



Taylor & Francis
Taylor & Francis Group



AAG
Association of American Geographers

Negro Slaves of the Five Civilized Tribes

Author(s): Michael F. Doran

Reviewed work(s):

Source: *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, Vol. 68, No. 3 (Sep., 1978), pp. 335-350

Published by: [Taylor & Francis, Ltd.](#) on behalf of the [Association of American Geographers](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2561972>

Accessed: 15/02/2012 12:37

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



Taylor & Francis, Ltd. and Association of American Geographers are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

NEGRO SLAVES OF THE FIVE CIVILIZED TRIBES

MICHAEL F. DORAN

ABSTRACT. A relatively large number of negro slaves were owned by the Five Civilized Tribes before the American Civil War. Slaves were introduced while the Tribes still maintained their homelands east of the Mississippi River; after removal to the Indian Territory with their masters, the slaves formed an isolated labor pool for the entrepreneurial element of the Tribes. Slave-holding among the Indians maintained a form quite similar to that in the Old South, as the idea of slaving was transferred almost intact to the Indian society from the Southerners.

WHEN the Five Civilized Tribes (the Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Creek, and Seminole nations) were at last compelled to abandon their traditional land holdings in the South and establish new homes in the Indian Territory to the west of Arkansas, they had already become strongly acculturated toward the ways of contemporary Anglo-American society. The several decades immediately prior to the time of forced removal in the 1830s and 1840s were years during which the Five Tribes had been in close and continued interaction with elements of the expanding Southern frontier. In their dynamic association with the Europeans who would eventually supplant them, the entire fabric of the Indians' culture began to change. Many of their culture ways were given up altogether, but a larger number were recomposed to include specific aspects of Anglo-American culture perceived as advantageous or as conforming to a new definition of what was culturally "correct." The Indians' general progress out of barbarism did not pass unnoticed by the American pioneers; the joint *soubriquet* applied to the Five Tribes after 1800 was grudging recognition of the fact that these people were indeed becoming "civilized."

One of the more striking adoptions Indian society made from the Southern cultural milieu was the institution of negro slavery. While other traits of the metamorphosing Indian culture were perhaps equally indicative of a motion away from aboriginal ways, negro slavery was an acquired characteristic that remains of special interest because of its significance both as

a sign of and catalyst for cultural change.¹ Contemporary observers in the early nineteenth century repeatedly mentioned the Indians' negro slaves as an indicator of progress toward the standards held in the southern United States; but they also were convinced that this same progress was materially assisted by the example of this servile class "whose industry and foresight were superior to their own."² The negro slave simultaneously acted both as a reliable source of labor and as a demonstrator of the more sophisticated neighboring culture in the South. His presence among the Indians is therefore of considerable interest.

Although most social historians of the United States are aware that slavery was present as a part of Indian society both while east of the Mississippi and later in the Indian Territory, neither the nature of negro servitude nor its impact on Indian society has been specifically explored in formal research. The black literature is strangely quiet on this subject, even though the situation of the negro on the American frontier has engaged the time and thoughts of a large number of active scholars.³ Slavery is inevitably mentioned in any work on the history of the Five Civilized Tribes, but these references are maddeningly vague and generalized. The few studies that have been specifically devoted to slavery among one tribe or another are uniformly disappointing, as they deal with lit-

¹ Michael F. Doran, "Antebellum Cattle Herding in the Indian Territory," *The Geographical Review*, Vol. 66 (1976), pp. 48-58.

² William H. Goode, *Outposts of Zion, with Limnings of Mission Life* (Cincinnati: Poe and Hitchcock, 1864), p. 51.

³ Kenneth Wiggins Porter, *The Negro on the American Frontier* (New York: Arno Press and the New York Times, 1971), p. 461.

Dr. Doran is Assistant Professor of Geography at Radford College in Radford, VA 24142.

tle more than the fact of slavery's existence over time, not with its structure.⁴ If the unique situation of cultural blend experienced by these Indians is to be adequately understood, negro slavery should not be accorded such superficial concern. The present work seeks to provide insights into the nature of the "peculiar institution" in its most peculiar American instance, and to suggest the impact that it made on the Indians' social and economic metamorphosis out of savagery.

SOURCE MATERIALS

Negro slavery among the Five Civilized Tribes is noted and commented upon in a number of primary sources. The *Annual Reports* of the Commissioners of Indian Affairs, as well as the correspondence of the federal agents assigned to the Five Tribes, are of occasional use and may be consulted today either as published legislative documents or within the letterbook files housed in the National Archives (now microfilmed for greater accessibility).⁵ The well-thumbed standard primary materials for the history of the Indian Territory (e.g. diaries, letters, and monographs of missionaries and military men) also contain scattered mention of slavery.⁶ Each of these sources is helpful in its own way. However, there are other

reservoirs of data which as yet have not been widely recognized and put to use.

In the analysis of social change it is especially valuable to employ the impressions of persons actually within the groups being examined. While today there are no surviving participants of the early acculturative process that incorporated negro slavery into the culture of the Five Civilized Tribes, we are fortunate in having the next best thing: transcriptions of interviews made with Oklahoman old-timers during the oral history projects of the Works Progress Administration in the late 1930s. These have been gathered together in two large collections and provide tremendously valuable primary insights into the nineteenth century context of Indian society. The most extensive source is the enormous (and, unfortunately, unpublished) *Indian-Pioneer History*, whose more than one hundred volumes preserve records of interviews made with several thousand Oklahomans who were identified in 1937 as having information pertinent to the history of the Indian Territory and early Oklahoma. These interviews were made with whites, blacks, and Indians, and typescripts are housed both in the Phillips Collection of the University of Oklahoma Library and in the Indian Archives of the Oklahoma Historical Society (here with a helpful index).⁷ In addition to this, other W.P.A. interviews made with negro freedmen have now been published in Rawick's *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography*, in volume seven of that collection.⁸ These two sets of recorded interviews offer an amazingly diverse look at the nature of Indian society as a whole, and more especially at the question of the negro as a companion of the Indian.

Finally, a reservoir that has almost completely escaped attention is the population data collected during the federal census enumerations of 1860. For many years the Five Civilized Tribes were considered to be in actual possession of their land holdings in the Indian Territory, thus until the 1890s (and redefinition of their legal status) there was no official sanction for statistical examination of these

⁴ J. E. Davis, "Slavery in the Cherokee Nation," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. 11 (1933), pp. 1056-72; Wyatt F. Jeltz, "The Relations of Negroes and Choctaw and Chickasaw Indians," *The Journal of Negro History*, Vol. 33 (January, 1948), pp. 24-37; Michael Roethler, "Negro Slavery Among the Cherokee Indians 1540-1866," unpublished doctoral dissertation, Fordham University, 1964; and R. Halliburton, Jr., "Origins of Black Slavery Among the Cherokees," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. 52 (1974), pp. 483-96.

⁵ A helpful guide to Oklahoman historical material housed in the National Archives is Philip M. Hamer, ed., *Oklahoma: A Guide to Materials in the National Archives* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1951).

⁶ N. Sayer Harris, *Journal of a Tour in the 'Indian Territory'* (New York: Daniel Dana, 1844); Henry C. Benson, *Life Among the Choctaw Indians, and Sketches of the Southwest* (Cincinnati: L. Swormstedt and A. Poe, 1860); Goode, op. cit., footnote 2; Grant Foreman, ed., *A Traveller in Indian Territory* (Cedar Rapids, Iowa: The Torch Press, 1930); Grant Foreman, ed., *A Pathfinder in the Southwest* (Norman, Oklahoma: The University of Oklahoma Press, 1968, 2nd edition); and Muriel H. Wright and George H. Shirk, eds., "Artist Möllhausen in Oklahoma, 1853," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. 31 (1953), pp. 392-441.

