

THESIS

BAPTISTS AND SLAVERY IN FRONTIER MISSOURI DURING THE ANTEBELLUM ERA

Submitted by

Nathan Woodward

Department of History

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the Degree of Master of Arts

Colorado State University

Fort Collins, Colorado

Spring 2011

Master's Committee:

Advisor: Fred Knight

Robert Gudmestad
James Lindsay
Joon Kim

Copyright by Nathan Woodward 2011

All Rights Reserved

ABSTRACT

BAPTISTS AND SLAVERY IN FRONTIER MISSOURI DURING THE ANTEBELLUM ERA

This thesis examines the way residents of the Missouri frontier viewed and reacted to slavery, with a particular emphasis on Missouri Baptist thought. I argue that Baptists were ambivalent toward slavery because of their religion and their unique agricultural position on the frontier far from the large cotton plantations of the Deep South. Their attitude toward slavery manifested itself in Frontier Baptist Conventions and within Baptist newspapers in Missouri. Because of this ambivalence, Baptist slaveholders and slaveholders in the largely Baptist town of Liberty, Missouri, had to find a way to reconcile their growing antislavery thoughts with their largely proslavery surroundings. Their answer came in the form of gradual emancipation of the slaves. Missouri Baptists sought to free and expatriate African Americans in colonization movements to Africa. To gauge these sentiments, this project relies heavily on three newspapers published in Missouri during the antebellum era: *The Western Watchmen* of St. Louis, *The Liberty Tribune* of Liberty, and *The Border Star* of Westport. The first is the only Baptist paper and the latter two are both secular. To ascertain their opinions on slavery, I used the papers to focus on ideas relating to the colonization movement, John Brown, Bleeding Kansas, states' rights, and secession. The final part of the thesis examines how southern Baptists reacted to the newly freed slave population during and after Reconstruction.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	iii
INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER 1: Slavery and Religion in the Antebellum Era, a Historiography.....	8
CHAPTER 2: Missouri Baptists and Ambivalence to Slavery.....	36
CHAPTER 3: Frontier Missouri Attitudes on Slavery from Secular Sources.....	57
CHAPTER 4: Baptists and African Americans after the Civil War.....	86
CONCLUSION.....	98
APPENDIX A: [For the Tribune.] From <i>The Liberty Tribune</i> , November 23, 1860.....	101
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	107
I. Primary Sources.....	107
II. Secondary Sources.....	110

INTRODUCTION

I spent the year prior to graduate school reading general books on American History from the founding of the Republic to just after the Civil War. I have always been interested in histories of thought and how different groups appropriated ideas to promote their culture and ideology. When studying the antebellum era, I could not help but be astounded at the multitude of ways in which groups in the North and in the South consistently referred back to the Bible to justify their respective positions on slavery. How can these various assemblages start from the same point of reference and come to entirely different conclusions?

I began my research to answer this question by examining the way slavery and religion interacted during the antebellum period, particularly in the South. I came to find that there exists a dearth of scholarship on this subject in the Frontier South, which allowed me to narrow down my topic. I chose Missouri for a few different reasons. I completed my undergraduate studies at William Jewell College in Liberty, Missouri. This school was founded as a Baptist institution near the border with the Kansas Territory in 1849. It is also the location of the Missouri Baptist Historical Society and the Missouri Baptist Archives. Thus, I left to do research at my old alma mater not knowing beyond the descriptions on the library's website what I would discover. What I did expect to find were sources that showed Missouri Baptists' staunch defense of slavery and angry rhetoric against Northern abolitionists who sought to end slave labor in the South. Besides my connection with a Baptist college, the religion presents an interesting mix of conservatism and progressivism. Baptists historically, like now, were very pious and strict in their religious

practice and worship. They were generally conservative in thought, yet they were progressive in their arguments against infant baptism. The most common theme to present itself in the minutes of Baptist conventions and in the Baptist *Western Watchmen* was their denunciation of who they termed “pedobaptists.”

The archives in William Jewell College’s Curry Library were scant in documents prior to the twentieth century. They did have a large collection of the *Western Watchmen*, a Baptist newspaper from St. Louis that published in the decade preceding the Civil War. They also had a smaller collection of pamphlets published for the frontier Baptist conventions. As I searched these documents, I looked for articles or statements that related to slavery. What I began to notice was instead of a vociferous defense of the institution, there was instead a feeling of ambivalence. Baptists on the frontier seemed to feel unsure toward slavery, especially as it related to their religious ethics. A common theme in these articles is the idea of gradual emancipation of slavery to be accomplished through the colonization movement. Turning African American freed men and women into expatriates had two major benefits for Missouri Baptists. While ending a morally troublesome institution, emancipation would also create a newly freed black population, who white Baptists could not see as equal citizens. Colonization solved this by sending former slaves to Africa. Theoretically, slaves who lived with white Baptists would learn basic Christian doctrine. In some cases, they might even be trained well enough to preach to others. Thus, when these Christian freedmen immigrated to Africa, they could spread Christian doctrine to those who were not so lucky as to be enslaved in Christian America, at least from the perspective of white Southern Christians. This ambivalence stands in direct contrast to the general Southern stance on slavery, especially as the nation moved closer to the Civil War. What accounts for this difference between Baptists on the Missouri-Kansas border

and the rest of the South? I contend that they took this position because Liberty's slaveholding population was much less dependent on slave labor as a whole because of their geographic location far from the large cotton plantations of the Deep South.

This thesis is meant as an introductory study into the way a frontier environment shaped Baptist thoughts on slavery and sectionalism from 1850 to 1860. This project is based in part on a St. Louis based newspaper, a source that provides insight into the state's intellectual framework on controversial national matters during this time. This project shows that most Baptist churches were more concerned with surviving than they were with politics. This meant that none of the extant sermons I examined strayed from strictly theological hortatory. This thesis is based not only on the Baptist *Western Watchmen*, but it also uses two secular newspapers, one based in a city for wayfarers and the other in a largely Baptist township. Using all three of these newspapers is challenging, because one has to assume that their audiences fully accepted the way these papers reported news. In certain instances, I was able to find direct statements connecting readership to the papers. Mostly, I rely on circulation across Missouri and within its counties for understanding the significance of each of these papers. The editorials included in these papers also provide a picture into the way the audience responded to both local and national news. So, what I present is a partial view of frontier Baptists and their views on slavery. What makes this thesis important is the way it shows a more complex view of Southern thought on sectionalism and the peculiar institution. It is easy for someone to associate the Deep South's position on slavery with the rest of the slaveholding states. As the country moved closer to war, the Missouri population was not exempt from national polarization. However, rhetoric in the largely Baptist town of Liberty remained sober and poignant as they desperately called for

both the North and the South to rethink their passions, a voice that would go unheard in the clamor of secession.

I organize my thesis into four chapters. Chapter one takes a historiographical look at slavery and religion during the antebellum era. The greatest degree of change in historical scholarship occurred from the 1970s onward. Prior to that, most historians accepted the myth of an idyllic institution in which African Americans benefited from their enslavement. The major exception to this was Kenneth Stampp who challenged this romantic vision with *The Peculiar Institution* in 1956. Chapter one also includes a section that considers the efficacy of the quantitative method as it relates to slavery. Unfortunately, the scholarship does not include religion, but the debate is important as historians argue this method can dehumanize slaves; scholars solve this problem in later decades by using statistics to supplement more traditional methods of erudition. I begin this section broadly including studies that incorporate the entire South. I end it by examining the few works that use Missouri as their focus. Far from the center of slave culture, Missouri only has one major examination of slavery within its borders; Diane Mutti Burke's *On Slavery's Border* was published in December of 2010. Another singular work published on race relations in the twentieth century by Jordan Roll, *Spirit of Rebellion*, was also published in 2010. Ideally this means that Missouri is starting to garner more attention as historians seek to examine a geographic area that was largely previously ignored.

Chapter two of my thesis is where I first examine Liberty, Missouri, and Missouri Baptists. William Jewell College and its eponymous founder set the theme of internal and external struggle as Baptists set religious ethics against southern slave culture. I use the minutes from the Southern Baptist and Frontier Baptist conventions to show two different pictures of Baptist views on slavery. The Southern Baptist minutes show the distribution of funding to each

member state. Missouri consistently ranked as one of the least funded states. This demonstrates how financially separate Missouri was from other slave states, especially those that relied heavily on large tobacco and cotton plantations. I suggest that this economic discrepancy coupled with frontier slaveholders who sold their chattel into the Deep South through Louisiana helped shape Missourian attitudes on slavery, especially amongst the Baptists. Missouri Baptists responded to issues of slavery by taking a gradual emancipationist approach through colonization.

In chapter three, I use two secular newspapers in Missouri to study attitudes of slavery in Liberty and Westport, Missouri. These papers are the *Liberty Tribune* and the *Westport Border Star*, respectively. Westport is approximately twenty miles south from Liberty, a minor drive today, but in 1850 a long enough distance to produce two very distinct attitudes on slavery. To understand the position of each of these papers, I examine the way they reported on John Brown and Bleeding Kansas and the possibility and threat of Southern secession from the Union. I chose these ideas for two reasons. First, both of these papers covered these topics extensively. Secondly, it shows where Missourians stood as the United States became more polarized in the 1850s. Chapter three shows that different slaveholding cultures developed in these two Missourian towns. This chapter also contends that the moderate reporting of the *Liberty Tribune* is due to the paper's largely Baptist audience. I also use these papers to understand secular reporting on colonization. The more vitriolic Westport paper remains silent in the issue. In the small holdings of the Kansas City Public Library's archives, I have found no legible record in which the paper reports on colonization.¹ The Liberty paper ran articles very similar to the Baptist St. Louis paper on the possibility and inherent morals of sending freed blacks to Africa.

Most important for my research in the pages of the *Liberty Tribune* was an editorial entitled "[For the Tribune.]" This article was published on November 23, 1860, after Abraham

¹ Most of the online sources that I could find for the *Border Star* were smudged and nearly illegible.

Lincoln was elected president and South Carolina and Georgia threatened secession. This article appears in full and is included in Appendix A. The article is a plea to people in the North and the South to look beyond their sectional differences and to work together to find a common solution to the problem of slavery. Though the article was too little too late, I was moved by the olive branch that it represented from the South. Whereas both Northern and Southern groups sought to blame the other for problems of secession, this article criticized both sides for their obdurate inflexibility. It is also noteworthy because the *Liberty Tribune* directly addressed the people of Missouri. The editorial represents a plea for common sense and sobriety in language, when others were ready for war, in a slave state and to a slaveholding population. The article was signed "Unitas," a word signifying the unity that was about to be lost through the violent rhetoric that would transform itself into violent action by April of 1861.

The final chapter of my thesis examines the relationship white Baptists had with African Americans in the decades following the Civil War. While there was ambivalence to slavery from Baptists during the antebellum era, the Southern loss seemed to harden even their thoughts about race. Part of this increased racism was due to the civil religion of the Lost Cause. The Lost Cause sought to portray a romantic vision of a lost past in the South. To a certain degree, southern Baptists also sought, as described by Paul Harvey, to redeem themselves from their controversial past in slavery. In the post-war era, Baptists muted their historical ambivalence about slavery allowing many to create a fictional past that imagined slavery as beneficial to slaves, both physically and spiritually. While there is a dearth of scholarship on Missouri, one can make inferences from the broader scholarship in the New South.

Being a slaveholder on the American frontier meant being a slaveholder in a different world than their peers in the Deep South. The economics of slavery were substantially different

and agriculture was not as strong. Adding a religious variable to this diluted form of slavery meant that Baptists slaveholders would begin to question the morality of the peculiar institution. They did not radically denounce the institution nor did they denounce racism. Instead, they sought a path that allowed them to abolish slavery and rid America of its “slave problem” and African American population. This racism would flare during Reconstruction and continue into the twentieth century in the South. But, not to include the Baptist populations near the border of Missouri and Kansas Territory in this generalized view of Southern slaveholding opinion is to simplify a much more complex view of the past. I hope that my scholarship becomes a link in frontier history of slavery and religion that demonstrates an overlooked region of American history.

CHAPTER 1: Slavery and Religion in the Antebellum Era, a Historiography

Few things haunt American history as slavery does. Different historians have examined the peculiar institution in a variety of ways. This historiographical examination begins with sources from the 1930s. These early sources create epistemic distance between the iniquity of slavery and the less oppressive themes of history that occur alongside slavery. For these early historians, slavery as an institution is benign. They examined politics and institutions in a way that did not place judgment on the past. As time passed, the scope of historical scholarship grew. Historians began to look at slavery from a more personal perspective, one that sought to understand the lives of the slaves themselves. To understand better what position human bondage had in American history, historians have to be able to see it from the positions of the slaveholders, enslaved, and outside observers; one must be able to look at the reasons and justifications made by the contemporaries of chattel slavery. The most common vehicle of justification came in the guise of organized religion. This first section of the thesis attempts a type of meta-analysis of over seventy years of historical scholarship on the relationship between slavery and religion; it examines the specific justifications drawn from religious doctrine and the way historians have interpreted that relationship. Following this first assessment of the historiography of religion and slavery, I will also analyze the much smaller historiography of Missouri prior to the Civil War. Over these seventy years, historians have created a more complex and nuanced view of slavery in the United States through examining the lives of slaves,

asking new questions on the institution, and using different methodologies to answer these issues.

In 1933, C. V. Bruner wrote “An Abstract of the Religious Instruction of the Slaves in the Antebellum South.” In his abstract, Bruner stated his goal to create “an unprejudiced account of a rather neglected field of American History.”¹ That field, the Christianization of slaves, Bruner divides into five periods; the beginnings of colonization to 1740, 1740-1790, which coincided with the Great Awakening, 1790-1830, a period of stagnant religious growth and growing atheism modeled after the French Revolution, 1830-1845, as a reaction to growing abolitionism in the North and also when the schisms between churches occur, and finally 1845-1860, a period where churches torn from their Northern brethren adopted religious instruction of slaves without the threat of manumission. Bruner’s abstract, only five pages long, seems innocuous until he describes the fifteen years prior to the Civil War.

For the period from 1845 to 1860, Bruner gives four reasons for the increased zeal for religious education of slaves. Both Southern and Northern churches believed churches in the South could increase the value of slaves through Christianization. Southern churches also claimed that religious education was a response to Northern abolitionist charges that slaves were living pagan lives in the South. The last reason stated that “planters as a whole desired to promote the happiness and general welfare of their servants.”² Given increasing paranoia about Northern abolitionist rhetoric and slave narratives such as Frederick Douglass’, Southerners seemed to have been more on the defensive with little regard or care given to the happiness or the general welfare of their slaves. In his final line, Bruner concluded that given the propensity of

¹ C. V. Bruner, “An Abstract of the Religious Instruction of the Slaves in the Antebellum South,” *Peabody Journal of Education* 11:3 (1933), 117.

² *Ibid.*, 121. New History refers to the change in scholarship beginning the 1950s as historians changed their historical focus away from whites in power and sought a more holistic narrative of American history.

religious instruction, it would be wrong to state that “Southern masters had been entirely neglectful of their duties to their servants.”³ Bruner’s study of slavery exhibits a prime example of the paternalistic view of the master-slave relationship in the South.

Two years later, in what seems to be an answer to Bruner’s concern over a lack of scholarship in religious studies and slaves during the antebellum period, William Sumner Jenkins published *Pro-Slavery Thought in the Old South*. Since the United States was a new world power following the First World War, Jenkins was reluctant to drop the trope of a heroic America. In his introduction, he placed the United States on the defensive in its use of slavery. The peculiar institution was only adapted from colonies that antedated the British. The intricacies, however, were particular to the social and cultural situations inherent in the southern United States. Jenkins described the use of chattel slavery in its early form as “apathetic” and a simple continuation of history.⁴

Jenkins organized his monograph along temporal and intellectual divisions of pro-slavery thought. The section that relates to this essay the most is his fifth chapter, “The Moral Philosophy of Slavery.” This chapter analyzed different takes of Christianity on slavery: in scripture, through Church doctrine, and the ongoing debate about the ethics of the institution. In scripture, both the Old and the New Testaments offer rationalizations for slavery. Using a geographical metaphor to emphasize importance, Jenkins names Leviticus 25:44-46 as the “rock of Gibraltar in the Old Testament [slavery] case.”⁵ When examining Jesus’s teachings in the New Testament, Jenkins shows negative theology used by Southerners. Jenkins claims Jesus’s mission on Earth was to provide new spiritual support in a non-threatening way. Thus, Jesus

³ Ibid., 121.

⁴ William Sumner Jenkins, *Pro-Slavery Thought in the Old South* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1935), 1-2.

⁵ Ibid., 202.

“sanctioned the institutions and relationships existing at His time which He did not expressly condemn.” There were no injunctions against slavery in any of his teachings, including his most famous, The Sermon on the Mount. However, there was no need for Southern Christians to use negative theology in this degree as Jesus was confronted directly with slavery in Luke 7:2-10. He heals the servant of the centurion and makes himself accomplice to human bondage. In the books that follow the Gospels of Jesus, the Apostles make direct admonitions to slaves to follow the will of their master.⁶

More important than any of the above arguments, Jenkins showed how Southerners defended slavery based on the Curse of Canaan found in Genesis. Southerners believed they had successfully “traced the curse through the complete course of history and proved American slavery to be a fulfillment of this prophecy.”⁷ The methods used to trace this ethnic genealogy were circuitous at best. The story in Genesis appears to refer only to Ham, but through etymology and genealogy, Jenkins traced the way Southerners molded the Bible for their own use. His focus was only on white arguments for slavery and does not examine the world that the slaves occupied, though it did stray from the moralistic argument provided by Bruner.

Six years after Jenkins’ publication, the United States would be pulled into the Second World War. Within five years of its conclusion, the first proxy war against Communism brought American troops to the Korean Peninsula. Domestically, Americans in the government were fighting citizens suspected of communist influences, while other citizens were fighting the government for equality in the Civil Rights Movement. With so much occurring at home and abroad, major scholarship on slavery during the antebellum period was put on hold until the

⁶ Ibid., 203.

⁷ Ibid., 205.

1970s with two major exceptions. These books were published between Jenkins' monograph and the plethora of new books beginning in 1974.

Prior to the Civil Rights Movements in the 1950s, historians had largely defined slavery as a benign institution. Slaveholders believed that slavery benefited their slaves, and without this institution blacks would neither work nor survive in America. For Bruner, chattel slavery was not a moral problem; rather, he focused his arguments on moralistic Christian teachings that were given to Southern African American slaves. Jenkins did not address the contradictions inherent within slavery; instead he offered a myopic vision of white thought. In 1956, a new era in historical scholarship of slavery began with the publication of *The Peculiar Institution* by Kenneth Stampp.⁸

In Stampp's analysis, subtle conflict and expressions thereof characterized life on the plantation. While previous scholars argued that slaves ignorantly acquiesced to slavery, Stampp made the case that African Americans living in the South resisted whenever possible. Within this social analysis, Stampp gave a very brief look at the role religion played in the peculiar institution. Stampp's analysis of Christian moralization of slavery differed from later historians. After Nat Turner's rebellion in 1831, Southern whites reigned in and completely reevaluated slave congregations. Stampp showed that whites became considerably warier over what a religious education might do to slaves. Stampp also attributed this white paranoia in the South to antislavery leanings of southern Baptist and Methodist denominations. He did quickly qualify this statement by saying that Southern church teachings began to resemble Southern politics. As this happened, religious teachings for slaves once again became imperative.⁹

⁸ Eric Foner, "Slavery, the Civil War, and Reconstruction," in *The New American History* Revised and Expanded Edition, ed. Eric Foner (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997), 86.

⁹ Kenneth Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South* (New York: Vintage Books, 1956), 156-8. I have maintained the lower case 's' within the original text for southern Baptists.

The brevity of this section was most likely due to its ancillary importance to Stamppp's main argument. Later scholarship focused more on the swift change in religious thought after Nat Turner's rebellion than is represented by Stamppp. While he advanced scholarship considerably, Stamppp fell short in his analysis of southern Baptist antislavery thought.¹⁰ In 1831, the southern Baptists split with the Triennial Convention of Baptist Churches was still fourteen years in the future, but through the quick reference to antislavery thought among the southern Baptists, Stamppp relegates nascent stirrings of a future denominational schism to non-existence. Stamppp's work was crucial, however, in opening up historical scholarship on slavery to new modes of thought that show a picture of the institution different from the Moonlight and Magnolias of past studies.

Published one hundred years after Fort Sumter and the end of the antebellum era, *The Crusade Against Slavery* by Louis Filler is unique in its method. Historians writing on the Northern abolitionist movement after Filler focused only on abolitionism. Filler incorporated all reform movements with abolitionism, paying especially close attention to the Women's Rights Movement. Given the passions that circulated around pro- and antislavery arguments before the war, Filler notes: "It was not possible to present disinterested analyses of their content and direction, either in their time or for a long time thereafter."¹¹ It was Filler's goal to achieve what others had not by creating an objective account of abolitionism.

With such a bold statement made during the heart of the Civil Rights Movement, it was unlikely that Filler would be able to achieve this end. And with the benefit of time, we can see that Filler fell prey to the same modes of thought that would unknowingly haunt future historians

¹⁰ In my writing, I make a distinction between southern Baptists and Southern Baptists. The former is in reference to Baptists living in the southern United States. While Southern Baptists refers to those members of the Southern Baptist Convention which split from the Triennial Convention of Baptist Churches better known as the American Baptists in 1845.

¹¹ Louis Filler, *The Crusade Against Slavery: 1830-1860* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960), xi.

who wrote on the people at the front of the fight for emancipation. The problem is that historians have been too eager to identify abolitionism as a primarily white movement. A cursory glance at the index shows that William Lloyd Garrison was cited more than twice the amount of times Frederick Douglass was mentioned. Gerrit Smith was also referenced more than Douglass, and James McCune Smith received a single sentence: “Dr. J. McCune Smith had been barred [from the ‘world’s’ convention on temperance] because he was a Negro.”¹²

Published thirteen years later, *Radical Abolitionism* by Lewis Perry is a political analysis of Northern abolitionism. William Lloyd Garrison’s abolitionism became centered as the main force for manumission. When Perry stated that abolitionism was inseparable from anarchist thought, Perry’s abolitionism was also inseparable from Garrisonian abolitionism.¹³ In essence, radical abolitionists became increasingly disappointed with government sanctioned slavery. Radical antislavery figures began to believe that the government of man had failed and should be replaced with the government of God. This new government, though, would be made and run by whites. Just like Filler, Perry only cites Frederick Douglass briefly, but always in passing and in relation to a white person. In the initial reference to Douglass after 107 pages, the explanation did not separate Douglass’ ideals from Garrison. Unlike Filler’s monograph, there was no reference to James McCune Smith.¹⁴

Though Perry is writing about the abolitionist government of God, the Bible was not given as much examination as Jenkins gave in his study of proslavery Biblical justification. Perry instead chose to examine religious arguments sans scriptural reference. For instance, in writing about Adin Ballou, the Universalist and prominent nineteenth century proponent of pacifism,

¹² Ibid., 9.

