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INNER BLUEGRASS AGRICULTURE: AN AGROECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE, 1850-1880

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INNER BLUEGRASS AGRICULTURE: AN AGROECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE, 1850-1880

THESIS

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in History
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By

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Lexington, Kentucky

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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

INNER BLUEGRASS AGRICULTURE:
AN AGROECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE, 1850-1880

This study examines agriculture in the Inner Bluegrass Region of Central Kentucky from 1850 to 1880. It utilizes an agroecological perspective, which interprets agriculture through the lens of ecology, to highlight the complex natural and cultural factors that combined to form one of the nation's most prosperous agricultural systems during the nineteenth century. Chapter One explores the agroecosytem Bluegrass farmers created and maintained, emphasizing dynamics in crop and livestock diversity and agricultural technology. Chapter Two examines the African-American labor force that played a key role in shaping the system, first as slaves and later as free men and women. Chapter Three addresses the cultural outlooks and institutions that influenced land use patterns, ranging from beliefs on proper methods of cultivation to voluntary organizations designed to facilitate market access. Through an examination of the various influences at work on the agricultural environment, the landscape emerges as a dynamic factor, rather than a passive backdrop, in Inner Bluegrass history.

KEYWORDS: Kentucky Agriculture, Agricultural Organizations, African American Labor, Agroecosystem, Bluegrass History

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Chapter One: Introduction

The Bluegrass Region of nineteenth-century Kentucky exemplified "American agriculture in one of its most refined and successful phases," according to a visiting editor from the *Country Gentleman*, but beyond the refined façade laid a dynamic agricultural system subject to a wide variety of shifting influences.[1] Most commenters, both contemporary and later historians, correctly highlighted the diversified products of the region's farms, but did not adequately address the factors that shaped the system as a whole. The result is a view in which the land acts as the static background to human history and the rich, working relationships people developed with the land are obscured.

In *Larding the Lean Earth: Soil and Society in Nineteenth-Century America* (2002) Steven Stoll argued for a renewed historical focus on agriculture because:

> "farming matters. It is the central biological and ecological relationship in any settled society and the most profound way that humans have changed the world over the last ten thousand years. Farming defines a specific landscape, the middle landscape—that place somewhere between wilderness and city where settled societies produce all their food…Farming occupied the vast majority of Americans in the nineteenth century, tied up most of its capital, and created the most essential commodities. The environmental history of North America is unintelligible without agriculture because husbandry embodied the force of settlement, created cultural landscapes, sustained the entire population, and produced commodities for trade and manufacturing."[2]

This study utilizes an agroecological perspective to highlight the connections between human agency and the rural environment in the Inner Bluegrass during the mid to late nineteenth century.

Eugene P. Odum defined "agroecosystem" as a type of intermediate system between natural ecosystems and fabricated ecosystems, like cities. They are solar

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[1] *Country Gentleman*, VIII, No. 28 (August 21, 1856), 122.
[2] Steven Stoll, *Larding the Lean Earth: Soil and Society in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2002), 8.

powered like natural systems, but differ in important ways. Agroecosystems depend on auxiliary energy sources like human and animal labor (or fossil fuels), dramatically reduce diversity in order to maximize the yield of certain species, dominant plants and animals are under artificial rather than natural selection and control of the system is in large measure external and goal-oriented.[3] Applying the agroecosystem perspective to the Inner Bluegrass provides focus on important forces that shaped the system: the transformative human labor often provided by the most impoverished section of society and the "artificial rather than natural selection" and "external" control asserted by farmers.[4] These two forces, and the tension between them, combined to shape the evolution of the landscape in the decades surrounding the Civil War.

This study examines the agroecosystem of the Inner Bluegrass region from 1850 to 1880 using Federal Agricultural Census records on the county level to provide a statistical basis for discussion of land use patterns. Combining these records with a sampling of unpublished Census returns from individual farms, and the papers of farmers themselves provides a view of the structure of Bluegrass agriculture. Examples are drawn from throughout the six counties that comprise the bulk of the Inner Bluegrass geologic zone, but for the purpose of detailed case study Bourbon County is the focus. Developments throughout the region were mirrored on the county level and limiting the scope allowed for analysis of trends on the individual farm level. The study compiled a sample of ten percent of Bourbon County farms reported on the original agricultural Census returns from 1850 to 1880 to examine issues like crop and livestock diversity and help reveal individual patches in the agricultural landscape.

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[3] Eugene P Odum, "Properties of Agroecosystems" in *Agricultural Ecosystems: Unifying Concepts,* eds Richard Lowrance, Benjamin R. Stinner, and Garfield J. House (New York: Wiley, 1984), 5.
[4] Ibid., 5.

Edwin Green Bedford (1814-1900) lived and farmed in Bourbon County his entire life. Born to a prosperous family, Bedford was a successful breeder and farmer who ranked among the local agricultural elite. He served on the board of directors for the Bourbon County Agricultural Society and imported cattle from overseas. He also kept annual diaries in which he wrote several times each day beginning in the 1850s. Bedford's records provide a uniquely detailed insight into the day-to-day operations necessary for the creation and maintenance of the local agroecosystem. He was engaged in all of the currents shaping the system and his diaries provide a view that reflects that of the slave and land-holding class, but also glimpses of the relationships the laboring class developed with the landscape. Bedford's journals provided a key window to the Inner Bluegrass agricultural system.

Previous historians have largely overlooked the complex forces that shaped the rural environment and presented a rather flat picture of Inner Bluegrass agriculture. In works like Thomas D. Clark's *A History of Kentucky* (1936) and *Agrarian Kentucky* (1977), this view of the landscape stems in part from the breadth of Clark's topics, but more fundamentally from his perspective of the land as a constant background variable to human affairs. He recognized and celebrated Kentuckians' connection to their land but failed to account for how dynamic this relationship was and the variety of factors that shaped the agroecosystem. James F. Hopkins' *A History of the Hemp Industry in Kentucky* (1951) does more to address the multiple influences on the agricultural system, but his focus on a single crop limits the study's usefulness in describing the system as a whole. Dissertations on Inner Bluegrass agriculture, such as those by Richard Troutman and Elizabeth R. Clotfelter, are largely descriptive and do little to explore the causes

behind the agriculture they described.[5] Local histories, such as *Bourbon County Since 1865* (1999) by H.E. Everman, often fall into the same category. Scientific works like *Bluegrass Land and Life* (1991) by Mary E. Wharton and Roger W. Barbour provide important details, but lack the historical context that links the countryside to complex set of human factors.

This study seeks to address these shortcomings in the literature by providing a more complete view of the dynamic relationship Inner Bluegrass residents had with the natural world. Chapter one examines the structure of the agroecosystem from 1850 to 1880, highlighting changes in crop and livestock diversity and agricultural technology. Chapter two shifts to emphasize the African Americans who performed the bulk of the labor to create the rural landscape. The labor force that shaped and maintained the physical environment underwent dramatic change during the 1860s and 1870s and the choices and preferences of former Inner Bluegrass slaves caused a significant reorganization of the agricultural system. Focusing directly on the African American residents of central Kentucky demonstrates the formative role the often-overlooked laboring class played in the region's celebrated agriculture. Chapter three examines elite farmers' philosophical outlook on cultivation and husbandry and how the dictates of the market influenced the choices they made, their "artificial selections" of which species to promote at the expense of others. It goes further to address the voluntary organizations, such as county agricultural societies, that provided farmers with both practical, experience-based farming advice and connections to wider markets for their products. Because of the important role such organizations played in disseminating agricultural

[5] Richard L. Troutman, "The Social and Economic Structure of Kentucky Agriculture, 1850-1860" (PhD dissertation, University of Kentucky, 1958). Elizabeth R. Clotfelter. "The Agricultural History of Bourbon County, Kentucky Prior to 1900" (Master's thesis, University of Kentucky, 1953).

information that shaped farmers' decision making, they can properly be viewed as influencing the evolution of the agroecosystem as a whole. Applying the agroecological perspective allows a greater focus on the shifting dynamics and factors that shaped the rural landscape and a more complete account of rural life in the Inner Bluegrass.

Chapter Two: Structure of the Inner Bluegrass Agroecosystem

The Inner Bluegrass region of Kentucky is a geologically and therefore environmentally unique zone. Encompassing the entirety of Fayette, and the majority of Bourbon, Scott, Woodford, Jessamine and Clark Counties, the Inner Bluegrass is characteristically underlain by Middle Ordovician Lexington Limestone.[6] The nuanced differences in subsoil that distinguish the region from the surrounding areas might take a geologist to truly appreciate, but the secondary effects are readily apparent. The limestone explains the higher soil fertility in the Inner Bluegrass compared to the surrounding Outer.[7] The gently undulating topography of the area is the result of underground drainage dissolving underlying limestone in low areas.[8] Early white explorers to the region recognized and extolled the area's natural virtues and settlers, often the younger sons of successful Virginia planters, streamed in to claim land for themselves.[9]

The most recent scientific research into the ecological history of the Inner Bluegrass suggests the oak savanna ecosystem that existed during Euro-American settlement of the region was the product of complex interactions between human and natural forces. By examining tree ring data from old growth vegetation researchers identified "release events" that occurred around 1800 when settlers began to clear canopy which had previously limited the oaks' growth. "Release events" are ecosystem disturbances that create opportunities for certain species to escape the usual constraints of

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[6] A.J. Woods, J.M. Omernik, W.H. Martin, G.J. Pond, W.M. Andrews, S.M. Call, J.A. Comstock, and D.D. Taylor, "Ecoregions of Kentucky" (Reston, VA., U.S. Geological Survey 2002). http://www.epa.gov/wed/pages/ecoregions/ky_eco.htm#Ecoregions%20denote Accessed March 11, 2010.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Mary E. Wharton & Roger W. Barbour. *Bluegrass Land and Life: Land Character, Plants, and Animals of the Inner Bluegrass Region of Kentucky, Past, Present and Future*. (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1991), 19.
[9] Thomas D. Clark, *A History of Kentucky* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1937) 65.

competition. White settlement touched off a series of changes, many of which involved a similar pattern of disturbance causing an unplanned shift in environmental conditions. The researchers further postulate that the existence of the canopy that hindered the oaks' growth was the result of lower land habitation and utilization rates by Native Americans in the decades prior to Euro-American arrival because of declining populations due to disease. [10] The species that gave the Bluegrass Region its name, *Poa pratensis,* was itself an exotic introduced from Europe during the late eighteenth century that came to replace native buffalo grass.[11] These findings reveal the historical depth of connection between the artificial or human influences and the natural in the Inner Bluegrass environment.

The cumulative affect of changes over three-quarters of a century after Euro-American settlement created a vastly different region by 1850. Inner Bluegrass farmers had transformed the area into a jewel of American agriculture. A study of late antebellum agriculture in Kentucky found that "Because the underlying blue limestone, full of organic remains, constantly supplies the soil in this section with fertilizing elements, the Inner Bluegrass is by far the most fertile agricultural district in the state…The high phosphorus and calcium content of vegetation grown in the region also makes it ideally suited to the raising of blooded stock. The high quality horses, cattle, asses, and mules produced in the Inner Bluegrass brought Kentucky national attention in the ante-bellum period."[12] These celebrated products were only part of a diversified system. A typical

[10] Ryan W. McEwan and Brian C. McCarthy. "Anthropogenic Disturbance and the Formation of Oak Savanna in Central Kentucky, USA," *Journal of Biogeography.* 35 no. 5 (2008): 965-975.
[11] Donald E. Davis, *Southern United States: An Environmental History* (Santa Barbara, California: ABC-CLIO, 2006), 146.
[12] Troutman, "The Social and Economic Structure of Kentucky Agriculture, 1850-1860" 12.

contemporary editorial praised the many products of the region's large farms and described the system as American agriculture at "its most refined and successful."[13]

Observers were correct to note the diverse products of the region's farms, as an analysis of Federal Census records and farmers' papers both illustrate. Inner Bluegrass counties consistently produced significant quantities of corn, wheat, rye, oats, hay, barley, and hemp in addition to orchard and garden crops. They also bred and raised livestock including horses, mules, cattle, swine, sheep and chickens.[14] Examining the diaries and papers of individual farmers like those of Edwin G. Bedford of Bourbon County, reveals that much of this regional diversity was reflected on individual farms. Over the course of three decades each of these domesticated species, and many others, found a home on Bedford's 377-acre holding.[15]

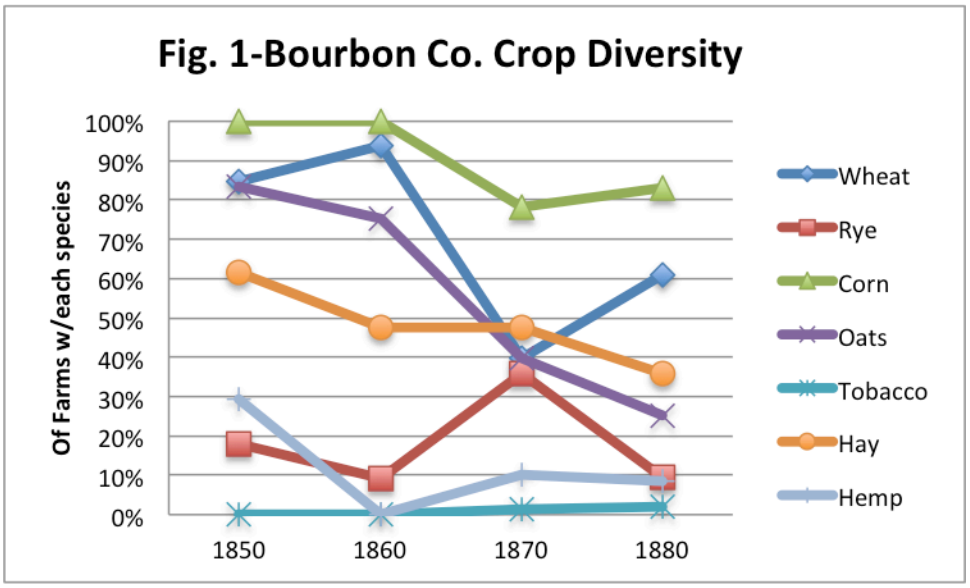
The agricultural landscape that produced these commodities constituted only a part of the larger agroecosystem that encompassed everything from the mono-crop cornfields to woodlands that long predated white settlement. Often single farms displayed a remarkable patchwork landscape, with wide-ranging levels of human influence over natural processes. On the spectrum of human control, places like the Houston or Stoner Creek were typically subject to minimal influence, though mills and fishing were important exceptions. Woodlands functioned as natural reserves for lumber, fodder, and wildlife. Hunting in local woods supplemented residents' diets and forest products were an important material support to the more domesticated spaces in the agroecosystem. The more park-like oak savanna sections often served as pasture for livestock. By making

[13] *Country Gentleman*, VIII, No. 28 (August 21, 1856), 122.
[14] U.S. Census, Agricultural Schedule 1850-1880.
[15] Edwin G. Bedford Diaries and Papers, 1812-1902. University of Kentucky Special Collections, Lexington, Kentucky. Hereafter cited as Bedford Diaries.

only periodic and selective use of these spaces, Inner Bluegrass farmers were largely happy to benefit from natural processes.

Farmers asserted more control in their fields, orchards and gardens. Mono-crop fields dominated, though multiple crops were sometimes planted together. Orchards and gardens often held tremendous diversity in a relatively small area. In these spaces farmers actively policed what species were and were not acceptable in the agroecosystem. Parasites, weeds, insects, birds, mammals, even certain categories of people could be deemed a threat and forcibly removed. Farmers' success in enforcing these distinctions, like their larger effort at earning a living and a profit from the production of the agroecosystem, was seldom complete and always dependent on intensive labor.

Crops

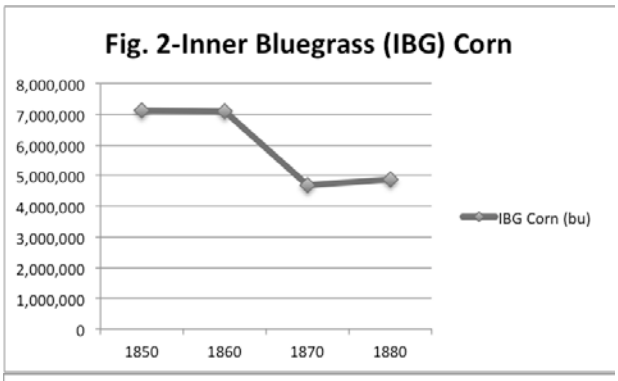


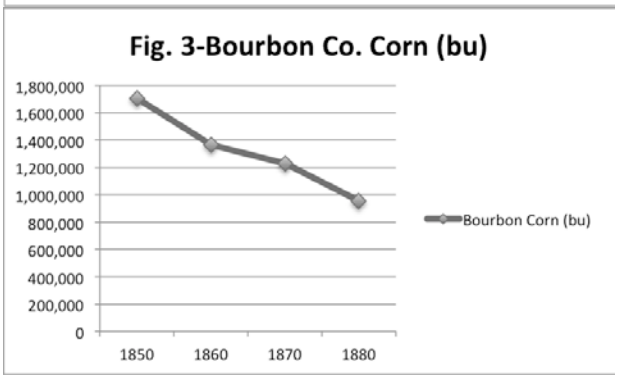
The most widely produced crop in the Inner Bluegrass in terms of both overall production and presence on farms was corn.[16] Previous studies indicated forty to fifty percent of cultivated land was planted in "Indian corn," findings which fit with Bourbon

[16] See Figure 1 "Bourbon Co. Farm Crop Diversity" and Figures 2 & 3 "IBG Corn" & "Bourbon Corn".

