Columbia Economic History Seminar
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Dear readers:

Below is chapter 3 of my book-in-progress, *Grassroots Leviathan: How Northern Farmers Summoned State in a Slaveholding Republic*. The book argues that in the half century before the American Civil War a vast agricultural reform movement emerged in response to structural economic and environmental changes that challenged prevailing modes of agriculture. This movement helps explain several puzzles and missing pieces in American history, such as why an overwhelmingly rural society would vote into power a Republican Party closely associated with industrialization; why powerful government bureaucracies (the USDA, land-grant universities, experiment states, etc.) arose in agriculture, ostensibly the preserve of individualistic Jeffersonian yeomen or antifederalist slaveholding planters; and how any convincing "economic" interpretation of the causes of the Civil War might deal with the fact that the North was certainly not "industrial" in any comprehensive sense in 1860.

The book consists of eight chapters in four parts as follows:

Part I: Organization

1. The Failure of Patrician Agricultural Reform
2. The Rise of the Agricultural Reform Movement

Part II: Ideology

3. Economic Nationalism in the Greater Rural Northeast
4. The Republican Developmental Synthesis

Part III: Policy

5. Agricultural Expertise in Crisis
6. From "Private Enterprise" to "Governmental Action"

Part IV: Politics

7. Movement into Lobby
8. Sectionalizing Agricultural Reform

Chapter 3, included here, establishes the broad economic and ideological context for chapter 4's more specific discussion of the role that agricultural reform and "scientific agriculture" played in the economic ideology of leading Republicans. Many thanks for give this your perusal and I look forward to your comments.

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Economic Nationalism in the Greater Rural Northeast

As colonial resistance pitched toward revolution in 1776, Thomas Paine wryly assured Americans that their grain would "always have a market while eating is the custom of Europe." It was Paine at his sardonic best. What could be more obvious than the power of American agricultural exports? In the years before independence, the colonies' ratio of foreign to domestic trade stood as high as four-to-one. If the British refused to take American staples, surely other countries would. Southern Europe had already become an important purchaser of American wheat and flour, especially from Paine's Philadelphia. Paine simply assumed that American farm surpluses would continue to go abroad regardless of the politics. "Our plan is commerce," he declared, "because, it is the interest of all Europe to have America a *free port*."[1]

But independence changed things. To begin with, Europeans consulted their interests differently than Paine predicted and chose to restrict American access to their imperial trade zones. More importantly, a budding domestic economy gained new vitality. Over the next three generations—as immigrants swelled the population, conquest enlarged the territory, and the transfer of sovereignty refocused government policy at home—the American foreign-to-domestic trade ratio completely reversed. By the 1840s, exports amounted to only a tenth of nonlocal trade. Everything else flowed through a dynamic internal market that took shape between the poles of Atlantic commerce and neighborly exchange. A robust domestic economy had emerged.[2]

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[1] Thomas Paine, *Common Sense* (Dover Publications, 1997), 19, 21 (emphasis in original); Marc Egnal, *New World Economies: The Growth of the Thirteen Colonies and Early Canada* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 62–63.

[2] Drew R McCoy, *The Elusive Republic: Political Economy in Jeffersonian America* (New York: Norton, 1982), 91–92; Diane Lindstrom, *Economic Development in the Philadelphia Region, 1810-1850* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), 3; David R. Meyer, *The Roots of American Industrialization* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 161; Percy Wells Bidwell and John I. Falconer, *History of Agriculture in the Northern United States, 1620-1860* (Washington, DC: The Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1925), 196–199; Clarence H. Danhof, *Change in Agriculture: The Northern United States, 1820-1870* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969), 9–11. According to Danhof, in 1820 the

This shift implied not only a new relationship with Europe but new relationships within the United States. The turn from Atlantic to internal trade occurred unevenly. Because the country's leading export, cotton, was confined to the South and its principal northern export, wheat, came increasingly from the Midwest, the domestic economy flourished largely in the area I call the Greater Northeast (a term explained below). The resulting sectional disparities fueled struggle over national economic policy and conditioned political alliances both within and across the sections. For instance, coastal merchants and western farmers invested in traditional export markets stood with southern planters in favor of free trade and aggressive overseas commercial expansion. Conversely, manufacturers clustered in the Greater Northeast tended to seek domestic development through protective tariffs. Despite the conventional wisdom that import substitution is a kind of tax on agriculture, many northern farmers came to support the manufacturers, reasoning that a dependable "home market" was preferable to a contingent foreign one.[3]

Slavery very much complicated the picture by introducing a uniquely nonnegotiable element into American national politics. After independence, the North gradually abolished human bondage at the same time as its economy pivoted inward. Meanwhile, southern planters discovered the secrets of short-staple cotton, leading to a remarkable expansion of slave country and its commodity exports. Yet North and South remained fastened together in a single national polity, so that disagreements over two sets of relatively distinct issues—slavery and economic policy—tended to overlap and get entangled. For a time, the second two-party system of Whigs and Democrats managed to foreground a subset of economic issues while suppressing the matter of slavery. But in a representative democracy numerically dominated by citizens of free territory, southern leaders repeatedly came back to a political strategy of restraint on federal powers. Who knew what an active national government could do should it fall into the hands of the northern majority, at best indiffer-

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proportion of American farm products that were exported was 4 percent, while the proportion that was sold domestically (beyond the local community) came to 15 percent, for a ratio of nearly one to four. By 1870 the percentage of exports had not changed while domestic consumption excluding local consumption had climbed to 35 percent of the total agricultural product, for a ratio of almost one to nine. While Lindstrom's and Danhof's figures, derived from different sources, differ somewhat, the direction and magnitude of change is unmistakable.

[3] Sven Beckert, *The Monied Metropolis: New York City and the Consolidation of the American Bourgeoisie, 1850-1896* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Andrew Dawson, *Lives of the Philadelphia Engineers: Capital, Class, and Revolution, 1830-1890* (Aldershot, Hants., England: Ashgate, 2004); Philip Sheldon Foner, *Business and Slavery: The New York Merchants and the Irrepressible Conflict* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1941).

ent to slavery, at worst actively hostile to it? Slaveholders' anxieties tended to implicate the whole range of federal action, which meant that economic development came to seem hostage to the security of property rights in human beings.[4]

This entanglement ultimately produced the Republican Party, a political organization that was northern and nationalist with equal militancy. Just as the abolitionist challenge to the Cotton Kingdom fostered southern pro-slavery ideology, antifederalism and eventual separatism, so too southern political obstruction of domestic development policies fostered a northern economic nationalism that Republicans proved best able to capture in the 1850s. The agricultural reform movement mediated this process by channeling the rural North's economic restructuring into a roughly coherent set of ideas and policy proposals that Republicans adopted as their own.

To understand how this happened, we have to follow parallel developments in the economy and in its contemporary ideological construction. This makes for a complicated story, so some signposting is in order. I shorthand the parallel developments as the *domestic economy* and the *home market*—terms that could be used interchangeably but do better service applied to analytically distinct if historically interwoven patterns of trade and thought. The story tacks back and forth in order to highlight the interaction between structures and ideas. This chapter explains the domestic economy's effects in the countryside, then suggests how politics and contingency gradually bound home market thinking to an implicitly antislavery position. The next chapter delves deeper into the domestic economy before detailing the ways that Republican political economists built on experience to interpret the country's developmental trajectory.

Together, these chapters aim to make a compelling case for why northern farmers would support the Republicans' manifestly developmental vision. The existing scholarship is oddly disjointed on this point. Explanations for the party's formation in the 1850s explicitly downplay economic issues, yet it is well known that Republicans instituted an expansive program of economic legislation the moment they took control of the federal government. Neither have we properly understood the place of agriculture in Republican thinking. Focusing on "market revolution," we

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[4] Adam Rothman, *Slave Country: American Expansion and the Origins of the Deep South* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005); Brian Schoen, *The Fragile Fabric of Union: Cotton, Federal Politics, and the Global Origins of the Civil War* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009); Matthew Mason, *Slavery and Politics in the Early American Republic* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006); John R. Van Atta, *Wolf by the Ears: The Missouri Crisis, 1819-1821* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015); Don E. Fehrenbacher, *The Slaveholding Republic: An Account of the United States Government's Relations to Slavery* (Oxford University Press, 2002).

have not sufficiently unpacked the *kind* of market that emerged. Here, too, there is an odd disjuncture in the scholarship. Historians tend to summarize the complicated transition to capitalism by speaking of industrialization. Yet they have long rejected the so-called economic interpretation of the Civil War by correctly pointing out that the North was much more agricultural than industrial when the conflict broke out.[5]

Indeed, in 1860, northern society remained dominated by the countryside, its economy largely agricultural. Even the states of New England and the mid-Atlantic—the nation's most industrialized areas—were still nearly two-thirds rural. About half of northern urbanites, moreover, lived scattered in small towns rather than concentrated in the kinds of places that people today would call cities.[6] The burgeoning urban-industrial sector certainly mattered a great deal, but in a sense its greatest immediate significance was its effect on agriculture. It is indicative that while the United States generally lagged behind Britain and France in industrial manufacturing during the 1850s, it was already a world leader in agricultural implements, machinery and processing, not to mention the modern carriages, locomotives and steamboats that carried farm goods to market.

Next to the evident dynamism of urban growth and western expansion, the northeastern countryside can seem the site of decline or, at best, stability. Northeastern farmers did face serious challenges, including deteriorating soils, ruinous competition from western grains, worsening parasitic outbreaks, and steady outmigration,

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[5] Eric Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men: The Ideology of the Republican Party Before the Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); Michael F. Holt, *The Political Crisis of the 1850s* (New York: Norton, 1983); William E. Gienapp, *The Origins of the Republican Party, 1852-1856* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); Heather Cox Richardson, *The Greatest Nation of the Earth: Republican Economic Policies During the Civil War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997); Charles Grier Sellers, *The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815-1846* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991); Charles A. Beard and Mary R. Beard, *The Rise of American Civilization*, New Edition (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1962); John Lauritz Larson, *The Market Revolution in America: Liberty, Ambition, and the Eclipse of the Common Good* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Marc Egnal, *Clash of Extremes: The Economic Origins of the Civil War* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2009); Adam Wesley Dean, *An Agrarian Republic: Farming, Antislavery Politics, and Nature Parks in the Civil War Era* (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2015); James L. Huston, *The British Gentry, the Southern Planter, and the Northern Family Farmer: Agriculture and Sectional Antagonism in North America* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2015).

[6] This northern pattern contrasted with the South's limited and more concentrated urban development. Frank Towers, "The Southern Path to Modern Cities: Urbanization in the Slave States," in *The Old South's Modern Worlds: Slavery, Region, and Nation in the Age of Progress*, ed. L. Diane Barnes, Brian Schoen, and Frank Towers (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 149; Meyer, *The Roots of American Industrialization*, 27, Table 2.6, which shows that Boston, New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore enjoyed a dwindling share of the region's urban population despite their spectacular growth, meaning that smaller towns accounted for a rising share of northern urbanites. In 1790 the major cities accounted for 72% of the region's urban population, by 1860 only 53%.

each an aspect of maturing settlement and thus an apparent sign of slowdown. Yet the rural Northeast was far more vital and innovative than we typically realize. Alan L. Olmstead and Paul W. Rhode have recently demonstrated the huge effect of "biological innovation" in farming regions once passed over by economic historians because of their unsuitability to mechanization. And as David Meyer points out, the spectacular growth of regional manufacturing in the last two decades of the antebellum era is simply inexplicable without prosperous, nearby farmer-consumers to purchase the goods. Indeed, far from declining, the rural Northeast continued to experience rising population and output. Adopting labor-saving technologies, soil-rebuilding practices, and pest-resistant cultivars while shifting production from grains to a mix of crops that earned the benefit of nearby urban markets, many of its farmers prospered. They also laid claim to an ethos of improvement every bit as modern as the more familiar business and social reform initiatives associated with the urban middle class. As one observer summed up the region's rural landscape in 1853, "a new order is brought about."[7]

Accounting for what that order looked like on the ground and in people's minds can tell us a lot about the fateful politics of the 1850s. In fact, it can tell us a lot about the entire course of American history in the nineteenth century. The domestic economy reoriented northern farmers' commercial ties from an Atlantic to a national framework. This was the reason that many rural northerners came to believe in domestic manufacturing and the tariff. At the same time, it encouraged popular commitments to scientific knowledge, technological progress, precise calculation, efficient time usage, practical education, and so on—in short, commitments to a kind of rural modernization. This was what lay behind novel demands for state agricultural colleges and a federal Department of Agriculture. All of this played out in dynamic interaction with the South's quite different developmental trajectory. The Republican Party's rise to power and the transformative economic program that it implemented once there can only be understood in this context.

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[7] Gouverneur Emerson, *Address Delivered Before the Agricultural Society of Chester County, Pennsylvania, September 17, 1853* (Philadelphia: T.K. and P.G. Collins, 1853), 4; Alan L. Olmstead and Paul Webb Rhode, *Creating Abundance: Biological Innovation and American Agricultural Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Meyer, *The Roots of American Industrialization*, 1–12.

The Domestic Economy: Structural Change in the Greater Rural Northeast

The domestic economy emerged in what I call the Greater Northeast. Less a bounded space than a set of conditions, the Greater Northeast gradually expanded out of the Northeast proper—New England plus New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania—into the upper Chesapeake around Baltimore, the Ohio River Valley, and the Midwest along the Great Lakes. The region's economy was defined by the growing presence of cities and manufacturing surrounded by relatively dense hinterlands engaged in diverse agricultural endeavors. These traits contrasted with predominant modes of southern and western frontier agriculture. They fostered a denser public sphere of civic associations and print discourse, including the agricultural reform movement. They comprised a broader range of agricultural practices and consequently a more varied ecosystem of rural capitalism. And they oriented farmers toward domestic rather than transatlantic markets, establishing a complicated reciprocal relationship with cities: raw materials and food energy flowed to town; consumer goods, new technologies and fertilizers flowed to the countryside.[8]

The shaping of this economic structure had roots in the colonial era. Market exchange in the thirteen colonies largely followed the dictates of transatlantic trade, but whereas this was especially true of the Chesapeake and Lower South, New England and the Mid-Atlantic were more complicated. New England's signal difficulty—its lack of an agricultural staple that could pay for the manufactured imports it needed—stimulated creative efforts to generate some other basis for effective trade, leading to significant internal development. In the 1640s, for instance, its colonial governments brazenly experimented with import substitution policies directly at odds with British imperial regulations. Lacking capital and technical expertise, however, bootstrap industrialization largely failed. Instead, New England prospered by developing a diversified economy of fisheries, shipbuilding, mixed agriculture, timber and naval stores, and limited manufacturing. The Middle Colonies, which enjoyed the advantage of staple wheat production, also developed significant processing and manufacturing capacities. As in New England, however, these remained "tied, more or less directly, to the export sector." Merchants played they key intermediary role by

[8] By speaking of a Greater Northeast, I do not mean to falsely homogenize regional differences in the emerging industrial core. Instead, I aim to draw attention to the geographic and temporal movement of domestic economic development, beginning in the Northeast proper and progressively incorporating much of the Midwest.

establishing northern ports as "hub[s] of intercolonial trade" that generated profitable "invisibles" in the form of freight charges, marine insurance, and interest on credit. The upshot was that the northern colonial economy enjoyed sufficient autonomy by the 1760s to make independence a plausible option. Yet into the 1770s the northern colonies were riding an "export-led boom" indicative of continued dependence on the transatlantic imperial trade system.[9]

The Revolutionary period disrupted this Atlantic orientation without immediately providing a clear alternative. The nonimportation movement, the war itself, and the closure of Caribbean markets underscored calls for a viable domestic manufacturing sector. The idea, in brief, was to use protective tariffs and subsidies to encourage a manufacturing sector that could offer American farmers a reliable domestic trade partner and thereby secure national economic independence. But capital and technical expertise were still in short supply and the splintering of revolutionary political coalitions prevented a consistent development policy. Farmers made do with an astonishing expansion of household manufactures, which may have as much as doubled between 1770 and 1790. Then, the fallout from the French Revolution brought a lengthy period of European warfare and renewed demand for American foodstuffs. Farmers turned toward the Atlantic once more until the belligerents' interference with American shipping and the looming threat of Tecumseh's Indian alliance invited the Jeffersonian embargo policy and a second war with Britain in 1812, again cutting off overseas markets. In brief, it was an era of instability.[10]

The War of 1812 marked the pivot of a transition phase. Whereas most of the early ventures in domestic manufacturing had failed, the embargo and the fighting interdicted British imports long enough to allow a more successful second wave. The

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[9] Margaret Ellen Newell, *From Dependency to Independence: Economic Revolution in Colonial New England* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), chap. 3–5 ("hub of intercolonial trade," p. 75); John J. McCusker and Russell R. Menard, *The Economy of British America, 1607-1789* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture by the University of North Carolina Press, 1985), chap. 5, 9 ("tied . . . to the export sector," p. 206); Egnal, *New World Economies*, chap. 4 ("export–led boom," p. 59). Economic historians of the colonial era now believe that significantly more internal development occurred than once thought. Still, I am unaware of anyone who has argued against Atlantic trade as the dominant commercial orientation in the period. See Cathy D. Matson, "A House of Many Mansions: Some Thoughts on the Field of Economic History," in *The Economy of Early America: Historical Perspectives & New Directions*, ed. Cathy D. Matson (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006), especially pp. 16, 18, 22–25.