¹³ Lewis Perry, *Radical Abolitionism: Anarchy and the Government of God in Antislavery Thought* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973), 57.

¹⁴ Ibid., 107.

Perry showed how Ballou tried to live a Biblically consistent life in his eschatological writings based on Puritan theology. For a Biblical literalist like Ballou, his main problem came in relating violence in the Old Testament with the call for love and compassion associated with the New Testament. Ballou's argument then became temporal; the New Testament as the latest divine revelation in the Christian tradition was accepted as the most appropriate doctrine to follow.¹⁵

Both Perry and Filler missed, for the most part, on one of the most notable theological debates to occur during the antebellum period: separatism. Filler, though, did make a passing reference to the schism that occurred in Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian sects, and interestingly, hit on the geographical beginnings of the movements in both religions that most historians miss. Religious separatism began in Northern churches and more specifically in the Burned-Over District in New York.¹⁶ Until Filler, most scholars skipped over the spatial locations where the rupture first occurred and focused instead on the Southern Baptist Convention that began in Augusta, Georgia, in 1845.

The most notable works to cover religious separatism come from the historian C. C. Goen. Goen wrote two books covering church divisions during the antebellum period. Published twenty-three years apart, one can see the evolution in Goen's scholarship. The first, written in 1962, examines the schism in churches from a Northern perspective only, with little to no reference to Southern churches. In his 1969 republication of *Revivalism and Separatism in New England*, Goen wrote in the preface that original critics took issue with his inattention to non-theological aspects of the division. Specifically, the book ignores economic, social, and cultural

¹⁵ Ibid., 153.

¹⁶ Filler., 123.

reasons for the splits. Goen's response was simply that he did not write the book that they had expected him to write. In the republication, none of these criticisms are given a response.¹⁷

What makes his first work so integral to the literature on religious separatism is twofold. The first lies in its examination of the schism in the North. Goen gave his readers a map of New England that encompassed northern New Jersey and eastern New York to Maine and along the Atlantic coast. Scores of separate Baptist churches were spread across New England with the highest concentration in Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts.¹⁸ This geographic distribution was important because it showed the limitations that historians placed on the study of antebellum churches when only examining the schism as a sectional conflict between the North and South.

By focusing on Biblical exegesis as a primary catalyst in Baptist, Methodist, and Presbyterian separatism, Goen gave the reader an appreciation for the passion that these congregations felt for their religious beliefs. In examining the formation of divisive theology, Goen used European church councils and sermons like the Westminster Confession of Faith, Cambridge Platform of Polity, and the Killingly Convention of 1781. What all three of these had in common was their focus on Biblical literalism. A strict interpretation of the Old and New Testaments was the common thread for the breakaway churches. As American government became stronger and more centralized, these churches became more concerned with a return to the government of God.¹⁹ These strengths in his book cover up the most glaring omission, as Goen largely left out a meaningful discussion of slavery and its relation to church doctrine.

¹⁷ C. C. Goen, *Revivalism and Separatism in New England, 1740-1800: Strict Congregationalists and Separate Baptists in the Great Awakening* (New Haven: Archon Books, 1969), vii-viii.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 256.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 148-158.

Published 23 years after Goen's above monograph, *Broken Churches, Broken Nation* took an entirely different look at religious separatism. Instead of being absent, slavery is introduced within the first few pages as the leading cause of religious schism, and ultimately, the Civil War. Goen stated his goal as wanting to look beyond trying to answer black and white questions that stem from the war, whether it was "repressible or irrepressible, needless or inevitable" and other variations on the same idea.²⁰ Instead, stated in the culminating point of the primary theses of his book, Goen wrote:

The denominational schisms presaged and to some extent provoked the crisis of the Union in 1861: they broke a primary bond of national unity, encouraged the myth of 'peaceable secession,' established a precedent of sectional independence, reinforced the growing alienation between the North and South by cultivating distorted images of 'the other side,' and exacerbated the moral outrage that each section felt against each other.²¹

If the religious schisms between North and South could initiate the grievances above, what then was the cause of the church divisions? In constructing a sociological examination of the South, Goen stated that the historian could argue that "all of Southern society – its economy, political institutions, hierarchical stratifications, and even its religious organizations – depended on the system of slavery for its structure and style."²² Because of a proclivity toward basing social mores on religious belief in nineteenth-century America, Southern religious views were used to justify human bondage, a way of life for the South, while in the North, the same religious values were used to assail the Southern social structure. Thus, it can hardly be surprising that a religious split could prefigure both a sectional division and, eventually, war.

The bigger question that looms from comparing the works by Goen is why two religious histories can vary so greatly, with one placing the entire narrative in the North with no reference

²⁰ C. C. Goen, *Broken Churches, Broken Nations: Denominational Schisms and the Coming of the Civil War* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1985), 4.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 13.

²² *Ibid.*, 152.

to Southern slavery and the other whose thesis is wholly dependent on the Southern peculiar institution. This is due in part to the social zeitgeists in which he wrote. Goen represented the changing historical scholarship that occurred in the 1970s and 1980s, which moved a long way from the historiographical writings of the 1930s. In particular, Goen's research changed as a result of the publication of a field-changing work in 1974.

Using a Marxist perspective to examine religion and its relation to slavery, Eugene Genovese wrote *Roll, Jordan, Roll*. Genovese compared the Southern plantation to feudal Europe when serfs were tied to the land through seigneurialism. Religion was the centerpiece of *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, which argued that Christians worked in the South on two main levels. For whites, religion became the primary justification for a "paternalist" slave society. For blacks, religion became the primary means of rebelling against dehumanization. For Genovese, religion allowed slaves a vector to maintain their humanity against the otherwise degrading and dehumanizing bondage. In fact, Christianity compelled slaves to "judge their masters."²³ The masters could not but follow the path of Christ under the same religious framework they had devised to ensure the oppression of their "chattel." Genovese used a Marxist interpretation to explain the structure of slaves' conflicts against their masters. He made the argument that all history is the story of those with power and property against those who live in literal and figurative opprobrium.

While not directly related to religion, the debate over Robert Fogel and Stanley Engerman's *Time on the Cross* shows new modes of research in the historiography of slavery in the 1970s. This work represents a starting point for the statistical paradigm, which in later years would become an important tool used in conjunction with other methods of study. This debate

²³ Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974), 282.

also serves as a warning for scholars; historians must not rely strictly on numbers or they risk dehumanizing the subject of their study. In 1974, Fogel and Engerman published *Time on the Cross*, in which they attempted to use cliometrics and quantitative theory to examine slavery as “dispassionate[ly] . . . as possible.”²⁴ They claimed that one of the advantages to a purely economic and mathematical look at slavery in the South was the “precise statement of relationships among variables . . . and the testing of these assumed relationships against data.”²⁵ Fogel and Engerman contrasted to the humanist historian who is more concerned with “aesthetic values,” that look and *feel* good but are not as scientifically sound. Both of these men were charged with coldness and callousness to the historical record, to which they rebutted that non-cliometric scholars “were overly concerned with ‘what ought to have been’ rather than ‘what actually was.’”²⁶ At stake for Fogel and Engerman was more than just an interpretation of antebellum slavery. They sought to challenge discrimination in black employment against the historically justified idea of a lazy and inefficient race.²⁷

Two of the most critical responses to Fogel and Engerman came from a group of historians led by Herbert Gutman. In *Slavery and the Numbers Game* by Gutman, the problem with Fogel and Engerman was that their work seemed to conform mostly to consensus history. Although there was no direct relation to *Roll, Jordan, Roll* by Gutman, he stated *Time on the Cross* assumed that slaves always sought to better their situation and willingly worked with their master to achieve these ends.²⁸ Historians also responded to Fogel and Engerman in *Reckoning with Slavery*. Kenneth Stampf wrote that *Time on the Cross*, while being the best economic

²⁴ Robert William Fogel & Stanley L. Engerman, *Time on the Cross: Evidence and Methods – A Supplement* (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1974), 3.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 16.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 18.

²⁸ Herbert G. Gutman, *Slavery and the Numbers Game: A Critique of Time on the Cross* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975), 167.

scholarly work on the South, it is at the same time the most “cheerful portrayal of virtually all aspects of slave life.”²⁹ The main problem with *Reckoning with Slavery* is the invective used by the contributing historians against Fogel and Engerman. Herbert Gutman and Richard Sutch summarize their analysis of the sexual relations between slave and master in *Time on the Cross* as follows:

Fogel and Engerman’s new quantitative data are meager, hopelessly biased contradicted by other sources, and frequently distorted or misinterpreted. Their arguments are confused, circular, and so unsubtle as to be naïve. Some of their conclusions can be disproved, while others remain unsupported conjectures, in some cases fanciful speculations.³⁰

This criticism was characteristic from the remaining contributors, Paul David, Peter Temin, and Gavin Wright. Temin and Wright seem to be defending the burgeoning field of quantitative history. As economic historians themselves, they believed that statistics work best when used with more traditional textual primary sources. In their damnation of the cliometrics of Fogel and Engerman, these historians masked the benefits of quantitative theory. Kenneth Stampf was alone in acknowledging the benefits that the quantitative theory would have had on his own work and on future historical scholarship regarding slavery.³¹

The importance of *Time on the Cross* thus is not related to its argument but to its methodology. Fogel and Engerman with strict economic theory, and Gutman and fellows with their strict humanistic perspective, did not realize the benefits that could be gained through a combination of methodologies. Future historians, however, did not miss this point and a combination of statistical analytic and “aesthetic” humanist viewpoints would characterize

²⁹ Kenneth Stampf, “Introduction: A Humanist Perspective,” in *Reckoning with Slavery: A Critical Study in the Quantitative History of American Negro Slavery* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), 6.

³⁰ Herbert Gutman & Richard Sutch, “Victorians All? The Sexual Mores and Conduct of Slaves and Their Masters,” in *Reckoning with Slavery* (see note 26), 162.

³¹ Stampf, “Introduction,” 9. Stampf states that the type of analysis done by Engerman and Fogel would have greatly benefited his work *The Peculiar Institution*. He also sets himself apart from other historians by welcoming the burgeoning field of cliometrics: “Therefore, I do not react to *Time on the Cross* as a historian who views quantification as a ‘Bitch-Goddess’ to be spurned at all costs.”

slavery studies during the antebellum period for the decades to follow. None of these books demonstrate that using single methodologies is too restrictive. There were too many variables to fully account for at once, and the absence of religion was glaring given the prominence it would hold in other scholarly works on slavery.³² This debate is worth mentioning in this essay because it shows the difficulty in introducing new sources that were not textually based. If the way Fogel and Engerman used numbers was dehumanizing, then future historians could prevent this by using quantitative data to add nuance to other primary source materials.

During the 1970s, in addition to the grand narratives written by scholars such as Stamp, Genovese, and Fogel and Engerman, historians began to limit their scope and focus their study of slavery within geographical areas. W. Harrison Daniel and Drew Gilpin Faust both published journal articles that focused on religion in antebellum Virginia. Each article used different methodologies to create a spatial history of proslavery rhetoric in Old Dominion.

In writing his article, Daniel used an entirely theological approach. His sources were drawn from church minutes and the *Religious Herald*, a Baptist newspaper in Virginia. Daniel's history did not fit into the traditional timeline which dated the escalation of proslavery writing to 1831. He made conventional connections between the reigning in of African American religious autonomy and Nat Turner's 1831 Rebellion, and also growing abolitionist attacks from the North. Daniel, however, argued that the check on black religious freedom began a decade earlier.³³ This contention is interesting because it fits with growing contemporary paranoia regarding slave uprisings. Denmark Vesey's insurrection was planned for the summer of 1822,

³² A fantastic example of integrated historical methodologies that incorporates religious belief into the narrative of slavery and Southern society is Stephanie McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Households, Gender Relations, & the Political Culture of the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

³³ W. Harrison Daniel, "Virginia Baptists and the Negro Antebellum Era," *The Journal of Negro History* 56:1 (1971), 4.

though Daniel does not make this connection. Instead, the subjugation of black Baptist churches was “the result of white fear and racism.”³⁴ Daniel did show that at least one writer for the *Religious Herald* used Nat Turner’s rebellion as an excuse for the growing religious restrictions of African American religious liberty.³⁵

Daniel drew upon the writings of Reverend Thornton Stringfellow as a vehicle to explain antebellum Baptist ideology in Virginia. By explaining Stringfellow’s exegesis of proslavery thought, Daniel was the first historian since William Sumner Jenkins in 1935 to go into in-depth scrutiny of specific Biblical arguments for slavery. Stringfellow’s writings were so extensive that they would become what the *Religious Herald* described as a foundation for all other white, proslavery apologies.³⁶ Daniel’s article focused prominently on Stringfellow’s arguments; Stringfellow the man would constitute the focus of the next spatially specific history of Virginian Baptist proslavery aegis. While it was strong in many respects, Daniel’s article did not figure in the possible influence of abolition sentiment. Rather he made the same arguments as Drew Gilpin Faust who would later contend that increased concern for slave salvation was not connected to Northern antislavery thought.

Faust used a post-structuralist and psychoanalytical biographical approach to slavery. She briefly examined the life and ideas of Thornton Stringfellow. To preface her article, Faust asserted that most historical scholarship has ignored Southern religious principles in favor of the North’s. Though Jenkins’ monograph also focused on the South, Faust made a strong case for the significance of her work, especially when compared to C. C. Goen’s first book. Eight years after Faust, Goen would amend his original work which focused chiefly on politics in Northern

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid., 7.

³⁶ Ibid., 12.

churches. It was Faust's goal to rectify this scholarly discrepancy.³⁷ By using a biographical approach, Faust was able to comprehensively research one individual and used him as a microcosm for greater Virginian thought. Biographical and geographical approaches were subject to the same hindrances: though their meaning may be important and relevant for the topic at hand, at what point does one stop extrapolating from such a narrow view of historical scholarship?

Both Daniel and Faust represented the growing trend in history to examine history on a small scale, or microhistory. Both authors used these microcosms to draw generalizations about greater contemporary trends. Faust explained that she chose Stringfellow over the Southern agitator George Fitzhugh as Fitzhugh was less representative of general evangelical thought. The microcosmic history was also important for the significance of space and time. As erudition grew, greater connections were made over sociological and historical evolution.³⁸

With the beginning of the 1980s, Drew Gilpin Faust encouraged historians to reexamine the proslavery argument. In a succinct and cogent historiographical introduction to antebellum texts supporting the peculiar institution, Faust laid out previous methodologies in studying proslavery works and set the groundwork for future scholarship. Like Jenkins in 1935, Faust talked of the importance of the theological defense of slavery. She offered a different perspective, however, by relating Christianity to natural philosophy. Writers supporting slavery during the antebellum were not only carrying out God's injunction for slavery, they were also

³⁷ Drew Gilpin Faust, "Evangelicalism and the Meaning of the Proslavery Argument: The Reverend Stringfellow of Virginia," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 85:1 (January 1977), 3-4.

³⁸ Ira Berlin later makes the case that historians need to be more willing to examine slave history as it evolved over time and space. Before Berlin and Faust it had been common for historians to restrict their scholarship to the height of slavery and have paid little to no attention to how it changed over time. Ira Berlin, "Time, Space, and the Evolution of Afro-American Society on British Mainland North America," *The American Historical Review* 85:3 (February 1980), 44:78.

placing people within their natural roles as defined by nature.³⁹ One of the most prominent advocates for this linkage between science and faith was the Reverend Thornton Stringfellow, the central character of Faust's focus in her journal article published four years previously.

Time also matters for Faust. She pointed out the transition in proslavery rhetoric that began in 1830. Over the next thirty years writing for human bondage in the South become "more systematic and self-conscious" as a specific reaction to growing abolitionist sentiment in the North. These arguments for chattel labor were not new, but their reception was. To gain notoriety, Faust argued that one only had to write a proslavery tract during these three decades.⁴⁰ This timing fits perfectly with Nat Turner's rebellion. Unlike Stamppp though, Faust showed that whites believed increasingly that slaves needed religious instruction, even though it was to be more controlled. This fell in line with the scholarship of Genovese. Religious instruction to the slaves was important in the eyes of the slaveholder but also gave the slaves a base of power in which they could hold their masters accountable. A geographical representation would most likely show that there were elements of truth to both Faust's and Stamppp's interpretations.

Continuing the temporal argument, Faust urged a type of psycho-history for historians to analyze the South. She described a cognitive dissonance that gripped Southerners during the antebellum period. Their writing, Faust contended, was not intended for Northern abolitionists but instead as a justification for slavery for other Southerners. The place that religion fills in these moral arguments for the existence of slavery proved especially important in the years following the Civil War as the South sought to reconcile the will of God with their years of

³⁹ Drew Gilpin Faust, "Introduction: The Proslavery Argument in History," *The Ideology of Slavery: Proslavery Thought in the Antebellum South, 1830-1860* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1981), 11. An excellent study on the relationship between Christianity and natural philosophy for racial motivation before the age of Darwin can be found in Susan Scott Parrish, *American Curiosity: Cultures of Natural History in the Colonial British Atlantic World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006).

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 4-5.

ethnic oppression.⁴¹ Faust also argued that these writings offered an outlet for repressed and rejected intellectual men of the South. Without the worry of market saturation, these proslavery apologists were made in true Horatio Alger fashion.⁴² Continued examination on the psycho-historical mentality of these Southerners is important. Faust brought an intriguing hypothesis to the literature, but there was one aspect that needs to be explained. If pro-slavery rhetoric was written for self-justification based off of cognitive dissonance, why then did it escalate in 1830 with the simultaneous intensification of Northern abolitionist rhetoric?

Daniel and Faust asked historians to look at a specific subject in a specific time and place. As microcosmic history gained ground outside of the experimental realm of scholarly journals, one historian used this methodology to examine Baptist history in Georgia. In *Democratic Religion*, Gregory Wills acknowledged that there were still dogmatic differences within Georgia, but Baptist thought constituted the religious majority. Also, by using a concentrated geographical area, Wills was able to give a much more comprehensive look at Baptist religious history.⁴³

Wills used a political approach to examine the slaves' relation to the Baptist church. In the beginning of the nineteenth century, blacks were given more autonomy over their religious education, primarily for two reasons. First, the Church stated that slaves needed to take responsibility for church teachings in their own hands as part of the path to salvation. White church leadership also reasoned that the complex exegesis and logic used by whites would be too

⁴¹ Ibid., 6-7. Southern reconciliation with their past after 1865 can be examined in a variety of lights. Two in particular take stridently different views. Paul Harvey took a specific look at Southern Baptist eschatology and its means of dealing with a Southern slave-holding past: Paul Harvey, *Redeeming the South: Religious Cultures and Racial Identities Among Southern Baptists, 1865-1925* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997). An approach that focuses more on the bitterness associated with Reconstruction and the new South was examined by Charles Wilson. Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1980).

⁴² Ibid., 7-8.

⁴³ Gregory A. Wills, *Democratic Religion: Freedom, Authority, and Church Discipline in the Baptist South, 1785-1900* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), ix.

complicated; slaves needed to be taught by slaves as Georgian Baptists believed the simple needed to be taught by the simple.⁴⁴

Wills showed that black churches and their members were less likely to be reprimanded for spiritual transgressions than white churches and their members. Breaking these statistics down further, Wills also showed that men were more often indicted than women. He used these values to connect hard data with contemporary social theory. Wills reasoned that the church was more lenient in favor of African Americans because they attributed a child-like nature to this ethnic group. Just as women were considered more pious and less likely to sin than men, the puerile blacks were seen as more pious and less likely to sin than whites.⁴⁵

Wills' focus on religion and African Americans obliquely challenged Eugene Genovese's premise that church beliefs offered a means of resistance against their white masters. Wills claimed "slave religion was far more than a form of social resistance," citing the spiritual importance and faith in Baptist doctrine.⁴⁶ To arrive at this conclusion, though, Wills compared black Baptist churches after the Civil War to white Baptist churches during the antebellum era. Although Reconstruction and the Jim Crow Laws of 1876 were oppressive, it was a more subtle form of oppression than the relationship between master and slave perpetuated before the Civil War. Wills, however, was able to use these postbellum black churches in a way that the antebellum black churches could not be used. By using postbellum churches, he avoided the stigma of paternalistic slave-master relationships in the establishment of churches. By using these Reconstruction era freedoms, historians exercised a freedom in scholarship that gives a more controlled view of African Americans within the Baptist church prior to the Civil War.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 64.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 65-6.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 83.

From Goen's scholarship over religious separatism, the historian can attribute Baptist schisms to both differences in doctrine and opposing views of slavery. Wills, however, chose to give primacy to the former only. Just as in Goen's first monograph, there was no association between the church splitting over slavery.⁴⁷ This was particularly troubling since the Southern Baptist Convention first met in Georgia. In a state where the heart of the new separatist church began, there was no mention of what Goen considered the driving force of doctrinal and church split. Goen did an excellent job of examining the role religion played in both the breaking of churches and the portent they gave for the nation, but women, like the studies previously discussed, were not discussed.

In over seventy-three years of the historical scholarship that this essay examines, only one monograph took a specifically feminist approach to religious history. However, the primary focus was on white female-preachers, with African-American women moderately interspersed throughout the work. Catherine Breckus, in *Strangers & Pilgrims*, brought black women into her narrative when they fit with the overall history of female preachers. During nineteenth century revivals female preachers were more plebian than their predecessors of the eighteenth century. High economic status was no longer a qualification to speak publically on religious philosophy, but ethnicity still mattered. When black women did speak, they were only allowed "praying aloud, witnessing, or exhorting" due to their extemporaneous nature. Formal pontification was not allowed.⁴⁸ Even though African American women were not allowed official religious duties at white religious gatherings, they gained authority amongst their peers at informal meetings both on and off the plantation. Oral records were passed down of a bygone era when black women were allowed to preach at churches under the direction of white men. The

⁴⁷ Ibid., 86-7, 100.

⁴⁸ Catherine A. Breckus, *Strangers & Pilgrims: Female Preaching in America, 1740-1845* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 59 and 130.

stories tell of grandmothers who loved singing and who were emotionally and physically moved by their spiritual experiences during hortatory.⁴⁹

Every now and then, slave women could transcend their skin color and position through religious devotion. Breckus used a brief biographical sketch of one woman who, through her religious transformation, was granted freedom and another whose obituary in the local newspaper “noted her ‘Ethiopian’ race, but they . . .also insisted that would have a ‘white’ soul in heaven.”⁵⁰ Though meant as a compliment, the quotation showed how inseparable exquisite Christian morality was with skin color. With the slave who gained her liberty through spirituality, a post-structural analysis could assume that she transcended the need of religious tutoring that whites presumed people of her race required. Having the faith and piety of a white woman, she also deserved the freedom and independence of a white woman.