County during the period.[17] This versatile crop provided food for both people and livestock. The essay on "Corn Culture" included in the 1880 *Annual Report of the Bureau of Agriculture, Horticulture and Statistics* for the state noted, "nine tenths of the corn crop is sold in the various markets," but "*not in the form of corn*."[18] Instead it "finds its way to market in fatted porkers, in mules, horses, bullocks" and "millions of gallons of Bourbon whisky." For example, the seven distilleries in Bourbon County during the 1870s, including the Paris Distillery which employed thirty people and had a 15,000-gallon capacity, all transformed local corn into a portable and profitable form.[19] In addition to corn's role in the market, it also provided "bread, hominy, and grits" to the local population. The author labeled it Kentucky's "*universal crop*" and argued that more attention should be paid to selecting seed and cultivating the crop in general.[20]

[17] Clotfelter 95 & Figure 16 "1880 Crop Acreage"
[18] Kentucky Bureau of Agriculture, Horticulture and Statistics. *Third Annual Report of the Bureau of Agriculture, Horticulture and Statistics* (Frankfort, Ky: The Bureau of Agriculture, 1880), 51.
[19] H.E. Everman, *Bourbon County Since 1865*. (Richmond, Ky.: H.E. Everman, 1999), 21-22.
[20] *Third Annual Report*, 51.





Edwin Bedford likely would have drawn the essayist's ire for the relatively haphazard way he selected and readied his seed corn from the remnants of the previous year's crop, but would have earned his approval for the care he took with the crop once planted.[21] Bedford kept a close eye on his fields and often had his work force plow through the corn multiple times in a season if he found it "full of weeds."[22] In years in which his corn progressed poorly, Bedford would have fields replanted two or three times in order to maximize his yield.[23] Despite the annual production of Bedford's farm, he often acted as a buyer in local markets for corn. He purchased corn by the bushel and by the field from neighboring farmers to feed his stock.[24]

During the antebellum period and the first years after the war, corn culture on Bedford's farm was largely hands-on. His diary entries reveal days of "Eddie dropping

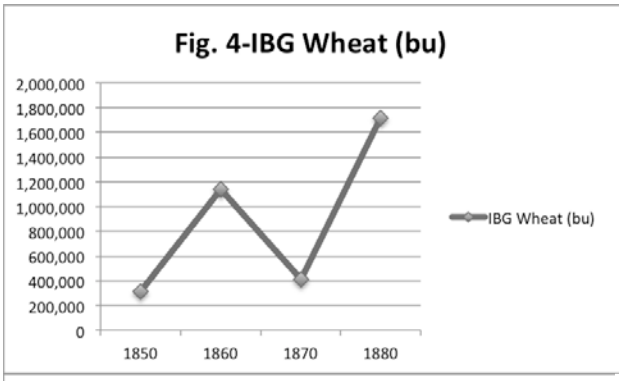
[21] Bedford Diaries May 3, 1878.
[22] Ibid, July 4, 1873.
[23] Ibid, 1877.
[24] Ibid, October 24, 1860 and May 3, 1878 for examples.

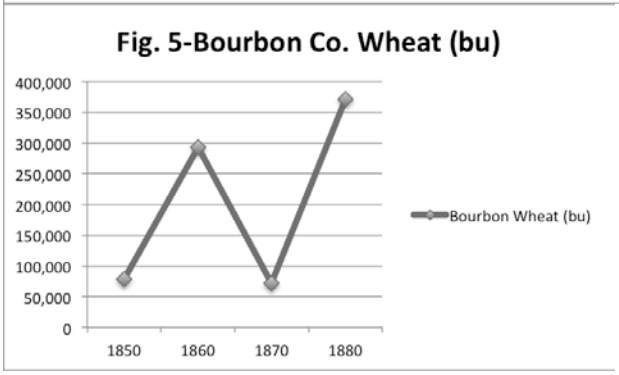
[seed], Buck Goodman covering" as his labor force planted corn each spring.[25] Harvest was no less intensive and corn cutters labored on Bedford's farm every year he kept records. During the mid-1870s however, Bedford and other Inner Bluegrass farmers transitioned to using a corn planter to sow their seed. In 1875 Bedford recorded that "Edwin and Billy set in to plant our field of corn with Mr. Ardery's corn planter."[26] This device aimed to provide greater production with less human labor, an attractive proposition to employers in the agricultural labor market following the Civil War. The technological solution achieved only partial success though and when Bedford found "the planter broke down" his laborers still had "to go at it with the plow and hoe."[27]

Wheat was another versatile crop produced by most Bourbon County farms during the antebellum period.[28] In a sampling of 1860 Census returns, 94% of farms reported cultivating wheat, but this figure fell to 40% in 1870 before rebounding to 61% in 1880.[29] Overall production for both the Inner Bluegrass and Bourbon County mirrored this decline followed by rebound pattern. Measured in bushels though, 1880's production on 61% of farms exceeded that of the pre-war period on over 90% of sampled holdings.[30] Taken together these patterns suggest wheat culture became more concentrated and intensive on a smaller number of farms. Throughout the period, wheat functioned as an important "*money* crop...raised to be *sold in bulk*, and with a view to being immediately turned into money" but could also provide food for local consumption.[31] Students of Bourbon County agriculture agreed with this assessment, arguing that while wheat was

[25] Ibid, April 30, 1868.
[26] Ibid, April 22, 1875.
[27] Ibid, May 23, 1878.
[28] See Figure 1 "Bourbon Co. Farm Crop Diversity" and Figures 4 & 5 "IBG Wheat" & "Bourbon Wheat".
[29] See Figure 1 "Bourbon Co. Farm Crop Diversity."
[30] See Figures 4 & 5 "IBG Wheat" & "Bourbon Wheat".
[31] *Third Annual Report*, 51.

not present on every farm, it was an important source of income for those farmers who chose to grow it.[32]





Bedford's experience reflected these patterns in wheat production. He raised wheat during the 1860s, but became much more engaged with the crop over the course of the 1870s.[33] Wheat culture in the Inner Bluegrass grew more technologically advanced during the period of study. Improvements to reapers and threshers, in particular, allowed for greater productive output with less labor. Bedford hired local farmers to harvest his wheat using their reapers until he purchased his own in 1877.[34] When running correctly, these mule or horse-drawn reapers sliced through the wheat rapidly enough to give Bedford's labor force plenty of work collecting and binding the cut wheat. But when the "Machine [was] constantly out of order and hands doing nothing" Bedford felt

[32] Clotfelter 97.
[33] Bedford, Diaries, February 14, 1867, March 16, 1868.
[34] Ibid, June 23, 1865, Bedford purchased a Champion Reaper on June 23, 1877.

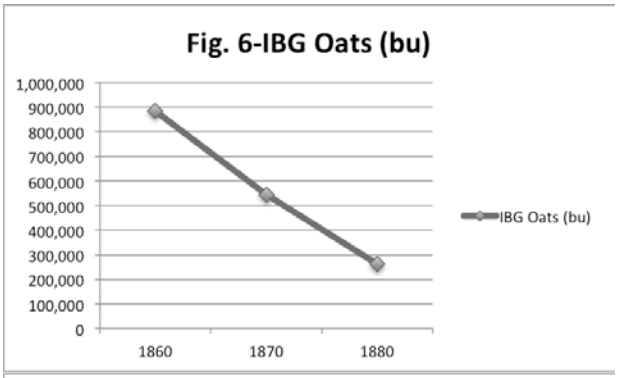
"discouraged at the slow work done."[35] Bedford enthusiastically described the first steam thresher he encountered, writing "It works finely, the power is much superior to horse power, it is regular, the man at the engine has perfect control of the machine and can stop and start it at his will instantly."[36] During the 1870s, Bedford hired threshers from local farmers but his enthusiasm for the technological fix waned when the machine had an "Engine leaking," "bands coming off frequently," or "broke 3 times," delaying his progress.[37] Despite his frequent complaints about flaws in his agricultural implements, he utilized them more and more often over time.

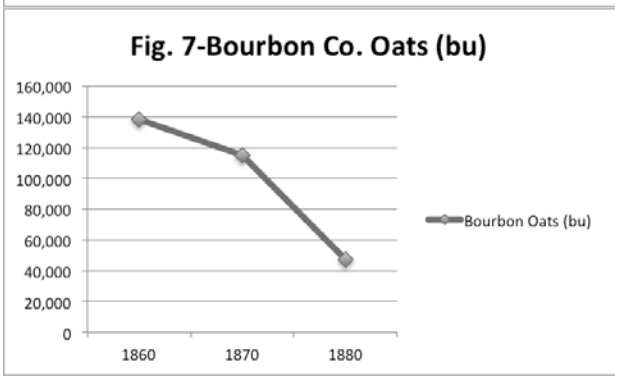
Bedford's production of wheat increased during the 1870s, mirroring that of the county and the Inner Bluegrass region generally. He also put more emphasis on "improving" his wheat harvest by using different varieties of seed, sampling breeds like "Swamp" and "2 kinds from Australia" and by experimenting with different levels ratios of seed to acreage when sowing.[38] Much of the wheat grown on Bedford's farm was sold and shipped to companies such as "Spillman & Co" of Covington via rail, but he also sold some locally.[39] The "improved" methods of wheat cultivation based on mechanized farm implements and specially selected varieties of seed led to a crop of "82,000 bushels of wheat" in 1879, which the Paris *True Kentuckian* proudly proclaimed, "the largest ever raised in Bourbon."[40]

Oats steadily declined in overall production and percentage of farms cultivating the crop in both Bourbon County and the entire Inner Bluegrass.[41] A sampling of Census

[35] Ibid, July 14, 1871.
[36] Ibid, July 21, 1863.
[37] Ibid, August 3, 1876, July 9, 1874 & August 10, 1875.
[38] Ibid, October 1, 1878 & September 27, 1875.
[39] Ibid, August 20, 1873 & October 20, 1876.
[40] Paris *True Kentuckian*, July 30, 1879.
[41] See Figure 1 "Bourbon Co. Farm Crop Diversity" and Figures 6 & 7 "IBG Oats" & "Bourbon Oats".

returns reveals that the percentage of farms raising oats fell from a high of 83% in 1850 to 25% by 1880. This decline reflected oats' smaller role in the agroecosystem and decreased diversity of domesticated species on Bourbon County farms. Edwin Bedford numbered among the 1 in 4 who continued planting oats throughout the 1870s, occasionally planting it "on wheat stubble" or "on thin timothy," but never as a primary focus.[42] Oats were typically grown to provide winter feed for horses, so many farmers transitioned to substitute crops.[43]

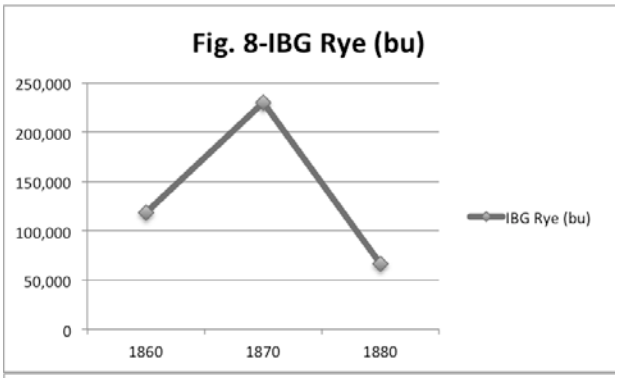


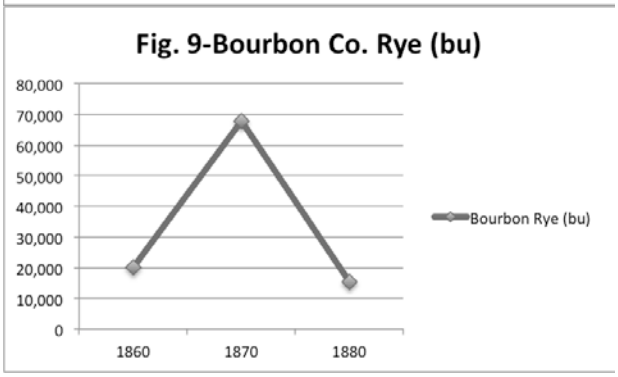


Rye culture experienced a peak in 1870 in terms of overall production and its presence on Inner Bluegrass farms, but had fallen below pre-war levels by 1880.[44] Bedford's farm produced rye consistently, though never in great quantities. Much as was the case for wheat, Bedford transitioned from "cutting rye with cradles" to using a reaper

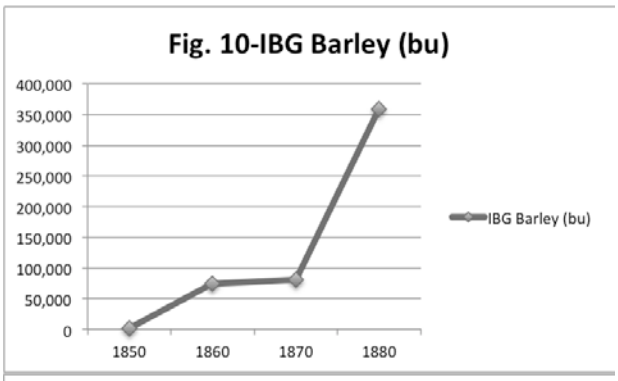
[42] Bedford, Diaries, 1875.
[43] Clotfelter, 100.
[44] See Figure 1 "Bourbon Co. Farm Crop Diversity" and Figures 8 & 9 "IBG Rye" & "Bourbon Rye".

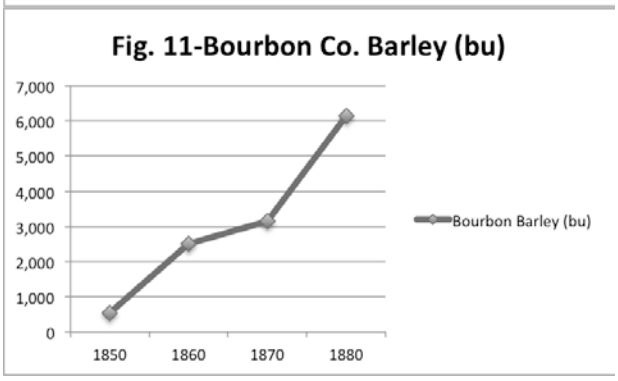
whenever possible.[45] He also had his harvest threshed by the same local farmers who threshed his wheat or if the rye was "inferior," he used it for straw.[46] Bedford made only brief mentions of barley in his decades-long diaries, noting when he had a few bags threshed along with his wheat.[47] This fits with the pattern suggested by Census data. Barley could be found on only a few farms and was largely concentrated in Woodford County, but the Inner Bluegrass produced increasing amounts of the crop over the period.[48] Rye and barley were both most often used as cover crops and to provide forage for livestock.[49]





[45] Bedford, Diaries, July 1, 1870 and June 26, 1876.
[46] Ibid, August 31, 1870 and August 21-22, 1871.
[47] Ibid, July 12, 1865.
[48] See Figures 10 & 11 "IBG Barley" & "Bourbon Barley."
[49] Clotfelter, 100.