⁷ Grant Foreman, ed., *Indian-Pioneer History* (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, Indian Archives, 1937, 119 volumes, typescript).

⁸ George P. Rawick, ed., *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Publishing Company, 1972, 2nd edition, 19 volumes), vol. 7.

"foreign" nations. However, through an error in the instruction of enumerators on the frontier of Arkansas in 1860, in that year population statistics were collected for all whites in the Indian Territory and all slave possessions held by either whites or Indians. The error was later detected by higher census authorities, and the Indian Territory data were never published save in brief summary remarks in the introduction to the volume on *Population*.⁹ The manuscript schedules of these data luckily were not destroyed despite their illegality, and as a result they remain available for consultation today.¹⁰ Making use of them is laborious, for tabulation is required, but the rewards are more than compensatory. The statistics derived make it possible to gain a more accurate impression of the alien populations among the Indians in 1860. In the context of the present study, some demographic characteristics of both the negroes and their owners in the late antebellum Indian Territory can be developed to assist in rounding out our picture of slavery at that time.

ADOPTION OF SLAVERY

The concept of holding the negro as a slave apparently did not diffuse through peripheral frontier contacts between the Indian and Anglo-American cultures. Instead, it was inserted directly into the heart of the Indian culture by a small number of whites involved in trading with the Indians for furs and skins. The traders initially were received as semi-permanent alien residents, tolerated by the tribes because they formed an important economic function that the Indians had no alternative to. The alien whites, however, almost inevitably married Indian women after a few years' time among the tribes, and through this means white men became accepted as official adopted tribal citizens. Shortly thereafter they began producing mixed blood progeny, children with clear tribal citizenship but also with a considerably greater breadth of cultural experience due to the continued influence of their fathers. The traders, and afterward their offspring, retained a strong attachment to the ways of life prevalent in the

contemporary South, and the trading establishments they operated formed nuclei for the maintenance of an alien cultural influence. It was there that the main strides toward large-scale agriculture were begun, in a local social environment encouraging material gain.

The earliest mentions we have of slaves resident among the Indians date to the latter part of the eighteenth century. Almost without exception, the persons who held slaves were either white traders or mixed blood chieftains.¹¹ This was the beginning of a pattern that continued throughout the Civilized Tribes' tenure in the Old South and following their removal to the Indian Territory. It was intensified by the fact that many mixed bloods converted their assets in the east into slave property at the time of removal, in which form they were better able to transport it to the Indian Territory.¹² After removal west of the Mississippi, few additional slaves were purchased from owners in the United States. Instead, the increasing numbers of negroes held by the Civilized Tribes were derived predominantly through natural increase.¹³ Through this the mixed bloods as a group over the years retained their hold on both negroes and the trait of negro slavery.

It is interesting that even after several decades of observation, the so-called "common Indians" (full bloods) had barely begun to own slaves. According to an intrigued missionary at the time, "The mass of the people have no direct interest in slavery. The owners of slaves among these tribes are mostly whites or mixed bloods."¹⁴ This should not be construed to imply that the body of full-blooded Indians found negro slavery intrinsically unpalatable. To the contrary, the idea of enslavement was familiar to all of the eastern tribes well before interbreeding with the whites began.¹⁵ A demand for negroes by the full bloods did exist but was hindered from expression by their endemic

¹¹ Benjamin Hawkins, "A Sketch of the Creek Country," *Collections of the Georgia Historical Society*, Vol. 3 (part 1, 1848).

¹² Goode, op. cit., footnote 2, p. 161.

¹³ Charles K. Whipple, *Relation of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions to Slavery* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1861, facsimile reproduction), p. 89.

¹⁴ Whipple, op. cit., footnote 13, p. 94.

¹⁵ Almon W. Lauber, "Indian Slavery in Colonial Times Within the Present Limits of the United States," *Columbia Studies in the Social Sciences*, Vol. 134 (1969).

⁹ Census Office; *Eighth Census of the United States, Population* (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1860), p. xv.

¹⁰ The Eighth Census of the United States, "Territories to the West of Arkansas," manuscript schedules of population (1860), *National Archives Microfilm Publication T7*, Rolls 11 and 12.

poverty. They were not inclined toward the acquisition of worldly riches, and were usually satisfied to live marginally and with little thought to the future. To the contrary of the mixed bloods, their motivation to own slaves was not to augment their capacity to produce surpluses for sale, but was instead to transfer the drudgery of everyday labor to other shoulders. Commenting on the Choctaw in 1860, Benson noted that:¹⁶

“As far as they are able . . . even the very poor Indians will manage to get possession of one or two negroes to perform their heavy work. Indians are known to cherish an invincible disgust for manual labor.”

This was fairly typical for the full bloods of the other four Civilized Tribes, many of whom lived in “squalid misery” with their slaves, simply because they did not exert themselves even to direct the work energy of the negroes.¹⁷

ESTABLISHMENT OF SLAVERY IN THE INDIAN TERRITORY

Despite the early and considerable tendency of the Five Civilized Tribes to adopt the ways of Anglo-American culture, the white frontiersmen considered them to be little more than an irritating obstacle to the expansion of the frontier. As the nineteenth century moved into its early decades, the Indians were increasingly subjected to overt and quite hostile pressure to abandon their lands and depart the South. The stress of continual violence, with the disruption of imported liquor, began to make such an impact in the late 1820s that many tribal leaders feared that collapse of their society's entire structure was only a matter of time unless something was done. After 1830 the chiefs agreed to lead their people to western lands beyond the most distant outposts of Arkansas in order to escape entirely from the destructive influence of the Southern frontier. A delighted Federal Government signed treaties trading them equal tracts of “desert” for the lands the Indians were leaving behind, and by the early 1840s most citizens of the Five Civilized Tribes had relocated in the “Indian Territory.” Here they reconstituted their nations,

hopeful of isolation and protection from the onslaught of the advancing pioneers.

On their arrival in the districts traded to them, the tribes tended to settle in the eastern regions, close by the borders of Arkansas and Texas (Fig. 1). Here the environment was fairly similar to that which they had left behind in their homelands, and the presence of military establishments of the United States Army suggested some security from attack by roving bands of fierce Plains Indians.¹⁸ The Cherokee spread thinly over the Ozark Plateau north of the Arkansas River to the east of the Grand River. The Creek and Seminole made their homes along the bottoms of the Arkansas upstream of the Cherokee, and especially above the confluence of the North Canadian River with the Canadian River. The Choctaw and Chickasaw settled in the vicinity of the Arkansas and Canadian rivers, but more extensively along the fertile course of the Red River between the border of Arkansas and the delta of the Washita River. Each tribe sought the better farming lands along water courses for their homes. They tended to avoid the remote fastness of the Ouachita Mountains and the western prairie lands, country either so rough or so ill-protected that it was considered undesirable. The distribution of tribal settlement created at this time lasted down through the early twentieth century.

The country actually occupied by the Five Civilized Tribes was rapidly transformed from wilderness into dispersed farmsteads, ranches, and cash crop plantations, much in the same fashion as in newly settled pioneer Anglo-American areas in the neighboring western South. Lang and Taylor noted in 1834 that the earliest contingents of Choctaw and Chickasaw settlers were living for the most part like “any of the white settlers” on the frontier.¹⁹ According to the meticulous observations of Gregg in the late 1830s, the communities of Indians that he had visited were nearly indistinguishable from those of “poorer whites” elsewhere, ex-

¹⁸ Michael F. Doran, “The Origin of Culture Areas in Oklahoma, 1830–1900,” unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Oregon, 1974, pp. 47–80.

¹⁹ John D. Lang and Samuel Taylor, Jr., *Report of a Visit to Some of the Tribes of Indians Located West of the Mississippi* (Providence, Rhode Island: Knowles and Vose, 1843), pp. 41–42.

¹⁶ Benson, *op. cit.*, footnote 6, p. 33.