[10] Lawrence A. Peskin, *Manufacturing Revolution: The Intellectual Origins of Early American Industry* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), 59, 63; James A. Henretta, "The War for Independence and American Economic Development," in *The Economy of Early America: The Revolutionary Period, 1763-1790*, ed. Ronald Hoffman, Russell R. Menard, and Peter J. Albert (Charlottesville: Published for the United States Capitol Historical Society by the University Press of Virginia, 1988), 45–86.

new urban and manufacturing populations offered farmers attractive domestic consumers. Just as important was the war's impact on Native Americans. By further devastating tribes in the trans-Appalachian West—the actual point of the war, to a large extent—the Army opened the sluices for a torrent of white settlers. Expansion into the Old Northwest, in turn, bore on the rural Northeast in two very important ways: first, by opening a channel of continuous out-migration and, second, by eventually inundating the region with cheap grain and other agricultural products. After the 1820s, farmers in the Northeast experienced urban-industrial growth and western expansion as a carrot-and-stick combination.[11]

The antebellum era's "transportation revolution" further enabled this dynamic. The importance of turnpikes, canals, steamboats and railroads may seem obvious given our now stereotyped vignettes of the Early Republic's impassably rutted roads and forbidding mountain barriers. But it is worth remembering just what was at stake. Fears of breakaway republics in the West were pervasive in the early national years. And for good reason. Through most of recorded history, large bodies of water have tended to connect diverse groups of people, large bodies of land to divide even similar ones. Economic development and political integration away from natural waterways inevitably required extensive road and canal works. Roman road-building was proverbial. China's ancient inland empire depended on its stupendous, 1100-mile Grand Canal. The Dutch rose to global power in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries thanks not only to financial innovation and aggressive foreign trade but to a canal system that transformed their provincial agriculture. Adam Smith recognized precisely this sort of infrastructural improvement as a crucial and legitimate role for the state.[12]

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[11] For early manufacturing failure, see Peskin, *Manufacturing Revolution*, 61–62; Newell, *From Dependency to Independence*, 296. For Indians and the War of 1812, see Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 74–76. For an example of the effect of western competition, see Andrew H. Baker and Holly V. Izard, "New England Farmers and the Marketplace, 1780-1865: A Case Study," *Agricultural History* 65, no. 3 (Summer 1991): 41. Western competition strongly re-enforced earlier moves toward agricultural intensification and market reorientation: see Winifred Barr Rothenberg, *From Market-Places to a Market Economy: The Transformation of Rural Massachusetts, 1750–1850* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 211; Richard A. Wines, "The Nineteenth-Century Agricultural Transition in an Eastern Long Island Community," *Agricultural History* 55 (January 1981): 52.

[12] Classic accounts of antebellum transportation include George Rogers Taylor, *The Transportation Revolution, 1815-1860* (New York: Rinehart, 1951); Carter Goodrich, *Government Promotion of American Canals and Railroads, 1800-1890* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960); Allan Pred, *Urban Growth and City-System Development in the United States, 1840-1860* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980); Robert Greenhalgh Albion and Jennie Barnes Pope, *The Rise of New York Port, 1815-1860* (New York: C. Scribner's Sons, 1939). For an account that emphasizes effective wagon transport and therefore road over canal construction, see Meyer, *The Roots of American Industrialization*, 29–34, 141–155. For

So too in the early United States. Artificial rivers and iron horses produced a "second nature" in the northern interior, converting it into a fluid world to rival that of the Atlantic or Mediterranean. "No country on earth, ancient or modern, can produce any thing in physical achievements at all comparable to this," boasted James Tallmadge in 1841. The intricate economic and cultural exchanges occurring over the new transportation and communications networks, John Quincy Adams thought, had made the interior like "a boundless ocean without a shore."[13]

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The transportation revolution exposed the northeastern countryside to the full force of western competition and enlarged the hinterland commerce that fueled urban growth. In response, farmers altered their crop mix, specializing in products that benefitted from proximity to domestic consumers. The spatial dynamics of this process can be grasped with the analytic framework elucidated by the contemporary German agriculturalist, Johann Heinrich von Thünen. Von Thünen posited an "isolated state" composed of a single central city surrounded by a geographically homogenous hinterland. In such a scenario, he reasoned, agriculture would sort itself into specialized commercial zones based on distance to the urban market, forming a pattern of concentric rings. High-value perishables such as fluid milk, fresh butter, fattened livestock, and garden products would occupy the space nearest the city; bulky items that could not bear distant transportation, such as forest products and hay, would form the next ring; grains and preserved dairy products would concentrate further out; and finally, stock-raising and industrial raw materials would dominate the outer-most ring. Similarly, as land value declined in proportion to distance from

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the difficulties of late colonial overland travel and the Appalachian Mountains' challenge to extending American sovereignty, see Trish Loughran, *The Republic in Print: Print Culture in the Age of U.S. Nation Building, 1770-1870* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 6–9; François Furstenberg, "The Significance of the Trans-Appalachian Frontier in Atlantic History," *American Historical Review* 113 (June 2008): 647–77. For water links and mountain divides in world history, see James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed: An Anarchist History of Upland Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 16, 43–50. Smith's views laid out in Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, ed. Edwin Cannan (London: Methuen & Co., 1904), Book V, chap. 2, part 3.

[13] James Tallmadge, *Address before the American Institute, at the close of its fourteenth annual fair, on the 26th of October, 1841* (New York: Hopkins and Jennings, 1841), 3; Adams quoted in Andrew Shankman, *Crucible of American Democracy: The Struggle to Fuse Egalitarianism & Capitalism in Jeffersonian Pennsylvania* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2004), 224. "Second nature" discussed in William Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis: Chicago and the Great West* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1991), xix, 34–35; Carol Sheriff, *The Artificial River: The Erie Canal and the Paradox of Progress, 1817-1862* (New York: Hill & Wang, 1996), 172–178.

the urban market, so would the intensiveness of agricultural production techniques. Only a few Americans seem to have been aware of Von Thünen's model, but they clearly understood its general idea by the 1850s, if not earlier.[14]

In reality, variations in geography and transport facilities warp the rings into odder shapes, but the basic pattern remains one of concentric agricultural zones. The appearance of Von Thünen rings in the antebellum era thus indicates the new centrality of American cities as agricultural markets. Around Philadelphia, the distinctive zones were clearly discernible by 1840, whereas they had not been when Thomas Paine thumbed his nose at the British Empire three generations before. A similar pattern developed around Syracuse in the 1840s and 1850s as the combination of older canal and newer railroad links stimulated urban growth and transformed the surrounding hinterland. By the 1860s, the same process was transforming the agricultural surroundings of Madison, Wisconsin.[15] Thus the immediate hinterlands of first the large coastal cities and then the progressively more western interior canal and railroad towns turned to market gardening, truck farming, and the supply of hay and forest products for rapidly rising urban populations. Proliferating railroad routes expanded these inner rings in the 1850s by, for example, extending urban "milksheds" and the truck farming zone. Improved means of harvesting and packaging reinforced the effect. For instance, mechanical presses and the "revolving" rake significantly enlarged the range of commercial hay production that powered horse-based urban transport. Further out, farmers tended to specialize in one of three areas: dairy, with the mix between butter and cheese conditioned by relative market access; wheat, wherever it could still be grown cost-effectively; and wool, especially in relatively inaccessible hill country less suitable to tillage.[16]

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[14] See, for instance, *Working Farmer* 11 (Feb 1859): 36; *Pennsylvania Farm Journal* 5 (Jan 1855): 11. My thanks to Simon Vézina for pointing out to me that at least some Americans became aware of Von Thünen's treatise, first published in 1826, when it appeared in French translation in 1851; see H. C. Carey, *The Slave Trade, Domestic and Foreign: Why It Exists, and How It May Be Extinguished* (Philadelphia: A. Hart, 1853), 268 and H.C. Carey, *The Principles of Social Science*, v. 1 (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co., 1858), 275; see also E. Peshine Smith to Henry C. Carey, 13 May 1856, Henry Charles Carey Papers, Edward Carey Gardiner Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

[15] Lindstrom, *Economic Development in the Philadelphia Region, 1810-1850*, 140–145; Roberta Balstad Miller, *City and Hinterland: A Case Study of Urban Growth and Regional Development* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1979), 95; Michael Conzen, *Frontier Farming in an Urban Shadow: The Influence of Madison's Proximity on the Agricultural Development of Blooming Grove, Wisconsin* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin for the Department of History University of Wisconsin, 1971), 88–96. For Boston, New York and Chicago, see Cronon, *Nature's Metropolis*; Meyer, *The Roots of American Industrialization*, 34–50, 162–183.

[16] Paul Wallace Gates, *The Farmer's Age: Agriculture, 1815-1860* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960), 239–240, 250–252, 256, 261, 266, 267, 269; Jeremy Atack and Fred Bateman, *To Their Own Soil: Agriculture in the Antebellum North* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1987), 149; Eric

Wool production rose rapidly after 1800. Nothing more obviously encouraged farmers to link their interests with manufacturers. At the height of the merino craze, observed one newspaper, "heretofore barren hills" became "clothed with rich verdure, and covered with sheep." After the War of 1812, returning British imports temporarily stymied domestic woolens, but ensuing tariff protection helped bring the industry back to life. As raw wool prices rose in the 1820s and 1830s, a second "sheep mania" took hold in the New England hill country, contributing to rural tariff support and to Vermont's "strong Whig sentiment." A similar process occurred in the hill towns of the Hudson Valley, in Central New York and western Pennsylvania, and throughout the Northeast, encouraging pro-tariff views and, according to one social historian, expanding farmers' "mental horizon" as well. Farmers further west came to share the enthusiasm for wool and tariffs, too. In Ohio, this occurred as early as the initial stimulus from the War of 1812. By 1850 the state was the national leader in number of sheep and quantity of wool.[17]

Rising western competition and reduced protection after the 1846 Walker Tariff pushed marginal eastern producers out of the business. If they could manage it, they moved into dairying or, alternatively, into mutton production for which they

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Brunger, "Dairying and Urban Development in New York State, 1850-1900," *Agricultural History* 29, no. 4 (October 1, 1955): 169–74; Clay McShane and Joel A. Tarr, *The Horse in the City: Living Machines in the Nineteenth Century* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007), 130–133; William R. Baron and Anne E. Bridges, "Making Hay in Northern New England: Maine as a Case Study, 1800-1850," *Agricultural History* 57 (April 1983): 165–80; Clarence H. Danhof, "Gathering the Grass," *Agricultural History* 30 (October 1956): 172–173; Christopher Baas and Darrin Rubino, "The Most Successful Press in This or Any Other Country: The Material Culture of 19th-Century Beater Hay Presses in the Mid-Ohio Valley," *Material Culture* 45 (Spring 2013): 1–20; Robert Leslie Jones, "The Introduction of Farm Machinery into Ohio Prior to 1865," *Ohio Archaeological and Historical Quarterly* 58 (1949): 1–20; Harry N. Scheiber, *Ohio Canal Era: A Case Study of Government and the Economy, 1820-1861* (Ohio University Press, 1969), 332; Ulysses Prentiss Hedrick, *A History of Agriculture in the State of New York* (Albany, NY: Printed for the New York State Agriculture Society, 1933), 262, 386, 402.

[17] "Heretofore barren hills" quoted in Carroll W. Pursell, "E. I. Du Pont and the Merino Mania in Delaware, 1805-1815," *Agricultural History* 36 (April 1962): 97; F.W. Taussig, *The Tariff History of the United States*, 6th ed. (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1914), 38–44; Edwin C. Rozwenc, *Agricultural Policies in Vermont, 1860-1945* (Montpelier, VT: Vermont Historical Society, 1981), 3–5 ("strong Whig sentiment," p. 5); Martin Bruegel, *Farm, Shop, Landing: The Rise of a Market Society in the Hudson Valley, 1780-1860* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 75–79 ("mental horizon," p. 79); Reeve Huston, *Land and Freedom: Rural Society, Popular Protest, and Party Politics in Antebellum New York* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 55; Miller, *City and Hinterland*, 92–93; Stevenson Whitcomb Fletcher, *Pennsylvania Agriculture and Country Life, 1840-1940* (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1955), 265; Steven Stoll, *Larding the Lean Earth: Soil and Society in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2002), 118–119; Robert Leslie Jones, *History of Agriculture in Ohio to 1880* (Kent, OH: Kent State University Press, 1983), 140–149; Scheiber, *Ohio Canal Era*, 331; Danhof, *Change in Agriculture*, 164–166; Harold F. Wilson, *The Hill Country of Northern New England: Its Social and Economic History, 1790-1930* (New York: AMS Press, 1967), 75–94.

imported entirely different kinds of breeds. Elsewhere, however, wool growers persevered and even thrived thanks to continuous improvement in breeds and care. In Chelsea, Vermont, for instance, labor scarcity impeded a switch to the more lucrative dairy business until the end of the century, but area farmers maintained stable incomes in the intervening decades by upgrading their sheep flocks. Olmstead and Rhode estimate that, nationally, the average clip of raw wool more than doubled from 1800 to 1860 while the quality of the fiber improved significantly over the same period. These advances, they contend, contributed to "a complete redesign of the physical makeup of the sheep" in the two centuries before 1940, just one of the many ways in which "biological innovation" mattered long before genetic hybrids.[18]

Over the course of the nineteenth century, dairy farming supplanted not only wool but commercial wheat in much of the Northeast. One reason was declining soil fertility, which farmers addressed by adopting a set of practices known as "convertible agriculture." This involved enlarging livestock herds, typically of milch cows, in order to produce soil-restoring manure, as well as more milk, butter and cheese. If the new farming practices encouraged dairying, however, they did not demand abandonment of wheat. That step was driven by two other factors that impinged with increasing force in the first half of the nineteenth century: destructive pests and cheap western grain.