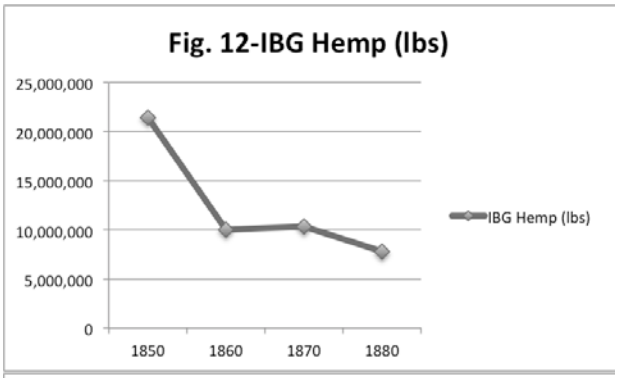


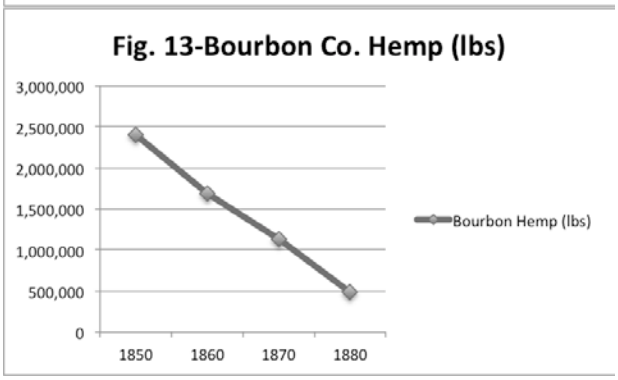


Hemp production was always limited to a few farms, typically of elite landholders who planted the crop to bring in cash income, and declined precipitously throughout the period of study.[50] In *A History of the Hemp Industry in Kentucky* (1951), which remains the definitive work on the topic, James Hopkins argued hemp was an important crop in the regional system of agriculture that was relatively successful in maintaining soil fertility over an extended period of time. Hopkins believed because "the farmer in Central Kentucky produced large numbers of livestock, learned early to plant cover crops in winter, and seeded large fields in hemp which contributed little to soil exhaustion and actually helped prevent erosion, that area retained a high degree of soil fertility long after less protected lands in other regions had become unproductive and been abandoned."[51]

[50] See Figure 1 "Bourbon Co. Farm Crop Diversity" and Figures 12 & 13 "IBG Hemp" & "Bourbon Hemp". The fact that the 1860 sample of Bourbon Co. farms does not include any hemp producers is a statistical anomaly, as the "Bourbon Hemp" figure makes clear.
[51] James F. Hopkins, *A History of the Hemp Industry in Kentucky* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1951), 5.

Scientists Wharton and Barbour expanded on the relative ecological benefits of hemp compared to other crops noting it "did not exhaust the soil as tobacco, corn, and cotton do; it covered the ground solidly, not in rows, and many successive crops could be grown without fertilization. After cutting and in preparation for breaking, it was spread for "dew rotting" on the ground that produced it; soluble minerals were thus leached back into the soil, and humus was added by the leaves."[52] While these characterizations are accurate for the role hemp played on large farms, these farms were a distinct minority and it would be easy to overstate the crop's effect on the agroecosystem as a whole.





Nevertheless, for the farmers who produced it, hemp certainly ranked near the top of their important crops and required significant investment in land and labor. A Woodford County resident described hemp as "the all-important [crop] to the farmer, since more attention is given to its culture than everything else" and termed it "the staple

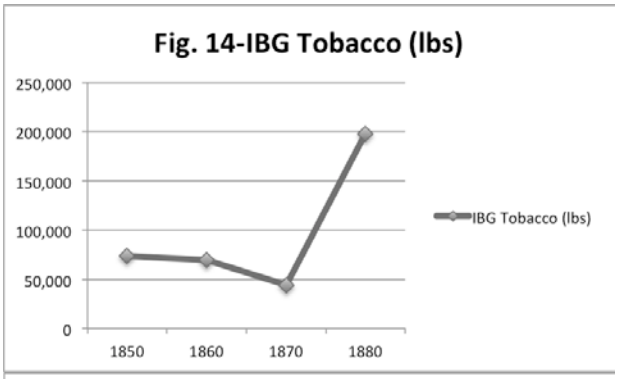
[52] Wharton & Barbour, 47.

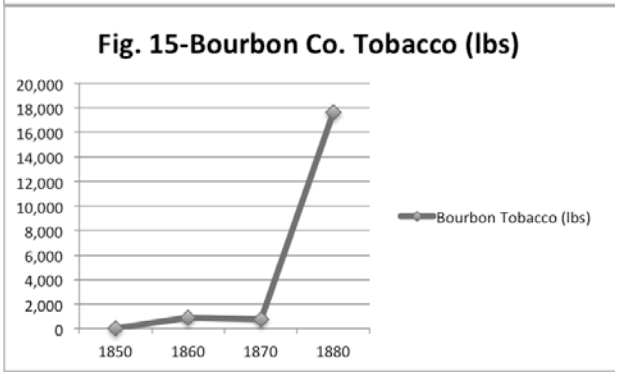
article" of the county.[53] In Bourbon County, Edwin Bedford bucked the overall trends for hemp production by beginning and expanding his cultivation of the crop during the 1870s while production declined throughout the region. Bedford only began growing hemp in 1875 after he purchased a neighbor's farm and inherited a crop in the field.[54] Once he began though, he continued throughout the 1870s into the 1880s. Hemp was a labor-intensive crop that required hard physical work at many stages of production and did not lend itself to laborsaving mechanization. Bedford sold his product, both hemp fiber and hemp seed, for cash to local dealers in Paris or Lexington for prices that could vary from 5.5 to 3.5 cents per pound depending on market conditions.[55]

Tobacco culture was virtually non-existent in the Inner Bluegrass prior to the Civil War, outside of a few pockets in Clark and Jessamine Counties. Yet by 1880 production of "the filthy weed" had made significant inroads as a cash crop. [56] The Inner Bluegrass as a whole reported a more than four-fold increase in tobacco production in 1880 compared to 1870, jumping from under 45,000 pounds to nearly 200,000 pounds. Bourbon County experienced an even more pronounced jump in production from 750 pounds to nearly 18,000 pounds. Comparing this upward trend with the precipitous decline in hemp culture has led historians like Thomas D. Clark to argue that "in the postwar years burley tobacco rapidly became the staple cash crop" supplanting hemp in that role.[57] However, a side-by-side examination of the total production of each crop reveals that even in 1880 hemp production still dramatically overshadowed that of

[53] *Western Farm Journal*, I (1856), 81.
[54] Bedford bought William Kenny's farm June 24, 1875.
[55] Bedford, Diaries, January 27, 1877 and January 21, 1879. Those prices come to $110 to $70 per ton, well below the price Hopkins labeled as profitable during the antebellum era.
[56] See Figure 1 "Bourbon Co. Farm Crop Diversity," Figures 14 & 15 "IBG Tobacco" & "Bourbon Tobacco" Quote from Bedford Diaries, June 18, 1863.
[57] Clark in the Preface to *A History of the Hemp Industry in Kentucky.* Hopkins xii.

tobacco. In the entire Inner Bluegrass nearly forty times as many pounds of hemp than tobacco were reported in the Census of 1880. Historians who found "a mild agricultural revolution as many farmers changed their acres of tall hemp stalks to fields covered with broad leaves of tobacco" in the decades immediately after the Civil War, were likely influenced by burley's twentieth century prominence more than documentary evidence.[58]





Previous historians have mischaracterized the transition between cash crops as rapid when in reality it was an uneven and halting process, yet tobacco production did increase in the decades the following the war, which established an important trend for the Inner Bluegrass agroecosystem. Contemporary observers recognized the inroads established as it became "manifest that tobacco can be made a profitable crop" and "a number of farmers…turned their attention to its cultivation," but merely noted that it "is probable a larger amount will be raised in Bourbon than at any previous season" rather

[58] Troutman, 70.

than term the trend a revolution.[59] Resistance to the crop persisted and though many did switch to tobacco, others like Bedford focused on the seemingly declining hemp industry and looked down on "the tobacco planter" who cultivated "a stand of the filthy weed, so that a being made in the shape of his Creator can fill his mouth with the disgusting slosh and squirt the disgusting filth on every gentleman's hearth or floor."[60]

Orchards were another space in which farmers sought a great deal of control over natural processes. They were often home to many different species of fruits and nuts which farmers harvested. Other crops, like corn or wheat, might also be grown in the shade of the orchard. Livestock were occasionally allowed into orchards to forage on downed fruit. Bedford's orchards were consistently home to peaches, apples, plums, and pears.[61] He raised fruit for home consumption, gave much away to friends and neighbors, and sold some surplus in local markets. Bedford also cultivated vineyards for wine. Some years his production exceeded 300 bottles and included multiple varieties of wine from different types of grapes, which suggests a sizeable harvest and a significant role for the vines in Bedford's agroecosystem.[62]

Bees also found a home in Bedford's orchards. These insects produced valuable honey and Bedford kept careful track of each time his bees swarmed and where they hived.[63] Harvesting the golden sweetener, or "robbing the bees" as Bedford often termed it, was no simple feat but it yielded a valuable product primarily for home or local consumption.[64] More important, if perhaps less obvious, was the role bees played as

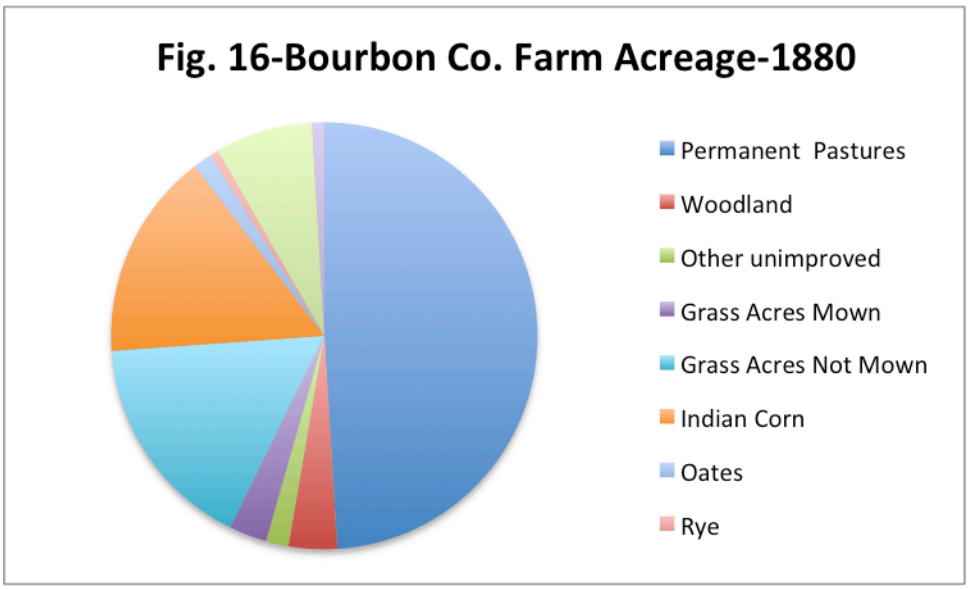
[59] Paris *True Kentuckian*, March 17, 1880.
[60] Bedford, Diaries, June 18, 1863.
[61] Ibid, see March 29, 1865, August 10, 1870 and July 6, 1871.
[62] Ibid, July 31, 1865.
[63] Ibid.
[64] Ibid, June 24, 1866.

pollinators for the agroecosystem. Keeping bees on his farm in close proximity to his flowering domesticated plant species allowed Bedford to utilize the natural behavior of the species, i.e. spreading pollen from plant to plant as they gather nectar to produce honey, to promote the production of his artificially-selected species. Honeybees, which were themselves an introduced species rather than the local bees, function as a clear example of how Inner Bluegrass farmers were able to graft natural processes onto their agricultural system for their benefit.

Gardens were sites of high concentrations of diverse domesticated species, particularly on large farms. They provided an important supplement to the diet of farmers and his or her laborers, and could provide cash in local truck markets. To give an idea of the diversity that could be found in these gardens, Edwin Bedford recorded cultivating onions, radishes, lettuce, asparagus, watermelons, cushaws, squash, cabbage, tomato, egg plant, raspberries, strawberries, beets, turnips, celery, "Mexican pepper," Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes, black-eyed peas, bunch beans and butter-beans.[65] Few Inner Bluegrass farmers invested in fertilizer and most used the manure they gathered from their livestock's stable to augment their garden's productivity.[66] The diversity of Bedford's garden was more the exception than the rule; smaller farmers raised a more limited variety for household consumption.

The overall trend for plant species diversity in the most tightly managed sections of the agroecosystem, the fields, orchards and gardens, over the time period was of decline. This was due in part to a trend toward smaller farms and a greater level of specialization on farms.

[65] Ibid. This is not an exhaustive list, rather a sampling drawing primarily from 1863, 1865 and 1870.
[66] Ibid, November 13, 1863, April 7, 1869, and March 11, 1874.



Pasture

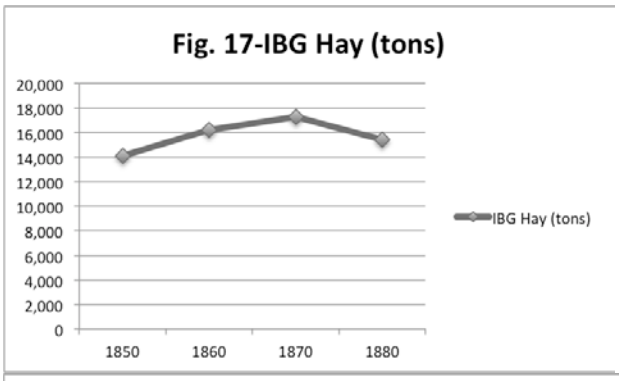
Pasture land sown in grasses like timothy and bluegrass formed a key component in the agroecosystem of the Inner Bluegrass. The 1880 Census classified almost half of Bourbon County farm acres as "Permanent Pasture."[67] Prized livestock spent the majority of its' time on these acres, grazing the photosynthetic production of what was essentially a domesticated oak savanna. This environment was "produced by a simple procedure…the underwood and useless trees are removed, and the valuable timber trees are left, standing sufficiently wide apart to admit the rays of the sun and the free circulation of air between them. The ground is then sown with grass, and extensive tracts…are thus converted into spacious lawns studded with noble trees."[68] In *Bluegrass Land and Life* (1991) Mary E. Wharton and Roger W. Barbour described the "unplowed woodland pastures with presettlement trees" that remained a prominent part of the landscape throughout the nineteenth century as "the best remnants of primeval vegetation"

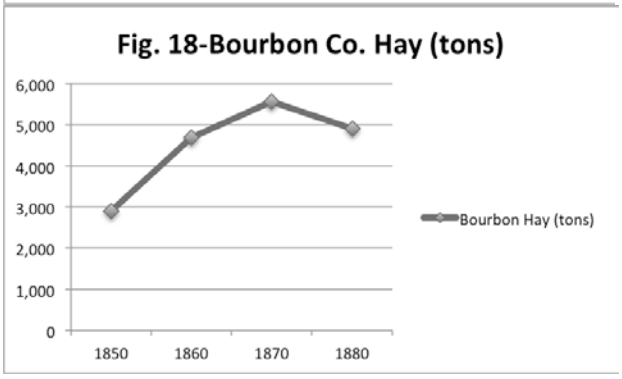
[67] See Figure 16 "1880 Crop Acreage"
[68] James Hall, "Travels in Hot Weather." *Western Monthly Magazine 2:* (1834-1835): 528-39; 3:29-38 Reprinted in Eugene L. Schwaab, *Travels in the Old South, Selected from Periodicals of the Times*. (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1973), 266-272.

in the Inner Bluegrass.[69] The adoption of the grazing system, which retained many features of the presettlement ecosystem, for such a large portion of the landscape provided a buffer of relative ecological stability within the agroecosystem Inner Bluegrass farmers created.

Livestock were kept off some pastures during the growing season so that the grass could be mowed, harvested and fed to the animals during the winter as hay. Total hay production remained relatively constant for the Inner Bluegrass over the period, but by the postbellum period this production was increasingly concentrated on fewer and larger farms.[70] Bedford maintained much of his land in pasture and harvested hay each year for winter feeding. He often sowed old wheat or cornfields in grass as part of a crop rotation.[71] Outside of nutrition for livestock, grass could also be profitable for Inner Bluegrass farmers who harvested grass seed using "strippers."[72] Bedford sold bluegrass and timothy seed to dealers in Paris and Lexington and to individuals from as far away as West Virginia.[73] As contemporary observers recognized and later historians have argued, in large measure the agricultural wealth of the Inner Bluegrass depended on these grasses and their ability to support top-quality livestock.

[69] Wharton and Barbour, 48.
[70] See Figure 1 "Bourbon Co. Farm Crop Diversity" and Figures 17 & 18 "IBG Hay" & "Bourbon Hay".
[71] Bedford, Diaries, October 9, 1877.
[72] Ibid, June 13, 1876
[73] Ibid, March 12, 1875, August 1, 1876, March 7, 1878.