Albert J. Raboteau also incorporated women into his book *Canaan Land*, but like in older texts, they were given an ancillary role. Like Breckus’ *Strangers & Pilgrims*, Raboteau’s book is a religious history. Instead of a primary focus on women, its central idea is the religious history of African Americans. Raboteau showed that white women were more influential than any other demographic in slaves’ religious education in the South. As for African American women, Raboteau only examined those in the North who served as preachers. This created a sharp geographical line of womens’ sacred power between the North and the South.⁵¹

In writing about religion itself in relation to the slaves, Raboteau used lyrics from spirituals. The word Canaan represented more than just another word for heaven. For those in

⁴⁹ Ibid., 63.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 150.

⁵¹ Albert J. Raboteau, *Canaan Land: A Religious History of African Americans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 47 and 37-9.

bondage, it also came to represent the North and freedom.⁵² While making this connection, Raboteau did something that other historians in this examination had generally not done. He extended religion for slaves beyond Christianity, albeit briefly. The few slaves who were Muslim or Roman Catholic when they came to the United States were placed in a sea of evangelical Protestantism.⁵³ Religious ideology of slaves and slaveholders remained important in studying the peculiar institution, but extending the discussion into philosophical discourse allows for this subject to be evaluated from a different perspective.

Although the general argument for pro- and antislavery thought has been described in all of the above texts, *The Debate over Slavery* by David F. Ericson deserves brief acknowledgment for his unique integration of philosophy into both sides of the slavery argument. Ericson broke up the philosophical arguments into three groups: deontological, consequentialist, and contextualist.⁵⁴ The remaining part of his monograph then fell in line with *The Ideology of Slavery* by Drew Gilpin Faust. He looked at the intellectual history of writers in the North and the South and then fit their writings into the three philosophical groups above. For the North he examined Lydia Marie Child, Frederick Douglass, and Wendall Phillips. For the South he examined Thomas Dew, George Fitzhugh, and James Hammond. It is worth noting that through the writers Ericson chose, he showed that women garnered a greater role in public debate in the North than they had in the South.⁵⁵ Although Breckus showed that women were allowed to preach in the South in greater numbers, Ericson qualified this by showing that women were not allowed to speak on controversial issues. Women like Lydia Marie Child would have been

⁵² Ibid., 49.

⁵³ Ibid., 49-50 and 86.

⁵⁴ Deontological comes from Immanuel Kant which establishes an approach to ethics that judges morality and action on adherence to set rules. Consequentialism states that the consequences of one's actions are the basis for morality and judgment of those actions. Contextualism states that actions and statements can only be understood within the context of which they are performed or said.

⁵⁵ David F. Ericson, *The Debate Over Slavery: Antislavery and Proslavery Liberalism in Antebellum America* (New York: New York University Press, 2000).

silenced and shunned in the South. It is appropriate to end this bibliographical essay with Charles F. Irons' *The Origins of Proslavery Christianity*. The book combined both quantitative and qualitative historical methodologies. Its focus on Virginia gives it the microcosmic perspective. He took what Daniel and Faust began in their articles and Wills began in his monograph. What made Irons' work different was his extensive use of statistical records. He put together congregational records that divided up the population of all Virginia counties into race and denominations from 1790 to 1850 and 1860. By dividing these statistics up temporally and by race, Irons allowed a statistical look at how African Americans fit into denominational divisions and how those connections changed over time.⁵⁶ Along with Stephanie McCurry, Irons answered the call of Kenneth Stampp and successfully bridged the humanist and cliometric models of historical scholarship. He also avoided the problems of debate on the use of statistics mentioned above. By combining the quantitative method with other forms of scholarship, Irons created a stronger and more complex picture of slavery and Christianity.

Something of interest that is worth mentioning regards the publishers of all of the above monographs. With the exception of *A Democratic Religion* by Gregory Wills, all of the books fit into neat sectional lines. All above monographs that were written on arguments from proslavery Southern whites were published in the South. The most prolific of these publishers was the University of North Carolina Press. All above monographs that were written on arguments from antislavery Northern whites and blacks were published in the North. The most prolific of these publishers was Oxford University Press. It shows that as far as publication interests go, there is a geographical division between anti- and proslavery works that extends over several decades. It

⁵⁶ Charles F. Irons, *The Origins of Proslavery Christianity: White and Black Evangelicals in Colonial and Antebellum Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 264-274.

shows that even as historical scholarship has changed, the areas that were willing to publish certain types of historical research remained static.

The way slavery has been examined over seven decades has changed considerably. The relationship slavery had to religion has changed with that scholarship, disappeared briefly, and then reemerged stronger than ever. For historians like Jenkins, religious exegesis was important as a way to understand the proslavery argument from the Southern white perspective. For men like Stamp and Genovese, religious practice became a way to understand the constant struggle for agency between slaves and their masters. In the scholarship cited, Fogel and Engerman had no use for religion in their mathematical and scientific assessment of the peculiar institution and their critics Gutman and his followers had no use for it in their critique. Goen saw religion's relationship to slavery as one of the main harbingers of the Civil War. Faust used the rhetoric of proslavery whites to build a psychological explanation for their increasingly bombastic and vitriolic writing. Raboteau and especially Breckus put women into the study of slavery and religion where before they had not been given much of a voice. Ericson broke down the epistemology of both sides of the debate over slavery. Irons incorporated slavery and religion into a cliometric and humanist model that drew from written sources as much as from numbers. These authors yield insight into the progression of historical scholarship on slavery and religion in the Southern United States. The focus of this thesis, however, is on one state in particular, Missouri. The historiography of slavery in Missouri has undergone an even more drastic change in methodologies than the trends above show.

The historical research on antebellum Missouri can fit into three major categories: genealogical histories, standard historical monographs, and amateur local histories. Genealogical histories by far and large represent very specific works written during the nineteenth and early

twentieth centuries. These histories follow a very tight structure of listing important people, places, and events without any analysis or critique of the information given. The standard historical monograph represents the most scholarly of these sources on Missouri history and follows the same type of structure as the books listed above on southern religious perspectives on slavery. Each begins with a thesis that the author is trying to prove and they then use their narrative to answer a set of scholarly questions. The amateur local histories were commissioned by towns and schools and gave the same type of information found in the genealogical histories, but their stories are supplemented with lots of photographs and provide little connection outside of their subject.

The genealogical histories include chronicles of Baptists within the state and two chronicles of two Liberty, Missouri institutions, the Second Baptist Church of Liberty and William Jewell College. Books on Missouri Baptists appeared in 1882 and 1899. *A History of the Baptists in Missouri* by R. S. Duncan was followed by *A History of the Missouri Baptist General Association* by W. Pope Yeaman. The former looks only at the important ministers in Missouri and which churches they were affiliated with, the founding of new churches, and few periodicals. The latter was slightly more scholarly in its approach, but like its predecessor did not offer any important analysis on the relationship of slavery to the Baptists. What brief mentions are given to slavery in these two works will be given more attention in the following part of this thesis. The Central Baptist Print published their history on William Jewell College, a Baptist school in Liberty, in 1893. *History of William Jewell College* reads in the same manner as the two works above on Missouri Baptists. It followed the college from its founding in 1849 with its primary focus in the beginning on education on the frontier. It then moved onto brief autobiographical sketches of William Jewell, college trustees, and presidents. As it was compiled by the Board of

Trustees of William Jewell College, it did not offer any information on the school that could paint it in a negative light. For instance, there was no mention of founders, Dr. William Jewell's slaveholdings, let alone any other mention of slavery or Robert S. James, a Baptist minister and farmer whose son Jesse James who became a famous American outlaw.⁵⁷ Published in 1968, *History of the Second Baptist Church, Liberty, Missouri* follows the same format as the above chronicles, though it was published nearly seventy years after the latest of the above chronicles. All of these works were commissioned by Baptist groups. Each one is biased toward Baptists in Missouri. There was no thesis to any of the works; instead they were merely conduits of information with little use beyond their importance for what they omit, slavery and its importance to practicing Baptists prior to the Civil War.

The amateur local histories are not much more useful. Two are worth mentioning here, *The Heritage of Liberty* published in 1976 and *Cardinal is Her Color*, a modern history of William Jewell College published in 1999. Both of these books were more likely intended for the coffee table than a scholarly library. Each is filled with pictures that show the physical change of Liberty, Missouri, and William Jewell College. *The Heritage of Liberty* began its narrative in 1817, though the only mention of African Americans was concerning the 1843 establishment of Mount Zion Baptist Church by "Negro Baptists."⁵⁸ *Cardinal is Her Color* suggested it will cover the school from its founding because the book is subtitled, *One Hundred Fifty Years of Achievement at William Jewell College*. However, the book defers on the early years of the college to another history of Jewell titled *Jewell is Her Name* by H. I. Hester, a former professor

⁵⁷ James G. Clark, *History of William Jewell College, Liberty, Clay County, Missouri* (St. Louis: Central Baptist Print, 1893), 67-68.

⁵⁸ Don M. Jackson, *The Heritage of Liberty: A Commemorative History of Liberty, Missouri Bicentennial Edition* (Liberty, Mo.: R. C. Printing Service, 1976), 3.

of religion at the college.⁵⁹ Instead, it offered a page introduction to the college before it began its story at the conclusion of World War Two. The final sources are more academic in nature and thus offer more to the historiography of slavery in Missouri than the two groups described above. These works are more holistic in their approach and focus primarily on the entire state of Missouri, thus sacrificing a more in-depth look into Liberty.

There is a growing body of more scholarly research on antebellum Missouri history. Two examples will show how slavery in the Show-Me State has been studied. The first is *Agriculture and Slavery in Missouri's Little Dixie* by R. Douglas Hurt. Hurt classifies himself as an agricultural historian, so it makes sense that his work focuses on seven of the more fecund counties along the Missouri River that he refers to as Little Dixie, for their importance in growing tobacco and hemp. Notable among these counties is Clay County, home to William Jewell College and Liberty, Missouri. Because of the centrality of agriculture in these counties, slavery was more prominent in these areas than the rest of the state; each “had a slave population of at least 24 percent in 1850, and each ranked among the top ten slave counties by population in the state.”⁶⁰ Hurt’s focus is on how Missourians, many immigrants from nearby frontier states, would struggle with the peculiar institution and attempt to maintain both slavery and peace but being able to keep neither.⁶¹ There is no study of the lives of slaves in Hurt’s book. The last work is important as it represents a challenge to the traditionally accepted notion of a more benign form of slavery on the frontier borderlands, but was published in December of 2010. *On Slavery's Border* by Diane Mutti Burke also uses agriculture as a focal point to examine slavery

⁵⁹ David O. Moore, “History of William Jewell: Jewell is Her Name,” *Cardinal is Her Color: One Hundred Fifty Years of Achievement at William Jewell College* (Liberty, Mo.: William Jewell College Publications, 1999), 1. *Jewell is Her Name* has proven extraordinarily difficult in finding a copy to borrow, even through Inter Library Loan. Because of this, I have not been able to incorporate it into my thesis.

⁶⁰ R. Douglas Hurt, *Agriculture and Slavery in Missouri's Little Dixie* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1992), xi.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, xiv.

in Missouri. Missouri did not have expansive plantations like those that could be found further south, and as a result, most slaveholders lived in small households in close quarters with their chattel. For Burke, both the geographic proximity of Missouri to other slave states and the nature of small slaveholding households worked to create a unique version of slavery dissimilar from Southern states far from the frontier border and the Mason-Dixon Line.⁶² Burke's goal was to show that although slavery differed in Missouri than the same institution in the Deep South, it was no less violent, exploitative, or cruel.⁶³

Missouri is integral because historians and publishers both have not emphasized the state during the antebellum era. Researchers have looked at Missouri and slavery in other works, but Hurt's and Burke's works are unique in their comprehensive historical examination of Missouri and slavery. Hurt's work was published by the University of Missouri in Columbia and Burke is a Kansas City native who is now an assistant professor of history at the University of Missouri at Kansas City. Scholarship has not garnered much interest outside of Missouri's borders, nor is there much published; the two works above have an eighteen year gap between publications. Missouri and frontier slavery is ripe for study.

⁶² Diane Mutti Burke, *On Slavery's Border: Missouri's Small-Slaveholding Households, 1815-1865* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2010), 3-5.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

CHAPTER 2: Missouri Baptists and Ambivalence to Slavery

When Dr. William Jewell chose the site for the Baptist college that bears his name, he chose the highest point of Clay County. William Jewell College was founded in 1848 to stand as a city upon a hill. From its beginnings, the new college found itself in a unique position between the increasingly separate North and South. Standing on “The Hill” in Liberty, Missouri, on a clear day shows today the two worlds William Jewell stood astride. Facing southwest, you can view Interstate 35 as it stretches through the Kansas City Metropolitan Area. Facing east, in the foreground is a white plantation style house with black trim, appropriately named “The Jewell.” Hills dotted with small farms roll away beyond “The Jewell.” The landscape changes colors with the seasons revealing that this terrain is more natural than manmade. Present-day William Jewell College sits between bucolic pastures home to yeoman farmers and a major interstate system serving Kansas City. This modern-day school on a hill represents the confusion that plagued frontier cities stuck between the plantation-economy south and the industrial north. Missouri entered the Union as a slave state through the 1820 Missouri Compromise. However, the landlocked state is situated far from the South Carolina Piedmont and nutrient-rich soil of the Mississippi Delta. Rice and cotton were unfeasible crops given the uneven geography of the northern Ozark state. Thus, slavery was not as important to the frontier economy as compared to the well-established planter south. Baptists in particular fought to understand their position between urban and rural slave relationships and philosophy. Being unable to mollify either, Missouri Baptists sought instead a middle road that neither gratified Northern states’ call for

radical abolition nor Southern states' vehement defense of the peculiar institution. Consequently, Missouri Baptists represented a unique position between the Northern abolitionists and the Southern slaveholders regarding the rights and legal status of slaves and free blacks by promoting the gradual emancipation of slaves and their subsequent recolonization to Africa.

William Jewell was one of the wealthier men on the Missouri frontier during the prewar years, as such, his will offers a glance into both his capital, his distribution thereof, and a Baptist insight into slavery. Upon his death in 1852 the *Western Watchmen* published Jewell's final wishes to satisfy the requests of its reading public. Out of eleven points, the first two dealt with Jewell's chattel slaves, though neither mentioned the word slave. Instead, they were called the "negro man," "negro woman," and "children."¹ This nomenclature demonstrates the tension that prominent Baptists like Jewell wished to ignore. It also suggests more respect to the slaves than could be expected from blacks in similar circumstances further south. The "negro man" was to be freed. He could earn a living as a blacksmith without the supervision of whites. The "negro woman," with no trade listed, became the property of Jewell's seven year-old grandson. Jewell requested that his widowed daughter Angeline Wilson keep the slave woman and her children under her watch until his grandson turned twenty-one. William Jewell's directions followed a growing paternalist trend among Missouri Baptists in the 1850s. That Jewell's male slave practiced a trade and was thus allowed freedom just eight years prior to the Civil War demonstrates that frontier Baptists did not wish to perpetuate slavery. There was a gendered delineation, however, in who would be most capable of living a successful freed life. The woman was to remain in slavery, unless her new keeper, Angeline Wilson died. In that event, the children would remain slaves, but the adult would be freed. Whites further South did not trust their slaves to be free, especially after failed uprisings like that of Nat Turner.

¹ "Dr. Jewell's Will," *Western Watchmen* (St. Louis, MO), September 2, 1852.

Why did slavery differ in Missouri? Why would a wealthy white Baptist grant freedom to some but not to others? The answers to these two questions are found in the unique nature of frontier slavery and are examined in this chapter primarily through the minutes of the Southern Baptist Convention and other associations affiliated with it, the journals of the *Western Baptist Review* and the flagship Baptist newspaper of Missouri, the *Western Watchmen*. The *Watchmen* would eventually decline in popularity as the Civil War grew closer. Prior to that, its publication and distribution between 1849 under its new editor and publisher William Crowell were substantial. The paper remained relatively successful though it took an antislavery position in a slaveholding state.² Both the *Western Watchmen* and the *Western Baptist Review* reprinted articles from other Baptist newspapers from the North and the South along with their own articles. What resulted was a fairly large geographical dispersion of printed ideas. Furthermore, the *Western Watchmen* offers a unique angle into Missouri religious and political history as most Baptist organizations during the antebellum years sought to distance themselves as much as possible from the slavery controversy. Sermons focused more on universal Baptist doctrine such as infant Baptism and other less divisive rhetoric. To understand how Baptist relations to secular world principles developed differently from their brethren in the North and the South, it is useful to look at how Baptist associations grew in other frontier states. This is also necessary because of the historiography of Baptist history in Missouri compared to the same history in Kentucky. The former mentions slavery only in the index.³ While the latter history does not take an analytic approach to chattel slavery, it at least documented Kentucky Baptist policy of ignoring the contradictory nature of Christian morality and human bondage.

² W. Pope Yeaman, *A History of the Missouri Baptist General Association* (Columbia, MO: Press of E. W. Stephens, 1899), 300-1.

³ Robert Douglass, *History of Missouri Baptists* (Kansas City, MO: Western Baptist Publishing Co., 1934).

Kentucky's Baptist Association consistently answered questions regarding the morality of slavery the same way: "The Association judges it improper to enter into so important and critical a matter, at present." The Elkhorn Association of Kentucky wrote: "This Association judges it improper for ministers, churches, or associations, to meddle with emancipation from slavery, or any other political subjects; and as such we advise ministers and churches to have nothing to do therewith in their religious capacities."⁴ Kentucky, Missouri's southeastern neighbor, gained admission to the United States frontier twenty-nine years before Missouri's statehood. Like their coreligionists in Missouri, Kentucky Baptists struggled to define their relationship to slavery. Churches found it in their best interest to ignore the peculiar institution. Evasive tactics allowed Baptists on the frontier to give their tacit approval and disapproval. Baptist congregations on the frontier concerned themselves primarily with survival and did not want to alienate potential members. They accomplished this by not speaking against slavery.

Records from Southern Baptist Convention meetings illustrate the inequality of Baptist funding during the antebellum period. Challenging chattel bondage meant risking the loss of already tight funds. To reconcile this incongruity, Baptists promoted a gradual emancipationist approach through African Colonization between 1849 and 1851. This upheld white superiority and solved the most pressing question regarding abolition, what to do with the newly freed population. Even the act of thinking about abolition shows the difference between slaveholding in the Deep South and the nature of the institution on the frontier West.

Slavery in Missouri depended mainly on cultivating hemp and tobacco; cotton remained nearly non-existent. Slave numbers grew the most in Missouri between 1830 and 1840 due to the growing infrastructure needed as more and more easterners settled along the Mississippi and

⁴ Frank Mariro Masters, *A History of Baptists in Kentucky* (Louisville: Kentucky Baptist Historical Society, 1953), 63, 168.

Missouri Rivers. After 1840, slave numbers dropped considerably in northern parts of the state, including Clay County – home to William Jewell College – while condensing in the South and along the Missouri River. This highly consolidated area of slavery, commonly known as Little Dixie, held anywhere from fourteen to twenty-seven percent difference in slaves proportionate to whites, higher than any other area in the state. Compared to the planter south where twelve percent of slave holders owned twenty or more slaves, Little Dixie's largest planters ranked under three percent.⁵ Agriculture in Little Dixie focused more on subsistence than commercial profits. After the steady influx of migrants stopped arriving in Missouri, the need for slaves diminished as whites fell from the planter class. Selling slaves to the Deep South states, especially through New Orleans, yielded a better chance of profits for Missourians than commercial agriculture.⁶ Slavery in Missouri grew under individuals like Eli E. Bass who already had enough money to support large plantations and could diversify their crops beyond tobacco and hemp; these individuals lived primarily in Little Dixie.⁷ Human bondage remained in Missouri in small farms throughout Little Dixie as large plantations could not be supported and were largely nonexistent.⁸ Slavery represented the status quo and in instances where slavery was not highly profitable, whites maintained the institution to retain the racial hierarchy between whites and blacks. Slavery offered more than just economic gain; it offered control. Not growing and selling cotton meant that Missouri Baptists, many of whom were small farmers, did not compare economically with the planter elite along the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts. This affected Baptist congregations in Missouri in their association with the Southern Baptist Convention and

⁵ R. Douglas Hurt, *Agriculture and Slavery in Missouri's Little Dixie* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 1992), 216-9.

⁶ Ibid. 256.

⁷ Ibid., 61, 149, and 222.

⁸ Diane Mutti Burke, *On Slavery's Border: Missouri's Small-Slaveholding Households, 1815-1865* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2010), 6-7.

their relationship to slavery and free blacks. It also affected how the Southern Baptist Convention divided funds among its member states.

Missouri Baptists received considerably less through donations and endowments than any other state member of the Southern Baptist Convention. In 1851, only Texas, Arkansas, Florida, and the District of Columbia collected less than Missouri's \$750. By contrast, the Southern Baptist Convention distributed \$9,000 to Georgia and \$13,500 to Virginia. State collections given to the Southern Baptist Convention for the same year ranked Missouri ahead of Louisiana and North Carolina with eighteen dollars, whereas Alabama contributed nearly \$2,700.⁹ Although Louisiana and North Carolina seem out of place in this register, the rest of the states stack up as expected. Missouri did not place high on the list of needs that the Southern Baptist Convention sought to recognize.

Baptists gave large amounts of money to support missionary work, though these missions were rarely directed toward the benefit of slaves. Domestic missions garnered less attention than foreign missions in general and most of the money collected and distributed to help spread the gospel was given to Baptists traveling to China and Africa. The Southern Baptist Convention ranked foreign missionary work higher than preaching to people within the United States.¹⁰ Domestic missions that had been arranged by the Southern Baptist Convention were primarily directed toward the "heathen" Native Americans found along the frontier border and beyond and to Spanish-speaking Mexicans living in Texas. By ink alone, reading the minutes from the 1851 Southern Baptist Convention proceedings show that the "Colored Population" was tertiary to Baptist concerns. While commending slaveholders who cared for their property's spiritual

⁹ "Biennial Report No. 1," *Proceedings of the Southern Baptist Convention, Convened in Nashville, Tennessee* (Richmond: H. K. Ellyson, 1851), 31.

¹⁰ Rufus B. Spain, *At Ease in Zion: Social History of the Southern Baptists 1865-1900* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1967), 9.

welfare, Southern Baptists simultaneously urged their brethren to take said welfare into individual hands. Tacitly, the Southern Baptist Convention would not contribute through the distribution of its funds. “One brother in Alabama has, during the past year, contributed \$400 to [building a slave church].”¹¹ A good Baptist would emulate this type of charity outside the direction of the convention. While the minutes do not give a specific amount given to the cause of domestic missions separately from normal church needs, foreign missions in 1851 received \$39,000. \$18,000 of that sustained Baptist work in Shanghai.¹² Less money contributed to Missouri from the Southern Baptist Convention allowed Missouri Baptists, less beholden to the party line, to develop a new perspective on slavery that would differ significantly from the Georgia based Southern convention.