Appearing first on the seaboard and moving inexorably west, the Hessian fly, the wheat midge and the "blast" (black stem rust, a type of fungus) were only the worst of a host of infestations that devastated wheat yields. In 1811, the fly wrecked such havoc in eastern New York that John Jay compared wheat growing to "taking a ticket in a Lottery—more blanks than prizes."[19] The midge appeared about a decade later. In 1854, the year it entered the Genesee Valley, the New York State Agricultural Society estimated $15 million in damage. Indeed, New York's wheat production declined by forty-four percent from 1849 to 1859, largely because of the midge. To combat such threats, American researchers, farmers, and travelers sought pest-resistant wheat varieties and cultivation methods. "Without significant investments in maintenance operations," Olmstead and Rhode conclude, "grain yields would have plummeted as the plant's enemies evolved," leading to yields perhaps less

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[18] Hal S. Barron, *Those Who Stayed Behind: Rural Society in Nineteenth-Century New England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 59–64; Olmstead and Rhode, *Creating Abundance*, 296–298 ("complete redesign," p. 302); Eric Carlos Stoykovich, "In the National Interest: Improving Domestic Animals and the Making of the United States, 1815-1870" (Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 2009), chap. 1; Gates, *The Farmer's Age*, 221–225.

[19] Carol E. Brier, "Tending Our Vines: From the Correspondence and Writings of Richard Peters and John Jay," *Pennsylvania History* 80 (January 2013): 91.

than half of those actually achieved by 1909. Mediterranean wheat proved particularly important because it was both suitable to the late planting that combated the fly and enjoyed resistance to the midge. Introduced from Europe in 1819, it was the dominant variety by the 1850s. Farmers tried out many other varieties as well. Contemporary agricultural surveys identified literally scores of wheat strains in cultivation, many unknown only a few years earlier. This widespread and continuous experimentation indicates just how dynamically innovative American agriculture was in the period.[20]

Nevertheless, competition from high-yielding western farms beyond the pest frontier forced many northeastern farmers to give up wheat. In New York, the opening of the Erie Canal exposed eastern portions of the state to grain imports from Genesee and later from Ohio. In turn, wheat in eastern Ohio declined in the 1850s in the face of newly arrived pests, declining soil fertility, and competition from the rest of the emerging Midwestern breadbasket. The shift was far from total. In parts of New York, Pennsylvania and the Chesapeake, wheat production continued with more intensive methods. Inevitably, this involved capital deepening as farmers purchased new machinery and the horses to operate them, in addition to seed and fertilizer. The new tools included the much studied mechanical reaper, but also improved plows, seed drills, manure spreaders, fanning mills, cultivators, harrows and horse-powered threshers (the last typically hired rather than bought), not to mention improved breeds of horses. Whether these were really improvements is not obvious because tillage can degrade the land unless coupled with appropriate cover crops. Sustaining northeastern wheat in the face of economic competition and ecological constraint thus required significant adjustment.[21] At any rate, even where northeastern farmers continued growing wheat commercially, a higher proportion of their crop went to domestic consumers than did the wheat of the Midwest.[22]

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[20] Olmstead and Rhode, *Creating Abundance*, 49–51, 60–61 ("grain yields would have plummeted," p. 41); Danhof, *Change in Agriculture*, 157.

[21] Sally McMurry, *Transforming Rural Life: Dairying Families and Agricultural Change, 1820-1885* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 11; Huston, *Land and Freedom*, 47; Bruegel, *Farm, Shop, Landing*, 75–76; Miller, *City and Hinterland*, 92–93; Jones, *History of Agriculture in Ohio to 1880*, 58, 63–64; Jones, "The Introduction of Farm Machinery into Ohio Prior to 1865"; Scheiber, *Ohio Canal Era*, 321–333; Peter D. McClelland, *Sowing Modernity: America's First Agricultural Revolution* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997), 94–120, 178, 190–193; Atack and Bateman, *To Their Own Soil*, 194, 251; Bidwell and Falconer, *History of Agriculture in the Northern United States, 1620-1860*, 207–215; Jane Mt. Pleasant, "The Paradox of Plows and Productivity: An Agronomic Comparison of Cereal Grain Production under Iroquois Hoe Culture and European Plow Culture in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," *Agricultural History* 85 (October 2011): 460–92.

[22] Annual Report of the Commissioner of Patents (1847): 104.

Wheat's decline helped make dairying an increasingly important source of northeastern farm earnings. Indicative of the region's scholarly neglect, economic historians have paid far more attention to grains and cotton, but because women typically took charge of the dairy, rural gender historians have done revealing work on the subject.[23] Dairy products included butter, cheese and milk, with butter by far the most important. Exports, especially to the West Indies, were significant throughout the Early Republic, but these declined to almost nothing during the War of 1812 and never really recovered.[24] Thereafter domestic city dwellers and workers in newly founded manufacturing villages became the primary consumers. Cheese production, which centered in the St. Lawrence and Mohawk River Valleys of New York and in the Western Reserve of Ohio, followed a somewhat different path, enjoying growing European markets throughout the antebellum period. Still, the vast majority of saleable American cheese went to domestic consumers.[25] Milk, of course, remained an entirely domestic trade.

In order to engage in serious dairy production farmers generally had to intensify their inputs of both capital and labor relative to land. A substantial dairy required new buildings, including redesigned barns and specialized sheds fitted with stanchions to confine cows during milking, as well as smaller outbuildings such as ice houses for making and storing the products. "A pervasive concern with system informed the arrangement" of these structures because milch cows, requiring constant care, raised labor demands and fostered efficiency consciousness. Other capital costs went to new tools such as box churns, improved butter-working tables, butter prints and pails, cheese vats, multi-blade steel dairy knives, and "self-acting" cheese presses. Among these items even those that could be made locally were increasingly factory produced. The Patent Office issued 244 patents for butter-related machinery in the years between 1802 and 1849; from 1850 to 1873 that number leapt to 1,360.

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[23] Atack and Bateman, *To Their Own Soil*, 147, 248, 256; Gates, *The Farmer's Age*, 233; Olmstead and Rhode, *Creating Abundance*, 263; Joan M. Jensen, *Loosening the Bonds: Mid-Atlantic Farm Women, 1750-1850* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 79–141; Nancy Grey Osterud, *Bonds of Community: The Lives of Farm Women in Nineteenth-Century New York* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 139–186; McMurry, *Transforming Rural Life*.

[24] In 1860, national butter production, in pounds, was more than four times that of cheese and butter was also more valuable per pound; Joseph C. G. Kennedy, *Agriculture of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census* (Washington: G.P.O., 1864), 186; for butter exports to the West Indies and elsewhere, see Elinor F. Oakes, "A Ticklish Business: Dairying in New England and Pennsylvania, 1750–1812," *Pennsylvania History* 47 (July 1980): 195–212; figures, see Bidwell and Falconer, *History of Agriculture in the Northern United States, 1620-1860*, 494.

[25] Jensen, *Loosening the Bonds*, 79–83 ("prospects for farms," p. 83); McMurry, *Transforming Rural Life*, 59; Jones, *History of Agriculture in Ohio to 1880*, 182–185; Gates, *The Farmer's Age*, 244–245.

Farmers also enlarged cattle stocks and, to a lesser extent, upgraded breeds. To feed their herds they planted higher-yielding grasses and acquired more land for fodder production, which then necessitated additional fertilizers and investment in planting and harvesting machinery, including horses. These multiple needs, which hint at the complex interdependencies of farm operations, may explain why farmers gave relatively less attention to specialized breeds of milch cows until after the Civil War. By then many had stopped growing their own fodder, instead purchasing it from the Midwest. Even so, milk yields steadily increased in the antebellum period thanks to better feed and care. "In just a generation," concludes Sally McMurry, "a dynamic innovativeness had replaced conservatism" in the economic strategies of dairy farming families.[26]

The role of women's labor in the shift to commercial dairy is indicative of the broader social changes entailed by northeastern agriculture's structural transformation. One reason why women could devote more time to butter and cheese making was that they were devoting less time to home manufactures. Weaving, especially, declined rapidly thanks to the falling costs of consumer textiles. Indeed, the antebellum era witnessed the almost wholesale collapse of household manufacturing in the Northeast as rural families opted for inexpensive factory output.[27] Individual farms were thus becoming more exclusively agricultural.

The same was often true of whole rural communities. When transportation improvements expanded markets, manufacturing that had once been scattered across the countryside tended to centralize in larger towns. Country villages might experience sudden relative decline as a result, but they often rebounded by building plank roads to central market towns, which helped local merchants to move into consumer retail, local artisans to switch from production to repair, and the village economy in general to shift toward farmer-oriented services.[28] Villages and towns centers became

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[26] McMurry, *Transforming Rural Life*, 24–38, 85–95 95 ("pervasive concern with system," p. 32; "dynamic innovativeness," p. 122); Jensen, *Loosening the Bonds*, 92–113; Huston, *Land and Freedom*, 48, 201; Jones, *History of Agriculture in Ohio to 1880*, 186, 190–191; Olmstead and Rhode, *Creating Abundance*, 331–339; Atack and Bateman, *To Their Own Soil*, 147–161; Gates, *The Farmer's Age*, 241–246; Thomas Summerhill, *Harvest of Dissent: Agrarianism in Nineteenth-Century New York* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2005), 99, 101, 112.

[27] Lindstrom, *Economic Development in the Philadelphia Region, 1810-1850*, 122, 179; Atack and Bateman, *To Their Own Soil*, 204–205; Donald Hugh Parkerson, *The Agricultural Transition in New York State: Markets and Migration in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America* (Ames, IA: Iowa State University Press, 1995), 7–12; Christopher Clark, *The Roots of Rural Capitalism: Western Massachusetts, 1780-1860* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), 139–146; Meyer, *The Roots of American Industrialization*, 189–193.

[28] Barron, *Those Who Stayed Behind*, 71–74; Miller, *City and Hinterland*, 68–70; John Majewski, Christopher Baer, and Daniel B. Klein, "Responding to Relative Decline: The Plank Road Boom of Antebellum

the key sites of rural sociability and consumerism. Economic development thus made not only households but the wider rural landscape more agricultural. Specialization is precisely what one would expect in a growing market economy, but the point needs highlighting because our own world can lead us to imagine rural life as inherently backward. In fact, the opposite could be true. America's post-World War II suburban world, rooted in the nineteenth century, is equal parts country and city modernities.

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Observing the constant outflow of migrants, some contemporaries and historians have thought that the northeastern countryside was suffering economic devastation. Yet rising land values tell a different story. Soil depletion, pest infestation, western competition and outmigration—the whole range of rural problems—were not so great, given proximity to urban markets, to make farming untenable. In fact, at midcentury northeastern farms appear to have been slightly more profitable than Midwestern ones on average.[29]

Rather than overall decline, land pressure structured a process of social differentiation. High land values gave smaller landowners a double incentive to migrate: on the one hand, they could not expect to settle their children nearby; on the other, they would earn a tidy sum from selling land they did possess, money that would go further in the West where long-term prospects were better for capital-poor farmers. Those who remained tended to fall into one of two categories. At the upper end were the farmers most committed to reform and improvement, generally older and wealthier than those who left. These "persisters" enjoyed the prosperity to engage in the more capital-intensive farming that could thrive in the region and to expand operations by buying their departing neighbors' land. They also married later and practiced birth control to reduce fertility—both signs of middle-class formation. At the lower end, impoverished farmers and immigrants who lacked the resources to set up in the West were increasingly drawn into tenancy, outwork and wage labor, or held onto marginal farms where access to forested uplands provided supplementary resources

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New York," *Journal of Economic History* 53 (March 1993): 106–22, doi:10.2307/2123177; Lindstrom, *Economic Development in the Philadelphia Region, 1810-1850*, 146–147; Summerhill, *Harvest of Dissent*, 102.

[29] Atack and Bateman, *To Their Own Soil*, 228, 246, 250; Lindstrom, *Economic Development in the Philadelphia Region, 1810-1850*, 179. For a discussion of land values, see Peter H. Lindert, "Long-Run Trends in American Farmland Values," *Agricultural History* 62 (July 1988): 45–85.

outside the market. What was happening, then, was not absolute decline, but social stratification.[30]

The agricultural reform movement registered this stratification in various ways. For instance, although agricultural editors and correspondents invariably praised the virtues of self-directed labor, they sometimes disparaged hired workers. John S. Skinner insisted that he was not speaking "of or to the common farm-laborer"—"ignorant as an ass, and, like an ass . . . content to labor and be fed from day to day"—when he harangued legislators for failing to establish agricultural schools. This was an unusual outburst, however. A more typical indication of the salience of class was the practice of awarding fair premiums to farm owners rather than to whomever actually did the work. In 1843, Fredrick J. Betts, "Esq.," won a prize for oats that more properly belonged to William Hughes, the farmer he employed to cultivate them. Ten years later, most of the contestants in a Massachusetts agricultural fair's spading match were Irish gardeners presumably standing in for wealthy estate owners. Independent standing in such events required independent means.[31]

But if agricultural reformers presumed a certain socioeconomic baseline, gentility was not necessarily it. Middling northern farm families worked with their own hands and any additional hired labor often came from young relatives and neighbors much like themselves. Hence James Mapes urged farmers to educate their children so

[30] Barron, *Those Who Stayed Behind*, chap. 3; Stoll, *Larding the Lean Earth*, 70; Mary Babson Fuhrer, *A Crisis of Community: The Trials and Transformation of a New England Town, 1815-1848* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 86–89; Miller, *City and Hinterland*, 139–142; Huston, *Land and Freedom*, 192, 202–203; Wilson, *The Hill Country of Northern New England*, 78–79; Danhof, *Change in Agriculture*, 107–114; Atack and Bateman, *To Their Own Soil*, 49–66, 100; Parkerson, *The Agricultural Transition in New York State*, 133–136; Summerhill, *Harvest of Dissent*, 44–45, 145–146; Lee A. Craig, *To Sow One Acre More: Childbearing and Farm Productivity in the Antebellum North* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 102–104; Susan E. Klepp, *Revolutionary Conceptions: Women, Fertility, and Family Limitation in America, 1760-1820* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009); Winifred B. Rothenberg, "The Invention of American Capitalism: The Economy of New England in the Federal Period," in *Engines of Enterprise: An Economic History of New England*, ed. Peter Temin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 75; Clark, *Roots of Rural Capitalism*, 137–139; Meyer, *The Roots of American Industrialization*, 11. For a brilliant exploration of the emerging rural middle class's values through an analysis of its vernacular architecture, see Sally McMurry, "Progressive Farm Families and Their Houses, 1830-1855: A Study in Independent Design," *Agricultural History* 58 (July 1984): 330–346.