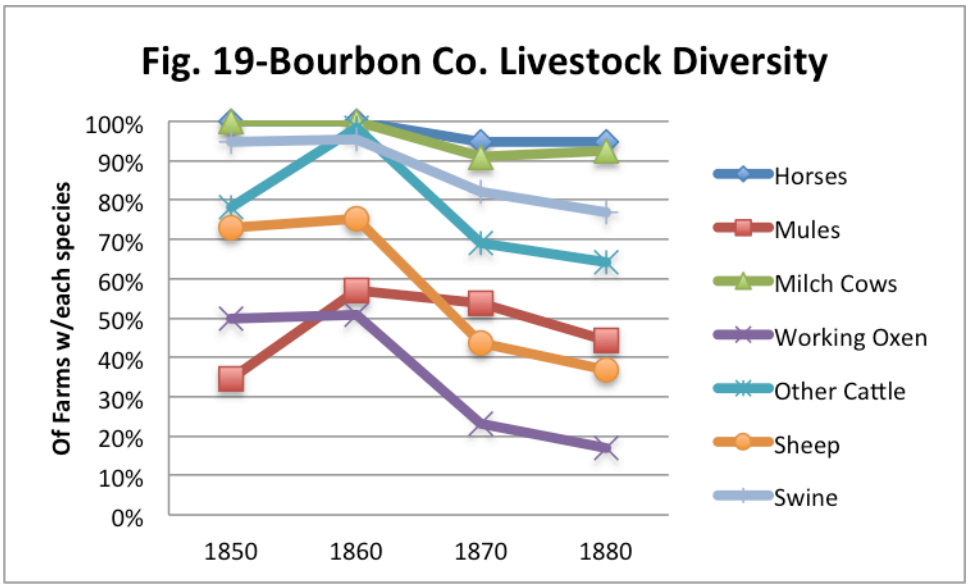
As "valuable timber trees" remained standing in many "Permanent Pastures" and grass was sown and livestock grazed in much of the "Woodland," distinctions between the two types of land use were often vague and left to the interpretation of individual Census enumerators.[74] Sections of remaining woodland escaped farmers' efforts at intensive management the majority of the time. The exceptions to usual low utilization rates, when the land was being cleared to put in crops or lumber or other forest products were harvested, could transform the woodlands irrevocably into a different type of environment. Their continued existence depended on the profitability of the agricultural system of which they formed a key component. These patches in the landscape functioned as reserves of relatively high levels of wild species diversity.

[74] Quote from James Hall, "Travels in Hot Weather." *Western Monthly Magazine 2:* (1834-1835) 528-39; 3:29-38. Reprinted in Schwaab, *Travels in the Old South*, 266-72. Census designations from 1880 Census, see unpublished individual agricultural returns.

Lumber served an important function in the maintenance of the agroecosystem created by Bluegrass farmers. The wood harvested from local lots was the key component of the fences designed to maintain and delineate borders between different sections of the system. Barriers were essential to keep any semblance of control over the production of the domesticated landscape. Building, checking and repairing fencing was a never-ending struggle for farmers as Bedford's diaries amply demonstrate. He had work done to repair fences that were burned by sparks from railroad cars, destroyed by spring storms, washed away by fall floods, and knocked down by livestock, in addition to erecting new fences when he cleared new fields.[75] Most of the wood for this fencing was harvested on Bedford's farm and he sold other wood to local farmers and merchants. He practiced a selective harvesting method and always "marked the trees to be left standing" before having his labor force begin cutting.[76] Nevertheless, the continuing pressures on local wood resources meant a shrinking portion of the Inner Bluegrass agroecosystem remained in woodlands that most closely mirrored the presettlement ecosystem.

Livestock

[75] Bedford, Diaries, October 4, 1872, May 1, 1876, November 15, 1877.
[76] Ibid, January 7, 1880.



The livestock of the Inner Bluegrass acted as the most mobile component in the shifting patchwork of the agroecosystem. They moved from pasture to woodlands to stables with a troughs filled with the products of local mono-crop fields. They provided an effective vehicle for transforming products of the soil into valuable and mobile property. Livestock converted feed into living supplies of meat and energy. Their labor pulling plows, reapers, wagons and carts literally transformed the landscape they inhabited.

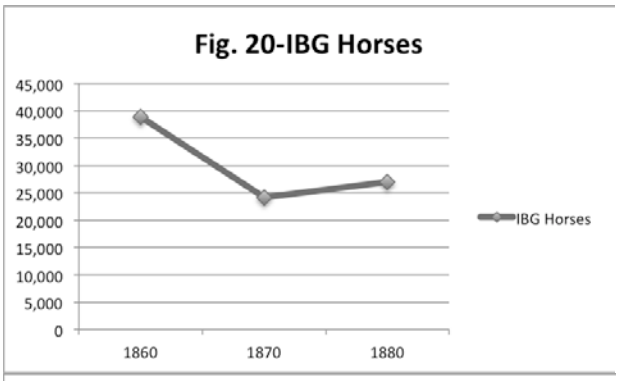
Soon after American settlement the Inner Bluegrass developed a reputation for producing high quality livestock. As early as 1836 locals "venture[d] to assert that if there is now (which is questionable) a state in the union, which can boast of more stock, of finer form, etc. than Kentucky, it will not be the case in a year or two. The improvement has been rapid, and is still progressing."[77] Visitors, like Fred E. Becton of Tennessee, tended to agree with the local opinion as his report in *The Cultivator* demonstrated: "the form, the perfect symmetry, the splendid, brilliant colors, the size, the

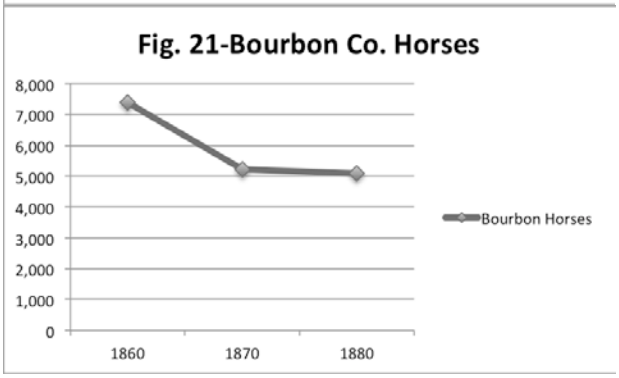
[77] *The Farmer & Gardner, and Live-Stock Breeder and Manager*. Sep 20, 1836. Reported from the *Lexington (Ky.) Observer and Reporter*.

milking qualities of some, and the fattening qualities of other" cattle on display left him "completely enraptured." Becton regretted that such a display was not possible in Nashville but doubted anything to match it existed in America or even Europe.[78] Twentieth-century scientists Wharton and Barbour argued that it was no coincidence that "the rich land that had produced phenomenal populations of large indigenous animals soon gained renown for domestic livestock." They believed the unique advantages of the Bluegrass environment and the agricultural system farmers developed to harness them explained the industry's success.[79]

Horses were nearly ubiquitous on Inner Bluegrass farms, though their overall numbers suffered a drop following the Civil War.[80] On most farms horses were primarily sources of labor and transportation. They assisted with any number of jobs from plowing fields and hauling crops to hunting trips and family excursions to the county seat or Lexington. Based on the higher percentage of farms that reported owning them than either mules or working oxen, horses can safely be called the primary labor animals responsible for shaping the agroecosystem.[81]

[78] Fred E. Becton, *The Cultivator*. November 1837, "Kentucky Farming."
[79] Wharton & Barbour, 50.
[80] See Figure 19 "Bourbon Co. Farm Livestock Diversity" and Figures 20 & 21 "IBG Horses" and "Bourbon Horses."
[81] See Figure 19 "Bourbon Co. Livestock Diversity."





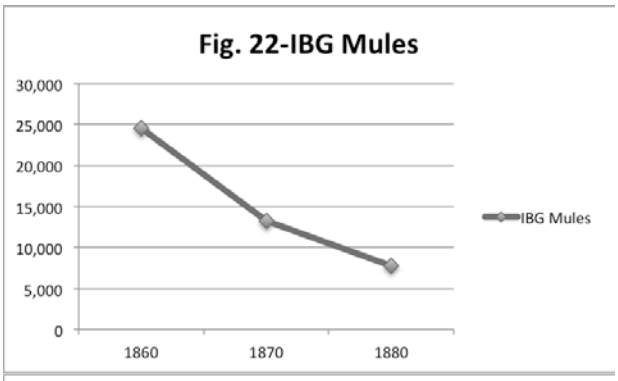
In *Agrarian Kentucky* (1977) Thomas D. Clark argued the distinction between horses as beasts of burden and objects of sport developed during Kentucky's frontier period. Horseracing became a "highly specialized para-agricultral" venture that barely touched the lives of most Kentuckians.[82] This is a valid observation about the scope of impacts from the thoroughbred industry, but for those Inner Bluegrass farmers engaged in this highly specialized trade it could be a source of tremendous profits. Bedford was a bit-player in Inner Bluegrass horse breeding, but did maintain a workout track on his property and trained any horses he thought displayed promise. His diaries do not record any particular racing successes and selling horses was not a major source of income. For prominent Inner Bluegrass breeders like Robert A. Alexander of Woodburn Farm in

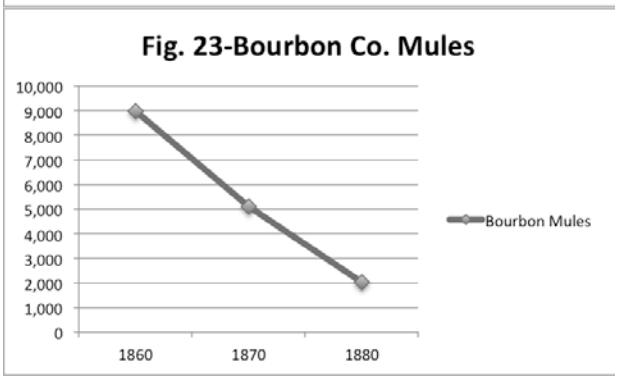
[82] Thomas D. Clark, *Agrarian Kentucky* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1977), 32. Horseracing and its' impact on the agroecosystem is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3 of this study.

Woodford County however, individual horses could bring thousands or tens of thousands of dollars.[83]

Mule breeding and its impact on the agroecosystem declined precipitously following the Civil War.[84] That the slope of the decline of mules' overall numbers is much steeper than the decline in the percentage of Bourbon County farms that used mules suggests they were bred less for export, as was the case during the antebellum era, than for laboring on local farms.[85] In 1850 and 1860 men like Thomas Hutchinson and E. Marston owned hundreds of mules, which they bred primarily for markets in the cotton-producing South and the Paris *Western Citizen* declared the "feeding of mules…a principal branch of our agricultural industry," yet by 1890 fewer than 300 mules lived in Bourbon County.[86] This decline was mirrored throughout the region and reflected a shift toward Missouri breeders supplying southern markets.[87]

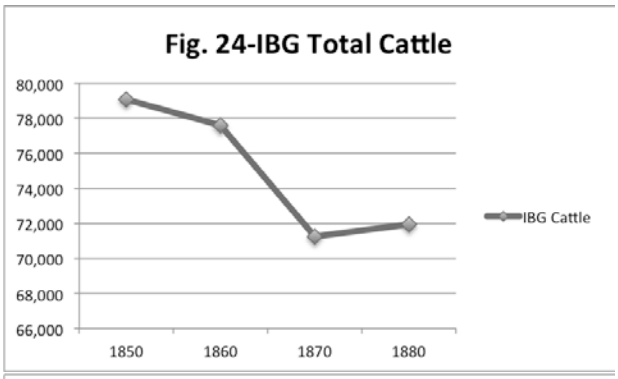
[83] *Prairie Farmer* July, 17, 1875. "Lexington." Reprinted from the *Frankfort Yeoman*. A more detailed discussion of the highly specialized agricultural pursuit of breeding and trading racehorses, and the organizational structure that supported its growth, follows in Chapter 3.
[84] See Figures 22 & 23 "IBG Mules" and "Bourbon Mules."
[85] See Figure 19 "Bourbon Co. Farm Livestock Diversity."
[86] Individuals are from my sampling of Bourbon County individual returns. Paris *Western Citizen*, July 14, 1854. 1890 statistic from Clotfelter 55.
[87] Jack Temple Kirby, *Rural Worlds Lost: The American South, 1920-1960* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1987), 198.

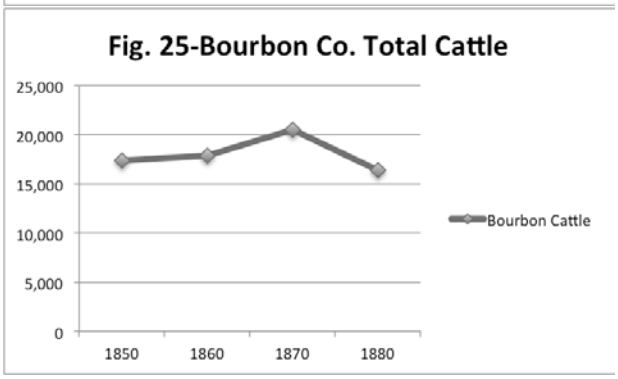




Cattle were found on most every Bourbon County farm. Over 90% of sampled farms had one or more "milch" cow that produced dairy products for the household throughout the study period. The percentage that had "working oxen" or "other cattle," however fell significantly from their 1860 highs. Oxen numbers declined until they were only found on 17% of the sampled farms by 1880, which indicates they played a shrinking role in creating and cultivating the agroecosystem over the period. Considering the relatively consistent number of total cattle in the region and the county, the sampling suggests cattle numbers became more concentrated on a smaller number of farms during the period.[88] Bedford's experience as a large landowner and cattle breeder fit this general pattern.

[88] See Figure 19 "Bourbon Co. Farm Livestock Diversity" and Figures 24 & 25 "IBG Cattle" and "Bourbon Cattle."





Breeding and trading shorthorn cattle was Bedford's primary agricultural endeavor. He invested thousands of dollars to import the highest quality breeding animals and purchased hundreds of feeding cattle a year locally to graze his pasture and sell in markets both near and distant. When he acquired celebrated new stock like the 2nd Duke of Geneva, which he had imported from New York, farmers from all over the Bluegrass came to judge it for themselves.[89] Those who left impressed often sent heifers back to be bred to bulls like the 2nd Duke in an effort to improve the quality of their own stock.[90] These arrangements created thousands of dollars of income for Bedford's farm. He spent large sums on heifers to improve his own stock, such as when he sent "$10,000 to [John] Thornton of London, England to buy Shorthorns" "6 fine heifers."[91] He profited from selling outstanding animals themselves as when he sold a heifer, her calf and a bull for

[89] Bedford, Diaries, June & July 1867.
[90] Ibid, January 22, 1869 for example.
[91] Ibid, March 6, 1871 and April 12, 1871.

$13,000.[92] Outside of these exceptionally valuable breeding cattle, Bedford also traded in feed cattle. He, or an agent, often travelled widely across the countryside and examined hundreds or thousands of cows when buying to build up his herds.[93] After grazing them for a year or two depending on their age, Bedford sold them in markets as close as Paris and as far away as Buffalo, New York.[94] Bedford's expanding cattle holdings, and the emphasis placed on improving his breeds, reflects the concentration of fewer, more valuable cattle on the large farms of elite landowners over the period of study.

Swine declined in both overall numbers and relative incidence on Bourbon County farms though they remained an important product.[95] During the antebellum period 95% of sampled farms raised pigs and while this figure decline to 77% by 1880, they remained the third most commonly raised species of livestock behind only horses and milch cows.[96] The total number of pigs in the region and the county fell by almost half by 1870 from their high in 1850, a trend that predated the Civil War.[97] This reflected a declining emphasis on swine as an export product rather than a decline in their local consumption. Hogs were also connected to the distilling industry the region was known for, since they "could be fattened so easily from the corn mash which otherwise would be wasted that each distillery found it profitable to fatten them."[98]

[92] Ibid, February 23, 1876.
[93] Ibid, March 1868
[94] Ibid, September 1868.
[95] See Figure 19 "Bourbon Co. Farm Livestock Diversity" and Figures 26 & 27 "IBG Swine" and "Bourbon Swine."
[96] See Figure 19 "Bourbon Co. Farm Livestock Diversity."
[97] See Figures 26 & 27 "IBG Swine" and "Bourbon Swine."
[98] Clotfelter, 57.