Two years later, domestic missions gained slightly more attention but only were a concern for those who could support them without the financial help of the Southern Baptist Convention. A convention committee wrote a report concerning the spiritual needs of “Africans” living in the South. The committee suggested Georgia as a prime area to begin spreading the Gospel to slaves. Not surprisingly, economics proved the deciding factor. The convention suggested that, “The seacoast of Georgia also presents an inviting field of labor, where there is a large Baptist colored population, and where the planters are willing to pay the expenses of missionaries . . .”¹³ The committee selected Georgia because therein were planters who were willing to pay the costs of the missions. This exempted the Southern Baptist Convention from the responsibility of paying for spreading the Gospel. Planters paid the fees. As stated above,

¹¹ “Colored Population,” *Proceedings of the Southern Baptist Convention, Convened in Nashville, Tennessee* (Richmond: H. K. Ellyson, 1851), 35..

¹² A. Thomas, “Biennial Report,” *Proceedings of the Southern Baptist Convention, Convened in Nashville Tennessee* (Richmond: H. K. Ellyson, 1851), 31.

¹³ C. George, “Report of Committee on Instruction of Colored Population,” *Proceedings of the Southern Baptist Convention, Convened in the City of Baltimore* (Richmond: H. K. Ellyson, 1853), 17.

Missouri lacked large plantations that could be found in states like Georgia. Without the elite planter class, no one existed who could meet the expenses needed to preach to slaves on the frontier. Missouri, Kentucky, and Tennessee requested the Southern Baptist Convention to place ministers in their states. The minutes from the 1853 meeting state that in spite of multiple applications for Southern Baptist representatives in each state, the convention “[has] hitherto failed to secure one [for Missouri, Kentucky, or Tennessee].”¹⁴ Missionaries who did make it to Missouri resided primarily in the port city, St. Louis.¹⁵ White Southern Baptists held a paternalistic and individualistic attitude about chattel slaves, and the Southern Baptist Convention only helped spread the word to slaves as long as the planter elite class could pay for missionary work. Where no planter elites existed, the church expected white slaveholders to take responsibility.

The economic disparities between the coastal South and the frontier produced contemporary news and articles that reflected that fiscal inequality. The *Western Baptist Review* published articles on slavery tailored to whites with disparate economic status from whites in the Deep South. In the 1849 publication, two entries addressed slavery from two different perspectives. The first disparaged the newly reopened Cuban slave trade. The writer used strong language referring to the practice as “nefarious.”¹⁶ Though the international slave trade merited the disapproval of the *Review*, the journal defended the slave institution from Northern attacks. The article began by referencing the *Lebanon Star* of Ohio and other Northern “papers, political, religious, and literary, [which] are constantly teeming with the articles, couched in the most

¹⁴ “Missouri,” *Proceedings of the Southern Baptist Convention, Convened in the City of Baltimore* (Richmond: H. K. Ellyson, 1853), 73.

¹⁵ “Missouri,” *Proceedings of the Southern Baptist Convention, Convened in the City of Montgomery, Alabama* (Richmond: H. K. Ellyson, 1855), 73.

¹⁶ J. L. Waller & R. R. Lillard, eds., “Cuban Slave Trade,” *Western Baptist Review* Volume IV (Frankfurt, KY: A. G. Hodges & Co. Printers, 1849), 382.

tristful strains, respecting the deplorable condition of the southern negroes.”¹⁷ The *Review* once again used language to display how Northerners were overcome by their emotions but suggested that if those same pathos-dominated people used logic, they would realize the true nature of Southern slavery. “They shed tears profusely over the evils and wrongs of slavery; and yet every well informed man knows that the slaves of the south, are, intellectually, socially, morally, and religiously, elevated far above the same number of the negro race any where upon the globe, either now or in any past period of time.”¹⁸ It is not unexpected that the *Western Baptist Review* claimed the same tropes as the Deep South in its defense of slavery, nor that it condemned the actions of the supposedly less sophisticated – non-white – Cuba. What is unexpected is the publication of the Northern-based findings on slavery from the American Baptist Home Missionary Society, especially since American and Southern Baptists had been separated since 1845.

The American Baptists Home Missionary Society published its report in the *New York Observer* to defend the society from accusations insinuating they had links with Southern slavery. The *Western Baptist Review* republished the report. The committee resolved itself to determine “whether in the transactions of the past year, or in any of the present relations of the Society, any fellowship or sanction of slavery may be justly implied,” and thus “prove that the Society has no connection with slavery involving any possible support or countenance whatsoever.”¹⁹ The committee found that not only had there been no connection with slaveholders in the South, there would never be such associations. The *Western Baptist Review* replied that there does exist a “*sprinkling* of such Baptists in the North,” and that these same

¹⁷ L. Waller & R. R. Lillard, eds., “Northern Love of the Negro,” *Western Baptist Review* Volume IV (Frankfurt, KY: A. G. Hodges & Co. Printers, 1849), 451.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 452-3.

¹⁹ L. Waller & R. R. Lillard, eds., “American Baptist Home Missionary Society, and Slavery,” *Western Baptist Review* Volume IV (Frankfurt, KY: A. G. Hodges & Co. Printers, 1849), 395.

Baptists were the children of slaveholders. While there is a feeling of angst in the editor's response, it lacked the same bellicose language found in the earlier entry on Cuba. The nature of the two articles published in the same journal edition highlight the fine line Baptists on the frontier were trying to walk between the North and the South.

The *Western Baptist Review* attempted many times to clear Baptists from the taint of slavery without an outright defense of the institution. One article began by paraphrasing common attacks from the abolitionist North. Nearly each phrase ended with an exclamation point, simultaneously showing the vehemence with which the North denounced the South and to portray Southern Baptists as more pacific and on the wrong end of misplaced Northern judgment. The writing was a portent of the Civil War. “[Northerners] teach, too, that it [slavery] must be overthrown, no matter how great the cost, and how terrible the consequences.” With a belligerent North, how could the South be blamed for the inevitable wrenching of the nation? “Hence, it is urged that the dissolution of the American Union must take place unless slavery be put down.”²⁰ The writing served the western Baptists' purpose of displacing the blame away from slavery and toward an irrational North. Baptists writing for the review truly believed that abolitionist ideas pushed them into a corner; they were innocent. After the dissolution of Northern and Southern churches, frontier Baptists worried that the Union would be next. “The suggestion to dissolve our government and to sunder the ties between the Churches north and south, has ever filled our mind with horror – as a measure fraught with every evil and destitute of every good.”²¹ A full twelve years before hostilities would begin at Fort Sumter, western Baptists hoped to absolve themselves of theological responsibility for the peculiar institution and blame political machinations for the “evil” of instability in the church and nation. These feelings

²⁰ L. Waller & R. R. Lillard, eds., “The Western Baptist Theological Institute,” *Western Baptist Review* Volume III (Frankfurt, KY: A. G. Hodges & Co. Printers, 1848), 365.

²¹ *Ibid.*

espoused by the Southern Baptist Convention were not reciprocated by Baptists along the frontier.

In 1848, traces existed in the *Western Baptist Review* suggesting sympathy for both Northern and Southern arguments. As rhetoric from abolitionists and the Southern Baptist Convention became stronger, the *Review* fell more in line with its Southern brethren. In 1850, Missouri's most popular Baptist newspaper earned condemnation from the Kentucky-based periodical. The editor of *The Western Watchmen* in 1850, John M. Peck, allowed the publication of an article supporting William Lloyd Garrison and abolition. Doing so meant that Peck and Missouri supporters of the *Watchmen* further separated themselves from mainstream political thought. According to the *Review*, to follow Northern ideas of slavery to their full conclusion was to deny and ignore fundamental Christian theology. "No man can receive the Bible as the Word of God, and consistently maintain that slavery is a sin in all cases, and under all circumstances."²² Like the American Baptist Church and the Southern Baptist Convention, Western Baptists started to sever ties between themselves and specific Missouri Baptists. Although no records could be found on the circulation of *The Western Watchmen*, some clues hint at a wide Baptist acceptance of the paper in Missouri. In 1850, the Cedar Baptist Association of Cedar County recommended the *Watchmen* to all "churches and individuals, as an excellent literary, religious, and family newspaper."²³ Advertisements from businesses and Baptists organizations, including William Jewell College, took up a quarter of each weekly issue. Every few months, the newspaper recommended that student subscribers from William Jewell College renew their subscriptions automatically. Business advertisements represented Westport (modern

²² John L. Waller, ed., "An Abolitionist Reproving Abolition," *Western Baptist Review* Volume V (Louisville, KY: Hull & Brother Printers, 1850), 40.

²³ D. R. Murphy, [*Minutes?*] of the *Second Annual Meeting of the Cedar Association*, September 6, 1850. The document found in the archives of the Missouri Baptist Historical Society is severely damaged at the top, and it is presumed that the missing word is "Minutes."

day Kansas City), Columbia, and St. Louis areas, showing an east-west statewide distribution. The *Watchmen* propagated ideas that would gain a Baptist following in Missouri that differed significantly from the rest of the South but still fell short of the radical abolitionist ideals of the North.

When the *Western Baptist Review* reprinted Northern articles disparaging slavery, critiques of the abolitionist rhetoric always accompanied the printing. *The Western Watchmen* also reprinted pieces from Northern sources, but did so without the accompanying appraisal. If an introduction was given it remained objective, with the exception of theological arguments. Two articles concerning fugitive slaves and fugitive slave laws made the front pages of the 1850 Halloween printing. The first article from the *Chicago Journal* recounted the debates for and against fugitive slave laws in the Windy City. The people of Chicago stood firmly against the laws, but Senator Stephen Douglas spoke against nullification of the slave laws and declared that neither he nor Chicago would support the Wilmot Proviso in any form or ideal. The second article from the *New York Tribune* briefly stated the few known details involving fugitive slaves. Details were scarce. “We had no conception of the number of these persons in the Northern States. . . The aggregate number in the Northern States is probably some thousands.” The *Tribune* understood the frustration felt by Southerners about runaway slaves. “No wonder the South should become dissatisfied with a state of things which virtually barred them from the recovery of their slaves, even when they found them – in violation of the express stipulations of the national compact.”²⁴ Since the *Watchmen* printed the *Tribune*’s article in its entirety without the same bellicose paraphrasing common in the *Western Baptist Review*, the *Watchmen*’s readership was left with little room for misunderstanding. A Northern source showing sympathy

²⁴ “The Fugitive Slave Law in Chicago,” *Western Watchmen* (St. Louis, MO), October 31, 1850.

for the South's feelings regarding fugitive slaves painted a different picture than the Southern vitriol presented in the *Review*.

Nothing shows the struggle Missouri Baptists faced amid the North and the South better than an article entitled, "Fanaticism South" published in the March 20th *Watchmen* in 1851. The article chastises Northern abolitionists under the direction of William Lloyd Garrison and Gerrit Smith and the fire-eaters, particularly in South Carolina, who were preaching secession and the dissolution of the union "for both factions are striving to *abolish* and destroy our national government."²⁵ The *Watchman* berated Northerners as "an errant set of cowards," who "can talk, resolve, bluster, [and] threaten." When threatened by the South, the *Watchmen* continued, Northerners "would go off in spasms." Their words for Southern secessionists were no less harsh. These "preaching nullifiers" are "the real revolutionists of South Carolina, [and] are from the Huguenot Stock. They have all the fire, fury, and hallucination of the French."²⁶ Here Missouri Baptists show disdain for the terse rhetoric erupting on both sides of the Mason-Dixon Line that remained common among their coreligionists along the frontier. This position would be touted even stronger in Liberty after Abraham Lincoln's 1860 election to the Presidency. The Baptist associations of Kentucky also did their best to remain neutral when questioned on the morality of slavery. They wanted to distance themselves as far as possible from such a divisive issue hoping that it would remain in the secular world of politics. The *Watchmen* took a more active approach in this article, but like their Kentucky brethren refused to take sides. To a certain degree, it can be ascertained that frontier Baptists were uncomfortable with the general tradition of slavery. Not having the same economic attachments as places in the Deep South, there was no reason why whites in Missouri should feel more of a connection to the institution. With different

²⁵ J. M. P., "Fanaticism South," *Western Watchmen* (St. Louis, MO), March 20, 1851. The byline in the newspaper gives only the three initials.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

socioeconomic foundations, it is not surprising that such tension would manifest itself in a frontier state far from both Northern and Southern rhetoric. The ire spewing forth from both sides could not but gain the chastisement from a group of people who prided themselves on moral integrity. While they could not – or did not – speak directly against slavery, they could – and did – speak against the growing rage suffocating North-South United States relations. Frontier Baptists found a solution to their moral conflicts of slavery through colonization which freed slaves and removed the subsequent free black population from their state and America.

African colonization made up the most common theme regarding slavery and blacks from *The Western Watchmen*. For Missouri Baptists, African colonization presented many questions, the most important of which, “But will they go?” The answer to this question varied based on individual circumstances, which could only be answered through more questions.

Who are they? What are they doing where they are? What influences are brought to bear upon them? Have they a will and a conscience? Have they susceptibilities to feel and power to appreciate? Is their Present condition as good as they desire it to be? Is there any prospect that in their present situation they ever can reach that point which is the true and lawful aim of a generous and noble spirit?²⁷

The Western Watchmen placed itself in an interesting position simply by asking these questions. Though their answers clearly indicated their same belief in white superiority that held sway in most other places in the United States, after a full paragraph explaining black inferiority the *Watchmen* made a claim for freed slaves: “They are nevertheless men.”²⁸ This coupled with at least a minor intellect, from the white Baptist perspective, allowed the liberated slaves to see the logic in Liberian colonization. The church taught freed slaves the benefits that could be made in immigrating to Africa. Though racist in pure form, white Baptists truly believed they were helping African Americans return to their ancestors’ lands and a better life. Even the descriptions

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸“African Colonization,” *Western Watchmen* (St. Louis, MO), November 7, 1850.

of the transoceanic journey revealed travel very different from the infamous Middle Passage. Steamship technology reduced the journey from a couple of months at the longest to a couple of weeks at the shortest. The ships “are to possess every requisite for comfort, speed and safety, which the ingenuity of man can desire, and the advanced state of the arts execute!”²⁹ These reports represented varying characteristics of the *Watchmen*. From their perspective, they did have a legitimate hope in the comforts and benefits of both the passage to and the colonization of Liberia. White church leaders preached to blacks with idealistic expectations of molding their filial, and racial futures. Yet, white hope for liberated slaves founded on African colonization was also founded on racism and bigotry. Southern and Northern whites both fretted over what would become of African Americans if slavery was successfully abolished. Northern whites who sought emancipation had no intention or desire for an influx in the black population above the Mason-Dixon Line. Southern whites contented themselves with the control slavery offered over blacks. With slavery gone, so too would be the most fundamental aspect of white ethnic dominance. White Baptists promoted colonization for their own benefit, not for the African Americans they sought to displace.

Missouri Baptists touted Liberian colonization as a “free negro Christian State, enjoying republican institutions, on the coast of Africa.”³⁰ American hubris demanded that blacks who immigrated to Liberia maintain an American-style government and Christian ethics. These two elements would work together to ensure successful living conditions on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean and allow “persons [to be] *completely* independent in their circumstances.” Even the American adage of hard work toward independence found ink in the *Watchmen*, which claimed that “every man in Liberia, if he will devote half of his time to active labor, may reach

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ “Liberia,” *Western Watchmen* (St. Louis, MO), August 14, 1851.

the same state of independence.”³¹ Whites encouraged emigrated African Americans to sustain American ideals in their new land. But those ideas were only good enough for them in Africa and should not be expected for free blacks in the United States.

There is no doubt that Baptists sought to rid the South of both slavery and blacks, but the *Watchmen* had no problem praising emancipated blacks who were far from the United States. The *Watchmen* credited ex-slaves with successfully policing and ending the slave trade along the western coast of Africa. Blacks benefited doubly from their victory, according to the St. Louis newspaper; they proved they could act righteously without the supervision of whites and they cleared a safe passage for the presumed thousands who would cross the Atlantic to African colonization. The pages of the *Watchmen* hunted for every opportunity to fuel their hope of establishing a consistent removal of blacks. “[T]he work of stopping the slave-trade by Colonization is much farther advanced than most people imagine.”³² For the writers and readers of Missouri’s Baptist newspaper, colonization offered a home to freed slaves and had the added moral good of stopping the African slave trade. White Baptist promoters of colonization hoped ending slavery in the United States and sending the freedmen to Africa helped ensure the end of slavery abroad. To whites, America was still setting an example to the rest of the world. Promoting colonization fulfilled Dr. William Jewell’s hope for Baptists as a beacon of pious Christian morality and ethics. The *Watchmen* printed the following in a direct appeal to Missourians to support Liberian colonization: “It is time that the people of this State were [sic] beginning to arouse themselves to the importance of this enterprise, which is no longer a doubtful experiment, struggling with difficulties, but is now established upon a firm basis, and is

³¹ “Liberia Farmers,” *Western Watchmen* (St. Louis, MO), August 21, 1851. Italics are from the original.

³² W. D. Shumate, “Missouri Colonization Society,” *Western Watchmen* (St. Louis, MO), November 15, 1850.

exhibiting to the world one of the proudest monuments of American wisdom and philanthropy.”³³

Baptists found it easy to promote colonization because it was vague, though ultimately unworkable. Any other attempt at giving rights to free blacks met with resistance. The *Watchmen* reprinted an article from the Virginia based *Baptist Banner* recounting Indiana’s attempts to amend the state constitution. The General Assembly of Indiana garnered the most attention from the *Banner* for its attempts to restrict black freedom in the state. The amendments that suggested that all blacks and mulattoes be restricted from moving into or settling in Indiana met with no positive or negative comment from the Baptist newspaper. The *Banner* endeavored to remain neutral in this news stating only, “It is probably [sic] that this section will pass.” Like Missouri, Indiana also sought to gradually reduce their state’s population of both free blacks and slaves, first by stopping black settlement of the state and second by procuring funds to assist African Americans who were inclined to leave but financially unable to do so. A dissenting voice of the convention suggested allowing blacks the “right of suffrage.” Whereas the previous comments did not deviate from Indiana’s racist laws toward blacks, the *Banner* and the *Watchmen* responded in a worried tone, “These are the signs of the times which are omenous.”³⁴ Frontier Baptists in the northern state of Indiana and the southern state of Missouri shared the same beliefs of ridding the borderlands, and eventually, the whole United States of slaves and blacks. The newspapers did not flinch at all when reporting strict racial codes in Indiana, but when someone promoted black suffrage, neither news source could sit back quietly and referred to the idea as portentous. A connection can be drawn between Baptist racial attitudes in the North and the South. Though there is no direct religious connection with the proposed amendments to

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ “Free Negroes in Indiana,” *Western Watchmen* (St. Louis, MO), November 28, 1850.

Indiana's constitution that the news was reported from a Virginia and a Missouri Baptist newspaper placed an eastern and western state on similar footing. Also, the gradual abolitionist approach that Indiana was taking toward slavery was analogous to the gradualist approach promoted by Missouri Baptists.

If there was ever any doubt on the position free blacks held in Missouri, it was dispelled with an article describing the state of "Free Colored People in the U. States." The article spoke to American ideals of individualism contrasted against the plight of free blacks "that must attract the attention of every philanthropist." This introduction characterized liberated slaves and free blacks as anathema to the American way of life. Even worse was the philanthropist who desired to help the free black population "to be placed on our own soil, upon an equal footing, civilly, socially, and intellectually, with the Anglo-Saxon race." Whites used demographics to justify their rancor against such ideas. By examining aggregate population growth in all parts of the United States, the writer states that between 1841 and 1851 the white population rose "39½ per cent. ; the slave population has advanced 28 per cent. ; while the free colored population has increased only 8½ per cent." These numbers in the article cannot be easily verified; however, from looking at the numbers alone, it is not difficult to see how they could be twisted in favor of white racial propaganda. The statistics tell two stories, the most obvious being the superior virility of whites; the other part shows that left to their own devices, free blacks lack fecundity and the ability to take care of themselves. For contemporary whites, it would not take a huge leap to come to the conclusion that unless slaves remained subjugated in slavery, their population will suffer consequences. Whites, including Baptists, used these statistics to maintain their general claims of white racial preeminence. The Baptist *Watchmen* allowed that some religionists (no specifics are given) argued for racial advancement for free blacks through religious and

intellectual advances, but through repetition, a different point is driven home: “But facts do not authorize this assertion.” In New England, where African Americans enjoyed more rights than Southern blacks, equality remained unobtainable. The *Watchmen* wrote that in the North, the free black believed he could “banish the prejudice against him on account of his race,” but instead “he dwindles and melts away as the snow before a vernal sun, in the presence of a superior race.”³⁵ In this context, the abolition of slavery became an even worse moral action than slavery itself! The only way Baptists could solve this problem was through colonization. The statistics clearly showed to whites that blacks on their own in the United States could not adequately support their race. Colonization to Africa meant putting African Americans into their ancestral homelands, and as stated above, their return meant the ending of the African slave trade along the western coast of the continent. Colonization did not represent the only option in dealing with a free black population, just the most palatable. The tone of the *Western Watchmen* would change as the 1850s advanced, but these changes offended the paper’s audience and became less popular in the latter half of the decade.

Beginning in 1852 the *Western Watchmen* began to print more articles that focused positively on the free black population in Missouri. The editor of the *Watchmen*, William Crowell, wrote a piece on the Second Colored Baptist Church fair in St. Louis. Without explicitly charging whites, Crowell insinuates that fairs “to our sorrow . . . under the name of *religion and benevolence* . . . [have] caused more evil than good,” but this black church is different and worth commendation. Crowell even urged his readers to cheer and “*materially*” encourage the congregation.³⁶ In another article on African American Baptists in New Orleans, Louisiana, the *Western Watchmen* praised three blacks who willingly gave cash to aid in the

³⁵“The Free Colored People of the U. States,” *Western Watchmen* (St. Louis, MO), July 17, 1851.

³⁶ William Crowell, “Second Colored Baptist Church Fair,” *Western Watchmen* (St. Louis, MO), December 30, 1852. Italics are from the original.

construction of a new church while chastising whites who have rarely “shown such open-handed liberality.”³⁷ In some cases, the titles of the articles moved away from the dry and simplistic tone commonly used and go so far as to extol the “Commendable Zeal of Colored Baptists.”³⁸ There was no identifiable reason for the shift from colonization to acceptance within the state, but that there is a shift is undeniable. Part of the issue could be the increasing polarization occurring amongst all people in the United States as the rhetoric from the North and the South became progressively worse. The *Western Baptist* could just have followed the beliefs of its editor William Crowell, who unlike other contributors to the paper penned his name with one of the above pro-black articles. Even William Jewell’s 1852 will followed this paternalistic pattern in that he freed his male slave who could fend for himself as a blacksmith.

1852 also began the decline of the *Western Watchmen*. Though the newspaper would last until 1861, its antislavery rhetoric, presumably coupled with Bleeding Kansas, would decrease its circulation. Even the Missouri Baptist Historical Society at William Jewell College only has documents of the *Western Watchman* up to 1854. While only speculation, this is presumably due to the proximity of the college to Lawrence and Osawatomie, Kansas, and the violent attacks against proslavery Missourians under the direction of Jayhawkers. From 1849 to 1854, however, the *Western Watchmen* guided Missouri Baptists in a different direction than their coreligionists of the Deep South. The paper was influenced by an audience that relied less on slavery for economic subsistence and was troubled more by the inherent conflict between slavery and Baptist theology.

