today as Durham Cottage.⁶

The building boom that resulted from many planters and their families moving into town during the 1840s is demonstrated by three large houses. John Rhea served as Alcalde of Feliciana while Spain controlled the Florida Parishes, and he was a key figure in the West Florida Rebellion. About 1840, he built Hope Terrace as a wedding gift to one of his children. This home served as the locus of Eliza Mills's Hope Terrace Academy shortly before the Civil War. The Greek-Revival style Brame-Bennett Home and magnificent Cedar Hill both date from the earl 1840s.⁷

The poverty of Clinton's residents during much of the seventy-five years following the Civil War proved to be both a blessing and a curse for the largest homes in town. On the one hand, few could afford to replace their dwellings with

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⁶The Majesty of the Felicianas. Stonehenge and Durham Cottage photos courtesy of H. T. Jackson.
Fig. 17: Brame-Bennett

Fig. 18: Cedar Hill
more modern buildings, therefore all of the homes shown above still exist, with the exception of Hardcastle. Like Hardcastle, on the other hand, the Nauman-Chase House (c. 1842-1843) serves as an example of a home torn down because the expense of upkeep sometimes left the houses in extreme disrepair.

Most of Clinton's residents, however, did not live in massive houses that resembled a Greek temple. Like their larger brethren, however, several large middle-class homes were destroyed in the twentieth-century because of structural problems that could not be affordably repaired with the technology available at the time. The Hawford House, for example, was struck by a tree during a hurricane in the 1960s. The owner chose to tear it down and rebuild a modern home on the same site. For many years the street that runs in front of the home was known as Hawford Street after the former resident, Justice of the Peace Henry Hawford. Located
directly between Stonehenge and the Durham Cottage, the house demonstrates that the planter class and upper and lower middle classes were not geographically separated. A blacksmith shop was located on the corner of this property.  

The close proximity of the several classes in Clinton is seen in the Boatner-Record House, which is located directly across from Brame-Bennett. It was built at least as early as 1830 by a member of the prominent Boatner family. The Elias Boatner house, located on the western edge of Clinton bears a remarkable resemblance to the Boatner-Record house. The double-pitched roof with a low peak in the center is the same on both houses, but it is located to the side of the Elias Boatner house rather than the front. It is not known where or how this design element arose.

The Powers-Wheat House is purported to have been built by Christian Bilger, a German-born tinner, in 1845. The

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8Personal interview with Rupert G. Thompson, owner of the property. Photo courtesy of Rupert and Phoebe Thompson. [personal note--I'll never forgive my dad for tearing down this beautiful house]

9The second Boatner building, built in 1839, is purported to have been a saddle shop. If this is indeed the case, then it is the only representative of an artisan's shop that I am aware of. Photos courtesy of H. T. Jackson.
1840s witnessed a building-boom among the middle class in Clinton as well. Most homes were fairly simple in design, usually with one or one and one-half stories, such as the Skipwith home and the Peters House.\textsuperscript{10}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.8\textwidth]{powers-wheat.jpg}
\caption{Powers-Wheat House}
\end{figure}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.4\textwidth]{skipwith.jpg} \quad \includegraphics[width=0.4\textwidth]{peters.jpg}
\caption{Skipwith House \quad Peters House}
\end{figure}

Some dwellings were modest in size, and were based on vernacular architectural designs; but the builders were more ambitious in design as the residents of Clinton tried to promote the image of respectability even with their homes. The Aull House, for example, is a simple shotgun house built

\textsuperscript{10}Photos courtesy of H. T. Jackson.
in the 1840s as the home of a local butcher. The large
gabled portico and columns at the front lend a more grand
effect than a flat face. The facade of the Woodside House,
built in 1847, deftly hides a dog-trot style home. Dog-
trot houses are so named because the original
construction included two separate one-room buildings
connected by a central open-air hallway, through which a
dog might run. This typical southern style spread throughout
the region with western migration, and it became adapted to
more a more permanent and settled lifestyle over time. Although the
Woodside House has been added on to and the outside ornamentation is
much more ostentatious than a frontier dwell-
ing, inside the pattern is still obvious: one room on either side of a wide central
Like the Woodside House, many of Clinton's nineteenth century homes have been modified in order to modernize both the facilities and the style. The Wall House, for example, dates from the early 1830s and served as the home of Methodist minister Isaac Wall, his school-teacher wife Mary, and their family. Modifications later in the century leave a home that appears more Victorian in style. The kitchen house of the Wall home was split off in 1940 and is completely unrecognizable as an early nineteenth-century building. Despite the loss of the original design, modernization was pivotal in the building's longevity. Unless a home could be kept in repair and remained useful, it likely would not survive.