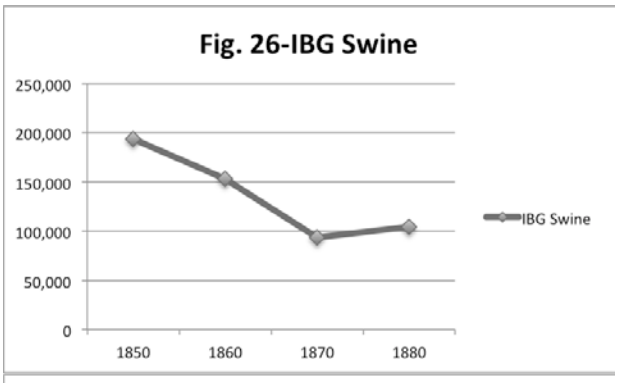


Fig. 26-IBG Swine

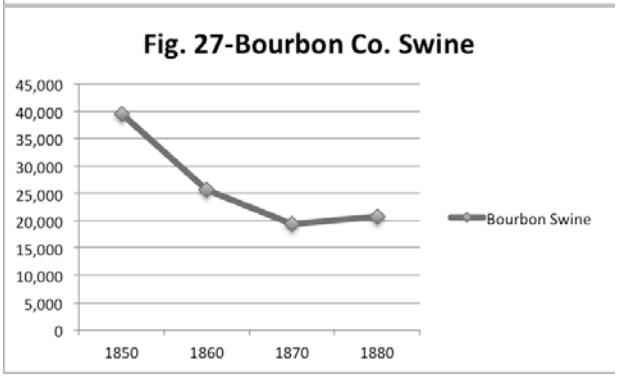


Fig. 27-Bourbon Co. Swine

Farmers like Bedford raised hogs for both home consumption and sale throughout the period. While never his main pursuit, Bedford invested considerable resources and effort to improve the quality of his pigs by importing breeding specimens from as far away as Canada.[99] He also acted as a seller in both national and local markets.[100] Bedford's celebrated Berkshire hogs brought additional income as he charged other farmers to breed their stock to them.[101]

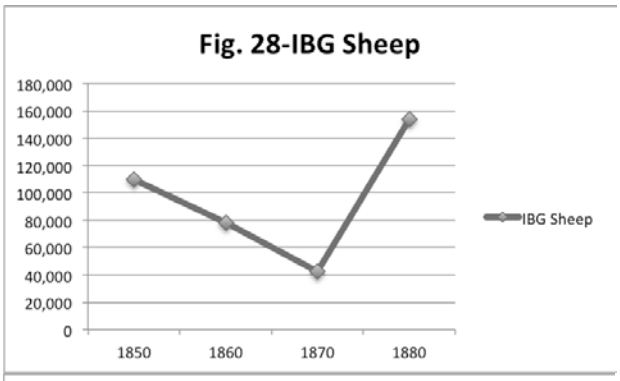
Pigs are extremely versatile creatures that were quite efficient at converting the photosynthetic production of the agroecosystem into meat on the hoof. They grazed pastures, ate mast in remnant woodlands, fed on corn produced in mono-cultures, cleaned up fields after harvest, consumed fallen fruit in the orchards and Bedford even had them

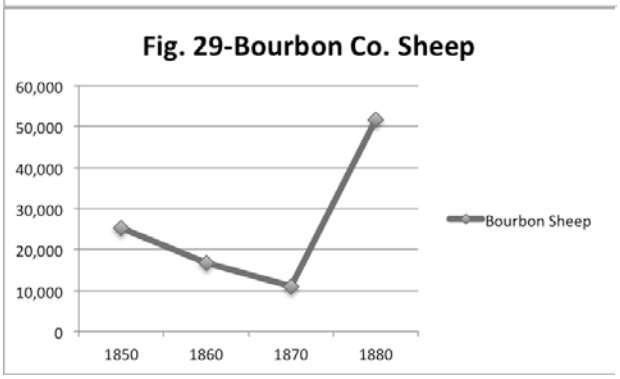
[99] Bedford, Diaries, December 31, 1868.
[100] Ibid, June 27, 1870.
[101] Ibid, 1870.

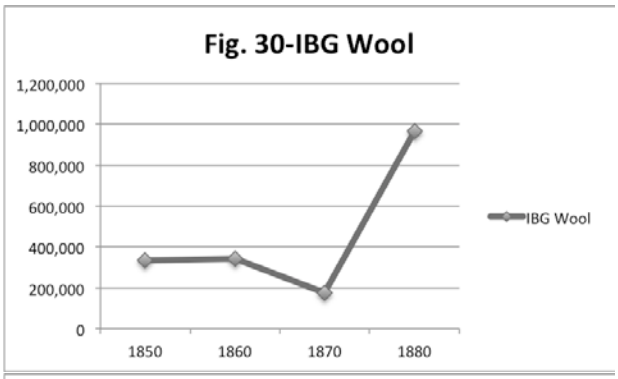
eat fish that were "dying in the pond" else "the water [would] smell bad."[102] The omnivore's versatility made it a reliable source of meat and it formed a key component of the Inner Bluegrass' diet. Killing, butchering, and processing hogs occurred yearly when the weather turned cool enough to prevent spoilage.[103]

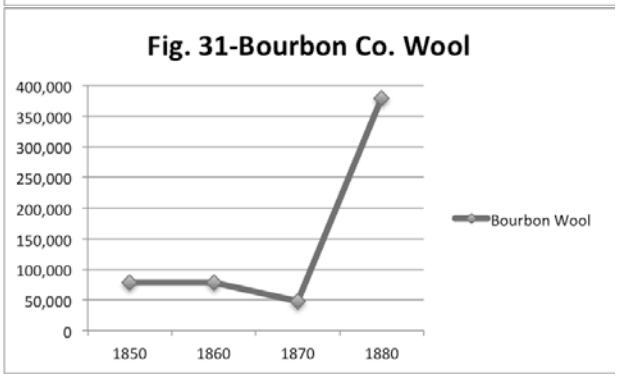
Sheep and wool culture could be found on fewer and fewer farms as time passed after the Civil War, yet this did not prevent a boom in the total number of sheep and harvest of wool by 1880.[104] More than three times as many sheep lived in the Inner Bluegrass in 1880 than 1870 and wool production expanded from less than 200,000 to almost 1,000,000 pounds.[105] Over the same period, the percentage of farms reporting sheep fell to 37% in a Bourbon County sample.[106] Taken together, these trends indicated larger herds on a smaller number of farms and subsequently concentrated impacts on the agroecosystem. Bedford's experience fits the general pattern. He raised sheep and sold wool throughout the period but in increasing numbers over time. In 1868 he sheared 205 pounds of wool from his Southdown and Cotswold sheep; by 1879 his farm's production increased to 878.5 pounds.[107] Farmers who expanded their sheep holdings during this period sought cash income from the sale of wool to merchants or processors in places like Paris, Lexington, or Georgetown.[108] However, the majority of farms no longer raised sheep in the decades after the Civil War and concentrated on other livestock or crops.

[102] Ibid, June 30, 1874 and August 29, 1876 for examples.
[103] Ibid, his farm typically killed hogs in mid to late November.
[104] See Figure 19 "Bourbon Co. Farm Livestock Diversity" and Figures 28, 29, 30 & 31 "IBG Sheep," "Bourbon Sheep," "IBG Wool," and "Bourbon Wool."
[105] See Figures 28 & 30 "IBG Sheep" and "IBG Wool"
[106] See Figure 19 "Bourbon Co. Farm Livestock Diversity."
[107] Bedford, Diaries, May 7, 1868 and May 23, 1879.
[108] Ibid, July 19, 1864, May 10, 1876, May 10, 1879.









Virtually every farm was also home to poultry. Census enumerators did not record the number of domestic fowl on farms until 1880, but in that year it was a very rare farm

that did not have chickens laying eggs for home consumption.[109] A dozen or so laying hens seem to have been common even on small Bourbon County farms. Larger farmers like Bedford often owned a greater diversity including turkeys and wild geese.[110] The chicken, however, was the most important species of poultry as its cheap price and relatively low labor demands made it a key component of farms both small and large.

The Civil War had a retarding affect on livestock numbers and production. Comparing livestock numbers for the Inner Bluegrass from 1860 and 1870 reveals a uniform drop, caused in part by the competing armies that swept through the region. Both sides requisitioned supplies from local farmers at different times and Bedford complained of horses, turkeys, corn and hay taken from his farm.[111] He took special offence when soldiers "rode over the garden, orchards and fields" on their way to demand supplies.[112] Bedford acknowledged that in some instances the war created opportunities for the farmers as when "the buyers for the Government" raised prices in the Lexington beef market, but overall the conflict served to decrease the number and quality of stock in the region.[113]

Much as was the case with plant diversity, the general trend was toward declining livestock diversity and increased levels of specialization on Inner Bluegrass farms.[114]

Policing the Agroecosystem

Harvesting the diverse products of the agroecosystem they created was no simple pastoral idyll. Natural forces continually conspired against Bluegrass farmers. They, and

[109] United States Census Agricultural Returns 1880. University of Kentucky Special Collections library.
[110] Bedford, Diaries, December 13, 1876 and November 5, 1878.
[111] Ibid, July 18, 1862, February 27, 1863, April 23, 1863, November 20, 1864.
[112] Ibid, July 24, 1862.
[113] Ibid, June 8, 1863.
[114] See Figure 19 "Bourbon Co. Farm Livestock Diversity."

their labor force, confronted variable weather, weeds, insects, disease, and wild animals, all of which acted as obstacles to the smoothly running system farmers envisioned. The elements posed seasonal challenges from flood to drought and from winter storm to summer heat wave. Heavy rains washed away fencing and could kill a crop in the field if they occurred at the wrong time.[115] Drought caused plants to wither and made watering livestock a struggle. Bedford addressed the last problem by digging cisterns and creating and maintaining artificial ponds. These provided a relatively reliable source of water and protected Bedford's livestock against dehydration. Winter storms could kill stock and farmers constructed stables to protect animals from the elements. They were often built using local lumber and so acted as an additional stress on lumber supplies.[116] Managing the agroecosystem through these variable climatic conditions was a constant effort for Inner Bluegrass farmers.

The battle against weeds that relentlessly encroached on mono-crop fields and multi-crop gardens was waged through hands-on labor, often supplemented by animal power as plows made trips through fields. Farmers sometimes lost these battles as when Bedford "walked up to see the corn and found the ground green with weeds" and conceded defeat for that round and set about clearing the ground and "re-planting corn."[117] Weeding represented an ongoing struggle to enforce a distinction between desirable and undesirable plant species and thereby bend the agroecosystem to the landowner's productive ends.

Insects were another foe of the agriculturalist. Unsanctioned bugs could undo the benefits of the primary production farmers had carefully cultivated. Susceptibility to pests

[115] Bedford, Diaries, January 17, 1870.
[116] Ibid, January 2, 1872.
[117] Ibid, May 23 & 26, 1873.

is characteristic of radically simplified ecological systems like those created in mono-crop fields and patches, and the Inner Bluegrass of the mid-nineteenth century was no exception. The arrival of "the first Colorado potato bug" provides an example.[118] The beetle, known to entomologists as *Leptinotarsa decemlineata*, was an introduced species originally from Mexico that evolved to feed on potato leaves and swarmed over crops across the nation. The late nineteenth century was "a time of insect plagues" because species evolved to exploit the growing concentrations of single crops, causing explosions in pest populations.[119] Farmers fought a defensive effort to prevent as much damage as they could and experimented with tactics like "brushing the potato bugs off in the rows and trying to cover them with the plow," but were largely ineffective.[120]

Crop and livestock diseases also posed periodic threats to the order Bluegrass farmers attempted to impose on their agricultural environment. In the winter of 1877 Bedford's hogs were struck with what he termed "Cholera" which killed "one or two a day" leaving a third of his herd "dead and sick."[121] He tried a variety of remedies including "coal oil and carbolic acid," "sulpher [sic]" and "soap, copperas, salt and ashes" which speak to the growing trend toward external and artificial inputs in agricultural, but were not effective overall.[122] At different times parasites threatened different types of Inner Bluegrass livestock. Examples include the 1869 outbreak of a "terrible disease" carried by "Texas Ticks" among the region's cattle and the "horse disease" or "distemper" that afflicted its equine population in 1872.[123] The parasites that caused these diseases

[118] Ibid, May 17, 1874.
[119] Charles C. Mann, *1493: Uncovering the New World Columbus Created* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2011), 231-237.
[120] Bedford, Diaries, June 8, 1874.
[121] Ibid, February 18, 1877, February 22, 1877 and March 2, 1877.
[122] Ibid, February 1, 1877, February 9, 1877, February 22, March 2, 1877.
[123] Ibid, July 23, 1869, November 23, 1872 and December 7, 1872

thrived in concentrated populations of domestic livestock and overwhelmed farmers' best efforts in many instances.

Farmers enjoyed more tangible successes against larger, more tangible foes like the wild animals that encroached on the domesticated species and spaces in the agroecosystem, but no matter the body count, Bluegrass farmers never gained a decisive victory. Hunting served as an important mechanism for regulating the system; unwelcome species could expect summary execution. Farmers often carried their firearms and took any opportunity to eliminate predators such as hawks, owls or eagles that might pose a threat to their livestock.[124] Bedford even hunted individual birds that preyed on his stock, tracking them to their nests and lying in wait.[125] Animals like moles, squirrels, deer and crows that could disturb or consume primary production also came under periodic attack.[126] Farmers even hunted dogs when they proved a threat to their sheep.[127] Landowners went further than making distinctions between species when they made decisions about what individuals could legitimately use their portion of the agroecosystem. Bedford's friends and neighbors were frequent visitors hunting in his woodlands and he often hunted on their property. Such communal use of the landscape did not apply to the laboring class, as evidenced by an episode when Bedford "found a gang of negroes hunting rabbits" with "a lot of dogs" and chased them "up to M.A. Kenny's yard and drove them away" and "met them and gave them order not to come" onto his property.[128] Inner Bluegrass landowners had very definite ideas about who and

[124] Ibid, October 16, 1871, November 10, 1870, March 22, 1868.
[125] Ibid, May 7, 1875.
[126] Ibid, May 6, 1876, June 1864, May 11, 1875, December 9, 1875.
[127] Ibid, February 2, 1871.
[128] Ibid, November 8, 1878.

what did and did not belong in their agroecosystem and often enforced these distinctions with the barrel of a gun.

Hunting also served as a recreational activity and dietary supplement to Central Kentucky farmers and laborers. Bedford hunted for sport and table throughout the year; his family often ate what he killed. Opossums, raccoons, rabbits, and deer were common targets. He also enjoyed hunting birds like doves and the now-extinct Passenger Pigeons that arrived "by the thousands" much to the delight of Bourbon County sportsmen who had "a fine time with their guns" as the birds fed on the products of the agroecosystem during their migrations.[129] Species like muskrats, minks, ducks and snipe could be found near the creeks and ponds that dotted the landscape. Love for hunting was passed from generation to generation in the Inner Bluegrass; Bedford often hunted with his young nephew and encouraged him to trap mink in the Houston creek. He also cultivated a fascination with guns and hunting in his infant son.[130]

Fishing was another activity through which Inner Bluegrass residents harvested the production of the more natural sections of the agroecosystem. Bedford and his family spent a considerable amount of time fishing in local creeks and ponds, catching catfish, perch and sunfish among others. He also took semi-annual excursions to places like the Cumberland River to fish other waters.[131] Fish could provide a welcome supplement to people's diets, and was often of particular importance to the laboring class as slaveowners, and later employers, were more likely to allow their workforce to fish than hunt.[132] Even in the underwater portions of the landscape, Bluegrass farmers were not

[129] Ibid, March 19, 1870.
[130] Ibid, November 21, 1866 and November 27, 1874.
[131] Ibid, see November 1867 and April 1868 for examples.
[132] Ibid, April 26, 1862 and October 21, 1878, "Lum" was a laborer on Bedford's farm.

content to leave natural processes alone as mills caused significant changes to waterways and ponds were stocked with fish, often of imported varieties like "salmon trout."[133]

Despite a fairly convincing illusion of control over the agroecosystem they had created, what contemporaries characterized as "American agriculture in one of its most refined and successful phases," landowning Inner Bluegrass farmers were only able to create, sustain and profit from the system with the often-begrudging help of the laboring class. [134] The dramatic transformation of labor relations that occurred as a result of the Civil War was a root cause of many changes to the agroecosystem in the decades that followed but did little to alter labor's formative role.

[133] Ibid, May 11, 1878.
[134] *Country Gentleman*, VIII, No. 28 (August 21, 1856), 122.

Chapter Three: African American Labor in the Inner Bluegrass

Antebellum visitors to the Inner Bluegrass were struck by the many large and beautiful farms dotting the landscape and commented favorably on their diversified agricultural production. The enslaved African Americans who performed the majority of the labor to create these showpieces of antebellum agriculture were less commonly emphasized. When slaves did receive mention it was often to note the apparent mildness of the institution in Kentucky in comparison with states in the Deep South, an impression that continued into twentieth century historical literature.[135] However, as developments of the post-war period demonstrate, Bluegrass slaves were not content with their lives on these estates and many utilized their newly won freedom to move from the countryside into more urban centers in search of greater opportunity for themselves and their families.