Taking a tour of William Jewell College today, the Cardinal Blazer taking you around the college grounds will tell you how Jewell Hall, the oldest building on campus, was used by both

³⁷ “Colored Baptists,” *Western Watchmen* (St. Louis, MO), November 18, 1852.

³⁸ S., “Commendable Zeal of the Colored Baptists,” *Western Watchmen* (St. Louis, MO), September 9, 1852.

the North and South during the Civil War. This demonstrates perfectly the middle ground that Baptists made up during the antebellum era and into the war. Missouri's unique position at what was then the American frontier influenced the religious, political, and social landscape of the state. Slavery and economics in Missouri before the Civil War were quite different than in the plantation South. This meant that the Southern Baptist Convention would deal with religion in the two areas differently, which would then cause Missourians to interpret their position within the Baptist ideology unique from their Southern brethren. After migration into the frontier state began to slow and the agriculture and urban infrastructure became established, slavery lost its primary use. The South could not accept Garrisonian Abolitionism without distancing themselves from the Southern Baptist Convention. Missouri Baptists could, however, adopt a gradual approach to emancipation through colonization. Liberia solved two problems for Missouri Baptists; it settled the problem of slavery and sent free blacks out of the state and out of the country. As conflict became more apparent and increased tensions between the North and the South, Missouri was caught between the polarizing fields. William Crowell, editor of the *Western Watchmen*, took the antislavery position and ended up losing circulation and, eventually his newspaper in 1861, as his readers aligned themselves more with the Southern slaveholding platform. William Jewell College's subscription to the *Western Watchmen* ended in 1854, two years after William Jewell's death. 1854 marks the year that bloodshed between Kansas and Missouri began in earnest over Kansas' position against slavery. These two events could be coincidental, but their proximity to one another on the timeline suggests that the college which William Jewell wanted to establish as a moral guidepost upon "The Hill" failed in its original mission.

CHAPTER 3: Frontier Missouri Attitudes on Slavery from Secular Sources

Though Christianity was especially important in the South, with a large majority of Christians classifying themselves as Baptist, it is important not to stereotype all southern Baptists as stringent in their theological beliefs as those described above. On the opposite side of Missouri from St. Louis along the banks of the Missouri River, Westport was establishing itself as an important stop for traders as they moved beyond the union into the frontier. Just twenty miles south of William Jewell College and barely north of Kansas City, Westport found itself in the midst of border fights for and against slavery. Debates over state and territorial rights were becoming more and more violent. Citizens all over the country were losing the luxury of indecision over slavery. Those citizens who lived in the border states between the North and the South and between the Union and the territories began to look at the conflict as less an issue over slavery but at the very core of constitutional rights, and thus, inherent rights to all white Americans. Beginning in 1858, H. M. M'Carty began publishing *The Border Star*, a weekly secular newspaper based out of Westport, Missouri. Whereas the Baptist affiliated *Western Watchmen* was publishing articles that supported the racial ideology that underpinned pro-slavery thought, its arguments for the peculiar institution were less harsh and advocated a gradual approach to abolition. Articles in *The Border Star* were much more consistent with the Deep South in their rhetoric. Their general tone was also much more accusatory of the North,

often times printing only quotes from Northern politicians and preachers who were opposed to slavery. Like most proslavery language, *The Border Star* depicted both its newspaper and the region it spoke for as on the defense from a vicious Northern neighbor who would stop at nothing to rid the South of slaves and state rights guaranteed by the Constitution.

Few things gave the Westport weekly more fodder for accusations against the North than the bloody conflict between proslavery forces in Missouri and those who sought to restrict the spread of slavery in Kansas. The second publication of *The Border Star*, an article entitled “To President’s Message” references the incumbent president, James Buchanan’s, third State of the Union Address. The paper was pleased with Buchanan’s stance on slavery in the territories, which they described as “a sound, conservative, national position.” By using the phrase “national” they seemed to foreshadow the violent future in store for the nation with the election of a president who sought the abolition, albeit gradually, of slavery. What is more notable for the purpose of this paper, though, is the final two sentences, which read: “We like this message better than any political document we have read for years, and one reason is that it *says nothing about Kansas*. When ‘Kansas’ is dropped from our vocabulary we may hope for political peace.”¹ Whether through forgetfulness of this statement, specious use of pathos-laced rhetoric, or proximity to Kansas, *The Border Star* would forget its own advice. The violence that had defined Kansas just three years before became a constant news piece in this paper.

The St. Louis-based *Western Watchmen* spoke for a more centrist Baptist audience while Westport’s *Border Star* spoke for a more vociferously conservative audience. The latter’s importance for examining public opinion on the western border of Missouri cannot be overemphasized, but it should be noted that it was not the sole newspaper speaking for the region. A smaller newspaper based out of Liberty, *The Liberty Tribune*, would offer a less

¹ “To President’s Message,” *The Border Star* (Westport, MO), January 7, 1859.

pugnacious alternative to print news. Widely circulated in Liberty, the *Tribune* was important as a counter-voice to the *Border Star*. It was not, however, large enough to be noticed by the *Star*, whereas the St. Joseph-based *St. Joseph West* frequently came under attack by the Westport weekly for its pro-Republican leanings.²

Westport and Liberty had been founded for different purposes. Liberty was first populated by Mormon residents from Ohio hoping to eventually set up headquarters for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in 1830. After their brutal expulsion, the establishment of the Second Baptist Church of Liberty in 1843, and the founding of William Jewell College in 1849, the town grew around Baptist tradition and professionals both for the college and in law. Westport, on the other hand, with its place on the Missouri River, was meant as a port to act as St. Louis once had, a stepping stone onto the frontier. Trade was crucial to the local economy. With both pro- and antislavery sympathizers moving from Missouri into Kansas leading up to and during the bloody Kansas conflicts, Westport saw itself as an important way station for over the border migration. What will follow will mirror much of the same scholarship done on the *Western Watchmen*. However, instead of the *Border Star* being supplemented by like minded sources, it will be tempered by the *Liberty Tribune*. The reason for this slight alteration in methodology is to keep an oblique focus on Baptists while comparing the central focus of this section, more secular minded Missourians. The more liberal Southern approach shown in the second section of this thesis was dependent on two different aspects, the first described above is the nature of commerce and agriculture in Missouri. These two secular newspapers are used as a control to show how Baptist faith in particular guided its frontier congregations to a more gradual emancipationist political platform. Baptists living on the frontier of the nation stood out as a voice of reason exhorting both the North and the South to assuage their anguish toward one

² “St. Joseph West,” *The Border Star* (Westport, MO), November 12, 1859

another guided by their religious ethics and that they were not as reliant on slavery for their economic prosperity.

The newspapers alone are not enough to present an accurate snapshot of the citizens without an understanding of the population from the 1860 census records. The *Western Watchmen* published in St. Louis, had the largest reading audience in Missouri through sheer size of the population residing in the Gateway City. In 1860, St. Louis had a population of 160,773 people, which comprised nearly fourteen percent of the aggregate 1.182 million people living in Missouri at the time. Of the 160,773 residents of St. Louis, there were only 1,542 slaves who made up less than one percent of St. Louis' inhabitants.³ Given how insignificant the slave population was to Missouri, it is not surprising that the city would produce a newspaper that took a more centrist approach to the question of slavery as it was and as it would be in the future. St. Louis was also home to large populations of German and Irish immigrants with less invested in the idea of states' rights and slavery in general. The aversion of recent immigrants to divisive American politics also meant that St. Louis-based newspapers were more accurate in their descriptions of free black and slave migration to the North.⁴ As expected, population numbers were significantly smaller across the state on the frontier border.

There are two ways to examine the population statistics for the audiences of *The Border Star* and *The Liberty Tribune*. These are county statistics for Jackson County and Clay County and city statistics for Westport and Liberty, respectively. Starting with county statistics, Jackson County had a total population of 22,887. The slave population numbered at 3,944, putting them at seventeen percent of the populace. Clay County had a total head count of 13,023 with a slave

³ Joseph C. G. Kennedy, *Population of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census, Under the Direction of the Secretary of the Interior*, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1864), 297.

⁴ Harriet C. Frazier, *Runaway and Freed Missouri Slaves and Those who Helped Them, 1763-1865* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2004), 17.

population of 3,455, comprising twenty-six percent of the populace.⁵ Liberty had a total population of 2,405 with 829 slaves making them thirty-four percent of the populace. It is interesting to note that even though *The Border Star* had a larger circulation, Westport was a smaller city than Liberty. Westport's population stood at 1,195 with only 134 slaves, making them just eleven percent of the population. Even when you expand the population statistics to include the two largest cities – and the other two primary recipients of *The Border Star* – in Jackson County, Kansas City and Independence, the percentage of slaves to the white population remains the same with a total tri-city population of 8,778.⁶ The census records for these areas help place the various newspapers examined into context.

It is not surprising that Westport, Kansas City, and Independence had a smaller ratio of the free white population to slaves than did Liberty. The passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854 brought proslavery whites – but not necessarily slaveholders – from all around Missouri and the greater South. The act allowed for incoming territories to vote on whether or not they would enter the Union as a free or a slave state. Immigrants came through Kansas City, Westport, and Independence on their way to Lecompton, the territorial capital of Kansas. These three cities were also waypoints for anti-slavery immigrants with the opposite idea to vote Kansas into the Union as a free state. The residents who settled in Jackson County were comprised largely of these non-slaveholding immigrants, but as Missouri was already a slave state, those who stayed tended to have pro-slavery leanings. These Southern sympathizers were especially resistant to anything that resembled free-soil or abolition. This philosophy is thus reflected quite vehemently in *The Border Star*. None of the above is entirely surprising, what is though, is Liberty's thirty-four percent slave population in a primarily Baptist town espousing a

⁵ Kennedy, 286. These numbers include two registered Indians in Westport as labeled on the census.

⁶ Kennedy, 286.

gradualist approach to abolition. Slave labor was important for building the infrastructure of Liberty as it grew and for maintaining the agriculture residents needed for sustenance on the west side of Missouri's Little Dixie. They also supported slavery as result of tradition of their forebears and then became disillusioned with the bloodshed so close to home caused by the peculiar institution. To understand better the cognitive dissonance of Liberty residents, we turn now to a comparative analysis of *The Liberty Tribune* and *The Border Star* through their reporting on John Brown and the events surrounding Bleeding Kansas and their ideas on and reactions to Southern secession from the United States.

Adorning a wall in the Kansas Capitol Building in Topeka is a mural depicting a larger than life man towering over the men around him. His arms are outstretched and in his bloody hands he carries a Bible and a rifle. His stance is strong as he seems to be moving forward among the lifeless corpses of Union and Confederate soldiers at his feet. The most striking feature of this man is his face; his eyes are stern, affixed on some unknown point in the distance, his mouth agape commanding those around him as he speaks words as unknown as the focus of his gaze. His beard moved by the wind. His entire posture depicts violent motion. Even the background is filled with violence, whether from the Civil War soldiers meeting each other in battle, the plainsmen crawling over the land bent-double from the weight of their journey, or the prairie fires raging over his left shoulder and the tornado rending the land over his right shoulder. Commissioned in the 1930s, *Tragic Prelude* was painted over two years, being completed in 1940 by muralist and painter John Steuart Curry. The man at the center of the painting, labeled both terrorist and freedom fighter, is none other than John Brown: the man who would be tried and executed for treason over his attempted raid at Harper's Ferry and whose name and story would be put to the music that would later accompany the Union's *Battle Hymn of the Republic*.

The man who also became a central figure in the violence and bloodshed that would plague Kansas in the decade prior to the Civil War.

In Nicole Etcheson's introduction to her monograph *Bleeding Kansas*, she describes the basic idea of the 1854 Kansas-Nebraska act as follows: "Popular sovereignty, the principle of the Kansas bill, built on the belief that the balance between personal freedom and government ought to tilt toward the former."⁷ This meant that individuals with interests in turning Kansas into a slave state and individuals with interests in turning Kansas into a free-state would clash as they both moved en masse over Missouri's border into the Kansas Territory. Moving into this territory for the abolitionist cause was John Brown, a figure who would gain commendation for his defense of antislavery forces at Osawatomie, Kansas, and rancor for his slaughter of proslavery forces at Pottawatomie Creek.

The beginnings of Bleeding Kansas would begin to find ink in *The Liberty Tribune* on August 15, 1856. The article entitled "Trouble in Kansas" uses neutral language to describe the skirmishes between pro- and antislavery forces near Osawatomie, Kansas, two weeks before the Battle of Osawatomie. It reports that Brown and his company of abolitionists "made an attack on the Colony of New Georgia, and burned down the place." The only word charged with negative connotation is reserved for "the treachery of Ottawa Jones, an Indian."⁸ John Tecumsah "Ottawa" Jones was a close compatriot of John Brown and it was on Jones' reserve of land in the Kansas Territory where many of Brown's filibusters planned and executed their actions.⁹ The paper printed the article in response to Brown's destruction of proslavery settlers' houses and

⁷ Nicole Etcheson, *Bleeding Kansas: Contested Liberty in the Civil War Era* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 2.

⁸ "Trouble in Kansas," *The Liberty Tribune* (Liberty, Missouri), August 15, 1856.

⁹ David S. Reynolds, *John Brown, Abolitionist: The Man Who Killed Slavery, Sparked the Civil War, and Seeded Civil Rights* (New York: Vintage Books, 2005), 170.

farm equipment in Osawatimie.¹⁰ These actions were precipitated months earlier by the sacking of Lawrence by proslavery, self-styled Border Ruffians.

Citizens along the Missouri-Kansas border prior to May of 1856 fell in line with the Southern ideology of states rights and bringing in Kansas as a slaveholding member of the Union. On reporting the events leading up to and after the sack of Lawrence in May, *The Liberty Tribune* maintains its distance and gives only the basest of news. Interspersed in its writing are exhortations for “Missouri-Men” to know that this is “the beginning of the end” and the start of a war in Kansas. Proslavery forces should be ready to, if necessary, raze Lawrence to the ground along with any other abolitionist settlement in Kansas. There is a certain ambivalence stressed in the report, where the writers worry for the women and children of the Kansas Territory for the violence that had already arrived and the escalation that was sure to follow. The only solace then for the authors of the article is the belief that law was on their side. No moralistic arguments for slavery or states’ rights are given, nor is there the use of vitriolic language.¹¹ This ambivalence for the abolitionists assembled in the Kansas Territory would expand outside of the South as the sacking of Lawrence became “a moral victory for the free-state side.”¹²

The takeover of Lawrence resolved John Brown’s will against the usefulness of peaceful and gradual emancipation of slaves. Three days after the proslavery force’s victory in Lawrence, John Brown and a small group of men under the cover of night invaded the home of a proslavery settler and massacred him and his family. Soon known as the Pottawatomie massacre, historian Thomas Goodrich would describe it as the beginning of a civil war that would send the frontier

¹⁰ Etcheson, 121.

¹¹ “Later from Lawrence,” *The Liberty Tribune* (Liberty, Missouri), May 30, 1856.

¹² Etcheson, 105.

border between Kansas and Missouri into bloody contention that would last into the Civil War.¹³ As important as these initial confrontations between the two opposing forces converging on Kansas, *The Liberty Tribune* does not reference them in May nor does the Pottawatomie Massacre gain any attention until August, when the paper obliquely mentions Brown and his actions. The article in question focuses on the tribulations of a landholder in the Kansas Territory who had been driven away by “Brown’s band.” White’s “only offence was that he was opposed to revolution and denounced the Potowatomie massacre.”¹⁴ This article was published one week after the one above, which is important in its first mention of John Brown and his policies of terror in the Kansas Territory and across the border in Missouri. Why would John Brown only enter the news of the *Liberty Tribune* three months after the Sacking of Lawrence and the subsequent Pottawatomie Massacre? If one follows the very legalistic writing that the Liberty-based newspaper used in passing judgment on the carnage, it is not a far logical leap to assume that the editor of the paper, Mr. Robt. H. Miller, sought to report the news of the territories without inciting unrest among his readers.

After the inclusion of John Brown and Martin White in the same article published in the August 22 edition of *The Liberty Tribune*, the two would not be in the newspaper again until another article printed on the same encounter between the men was given more detail ten weeks later in the November 28 printing of the weekly. The article is a reprinting of “Poor Martin White” from a newspaper with only its name given, the *South-West Democrat*. The paper expressed pleasure in being able to interview Martin White in person and described him as “a true specimen of a Border Ruffian,” the title that proslavery forces gave themselves as they moved into Kansas. White describes his encounter with Brown for the interviewer in what seems

¹³ Thomas Goodrich, *Bloody Dawn: The Story of the Lawrence Massacre* (Kent, Oh.: The Kent State University Press, 1991), 3.

¹⁴ “Latest from the Territory,” *The Liberty Tribune* (Liberty, Missouri), August 22, 1856.

like apocryphal language and grandiose heroism against John Brown's band of abolitionists. Whereas the article published in August states that Martin White was forced off of his land, this new printing states that Brown and his forces found the one man "too many for them" and retired a short distance to fire a volley against White's house, destroy his property, and flee to Osawatomie.¹⁵ While the second article is from a separate newspaper, the *Liberty Tribune* chose to reprint it. There is no other addendum to the article like those found in the *Western Watchmen* explaining the *Tribune*'s position on the article. Both the gap in time between each article's publication and the different stories they tell are worth noting. It is interesting that the *Liberty* newspaper did not correct or explain the discrepancies in the two tales of Martin White's encounter with John Brown and his gang of abolitionists. This shows that the people of *Liberty* did harbor sympathy for states' rights and non-violence in Kansas Territory. Since the *Border Star* was not in publication at the time, it also shows how other newspapers separate from the *Liberty Tribune* describe the events in Kansas. In "Poor Martin White," hyperbole and pathos work together to conjure sympathy from the audience for the proslavery settlers in Kansas Territory. The tale of one man fighting off many suggests courage in the face of the unjust and ruthless. For his part, John Brown told his men not to harass Martin White and repeatedly spoke against the threat of death toward White.¹⁶ Neither of these newspapers point out that White killed Frederick Brown, one of John Brown's sons.¹⁷

John Brown receives quite a few more descriptive words in his first mention in the December 31, 1858, edition of *The Border Star* than anything written on him in *The Liberty*

¹⁵ "Poor Martin White," *The Liberty Tribune* (Liberty, Missouri), November 28, 1856. I searched for information on the *South-West Democrat* but could not find anything about where it was printed or whom it was affiliated with beyond the name.

¹⁶ Oswald Garrison Villard, *John Brown 1800-1859: A Biography Fifty Years After* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1910), 357.

¹⁷ Villard, 356. Villard uses the word "murder" for describing the death of Frederick Brown at the hands of Martin White. As the shooting occurred during a skirmish near Pottawatomie, I have chosen to use the less connotatively charged word "killed" as both sides sought to harm the other.

Tribune. The article opens with the following statement: “Again we are called upon to chronicle the fact of another invasion of our State by Kansas robbers and assassins.” This “band of thieves and assassins from the territory” killed a Missouri slaveholder and “stole a lot of cattle, some twenty horses and eleven negroes, five of which were the property of Isaac B. LaRue.” Not only did Brown enter the “Sovereian [sic] State of Missouri” to cause harm, but he also stole human property. The article ends by imploring the governor of Missouri to protect the citizens of the state and do something about these continued outrages against the citizenry.¹⁸ There is an immediate change in the type of rhetoric used to report on John Brown and the violence occurring in Kansas Territory.

John Brown was a prominent and well-known figure along the Missouri-Kansas border, so it should come as no surprise the relief expressed in the newspapers upon hearing of John Brown’s injury and arrest after his raid on the arsenal at Harper’s Ferry on October 16, 1859. Both the *Liberty* and *Westport* weeklies first reported the news based off of the same telegraphed messages in their publications of October 21 and 22, respectively. The *Tribune*’s headline reads “Insurrection at Harper’s Ferry. Negroes and Whites in Arms! Insurrection led by Old Brown of Kansas,” compared to the much more succinct “Big Mob at Harper’s Ferry: Negros and Whites engaged, with Old John Brown at their head” in the *Star*.¹⁹ The headline language of the *Liberty Tribune* follows their trend of neutral reporting. An insurrection has much less meaning to a population already charged against John Brown and his abolitionist ideology than the image of a mob. Whereas an insurrection suggests planning and strength, a mob alludes only to a frenzied and anarchic grab for power at the federal arsenal. The papers received the same information via cable from the east coast, so their central reporting of the event is not different in its content. *The*

¹⁸ “Startling Intelligence,” *The Border Star* (Westport, MO), December 31, 1858.

¹⁹ “Insurrection at Harper’s Ferry,” *The Liberty Tribune* (Liberty, MO), October 21, 1859. “Big Mob at Harper’s Ferry,” *The Border Star* (Westport, MO), October 22, 1859.

Border Star, however, passed its judgment on the event where *The Liberty Tribune* chose to remain silent. The *Star* concluded with its hopes for John Brown and his affiliates: “It is supposed that the rioters will be tried under martial law as soon as captured, and hung on the spot.” It is true that John Brown would be convicted of treason for his role in the attack on the government-owned facility, but his execution would not happen until six weeks later on December 2.

In the weeks immediately following the failed raid at Harpers Ferry, both the *Liberty Tribune* and the *Border Star* printed a series of articles on John Brown, ranging from strictly news of his actions before and during his raid to portents of Northern usurpation of Southern states’ rights. The Liberty-based weekly during this time shows a willingness to reprint articles from eastern newspapers. One from Baltimore (a newspaper name is not given) is representative of passive reporting of the news, meaning that for all intents and purposes, there was no part of the original publication or the subsequent reprinting meant to incite further rhetoric or action against either John Brown or his antislavery ideology. The article describes John Brown’s last moments in the armory and then lists specific details relating to the raid including those involved, funds raised, and potential charges to be brought. One detail of note is a discovered letter from Gerrit Smith informing Brown of deposits into a New York-based account presumably as a donation to Brown’s mission in Virginia.²⁰ The October 28, 1859, edition includes several more articles relating to Brown, both written by the *Tribune* and other newspapers, primarily from the New England area. One Liberty journalist wrote a quick blurb on Brown’s feelings regarding a trial in which the mastermind behind the plot in Virginia asked that “they execute him immediately without the mockery of a trial.”²¹ On the same page, another

²⁰ “Latest from the Insurrection,” *The Liberty Tribune* (Liberty, MO), October 28, 1859.

²¹ “The Trial of Old John Brown,” *The Liberty Tribune* (Liberty, MO), October 28, 1859.

article reprinted in whole Brown's address to the court in which he spoke for himself in taking responsibility for his actions, showed no remorse and made the request not to be "foolishly insulted as cowardly barbarians insult those who fall into power."²² Even bearing the pain of three blade wounds in his body and a saber wound to his forehead, John Brown confronted the South and demanded that it take his actions as more than that of a simple madman. The final mention of Brown in this weekly is a reprinted advertisement for and excerpt from a future publication of a new biography entitled *The Latest Movements of Ossawatimie Brown* under the aegis of the Chicago Press. Though John Brown remained the scourge of frontier Missouri for many Southerners, his story attracted enough attention in the Baptist city that the Liberty weekly marketed a northern published biography of his life. I was unable to find any extant versions of this early account of John Brown's life.