Martin Hill, built circa 1843-44, by an attorney named Roberts, was purchased by the Jewish merchant Abe Meyer. Heinrich L. Meyer received the house as a gift from his uncle and added the half story in 1880. This building is typical of the residences of the large merchant class in Clinton. H.
L. Meyer's brother Isadore built his magnificent Victorian mansion across the street from his brother in 1900. The house was likely a response to the brief upturn in Clinton's economy of the 1890s, but Meyer, like the other Jewish merchants of the town, would be gone by the 1920s.\textsuperscript{12}

Surrounded by the history that these buildings exemplify, most modern residents look little further when they think of the town's 150-year history. Clintonians are pleased to dwell, if they think about it at all, on their beautiful antebellum homes and the contemporary attentions they bring. But the social history of the town, for the most part, is lost to the people who call Clinton home. Their memory of the past tends to focus on the order, gentility, and prosperity that the founders fought so hard to establish.

\textsuperscript{12}Photos courtesy of H. T. Jackson. Photo of I. Meyer house by author.
The imposing homes and public structures that remain seem to exude and represent that order, gentility, and prosperity, and these physical artifacts of the past conceal from residents the harsher reality that underlay that veneer of former glory. Mislead by their architectural heritage, modern Clintonians usually ignore the means by which those three goals were achieved. In other words, the real social history of the town is nearly lost.

Most efforts to promote the town's history rely on tourism, both as the consumers of the surviving and visible history and as the means of funding the process. The local Garden Club began sponsoring a "Spring Pilgrimage" in the mid-1950s, when home owners would open their doors to the paying public in order to show off the architectural wonders of the town. According to a past president of a modern incarnation of that club, those owners began to feel vulnerable as social formality broke down during the late 1950s and early 1960s, and they stopped hosting the pilgrimage. Segregation served as the final nail in the coffin, as some whites were aghast at the possibility that blacks might enter their homes as a guest and through the front door.¹³

The Garden Club rejuvenated the spring pilgrimage in the early 1980s, and the members tried to offer more information about Clinton's social history in these updated tours. In an effort to educate the young (middle-class, white) women in

¹³Personal interview, anonymous resident of Clinton, Aug. 2002.
town, the Garden Club sponsored the Feliciana Belles, who wore accurate reproductions of period costume from Clinton's heyday in the 1840s and served as docents during the home tours. These tours, however, still promoted the gentile version of the past, peopled by wealthy, debonair planters and wives—a few bold but most humble—who mended the socks as they minded the children.

Then, in 1985 a cemetery tableau entitled "Shades of the Past" became a centerpiece of the pilgrimage weekend. In the tableau, local residents portrayed the ghost of one of the many men, women, and children buried in the town's oldest public graveyard. The dearth of knowledge of the town's past came to light with this tableau. My own family was heavily involved in the production of the cemetery tableau. My mother made many of the costumes, including my own. My father portrayed John Rhea, who helped organize the West Florida Rebellion and built Hope Terrace. No one knew the life story of either of the children my brother Worth and I portrayed. In fact, no two tour groups that passed through the cemetery and passed my brother's "grave" heard the same tale. With each telling, he died a more and more gruesome death. I played Virginia Pettis. I decided that Virginia was a...
wealthy planter's daughter, a fashion-conscious girl of
twelve who died of typhoid fever. I now know more about
Virginia than I did when I pretended to be her: she was the
daughter of a butcher, and she died in a yellow fever
epidemic that hit Clinton in 1853.

The Cemetery Tableau proved to be a great success, and
the Garden Club continued the event for several years.¹⁴ The
year 2002 marks the 150th anniversary of Clinton's
incorporation. The Clinton Development Association sponsored
a Homecoming Weekend in November, and central among the
attractions was a historical exhibit. The traditional map of
Clinton with the antebellum homes highlighted still had a
place, but the members of the history committee were
committed to increasing local awareness of Clinton's social
history. Utilizing much of the research carried out for this
dissertation, the exhibit coordinators did not overlook the
less sanguine topics of slavery and Reconstruction violence.
The exhibition also included details about religious life,
past sports glories, and the movie industry in the area. The
chairs of the committee also plan for portions of the exhibit
to remain on permanent display in a newly re-opened museum at
the Marston House.¹⁵