This study supports and builds on historical literature on antebellum agriculture in the Inner Bluegrass by providing a greater emphasis on the central role played by black slaves. It goes further to examine the transition from a slave to a free society and the choices made by emancipated African Americans in the early years of this transition. The effects of these choices were multiple. Evidence suggests blacks that moved to local urban centers, in largely rural areas, enjoyed greater levels of economic, educational, and social opportunity than those who stayed in the countryside. That many chose to move, and others exerted their independence to control their labor, factored into agricultural change in the region such as the transition from hemp to tobacco as a leading cash crop. The overall conclusion, that African Americans were central to the creation and evolution

[135] J. Winston Coleman, *Slavery Times in Kentucky*, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1940), 54, 15. Thomas D. Clark, *A History of Kentucky* (Ashland, KY: The Jesse Stuart Foundation, 1988, first published 1937) also falls into this general characterization of slavery in Kentucky.

of the Inner Bluegrass agroecosystem, through their labor and their choices, applies equally to the antebellum and postbellum eras.

To revisit Eugene P. Odum's definition of "agroecosystems," one of the characteristics that distinguishes them from natural systems is a reliance on "auxiliary energy sources," which meant "animal and human labor" during the nineteenth century.[136] The livestock that played such a transformative role in the landscape lived within a framework created and maintained by human labor. Inner Bluegrass blacks provided much of this labor in the mid to late nineteenth century, whether as slaves, day laborers or tenant farmers. Changes in labor relations necessarily caused ripples to spread through the agroecosystem. Further, white landholders acted as guardians of the system and access to its production and benefits functioned as the stakes in many negotiations between African Americans' and their owners, employers, or landlords.

Antebellum System

It might seem that a farm as busy as Bedford's would have required constant attention from the proprietor, yet his diaries indicate he had an ample supply of leisure time. He often spent days hunting, fishing and visiting friends and family on surrounding farms or in Paris or Lexington. Evidence reveals Bedford was a welcoming and gracious host, as it was a rare week when he did not have several groups of visitors, many of whom stayed overnight or for days at a time. As Richard Troutman's study of antebellum Bluegrass agriculture suggested, this was possible because a "guest was never a burden in the home where all the extra work was absorbed automatically by the slaves."[137] Similarly, the fact that the farm's black residents performed the majority of the

[136] Odum, 5.
[137] Troutman, Richard Laverne. "Plantation Life in the Ante-Bellum Bluegrass Region of Kentucky." (Master's thesis, University of Kentucky, 1955), 24.

agricultural labor freed Bedford to pursue more "gentlemanly" activities. In 1850, six enslaved African Americans lived and worked on Bedford's farm and by 1860 this number expanded to eight.[138] In her discussion of slave labor a student of Bourbon County agriculture noted that while whites were often unwilling to work alongside another man's slaves for wages, many slave owners had no problem joining their bondsmen and women in the field. Thus, when Bedford commented that he spent the afternoon "At work in the grapes" it might have actually meant he worked on the vines along with his slaves.[139] That they sometimes worked side-by-side, however, should not obscure the fact that they were not really working *together*, in the sense of mutual effort toward a shared goal, rather the institution of slavery made it quite apparent that African Americans worked *for* their masters.

The slaves living on Bedford's farm performed a wide range of tasks that facilitated the Inner Bluegrass' diversified agricultural system. Each crop discussed in chapter one above had different labor requirements and life on the farm moved according to seasonal rhythms: preparing fields, planting, tending growing crops, harvesting, and processing. The stock also needed regular care and attention, particularly Bedford's expensive pureblooded cattle. Working in such close proximity to the different agricultural species engendered detailed, practical environmental knowledge of the local cultivated landscape.[140] Slaves also handled domestic tasks around the farmhouse, such as cooking and cleaning. African Americans on Bedford's property lived in two slave

[138] United States Census (Slave Schedules), 1850 & 1860, digital images accessed February 20, 2011 via ancestry.com for Bourbon County, Kentucky, District 1. Records for Green Bedford and Edwin G. Bedford, respectively.
[139] Clotfelter, 114-115 and Bedford, Diary, July 21, 1862.
[140] For more on the relationship between slaves and the land see "Slavery and African American Environmentalism" in *To Love the Wind and the Rain: African Americans and Environmental History* eds. Dianne D. Glave, and Mark Stoll (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006).

houses that likely sat a little behind the main house, if his farm followed the common layout of Bluegrass estates.[141] Some of the work, like digging stumps, was back-breakingly difficult, while some, like husking corn in the winter, could be a relatively enjoyable group experience. George Henderson, an ex-slave from Woodford County, remembered they "would have heaps of corn-shuckings, the neighbors would come in and then we'd have big dances" that always included "a 'jug of licker.'"[142]

Slaves on Bedford's farm also fished on occasion, and on other Inner Bluegrass farms slaves hunted as well.[143] From the slave owner's perspective, granting these privileges functioned as in the farm's best interests. Slaves were able to catch or kill protein for their own tables, thereby reducing their cost of maintenance. Such "lenient" practices were also believed to encourage good behavior from an enslaved work force. George Henderson fondly recalled eating "all kinds of wild food" including "possum and rabbits baked in a big oven" and fish from the creeks "fried in hot grease," which certainly reduced his owner's costs of feeding his labor force, but hunting and fishing took on a different significance for the African Americans involved.[144]

These activities not only provided nourishment to supplement their diets, they could also strengthen family and community bonds on and among farms. Living in a system that denied them complete control over their family lives, black hunters and fishermen (and women) were able to reassert a measure of independence, and function as

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[141] Peter C. Smith, and Karl B. Raitz. "Negro Hamlets and Agricultural Estates in Kentucky's Inner Bluegrass". *Geographical Review.* 64, no. 2 (1974): 217-234. 224.
[142] George Henderson, *WPA Slave Narrative Project, Kentucky Narratives, Volume 7*. Accessed via http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?mesnbib:1:./temp/~ammem_ZyWN:: April 18, 2011.
[143] Bedford, Diary, April 26, 1862.
[144] George Henderson, *WPA Slave Narrative Project, Kentucky Narratives.* My discussion of slave hunting and fishing draws on the work of Scott Giltner in "Slave Hunting and Fishing in the Antebellum South" in *To Love the Wind and the Rain: African Americans and Environmental History* eds. Dianne D. Glave, and Mark Stoll (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006).

providers to their dependents. Hunting and fishing could provide a pleasurable opportunity to teach children important skills, as was the case for Henderson who relished his memories of the times he "would ride on his [father's] back…feet in his pockets" as he hunted rabbits and possums for the oven.[145] Further, some slaves were successful enough hunting or fishing that it could become a source of revenue. William Hayden, once a slave in Scott and later in Franklin County, was able to earn "a considerable sum of spending money, without, in the least, encroaching on my master's time" by fishing in the Kentucky River during his free time.[146] Such activities typically occurred outside of white supervision and provided temporary psychological relief from direct control. Thus the natural sections of the agroecosystem, surrounding the cultivated landscape their labor created, provided slaves with opportunities to strengthen family bonds, supplement their rations, demonstrate a measure of self-sufficiency or even enter the market economy.

While Bedford's enslaved African Americans did a great deal of work on his farm, their labor also played an essential role on neighbors' and friends' land. The common practice of loaning slaves in the Inner Bluegrass meant they had an even greater impact on the agricultural production of the region than their overall numbers suggest. A single man might harvest wheat on three or more farms in a year, meaning three white farmers benefited from his forced labor. Slaves seem almost to have been treated as a communal resource. This meant an expanded role in shaping the agroecosystem beyond the

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[145] George Henderson, *WPA Slave Narrative Project, Kentucky Narratives.*
[146] William Hayden, *Narrative of William Hayden, Containing a Faithful Account of His Travels for a Number of Years Whilst a Slave, in the South*. (Cincinnati: No Publisher Listed, 1846), 25-26. Accessed via http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/hayden/hayden.html April 18, 2011. Franklin County, where Hayden was doing his fishing, is outside the designated area of study, but a large minority of the county, including Frankfort where Hayden sold his fish, is actually in the Inner Bluegrass region according to the Map of Kentucky's Ecoregions done by the U.S. Geological Survey cited previously.

boundaries of the farm of their owner or renter, multiplying their impacts by allowing for greater production of crops like wheat and corn. The practice is apparent from Bedford's diary as he loaned male slaves to neighbors every summer to help with the harvest, and his neighbors often returned the favor.[147] Other peaks of agricultural activity, like the yearly hog slaughter in the autumn, were also met by the shared use of slave labor.[148] For Inner Bluegrass farmers the practice of loaning slaves among family, friends, and neighbors added flexibility to the labor supply; infrequent large tasks could be accomplished efficiently without each slaveholder maintaining an enslaved work force equal to the highest periods of activity on his farm.

Slave loaning reinforced a generally high level of African American mobility in the Inner Bluegrass. Even during the Civil War, with armies from both sides in the vicinity, Bedford and his neighbors felt comfortable enough to send their slaves to help with friends' harvests.[149] Blacks also hauled crops and drove livestock between farms and to be processed with no supervision. Because of the relatively small size of typical slaveholdings in Central Kentucky and practices that allowed for considerable freedom of movement across the local countryside significant ties of community and communication connected the region's African Americans.

Inner Bluegrass slaveholders also often rented their slaves out on a yearly basis. Typically these arrangements went from Christmas to Christmas, as Bedford's experience demonstrated. His diary entry from December 25, 1862 noted that he "Sent Lotty, Rilla Berry, Jo & Berry home."[150] Exactly one year later his diary mentioned his having "hired

[147] For example see Bedford, Diary, July 24, 1862, July 8, 1863, July 30, 1863.
[148] Bedford, Diary, November 9, 1863.
[149] Bedford, Diary, July 24 & 28, 1862.
[150] Bedford, Diary, December 25, 1862.

Lotty and 3 children," perhaps some of the other slaves mentioned above, "for victuals and clothes."[151] This suggests at least some slave renters preferred to procure the labor of the same slaves year after year. Also in 1863 he entered into a contract "to pay Peter Hedges…the sum of Eleven Dollars fifty cents for the hire of a Negro Boy name Jefferson until the 25th day of December 1863." He further agreed to "clothe Jefferson in the following manner, three cotton shirts, two pairs of twilled cotton pantaloons, one good Negro cotton apron, one pair of shoes for summer, one good Janes coat, two pair of good Janes pantaloons, one wascoat [sic], two pair of socks, one good pair of shoes, one wool hat, and one blanket and treat him humanely."[152] That renting Jefferson cost $11.50 in addition to clothing and feeding him suggests the greater value placed on male slaves than female. The details included in the contract for Jefferson's rental could be interpreted to indicate that Bedford was not a particularly vicious master toward his enslaved workforce, but they certainly demonstrate the economic incentives in play. Hedges sought to protect his investment (Jefferson) from mistreatment that would undermine his future value.

Bedford's treatment of sick slaves lends further support to the idea that while humanitarian considerations might have played some role in his care for his bondsmen and women, the economics of slavery certainly did. The slaves living on his farm seem to have taken ill on a regular basis, and when they did Bedford summoned the same doctor who treated his family. Dr. Wheat would visit daily, or even multiple times in a single day, to check on his patients, and each development was important enough to Bedford that it received mention in his diary, thus one can read about Lotty's progression from

[151] Bedford, Diary, December 25, 1863.
[152] Contract between Edwin Bedford and Peter Hedges. Bedford Papers, Box 3. Date missing.

slightly unwell to "quite dangerous[ly]" unwell to "well enough to do without" the doctor.[153] This level of concern, while seemingly admirable, must be balanced against the fact that Bedford had an important financial stake in keeping Lotty, a valuable adult woman, alive. Had she died while under his care it certainly would have caused some discussion over "fault" and whether Bedford was required to compensate her owner. By way of contrast, the death of a slave child received one brief mention and no indication that Dr. Wheat was consulted.[154] In another instance an inhumane callousness comes through in Bedford's simple diary entry: "America's child is dead. Tom gone to Paris for a coffin."[155] No definitive conclusions can be reached as the exact circumstances surrounding the deaths escape the historical record, but it is suggestive that the less valuable slaves received markedly less attention and Bedford's cold, disinterested tone.

The stark reality of African Americans' economic valuation in white eyes was never more apparent than when slaves were bought and sold. Bedford sold "Mary Jane and 3 children" to Mary Cordelia Bedford for $1,100 in the only such transaction recorded in his papers, but slave sales were a notable part of the Inner Bluegrass economy.[156] He also kept up with slave prices when he visited Paris and Lexington in much the same manner he noted changes in livestock markets.[157] Census returns from 1850 and 1860 show slave traders listed among the residents of Paris and suggest connections between the local and regional markets for enslaved laborers.[158]

[153] Bedford, Diary, January 29-February 14, 1863.
[154] Bedford, Diary, July 26, 1863.
[155] Bedford, Diary, February 10, 1865.
[156] Bedford, "Sale Bill" Papers Box 3, no date.
[157] Bedford, Diary, March 27, 1864.
[158] Federal Census returns accessed via ancestry.com

Bedford appears to have been incapable of viewing African Americans as people. He often complained that he was "alone" when there was "not a white person on the place" but himself or commented on his "lonesome day" when he had not "seen a white face during the day."[159] In Bedford's conception of the world, African Americans were worth taking care of and protecting in the same way in which farm implements would be, only to the extent that they benefitted him economically. What decent treatment slaves received was the result of economic self-interest more than humanitarian concerns, though this is not to argue that humanitarian concerns never existed.[160]

One important crop for the Inner Bluegrass that Bedford did not grow prior to the war was hemp. The state of Kentucky led the nation in its production during the antebellum era and James F. Hopkins, whose *A History of the Hemp Industry in Kentucky* (1951) remains the definitive work on the topic, argued that hemp production was a key factor in the development of slavery in Kentucky; "Without hemp, slavery might not have flourished in Kentucky, since other agricultural products of the state were not conducive to the extensive use of bondsman." Hemp was a labor-intensive crop at every stage of production and processing and "the need for laborers was filled to a large extent by the use of Negro slaves, and it is a significant fact that the heaviest concentration of slavery was in the hemp producing areas," namely the Inner Bluegrass and a few scattered counties in the Outer Bluegrass.[161] Hemp production was so thoroughly dominated by slaveholders that it was widely known as a "'nigger crop.'"[162]

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[159] Bedford, Diary, June 2, December 9, 1863.
[160] Most accounts of antebellum Bluegrass agriculture tend to emphasize the paternalistic or humanitarian aspects of the institution, this is particularly true in Troutman, Clotfelter, Coleman and to some extent in Thomas D. Clark's *History of Kentucky*, which views Bluegrass slavery as an unprofitable institution.
[161] Hopkins, 4.
[162] Troutman, *The Social and Economic Structure of Kentucky Agriculture*, 70, 76. His statistical analysis found that slaveholders produced 95% of the state's crop by 1860.

Thomas Walker Bullitt's memoir, *My Life at Oxmoor: Life on a Farm in Kentucky Before the War* (1911), must be taken with a measure of skepticism as it was written a half-century after the events it describes and because of the clear incentive Bullitt had to sanitize the institution of slavery as it existed on his father's farm, but it can nevertheless give us some idea of the patterns of labor associated with hemp production on a prosperous Kentucky farm. He believed, and scholars like Hopkins concurred, the hardest work on the farm dealt with the hemp crop. Seed was sown by hand broadcasting in the spring. Slaves cut the plants during the summer using a type of hand sickle and arranged them in shocks in the field, before spreading them over the ground in the autumn to rot in the dew.[163] During the otherwise slow periods on the farm during the winter months hands "broke" the crop to separate the useable fiber from the unusable stalk. These were all physically demanding tasks. Yet, cutting and breaking were also favored jobs for slaves according to Bullitt since they were both done according to the task system. During harvest, men were assigned a certain amount of hemp to cut and their workday ended when they completed their assignment. Bullitt wrote that typically men finished in the early afternoon. The normal task for a man breaking hemp in the winter was one hundred pounds per day and slaves on Bullitt's farm were paid a one-cent bonus for each pound over their assignment. Since a good hand was often able to exceed 150 pounds per day, this was a fairly significant source of income for slaves on Bluegrass farms.[164] References to the task system in hemp production in accounts from the period confirm that Bullitt's description is generally applicable.[165]

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[163] "Taking Up Hemp," *The Kentucky Farmer* (Frankfort, Ky.), Vol. 1, 1858-1859, pp. 105-106.
[164] Thomas Walker Bullitt, *My Life at Oxmoor; Life on a Farm in Kentucky Before the War*. (Louisville, KY: John P. Morton and Co, 1911), 45-46.
[165] The Paris *True Kentuckian*, March 5, 1873.