¹⁷ Grant Foreman, “The California Overland Mail Route Through Oklahoma,” *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. 9 (1931), p. 306.

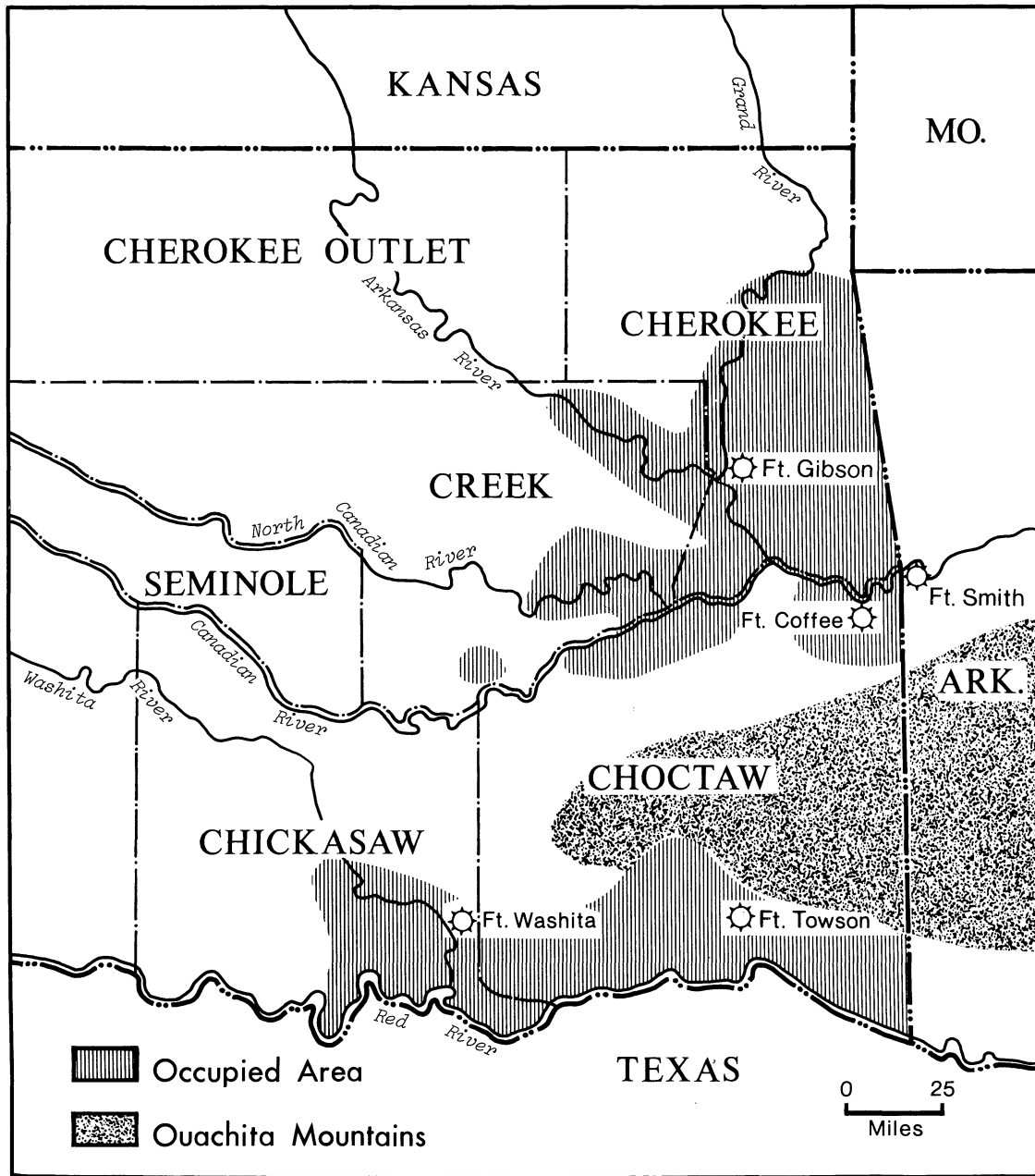


FIG. 1. Foci of Settlement to 1845.

cept for differences in language, dress, and physical appearance.²⁰

The varied distribution of significant improvements was, however, quite marked. For

example, a visitor to the Cherokee in 1836 was struck by:²¹

the contrast between an occasional stately dwelling, with an extensive farm attached, and the miserable hovels of the indigent, sometimes not ten feet square, with a little patch of corn, scarce large enough for

²⁰ Reuben Gold Thwaites, *Early Western Travels, 1748-1846* (Cleveland: The A. H. Clark Company, 1904-1907, 32 volumes), Vol. 20, p. 304.

²¹ Thwaites, *op. cit.*, footnote 20, p. 303.

a family garden. In fact, among all . . . *who have no slaves*, what little there is of cultivation, is mostly the work of the women [italics added by the author].

The "hovels" were the residences of the full bloods, while the larger and more affluent establishments were the product of mixed blood ambition. Contemporary Indian agents were struck by the almost perfect correlation of economic development in the Indian Territory with the presence of mixed blood families.²²

EMPLOYMENT OF NEGRO SLAVES

Of the estimated 4,500 to 5,000 negroes who formed the slave class in the Indian Territory by 1839, the great majority were in the possession of the mixed bloods.²³ The slaves of this class of tribal citizens were quickly put to work on their arrival, cutting timber, readying fields for cropping, and raising the buildings and other improvements the mixed bloods wished to have on their farms and ranches.²⁴ According to Hitchcock, the more extensive advancement that distinguished the Cherokee, Choctaw, and Chickasaw nations from the Creek and Seminole nations was due to the greater presence in the former nations of mixed blood progressives.²⁵ It must be recognized in addition that here also were the laboring negro slaves who actually did much of the work for the mixed bloods.

Variation in the attainment of worldly success among the Civilized Tribes was due to differences in perception of the desirability of regularized, surplus-oriented economic activity. This was manifested in many ways, but never more clearly than in how slave labor was utilized by the two major classes of tribal citizens. As a military officer explained it:²⁶

The full-blood Indian rarely works himself and but few of them make their slaves work. Proceeding from this condition, more service is required from the slave until among the half-breeds and the whites who have married natives, they become slaves indeed in all manner of work.

The full bloods were fairly indulgent masters, sharing the fluctuation of good times and bad with their slaves, striving only to maintain themselves with a minimum of effort and planning at a subsistence level. The mixed bloods wished more from life than this, and used their slaves to build up substantial estates.

It is clear that had the slaves not been available to the mixed bloods as a fund of inexpensive labor, their aspirations toward profitable agricultural operation would have been much less successfully realized than they were. Only a very few whites were permitted into the antebellum Indian Territory, and these were primarily either missionaries or government agents with supporting staffs. Until shortly before 1860, agricultural laborers from the United States were carefully prohibited from entering the Territory as employees. But the full blood Indians, who scarcely cared to work for themselves, could only rarely be induced to work as wage-earners.²⁷ This left the negro as the only labor alternatives, made more attractive as well because no investment save food and clothing was necessary for the employment of inherited (but multiplying) slaves. Gregg remarked specifically in the 1830s that in each of the Five Civilized Tribes the wealthier classes relied greatly upon slave laborers on their establishments, and that they had adopted the Southern style of slavery in almost exact duplication.²⁸

Slave labor was utilized by the mixed bloods in order to build saleable surpluses of several products. The only area where true plantation agriculture emphasizing cotton cropping was attempted was in the southeastern part of the Territory, to which vicinity contemporary farming theory defined the climatic limits of the cotton plant.²⁹ Cotton planting began here in the 1830s, and even some full bloods with quite small holdings raised a few acres of the staple near the broad fields of the mixed bloods in hope of carrying out a profitable trade in the fiber with buyers from Texas and Louisiana. The mixed blood elite had constructed ten cotton gins by 1840, and their export in that year came to roughly 1,000 bales.³⁰ Production was

²² Commissioner of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report* (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1844), p. 155.