The following day, the Westport *Border Star* published two very different articles on John Brown. The first entitled simply *The Insurgents* was a brief paragraph that described the conspiracy against Harper's Ferry. The *Star* claimed that the plot extended "throughout a portion of Ohio, New England, and some towns in Pennsylvania."²³ Letters were used to construct this network in which the actors in the scheme sought material aid in weapons – axes, swords, and firearms - and monetary assistance. While the *Liberty Tribune* only mentions the North when describing the New York bank in which Gerrit Smith deposited funds for Brown, the *Border Star* insinuates a larger conspiracy in three specific Northern states. By doing this, the plot against Harper's Ferry is portrayed as a much more nefarious plan by the free-states to wreak havoc against the Southern chattel system. By itself, this may seem like a sizeable logical leap, though when coupled with the next article relating to John Brown, it is clear that the Westport weekly

²² "Trial of the Insurgents," *The Liberty Tribune* (Liberty, MO), October 28, 1859.

²³ "The Insurgents," *The Border Star* (Westport, MO), October 29, 1859.

sought to create an atmosphere of paranoia for its readers. In “The Designs of Black Republicans,” the *Border Star* began by linking the Republican Party ideologically with John Brown, a connection which was never made by either group. The *Star* wrote that the Republicans “preach what Brown practices,” and to prove their point, it gave quotes from prominent Northern politicians speaking against slavery.²⁴ Included is this notable statement from William H. Seward: “There is a higher law than the Constitution, which regulates our authority over the domain, SLAVERY MUST BE ABOLISHED AND WE MUST DO IT.”²⁵ God and moral Christian ethics represented the higher authority for Seward, which overrode the claimed Constitutional acceptance of and therefore justification for slavery. The *Border Star* made a distinct shift to more inflammatory rhetoric in their stories. Republicans were not the only faction associated with Brown.

After Harper’s Ferry, Brown’s name was used to sully the character of anyone who spoke or acted against slavery. Politicians were not the only target for proslavery Southerners, but any newspaper that sought to disrupt or discredit the peculiar institution within slaveholding borders singled itself out for retaliation from local residents. When this situation occurred in Covington, Kentucky, the *Border Star* would refer to it as “The Nuisance.” The article is worth quoting at length for the reader to appreciate the full range of pathos used to demonize the Northern abolitionist who sought to undermine the peaceful and divinely sanctioned Southern foundation.

The telegraph informed us of the “mobbing” of an abolition paper at Covington, Ky., and the announcement has been followed by a series of howls and shrieks from the “Republican” press throughout the North, East and West.

The facts connected with this “mobbing” are just these:

Some time since a fellow by the name of Bailey came on to Kentucky from some free State and started an abolition paper at Covington. We forget the original name of the vile

²⁴ “The Designs of Black Republicans,” *The Border Star* (Westport, MO), October 29, 1859.

²⁵ The capitalization is taken from the newspaper. There are other quotes, including one from Gerrit Smith, but this section of the *Border Star* is nearly incomprehensible as the quoted text is much smaller and considerably faded.

sheet. . . Bailey was not only an abolitionist in politics, but a free-thinking, God-defying infidel in religion, and coarsely ridiculed everything that Kentuckians and all other decent people held in respect and reverence.

This characterization of Bailey was contrasted against the picture painted of the virtuous and frustrated citizens of Covington. The article continued:

The people of Covington long bore with its insults and falsehoods, rather than lay themselves open to the charge of mobocracy by dealing with it as it deserved. It never had any support in Kentucky – its friends and backers all being from Ohio and the North. . . Upon the recent outbreak at Harper’s Ferry, this man Bailey and his “Free South” gave such unmistakeable indications of sympathy with Old Brown and his villainous crew, that the people of Covington called a meeting to consult as to what was their duty in the premises.²⁶

Only after a significant exertion of self-control, the people of Covington, Kentucky, according to the *Border Star*, acted as anyone could after such badgering; they congregated together against the publishing house, dismantled the press and made it so Bailey could no longer spout his venom against the God-fearing and God-accepted people of the South. The author of this article attempts to do what comes naturally to the writers for the *Liberty Tribune*, to write with journalistic objectivity. Before he stated that he was giving nothing but the facts, he had already placed himself firmly politically by classifying Northern complaints against the citizens of Kentucky as “howls and shrieks.” By claiming that these emotional responses were coming from all cardinal directions of the American land except for the South, the author obliquely states that only those who are proslavery, or living in the South, are on the side of God. According to the *Border Star*, the final straw for the people of Covington was Bailey’s siding with John Brown after the events of October 16. When “decent” folk were under siege for so long, it was only natural that the good citizens of this innocent Kentucky town would eventually give the *Free*

²⁶ “The Nuisance Abated,” *The Border Star* (Westport, MO), November 19, 1859.

South newspaper its comeuppance.²⁷ This is what the Westport weekly wanted its audience to believe. In this sense, *The Border Star* followed the normal trend of paradoxical proslavery rhetoric in the South. Southerners were taught to believe that the state of nature for Africans and their descendants was a state of bondage. The cruel institution of slavery was for the benefit of the enslaved. This type of thinking established a foundation for thought that allowed the *Border Star* to claim the mob ransacking of a newspaper as justified, in direct contrast to the villainous mob attack against Harper's Ferry.

Choosing John Brown to establish the positions of these two newspapers is a natural decision. His abolitionist stance put him in the extreme already for proslavery Southerners, but his cynicism toward the possibility of gradual emancipation put him in the extreme for antislavery Northerners as well. His extremism and the violent ways in which he took action meant that he should have acted as a polarizing figure. The Westport *Border Star* painted John Brown, his actions, and his philosophy on slavery in the worst possible light. The paper used language designed to incite rage in the reading populace of Jackson County. Just one county north, in an area more dependent on slave labor and tied more to the land, the rhetoric against John Brown comes across relatively neutral. *The Liberty Tribune* published articles without the bellicose prose of its Westport peer and remained closer to strict reporting of facts. While the *Liberty Tribune* does not go as far as to show John Brown in a positive light, its response to his person in its news was far more tempered than the *Border Star*. It can be surmised that one of the factors that contributed to this uncharacteristic difference in reporting is religion. Liberty had Baptist roots stretching to the 1830s and had cemented its full Baptist stance in 1849 with the establishment of William Jewell College. Westport, as has already been stated, attracted

²⁷ In the introduction of the article, the author does not deign to give Bailey's newspaper a name. It is only later in the article that the reader becomes aware of an assumed name for the paper, being the *Free South*.

wayfarers and “Border Ruffians” seeking to turn the Kansas Territory into a slave state. In posterity, John Brown would become a prominent character in antebellum narratives on the slavery debate. The negative image of John Brown exists in small enclaves in the present where he is often attributed to early forms of domestic terrorism.²⁸ In 1964, the Black Nationalist leader Malcolm X stated in an interview with *Ebony* that no whites would be allowed in his newly formed “Organization of Afro-American Unity.” Though, Malcolm X added, “If John Brown were [sic] still alive, we might accept him.”²⁹ Paralleling John Brown’s frustration with the gradual emancipationist approach, Malcolm X preached a similar self-defense tactic in the fight for African American civil rights. In his biography of John Brown, W. E. B. Du Bois attributed to Brown greater “unselfish devotion and heroic self-realization” than “Benezet, Garrison, and Harriet Stowe; Sumner, Douglas and Lincoln.”³⁰ Standing in front of *Tragic Prelude* in Topeka, my tour guide proudly proclaimed that John Brown is the only American convicted of treason to be depicted in any medium in the state capitol building.³¹ This larger than life figure casts a long and divisive shadow over the history of frontier Missouri and Kansas. John Brown was born in Connecticut and thus his movements in the South were seen as a nuisance and an invasion from the North. The possibility and threat of secession represents an issue that struck closer to home for both of these newspapers. Once again, the *Liberty Tribune* and the *Border Star* show large discrepancies in thought.

After the presidential election of 1860, many Southern states proclaimed that if Abraham Lincoln were to become the United States’ next president, they would have no choice but to secede from the union. Most vociferous among the slave states was South Carolina, a state with a

²⁸ Ken Chowder, “The Father of American Terrorism,” *American Heritage* 51:1 (Feb/Mar 2000), 68.

²⁹ Hans J. Massaquoi, “Mystery of Malcolm X,” *Ebony* (September 1964), 40.

³⁰ W. E. B. Du Bois, *John Brown* (New York: Modern Library, 2001), 3.

³¹ This is an interesting claim that I have yet been able to substantiate, though in all probability, it is most likely true.

lot to lose with the abolition of slavery. Missouri was less unified as a citizenry on thoughts of secession. While a topic of interest before the election, after it became clear that Lincoln would defeat Stephen Douglas, John Breckinridge, and John Bell in the presidential election, the *Liberty Tribune* began in earnest to publish articles and editorials on secession and Missouri's fate with the Union. In the November 11, 1860, publication of the paper, there were no less than eleven articles in the weekly's four pages relating to disunion. Most prominent of these is a reprinting from the *St. Louis Republican* entitled "Shall St. Louis Speak for the Union?" The article began by stating Southern states, as a result of Lincoln taking the nation's highest office, were beginning movements toward secession. To the *St. Louis Republican* these actions were based off emotions and not being considered to their full logical conclusion. The article stated, "The parties to them seem so far under the dominion of section passions, that they stop not for a moment to inquire whether Secession is a remedy for any alleged grievances, much less do they take time to consider the consequences." The *St. Louis* paper proclaimed that those in favor of secession are "forgetful that the disruption of a nation of brothers is a violation of all the laws of nature, of morality, and of religion." Most important for their readers to understand is that "Missouri does not unite with them [secessionists] in their desperate schemes." These early sentences are all fairly vague and it is only near the end of the article that South Carolina and Georgia are blamed for the stirrings of discontent. The paper does not deny that Missouri may yet join these states in favor of disunion, but they claimed that to do so months before Abraham Lincoln took office was premature. The reason for his election, the paper lamented, was because of Southern factionalism; Southerners were at fault for his rise to the position of Commander in Chief. Alabama and Mississippi immediately came forward in support of Georgia and South Carolina's claim to disunion. Three states remained silent on disunion, Virginia, North Carolina,

and Louisiana. The presses of Kentucky, Tennessee and Maryland had all professed the same position as Missouri against premature secession. The *St. Louis Republican* expressed trust in the American government to maintain a balance of power to keep Lincoln from stripping Southern states of their slaveholding rights. Lastly, the paper declared that it would be foolish to act against Lincoln as he was the most capable Northerner to speak on behalf of the Southerners to repeal the Personal Liberty Laws of the North. These laws were intended to nullify the Fugitive Slave Acts.³² Unlike most reprinted articles, this one from the opposite side of the state had no explanation or sentiment given from an editor or writer for the *Liberty Tribune*. That is not enough to conclude that the Liberty newspaper was against Southern secession by itself. Yet, the choice of articles relating to the potential dissolution of the United States following the above declaration is enough to state that the *Liberty Tribune* and presumably its audience were opposed to the extreme rhetoric of their Southern neighbors.

Following this declaration of Missouri's position within the Union, the next item related to Southern secession by analyzing events that occurred in Washington. It suggested that the "moneyed and mercantile interests" were standing behind the federal government. With them, representatives from the border slave states were questioning the legality of South Carolina and Georgia's proposed secession. And like Missouri, "Virginia is by no means favorable to the precipitate actions of South Carolina."³³ A reprinting of an article showing the excitement in Columbia, South Carolina, over the prospect of disunion who met it with considerable disfavor from the *Liberty Tribune*. The Liberty paper repined that "If she could not accomplish [the destruction of the Union] otherwise, she would throw her arms around the pillars of the

³² "Shall St. Louis Speak for the Union?" *The Liberty Tribune* (Liberty, MO), November 23, 1860.

³³ "From Washington," *The Liberty Tribune* (Liberty, MO), November 23, 1860.

Constitution, and involve all the states in common ruin.”³⁴ This statement created a sense that there is no benefit to the South if the slaveholding states were to secede, while also testifying that the North and the South need one another so that the United States may retain the vitality of the nation. This is in direct opposition to the views expressed by *The Border Star*, which stated that the South would be more than capable of maintaining itself on a trans-Atlantic scale separate from Northern industry. The *Liberty Tribune* had not given up hope that Southern states who had spoken in favor of disunion would be totally lost. As mentioned above, Alabama made stirrings toward the side of South Carolina and Georgia on secession. However, the *Liberty Tribune* decreed that United States Senator Jeremiah Clemens of Alabama is “All Right” as a man whose “soul is fired with devotion to the Union.” For its readers, the Liberty weekly printed a speech given by Clemens to his constituency asserting that it is the citizen’s moral duty to stand against disunion.³⁵ All of these reprinted articles and the briefs given or omitted with them from the *Liberty Tribune* paint a substantial picture of the paper’s thoughts on secession. To allay all doubt, the Liberty weekly gave an editorial that was substantially longer than all of the blurbs hitherto mentioned.

This editorial column firmly placed the *Liberty Tribune*, and presumably its Liberty audience, outside of the accepted political parameters in both the North and the South. Within brackets at the beginning of this polemic is the single phrase “For the Tribune,” allowing the reader to assume that the following rhetoric is to openly state the opinion of the *Liberty Tribune*. The prose of the article is a repast from the emotional deluges shown above. It began by stating that the American people have convinced themselves that a Republican government is the best option for state longevity. Instead of being the easiest to maintain, “a system of civil government

³⁴ “From Charleston,” *The Liberty Tribune* (Liberty, MO), November 23, 1860.

³⁵ “Jeremiah Clemens is All Right,” *The Liberty Tribune* (Liberty, MO), November 23, 1860.

as the one under which we live, is from its very nature the most liable to be convulsed, and divided, imperiled, and obstructed,” because of “its subjects, [who] generally speaking, are more fickle, dogmatic, more irritable and obstreperous, than those of any other form of government, whether ancient or modern.” Criticizing the bellicose rhetoric that characterized both Northern and Southern parlance, the editorial continues that regardless of the economic comforts guaranteed by this wealthy nation, Americans “suffer ourselves to be carried away with the varied *ignis-fatuus* [will-o’-wisp] of our fevered imaginations, and with the strong currents of our impulsive nature.” Emotions have led Americans to forget at what cost their nation had been founded and have “place[d] a fictitious estimate upon our strength and security.” Missourians are as guilty as their brethren across the nation for this degenerative train of thought. Politics have succumbed to “braggadocio” as factions have become more concerned with their own agenda than America as a national whole. The editorial implores its audience to “enter vigorously upon the work of political regeneration.” The Constitution, described as “the great palladium of our civil and religious liberties,” is being “violently assailed.” The above dialogue is taken from the first three quarters of the column. It is not until the final quarter that the true nature of the threat is revealed:

The broad-sword of truth and reason, and the shield of conscientious rectitude, must be used by heads cool, and hearts brave and true. The fire-brands of Secession and Disunion must be forcibly snatched from the hands of every political traitor and incendiary and they must be quickly quenched in the fountains of national affection and purity. To permit sectional prejudices and party animosities to divide and alienate us in the hour of our country’s agony and trial, is the very climax of madness and ingratitude.

From this point on, the author exhorts its readers to solve the conflict hobbling the nation. The only way to accomplish this is to set passions aside and return to the foundation of the American liberties embedded in the Constitution. No longer should the political liberties afforded in this

country be taken for granted. The article is signed with the pen name *Unitas*.³⁶ While notable for its eloquence, this editorial is even more important for its sober call to Americans. Pathos is not used here to incite fanatical and violent sentiments but instead to force its readers to think about what has brought this nation to the brink of war. It is unique in its thoughtfulness. The newspaper, with this article, condemned the actions of John Brown simultaneously with the secessionists of South Carolina and Georgia. Whereas the oratory of the Fire-Eaters used and seen in the *Border Star* used repetition and negative association to malign its enemies, this article makes only one mention of its primary target, secessionists, and only oblique referenced the North. Even the pen name, *Unitas*, connotes that through thoughtful understanding and discussion between the North and the South will the nation have a chance at being united again. Though there is no direct appeal to religion, the writer does suggest that secession would tear at the “religious liberties” guaranteed by the Constitution. If the nation were to be dissolved, then each side would most likely establish religion based off of the schisms over sectional politics. The Constitution would no longer be the supreme law of the land. “For the Tribune” distinguishes the position of the Liberty newspaper in a way that none of the other articles in the same edition could. It represented a genuine appeal to the North and the South to set aside their anger and their differences and find a solution to the sectionalism that was rending the United States apart.

Unfortunately, the Kansas City Public Library’s collection of the *Border Star* extends only to September 1860. As such, there are no direct records of the Westport paper’s reaction to Abraham Lincoln’s election and the threat of secession that immediately followed. That is not to

³⁶ *Unitas*, “[For the Tribune],” *The Liberty Tribune* (Liberty, MO), November 23, 1860. The brackets surrounding the title are used in the title of the newspaper. I have included the full article in Appendix A due to its eloquent prose and the sobriety of its argument in a time otherwise filled with provocative rhetoric.

say that the weekly was silent on the possibility of disunion. There exist veiled threats to secession in the small amount of extant copies, enough that the *Border Star*'s position can be adequately depicted. The *Border Star* appealed to economics and the implications of disunion. The Westport paper challenged the Northern abolitionist – no specifics are given – claim that the hay crop provided enough agricultural revenue that the loss of cotton income from Southern secession would be of no consequence. For the *Border Star*, this is nothing more than an attempt uttered by the North to make disunion attractive. It goes on to argue that slave-grown cotton and its export through Boston, New York, and Philadelphia that made those cities so remarkable. The article concludes that “If the Union is destroyed it will be the abolition Republican party that will do it.”³⁷ This final sentence allows the paper's audience to believe that the proposition and potential action of secession is out of their hands. It also illustrates the irrationality that was inherent in talk of disunion which *Unitas* would lament nearly two years later. In this case, neither Northerner nor Southerner accepted their economic relation to one another. Each believed that independent from their sectional rival they would survive at the worst but would most likely be more successful without the other. Continuing the economic argument for the South, the *Border Star* claimed four months later that from the fifteen slaveholding states' the “improved estates, plantations, and farms within them were valued at more than a billion dollars” from the 1850 census. This land, the paper maintained, was half the value from all states and territories in the remainder of the Union while only occupying one quarter of the space. More valuable than this land, and what the North refused to understand, was the labor that worked it, over three million slaves. This represents the primary tension between the North and South according to the *Border Star*, which it called “The negro question.” The paper justified Southern slaveholding through the Constitution – the very document under threat according to *Unitas* –

³⁷ “Local News,” *The Border Star* (Westport, MO), January 21, 1859.

and individual state laws. For the Southerner, what was most tragic about this Northern position was the harm it did to the slaves, both for their life as property and what would become of them if they were to be freed. On secession, the article reads: “It is this negro question which causes Southern conventions to be denounced as assemblages of Disunionists, and the denunciation comes from the North.”³⁸ Once again, if the Union were to crumble, it is from the irresponsible actions of the North. For the *Border Star*, there is no other beneficial option to African Americans other than slavery.

Polemics against the North and for secession were written to create certain feelings in their audience. Making distinctions between a Northern culture and Southern culture allowed the feelings of otherness to develop. When Southerners claimed that their culture was under attack from the North, it put them on the defensive while simultaneously characterizing the Northern “other” as nefarious and intent upon Southern abrogation of rights. In this context, secession became the only way to protect the culture under threat and maintain independence from those who would seek to take Southern liberties away. Reprinted by the *Border Star* from the *Charleston Mercury*, “Why the Black Republicans are not Disunionists,” shows in writing how the South followed the above model to make an argument for secession. The article began on the assumption made by other Southern papers that Black Republicans – presumably anti-slavery Northern politicians – through their anti-slavery rhetoric seek to dismantle the Union by forcing the South to secede. The *Charleston Mercury* said that their plans are much more sinister than compelling the South to secede. What the Northerners wanted was the complete submission of the South to their political and cultural will; at the center of this compulsion, is the elimination of slavery, what Southerners claim as the foundation of their way of life. These Northerners espoused politics that seek “the reduction of the South a condition of dependence upon the will

³⁸ “The South and her Interests,” *The Border Star* (Westport, MO), May 13, 1859.

of the northern majority, in which her institutions may be adapted to their ideas of propriety.” What would the benefit to the North be? The South Carolina paper states through over taxation and exclusive trading rights with the South, the North would use their power of their brethren below the Mason-Dixon Line to strengthen their industry and commerce. Instead, the South would benefit doubly through secession: they would be able to maintain slavery indelibly and would concurrently cripple the economic infrastructure of the North, which they claimed relied on Southern cotton for its success. For this paper, the noble calls of the North against Southern secession as an attack on the fabric of the nation and the destruction of the constitution are all fallacious. “They denounce disunion as rebellion and treason against the will of the northern majority who hold the reins of empire and legislate for ‘the general welfare’ untrammelled by constitutional restrictions.”³⁹ While disunion may dissolve the Constitution in the eyes of Northerners, to the *Charleston Mercury*, it is the Northerners who would move against the spirit of the document first in their subversion of the South. While a reprinted article, it seems the *Border Star* believed the prose was clear enough to speak for itself. It is usually only when dissension in opinion occurs that a paper adds its thoughts on an article copied from a different paper.

None of these examples portray the Jackson County weekly as overtly secessionist. By trying to place fault with the North, it avoided culpability themselves. In describing a meeting called in Independence, Missouri, on the subject of saving the Union, the *Border Star* showed itself and its reading audience to be firmly against the idea of secession while hinting at the confused politics of those involved. The Hon. A. K. Marshall called the meeting in Independence and as described as “formerly democrat, more recently American, and at present – *we don’t-know what*.” It is a safe assumption to state that the *Border Star* leaned toward the antebellum

³⁹ “Why the Black Republicans are not Disunionists,” *The Border Star* (Westport, MO), June 10, 1859.

era's Democratic Party platform, thus by labeling Judge Marshall as a former Democrat and claiming his current position to be an enigma, the paper placed him outside of its political loyalties; he became an other. It continued by stating that Marshall was an upstanding individual who they would not normally discuss within their papers, but given his position among these "Union-Savers" they were compelled to. Its next move was to state it they did not doubt the patriotism of Marshall, nor should he doubt theirs, nor the patriotism of anyone else in Jackson County. If a meeting was to be called for the preservation of the Union, it should be called in the North, where there should also be "pledges to observe the requirements of law, to carry out in good faith the guarantees of the Constitution."⁴⁰ Even when stating its faithfulness to the United States, it found the opportunity to criticize and place blame on the North. The language that the *Border Star* employed was considerably different when reporting on secession than it was in its denunciation of John Brown. John Brown was an extremely divisive figure who was met with disapproval from the weeklies of Westport and Liberty. Secession was a much more sensitive subject. The direct feelings of the *Border Star* could not be given to the prospect of secession like it could say in reference to John Brown or their respect for fire-eaters.⁴¹ It seems that the very careful remarks made on the proposal of secession were all made understanding that the time would come that disunion would be unavoidable. By keeping its words and thoughts tame on the subject, the *Border Star* would be able to place all blame on the North. Since the records of the Westport weekly ended before the Presidential election of 1860 and the ensuing chaos, it is impossible to see how the rhetoric would change once secession became an immediate concern for South Carolina and Georgia. The idea of its sentiments is still important, however, especially

⁴⁰ "The Union-Savers," *The Border Star* (Westport, MO), February 18, 1860.