One student of Bourbon County agriculture suggested farmers' inability to secure sufficient labor following emancipation contributed to the decline of the hemp industry, a situation that was compounded by the fact that "few whites were willing to work in the hemp field."[166] A local paper noted "Bourbon does not raise as much hemp as some of the other Bluegrass counties, preferring the grass instead. Breakers get 1 cent to 1¼ cents per pound and a good hand can break one hundred and fifty pounds and some two hundred and fifty per day."[167] The difference between a white farmer getting the first hundred pounds from each hand free of charge and paying for every pound produced negatively impacted the returns on their investment and the difficulty of inducing free laborers to take on the dirty and laborious tasks were both factors in hemps' decline as a major agricultural product of the Inner Bluegrass.[168]

That slave labor, and its destruction, were central to the fate of hemp production is only the tip of the iceberg in the discussion of the importance of enslaved African Americans to Kentucky's agroecosystem. Richard Troutman's *The Social and Economic Structure of Kentucky Agriculture, 1850-1860* utilized statistical analysis to examine the relative importance of different segments of the farming population of Kentucky through a comparison of the distribution of wealth, slaves, improved acreages, crops and livestock. Troutman found a tremendous inequality of wealth in Kentucky's agricultural system during the period he studied.

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[166] Clotfelter, 86.
[167] The Paris *True Kentuckian*, March 5, 1873.
[168] Assuming hands broke 150 pounds per day, slaves were paid a 1-cent bonus for each pound over 100, and later free blacks were paid 1 cent per pound, labor costs for breaking one ton of hemp increased from approximately $6.67 to $20 for the white farmers producing the crop. The difference would grow more dramatic if slaves broke less weight per day. Of course such rude calculations neglect the other costs of maintaining a slave labor force, but it does give an idea of the differences under the wage labor system.

Slaveholders constituted only 31% of all farmers in 1860, yet their proportion of the state's agricultural property and productions was "most impressive." He noted their control over 70 percent of farm value, 60 percent of improved lands, 70 percent of wheat, 55 percent of corn and tobacco, 60 percent of livestock values and 70 percent of overall farm value.[169] This inequality is even greater than it appears since the value of slaves was not included in total farm values.[170] Troutman hesitated to contradict Kentucky expert Thomas D. Clark's assertion that slavery was not suited to the type of diversified agriculture practiced in the state, but argued that his evidence indicated that if farming using slave labor was unprofitable, then all farming in Kentucky was unprofitable.[171]

The beautiful agricultural estates of wealthy Bourbon County residents strongly suggest they profited from their use of slave labor and an examination of black demographics provides further support.[172] In 1850, African Americans outnumbered whites living in the county, constituting just over half of the population. Just 245 of the more than 7,000 blacks were classified as free, the remainder were enslaved to white owners.[173] Of the 130 rural slaveholders sampled, over 62% owned five or fewer slaves, just over 20% owned between six and ten, 13% between 11 and 25, and just over 2% owned between 25 and 50. None in the sample owned more than 50, though Brutus J.

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[169] Troutman *The Social and Economic Structure of Kentucky Agriculture*,. 117-118.
[170] Ibid., 36.
[171] Ibid., 119-122.
[172] For the purpose of comparing between different slave populations within the county I have analyzed all African Americans living in the town of Paris, the county seat and largest urban area, the town of Millersburg, the next largest urban area, and a 10% representative sample of those living in rural areas. The 10% were randomly selected from among all rural precincts by including every tenth page in the original census returns. All original returns were accessed via ancestry.com
[173] United States Census Bureau. Compendium of the Seventh Census. Part VI, pg. 236. For general, countrywide statistics on the racial breakdown of population see Appendix A.

Clay held 88 men, women and children in bondage.[174] These findings fit with the general descriptions of Inner Bluegrass slavery, which emphasize the fact that most slaveholders owned fewer slaves than was typical in the deeper South. Edwin Bedford falls in the second tier of slaveholding size with six in 1850 and the diversified agricultural pursuits of his farm give an indication of what types of labor the majority of Bourbon County blacks were engaged in on behalf of their owners. It should also be emphasized that the common practices of slave loaning and renting meant that many slaves would work on a number of different farms throughout the year, effectively expanding the pool of unfree labor available to white farmers.

The rural slaves of Bourbon County were a very young group of people, averaging less than 17.5 years of age in 1850. Almost 41% of the sampled African Americans were ten years old or younger and over 27% were between the ages of 11 and 20. Less than 8% of the sampled population was 41 or more years old. These demographic numbers, which are skewed toward the younger end of the spectrum, are suggestive of just how hard life was for Bourbon County slaves. Few slaves living in the county could expect to reach old, or even middle, age. It might also suggest that the lure of selling slaves South into the hungry markets of the cotton belt was a temptation to which Bourbon County slaveholders were susceptible. While a definitive answer is beyond the scope of this study, it seems significant that less than 16% of slaves were in their twenties, the age at which they would have brought the highest prices in the slave trade.[175]

[174] United States Census Bureau. Slave Schedule original returns. Record for Brutus Clay of Bourbon County, District 1.
[175] See Appendix B, "1850 Rural" for complete statistics.

The slave populations of the towns of Paris and Millersburg in 1850 show substantial differences from those of the countryside. In Paris close to 90% of slaveholders owned five or fewer slaves, and in Millersburg this figure was close to 80%. Each also had a higher percentage of women than was found in the rural districts, well over 60% as compared to a roughly even distribution outside the towns. The towns' slave populations were also older as they averaged over 19 years of age and a greater percentage lived into their 40s and beyond. These differences suggest slaves living in the towns were engaged more in domestic tasks, which were thought to be better suited for women, and a slightly less physically demanding lifestyle.[176]

In 1860, African Americans made up over 47% of Bourbon County's population. 300 blacks were free, the rest were enslaved to white owners.[177] The sample of rural slaves suggests some changes had occurred in the decade since 1850. The percentage of slaveholders with one to five slaves dropped to just under 47%, a significant decrease that can be accounted for by the jump in owners of six to ten, up to over 25%, and owners of 11 to 25, which also increased to over 25%. These numbers suggest a consolidation of economic resources among the wealthier farmers of Bourbon County.[178] Edwin Bedford did not move out of the second tier of slaveholding, but he did own two more individuals in 1860 than in 1850, which fits within the general pattern seen throughout the country. While the selected sample does not contain any individuals who possess more than 50 slaves, the holding of Brutus J. Clay had expanded from 88 to 132 people by 1860,

[176] See Appendix B, "1850 M'burg & 1850 Paris" for complete statistics.
[177] United States Census Bureau. Compendium of the Eighth Census (Washington D.C.: 1871), 169, 171, 175.
[178] See Appendix C, "1860 Rural-Non Paris" for complete statistics.

lending additional anecdotal support for the idea that slaveholders were consolidating their resources in the years just prior to the Civil War.[179]

The slave population of the Bourbon County countryside was a bit older in 1860 than in 1850, the average age in the sample was 18.3 years, but it was not different enough to suggest any fundamental changes in the system. The percentage of African Americans found in each age range likewise show a bit of variation, but largely resemble those found in 1850.[180]

Also like 1850, there are observable differences between the slave population of the countryside and those living in Paris and Millersburg. These statistics, however, are likely skewed to make the differences less apparent than they might otherwise be by the fact that the Census enumerator included many of the slaves who lived in the countryside surrounding Paris in the returns for the town itself. This accounts for the dramatic jump in the number of slaves listed in the town from 141 in 1850 to 555 in 1860. The most likely explanation is that the enumerator listed the slaves of those farmers who also had homes or property in the town as residing in Paris, when in reality they lived on a farm outside of town. These discrepancies notwithstanding, the slaveholders living in the towns were much more likely to own five or fewer slaves than those living in the country. The towns' slave populations also remained older than that of the rural areas and the average ages increased to 22.7 in Millersburg and 21.2 in Paris. The gender distribution of town slaves also changed during the decade, as the breakdown is much closer to even by 1860. This might be explained by the above-mentioned discrepancy in listing for Paris, but no ready

[179] United States Census Bureau. Slave Schedule original returns. Record of Brutus Clay of Bourbon County, District 1. Accessed via ancestry.com. A cynical interpretation of Clay's Unionism during the war could be that he saw loyalty to the Union as a better protection of his investment than joining the Confederacy. Edwin Bedford and other slaveholders could fall into the same category.
[180] See Appendix C, "1860 Rural-Non Paris" for complete statistics.

explanation emerges for Millersburg outside of the small size of the population making it particularly susceptible to dramatic changes in percentages.[181]

As mentioned above, while enslaved African Americans made up the vast majority of Bourbon County blacks, there was also a small, and growing, community of free people of color. In 1850, 46 free blacks lived in Paris, almost two-thirds of whom were women. These individuals averaged 26 years of age, making them significantly older than any of the examined slave populations, and owned an average of $43.48 worth of real estate, though this value was actually held by only four individuals. Unfortunately, the Census enumerator only recorded professions for three of the thirty free adult black residents, making it impossible to form any conclusions about their working lives. It is worth noting that one man was listed as a shoemaker and another as a stonemason, two relatively skilled professions. No details are given for free black women's professions, but two of the four African American property owners in Paris were women, indicating that a small measure of financial success was possible, if extremely rare, for black women in the Inner Bluegrass' slave society.[182]

The free black community underwent substantial growth by 1860. Their overall number more than tripled to 149, meaning almost half of the free blacks in Bourbon County now lived in Paris. Women continued to outnumber men and the average age remained relatively consistent. Despite the growth in overall population, per capita wealth also increased dramatically. In 1860, the combination of average real estate value and average personal property value totaled over $135 per person. Associated with the growth of the free African American community in Paris seems to be an expansion of

[181] See Appendix C, "1860 M'burg" and "1860 Paris" for complete statistics.
[182] See Appendix D, "Paris 1850" for complete statistics.

free African Americans into more sectors of the local economy. By 1860 free black men made a living as barbers, brickmakers, in the horse industry as trainers or breakers, processing hemp as rope makers, and as a silversmith, in addition to the shoemaker and stonemason listed in 1850. The majority, however, worked as unspecified laborers. Free African American women found employment mainly in domestic positions such as cook, washwoman, or unspecified servant. Working within this limited sphere, free black women nevertheless continued to establish a basis of economic stability and independence.[183]

Judged in economic terms, the most successful free African American living in Paris on the eve of the Civil War was Jefferson Porter. He had been freed by Lucy Porter's will in 1846, which also provided him with a bakery and shop. In return, Jefferson was to pay for Lucy's funeral and help support her daughter and grandchildren until they were old enough to support themselves.[184] In 1860 his profession was listed as "confectioner" and he owned $4,000 of real estate and personal property of $5,000.[185] A woman living in his residence named Cynthia Harrison owned $1,000 in personal real estate. Porter's $9,000 in personal wealth made him the richest African American living in Paris by a wide margin and demonstrates the level of success that was possible even prior to the Civil War. The fact that he was freed and given property by Lucy Porter's will demonstrate the rare good fortune that cleared the way for his rise.

This was the state of the African American community living in Bourbon County when the tumultuous 1860s began. The vast majority of black men, women and children

[183] See Appendix D, "Paris 1860" for complete statistics. For example of free African American women's financial independence, the 21 wash women had a net worth of $2,665.
[184] "Porter, Jefferson" *Notable Kentucky African Americans Database*. (Lexington, Ky: University of Kentucky, 2003) accessed April 11, 2010. <http://www.uky.edu/Libraries/NKAA>.
[185] United States Census (Population Schedule) 1860. Jefferson Porter.

lived in the rural countryside, enslaved to white farmers who viewed and treated them as valuable pieces of agricultural machinery to be loaned, rented and worked at their pleasure. But white control was not absolute, as the task system that developed for the production and processing of hemp demonstrated. In some regards an on-going set of negotiations existed, and even slaveholders acknowledged limits on what might reasonably be expected of their bondsmen and women. There also existed a minute free population, a large percentage of which lived in the county's towns, whose relative financial success stood in stark contrast to the circumstances faced by those still in slavery.

Civil War Upheaval

The Civil War caused massive disruptions throughout the nation and the Inner Bluegrass was no exception.[186] Kentucky never left the Union, but pro-Confederate sympathies ran high among the white population, especially in the areas in which the agricultural economy was largely dependent on slave labor. Many, however, supported the status quo antebellum and seemed equally disdainful of both sides in the conflict. Edwin Bedford fell into this last category. Technically he remained loyal to the Union, as his oath signed August 8, 1862 suggests, and allusions in his diary like calling July 4 "Independence day for my country" indicate his oath was not simply a case of shrewdly betting on the correct side.[187] However, his support was not complete, he clearly identified the Union cause with the destruction of slavery, which he viewed as a grave

[186] For more on the African American Civil War and emancipation experience in Kentucky see Victor B. Howard *Black Liberation in Kentucky: Emancipation and Freedom, 1861-1884*. (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1983).
[187] United States Loyalty Oath, signed August 8, 1862 in Bedford Papers, Box 3. Bedford, Diary, July 4, 1862.

mistake.[188] He felt particularly bitter over the army's use of his slaves in support of the war effort noting in his diary that he had been "notified to furnish two negroes or report in person to Gov. Fry to be held as a prisoner. What a plan to make Union men."[189]

What enslaved African Americans thought of early developments in the conflict, like troops movements along the roads and the roaring of cannon in the distance, cannot be definitively addressed, yet Bedford's description of slaves as "lying low" awaiting the outcome suggests an awareness of the stakes involved in 1862.[190] In a revealing entry that suggests blacks' freedom of movement particularly in the chaos of the war he wrote "Negroes coming from Lexington. On the run badly scared. Fighting in Lexington. Negroes say the place is on fire."[191] By July 1864 Bedford complained when he "saw the first Negro soldier in arms today, soldiers in all equality," in August he noted the "Negroes volunteering lively" in Paris and by September Union ranks swelled at his labor force's expense when "Berry, a boy about 14 years old, left and joined the army" and Jeff, Bedford's rented hand, left the following day.[192]

During, and immediately after the Civil War, there seems to have been a great deal of flux over the status of African Americans in the Inner Bluegrass. Slave auctions continued until well after the end of military hostilities, which was only possible because Kentucky did not leave the Union, meaning slavery existed longer than in the former Confederate states.[193] Confidence in the institution's long-term survival waned however, as declining prices demonstrated.[194] As white citizens grappled with the reality of

[188] Bedford, Diary, January 1, 1863.
[189] Ibid, August 7, 1863.
[190] Ibid, December 27, 1862.
[191] Ibid, June 10, 1864.
[192] Bedford, Diary, July 9, August 22, September 5 & 6, 1864.
[193] *Western Citizen*, December 23, 1862 and *Western Citizen*, November 24, 1865.
[194] Bedford, Diary, March 27, 1863.

emancipation, Bourbon County papers documented a variety of views and reactions toward African Americans, ranging from the relatively moderate to virulently racist.

As early as May 1865 the *Western Citizen* of Paris ran an article cautioning whites not to take violent action against the groups of African Americans congregating around the peripheries of county towns as the law would view them as vigilantes and thugs.[195] This speaks to the existence of a voice of relative moderation, but also of a very real possibility of racial violence on a large scale. The idea of blacks exercising political rights and the Freedman's Bureau sparked particular scorn among the white population:

> "WHAT HAS BECOME OF THE FIFTEEN HUNDRED MILLIONS OF DOLLARS taken out of your poctes during the past three year…[it has] gone to SUPPORT A GREAT NEGRO BOARDING HOUSE in the South…And to SUPPORT A STANDING ARMY OVER THE SOUTH, in order that NEGRO JUDGES! NEGRO GOVERNORS! NEGRO LEGISLATURE! NEGRO GOVERNMENTS!" and calling on voters to "ABOLISH THE NEGRO BUREAU; and let the negroes shift for themselves."[196]

Newspaper headlines such as "Two Little Girls Outraged by a Negro" and "Attempted Rape of Little White Girl by Negro" enflamed white passions.[197]

By 1866 racial violence was on the rise in the Inner Bluegrass. Paris has the dubious distinction of being the location of the first documented lynching in the state following the Civil War as "Bertraud" was put to death by a mob in March for alleged rape.[198] Also in March, an African American man was fatally shot after allegedly stealing shoes (which were never found) and defending himself from attack by throwing rocks.[199]

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[195] *Western Citizen*, May 5, 1865.
[196] The Paris *True Kentuckian*, July 29, 1868.
[197] The Paris *True Kentuckian*, July 16, 1867, January 6, 1869.
[198] George C. Wright, *Racial Violence in Kentucky, 1865-1940: Lynchings, Mob Rule, and "Legal Lynchings"* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990), Appendix A.
[199] The Paris *True Kentuckian*, March 8, 1866.