[31] *Monthly Journal of Agriculture* 2 (Feb 1847): 340; *Annual Agricultural Report of the American Institute of the City of New York* 2 (1843): 31; Item 5, Series II, Middlesex Agricultural Society Records, 1803-1892, Concord Free Library, Concord, MA. Criticism of hired labor usually took the form of specific complaints and managerial tips rather than Skinner's undisguised contempt; see *Farm Journal and Progressive Farmer* 9 (April 1856): 123; *Working Farmer* 4 (Aug 1852): 135.

that they "would no longer complain of the difficulty of obtaining *good help*." Agricultural editors' cautious embrace of credit likewise indicated a readership with some property but not necessarily very much. The availability of relatively cheap credit was in fact one of the potential advantages of remaining the Northeast. Mapes wrote encouragingly that to get his farm in shape he "ran in debt largely and liberally." By the 1850s most editors agreed that borrowing, while entailing risk, could be rewarding for young farmers with limited capital. "I have so far weathered the storm, with a head wind," wrote one Massachusetts farmer in 1852, "and am a little nearer the harbor than I was when I commenced the voyage. I have paid up about $600 on the mortgage, and laid out nearly $2,000 in permanent improvements on my buildings and farm."[32]

In comparative perspective, the rural Northeast remained quite egalitarian. The northern countryside enjoyed greater wealth equality than contemporary urban areas, the South, and the United States as a whole. Within the North, rural wealth distribution differed little between the Northeast and Midwest once age is taken into account. Contemporary celebrations of what is called the "agricultural ladder," in which wage labor during youth leads to propertied independence by middle age, made some sense. There is evidence that rising wages actually made it easier to acquire a farm in the 1850s and 1860s than had been the case in earlier decades. For many farmers, then, economic development offered a middle-class competence, what agricultural reformers extolled as the virtues of "that just medium which affords the truest sources of man's happiness, 'neither poverty nor riches.'"[33]

As an example, consider the family of Francis W. Squires. Francis was born in 1820 and began keeping a diary in 1840, by which time he and his family were living about fifty miles north of Utica in Martinsburg, New York. His father specialized in dairying, apparently with some success. Not only did a sample of his cheese take second place at the 1844 county fair, but he owned more cows and produced considerably more cheese than the local average. We do not know whether the family subscribed to an agricultural journal, but we do know that they practiced up-to-date

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[32] *Working Farmer* 8 (Jan 1857): 241; 8 (Feb 1857): 265 (emphasis in original). On hiring children of relatives and neighbors, see Parkerson, *The Agricultural Transition in New York State*, 126-141. On debt, see Danhof, *Change in Agriculture*, 75-87, 107-114 ("weathered the storm" quoted on p. 112). On financial risk more generally, see Jonathan Levy, *Freaks of Fortune: The Emerging World of Capitalism and Risk in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012).

[33] *Abstract of Massachusetts Agricultural Societies Returns* (1859), 41-42. Atack and Bateman, *To Their Own Soil*, 86–101; Bruegel, *Farm, Shop, Landing*, 104; Parkerson, *The Agricultural Transition in New York State*, 126–141; Danhof, *Change in Agriculture*, 77–78. On the "agricultural ladder," see Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men*, 30-33; on a "competence" see Barron, *Those Who Stayed Behind*, 35-36.

farming techniques such as rotating crops, augmenting soil with plaster, and stabling cattle in winter. Despite their large and modern operation, however, they depended mostly on their own labor and exchanging works with neighbors. Only during the bottleneck of the haying season did they typically hire two extra hands.[34]

In 1846 the Squires family relocated to Oswego County, where they shifted production in a number of ways. Francis and his brother engaged in full-time coopering for the Syracuse salt works and Oswego flour mills. The parents handled a reduced dairy business directed to fresh butter, which was more profitable than cheese given the nearby urban markets. By the early 1850s the family changed course again, coopering less as they moved into commercial apple production and stock raising. Everyone continued to work hard, hiring no extra help even during the busy season. In 1853 Francis recorded in his diary that, at sixty-eight years old, his father could still "do a good days [sic] work." Though they enjoyed a middle-class existence, the Squires family were very much working people.[35]

Similar examples are easily multiplied. None, perhaps, are really representative, but that is part of the point. Northeastern farming was diverse and dynamic. It resists easy generalization. We tend to have clear pictures in our minds of southern agriculture (mostly cotton, a little Chesapeake tobacco or Louisiana sugar) and Midwestern agriculture (mostly grains, perhaps some hogs or beef cattle), but are not quite sure what northeastern agriculture looked like. "Any observant American," wrote one well-traveled southerner in the 1850s, "will be utterly astonished at the variety and quantity of Northern agricultural productions kept for sale." Taking wool, wheat and dairy as examples, I have barely discussed fodder crops for animal power or the truck farms and market gardens that provided urban consumers with fresh fruits, vegetables, eggs and the like, to say nothing of such niche economies as cut flowers for wealthy homes or hops for workingmen's beer. Urban consumerism and working-class leisure culture were, to some extent, rural productions.[36]

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[34] Yasuo Okada, "Squires' Diary: New York Agriculture in Transition, 1840-1860," *Keio Economic Studies* 7 (1970): 78–84. For the labor demands of the hay harvest, see Danhof, "Gathering the Grass"; Alan Taylor, *Liberty Men and Great Proprietors: The Revolutionary Settlement on the Maine Frontier, 1760-1820* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia, by University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 68.

[35] Okada, "Squires' Diary," 85–98 ("good days work," p. 89).

[36] Hinton Rowan Helper, *The Impending Crisis of the South: How to Meet It* (New York: Burdick Brothers, 1857), 48; David C. Smith, "Middle Range Farming in the Civil War Era: Life on a Farm in Seneca County, 1862-1866," *New York History* 48 (October 1967): 352–69; Baker and Izard, "New England Farmers and the Marketplace, 1780-1865"; Ronald D. Karr, "The Transformation of Agriculture in Brookline, 1770-1885," *Historical Journal of Massachusetts* 15 (January 1987): 33–49; Baron and Bridges, "Making Hay in Northern New England"; Adam Krakowski, "A Bitter Past: Hop Farming in Nineteenth-

The significance of the domestic economy hinges on this variety. Ramifying development created a relatively autonomous if far from autarkic economic space in the American interior that challenged the colonial hegemony of the Atlantic World. To be sure, foreign trade expanded tremendously after independence thanks largely to cotton and a few other commodities.[37] Some northeastern farmers, such as Connecticut's tobacco growers, fully participated in this expansion. But, in general, farmers in the Greater Northeast experienced capitalism as a national phenomenon, extending well beyond local communities yet significantly bounded by a market structure centered on the rising urban-industrial sector. Aided by new transportation links and partially freed from the spoilage constraints of very long-distance trade—but also pushed by new competitors and environmental challenges—middle-class farmers intensified labor and capital inputs, experimented with new techniques and technologies, and shifted production toward an eclectic crop mix bound for domestic consumption.

In doing so, they gradually reimagined their world. Once understood by reference to the polarities of locality and empire, it now became framed by the categories of the North and the nation. And this, in turn, involved new ideological and political commitments. Thomas Paine's vision of America as a coastal free port gave way to a new vision of a gargantuan home market. Southerners, meanwhile, conceived of the United States as basically an expansive trade federation within the larger global market. A politics pitting domestic development against international commerce characterized many countries during the nineteenth century. But the United States was exceptional in one very important regard: its trade politics overlapped the geography of slavery.

The Home Market: Ideological Construction of Sectional Divergence

Without slavery, the Civil War makes no sense. Genuine repugnance at human bondage, fears of slaveholding's antidemocratic entailments, and the political savvy of committed abolitionists played an indispensable role in the emergence of the

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Century Vermont," *Vermont History* 82 (Summer-Fall 2014): 91–105; Jeremy Atack, Fred Bateman, and William N. Parker, "The Farm, the Farmer, and the Market," in *The Cambridge Economic History of the United States: Volume 2, The Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. Stanley L. Engerman and Robert E. Gallman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 255.

[37] Douglas A. Irwin, Tables Ee446-457 and Ee569-589 in *Historical Statistics of the United States,* Millennial Edition On Line, ed., Susan B. Carter, et. al. (Cambridge University Press 2006).

Republican Party and the achievement of permanent emancipation.[38] But American history from Reconstruction to the carceral state shows plainly that northern whites' commitment to black liberation has been lukewarm at best.[39] On the other hand, the ambition of Republican economic policy was evident from almost the moment the party came into being. Neither abolitionism nor free labor ideology's diffuse anti-slavery stance can explain the full form and scope of this program, which from 1862 till past the turn of the century shaped America's rise to global industrial power.[40] For that, we need a story about northern economic nationalism. That story centers on the idea of the home market.

Since the 1600s if not earlier, close European observers of political economy had understood that manufactures were what made countries rich and powerful. Technological advances upped the stakes by the time the colonial crisis unfolded in the late 1700s. Despite losing much of its empire, Britain emerged from that crisis more powerful than ever as the "workshop of the world." It was clear to many American nationalists, particularly in the states of the Northeast that already had colonial experience with limited manufacturing and economic diversification, that the United States would have to catch up. And to do so it would need an industrial policy. While most economists are skeptical about protectionism, it is a matter of historical record that industrialization has almost universally occurred under one form or another of protectionist regime.[41] As one early American tariff advocate observed, "Every nation

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[38] Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men*; James Oakes, *Freedom National: The Destruction of Slavery in the United States, 1861-1865* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2013); Corey Brooks, "Stoking the 'Abolition Fire in the Capitol': Liberty Party Lobbying and Antislavery in Congress," *Journal of the Early Republic* 33 (2013): 523–47.

[39] "Historians and the Carceral State," special issues of the *Journal of American History* 102 (June 2015); Leon F Litwack, *North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790-1860* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961); Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988); Heather Cox Richardson, *The Death of Reconstruction: Race, Labor, and Politics in the Post-Civil War North, 1865-1901* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001); Thomas J. Sugrue, *Sweet Land of Liberty: The Forgotten Struggle for Civil Rights in the North* (New York: Random House, 2008).

[40] Richard Franklin Bensel, *Yankee Leviathan: The Origins of Central State Authority in America, 1859-1877* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Richard Franklin Bensel, *The Political Economy of American Industrialization, 1877-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Richardson, *The Greatest Nation of the Earth*; Leonard P. Curry, *Blueprint for Modern America; Non-Military Legislation of the First Civil War Congress* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 1968).

[41] Sophus A. Reinert, *Translating Empire: Emulation and the Origins of Political Economy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011); Erik S. Reinert, *How Rich Countries Got Rich and Why Poor Countries Stay Poor*, 1st Carroll & Graf ed. (New York: Carroll & Graf, 2007); Ha-Joon Chang, *Kicking Away the Ladder: Development Strategy in Historical Perspective* (London: Anthem, 2002).

that follows that same policy is rich, every nation which neglects that policy is poor. The idea of free trade is utopian."[42]

But in a predominantly agricultural society, not everyone necessarily wanted industrial development. Thomas Jefferson and James Madison famously hated the idea until the humiliations of the War of 1812 convinced them that at least some domestic industrial capacity was indispensable.[43] There were certainly good reasons for deploring factory working conditions that inspired horrified observers with visions of damnation—on the eve of the Civil War, Blake's "satanic mills" remained for Rebecca Harding Davis "a street in Hell."[44] During the 1780s, however, it was craftsmen themselves who clamored for tariff protection, believing that republican political institutions would empower them to control their own labor.[45]

Yet urban craftsmen remained a tiny minority of the population, and after the Constitution shifted the locus of trade policy from the states to the national level, their influence dwindled rapidly.[46] Farmers, the vast majority, were the crucial target audience. They were the ones who had to be convinced of the benefits of protectionism and economic development more broadly if a nationalist economic program was ever to achieve sustained expression in an agrarian republic. Mathew Carey, the leading protectionist of the 1820s, stated the situation plainly:

> As the agriculturists are now, and are likely to be for a century at least, the predominating interest in this country, and have a decided influence in its legislation, it is of immense importance that they should form correct views on the system best calculated to promote the general welfare.[47]

This was where the home market thesis came in. Drawing on the likes of Alexander Hamilton and Tench Coxe, Carey and other economic nationalists repeated the same simple argument: American farmers would benefit from the growth of domestic industry because it would provide a reliable home market for their goods. Hence there was "an identity of interests between agriculture and manufactures." This principle formed the foundation of protectionist appeals to farmers for the rest of the nineteenth century. "The more manufacturers you have the more consumers

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[42] Frederic Hudson, *Journalism in the United States, from 1690 to 1872* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1873), 319.
[43] McCoy, *The Elusive Republic*.
[44] Rebecca Harding Davis, "Life in the Iron Mills," *Atlantic Monthly* 7 (Apr 1861): 430-451.
[45] Peskin, *Manufacturing Revolution*, chap. 4; Shankman, *Crucible of American Democracy*, 80.
[46] Peskin, *Manufacturing Revolution*, 92.
[47] Mathew Carey, *The New Olive Branch* (Philadelphia: M. Carey & Son, 1820), 172.

there will be," explained Thomas H. Dudley to the New Jersey Agricultural Society in 1882, "and the more extended and better the farmer's market." Dudley came in a direct line from Carey, whose son Henry formed the connecting thread, and all three spoke to the particular conditions of the Mid-Atlantic. But as early as the 1810s and increasingly from the 1860s, protectionists were trumpeting the same message all over the Midwest. Home market rhetoric, like the defining conditions of the Greater Northeast, gradually blanketed America's vast industrial core.[48]

Which is not to say that the thesis went uncontested. Its sheer repetition testifies to its limits. Yet limits are not the same as marginality. Repetition also suggests that audiences were receptive to the home market idea and could perceive it as congruent with their lived experience. By midcentury, the domestic economy's emergence turned the home market thesis from merely a plausible projection of the country's future into an apparently accurate description of what was actually happening.

Like the domestic economy, the ideological construction of the home market had colonial roots. New Englanders' early experiments with import substitution policies have already been mentioned. More consequential were their experiments with paper money. Originally devised in the 1690s to finance war with Indians and rival Europeans, paper currency backed by taxing authority or land mortgages gained appeal for its developmental potential. In pamphlets, town halls and election campaigns, New Englanders debated the wisdom of ongoing paper emissions. By the 1730s the currency question engaged the political loyalties of middling farmers throughout the interior, where specie from international trade remained forever scarce and credit under the tight control of the gentry. Opponents of paper money argued that it would interfere with Atlantic trade and encourage dissolute consumption of "luxuries." Supporters depicted consumption as the real measure of a community's wealth and called

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[48] Mathew Carey, *Address Delivered Before the Philadelphia Society for Promoting Agriculture, at Its Meeting, on the Twentieth of July, 1824* (Philadelphia: Mifflin & Parry, 1827), 11–12; Thomas Haines Dudley, *The Farmer Feedeth All: How Protection Affects the Farmer: An Address Delivered Before the New Jersey State Agricultural Society, at Waverly, Sept. 22, 1882* (Allen, Lane & Scott's Printing House, 1882), 5; Donald J. Ratcliffe, *The Politics of Long Division: The Birth of the Second Party System in Ohio, 1818-1828* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2000), 59–61; Hudson, *Journalism in the United States, from 1690 to 1872*, 316–319; Horace Greeley, *Protection and Free Trade: The Question Stated and Considered* (New York: Greeley & McElrath, 1844); Caleb B. Smith, *Effects of a Protective Tariff on Agriculture: Speech of Mr. Caleb B. Smith, of Indiana, on the Subject of the Tariff* (Washington, DC: J. & G.S. Gideon, 1844); E. B. Ward, "The Farmer and the Manufacturer, an Address Delivered at the Wisconsin State Fair, Madison, October 1, 1868," in *Transactions of the Wisconsin State Agricultural Society, with the Report of the State Horticultural Society*, vol. 7 (Madison, WI: Atwood & Rublee, 1868), 452–69; David H. Mason, *How Western Farmers Are Benefitted by Protection* (Chicago, 1875); Thomas Haines Dudley, *Farmers and the Tariff: A Speech Delivered at the Meeting of the Farmers' Congress, Chicago, November 11, 1887* (American Protective League, 1887).

for a plentiful money supply to spur development and diversification. Although the latter "fell short of an economic declaration of independence," their arguments hinted at "economic nationalism" and helped establish a broad developmental constituency among the middle stratum of New England's farmers.[49]