⁴¹ "[]," *The Border Star* (Westport, MO), June 10, 1860. The title is illegible. This article is interesting because it lauds a nameless former editor of the *Enquirer* who was a respectable Southern man and "fire-eater." However, the praise ends and attributes a bout of insanity to this man who no longer espouses Southern principles and has fallen in with the "proclivities" of the North.

when compared against *Unitas* and the position of the *Liberty Tribune*. Where one paper sought to place all censure on the North, the other paper stated that both sectional divisions should be equally impugned. Just twenty miles from one another, Liberty and Westport had established two very different attitudes on secession. How each responded to the increasingly polarizing political situation determined and was determined by the attitudes of their audience.

By 1860, Liberty had a slightly smaller population than Westport twenty miles south, yet they had a greater stake in slavery through their owned chattel. The largely Baptist town was more established than the port municipality on the Missouri River. Clay County's position in Missouri's Little Dixie meant that agriculture was a central concern for its inhabitants. Jackson County, because of its location on the great waterway that crosses the Show-Me State, became a prime stopping point for settlers moving into Kansas Territory and as such did not invite long-term settlement within its township. It would thus seem logical to conclude that Liberty would be far more supportive of slavery and Southern States' rights than Westport. By far and large, though, sectional attitudes found prominently in the Deep South were more common in Westport than in Liberty. As I have argued above, this is due to a few measurable factors. That Liberty was less dependent on agricultural production than other towns within Clay County and was actively trying to sell their slaves in the markets in Louisiana is a prime example of the way they sought to distance themselves from the peculiar institution. Also, because of the violence in Kansas Territory, many Southerners were drawn to Westport as they passed over the border, thus creating a population that was vehemently opposed to Northern ideas of abolition and willing to engage in violent and bloody conflict to protect their Constitutional rights. One major factor that has been suggested but not fully examined to set Liberty at an ideological distance from Westport was their Baptist faith. Thinking back to the *Western Watchmen* in Part 2, one way in

which Baptists tried to grapple with slavery was through gradual emancipation, to be primarily achieved through colonization.

For the *Border Star*, the emancipation of slaves and their subsequent colonization of Africa was not an option. It should come as no surprise that the Westport weekly wasted no ink on the subject. The *Liberty Tribune* referenced African colonization frequently during the decade preceding the Civil War ranging in length from brief blurbs to longer expositions on the topic. On May 12, 1854, the Liberty paper wrote the brief: “Thirty colored persons have applied to the Missouri Colonization Society for passage to Liberia.”⁴² Though short and concise, the paper demonstrated that colonization was not out of their purview for reportable news. The paper also gave commendable praise to the Honorable Henry A. Wise of Virginia who spoke to a group in Boston on the calling of God for Americans to release slaves and for the “colonization of free blacks upon the shores of Africa and the enlightenment and the christianizing of the slaves here so as to fit them for Africa.”⁴³ Not only is the repatriation of slaves to Africa admirable, it is entirely in line with Christian ethics, serving the dual purpose of abolition and missionary work to Africans. The federal government’s actions toward colonization were not met with disdain in the pages of the *Liberty Tribune*. The Liberty paper fashioned an argument on posterity claiming that Thomas Jefferson and “the fathers of the Republic” approved of colonization.⁴⁴ Reporting strictly as a news with no negative critique they wrote about the “Government[‘s]” contract with a “Colonization Society to take . . . captured Africans at Key West at ten dollars each.”⁴⁵ When the Honorable Edward Bates passed away, the *Liberty Tribune* republished his final letter, which meant to explain his full thoughts on slavery in the United States. Bates claimed, “I am opposed

⁴² “Thirty colored persons . . .,” *The Liberty Tribune* (Liberty, MO), May 12, 1854.

⁴³ “The Letter of Hon. Henry A. Wise,” *The Liberty Tribune* (Liberty, MO), October 6, 1854.

⁴⁴ “Washington News,” *The Liberty Tribune* (Liberty, MO), January 22, 1858.

⁴⁵ “From Washington,” *The Liberty Tribune* (Liberty, MO), June 1, 1860.

to the Extension of Slavery, and in my opinion the spirit and policy of the Government ought to be against its execution.” On matters relating to colonization, he thought similarly to the writers of the *Western Watchmen*, believing it to be the best option of emancipation of the slaves, but differed by stating that due to financial restraints, the tropics of Central America were more feasible and matched nicely with the geography of African locales such as Liberia.⁴⁶ Not only did the Liberty paper demonstrate a tendency toward colonization, like the Baptist *Western Watchmen* on the other side of the state in St. Louis, they appealed to divine justice in their reporting. It is remarkable that towns so close to one another would produce such different attitudes on the news around them, especially when one considers how polarizing the sectional differences were during the antebellum period. What is even more remarkable is the plea for sanity made by the *Liberty Tribune* just five months before shots rang out at Fort Sumter.

The letter written “[For the Tribune.]” by Unitas is integral in understanding the beliefs of the *Liberty Tribune*, and by extension, the people of Liberty, Missouri. When most writers both North and South were seeking to place all fault upon one another with no recourse to logic and only appeal to emotion, the Liberty-based weekly asked that grievances be set aside so that violent rhetoric did not intensify into violent action. This largely Baptist town produced a secular newspaper that would mirror the *Western Watchmen*. The *Liberty Tribune*’s view of United States and its fate was portentous, and it is tragic that the plea of Unitas would ultimately be lost in the cacophony of passions that made sectional division uncontrollable and would tear the nation apart.

⁴⁶ “Mr. Bates on Slavery,” *The Liberty Tribune* (Liberty, MO), April 6, 1860.

CHAPTER 4: Baptists and African Americans after the Civil War

During the antebellum years, a distinct racial and social hierarchy structured the South. At the top were white slaveholders and at the bottom were free African Americans and slaves. Chattel slavery acted as the glue that maintained social stratification by giving all whites – not just slaveholders – control over the black population. One of the greatest fears of abolition was the loss of slavery as a form of control. With the Union victory over the Confederate States, the Southern white population found themselves living their nightmare. Slavery, however, was not the only means of white dominance. Religion also allowed whites to justify African American inferiority. Whether it was through scripture exhorting slaves to obey their master or through Biblical myth stating blacks as the descendents of Ham religion became a moral justification for slavery. After Appomattox, religion would maintain its prominence in Southern culture and its use for hegemony over the freed population would grow. Prior to the Civil Rights Movement, the Lost Cause ideology would dominate American history of slavery, Reconstruction, and the New South.

The Civil War forced Baptists all over the South to reconsider their place in the nation and their attitudes to new political problems that grew in the postbellum era. After the Civil War, through Reconstruction to the turn of the century, “to what extent did Baptists shape their environment and to what extent were they shaped by their environment?”¹ Though the Southern Baptist Convention had been founded on Southern ideals, most notably chattel slavery, Baptists

¹ Rufus B. Spain, *At Ease in Zion: Social History of Southern Baptists 1865-1900* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1961), 11.

were reluctant to support secession and the impending war, as is demonstrated above through their newspaper publications. The four year conflict between the North and the South would transform southern Baptist thought in a way that the sectional politics before 1860 never did. By the end of the war, those Baptists who vacillated between peace and aggression had fully vested themselves in the Southern cause. The forced emancipation of slavery created the largest upheaval in American history but failed to radically change racial interactions between blacks and whites, particularly in the South.²

Baptists as a religious organization did their best to avoid the politics of reintegrating the newly freed African American population into Southern culture, citing the Establishment Clause of the Constitution, though individuals were expected to bring Christian purifying practices into the secular realm. This desire to stay out of politics coupled with Jim Crow laws meant that Baptists would avoid controversy and the place of blacks within churches and society. Baptists held two views, one personal and the other public. White public excuses all avoided the primary issue of their personal reason for evading social questions concerning African Americans. Their excuses included “lack of funds, indisposition of the Negroes to receive their aid, [and] the presence of Northern teachers and politicians,” which all skirted their fear that “close contact with Negroes, even in religious worship, would lead to social equality.”³ Amongst Southern Baptists, blacks’ places in society had not changed since the antebellum era, and they were still expected to provide “whites with a constant supply of cheap, docile labor.” And most importantly, Baptists still believed that African Americans were the descendents of Ham: “The sons of Ham were still the servants of Japheth.”⁴

² Ibid., 44.

³ Ibid., 67.

⁴ Ibid., 96.

After the Civil War and Reconstruction, white Baptists were eager to make black Baptist congregations self-sufficient and independent. Before this autonomy was achieved, white Baptists were more than willing to offer spiritual “succor” to African Americans. The historian John Bell emphasizes the sympathy that white Baptists held for the freed slaves; whites claimed that freedmen were not responsible for their own social upheaval. Emancipation instead was meant to show the mysterious workings of divine will and acted as hortatory for African Americans to retain their place in the social hierarchy. They had no use for “freedmen ‘who have been exposed to the contamination of intruding theorists and speculators.’”⁵ The future of African American Baptists was bleak. The only aspect of their religious and secular life growing in a positive way was the number of black churches and the members in their congregations. In all other aspects, however, the “postwar black condition [w]as one of ignorance, poverty, discouragement, and bitter disappointing struggles.”⁶ Even if whites displayed sympathy for the plight of freedmen shortly after the war, it was only temporary. While politically free, blacks now faced the degrading system of segregation. Segregation did force blacks to take a more proactive approach in their church membership and created their own institutions where they could be on equal footing with one another and not constrained to sit separate from the congregation in the seat of a slave.⁷

In a different view, John Lee Eighmy, professor emeritus at the Oklahoma Baptist University, contended that segregation was beneficial to African Americans. Instead of the traditional religious view that Southern Baptist attitudes were stridently proslavery, Eighmy noted that during the American Revolution, nearly all Baptist associations in Virginia opposed

⁵ John L. Bell, “Baptists and the Negro in North Carolina during Reconstruction,” *The North Carolina Historical Review* 42:4 (1965), 391-2.

⁶Ibid., 407.

⁷ Ibid., 409.

the continuation of slavery and set many of their slaves free. Eighmy also stated that through Baptist actions, the “Negro’s social progress” was both encouraged and improved.⁸ Baptist rhetoric on slavery was absent on the political side and only noted to condemn egregious abuse of slaves by their masters. Eighmy claimed that segregation was a fundamental part of church structure long before the Civil War. Eighmy’s argument gets hazy when he stated that segregation necessarily evolved from antebellum churches and that “the very act of preaching a gospel of brotherhood, established a demonstrable basis for equality.”⁹ This equality, Eighmy wrote, extended only into church attendance, and in some cases, black ability to preach to other slaves. White Baptists then used religion to reinforce ideas of black inferiority to whites while preaching brotherhood. With this foundation of half-equality for churchgoing black Baptists, they could then reap what Eighmy stated were the benefits of segregation after the end of the Civil War. Baptist theology “encouraged an independent church life among the slaves,” and “a separated church was but one step away from a religion conducted by the Negroes themselves.”¹⁰ Eighmy concludes that the creation of free African American Baptist churches in the South during and after Reconstruction stood as the black communities’ greatest accomplishment in the years after Appomattox. This accomplishment would not have been possible without segregated churches. While there is some logic in Eighmy’s supposition, he failed to account for white intervention in black church creation directly after the war and more importantly, the harmful aspects of segregation. Eighmy completely ignored that segregation allowed for a great deal more racial atrocity against blacks and the stripping of political liberties.

⁸ John Lee Eighmy, “The Baptists and Slavery: An Examination of the Origins and Benefits of Segregation,” *Social Science Quarterly* 49:3 (1968), 666.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 669.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 671.

Other historians would debate on the political influence churches had on African Americans and their place in society during the first half of the twentieth century. Donald W. Shriver, writing in 1970, still examines the church's relation to institutionalized racism, but focuses on the change occurring in the New South in the decades surrounding the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* Supreme Court decision. Shriver begins his article by challenging Samuel S. Hill, Jr.'s statement that the Southern Christian church, whether Baptist or Presbyterian, is without social ethics. However, before 1954 and directly after the *Brown* verdict, the Southern Baptist church's stance on social ethics, chiefly segregation, remained tenuous at best. And it was not until the Supreme Court pronouncement was made that the Southern Baptist Convention made any declaration against segregation at all. Shriver defends Southern Baptists by stating their conflict with individual congregation members who were less willing to accept their organizing body telling them to recognize racial issues such as the 13th, 14th, and 15th amendments as well as social equality within and without the church.¹¹ The Civil Rights Era was a time of change within Southern churches. Baptists previously had examined social ills on an individual basis. Therefore ethics were not communal and thus issues such as segregation did not merit the attention of the Convention.¹² The pressure from Southern race riots and outside groups proved more powerful than the two biggest Southern religions could resist and forced the two denominations to ally themselves with secular groups, primarily Southern businessmen. Businessmen were more likely to initiate interracial relations than other groups. Southern churches began to realize in the 1950s and 1960s that if they must ally themselves with secular groups, then the NAACP meshed more with theological doctrine than the KKK.¹³ Baptists forgot

¹¹ Donald W. Shriver, Jr., "Southern Churches in Transition," *New South* 25:1 (1970), 40-1.

¹² *Ibid.*, 42-3.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 45-6.

the religious ambiguities that existed before the war in regard to slavery as a result of the South's loss in the Civil War.

Southern churches supported and helped cultivate the Lost Cause ideology. This secular ideology would become a civil religion that adopted sacred characteristics and beliefs. The Lost Cause became the civil religion of the former Confederate States of America after the Civil War. Part of the creed of the Lost Cause was the belief that the North was a morally bankrupt society trying to spread atheistic ideas into the rest of the South. Thus, the Lost Cause became a movement to preserve not just Southern culture, but Southern religion as well.¹⁴ Promotions of the Lost Cause came from all religious pluralities in the South, especially Baptists. Although, not all Baptists were proponents of all aspects of the Lost Cause, many Baptist leaders were integral in supporting ideas of Southern superiority. Church officials involved themselves in secular Southern politics and culture.¹⁵ Secular organizations like the Confederate Veterans and Daughters of the Confederacy sprouted from the Lost Cause and promoted a romantic vision of slavery during the antebellum era that would become so ingrained in Southern thought that it became known as the Moonlight and Magnolias myth. The atheistic North served as a constant reminder to the Christian South of what they should not become, in the sacred and secular orders of society. The Lost Cause ideology also became the primary argument Southerners made when trying to defend – what they perceived to be – their slowly evaporating culture.

The South “deliberately and proudly remained outside of the national mold set during the era of modernization . . . [while remaining] firmly inside the evangelical consensus of the

¹⁴ Charles Reagan Wilson, *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920* with a new preface (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2009), 8.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 98.

nineteenth century.”¹⁶ Baptists split social redemption from slavery and the Civil War by the end of 1925. Whites had successfully, in their minds, maintained both their racial superiority to blacks and their cultural superiority to the North. Blacks had gained independence over their church services but at the cost of segregation. The years following World War One left white Americans in both the North and South with a sense of optimism for the future of their country while African Americans remained troubled that “the same racial dilemmas remained unresolved.”¹⁷ Even in this situation, blacks felt religion offered the best hope for social amelioration and “the only answer to prejudice.”¹⁸

Whites, in the years after the Civil War, were unable and unwilling to decouple the justification of slavery with scripture.¹⁹ The Civil War was fought for the political right of slavery, but Southern whites believed they had much more at stake. The war became a way for the South “to prove itself a God-fearing nation in the eyes of the Lord of Hosts.”²⁰ With a Southern victory, this would have the added benefit of justifying slavery once and for all. Religion became warped in the minds of Southern whites and those theological attitudes degenerated “into chauvinism that verged on blasphemy.”²¹ As the war continued, Southern prayers became more desperate with each loss and especially so after their inevitable defeat became clear. Loss meant that white Southerners needed a way to justify their bellicose rhetoric; they found their answer in Biblical allusion to the Israelites. “Once again, a wrathful and

¹⁶ Paul Harvey, *Redeeming the South: Religious Cultures and Racial Identities among Southern Baptists, 1865-1925* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 13.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 254.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 254.

¹⁹ Eugene D. Genovese, *A Consuming Fire: The Fall of the Confederacy in the Mind of the White Christian South* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998). This foundation is set in the first chapter of the book entitled “Waiting on the Lord,” a reference to Psalms 27:1-3, 14.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 37.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 37.

inscrutable God had called upon the heathen to punish his disobedient *chosen* people.”²² As penance for their sinful ways, white Southerners now believed they must suffer under the materialistic market-based culture of the North. Whites attempted to maintain moral superiority under the encroachment from the North, and demanded that they withhold in all possible ways against cultural assimilation with the North.²³ One way to accomplish this was to recreate and maintain the social hierarchy that existed before the war. Sharecropping was their answer. Southerners did admit that their defeat in the Civil War was punishment for their sinful ways but adamantly refused to recognize that slavery was an aspect of their sins. Thus, the apologies for white racial superiority in justification of slavery would remain largely intact even without the system of chattel slavery.

Far from the Frontier, white Alabama Baptists struggled to find a place for their newly freed African American coreligionists. The whites of the Alabama Baptist State Convention in 1865 wanted to keep blacks in biracial churches where whites could supervise and preach proper theological doctrine. It was through black action alone that African Americans left mixed churches. Teaching precocious blacks in ministerial studies presented a solution for whites who were concerned with religious education among the newly freed population. After Reconstruction, this education was expanded to include both Northern and Southern Baptist congregations.²⁴ The former offered more assistance than the latter. When black Baptists in Selma sought to open their own theological seminary, they were at first denied assistance from the Alabama Baptist State Convention, and eventually the white Baptist Association relented and offered meager financial support. Racial tension erupted from African Americans’ desire to

²² Ibid., 71. My italics. Disobedient in this phrase is not qualified by Southern whites or Genovese in this context.

²³ Ibid., 102-3.

²⁴ Harriet E. Doss, “Reconstruction and the Founding of Selma University,” *Alabama Baptist Historian* 37:2 (2001), 46-8.

strike out on their own and establish independent schools and churches that were separate from the State Baptist Association.²⁵ White and black Baptists in Selma can be compared to a neighboring county to understand varying racial attitudes in the South.

While white racism perpetrated against African Americans was the norm during Reconstruction, one Alabama county shows a more nuanced picture.²⁶ Perry County lies directly of Dallas County, the location of Selma University. In Perry County, many African Americans gained political offices and “former slave Alexander H. Curtis, was the only black man selected to preside over the Alabama Senate during the nineteenth century.”²⁷ Stressing the dichotomy of Perry County to the rest of Alabama, English points out that while the state was preparing to restore autonomous rule at the end of 1873 and Alabama Reconstruction, Perry County opened “the Alabama State Lincoln Normal School and University, the first state-sponsored liberal arts institution for higher education of blacks in the country.”²⁸ Literacy and land-ownership rates among African-Americans were significantly higher in Perry County than the rest of Alabama and the South. English contends that Perry was different due to the high concentration of “white educational and religious institutions and its sizeable, refined, and politically active black population.”²⁹ These explanations prompt several questions. Why were the high concentrations of religious associations in Perry different than other areas in the South with similar religious demographics? What made blacks refined and able to be so politically active in this small enclave of the Deep South? Part of the answer comes from the Southern Baptist Convention’s decision to establish the domestic missions board in Marion, a city in Perry County. During the

²⁵ Ibid., 49.

²⁶ Bertis English, “A Black Belt Anomaly: Biracial Cooperation in Reconstruction-era Perry County, 1865-1874,” *The Alabama Review* (January 2009), 6.

²⁷ Ibid., 13.

²⁸ Ibid., 13.

²⁹ Ibid., 17.

antebellum era, the members of the board and other whites in Marion took an enlightened approach to the education and treatment of slaves. In the second largest city of Perry County, Uniontown, blacks petitioned white churchgoers to establish a separate black church which was immediately accepted. White Baptists even helped offset costs and assisted with construction. The first preacher was white.³⁰ The white Republican and compeer of Curtis, Joseph Speed prided himself and his county that the KKK never established an organization within Perry's borders. English reveals this to be a mixture of wishful thinking and exaggeration, but maintains that violent and overt Klan actions rarely occurred. After the passage of Alabama's black codes, freedmen in Perry County remained well aware of their position in the social hierarchy. After the passage of Jim Crow laws, "Perry's long history of white cultural and educational institutions, wealth, political influence and, to a lesser extent, antebellum amalgamation helped created a countywide anomaly in which black self-help and biracial cooperation were widespread during Reconstruction."³¹ English does not deny that race problems still existed in Perry County. He does claim that statistics of such acts were considerably lower than the rest of the South. Perry County prevents historians from making general claims about the South that are too wide and encompassing. To a certain degree, however, Perry County is an anomaly in the historical record as there are no other singular studies that depict black and white relations on a county level in the same, relatively congenial, fashion.

The above story of blacks, whites, and religion in the postbellum years of the United States shows the interaction between the three groups in a very general way but is meant to represent the entire South without regional distinctions. Understanding Baptists on the frontier of Missouri does not prepare one to understand a very different picture demonstrated from most

³⁰ Ibid., 21.

³¹ Ibid., 27.

studies on the broad-spectrum of Baptists in the South. Just as academics do not pay a lot of attention to religion and slavery in the Show-Me State prior to the Civil War, there is a dearth of scholarship for the same region after 1865. In 2010, Jarod Roll published *Spirit of Rebellion* which does what none of the above scholarship does; it examines the relations of blacks, whites, and religion in Missouri during the first five decades of the twentieth century. At the turn of the century, farmers from both races sought land in the southeast corner of the state, colloquially referred to as the Bootheel for its geographic shape. Missouri was appealing to the African Americans because the state had no Jim Crow laws.³² African American Baptists in most Southern states outnumbered other religion denominations by eight to one; in the Bootheel, the African Methodist Episcopal branch nearly equaled the amount of black Baptist churches. Between these two religions, African American men established an agricultural community based on notions of the Protestant worth ethic. White elites preferred these populations of pious and industrious black agricultural workers over poorer whites who responded to African Americans with violence and disdain. Indigent whites thus became more vicious against the black population under the guise of the KKK.³³ Beginning in the 1930s, poor whites became less vitriolic toward blacks as both races saw themselves suffering from the Great Depression and a major drought that stunted agricultural output in the Bootheel. The dire straits farmers found themselves in meant that they increasingly sought solace in religion. Pentecostalism offered a new kind of spirituality to these suffering masses as it was incorporated into preexisting Baptist and Episcopal worship.³⁴ While feelings of anger and jealousy instigated racial tension in the 1910s and 1920s, by the time agricultural output fell, whites and blacks bound themselves

³² Jarod Roll, *Spirit of Rebellion: Labor and Religion in the New Cotton South* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010), 2.