²³ Joseph B. Thoburn and Murial H. Wright, *Oklahoma: A History of the State and Its People* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1929, 4 volumes), Vol. 1, p. 297.

²⁴ Rawick, op. cit., footnote 8, p. 33.

²⁵ Foreman, op. cit., footnote 6, p. 187.

²⁶ Foreman, op. cit., footnote 6, p. 187.

²⁷ Goode, op. cit., footnote 2, p. 141.

²⁸ Thwaites, op. cit., footnote 20, p. 303.

²⁹ Joseph B. Lyman, *Cotton Culture* (New York: Orange, Judd, and Company, 1868), p. 69.

³⁰ Commissioner of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report* (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1841), p. 335.

made possible by the labor of negro slaves, working on some of the biggest agricultural establishments in the Territory.³¹ Cotton growing was profitable in most instances if bales could actually be carried to market. However, the vagaries of transport on the Red River, chronically subject to periods of low water with exposure of sand bars and shoals, made export by water irregular, if still greatly cheaper than hauling overland.³² In this area of the Territory, known even today by Oklahomans as "Little Dixie," the negro slave formed an essential source of labor for cash crop production.

North of the plantation districts in the southeast efforts at producing cash crops were met with only intermittent success. Although the Arkansas River could be navigated consistently to the vicinity of Fort Gibson at the mouth of the Grand River, cotton was not grown in quantity because it was not perceived as a successful plant this far north. Cropping to the north of the Ouachita Mountains was oriented towards grains (predominantly corn) and garden produce. Surpluses of corn were used for fattening of penned steers or were sold with vegetables to either the United States military establishments or to passing emigrants on the Texas and California roads.³³ In this area the mixed bloods made conscious efforts to build food crop markets, and to this end they detailed many of their slaves for extensive work in the corn fields. The full bloods sold surpluses in years when clement seasons and adequate rainfall gave them more than they needed for their subsistence.

Of equal or greater importance than food cropping north of the Arkansas River was the production of salt. Salt springs were located in various places along the edge of the Ozark uplift, with the most important source of salt at Grand Saline on the middle Grand River. The Cherokee mixed bloods early recognized the potential profits from the export of salt, and by

1834 "an abundance of salt" was being gathered and sold both by them and by some of the mixed bloods of the neighboring Creek Nation.³⁴ The greatest efforts in the salt trade seem to have gotten under way in 1838 after Lewis Ross of the Cherokee Nation brought in several hundred slaves to the "Saline District" specifically for employment on the farms and salt works there.³⁵ The salt was exported mainly to dealers in surrounding states, especially Arkansas.³⁶ Production continued up until the Civil War, after which competition from national salt corporations in the United States (and the end of cheap slave labor) put the Indian salt business into receivership.

More important by far than other exports from the Indian Territory were the great droves of cattle periodically gathered together and taken to markets in Arkansas and elsewhere.³⁷ Cattle raising had been adopted from the Lower Southern cattle herders well before the Civilized Tribes relocated to the west, largely because it combined high value of resultant product with ease of supervision and uncomplicated techniques. By the late 1840s, the cattle industry of the Indian Territory had become so extensive that one amazed observer predicted that soon the greater part of the Southern market would be supplied entirely by the Indian herds.³⁸ Cattle marketing achieved a premiere position as the foundation of worldly success for those in the Indian Territory, a trade "of vast importance" to those involved in it.³⁹ These were dominantly the slave-owning mixed bloods, who employed their negroes in this context as cowboys and herders throughout the antebellum period.⁴⁰

³⁴ J. Van Horne to George Gibson, October 7, 1834, "Report from the Office of Indian Affairs for 1834"; *United States Senate Document*, I (11), 23rd Congress, 2nd Session (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1835), p. 257.

³⁵ Foreman, *op. cit.*, footnote 7, Vol. 63, pp. 1-2.

³⁶ Grant Foreman, "Salt Works in Early Oklahoma," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. 10 (1932), pp. 474-500.

³⁷ Doran, *op. cit.*, footnote 1.

³⁸ A. L. Hay, "The General Interest in Missions," *Indian Advocate*, Vol. 3 (1848), p. 2.

³⁹ J. H. Beadle, *The Undeveloped West* (Philadelphia, Chicago, Cincinnati, Memphis, and Atlanta: The National Publishing Company, 1873), p. 417.

⁴⁰ Philip Durham and Everett L. Jones, *The Negro Cowboys* (New York: Dodd, Mead, and Company, 1965), p. 18.

³¹ The Eighth Census of the United States, *op. cit.*, footnote 9, "Slave Inhabitants in the Choctaw Nation (Counties of Red River and Towson)."

³² Muriel H. Wright, "Early Navigation Along the Arkansas and Red Rivers in Oklahoma," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. 8 (1930), pp. 65-88; and Norman W. Caldwell, "The Red River Raft," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. 19 (1941), pp. 253-68.

³³ Norman Arthur Graebner, "Pioneer Indian Agriculture in Oklahoma," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. 23 (1945), pp. 244-48.

Even in areas where plantation agriculture was also carried on, there was a definite correlation between substantial cattle holdings and the ownership of slaves. For example, in the Choctaw Nation in 1858 it was observed that among the wealthy citizens "their property was chiefly in cattle and negroes."⁴¹ An exslave who had belonged to the mixed blood George Stidham in the Creek Nation recalled his early days "on the *plantation*, perhaps one should say the *ranch*, for they raised principally livestock and corn."⁴² Negroes continued to be important to the cattle industry of the Indian Territory even after 1865, although from this time onward they were advanced to the status of hired hands.⁴³

The slaves of the Indian Territory were bound to localities according to the settlement preferences of their owners. As the dominant tendency of the mixed bloods was to locate in the fertile alluvial lowlands, where bases for both extensive farming and cattle ranching were better placed, the great mass of the slaves was also found there. For example, Skullyville County in the Choctaw Nation's Arkansas Valley country was divided into two distinct settlement districts. The northern area close by the river "was settled and occupied by slave owners . . . while the southern half of the county was given over to those who were not so plentifully supplied with wealth."⁴⁴ This pattern was duplicated repeatedly both in the Choctaw Nation and in the other Indian nations. By far the heaviest concentrations of negroes were found in the plantation country along the Red River and in the vicinity of the Cherokee salt works on the Grand River (Fig. 2). The concentration areas became nuclei of continued negro population growth following the Civil War, both through natural increase and through immigration, especially after 1880.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SLAVE LIFE

The data available on the everyday life and treatment of the Indians' slaves is derived primarily from material dealing with the mixed bloods, mainly because this group owned the

great majority of the negroes.⁴⁵ The negroes owned by full bloods were not slaves in the same sense that they were for mixed blood masters. Negroes in the settlements of full bloods were permitted a fair degree of autonomy in their day-to-day lives; their servitude consisted essentially of being required to labor on their master's request, which was a fairly intermittent demand on their time. The perception of class differences between the full bloods and the negroes was in some cases so slight that intermarriage between the races became commonplace, as among the Creek and Seminole.⁴⁶ However, the mass of the slaves were under the control and influence of the mixed bloods and resident citizen whites, where regularized supervision and utilization of slave labor were the rule, and conditions were closer to the characteristics of slavery in the South.

Negro slavery in the Indian Territory was generally given an unfavorable description by the Yankee missionaries resident there before the Civil War. Rev. Goode, for example, reminisced in 1864 (during the height of anti-Southern feeling in the North) that while the full bloods had been fairly indulgent masters, the mixed blood "cavaliers" were not infrequently "hard masters, exacting labor with rigor and punishing with severity."⁴⁷ However, the bulk of the evidence stands to the contrary of opinions volunteered by abolitionist zealots. The interviews with Indian freedmen are especially revealing. A former slave on the Love Plantation in the Chickasaw Nation recalled that:⁴⁸

I never did know that I was a slave, 'cause I couldn't tell that I wasn't free. I always had a good time, didn't have to work much, and allus [sic] had something to eat and wear."