The imperial crisis of the 1760s emboldened the developmentalists. Contrary to European political economists, who continued to focus on the export sector even if they valued domestic exchange, they described a more autarkic model in which domestic agriculture and industry supported one another's mutual growth. During the 1780s, protectionist craftsmen and entrepreneurial merchant-manufacturers helped secure ratification of the Constitution and passage of the mildly protectionist Tariff of 1789.[50] Later, Jeffersonian trade sanctions and the War of 1812 established a period of de facto protectionism that simultaneously revealed the country's economic weakness in the face of a lengthy trade disruption. In response, nationalists in Congress passed legislation to strengthen the country's economic base, including a new national bank, a navigation act to protect American shipping, and a tariff to encourage the nascent manufacturing sector. Northerners had the most to gain from these measures, but southerners, though they made a point of registering their sacrifice, were willing to compromise on immediate interest for the sake of long-term national development and security.[51]

Then, in 1819, the home market idea simultaneously received a major impetus and a major challenge when a serious financial panic and Missouri's application for statehood sparked parallel crises that fractured the nationalist coalition and exposed diverging sectional trajectories. In the North, the post-panic depression fostered support for a protected home market as an alternative to capricious foreign markets. In the South, the rancorous debates over slavery in Missouri led to a renewal of states' rights rhetoric and disavowal of federal power to shape economic develop-

[49] Newell, *From Dependency to Independence*, 127–180 (quotations, pp 172–173) ; John L. Brooke, *The Heart of the Commonwealth: Society and Political Culture in Worcester County, Massachusetts, 1713-1861* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), chap. 2.
[50] Peskin, *Manufacturing Revolution*, 30–44, 65–92; Newell, *From Dependency to Independence*, 281–290; Margaret Ellen Newell, "Putting the 'Political' Back in Political Economy (This Is Not Your Parents' Mercantilism)," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 69 (January 2012): 60; Robin L. Einhorn, *American Taxation, American Slavery* (Chicago: University Of Chicago Press, 2006), chap. 4.
[51] Schoen, *The Fragile Fabric of Union*, chap. 2; Norris W. Preyer, "Southern Support of the Tariff of 1816: A Reappraisal," *Journal of Southern History* 25 (August 1959): 306–22. For the importance of national military power to southern growth during the early republic, see Robert E. Bonner, *Mastering America: Southern Slaveholders and the Crisis of American Nationhood* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), chap. 1.

ment, positions that dovetailed with cotton exporters' free trade interests. The overlapping of these geopolitical fault lines helped consolidate the emerging categories of North and South.

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The Panic of 1819 and the subsequent depression resulted from a collapse in European demand for American farm commodities exacerbated by contractionary bank policies on both sides of the Atlantic. With prices for agricultural staples in steep decline, many northern commentators argued that only an enlarged domestic manufacturing sector could reconstitute the market.[52] In a series of 1821 pamphlets whose title, "The Farmer's and Planter's Friend," clearly indicates their target audience, Mathew Carey maintained that the era of high European demand for American farm products had ended permanently and that commodity prices would remain depressed unless the domestic economy was rebalanced by expanding the manufacturing sector. "*The grand secret to promote national prosperity*," he divulged to Philadelphia's agricultural reformers, was a "*proper distribution of labour*."[53] George Tibbits argued the same point before the New York Board of Agriculture in his precisely titled "Memoir on the Expediency and Practicability of Improving or Creating Home Markets for the Sale of Agricultural Productions and Raw Materials, by the Introduction or Growth of Artizans and Manufacturers."[54] Similarly, Nicholas Biddle thought that in supporting the tariff farmers would "by their own efforts retrieve the loss of the foreign markets." "The increase of manufactures," he elaborated, "have

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[52] Clyde A. Haulman, *Virginia and the Panic of 1819: The First Great Depression and the Commonwealth* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2008); Murray Newton Rothbard, *The Panic of 1819: Reactions and Policies* (Ludwig von Mises Institute, 1962); Daniel S. Dupre, "The Panic of 1819 and the Political Economy of Sectionalism," in *The Economy of Early America: Historical Perspectives & New Directions*, ed. Cathy D. Matson (University Park, PA: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2006).

[53] Gautimozin (Mathew Carey), *The Farmer's and Planter's Friend*, nos. 1-7 (1821); Mathew Carey, *Address Delivered Before the Philadelphia Society for Promoting Agriculture*, 29 (emphasis in original). Andrew Shankman has argued that around this time Carey pivoted his attention southward in order to win southern support for his tariff plans, but clearly he also recognized the need to appeal to northern farmers; see Andrew Shankman, "Panic and Crisis in the Post-War World of Mathew Carey" ("Ireland, America and the Worlds of Mathew Carey: A Conference Sponsored by the McNeil Center for Early American Studies, the Program in Early American Economy and Society, the Library Company of Philadelphia, and the University of Pennsylvania Libraries," Philadelphia, 2011), http://www.librarycompany.org/careyconference/papers.htm.

[54] George Tibbits, *Memoir on the Expediency and Practicability of Improving or Creating Home Markets for the Sale of Agricultural Productions and Raw Materials, by the Introduction or Growth of Artizans and Manufacturers* (Albany: Packard and Van Benthuysen, 1825).

now concentrated our population, and by the formation of a permanent home market, are calculated to give a new character to our farming."[55]

Many coastal merchants fought to prevent this domestic reorientation. Members of the Massachusetts Society for Promoting Agriculture, who were closely connected to Boston's mercantile interests, bitterly opposed protective tariffs as "unnatural and morbid."[56] But most agricultural organizations explicitly aligned themselves with manufacturers. In 1820, for instance, a petition from a subsidiary of the New York Board of Agriculture reminded Congress that the Board "embraces the encouragement of domestic manufactures, as well as the cultivation of the soil."[57] A year later the Berkshire County (MA) Agricultural Society petitioned Congress for a second time to raise tariff rates so that "a home market for the farmer will be provided."[58] Agricultural societies in Connecticut, Ohio, Maryland and Pennsylvania made similar cases for a turn to protectionism.[59] Reflecting on what he learned from such groups during an extended sojourn in the United States at about this time, the great German economic nationalist Friedrich List observed that in America, "the plainest farmer knows . . . the means of making agriculture prosperous, and augmenting rents; he endeavors to attract manufacturers to his neighborhood."[60]

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[55] First quote: N.B. [Nicholas Biddle] to Walter Lowrie, 22 Feb 1822, Records of the Philadelphia Society for Promoting Agriculture (Ms. Coll. 92), Van Pelt Library Manuscripts and Special Collections, University of Pennsylvania. Biddle appears to have sent nearly identical letters to James Monroe (22 Feb 1822), Mathew Carey (4 Feb 1822) and several others, including the agricultural reformer James LeRay de Chaumont (4 Feb 1822). Second quote: Nicholas Biddle, *Address Delivered Before the Philadelphia Society for Promoting Agriculture, at Its Annual Meeting, on the Fifteenth of January, 1822, by Nicholas Biddle, Esq.* (Philadelphia: Clark & Raser, 1822), 16

[56] Quoted in Tamara Plakins Thornton, *Cultivating Gentlemen: The Meaning of Country Life among the Boston Elite, 1785-1860* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989). On merchants' opposition, see Dupre, "The Panic of 1819 and the Political Economy of Sectionalism," 278; Malcolm Rogers Eiselen, *The Rise of Pennsylvania Protectionism* (Philadelphia, 1932), 19; Beckert, *The Monied Metropolis*; Dawson, *Lives of the Philadelphia Engineers*.

[57] *Memorial of the New York County Agricultural Society*, H. Doc. 28, 16th Cong., 2nd Sess. (Washington, December 15, 1820), 6, Serial Set Vol. No. 48, Session Vol. No.1.

[58] *Memorial of the Berkshire Agricultural Society of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.: January 22, 1821. Referred to the Committee on Manufactures* (Washington: Gales & Seaton, 1821), 6; Mark Mastromarino, "Fair Visions: Elkanah Watson (1758-1842) and the Modern American Agricultural Fair" (Ph.D. diss., College of William and Mary, 2002), 169, 207, 310–311.

[59] "Report of the Committee on Domestic Manufactures," dated 28 Jan 1822, in volume entitled "Communications to the Agricultural Society of Bucks County," p. 197 (BM-B-428), Mercer Museum and Library, Doylestown, PA; *Rural Magazine and Farmer's Monthly Museum* 1 (Feb 1819): 25; *American Farmer* 2 (9 Jun 1820): 83; *Agriculturist's and Manufacturer's Magazine* 1 (Jan 1820): 16, 18-21; Ratcliffe, *The Politics of Long Division*, 59; Rothbard, *The Panic of 1819*, 218; William Frederic Worner, "Agricultural Societies in Lancaster County," *Historical Papers and Addresses of the Lancaster County Historical Society* 34 (1930): 278–80.

[60] Frederick [Friedrich] List, *The National System of Political Economy*, trans. G. A. Matile (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co., 1856), xi–xii.

Again and again these groups insisted on improvement of the interior over continuation of traditional Atlantic trade patterns. The New York petitioners noted merchants' opposition to protective duties, but maintained that "while the advantages of this emporium for extensive foreign commerce are duly appreciated, we can never forget that vast and fertile inland territory, with whose flourishing or unprosperous condition the fortunes of the city of New York are intimately connected."[61] Jacob Cist of the Luzerne County (PA) Agricultural Society called for "the extension of our agriculture and the improvement of our manufacture," because "the settlement of the interior of the State, the calling into action her immense physical and mineral resources are objects of higher importance and of more general interest than the mere trade of the West."[62] Biddle agreed that "much remains to be done by our landowners to improve the interior."[63] Surely the country's "inestimable" natural endowments, argued the president of still another agricultural organization, were given by God not merely "to gaze at" but "for our improvement."[64]

Wool occupied a special place in this developmental vision. One reason was that woolens manufacturing had tracked shifting European political power since the Renaissance, from Venice to the Netherlands to England. For David Humphreys, who set protectionism to verse in 1794, "industry . . . 'Twixt realm and realm the greatest diff'rence makes." Hence he urged Congress:

> To useful arts a nation's aim direct,
> Create new fabrics and the old protect.[65]

Thirty years later an Albany tariff convention made the point in plain old prose, explicitly referencing wool's historic role in fostering Dutch and English riches.[66] This nationalist logic lay behind Humphreys's merino importations and the subsequent merino mania that he helped kick off. After the Peace of Ghent, a flood of

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[61] *Memorial of the New York County Agricultural Society*, H. Doc. 28, 16th Cong., 2nd Sess. (Washington, December 15, 1820), 6, Serial Set Vol. No. 48, Session Vol. No.1.

[62] Handwritten draft of a pamphlet likely published sometime in the 1810s, Box 2, Item 214, Jacob Cist Papers (Collection 152), Academy of Natural Sciences, Drexel Univeristy, Philadelphia; Stewart Pearce, *Annals of Luzerne County: A Record of Interesting Events, Traditions, and Anecdotes* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co., 1866), 342-343.

[63] N.B. [Nicholas Biddle] to Walter Lowrie, 22 Feb 1822, Records of the Philadelphia Society for Promoting Agriculture (Ms. Coll. 92).

[64] "An Address to the Members of the Society by James Worth, President, Delivered 8th May 1820," in volume entitled "Communications to the Agricultural Society of Bucks County," p. 4 (BM-B-428), Mercer Museum and Library, Doylestown, PA.

[65] Quoted in Frank Landon Humphreys, *Life and Times of David Humphreys: Soldier, Statesman, Poet*, vol. 2 (New York: G. P. Putnam's sons, 1917), 323.

[66] *Niles' Register*, third series, 8:22 (28 Jul 1827): 363.

British imports put an end to that speculation, but the Panic of 1819 led to renewed arguments that, with proper government care, wool offered a promising avenue back to prosperity. In 1820, for instance, John Skinner's *American Farmer* ran a series of essays arguing that farmers would derive great benefit from a tariff-protected domestic woolens industry. "Let not the American Farmer think these are matters, with which he has no concern," the author warned. "He is as deeply interested in them, as any other in the community."[67] Two years later a committee of the Bucks County (PA) Agricultural Society encouraged farmers to expand sheep flocks now that "our manufacturing establishments are increasing with stability."[68] Agricultural society members in Berkshire argued the same thing, and as it turned out, Pittsfield's woolens industry powered regional development for the next half century.[69]

In the early 1820s agricultural reform was not yet broadly representative. It articulated the views and interests of the rural elite, including mega-landlords such as Robert R. Livingston and Stephen Van Rensselaer, for whom domestic manufacturing, internal improvements, and scientific agriculture were all parts of an expansive developmental outlook aimed at establishing American nationhood while raising the value and income of their land holdings. But that is not to say that developmentalism had no popular appeal or support. Less exalted farmers did, in fact, expand wool production and express belief in the home market idea. Thus, Joan Jensen reports of middling families in the Brandywine River Valley traversing southeastern Pennsylvania and northern Delaware:

> The prospects for farms selling produce to the new factories being built along the Brandywine seemed so good that farmers in the area petitioned Congress in 1816 to raise protective barriers to 'enable the manufactories to continue their works . . . & furnish us with a home market for our products.'[70]

Over the next decade or so, similar claims appeared in a mass of petitions, speeches, editorials and resolutions.

As the American interior continued to fill up with white settlers, ordinary rural northerners attained a critical stake in economic development. By midcentury the home market idea, merely plausible in 1819, appeared to accord with what farmers in the Greater Northeast had actually experienced: a shift toward production for

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[67] *American Farmer* I (1819): 247; other articles in the series appear on pp. 206, 214, 216, 230, 272.

[68] "Report of the Committee on Domestic Manufactures," dated 28 Jan 1822, in volume entitled "Communications to the Agricultural Society of Bucks County," p. 197 (BM-B-428), Mercer Museum and Library, Doylestown, PA.

[69] *Memorial of the Berkshire Agricultural Society*; Mastromarino, "Fair Vision," 207, 310–311.

[70] Jensen, *Loosening the Bonds*, 83.

domestic urban centers. While cotton planters and merchant princes still looked to export markets, northeastern farmers literally lived the home market as the American countryside transformed around them. Thus in an 1858 address before his local agricultural society, Ralph Waldo Emerson made what by then was the utterly conventional observation that the northeastern farmer enjoyed "the advantage of a market at his own door, the manufactory in the same town."[71]

In the 1850s, moreover, northern agricultural reform was no longer the elite project it had been during the early republic, but rather a popular movement broadly reflective of the rural middle class. Protectionist sympathies remained largely unchanged through that shift. Virtually all farm journal editors in the Northeast "insisted that agriculture profited from the growth of manufactures" and historians have repeatedly found evidence that farmers responded positively to the message. It seems reasonable to surmise, then, that after more than a century of involvement with developmental schemes going back to the colonial paper currency debates, a significant number of northern farmers viewed a tariff-protected home market as a good bet. As one historian observes, they "could hardly avoid the conclusion that cities were shaping their lives."[72]

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The home market thesis held considerable appeal in the Upper South, too.[73] With a significant urban-manufacturing base, relatively dense hinterlands, and a mixed agriculture not necessarily committed to foreign markets, the Upper South resembled the Greater Northeast, most obviously around the cities of Baltimore, Cincinnati, Louisville and eventually St. Louis. Many leading protectionists of the 1820s and later hailed from such areas. Hezekiah Niles, who published a popular digest of

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[71] Annual Report of the Secretary of the State Board of Agriculture of Massachusetts 6 (1859): 15.