³³ *Ibid.*, 60-1.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 88.

together in democratic-religious worship and protest movements such as the Universal Negro Improvement Association and the Southern Tenant Farmers Union.³⁵ While Roll's study adds more nuance to racial politics in the 1900s in Missouri, it is still far from the original frontier area of Kansas City. What it does do, is show that in a Missourian context, there is some degree of consistency among elite religious whites in their relationship to African Americans, most likely predicated on African American Christian piety. It took longer for poor whites to be as accepting as their elite racial peers. Even though destitute white actions toward blacks were tenuous at best and violent at worst, the shared experience of the Great Depression and Dustbowl merged with a new religious mysticism brought the two groups together as they fought for their right as farmers in the Bootheel of Missouri.

³⁵ Ibid., 178-80.

CONCLUSION

In 1845, disillusioned with the Triennial Convention of Baptists Churches, Baptists living in the South established their own religious organization in the Southern Baptist Convention. In their eyes, how could they retain a relationship with people who sought to strip them of their rights not only as Americans but as Southerners? States' rights underpinned their argument for splitting from the Northern-based organization. Read plainly, they split over slavery. Southern culture had defined itself through slavery. The most vociferous identified themselves as Southern first followed by either American or Baptist. To associate this type of self-recognition with the entire Southern population is to deny internal differences and miss local nuances. This thesis is meant to introduce a new perspective into the historiography of Southern slave history. The examination of Frontier Baptists on the border of Missouri and the Kansas Territory shows that some Southerners felt an ambivalence toward slavery based off of religion that is not part of the normal Southern historical narrative. There is no doubt that white Baptists living in Missouri held the same white superiority views as their contemporaries in other parts of the South and largely in the North as well. However, they had to walk a fine line in their denunciation of the peculiar institution to maintain their identities of living in the South and, more importantly to them, as Baptists.

In the late eighteenth and into the nineteenth century, it was not uncommon for slaveholders to manumit their slaves upon their death or allow their chattel to buy their freedom. However, as the Union became increasingly polarized during the antebellum era, this once

familiar aspect of the institution became rarer. This was due in large part to two major threats that Southerners felt could undermine their labor system. The first threat came in the abolitionist rhetoric of the North which became increasingly invective as more slaves started to escape from the South and brought with them tales depicting the horrors of slavery. The second threat came from freedmen, who in the eyes of the white South, were poisoning the minds of those still enslaved with thoughts of rebellion and violence against the munificent slaveholders. This paranoia was less apparent for Baptists on the frontier. William Jewell died in 1852 and manumitted his male slave while creating a situation in which the children and the female slave could be freed, too. Paternalistic thought kept him from totally freeing the latter. William Jewell, like other Missouri Baptists, had accepted the institution handed down to them through history, but the institution's clash with their morality forced them to look for different options. They could not simply let the "wolf by the ears" go, for the slaves who would then become free and for the vocal reaction of their southern peers. Missouri Baptists found the solution through the colonization movement.

It is not surprising then that the *Western Watchmen* presented a gradual emancipationist view of slavery. St. Louis in the 1850s was by far the most cosmopolitan town in Missouri and had the largest immigrant population. Immigrants who moved to America were not large landholders and generally did not own or work plantations, thus they did not have the same economic need for slave labor as whites who passed down their slaves from generation to generation. What is important, however, is the paper's circulation beyond St. Louis. The Baptist *Western Watchmen* had garnered a Baptist audience across the state of Missouri. That the views espoused in its pages could be found in the secular *Liberty Tribune* and not in the *Border Star*, is evidence that the citizenry of Liberty felt nearer ideologically to the St. Louis paper than the one

from Westport. On a strictly conservationist note, the archives themselves represent a bias in thought. Both the *Western Watchmen* and the *Liberty Tribune* were preserved by William Jewell College, with the latter having a ten year collection and the former spanning as long as 1842 to 1857 with records existing as far back as 1848 and as far forward as 1883. The Kansas City Public Library's archives of the *Border Star* are for only two years.

In the end, what was most notable from the *Liberty Tribune* was its eloquent call to both the North and the South to be rational in a time filled with passions and anger. There was no placing of blame or name calling. The author, and the paper, assumed that the topic of which it spoke should have been obvious enough, that they did not engage in the normal rhetorical device of denouncing through repetition. When the *Border Star* sought to illicit feelings of anger and betrayal against the North, the *Liberty Tribune* only wanted understanding and patience. The people of Liberty, Missouri, and Baptists across the frontier found themselves in a perilous position, but they navigated their world as tactfully as they could.

APPENDIX A: From *The Liberty Tribune*, November 23, 1860

[For the Tribune.]

The opinion seems to have become extensively prevalent in the present age, and especially upon the American continent, that a republican form of government like our own, can be more easily upheld, and carried on, than any other, whether it be an oligarchy, or a democracy, or an absolute despotism. – We, however, conscientiously differ from such an opinion, and think that future developments – if past and present ones should not suffice – will abundantly prove that we are right. Our belief is, that such a system of civil government as the one under which we live, is from its very nature the most liable to be convulsed, and divided, imperilled, and obstructed; and that its subjects, generally speaking, are more fickle and dogmatic, more irritable and obstreperous, than those of any other form of government, whether ancient or modern. Inheriting, as we do, unlimited freedom of thought, speech and worship; and having at our command the wonderful and ubiquitous agency of the press; and being likewise blest with the most liberalizing institutions; and also enjoying unparalleled prosperity and comfort; and having an immense and inviting theatre of activity and enterprise spread before us; we are lead to forget the corresponding obligations and proprieties of our position, and suffer ourselves to be carried away with the varied *ignis-fatuus* of our fevered imaginations, and with the strong currents of our impulsive natures: and hence the occurrence ever and anon of the wildest political excitement, mobocratic scenes, and local outrages, which cause the deepest apprehension and regrets on the part of reflecting and peaceable citizens, and which operate as

living devouring cancers upon the body-politic, and cast a foul indelible stain upon our national escutcheon. And yet, this complex system of civil government, with all its frailties and imperfections, is, perhaps all things considered, the best, and most desirable, for us as an homogenous people, especially, when it is thoroughly understood, and properly appreciated and obeyed.

It becomes, then, a matter of greatest importance to every one of us, that the functionaries of government should be men of the right stamp – men, possessed of more than ordinary intelligence and virtue, of ability and experience, of foresight and judgment, of courtesy and firmness. And the more prominent and responsible the official stations they may be called to fill, the more necessary it is that they should excel in every essential qualification; and the more earnest should be their wish and endeavor to meet and discharge every duty connected therewith. Adaptation, or fitness for public service, seems to have been more carefully considered by our forefathers than by us, their descendents. Too often is it the case in the present day, that the men who have got the most assurance, the most guallability, the most unscrupulousness ambition, the most wealth or influence – not healthy, moral influence – are the very men who are *chosen* by the people, to represent and attend to their interests, and to rule over them.

The reason of this is obvious. As a nation of intelligent freemen, we have certainly degenerated. We are far too prone to place a fictitious estimate upon our strength and security. We undervalue the inestimable privileges purchased for us, and bequeathed unto us, by the blood and sufferings of our heroic ancestry. Our all-absorbing passion is to make money, to acquire property. We have scaree [sic] a thought or care for anything else, than speculation and commerce, profit and pleasure. And thus, we are very easily duped, and lead to countenance and support a set of men in office, the great majority of whom, are utterly disqualified therefore, and

undeserving thereof. Were the people in their remorse and reformation, to eject them, and were the vacuum caused thereby to remain unsupplied for the rest of the term, public interests though retarded, would not suffer much more than they do, from their comparatively worthless attention to them. At all events, there would be less vexation and disappointment experienced.

Now, the evils we complain of exist more or less in every part of the Union. They are, however, more generally prevalent in these Western States, wither the mightier streams of emigration, and where business habits are not so much a science as an experiment, hastily adopted to pocket the profits. Nor is Missouri exempt from the dead-weight, the curse, and the shame of civil degeneracy and political misrule. Our state has had some very able and worthy public officers – some good and faithful servants – but we regret to say, the greater number have been mediocre, slothful and negligent. Were it necessary, we could mention the names of senators, representatives, judges, soldiers and civilians, who have shed a rich luster upon our State history and renown; and whose brilliant achievements have become the nation's pride and heritage. But how is it with us at the *present* time? Are our public men, as a *body*, men of uncommon abilities and experience? Are they men to be implicitly relied upon in the hour of trial and danger? Are they *the* men for the *dreadful crisis* which is just upon us? We fear not. Can we truly affirm of the Legislative and Executive departments of our State, that they have promptly and fully discharged their duties to their various constituencies and to the commonwealth at large? We opine we cannot. And what of our grave and august Senators? Have *they* demeaned themselves with that dignity, and candor, and national spirit, becoming their high rank and position? Have *they* been faithful to their solemn vows of fidelity and devotion to the Constitution – State and federal – and to the Union? By many it is thought they have not. They have mingled too freely with demagogues and conspirators to escape suspicion. Nay, have we

not heard of, and even witnessed, exhibitions of arrogance, and vanity, indiscretion, and folly, in which *they* played a conspicuous part? Surely, the serious and thoughtful portion of our citizens have become thoroughly disgusted and deeply mortified with such disgraceful scenes. May we never have the misfortune to hear or see them again.

We sincerely hope the people will no longer submit to such grievances and insults. But ah, what fools and playthings the people are. We allow political adventurers to cheat us of our suffrages, to neglect our interests, to damage our public credit and reputation, to infract our rights, to disturb our peace, to wound our State-pride, and to ride rough-shod over our known convictions and feelings; in a word, to accomplish their own selfish plans and purposes, to the almost total neglect of the public service; and yet, after all this, some trifling local measure, some picayunish legislation, or perhaps a sensation speech, or a little pluck and braggadocio at some particular crisis, makes sufficient atonement for the past, and affords ample security for the future.

When then, we ask, shall this childishness and morbid generosity cease? Is it not high time to *act* like men? And have we not every motive to do so? In justice to ourselves and to those dependant upon us for protection and support, in justice to succeeding generations, and to the State and the Union, we ought to enter vigorously upon the work of political regeneration. The perils which threaten us are *real* – not imaginary. – The popular atmosphere is malarious; it is tainted with political heresy, revolution and death. And we are in imminent danger of infection. We positively need the best advice that our wisest statesmen and truest patriots can give us. The Constitution – the great palladium of our civil and religious liberties – is violently assailed. Faction reigns on every hand. The broad-sword of truth and reason, and the shield of conscientious rectitude, must be used by heads cool, and hearts brave and true. The fire-brands of

Secession and Disunion must be forcibly snatched from the hands of every political traitor and incendiary and they must be quickly quenched in the fountains of national affection and purity.

To permit sectional prejudices and party animosities to divide and alienate us in the hour of our country's agony and trial, is the very climax of madness and ingratitude. Each party organization had *had*, and still *has*, its good men; its sensible men; its reliable men. And out of these noble and valiant spirits, such a *selection* should be made as will be most conducive to the general harmony, goodwill and benefit. It is in the power of the people – the honest, warm-hearted people – if they will but seriously reflect upon it, and wisely exercise it – to work *miracles* for their country's salvation. – Let them but spend a few hours in calm retrospection of the glorious *past*, in patient consideration of the unhappy *present*, and in steady contemplation of the portentous *future*; and if there dwells in their hearts the blood of their patriot sires – as we believe there does – we have no fears as to the *conclusion* they will come to. They will at once resolve to bury in oblivion all partisan feelings and opposition, and henceforth consecrate themselves to the one common cause of national peace, national unity, national sympathy and fellowship.

It is absolutely impossible for us to live and prosper in the midst of schism, feuds, and contention. We not only disgrace ourselves by such unnatural and unmanly conduct, but we weaken every energy, and jeopardize every interest, and most effectually contribute to our downfall and ruin. It is therefore the manifest duty and interest of every good citizen, to cooperate with each other for the advancement and prosperity of their common happiness and privileges as free and sovereign people. We trust, therefore, every Missourian – irrespective of party views and associations – will carefully weigh these important matters in his mind, that they may have their proper effect upon his life and actions in the future. We think the time has fully

come for the adoption of a *safer* and more liberal public policy for the preservation of our honor and welfare as a State, and likewise as a confederacy; and that the duty imperatively devolves upon us, to entrust that policy into the hands of those who *understand* its true nature, who *feel* its urgent necessity, and who will not be at all likely *to shrink from* its advocacy and enforcement, should the will of the people call them to it.

UNITAS.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. Primary Sources

Border (MO) Star, The. "Big Mob at Harper's Ferry." October 22, 1859.

———. "Local News." January 21, 1859.

———. "St. Joseph West." November 12, 1859.

———. "Startling Intelligence." December 31, 1858.

———. "The Designs of Black Republicans." October 29, 1859.

———. "The Insurgents." October 29, 1859.

———. "The Nuisance Abated." November 19, 1859.

———. "To President's Message." January 7, 1859.

———. "The South and her Interests." May 13, 1859.

———. "The Union-Savers." February 18, 1860.

———. "[]." June 10, 1860.

———. "Why The Black Republicans are not Disunionists." June 10, 1859.

Crowell, William. "Second Colored Baptist Church Fair." *Western (MO) Watchmen*, December 30, 1852.

George, C. "Report of Committee on Instruction of Colored Population." *Proceedings of the Southern Baptist Convention, Convened in the City of Baltimore*. Richmond: H. K. Ellyson, 1853.

Kennedy, Joseph C. G. *Population of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census, Under the Direction of the Secretary of the Interior.*

Washington: Government Printing Office, 1864.

Liberty Tribune (MO), The. "From Charleston." November 23, 1860.

———. "From Washington." June 1, 1860.

———. "From Washington." November 23, 1860.

———. "Insurrection at Harper's Ferry. October 21, 1859.

———. "Jeremiah Clemens is All Right." November 23, 1860.

———. "Later From Lawrence." May 30, 1856.

———. "Latest from the Insurrection." October 28, 1859.

———. "Latest from the Territory." August 22, 1856.

———. "Mr. Bates on Slavery." April 6, 1860.

———. "Poor Martin White." November 22, 1856.

———. "Shall St. Louis Speak for the Union?" November 23, 1860.

———. "The Letter of Hon. Henry A. Wise." October 6, 1854.

———. "The Trial of Old John Brown." October 28, 1859.

———. "Thirty Colored Persons . . ." May 12, 1854.

———. "Trial of the Insurgents." October 28, 1859.

———. "Trouble in Kansas." August 15, 1856.

———. "Washington News." January 22, 1858.

Murphy, D. R. [*Minutes?*] of the *Second Annual Meeting of the Cedar Association.* September 6, 1850.

P., J. M. "Fanaticism South." *Western (MO) Watchmen*, March 20, 1851.

Proceedings of the Southern Baptist Convention, Convened in the City of Baltimore. “Missouri.”

Richmond: H. K. Ellyson, 1853.

Proceedings of the Southern Baptist Convention, Convened in the City of Montgomery, Alabama.

“Missouri.” Richmond: H. K. Ellyson, 1855.

Proceedings of the Southern Baptist Convention, Convened in the City of Nashville, Tennessee..

“Colored Population.” Richmond: H. K. Ellyson, 1851.

Shumate, W. D. “Missouri Colonization Society.” *Western (MO) Watchmen*, November 15, 1850.

Thomas, A. *Proceedings of the Southern Baptist Convention, Convened in the City of Nashville, Tennessee.* “Biennial Report No. 1.” Richmond: H. K. Ellyson, 1851.

Unitas. “[For the Tribune].” In *The Liberty Tribune (MO)*. November 23, 1860.

Waller, J. L., and R. R. Lillard, eds. “The Western Baptist Theological Institute.” *Western Baptist Review* Volume III. Frankfurt, KY: A. G. Hodges & Co. Printers, 1848.

———. “American Baptist Home Missionary Society, and Slavery.” *Western Baptist Review* Volume IV. Frankfurt, KY: A. G. Hodges & Co. Printers, 1849.

———. “Cuban Slave Trade.” *Western Baptist Review* Volume IV. Frankfurt, KY: A. G. Hodges & Co. Printers, 1849.

———. “Northern Love of the Negro.” *Western Baptist Review* Volume IV. Frankfurt, KY: A. G. Hodges & Co. Printers, 1849.

Waller, John L., ed. “An Abolitionist Reproving Abolition.” *Western Baptist Review* Volume V. Louisville, KY: Hull & Brother Printers, 1850.

Western (MO) Watchmen, “African Colonization.” November, 7 1850.

———. “Dr. Jewell’s Will.” September 2, 1852.

———. “The Free Colored People of the U. States.” July 17, 1851.

———. “Free Negroes in Indiana.” November 28, 1850.

———. “The Fugitive Slave Law in Chicago.” October 31, 1850.

———. “Liberia.” August 14, 1851.

———. “Liberia Farmers.” August 21, 1851.

II. Secondary Sources

Bell, John L. “Baptists and the Negro in North Carolina during Reconstruction.” *The North Carolina Historical Review* 42:4 (1965): 391-401.

Brekus, Catherine A. *Strangers & Pilgrims: Female Preaching in America, 1740-1845*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998.

Bruner, C. V. “An Abstract of the Religious Instruction of the Slaves in the Antebellum South.” *Peabody Journal of Education* 11:3 (1933): 117-121.

Burke, Diane Mutti. *On Slavery’s Border: Missouri’s Small-Slaveholding Households, 1815-1865*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2010.

Chowder, Ken. “The Father of American Terrorism.” *American Heritage* 51:1 (Feb/Mar 2000).

Clark, James G. *History of William Jewell College, Liberty, Clay County, Missouri*. St. Louis: Central Baptist Print, 1893.

Daniel, W. Harrison. “Virginia Baptists and the Negro Antebellum Era.” *The Journal of Negro History* 56:1 (January 1971): 1-16.

David, Paul A., Herbert G. Gutman, Richard Sutch, Peter Temin, and Gavin Wright. *Reckoning with Slavery: A Critical Study in the Quantitative History of American Negro Slavery*.

New York: Oxford University Press, 1976.

Doss, Harriet E. "Reconstruction and the Founding of Selma University." *The Alabama Baptist Historian* 37:2 (2001): 46-49.

Douglass, Robert. *History of Missouri Baptists*. Kansas City, MO: Western Baptist Publishing Co., 1934.

Du Bois, W. E. B. *John Brown*. New York: Modern Library, 2001.

Eighmy, John Lee. "The Baptists and Slavery: An Examination of the Origins and Benefits of Segregation." *Social Science Quarterly* 49:3 (1968): 666-673.

English, Bertis. "A Black Belt Anomaly: Biracial Cooperation in Reconstruction-era Perry County, 1865-1874." *The Alabama Review* (January 2009): 3-36.

Etcheson, Nicole. *Bleeding Kansas: Contested Liberty in the Civil War Era*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004.

Faust, Drew Gilpin. "Evangelicalism and the Meaning of the Proslavery Argument: The Reverend Stringfellow of Virginia." *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 85:1 (January 1977): 3-17.

———. "Introduction: The Proslavery Argument in History." In *The Ideology of Slavery*.

Edited by Drew Gilpin Faust. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University, 1981.

Filler, Louis. *The Crusade Against Slavery: 1830-1860*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960.

Fogel, Robert William, and Engerman, Stanley L. *Time on the Cross: Evidence and Methods – A Supplement*. Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1974.

- Foner, Eric. "Slavery, the Civil War, and Reconstruction." In *The New American History* Revised and Expanded Edition, edited by Eric Foner, 85-106. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997.
- Frazier, Harriet C. *Runaway and Freed Missouri Slaves and Those Who Helped Them, 1763-1865*. Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Company, Inc., Publishers, 2004.
- Genovese, Eugene D. *A Consuming Fire: The Fall of the Confederacy in the Mind of the White Christians South*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998.
- . *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1974.
- Goen, C. C. *Broken Churches, Broken Nations: Denominational Schisms and the Coming of the Civil War*. Macon: Mercer University Press, 1985.
- . *Revivalism and Separatism in New England, 1740-1800: Strict Congregationalists and Separate Baptists in the Great Awakening*. New Haven: Archon Books, 1969.
- Gutman, Herbert G. *Slavery and the Numbers Game: A Critique of Time on the Cross*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1975.
- Harvey, Paul. *Redeeming the South: Religious Cultures and Racial Identities among Southern Baptists, 1865-1925*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997.
- Hurt, R. Douglas. *Agriculture and Slavery in Missouri's Little Dixie*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1992.
- Jackson, Don M. *The Heritage of Liberty: A Commemorative History of Liberty, Missouri* Bicentennial Edition. Liberty, Mo.: R. C. Printing Service, 1976.

- Jenkins, William Sumner. *Pro-Slavery Thought in the Old South*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1935.
- Massaquoi, Hans J. "Mystery of Malcolm X." *Ebony* (September 1964).
- Masters, Frank Mariro. *A History of Baptists in Kentucky*. Louisville: Kentucky Baptist Historical Society, 1953.
- McCurry, Stephanie. *Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Households, Gender Relations, & the Political Culture of the Antebellum South*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- Moore, David O. "History of William Jewell: Jewell is Her Name." *Cardinal is Her Color: One Hundred Fifty Years of Achievement at William Jewell College*. Liberty, Mo.: William Jewell College Publications, 1999.
- Perry, Lewis. *Radical Abolitionism: Anarchy and the Government of God in Antislavery Thought*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1973.
- Reynolds, David S. *John Brown, Abolitionist: The Man Who Killed Slavery, Sparked the Civil War, and Seeded Civil Rights*. New York: Vintage Books, 2005.
- Roll, Jarrod. *Spirit of Rebellion: Labor and Religion in the New Cotton South*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2010.
- Shriver, Donald W. "Southern Churches in Transition." *New South* 25:1 (1970): 40-47.
- Spain, Rufus B. *At Ease in Zion: Social History of the Southern Baptists 1865-1900*. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1967.
- Stampp, Kenneth M. "Introduction: A Humanistic Perspective." In *Reckoning with Slavery: A Critical Study in the Quantitative History of the American Negro*, by Paul A. David,

Herbert G. Gutman, Richard Sutch, Peter Temin, and Gavin Wright. New York: Oxford University Press, 1976.

———. *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South*. New York: Vintage Books, 1956.

Villard, Oswald Garrison. *John Brown 1800-1859: A Biography Fifty Years After*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1910.

Wills, Gregory A. *Democratic Religion: Freedom, Authority, and Church Discipline in the Baptist South, 1785-1900*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Wilson, Charles Reagan. *Baptized in Blood: The Religion of the Lost Cause, 1865-1920*. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1980.

Yeaman, W. Pope. *A History of the Missouri Baptist General Association*. Columbia, MO: Press of E. W. Stephens, 1899.