Another freedman thought that slavery was less strictly applied by his master because Indian owners were "just naturally kind anyway."⁴⁹ Slave offenses in the Indian Territory were seldom punished by whipping, although this was not entirely unknown wherever intermarried whites were found. Punishment was usually administered through deprivation of holidays or rewards, or with threats of the errant negro

⁴¹ Foreman, op. cit., footnote 17, p. 306.

⁴² L. M. S. Wilson, "Reminiscences of Jim Tomm," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. 44 (1966), p. 292.

⁴³ Neil R. Johnson, *The Chickasaw Rancher* (Stillwater, Oklahoma: The Redlands Press, 1961), pp. 52-54.

⁴⁴ Foreman, op. cit., footnote 7, Vol. 64, p. 107.

⁴⁵ Goode, op. cit., footnote 2, p. 162.

⁴⁶ Harris, op. cit., footnote 6, p. 160.

⁴⁷ Goode, op. cit., footnote 2, p. 160.

⁴⁸ Rawick, op. cit., footnote 8, p. 244.

⁴⁹ Rawick, op. cit., footnote 8, p. 34.

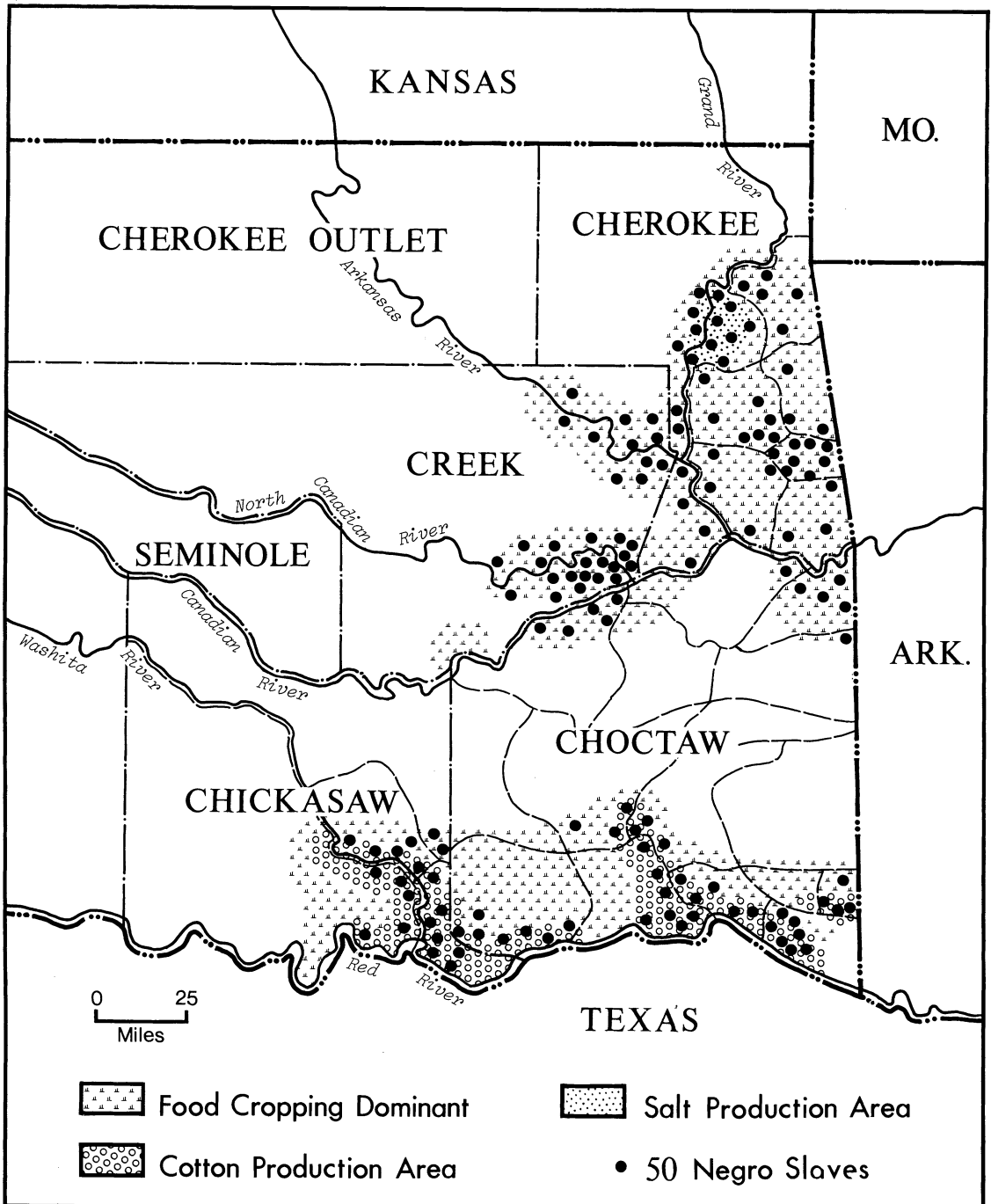


FIG. 2. Population and Economic Patterns, 1860.

being sold to whitemen in Texas or Louisiana, a possibility which evidently held some terrors for the Indians' slaves. Truly recalcitrant negroes were indeed occasionally "sold across the river," but most attempted to conform to their

masters' wishes.⁵⁰ Contemporary Anglo-American slavers, it should be mentioned, were usually loathe to buy the few Indian negroes that

⁵⁰ Rawick, *op. cit.*, footnote 8, p. 267.

were offered them for sale. The recurrent rumor was that these slaves had been spoiled by the leniency shown them in the Indian Territory, and that their purchase was a poor investment.⁵¹ Altogether, the available primary evidence is strong that the Indian slaves enjoyed fairly mild conditions of servitude.

The organization of slaveholding farms and ranches was fairly standard throughout the holdings of the Five Civilized Tribes, and on the whole was quite similar to that prevalent in the American South. The home of the owner and his family tended in most cases (with the exception of the very rich) to be a large double-pen log cabin in the "Texas style," in other words, of two pens placed with facing doorways separated by a breezeway (or "dog trot"), but all sheltered under the same roof. Fireplaces for winter heating and for some cooking were raised on the side of each pen opposite the breezeway. In the case of the smaller farms, the owner's home consisted of a single story; more affluent establishments often boasted a Big House with a second story and lean-to attachment in the rear, creating a substantial dwelling of four or five large rooms or more, such as the old Vann home at Spring Place in the Cherokee Nation.⁵² A broad porch usually extended across the front of these buildings, and a kitchen was appended at the rear by a covered passage. Behind the owner's house were a variety of out-buildings such as smokehouses, barns, cribs, and the cabins of the slaves, all constructed similarly of log pens. Although some pains were taken with the Master's home, with careful chinking, daubing, whitewashing, and even the construction of windows, the other buildings had considerably less effort exerted on them. The slave cabins were usually nothing more than simple one- or two-room log pens, poorly assembled and with few improvements, with no windows, and only a smokey clay and stick fireplace (if that) for cold weather.⁵³ As in the South, it was not considered necessary nor particularly desirable to provide mere slaves with more than the minimum for continued survival.

The other elements of the slaves' world were comparably crude. Clothing was inevitably of rough cotton cloth which was spun and woven

on the farm itself. This thick material was stitched by the slave women into simple shifts for themselves and their children, and into irregular shirts and pants for the men. While the cotton for these clothes was readily at hand on the plantations of the Choctaw and Chickasaw, elsewhere raw cotton had to be purchased from dealers and transported to the farms by wagon before any clothing could be made.⁵⁴ Shoes were used by the slaves only during the winter time and were likewise made on the spot. Hides were taken from the abundant cattle herds nearby; these were then tanned, cut into the appropriate pieces and sewn or pegged together into footwear.⁵⁵ The slaves' apparel was crude and heavy, and uncomfortable by modern standards, but it was inexpensive and consequently the only clothing they ordinarily were allowed.