[72] Quotations in Donald B. Marti, *To Improve the Soil and the Mind: Agricultural Societies, Journals, and Schools in the Northeastern States, 1791-1865* (Ann Arbor, MI: Published for the Agricultural History Society and the Dept. of Communication Arts, New York State College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Cornell University by University Microfilms International, 1979), 147; David B. Danbom, *Born in the Country: A History of Rural America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 83. For evidence of rural tariff support, see Peskin, *Manufacturing Revolution*, chap. 6; Gates, *The Farmer's Age*, 381; Huston, *Land and Freedom*, 55; Bruegel, *Farm, Shop, Landing*, 10, 77, 98–102; Eiselen, *The Rise of Pennsylvania Protectionism*, 32, 46–52; Shankman, *Crucible of American Democracy*, 188–190, 210–213; Ratcliffe, *The Politics of Long Division*, 60–61; Jensen, *Loosening the Bonds*, 83.

[73] Dupre, "The Panic of 1819 and the Political Economy of Sectionalism," 282–283.

national events and official communications out of Baltimore, was probably the country's most important tariff advocate after Mathew Carey. Another Baltimorean, Daniel Raymond, numbers among the founders of the protectionist American School of political economy. Then there was John Skinner, also a Marylander, who despite some initial uncertainty turned over the pages of his *American Farmer* to making the home market case. Skinner gradually became more confident in the idea, eventually founding a new agricultural journal, *The Plough, the Loom and the Anvil*, dedicated to disseminating the elaborate protectionist theorizing of Mathew Carey's son. Meanwhile the *American Farmer* remained a protectionist voice in Baltimore through several changes of ownership all the way into the McKinley era.[74]

Undoubtedly the most important Upper South exponent of the home market thesis was Henry Clay, somewhat of an agricultural reformer himself thanks to his interest in improved cattle. "It is most desirable that there should be both a home and a foreign market," Clay argued in Congress, "but with respect to their relative superiority, I cannot entertain a doubt. The home market is first in order." This was because it offered strategic security in case of war, steadier demand than foreign markets, and the "creation of reciprocal interests" linking Americans together. "A genuine AMERICAN SYSTEM," he concluded, "is only to be accomplished by the establishment of a tariff."[75]

Below Kentucky, however, this reasoning won few converts. Although in 1816 many southerners had somewhat reluctantly accepted temporary protectionism as a strategic measure, by 1820 they began to feel differently.[76] In shifting position, they moved the tariff and the American System's broader vision from the realm of policy, a space for negotiation, to the realm of principle, a ground for unyielding resistance. The South's export economy put its interests on the side of free trade, but

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[74] H. Niles, *Agriculture of the United States, or, an Essay Concerning Internal Improvement and Domestic Manufactures, Shewing Their Inseparable Connection with the Business and Interests of Agriculture, in the Establishment of a Home-Market for Bread-Stuffs and Meats, Wool, Cotton, Flax, Hemp, &c., as Well as the Supplies that They Will Furnish in Aid of the Foreign Commerce of the United States* ([Baltimore?], 1827), originally published in *Niles' Weekly Register*, 24 Mar 1827, pp. 49-58; Paul Keith Conkin, *Prophets of Prosperity: America's First Political Economists* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), chap. 4, 7; George Winston Smith, *Henry C. Carey and American Sectional Conflict* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1951), chap. 3; Michael Hudson, *Economics and Technology in 19th Century American Thought*, The Neglected American Economists (New York,: Garland Pub., 1975), chap. 16–17.
[75] *Mr. Clay's Speech on the Tariff: Or, The "American System," So Called, Or, The Anglican System, in Fact, Introduced Here, and Perverted in Its Most Material Bearing Upon Society, by the Omission of a System of Corn Laws, for the Protection of Agriculture* (Thomas W. White, 1827), 12–13, 18, 24.
[76] Schoen, *The Fragile Fabric of Union*, 109–111; Preyer, "Southern Support of the Tariff of 1816," 315; William W. Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War: The Nullification Controversy in South Carolina, 1816-1836* (New York: Harper & Row, 1966), 91–96.

the tariff would never have proved so divisive if not for slavery. For at the same moment that the Panic of 1819 led northern farmers to welcome a protected home market, the surpassing acrimony of the Missouri Crisis severely undercut the idea among southerners, who began to view any exercise of federal power as a potential precedent for action against slavery. Clay, himself the owner of scores of human beings, thoroughly repudiated federal intervention on "that delicate subject." But many planters found his assurances "insulting to the understandings of every . . . slave holder . . . from Potomac, to the Gulf of Mexico."[77]

In 1820 Virginia's United Agricultural Societies expressed this position obliquely in a series of petitions to Congress. The first simply averred that "bounties, monopolies, or protective duties" were useless to alleviate economic "calamities in their nature as inevitable as they are incurable, by legislative interposition." This foreshadowed growing southern invocations of *laissez faire* in national economic policy debates. The second petition was considerably more strident. The tariff bill before Congress, it argued, "contemplates nothing less than a radical change in our political institutions." The new policy aimed to destroy the country's international commerce by provoking a trade war. Once customs receipts plummeted, farmers would end up saddled with internal taxes while "another party, less attached to the soil, and completely dependent on the bounty of government, is to be raised to opulence and power." Moreover, the home market argument for expanding the manufacturing sector amounted to a program for converting farmers into an industrial proletariat. "In plain English, the hardy, independent sons of our forests and our fields are called on to consent to be starved into weavers and button-makers." This petition thus previewed pro-slavery ideologists' later critique of northern "wage slavery."[78]

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[77] *Mr. Clay's Speech on the Tariff*, 3, 25.

[78] First petition: *American Farmer* I (28 Jan 1820): 348. Second petition: *Memorial of the Delegates of the United Agricultural Societies of Prince George, Sussex, Surry, Petersburg, Brunswick, Dinwiddie, and Isle of Wight. December 13, 1820. Referred to the Committee on Agriculture* (Washington: Gales & Seaton, 1820), 3–4; *Memorial from the United Agricultural Societies of the State of Virginia: January 17, 1820, Referred to the Committee on Commerce* (Washington: Gales & Seaton, 1820). For similar points, see "Remonstrance of the Virginia Agricultural Society of Fredericksburg" in *American Farmer* I (14 Jan 1820): 333; and "An Address to the Public, from the Delegation of the United Agricultural Societies of Virginia" in *American Farmer* I (19 May 1820): 57-59. See also Dupre, "The Panic of 1819 and the Political Economy of Sectionalism," 287–291. For examples of pro-slavery thought, see Isaac Kramnick and Theodore J. Lowi, eds., *American Political Thought: A Norton Anthology* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2009), 626–650; Drew Gilpin Faust, ed., *The Ideology of Slavery: Proslavery Thought in the Antebellum South, 1830-1860* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981).

Disdaining a government-sponsored alliance between farmers and domestic manufacturers, Virginia's leading agricultural reformers stuck by the Old Republicans' "marriage" of "agriculture and foreign commerce."[79] That union had been proposed by James Madison in the 1790s as the basis of national economic policy and it had been codified with strong southern support in the Navigation Act of 1817, which aimed to bolster American shipping. Although many southerners disapproved of discriminating against foreign shippers, they rarely attacked the policy with the rancor and high constitutional principle they reserved for the tariff.[80] Thus when the House Agriculture Committee's veteran Jeffersonians took up the Virginia petitions in 1821, they quickly moved past questions of expedience to argue at length that the tariff was an illegal encroachment on "state sovereignties."[81]

Such recourse to states' rights offered a defense of slavery without saying as much. The logic was straightforward: by locating sovereignty in the individual states and limiting national powers to their narrowest constitutional span, slavery could be shielded from federal interference. Hence in 1818, North Carolina's Nathaniel Macon privately urged a fellow southern politician to oppose federally funded transportation projects as unconstitutional. "If Congress can make canals they can with more propriety emancipate," he warned.[82] Two years later northerners' powerful push to exclude slavery from Missouri and the entire Louisiana Purchase was driving that warning home, leading one South Carolinian to stress the overriding importance of "keeping the hands of Congress from touching the question of slavery." After all, as another writer put it unceremoniously, "the blacks constitute either absolutely, or instrumentally, the wealth of our southern states."[83]

Therefore, while Carey and Clay argued the home market thesis, Virginia's Old Republicans revived the "Spirit of 98" with its "interposition" doctrine sanctioning individual states to declare federal law unconstitutional. Taking up the banner

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[79] McCoy, *The Elusive Republic*, 84. See also John E. Crowley, *The Privileges of Independence: Neomercantilism and the American Revolution*, Early America (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).
[80] McCoy, *The Elusive Republic*, 137–139; Schoen, *The Fragile Fabric of Union*, 85–87, 96–97, 226–228; Haulman, *Virginia and the Panic of 1819*, 57.
[81] *Report of the Committee on Agriculture, on the Memorial of the Delegates of the United Agricultural Societies of Sundry Counties of the State of Virginia* (Washington, DC: Gales & Seaton, 1821), 26, 28.
[82] Quoted in John Lauritz Larson, *Internal Improvement: National Public Works and the Promise of Popular Government in the Early United States* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 105.
[83] *American Farmer* 2 (31 Oct 1820): 242; Pinckney quoted in Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War*, 109. On the politics of the Missouri Crisis, see, Van Atta, *Wolf by the Ears*; Mason, *Slavery and Politics in the Early American Republic*, chap. 8; Leonard L. Richards, *The Slave Power: The Free North and Southern Domination, 1780-1860* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2000), chap. 3.

of states' rights and strict constructionism, the so-called "Richmond Junto" rehabilitated once outcast radical opponents of federal power. It now mended fences with John Randolph and gave a public platform to John Taylor of Caroline.[84] Randolph was by this time legendary for his intemperate defense of slaveholder sovereignty. In 1807 he had famously declared, "If union and the manumission of slaves are to be put into the scale, let union kick the beam!" Taylor, for his part, helped prepare the grounds for nullification by theorizing the federal union as a compact of individually sovereign states. He was also a kind of godfather to Virginia's agricultural reformers. Not only did his arguments inform the United Agricultural Societies' anti-tariff petitions, but the organization's secretary, Edmund Ruffin, would soon emerge as his heir: the South's preeminent agricultural reformer, an opponent of federal power, an aggressive defender of slavery, and finally a passionate secessionist. It was Ruffin, legend has it, who fired the first shot at Fort Sumter.[85]

Strict constructionism gradually gained influence in the wider South, if not right away. In 1820, even South Carolinians voiced their tariff opposition primarily in practical rather than constitutional terms.[86] Yet within less than a decade—after they blamed Denmark Vesey's aborted slave rebellion on loose northern talk about natural rights and after David Walker worked to put his *Appeal* for immediate emancipation into slaves' own hands—South Carolina's planter elite would lead a new movement to "nullify" the so-called "Tariff of Abominations" in order to protect their particular interests and peculiar institutions from outside meddling. When

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[84] Mason, *Slavery and Politics in the Early American Republic*, 197–200; Harry Ammon, "The Richmond Junto, 1800-1824," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 61 (October 1953): 404, 407, 411; Don E. Fehrenbacher, *Constitutions and Constitutionalism in the Slaveholding South* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1989), 40–41, 48–49.

[85] Randolph quoted in Padraig Riley, *Slavery and the Democratic Conscience: Political Life in Jeffersonian America*, forthcoming from University of Pennsylvania Press. For analyses of Taylor's thought, see Stoll, *Larding the Lean Earth*, 71–73; Conkin, *Prophets of Prosperity*, chap. 3; Martin J. Burke, *The Conundrum of Class: Public Discourse on the Social Order in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 45–52; Robert E. Shalhope, *John Taylor of Caroline: Pastoral Republican* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1980). These is a large literature on Ruffin, including David F. Allmendinger, *Ruffin: Family and Reform in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990); W. M. Mathew, *Edmund Ruffin and the Crisis of Slavery in the Old South: The Failure of Agricultural Reform* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1988); Betty L. Mitchell, *Edmund Ruffin: A Biography* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1981); Avery Craven, *Edmund Ruffin, Southerner: A Study in Secession* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1932). For an example of Ruffin's views on slavery, see his pamphlet, *The Political Economy of Slavery, or, The Institution Considered in Regard to its Influence on Public Wealth and the General Welfare* ([Washington, DC]: L. Towers, [185-?]).

[86] Larson, *Internal Improvement*, 115; Schoen, *The Fragile Fabric of Union*, 110.

South Carolina finally seceded a generation later, the states' rights doctrine once brandished against tariffs was explicitly harnessed to the defense of slavery.[87] Thus, for example, in 1859 and 1860 John Calhoun's son, Andrew, a prominent agricultural reformer and future secession commissioner, addressed the state agricultural society of which he was president in order to rail against "unjust and outrageous" tariffs, the "ignorant and stupid nature of the negro," and the intolerable menace of the "Black Republicans." Edmund Ruffin attended the second of these talks and found it much to the point.[88] Thus in the two southern bellwether states of Virginia and South Carolina, agricultural reformers tracked a politics that linked free trade, strict limits on federal power, and the defense of slavery.

The tariff proved especially susceptible to these sectionalizing linkages for several reasons. To begin with, pro- and anti-tariff interests plausibly mapped onto the geographic division between free and slave states. The correspondence was far from perfect, especially in the West and Upper South, but since cotton exports and the domestic sector constituted the respective nuclei of slave- and free-state economies, tariff debates tended to express antagonistic sectional interests.[89] Institutional features of American federalism amplified this tendency. From the Constitutional Convention till the end of the nineteenth century, everyone agreed that customs duties would provide the lion's share of federal revenues.[90] This meant that rate negotiations were institutionally hardwired, so it was useful for southern exporters to found tariff opposition on a clear set of principles—states' rights, strict constructionism and *laissez faire* fit the bill. As Andrew Calhoun put it, "To represent the South, or cotton country, requires a thorough knowledge of its great and commanding interest, and as a minority section, the uncompromising advocates [sic] of its rights."[91]

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[87] *Declaration of the Immediate Causes Which Induce and Justify the Secession of South Carolina from the Federal Union; And the Ordinance of Secession* (Charleston, SC: Evans & Cogswell, 1860), 7–8; Freehling, *Prelude to Civil War*, 83, 106, 255 and throughout; Fehrenbacher, *Constitutions and Constitutionalism in the Slaveholding South*, 45–52; Don Harrison Doyle, "Introduction," in *Secession as an International Phenomenon: From America's Civil War to Contemporary Separatist Movements*, ed. Don Harrison Doyle (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2010), 9.

[88] A.P. Calhoun, "Address," in *History of the State Agricultural Society of South Carolina*, by W.A. Clark, W.G. Hinson, and D.P. Duncan (Columbia, SC: The R.L. Bryan Company, 1916), 102–21; Charles B. Dew, *Apostles of Disunion: Southern Secession Commissioners and the Causes of the Civil War*, A Nation Divided (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2001), 39–41; Drew Gilpin Faust, "The Rhetoric and Ritual of Agriculture in Antebellum South Carolina," *Journal of Southern History* 45 (November 1979): 541–68.

[89] Dupre, "The Panic of 1819 and the Political Economy of Sectionalism," 278.

[90] Einhorn, *American Taxation, American Slavery*; Max M. Edling, *A Revolution in Favor of Government: Origins of the U.S. Constitution and the Making of the American State* (Oxford University Press, USA, 2003).

[91] Calhoun, "Address," 110.