¹⁴ For a humorous account of these tableaux, see Mildred P. Worrell,
Last Tales: Passin' On in Southern Style (Clinton, LA: Pretty Creek
¹⁵ Marston descendants donated the house to the Parish in 1941 and it
became the locus of Garden Club Enterprises. When the club became
moribund in the early 1990s, the building fell into disuse. The Marston
family has recently formed a non-profit corporation and plans to reopen
the house as a museum in conjunction with the Clinton Development
Association. (Baton Rouge) Morning Advocate, Aug. 17, 1941, typescript
in Cain, "For Fond Remembrance," p. 32.
The legacy of Reconstruction may still be seen in the state of Louisiana and in Clinton by the continued racial segregation of the community. No law enforces such segregation, but it exists enforced by long tradition. Facing the town’s social history honestly would require white and black residents alike to confront that legacy of subjugation; it has been buried, but it still lies just beneath the surface. The Clinton History 150 Committee was committed to integrating the planning of the historical exhibits and to integrating the history that was told. This “new,” more realistic version of the town’s history is now what will be passed on to future generations. Clinton and other small towns throughout the South have a rich history that has long been ignored by anyone who did not live in that community. By recognizing the varied contributions of the many individuals who lived in Clinton—white and black; Christian and Jew; native, Yankee, and immigrant; male and female—the story of one small town may serve to broaden our understanding of a long under-represented segment of the nineteenth-century South.
APPENDIX: RESEARCH METHODS AND PROBLEMS

Much of the data for this paper were derived from the manuscript census of East Feliciana Parish in 1850 and 1860. I used transcribed copies of both censuses, both of which I checked against microfilm copies of the official census.¹ In the rare instances where there were discrepancies between transcription and federal census, I used the official federal listing. Aside from potential transcription errors, census data raise many other questions of accuracy. In using this material I have been forced to make many educated guesses that would not have been necessary were the census information more complete. Yet they still remain the most detailed, and probably the most accurate, sets of information available for Clinton during this period.

Problems in establishing Clinton's population rose immediately when I looked at the 1850 census: there was no designation of wards or townships. While the "Post Office at Clinton" was indicated, this included about half of the parish. I had a general idea of where Clinton would fall within the census and found the names of several individuals whom I knew to be residents of the town. I then worked forward and backward through the census according to the most

obvious indicator of a town resident: occupation. Following a full page of "Farmer," came a page of "Tavern Keeper," "Merchant," and "Clerk"—this page I marked as the beginning of Clinton in the census. Likewise, when occupations moved from "Merchant," "Doctor," and "Carpenter," to a full page of "Farmers," I marked this page as the end of Clinton. Turning to the slave schedules I counted the number of slaves for each of the town residents. All told the figure reached 1,027. James Peacock noted in *DeBow's Review* that the 1850 population of Clinton was 1,252.² Throughout the paper, I use my figures, as I have not been able to account for this discrepancy, though some may arise from the exclusion of certain slaves from my analysis.

There were several slaveholders in Clinton who owned greater than 30 slaves (Micajah Harris, 31; George W. Munday, 32; Henry Marston, 43; F. Hardesty, 72). The majority of these slaves I did not include in the tabulations of age and sex or in the town population, as the four owners were absentee plantation owners living in town. For Marston and Munday, the 1860 census listed their town and plantation slaves separately—I was thus able to assume they maintained a similar number of house servants one decade before (10 and 9 respectively). These numbers were included in the tabulations on size of holdings and town population but were by necessity excluded from age and sex calculations. Only one other slaveholder owned more than twenty slaves; these I

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²James S. Peacock, "Parish of East Feliciana, LA." 265.
included in the tabulations since it is at least plausible that someone could maintain that number of slaves in or very near the town. One other problem with the tabulation of slaves in 1850 was the presence of seven slave owners listed in the slave schedule among Clinton slave owners, but who were not listed in the free schedule at all. The slaves owned by those seven people, numbering twenty-two in all, and their owners were excluded from all tabulations.

The census of 1860 presented its own set of problems, but some of the guesswork was eliminated. The parish version of the census designated the Town of Clinton separately from the other wards, therefore I did not have to establish the boundaries myself. Most absentee plantation owners listed their town slaves and plantation slaves separately, as mentioned above. There were only two town residents with over thirty slaves not listed separately (F. Hardesty, 81; Bythell Haynes, 43); again, these slaves were excluded.

The owners of slaves in the slave schedules correspond almost exactly to the order of listing in the free schedule. In the 1860 census however, the slaves of a group of town residents were listed several pages after the main block of Clinton residents. The question arose, then, were these slaves hired out or did the census taker simply copy his notes slightly out of order? Considering that the names of slave owners were listed in the same order as they were in the free schedule, only a few pages out of order, I concluded
that it was probably the latter and included these slaves in the calculations.

Finally, the reader should note that due to rounding, percentages given throughout the paper may not add up to 100 percent within each category.
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