The staples of the slaves' diet were a combination of standard Southern fare laced with overtones from traditional Indian dishes. Ground corn formed the major staple here as in the South; however, it was made into various kinds of cakes according to the often aboriginal preferences of their owners, and given names such as "pashofa" and "tofula." Hominy was also common fare. Pones were made from meal without the addition of either soda or baking powder, which were too expensive and rare in the Indian Territory to be used by slaves. Whole roasting ears of corn or sweet potatoes added variety to eating from time to time. Beef seems to have been regularly provided, undoubtedly because cattle were to be had at little effort and no expense from the nearby plains where they ran wild in immense numbers. Possum, coon, and squirrel meat were regular additions to the slaves' diet depending upon the success of an evening's chase. To a lesser degree the slaves also ate vegetables grown in garden plots around their cabins, such as peas, turnips, and collard greens. Milk and butter were available on some farms, and molasses in liberal quantity sweetened nearly every meal.

Major Presbyterian, Methodist, and Baptist missionary efforts were carried on in the Indian Territory before the Civil War. Their main emphasis was placed on reaching the full bloods, but important ancillary activity was

⁵¹ William Queensbury, "The Lower Creeks," *Arkansas Intelligencer*, Vol. 4 (August 2, 1845), p. 2.

⁵² Foreman, *op. cit.*, footnote 7, Vol. 8, p. 515.

⁵³ Rawick, *op. cit.*, footnote 8, pp. 2, 285.

⁵⁴ Rawick, *op. cit.*, footnote 8, p. 287.

⁵⁵ Foreman, *op. cit.*, footnote 7, Vol. 7, p. 74.

devoted to vitalizing the Christianity of the mixed bloods and their slaves. Christian ritual had been accepted by most of the mixed bloods before removal to the Territory, and they often maintained their faith through periodic camp meetings similar to those popular in the South. Regular services were held in log churches when these were available; more commonly, brush arbors were raised to shelter meetings out of doors. The masters would sit together under the arbor and close to the pulpit, while the masses of slaves were placed off to one side but near enough to hear the service and join in the singing.⁵⁶ Even when a slaveholder himself did not care to observe the Sabbath due to apathy or outright disbelief, he usually was not adverse to letting the slaves participate because it was believed that "it made them better men and women."⁵⁷ Even in quite remote areas that were dominantly populated by full bloods still clinging to traditional religious ideas, negroes acquired from the mixed bloods managed to perpetuate the Christian heritage (although some followed the example of their new masters and adopted primitive rituals). The gospel in these districts was preached through the agency of *de facto* negro ministers, often self-appointed, who carried on regular Sunday teaching.⁵⁸

The living environment of the slaves in the Indian Territory was fairly similar to that of their cousins in servitude in the United States. Men were invariably used as field hands for plowing, chopping cotton, planting food crops, herding of livestock, and maintaining farmstead improvements generally. Slave women attended to kitchen duties, to household cleaning and tending of garden patches, and the making of rude clothing.⁵⁹ Food was relatively plentiful for the slaves, and while amenities were limited the negroes were evidently treated humanely by their masters. Life was thus simple and uninspiring, but there was usually no reason for them to feel oppressed by the social system they found themselves under. Antebellum times were usually recalled by them as a period of sufficient subsistence and easy labor and, for the most part, with something akin to nostalgia.⁶⁰

INCREASING NUMERICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SLAVES

The available sources of data on the number and distribution of negroes resident among the Five Civilized Tribes are severely limited in number. The Indians themselves only became interested in regularized tallies of their citizen and alien populations after the Civil War, when it was increasingly important to measure the extent of Anglo-American intrusion on their lands. Before 1860, the federal government was specifically barred from carrying out enumerations of the tribes, due to their official status as "domestic dependent nations." The yearly estimates of tribal population that were placed in the official Reports of the Indian Commissioner were of varying reliability, and were usually not based on field investigation. The slaves of the Indians were not even accorded the benefit of an estimate in these Reports. As a consequence, the only reliable data on the negroes in the antebellum period comes to us from just two sources: the U.S. Army tabulation of Indians, slaves, and aliens made at the time of removal in the 1830s, and the irregular intrusion into the Indian Territory made by the enumerators of the 8th United States Census in 1860.

The Army head count of the Indians in the 1830s was made with conscientious dedication, as the military was required by Congress to provide documentation of the emigration they were assisting.⁶¹ Most of the tribes already had sent vanguards to the west by the 1830s, whose numbers were roughly known as well. We are therefore able to provide a fairly good impression of overall numbers (Table 1). The Army also made every attempt to learn how many whites and blacks there were living with the Indians, and we thus also possess figures on noncitizens who departed with the Indians (Table 2). The table suggests that even by this date negroes formed a statistically more important presence than did resident whites, for while recorded whites numbered only a few hundred, the tribes by this time owned several thousand

⁵⁶ Foreman, *op. cit.*, footnote 7, Vol. 7, p. 37.

⁵⁷ Foreman, *op. cit.*, footnote 7, Vol. 7, p. 243.

⁵⁸ Lang and Taylor, *op. cit.*, footnote 19, p. 40.

⁵⁹ Rawick, *op. cit.*, footnote 8, pp. 8-9, 242-43.

⁶⁰ Rawick, *op. cit.*, footnote 8, pp. 34-35.

⁶¹ The Seminole were an exception, primarily due to their repeated revolts and refusal to assist any attempts to number them. The figures available on citizen populations of the Seminole are often even more confused because of their adamant insistence that negro slaves were citizens.

TABLE 1.—TOTAL POPULATIONS OF THE FIVE CIVILIZED TRIBES AT REMOVAL

	Eastern group	Western group	Total
Cherokee Nation	16,542 ¹	+3,500 ²	20,042
Choctaw Nation	17,963 ³	±1,000 ⁴	18,963
Chickasaw Nation	5,224 ⁵	—	5,224
Creek Nation	21,762 ⁶	+2,400 ⁷	24,162
Seminole Nation	4,883 ⁸	—	4,883
	66,374	6,900	73,274

+ = probably more ± = approximate

¹ J. F. Schermerhorn to Lewis Cass, March 3, 1836, *United States Senate Document No. 120*, 25th Congress, 2nd Session, p. 535. Recorded about 1835.

² Charles C. Royce, "The Cherokee Nation of Indians," *Fifth Annual Report of the Bureau of American Ethnology* (1887), footnote on p. 218. Recorded about 1816.

³ Register accompanying letter of William Ward to Lewis Cass, January 20, 1832, *United States Senate Document No. 512*, 23rd Congress, 1st Session, Vol. 3, pp. 26–124. Recorded about 1831.

⁴ William Ward to John H. Eaton, December 8, 1830, *United States Senate Document No. 512*, 23rd Congress, 1st Session, Vol. 2, p. 197. Recorded about 1830. Most of these people were scattered along the Red River in Arkansas for a number of years.

⁵ "Removal of Chickasaw Indians," read March 17, 1842 (12 pp.), *United States House Report No. 454*, 27th Congress, 2nd Session, Recorded about 1837.

⁶ Register accompanying letter of Thomas J. Abbott to Lewis Cass, May, 1833, *United States Senate Document No. 512*, 23rd Congress, 1st Session, Vol. 4, pp. 235–394. Recorded about 1832.

⁷ Samuel S. Hamilton to John Campbell, November 18, 1830, *United States Senate Document No. 512*, 23rd Congress, 1st Session, Vol. 2, pp. 43–44.