The tariff also implicated national governing power more than any other major issue except, perhaps, for the disposition of western territory. To be sure, federal policy on banking and internal improvements provoked major political battles through the 1830s and 40s. But these issues could be addressed at the state level, too. For instance, "free banking" policy and the "Suffolk system" provided alternative modes of regulating the currency, while transportation could be done by the states, private actors, or some combination. But states could not engage in protectionism. The tariff, as one southern opponent pointed out, "necessarily involves complete unqualified jurisdiction over a territory."[92] Not only did this mean that tariff debates *had* to take place at the national level, it meant that, unlike banking and internal improvements, the tariff was poorly adapted to the Jacksonian two-party system's characteristic mode of connecting state with national politics.

Those connections were what allowed the party system to keep sectionalism effectively at bay between the Missouri Compromise and the fallout from the war on Mexico. By identifying political divisions that were meaningful within both states and the nation, the parties linked political leaders across sectional lines.[93] This worked beautifully when it came to banking, which mobilized competing interests everywhere and could be grafted onto existing intra-state political divisions. Nullification failed in 1832 because most southern politicians embraced the emerging partisan alignment annealed by Andrew Jackson's bank veto and its cascading financial ramifications in

[92] *Mr. Clay's Speech on the Tariff,* 48. Actually, states could practice a form of industrial policy by offering manufacturers direct subsidies, or bounties. Alexander Hamilton favored this method over tariffs. But bounties smacked of undue government favoring of particular business. Moreover, whereas the cost of tariffs distributed themselves invisibly in the economy, bounties had to be paid out of tax revenue and were thus conspicuously visible in government accounts. For these reasons, state-level industrial policy was never seriously attempted. For some of these points see, Einhorn, *American Taxation, American Slavery*, chap. 4; Andrew Shankman, "'A New Thing on Earth': Alexander Hamilton, Pro-Manufacturing Republicans, and the Democratization of American Political Economy," *Journal of the Early Republic* 23 (October 2003): 323–52.

[93] The literature on the origins and significance of the second party system is immense, but important representative works include Holt, *The Political Crisis of the 1850s*; Michael F. Holt, *The Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party: Jacksonian Politics and the Onset of the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999); Harry L. Watson, *Liberty and Power: The Politics of Jacksonian America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1990); Daniel Walker Howe, *The Political Culture of the American Whigs* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979); Charles Grier Sellers Jr., "Who Were the Southern Whigs?," *The American Historical Review* 59, no. 2 (January 1, 1954): 335–46, doi:10.2307/1843625; Joel H. Silbey, *The American Political Nation, 1838-1893* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991); Joel H. Silbey, *The Partisan Imperative: The Dynamics of American Politics Before the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); Ronald P Formisano, *The Transformation of Political Culture: Massachusetts Parties, 1790s-1840s* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983); Richard L. McCormick, *The Party Period and Public Policy: American Politics from the Age of Jackson to the Progressive Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

the states.[94] For strict constructionists like the Richmond Junto's Thomas Ritchie, an ideology of limited government and Jackson's charismatic appeal made a suitable basis for tying the "planters of the South and the plain republicans of the north" within the Democratic Party. Other southerners opted for the Whigs, the party of government-sponsored economic development. Yet in the cotton states many Whigs were actually states' righters opposed to Jackson's dictatorial style, while those who embraced the developmental platform were more interested in banks and internal improvements than in protectionism.[95]

Among the slave states, the full scope of Clay's American System held broad and consistent appeal only in the Border States and Louisiana. With trade patterns similar to the Greater Northeast's, the home market idea suited this region.[96] But it was also a slave region, in this respect part and parcel of what we call the South. Clay always found himself caught between the two commitments, and so perhaps his most characteristic move was his embrace of the American Colonization Society, an ineffective compromise on slavery that could be assimilated to the American System's vision of a pro-active federal government.[97] By the 1850s, however, precisely these twinned commitments—too obligated to slavery for the North, too accepting of federal power for the South—had rendered Clay's legacy and the remaining Upper South Whigs increasingly irrelevant as a political force.

It might have turned out differently. Had Clay won the vanishingly close presidential race of 1844, perhaps he could have kept the United States from conquering half of Mexico.[98] Then the question of slavery's status in the territories may not have reemerged with such vehemence, southerners may not have converted the Democratic Party into a mechanism for obstructing federal development policies demanded in the North, and the economic issues that roiled the Jacksonian era may have continued to run orthogonally to the slavery issue. Instead, all those things did

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[94] The depression that followed the Panic of 1837 brought a second round of partisan conflict over financial issues, this time focused as much on internal improvements and corporations as on banking.

[95] Sellers, "Who Were the Southern Whigs?," 338, 340, 344–345; J. Mills Thornton, *Politics and Power in a Slave Society Alabama, 1800-1860* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2014), throughout, but see p. 53 for an example of Whig opposition to the tariff; Howe, *The Political Culture of the American Whigs*, chap. 10; Holt, *Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party*.

[96] Dupre, "The Panic of 1819 and the Political Economy of Sectionalism," 282–283.

[97] Howe, *What Hath God Wrought*; Holt, *Rise and Fall of the American Whig Party*; Phillip W. Magness, "The American System and the Political Economy of Black Colonization," *Journal of the History of Economic Thought* 37 (June 2015): 187–202.

[98] This possibility is especially suggested in Brian DeLay, *War of a Thousand Deserts: Indian Raids and the U.s.-Mexican War*, Lamar Series in Western History (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 218–220; Amy S. Greenberg, *A Wicked War: Polk, Clay, Lincoln, and the 1846 U.S. Invasion of Mexico* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012), chap. 3.

happen. Then another financial panic struck in 1857. This time it was Henry Carey, Mathew's son and heir, who pressed the home market argument.[99] The result was that, as in 1819, divisions over slavery and economic development lined up with one another. A matrix of ideological binaries stacked up in ordered columns:

national	vs.	state sovereignty
active	vs.	limited government
domestic	vs.	overseas markets
diversified	vs.	staple economy
free	vs.	slave labor

And, finally:

North	vs.	South.

Joseph Blunt and the American Institute: Making Northern Economic Nationalism

To chart the path from the crises of 1819 to the gathering firestorm of the 1850s, a little-known figure named Joseph Blunt offers a useful guide. A New York City expert in marine law, Blunt seems, at first glance, an unlikely figure to champion the home market. Yet over four decades of commentary on a wide range of political and economic questions, Blunt helped to consolidate a northern brand of economic nationalism predicated on free labor and the home market thesis. Politically, Blunt advocated this outlook first as a supporter of John Quincy Adams, then as a "New School" Whig, and finally as an early organizer of the Republican Party. But Blunt spent most of his public career working through nonpartisan organizational channels and his significance lies in his illumination of ideological development at the level of associational life and print culture beyond immediate partisan imperatives. Here we can observe the deepening of a northern nationalist perspective that first crystallized during the twin crises of 1819, then reemerged in the 1850s with much greater organizational and ideological force.[100]

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[99] Henry C. Carey, *Letters to the President, on the Foreign and Domestic Policy of the Union, and Its Effects, as Exhibited in the Condition of the People and the State* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott & Co, 1858). For an important account of the panic's effect on Republican victory in 1860 which stresses industrial workers but largely ignores farmers, see James L Huston, *The Panic of 1857 and the Coming of the Civil War* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987).

[100] For brief biographical information, James Grant Wilson and John Fiske, eds., *Appleton's Cyclopaedia of American Biography*, vol. 3 (New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1888), 1:288; Francis S. Drake, ed., *Dictionary of American Biography, Including Men of the Time* (Boston: Houghton, Osgood & Company,

Blunt first entered public debates with a pamphlet on the Missouri controversy that minced no words. Slaveholder paternalism was plainly nonsensical: "Do we believe that men will not abuse uncontrolled power?" To prevent slavery's growth, "the law must interfere in the most energetic manner." Though he followed by incongruously claiming that he meant no intrusion in the existing states, his opening assertion that slavery "is repugnant to the fundamental principles of a republic" can be read to imply otherwise. Since the Constitution guarantees each state "a republican form of government," Blunt seemed to be saying that slavery everywhere had to go. In later years abolitionist lawyers occasionally proffered arguments along similar lines.[101]

Blunt issued another broadside against the enemies of republican government in 1823. This time, however, his target was the Holy Alliance's announcement of forceful intervention in defense of monarchy. Blunt argued that were this policy to stand, violent upheavals like the French Revolution were sure to follow. Any attempt "to put down the spirit of revolution without extirpating its causes" was doomed because the historical diffusion of wealth and education had "rendered the actual situation of society inconsistent with its existing civil institutions."[102] We can read this striking statement as a kind of historical materialism, similar to Marx's view that revolution becomes objectively necessary when "new forces and new passions spring up in the bosom of society; but the old social organisation fetters them and keeps them down." From this perspective, law and government amount to a reactionary institutionalization of archaic social relations.[103] Alternatively, we can read Blunt as

1879), 99. On New School Whigs, Sean Wilentz, *The Rise of American Democracy: Jefferson to Lincoln* (New York: Norton, 2005), 483–494.

[101] Joseph Blunt, *An Examination of the Expediency and Constitutionality of Prohibiting Slavery in the State of Missouri* (New-York: C. Wiley & Co, 1819), 3, 6, 14. For abolitionists, *Proceedings of the Convention of Radical Political Abolitionists* (New York: Central Abolition Board, 1855), 18, 22; Paul Finkelman, ed., *Abolitionists in Northern Courts: The Pamphlet Literature* (The Lawbook Exchange, Ltd., 1988), 203, 477–478.

[102] "The Principles of the Holy Alliance; or Notes and Manifestoes of the Allied Powers," first appeared in the *North American Review* 16 (Oct 1823): 340-375; reprinted in Joseph Blunt, *Speeches, Reviews, Reports, &c.* (New York: James Van Norden, 1843), 29–68 (quotations on pp. 29–31). Joseph Blunt, *Speeches, Reviews, Reports, &c.* (New York: James Van Norden, 1843), 29–68 (quotations on pp. ; "Relations between the Cherokees and the Government of the United States," in *Speeches, Reviews, Reports, &c.,* 138.

[103] Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy* (Moscow: Progress Publishers), vol. 1, chap. 32, accessed on www.marxists.org. See also the preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*. The materialist "laws of history" privileging socioeconomic class conflict over politics is traditionally how Marx is understood, but for a counterview see Kojin Karatani, *History and Repetition*, ed. Seiji M. Lippit (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 7–8.

really a romantic idealist akin to George Bancroft. Like Marx, Bancroft regarded social transformation, not high politics, as the real substance of history. He simply stressed the spirit of the common people. "The voice of the people is the voice of pure reason," he wrote. "The many are wiser than the few."[104] From this perspective, the Jacksonian negative state had essentially got it right by protecting private property and otherwise letting people alone.

Yet Blunt was neither of these because he accorded a key developmental role to the state. As much as Marx's classes and Bancroft's common man, the state was an historical agent. The problem with monarchies was that they were "unsuitable to modern societies" because they "extinguish the desire of innovation." The boldness of this statement is easily missed unless we recall that, at the time, "innovation" was commonly a pejorative connoting half-baked reform or, worse, starry-eyed revolution. Blunt understood it to mean progressive change, much as we would today. The state's role was to support and encourage this kind of innovation. Its legitimacy in any particular case therefore lay in its willingness to forward "all the improvements of modern times." This was why Blunt later invoked the Cherokees' "capacity of self-improvement" as the clinching refutation of removal policy. In his mind, development sanctioned sovereignty.[105]

Blunt proceeded to expound a nationalist theory of the Constitution in a historical essay on the American founding. Initially, he was motivated to refute Georgia's "zeal in behalf of state rights" during its aggressive dispossession of the Cherokees.[106] After the Cherokees' expulsion, however, Blunt extracted an argument that could stand alone to legitimize federal sovereignty and action. From the very moment Americans declared the severance of ties with Britain, he asserted categorically, "they were free and independent, not as isolated states, but as the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA." By "force of circumstances," he continued, they had become "a nation, one and indivisible, and instituted a general government, long before the state constitutions, or the articles of confederation, were framed." Such adamant nationalism aimed to counter all states' righters who regarded the Constitution as a kind of treaty

[104] James W. Ceaser et al., *Nature and History in American Political Development: A Debate*, The Alexis de Tocqueville Lectures on American Politics (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2006), 41; George Bancroft, *The Necessity, Reality, and the Promise of the Progress of the Human Race* (New York: New-York Historical Society, 1854), 10.
[105] "The Principles of the Holy Alliance," 48-49, 63; "Relations between the Cherokees and the Government of the United States," in Blunt, *Speeches, Reviews, Reports, &c.*, 138.
[106] Joseph Blunt, *A Historical Sketch of the Formation of the Confederacy, Particularly with Reference to the Provincial Limits and the Jurisdiction of the General Government Over Indian Tribes and the Public Territory* (New York: Geo. and Chas. Carvill, 1826), 6.

among sovereign states. In Blunt's formulation this was impossible since the states had never had any sovereignty to begin with. He went so far as to insist that the very first colonists were "men migrating here to found a nation."[107]

Having called slavery "repugnant," attacked states' rights, and argued that socioeconomic development was the measure of legitimate government, Blunt next suggested that the South's anti-federalism corresponded to its economic complacency. Addressing a putatively national readership in 1830, he phrased this as an impartial retrospection:

> Experience had shown, that the representatives from the southern states had generally ranked themselves among those, who contended for the less liberal view of the powers of the federal government. Whether it was owing to the peculiar character of the states, which from their *stationary condition* did not require that active care from the national government, that was demanded in other portions of the country where the population was increasing, and the resources more rapidly developed; or to an apprehension, that the general government might at some future period *interfere with the rights of slave holders*; certain it is, that a strong jealously of its powers had always been manifested by the representatives of the planting states.[108]

Several years later, however, when speaking to a northern audience, Blunt condemned southerners outright as lazy and vicious. Lecturing on the rise of Pennsylvania's anthracite industry, he quipped that merely observing the "unenterprising" coalmines of "Old Virginny" produced a sensation of mental fatigue.[109] Yet southerners had been anything but lethargic in opposing effective economic policy. "Dissatisfaction and jealousy among the planting interest," he believed, had overturned federal protections of American shippers and manufacturers, thus exposing the country to "the systematic assault of open enemies" abroad. The South not only failed to develop its own resources, it undermined the northern home market. Like England, it was "obstructing our path to prosperity and greatness."[110] One can only imagine how Blunt

[107] "An Anniversary Discourse Delivered before the New-York Historical Society, on Thursday, December 13, 1827" and "Historical View of the Formation of the Confederacy," both in Blunt, *Speeches, Reviews, Reports, &c.* (quotations on pp. 7, 20, 123-124).
[108] *American Annual Register for the Years 1827-8-9* (New York: E. & G.W. Blunt, 1830), 12 (emphasis added).
[109] "Lecture on Coal, before the American Institute," in Blunt, *Speeches, Reviews, Reports, &c.*, 270.
[110] "Address of the Home League, to the People of the United States, 1842," in Blunt, *Speeches, Reviews, Reports, &c.*, (quotations on pp. 225, 227, 233, 270).

must have reacted when southern fire eaters such as James Henry Hammond boasted that slaveholders had "ruled" the federal government since its founding.[111]

By 1854, Blunt was leading the effort to organize New York's Republican Party. As in 1819, the immediate question was territorial. The Kansas-Nebraska Act had formally revoked the Missouri Compromise line, opened western settlement to slavery, and outraged northern public opinion. The outrage, however, was not simply and only about the fate of the territories, nor was it a sectional lightning bolt out of the blue. For Blunt, it "crowned a long list of aggressions and exhausted the patience of the Free States."[112] Blunt had entered national politics during one sectional controversy over the territories and made his final mark during a recurrence of largely the same issue. But it would be mistaken to suppose that western settlement itself was his prime concern. Blunt was an easterner through and through. He never even really abandoned an Atlantic outlook, as his concern with European power politics and marine law suggests. Two of his brothers were leading hydrographers, hence architects of American oceanic commerce. But Blunt also understood that the domestic economy, not Atlantic trade, was the key to national development.[113] And while free labor and the territories were basic to his vision, so was the state.