⁸ *American State Papers*, "Indian Affairs," Vol. 2, p. 439.

slaves. It should be noted that these data do not include those wealthy mixed blood families who had already moved to the Indian Territory with their slaves and associates before the military was brought in to assist, so the figures for both whites and negroes are probably weaker in their

implications than they should be. The Chickasaw Nation was perhaps best described, as this tribe removed west as a discrete unit; it can be seen that for this group the negroes amounted to nearly twenty percent of their total number (Table 2).

The most painful immediate effect of the removal period on the Five Civilized Tribes was a dramatic decline in citizen population. Most of the deaths appear to have occurred shortly after arrival in the West, as epidemics and exposure to a harsher environment depleted the Indian populations of their weaker members. Total decline has been estimated to be in the neighborhood of several thousands, with a reduction of tribal strength down about one third by 1860.⁶²

It is of great interest to discover that this decimation was not duplicated in the ranks of the slaves, who seem to have thrived both before and after emigration. Examination of the population figures available to us on citizen populations of the Five Civilized Tribes, and comparison with the figures derived from the Census of 1860 on whites and slaves in the Indian Territory, shows that negroes were still by far the most important minority group living with the Indians (Table 3). In fact, while the Indian cohort had declined, their negroes had increased in number past 8,000 and now repre-

⁶² Michael F. Doran, "Population Statistics of Nineteenth Century Indian Territory," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. 53 (1975–76), p. 498.

TABLE 2.—CITIZENS AND NONCITIZENS IN THE EAST, 1830S

	Indian citizens	Percentage	Whites	Percentage	Slaves	Percentage	Total population
Cherokee Nation ¹	16,542	90	201	1	1,592	9	18,335
Choctaw Nation ²	17,963	96	151	1	512	3	18,626
Chickasaw Nation	5,224 ³	82	—†	0	1,156 ⁴	18	6,380
Creek Nation ⁵	21,762	96	—†	0	902	4	22,664
Seminole Nation ⁶	4,883	100	—†	0	—‡	0	4,883
	66,374	94	352*	0	4,162*	6	70,888*

† Not recorded, but presumably small number.

‡ Not clearly separated from Indian population.

* Summary figures inferior to actual († unknown) total, due especially to Seminole refusal to assist enumeration.

¹ J. F. Schermerhorn to Lewis Cass, op. cit., Table 1, footnote 1.

² William Ward to Lewis Cass, January 20, 1832, *United States Senate Document No. 512*, 23rd Congress, 1st Session, Vol. 3, pp. 26–124.

³ "Removal of Chickasaw Indians," op. cit., Table 1, footnote 5.

⁴ Joseph B. Thoburn and Muriel H. Wright, *Oklahoma. A History of the State and Its People* (4 vols.) (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., Inc., 1929); Vol. 1, p. 297.

⁵ Thomas J. Abbott to Lewis Cass, May, 1833, *United States Senate Document No. 512*, 23rd Congress, 1st Session, Vol. 4, pp. 235–394.

⁶ *American State Papers*, op. cit., Table 1, footnote 8.

TABLE 3.—POPULATION OF THE INDIAN TERRITORY, 1860

	Indian citizens	Percentage	Whites	Percentage	Slaves	Percentage	Total population
Cherokee Nation	13,821	81	716	4	2,511	15	17,048
Choctaw Nation	13,666	81	804	5	2,349	14	16,814
Chickasaw Nation	4,260	79	148	3	975	18	5,384
Creek Nation	13,550	86	596	4	1,532	10	15,678
Seminole Nation	2,253	71	35	—	1,000	29	3,665
	47,550	82	2,299	4	8,376	14	58,594

SOURCES: Indian citizen populations derived from: Federal Records Center, Southwest (Fort Worth), "Drennen Role of Cherokees of 1852"; Indian Archives Division, Oklahoma Historical Society, "Choctaw National Census of 1867"; Henry R. Schoolcraft, *Information Respecting the History, Conditions, and Prospects of the Indian Tribes of the United States* (5 vols., Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo and Company, 1853-1856), Vol. 1, pp. 439-524; Commissioner of Indian Affairs, *Report* (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1860), p. 125; Commissioner of Indian Affairs, *Report* (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1859), p. 183. White and slave populations hand tabulated from the *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860*, manuscript schedules entitled "Territories to the West of Arkansas," except for the Seminole slave number, taken from N. Sayer Harris, *Journal of a Tour in Indian Territory* (New York: Daniel Dana, 1844), p. 16.

sented fourteen percent of the entire population. The only absolute decline in slave numbers was found in tabulating the Chickasaw Nation, and this may have been a statistical product of the decision by some Chickasaw elite to accept citizenship in the Choctaw Nation, which removed an unknown number of slaves from the Chickasaw count. As has been indicated above, the overall growth in slave population was dominantly caused by natural increase, which must therefore have been in the neighborhood of from 1.5% to 2.5% per annum. Data limitations proscribe making an entirely satisfactory description of fertility among the negroes, for in 1860 only gender was recorded for slaves, with age and family groupings ignored. However, the proportion of females to males in 1860 suggests that there were favorable circumstances for maintenance or expansion of population by the negroes (Table 4). In short, although the rate of negro reproduction was somewhat below that occurring contemporaneously in the South (roughly twenty-two to thirty-two percent per decade), its trend was steady and of undoubted importance to the societies of the Indian Territory.⁶³

CHARACTERISTICS OF SLAVE OWNERSHIP IN INDIAN TERRITORY

Ownership of slaves was limited to a very small percentage group of free persons in the Indian Territory. According to the census of 1860, only 2.3% of tribal citizens actually

owned any slaves, and of the resident whites less than 5% were slaveholders (Table 5). The pattern of slave ownership emphasizes once again the extremely unbalanced distribution of affluence and property that was the case for the Indian Territory before 1860, and suggests the number of tribal citizens who were in position through heritage and wealth to more directly associate themselves with Anglo-American culture. As we have seen, they were predominantly the mixed bloods. The masses of citizenry held few or no slaves, and the same socioeconomic perspectives that created this situation also defined the social segment least impacted by cultural change.

The great majority of resident whites also were not slave owners, but for different reasons. The years immediately before the Civil War saw the first substantial employment of Southern white farm workers by the entrepreneurial mixed bloods, as the demand for agricultural labor had exceeded local supply.⁶⁴ Little is known about these workers, save that they were largely from the Upper South. However, as the distribution of slaves among them was less balanced than in even the poorest pine barrens of Mississippi, we can surmise that the majority of the white workers came from the least prosperous classes of the South.⁶⁵ There is no recorded information to suggest active foreign recruitment of agricultural labor by the mixed bloods, and presumably these workers

⁶⁴ Doran, *op. cit.*, footnote 18, pp. 108-17.

⁶³ Alfred H. Conrad and John R. Meyer, "The Economics of Slavery in the Ante Bellum South," *Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 46 (April, 1958).

⁶⁵ Herbert Weaver, *Mississippi Farmers 1850-1860* (Nashville, Tennessee: Vanderbilt University Press, 1945), p. 35.

TABLE 4.—INDIAN TERRITORY NEGROES, 1860: SEX RATIO^a

	Number of males		Number of females		Total numbers
		Percentage		Percentage	
Cherokee Nation	1,226	49	1,285	51	2,511
Choctaw Nation	1,136	48	1,213	52	2,349
Chickasaw Nation	456	47	519	53	975
Creek Nation	737	48	795	52	1,532

^a Seminole Nation not enumerated.

SOURCE: Manuscript Schedules of Slave Population, 1860: "Territories to the West of Arkansas," *Eighth Census of the United States*.