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What does all this amount to? Blunt is an obscure figure to us. Views similar to his can be multiplied, but so can opposing views. Why should we care about him? And how does he help us chart the course from Missouri to Kansas to Sumter to Appomattox? One answer is that his pronouncements and partisan choices nicely illuminate the path that many northerners took to become Republicans. A majority of Republicans were former Whigs and the party undertook a political reshaping of the American economy that derived in large part from the Whig program. In this sense, Blunt is representative of a whole class of second-order Republican Party operatives. Yet the critical importance of anti-slavery Democrats meant that the Republican coalition was not merely Whiggery rebranded.[114] And so a better answer to the

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[111] Richards, *The Slave Power*, 9–10; Fehrenbacher, *Constitutions and Constitutionalism in the Slaveholding South*, 55. See also Fehrenbacher, *The Slaveholding Republic*.

[112] "The Anti-Nebraska Convention: Remarks of Joseph Blunt, Esq., on the Nomination of a State Ticket," New York *Times*, 2 Oct 1854.

[113] "Anniversary of the Home League," *Hartford Courant*, 23 Aug 1842, p. 2 (reprinted from New York *Tribune*.

[114] Gienapp, *Origins of the Republican Party*, 446; Foner, *Free Soil, Free Labor, Free Men*, chap. 5.

question of Blunt's relevance lies in his organizing efforts outside of the parties. Precisely because the Jacksonian two-party system crisscrossed the sections like two giant stitches holding the country together, it was elsewhere—in the vast public sphere of civic associations and print media—that northern economic nationalism was made. Here Blunt played a key role.

In 1827 Blunt co-founded the American Institute of the City of New York, an organization that embodied the intersection of agricultural reform and industrial development. Another founder was James Tallmadge, he of the Tallmadge Amendment that had sparked the Missouri Crisis eight years earlier. Blunt can be taken to broadly represent the group's disposition. Historians have seen the American Institute (AI) as a site where entrepreneurial master craftsmen began to construct free labor ideology. But it was more than that. Initially projected to advocate for John Quincy Adams's administration, the AI quickly emerged as a major center for the formulation of a distinctly northern brand of economic nationalism predicated on the home market thesis. It is particularly significant not only because it was a substantial organization in its own right, but for its close connection with the agricultural reform movement.[115]

The Institute made the crucial early decision to establish an annual fair in Manhattan. Blunt's report for the executive committee shrewdly framed the proposed exhibitions not only as a way to render New York the "emporium of American manufactures," but as a lever of national development and technical innovation. "The emulation excited by competition on such a theatre," the report explained, "would improve the quality" of domestically wrought goods.[116] It was a subtle point. In a period when regional markets remained only partially integrated, Blunt hoped that the Institute's exhibitions would effectively simulate a national marketplace in order to accelerate the gradual improvements that extensive commercial competition ought eventually to have produced. It typified a developmental mindset that entertained no

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[115] *Niles' Weekly Register* 34 (26 Apr 1828): 150; 34 (10 May 1828): 181; Charles P. Daly, "Anniversary Address Before the American Institute, 'on the Origin and History of Institutions for the Promotion of the Useful Arts,' Delivered at the Hall of the New York Historical Society, on the 11th of November, 1863," in *Report of the American Institute of the City of New York for the Years 1863, '64* (Albany, NY: Comstock & Cassidy, 1864), 45-77; Tristam Burges, *Address, Delivered Before the American Institute of the City of New-York, at Their Third Annual Fair, Held at Masonic Hall, October, 1830* (New York: John M. Danforth, 1830). On master craftsmen at the AI, see Sean Wilentz, *Chants Democratic: New York City & the Rise of the American Working Class, 1788-1850* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984), 274–276; Beckert, *The Monied Metropolis*, 64, 67, 73–74.

[116] "Report to American Institute Proposing Annual Fairs" in Blunt, *Speeches, Reviews, Reports, &c.,* 73. See also *Niles' Weekly Register* 42 (18 Aug 1832): 440-441; 47 (11 Oct 1834): 81; *American Agriculturist* 1 (Aug 1842): 129.

thought of waiting for capitalism to work itself out on its own.[117] No *laissez faire* here. Hence the Institute repeatedly pressed municipal, state, and federal authorities for specific economic promotion policies.

The Institute's fairs quickly became annual extravaganzas for celebrating "improvement in those arts and sciences which tend to increase the independence and the strength of our glorious republic." In 1843, for instance, the AI put on a spectacular "grand aquatic gala" which involved sailing races, a trial of life boats, and blowing up a ship with a new Colt sub-marine battery. "It is conceded by everyone," the managers reported, "that the scene was never equaled, in magnificence, splendor, and success, by any exhibition within the waters of the United States." The next year's fair featured multiple fireworks displays and drew as many as 240,000 visitors. By 1857, when the fair was held in the New York Crystal Palace, expenditures and receipts indicate that total attendance may have approached half a million.[118]

In 1841 the AI became New York City's representative in the new state-supported system of agricultural societies. It thus received government aid for its annual fairs and benefitted from state printing of its hefty reports, which turned into compendia of agricultural material subscribed to largely by state and local agricultural societies.[119] The Institute's fairs grew more farming-oriented, too, hosting an annual "Convention of Farmers, Gardeners and Silk Culturists" and enlarging the agricultural displays. Fair managers reported in 1843 that exhibition of "agricultural articles" had increased "tenfold" in the preceding few years. Indeed, whereas in 1835 only about five percent of fair premiums went to agricultural categories including both farm products and farm implements, a decade later the proportion stood at more than a third and separate sites for a plowing match and a cattle exhibition complemented the main display. By 1859 nearly forty-five percent of fair premiums went

[117] For other efforts to use fairs and civic associations to promote development, see Sean Patrick Adams, "Warming the Poor and Growing Consumers: Fuel Philanthropy in the Early Republic's Urban North," *Journal of American History* 95 (June 2008); Rosalind Remer, *Printers and Men of Capital: Philadelphia Book Publishers in the New Republic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996), 63, 69–70; David Kaser, *Messrs. Carey & Lea of Philadelphia: A Study in the History of the Booktrade* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1957), 125–132.

[118] *American Institute Report on Agriculture* 2 (1843): 103–104; 4 (1844): 18. See also the scrapbooks in Box 461, Records of the American Institute of the City of New York for the Encouragement of Science and Invention, NYHS; for contemporary reports on fair attendance and my own independent verification from manuscript records at the NYHS, see Ron, "Developing the Country," Appendix C.

[119] See the subscription book for the American Institute's annual transactions, a standalone volume in the Records of the American Institute, NYHS. Subscribers included major official bodies such as the Massachusetts Board of Agriculture and relatively informal farmers' clubs from as near as Rockland County, New York and as far as Pleasant Prairie, Wisconsin.

to agricultural categories and an additional cash prize of $1,000 was awarded to Joseph Fawkes for his celebrated steam plow **(Note: obtain image of Fawkes plow in *Scientific American*, new series, 1:11 [10 Sep 1859]: 161).**[120]

In other ways, too, the American Institute became closely integrated with agricultural reform. It established ties to a succession of agricultural journals: the *New York Farmer*, the *Monthly Journal of Agriculture*, the *Working Farmer*, and the *American Agriculturist*. It sponsored weekly meetings of the New York Farmers' Club, which earned extensive coverage in the New York *Tribune* and reportedly inspired hundreds of similar groups around the country. It campaigned for agricultural reform initiatives such as a state geological survey and a federal "Home Department" that would include a national agricultural bureau. It took a leading role in the movement for a state agricultural college: in 1849 a state commission chaired by none other than Joseph Blunt recommended heavy appropriations for such an institution.[121]

Perhaps most importantly, the American Institute's fairs dramatized the home market in live action. Arraying the products of American farm and factory within an enclosed space, they modeled the national economy as the domestic economy. This was a conscious choice to "focalize the industry of the country, by bringing it under view as one spectacle."[122] Editors and orators expressly highlighted the implications of this side-by-side arrangement of goods, praising their "nice adjustment and harmonious grouping of the varied productions of the husbandmen, the artisan, the manufacturer, and the artist."[123] Much the same was said at contemporary agricultural exhibitions. In 1849 the featured speaker at the New York State Fair described the event as a "prominent theatre for the display of American ingenuity," of "a nation's present capacities and future grandeur."[124]

There were subtler clues, too. Following Walter Benjamin, historians tend to see fairs as sites of consumerism. They have argued that by disassociating the product

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[120] Percentages calculated from *American Institute Report on Agriculture* 2 (1843): 2; 3 (1844): 34–37; 5 (1847): 13; *Transactions of the American Institute of the City of New York* (1859): 36–37.

[121] "Report of the Committee on Agriculture on so much of the Governor's Message as relates to an Agricultural College and Mechanical School, and on the Memorial of the State Agricultural Society on the same subject," in *Documents of the State Assembly of New York, Seventy-fourth Session*, v. 2 (Albany: Charles Van Benthuysen, 1851), doc. no. 3.

[122] Charles P. Daly, "Anniversary Address Before the American Institute, 'on the Origin and History of Institutions for the Promotion of the Useful Arts,' Delivered at the Hall of the New York Historical Society, on the 11th of November, 1863," in *Report of the American Institute of the City of New York for the Years 1863, '64* (Albany, NY: Comstock & Cassidy, 1864), 59.

[123] *American Agriculturist* 1 (Aug 1842): 129–130.

[124] *Transactions of the New York State Agricultural Society* 9 (1850): 32–33, 464.

from the producer, fairs presented a self-contained wonderland of goods, a fantasy of spontaneous capitalist creation.[125] Yet the agricultural and AI fairs always drew attention to the domestic production of the displays. That was the whole point. "Representatives from the shop, field and laboratory," began an oration at the 1849 AI fair, "have again come forth . . . in vindication of their country's honor."[126] These events were not designed to get people to *buy*, they were designed to get people to *make*. Hence fine art exhibited at the AI fairs adopted an aesthetics of utility that entailed "a direct function for the benefit of society" as an "adjunct to mechanical invention and production."[127] It was not art for art's sake. For similar reasons, a silver-plated plow offered for sale at the 1855 Iowa State Fair was criticized for "injudicious ornamentation."[128] Moreover, to the extent that these fairs did shield viewers from the production process, they only facilitated imagining a national economic space. Actual labor may have escaped notice; that the goods were American was impossible to miss. What was finally on display at the American Institute and many state fairs, therefore, was a largely northern conception, grounded in the domestic economy, of what the national economy ought to look like.

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Mid-nineteenth-century Americans, however, did not speak of the "the economy" as an independent realm of social life in the way we do now. Instead they spoke of "*political* economy" because they regarded political order as constitutive of economic relationships.[129] Therefore exhibitions that explicitly aimed to dramatize economic relationships implicitly suggested a corresponding political order. If the home

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125 Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1999); Curtis M. Hinley, "Strolling through the Colonies," in *Walter Benjamin and the Demands of History*, ed. Michael P. Steinberg (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 119–40; Ethan Robey, "The Utility of Art: Mechanics' Institute Fairs in New York City, 1828-1876" (Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 2000), 92–93; Warren Susman, "Ritual Fairs," *Chicago History* 12 (Fall 1983): 4–9; David Blanke, "Consumer Choice, Agency, and New Directions in Rural History," *Agricultural History* 81 (April 2007): 182–203.

126 George Gifford, "An Address on the Patent Laws, Delivered on Invitation of the American Institute, in Castle Garden, at Its Twenty-Second Annual Fair" (New York: Jennings & Harrison, 1849), 3.

127 Robey, "Utility of Art," 2.

128 Blanke, "Consumer Choice, Agency, and New Directions in Rural History," 187.

129 Richard R. John, "Ruling Passions: Political Economy in Nineteenth-Century America," *Journal of Policy History* 18 (Winter 2006): 13; James L. Huston, *Securing the Fruits of Labor: The American Concept of Wealth Distribution, 1765-1900* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1998), xiii; William J. Novak, *The People's Welfare: Law and Regulation in Nineteenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), chap. 3; Shankman, *Crucible of American Democracy*, 115.

market was at the heart of northern agricultural reform—and the vast majority of northern agricultural reformers insisted that it was—an appropriate set of institutions and government policies had to be as well.

Here it is well to remember that the field of knowledge known as political economy always concerned the state. When Adam Smith repudiated the statist tradition he labeled mercantilism, he still spoke of the "wealth of nations," not simply of individuals, and while Book I introduced the invisible hand, Book V concerned appropriate roles for government. Among these Smith included the potentially expansive "duty of erecting and maintaining certain public works and certain public institutions which it can never be for the interest of any individual, or small number of individuals, to erect and maintain."[130] That view is basically consonant with Abraham Lincoln's belief that "the legitimate object of government, is to do for a community of people, whatever they need to have done, but can not do, *at all*, or can not, *so well do*, for themselves—in their separate, and individual capacities." In this category Lincoln included "all which, in its nature, and without wrong, requires combined action, as public roads and highways, public schools, charities, pauperism, orphanage, estates of the deceased, and the machinery of government itself." The tariff escaped mention here, but there is no doubt of Lincoln's views on that matter. Nor of his views on the collective utility of agricultural fairs. In their capacity "to stimulate discovery and invention," they were "kindred to the patent clause in the Constitution." Good thing they were "becoming and institution of the country."[131]

Even the classical British liberals like David Ricardo and the early Jeremy Bentham insisted on a kind of tough-love state, one that governed by discipline rather than paternal care and command, but governed all the same, if not more so. We forget this now because over the nineteenth century the "political" half of political economy was dropped and the "economy" part lost its original meaning, which was similar to what today we call management. Political economy in its original sense thus referred to management of the public treasury or to management of national wealth more generally, in contradistinction to domestic economy, or management of the household. From this perspective one could still speak of "wise economy," i.e., wise management or economic statecraft. Today the economy can hardly be wise because it is thought of as an arena of action rather than the action itself. Economy (without the definite or indefinite article) once signified an act; now it is a place where people

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130 Smith, *Wealth of Nations*, econlib.org IV.9.51.

131 Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, 2:185 (Book IV, chap. 9); Abraham Lincoln, *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (Abraham Lincoln Association, 1953), 2:220–222, 3:471–472, http://quod.lib.umich.edu/l/lincoln.

commit acts that are economic.[132] Marxists would add that "the" economy has been thoroughly reified. And yet, while people may think of the economy as an objective reality grounded in natural human predilections conceptually prior to things like politics and culture, even economists continue to derive much of their power and prestige from their association with the state—that is, from policy recommendations that presume a measure of planning and collective agency. The economy, in short, is never far from politics.

Nor was it in the 1850s. Despite the collapse of the Jacksonian two-party system which had blocked sectionalism by engaging the electorate in a series of compelling economic controversies, the temporary submersion of overtly economic politics in the 1850s cannot possibly be taken as the actual disappearance of the economy from political relevance. Let us now turn, therefore, to how agricultural reformers and Republicans understood political economy in the crucial late antebellum years.

[132] Peter A. Shulman, *Coal and Empire: The Birth of Energy Security in Industrial America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2015), 39–40; Timothy Mitchell, *Carbon Democracy: Political Power in the Age of Oil* (London: Verso Books, 2011), 123–125; Conkin, *Prophets of Prosperity*, ix.