TABLE 5.—SLAVE OWNERS IN THE INDIAN TERRITORY, 1860

	Citizen owners			Alien owners		
	Tribal citizens	Slave owners	Owners as a percentage of citizens	Alien residents	Slave owners	Owners as a percentage of aliens
Cherokee Nation	13,821	330	2.4	716	55	7.7
Choctaw Nation	13,666	344	2.5	804	43	5.3
Chickasaw Nation	4,260	112	2.6	148	7	4.7
Creek Nation	13,550	261	1.9	596	7	1.2
	45,297	1,047		2,264	112	4.9

SOURCE: See footnotes, Table 3.

were largely drawn from the passing masses of immigrants on the Texas Road.

One of the most valuable ways in which slave ownership among the Five Civilized Tribes can be used is for cross-cultural comparison of the trait with areas in the contemporary United States. As it was found that the distribution of slaves in the ranks of citizen slaveholders was almost identical to that among alien slaveholders, there is the obvious implication that slave owning was transferring as a complete trait from the South to the acculturating Indian societies (Table 6). Most slave owners, whether citizen or alien, held fewer than five slaves. If the usual generalization is employed to define the number of "wealthy planters" (i.e. those

who owned thirty slaves or more), fewer than thirty individuals in the entire Territory fell into this category. Data on slaveholding in Tennessee for 1860, broken down into that state's major physiographic regions, suggests the most similar slave owning context in the Anglo-American South (Table 7). It is instantly clear that the pattern of ownership in Indian Territory was strikingly congruent with ownership in the mountainous regions of eastern Tennessee, the epitome of the so-called "Upland South." Whether this similarity was caused by the economic environment of the eastern Indian Territory or by insertion of alien diffusors from the Upland South remains for

TABLE 6.—OWNERSHIP OF SLAVES IN THE INDIAN TERRITORY, 1860

Number of slaves held	Citizen slaveholders		Alien slaveholders	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
1-5	662	63.2	72	64.3
6-10	219	20.9	23	20.5
11-20	113	10.8	9	8.0
21-30	27	2.6	5	4.5
31-40	12	1.1	0	0.0
41-50	4	.4	2	1.8
51-75	6	.6	1	.9
76+	4	.4	0	0.0
	1,047	100.0	112	100.0

SOURCE: Manuscript Census Schedules, op. cit., Table 3.

TABLE 7.—SLAVE OWNERSHIP IN TENNESSEE: SELECTED DISTRICTS, 1860

Number of slaves held	Percentage of slaveholders:	Percentage of slaveholders:	Percentage of slaveholders:
	delta Tennessee	middle Tennessee	east Tennessee
1-5	35.6	54.8	62.5
6-10	21.5	22.3	21.8
11-20	19.8	15.4	12.1
21-30	10.5	5.1	3.0
31-40	3.3	1.7	0.6
41-50	3.9	0.7	0.0
51-75	3.9	0.0	0.0
76+	1.5	0.0	0.0

SOURCE: Frank L. Owsley and Harriett C. Owsley, "The Economic Structure of Rural Tennessee, 1850-1860," *Journal of Southern History*, Vol. 8 (1942), p. 180.

further research to clarify. However, the census figures reveal that a large number of American immigrants were indeed from homelands in Tennessee and other states with hilly or mountainous districts (Table 8).

CONCLUSION

Negro slaves constituted the single most numerous minority group among the Five Civilized Tribes from an early date, and by 1860 outnumbered alien whites in the Indian Territory by a ratio of more than three to one. The several thousand slaves at that date, and presumably earlier as well, were only owned by a small group. According to the manuscript census schedules, not quite 2.5% of tribal citizens and about 5% of alien white residents actually owned slaves. The slaveholding element constituted a tiny elite in the Indian society, but evidently one with disproportionate economic and political power. Contemporary reports on Indian life inevitably associated the families possessing slaves specifically with "easy" or "better" circumstances, in contrast with the mass of the populace who lived in grinding (but seemingly unconcerned) poverty.⁶⁶ In the context of the slaveowning citizen families, literary evidence states that the wealthy parties were mixed both in blood and in cultural heritage. In 1860 the whites apparently were divided into a small group of permanent residents plus a much larger group of what seem to have been lately imported agricultural laborers. Of those persons who actually held slaves, characteristics of slave ownership as derived from Census statistics show that there were direct similarities with the Upland South in regard to this socioeconomic trait. Many other aspects of slavery were very similar to conditions in the South as a whole.

Slave labor was introduced to the Indians through extended residence by Anglo-American traders, who intermarried and left to their mixed blood offspring both the cultural perspective of using slaves and a successfully reproducing stock of negro possessions. The mixed bloods formed the most important entrepreneurial force within the Five Civilized Tribes, both in terms of their orientation toward building and maintaining comfortable sur-

TABLE 8.—STATE OF BIRTH OF ALIEN RESIDENTS, 1860

	All Aliens		Slaveholding Aliens	
	State of birth	Percentage of all aliens	State of birth	Percentage of alien slaveholders
Alabama	175	7.7	4	3.6
Georgia	164	7.2	15	13.4
Mississippi	67	3.0	7	6.2
Kentucky	96	4.2	7	6.2
Tennessee	307	13.6	31	27.7
Virginia	96	4.2	6	5.4
North Carolina	89	3.9	15	13.4
South Carolina	59	2.6	8	7.2
Texas	80	3.5	1	.9
New England	68	3.0	7	6.2
New York	63	2.8	3	2.6
Pennsylvania	62	2.7	1	.9
Ohio	42	2.0	1	.9
Other (includes children born in the Indian Territory)				
	896	39.6	6	5.4
	2,264	100.0	112	100.0

SOURCE: Manuscript Census Schedules, op. cit., Table 3.

roundings, and because of their cultural heritage. In part because during most of the antebellum period there was no other reliable source of labor, and in part because the negroes were already available to them, slavery was retained and encouraged by the mixed bloods as a necessary economic device. Few of them ever owned a great number of slaves, perhaps because of division of slave inheritance among descendants. The slaves served a highly useful function as laborers on the agricultural operations of their masters, a unique pool of available labor up until 1860. This permitted at least some areas under Indian ownership to make notable strides in advancement, both in real wealth and in the resultant trappings and advantages of affluence.

An interesting consideration that remains to be treated past the economic service of the negro slaves is the question: how did the slaves themselves impact the acculturation process among the Five Civilized Tribes? Discussions of the progress of the Indians, from the early nineteenth century writings down through modern examinations of their cultural change, almost inevitably remark that the "intermixture of white people with the Indians has undoubtedly been a considerable cause of the civiliza-

⁶⁶ Rev. William Graham, "Lost Among the Choc-taws During a Tour in the Indian Territory, 1845," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. 50 (1972), p. 227.

tion of the latter."⁶⁷ However, almost nothing has appeared in regard to whether the much more numerous slaves may have been a vector of cultural example as much or more important than the whites and mixed bloods. We know that slaves were primarily owned by a favored few who already were inclined toward or immersed in acculturation; yet some were owned by the more prosperous full bloods, and there must have been fairly regular contacts at all levels. That diffusion at the level of slave-to-Indian may have been quite important was suggested in one of the last *Reports* of the Indian

⁶⁷ Gottlieb Byhan, et al., "Cherokees: Resolutions and Statements of the Missionaries Relative to the Contemplated Plan of Removing the Indians," *The Missionary Herald*, Vol. 27 (1831), p. 82.

Commissioner before the Civil War, in the reprinted comments of Agent Butler sent in from the Cherokee Nation. He wrote that:⁶⁸

I am clearly of the opinion that the rapid advancement of the Cherokees is owing in part to the fact of their being slaveholders, which has operated as an incentive to all industrial pursuits. . . for it is a well established fact that all wild tribes have an aversion to manual labor, and when thrown in contact with those who will work, they will gradually acquire industrious habits.

It seems certain that the place of the negro slave in the societies of the Five Civilized Tribes awaits considerably more attention before his full significance is adequately revealed.

⁶⁸ Commissioner of Indian Affairs, *Annual Report* (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1859), p. 172.