Another man, whose name eludes the historical record, was lynched in September.[200] In November a young white man killed a young black man for little apparent reason while slaughtering hogs on the white man's father's farm despite the fact that the two had been "warm friends" their entire lives. The killing was judged to be in self-defense.[201] The federal government extended the Freedman's Bureau into Kentucky in January 1866 because state officials refused to help newly freed blacks or prevent or punish violence toward them.[202] The rash of racial violence demonstrated the need for African Americans to rely on each other and their own community in order to survive.

Postbellum System

Some African Americans left the violence of the countryside for regional centers like Lexington where they sought greater security and opportunity.[203] This kind of movement helps account for the fact that the percentage of African Americans in Bourbon County's population had fallen under 45% by 1870.[204] More than left the county however, seem to have moved to communities like Paris and Millersburg, and often to new black communities like Claysville and Ruckerville that developed around the periphery of these towns.[205] The African American populations of these towns resembled the earlier slave populations in that substantially more women than men resided in the towns and the more urban populations were older than those living in the countryside, averaging over 24 years of age compared to under 22 in the sampling of rural precincts.[206] The reasons for these differences are likely the same as during the antebellum period, the greater

[200] Wright, Appendix A.
[201] The Paris *True Kentuckian*, November 15, 1866.
[202] Wright. *Racial Violence*. 2.
[203] See John Kellogg, "The Formation of Black Residential Areas in Lexington, Kentucky, 1865-1887". *The Journal of Southern History*. 48, no. 1 (1984): 21-52.
[204] See Appendix A for countywide statistics.
[205] Everman, *Bourbon County Since 1865*, 37.
[206] See Appendix E, "1870" for complete statistics.

availability of domestic work in the cities, while more men were employed working the land.

An examination of the professions listed for African Americans in the different communities for the 1870 Census supports this interpretation. Over 26% of all black residents in Paris were domestic servants, and another 13% worked in the nebulous capacity of "keeping house." For Millersburg these figures were 40% and 6%. Only 6% and 10% worked as farm laborers in Paris and Millersburg, respectfully. In the rural sample, over 27% were farm laborers and 20% worked as domestic servants. As these figures, indicate a large portion of the African American community labored in much the same capacity in the early years after slavery as they had prior to emancipation. However, many African Americans were able to take advantage of their newly won freedom to pursue a wider range of professions. Men worked as day laborers in the towns, in the grocery business, as brick masons and blacksmiths, as preachers or painters, and the number of barbers grew. Women worked as teachers, seamstresses, and laundresses.[207]

Similar to the patterns observed among free blacks in the 1860 Census, Paris remained home to the highest concentrations of wealth among Bourbon County African Americans. The rural sample averaged under $15 worth of real and personal property per person in 1870. Blacks living in Millersburg were actually the poorest per capita with less than $14 total wealth per person. The number of African Americans living in Paris grew from 704, including both slave and free, in 1860 to 997 by 1870 and per capita wealth averaged over $101.32.[208] This represents a substantial increase from the $28.72 of wealth per person found when averaged among all African Americans, free and unfree,

[207] See Appendix F, "1870 Occupations" for complete statistics.
[208] See Appendix E, "1870" for complete statistics.

living in Paris in 1860. It is also worth highlighting that it represents a small drop from the $135 per person of wealth for free blacks of Paris prior to the Civil War.[209]

The relative financial success achieved by Paris blacks was both a product of, and a contributing factor in, the development of African American institutions and community. Freed from their forced labor in the countryside, many African Americans focused on uniting families and building institutions like churches and schools to strengthen their community. Churches emerged in Paris like the African Baptist Church, which split from white Baptist Church in the period following emancipation, and the Seventh Street Christian Church, which was built in 1870 by African Americans who were previously members of the First Christian Church.[210] Small Bourbon County communities also created new and independent congregations. Samuel Buckner founded the Little Rock Christian Church in an African-American community named Little Rock that flourished after the Civil War.[211] Samuel Buckner is considered one of the founders of the Colored Christian Church Movement in Kentucky and worked to establish churches for newly freed African Americans in communities around the state. These churches constituted a key component of black communities, serving as social and political centers in addition to their spiritual role.[212]

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[209] The Paris example lends support to Marion Lucas' conclusion, based mainly on larger communities like Lexington and Louisville that "Acquisition of property by blacks, though miniscule when compared to that of whites, was impressive." *A History of Blacks in Kentucky: From Slavery to Segregation, 1760-1891*. 2nd Edition. (Frankfort: Kentucky Historical Society, 2003), 277.

[210] "African Baptist Church (Paris, KY)." *Notable Kentucky African Americans Database*. Lexington, Ky: University of Kentucky, 2003. <http://www.uky.edu/Libraries/NKAA>. And Berkley Scott and Jeanine Scott, *Paris and Bourbon County* (Charleston, S.C.: Arcadia Publishing, 2002), 53.

[211] Scott & Scott 46.

[212] For a discussion of the importance of churches to African American communities in the South see Steven Hahn, *A Nation Under Our Feet: Black Political Struggles in the Rural South, from Slavery to the Great Migration* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003).

One important benefit of moving closer to Paris was greater access to new educational opportunities for African American children. In 1870 almost 6% of Paris' black population was listed as attending school. No children living in Millersburg are listed as students and only four of those living in the sample taken from the rural precincts, or .7% of the sampled population, attended school.[213] The possibility of your child obtaining an education served as a powerful lure to some African American parents. It is significant that the two schoolteachers mentioned above were African-American women educated at Oberlin and that they had the courage to pursue legal action against a local white. Their example likely served as inspiration to young black students.

The growth of the African American community provided a wider base of clientele for black businesses as well. Jefferson Porter expanded his operation in the decade between 1860 and 1870. His profession was now listed as "grocer" and his net worth had grown to $15,000, making him a man of considerable means for any race. [214] Viewing his wealth in relation to the fact that over 94% of African Americans living in Paris possessed no real estate and over 99% had no listed personal property reveals the highly stratified nature of the African American community of Bourbon County. Churches acted as benevolent organizations and the Colored Mutual Benefit Association of Bourbon County was organized in an attempt to alleviate the worst suffering from poverty through fundraising using fairs for the community.[215]

All of these developments in the African American community: greater portions of the population living in urban or semi-urban areas, more diverse professions, greater educational opportunities, and the creation of uniquely black institutions, were the result

[213] See Appendix F, "1870 Occupations" for complete statistics.
[214] United States Census (Population Schedule) 1870. Jefferson Porter.
[215] Bourbon County Agricultural Society Board of Directors Records, June 8, 1878.

of African American freedom following emancipation. This expansion of freedom left many white farmers struggling to fill their labor needs, which resulted in an overall agricultural decline for the county. From 1860 to 1870, Bourbon County's agricultural production decreased in nearly every major category.[216] Thus, when African Americans were able to allocate their labor for themselves they spent more effort on creating institutions and community for their people and less working on white farms.

The focus on the African American community of Paris should not obscure the fact that the vast majority of Bourbon County blacks remained in the countryside in the years immediately following emancipation. While most worked as farm laborers, a few rose in the ranks to become landowning farmers. By 1878 Bourbon County blacks owned some 467 acres of farmland and six men from the sample of rural precincts were listed as "farmer" by 1870.[217] Landholdings for these black farmers were likely quite small in comparison with their white neighbors, but they nevertheless represented hard-won progress toward financial independence.

Geographers have studied a peculiar settlement pattern, which Peter C. Smith and Karl B. Raitz termed "Negro hamlets," that developed as the product of negotiations between elite farmers with large holdings and their labor force as the employers struggled to recover after their agricultural production after the Civil War. Faced with a labor shortage, some large farmers elected to sell land at a reasonable rate, or even give small parcels, to African Americans on plots adjacent to their property. Typically a landowner dedicated ten to twenty acres for subdividing into lots ranging from a quarter acre to five acres to be sold or given to black families. He might also assist in the construction of

[216] See Appendix G, "Agriculture" for countywide agricultural statistics.
[217] *Third Annual Report*, 228. See Appendix F.

dwellings and a community well. The heads of households, and often other family members, labored on the large landowners farms. Families typically used the remainder of the lot for garden crops and as home to chickens and perhaps swine.[218]

The elite, landowning farmers relinquished title to a small plot of land in exchange for a secure labor supply and African Americans found both work and a slice of land of their own to cultivate. In many ways the system Smith and Raitz described overlapped with a larger system of tenancy, especially after tobacco began to emerge as a viable cash crop that could be produced on shares.[219] Negotiations like these led to the modifications of the patchwork landscape of the Inner Bluegrass agroecosystem. Garden plots owned and tilled by black men and women slowly spread and large white landholders tweaked the mix of species on their holdings.

The system of nucleated African American hamlets on the fringes of large estates that developed was more the exception than the rule however, as access to what they deemed suitable labor proved an elusive goal for most Bourbon County farmers after the Civil War. Many farmers, like Bedford, employed a combination of strategies. He hired laborers for different lengths of time ranging from days to entire years. He sometimes rented small plots of land to African American families, never more than one or two at a time, who then worked on his farm. Bedford also came to rely more on white labor, particularly in regards to his livestock. Edwin Bedford Garrard, a great nephew of Bedford's, who lived on the farm from a young age finished attending school and

[218] Smith and Raitz, 227-229.
[219] Smith and Ratiz, 230. The system they describe is quite similar to Bedford's arrangement with William Shannon in 1884. Bedford, Diaries, "Memo." at end of 1884 diary.

provided an able body with the animals and running machinery.[220] For stretches he employed and housed single white men who worked with his stock and as agents scouting the countryside for promising herds for sale.[221] For the bulk of labor done with crops however, Bedford employed African American "hands" paid a daily rate, collected at the end of the week or when the relationship was terminated, which could occur virtually any time either side rejected the arrangement.

Bedford's diary demonstrates the difficulty many former slaveholders had in securing an adequate and stable labor supply. Beginning in 1865 the number of complaints he registered about his workers exploded. He experienced a high degree of turnover among his laborers. Some worked for just a few days, others for weeks, most were hired at monthly wages and some labored on Bedford's farm several different times, leaving his employment for months or years before returning.[222] Besides the difficulty Bedford encountered hiring enough hands, he often found their work less than satisfactory. He occasionally fired people outright like the time he "found [his] gardener in bed, having quit work as soon as I left," but his diary indicates it was as common for a hand to quit "highly insulted" at their treatment.[223] The phrase "the hands work badly" became a common refrain among Inner Bluegrass farmers in the period after the Civil War.[224]

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[220] Garrard came to live with Bedford and his first wife, Margret Garrard, had no surviving children before her death in 1863, soon after he was born in 1854. While "Eddie" Garrard was technically his great nephew, Bedford was closer in age and affection with Garrard's mother, Mattie Kennedy Garrard and had a very close uncle-nephew relationship with Eddie.
[221] John Tanner, occupation "trading" in the 1880 Census, lived with and worked for Bedford for years at a time, though intermittently.
[222] Bedford, Diaries, April 15-16, 1865, April 3, 1868, February 3, 1869, August 30, 1866 and December 1866
[223] Ibid, April 15, 1865 September 12, 1867.
[224] Ibid, June 24, 1865.

Bedford maintained a running litany of criticism of his work force that spanned decades. The slow pace of work was a source of constant irritation, crop rows were often unacceptably crooked, and hands were likely to be found "resting in the shade" whenever given an opportunity.[225] Failure to live up to Bedford's standards in the treatment of his high quality livestock particularly drew his ire. An episode with three young men from the Small family who lived in a cabin on the farm illustrates the stakes over the implementation of Bedford's vision for creatures living on his slice of the agroecosystem: "Jo and Ben Small leave today, I start Ben for failing to put my imp ewes in the stable and lying about it and Jo proposed to quit and I started him quick and told Jno he could go too but he went to work."[226] Similar complaints emerge again and again, describing different laborers each time as Bedford struggles to harness the labor to shape the landscape to his wishes. It is difficult to determine which workers were black and which were white, but the point remains that emancipation touched off a series of developments that undermined the stability of the agricultural labor force in Bourbon County.

The problems Bedford and other gentlemen farmers encountered in keeping their kitchens running smoothly shows the dramatically reduced supply of domestic laborers, but also hints at the larger struggle these former masters had adjusting to such incomplete control over their workforce. Bedford seemed unable to employ a cook for more than a couple of months in succession in the late 1860s.[227] A typical complaint was that he was "Without a cook again…Ed [Garrard] got dinner…Oh what a time and what a live to live" despite the fact that they ate "roast mutton, baked potatoes, bed [sic] butter and milk."[228]

[225] Ibid, July 20, 1867, April 27, 1869 and June 28, 1877.
[226] Ibid, February 8, 1878.
[227] Ibid, July 23-27, 1865, January 2, 1868, March 23, 1868, April 23, 1868, December 27, 1868.
[228] Ibid, September 9, 1866.

After one particularly unsuccessful hire Bedford "Turned Sallie off for jawing and for mean cooking" fifteen days after hiring her. In a development that demonstrates how much Inner Bluegrass labor markets changed after the Civil War, significant competition developed among "gentlemen trying to get women for cooks" and men who once owned entire families could not induce a black women to make their breakfasts.[229] The exasperation and frustration of Bedford's daily complaint when he was "still the Head Cook" spoke to a greater frustration over the new necessity and difficulty of negotiating with his labor force in order to implement his vision, of things, from his farm to his meals.[230]

Local newspapers commented on the difficulty of the new labor regime noting "Many of the negroes seem at a loss to know what to do. The best farm hands, men, hire out at $15 a month. Women $10-12."[231] Whites seemed incapable of comprehending why African Americans might not be induced to work in the same manner as previously, even when offered such "good" wages. The paper also mentions legislative efforts to encourage the immigration of white laborers to Kentucky by promulgating information about the quality of land and work.[232] Bedford summed up his and other whites' annoyance with the situation by noting, "It is strange how little work can get got out of the negroes. I can barely see what has been done from one day to another."[233]

In some cases members of the former slaveholding class sought to extend their control as long as possible by indenturing young former slaves under pretense of interest in the child. This description appears appropriate for Mary Grimes of Bourbon County

[229] Ibid, January 2, 1868.
[230] Ibid, January 19, 1868.
[231] The Paris *True Kentuckian*, January 6, 1870.
[232] Ibid, January 6, 1869.
[233] Bedford, Diary Vol. 2, December 17, 1872.

who had William, a twelve-year-old black boy, indentured to her in 1867 without his father's consent. The ruling approving the indenture was first given by Judge Hayes of the Bourbon County court, but was overturned by Judge Ballard of the United States District Court in Louisville when the boy's father, Daniel Parker, sued for custody. Significantly, all of the white Bourbon County residents in this vignette, including the editor commenting in the Paris *True Kentuckian*, viewed the forced apprenticeship as perfectly natural. The newspaper goes so far as to characterize the decision by the Federal Court as "part and parcel of the military despotism which is now overshadowing and trampling down all the liberties and laws of this once free and happy people," apparently without irony.[234] White former slaveholders were so accustomed to easy control over black labor they could still imagine that their concerns outweighed parental rights even years after emancipation.

Despite these problems and complaints wage labor remained the dominant form of employee-laborer relationship for the countryside in the decades after the Civil War. Wages varied over time, according the task, and the race of the laborer on Bedford's farm. For a black hand working at preparing, maintaining and harvesting fields during the first years after the Civil War, fifty cents a day was a fairly typical rate of pay.[235] Some hands earned more and fifteen dollars a week, for six days of work, became more common as the decade continued.[236] By the early 1870s Bedford regularly paid up to eighty-five cents or a dollar per day for African American laborers to work in the fields.[237] Over the course of the decade labor costs seemed fairly stable, averaging in the fifteen to twenty

[234] The Paris *True Kentuckian*, August 13, 1867.
[235] Bedford, Diaries, November 20, 1867.
[236] Ibid, April 3, 1868, September 8, 1868, February 3, 1869.
[237] Ibid, February 6, 1871, March 22, 1871.

dollar range per month, though Bedford also employed some hands at lower rates late, perhaps young laborers or part-time help.[238] White laborers received greater compensation than their black counterparts; a white worker like James Remington of New York, who handled Bedford's stock, was paid a dollar a day in the late 1860s.[239] By the 1870s the going rate of employment for white herdsmen was thirty dollars a month, meaning a pay disparity of roughly two to one in favor of white labor compared to black existed throughout the period.[240] This pay disparity reveals the strong financial motivation white large farm owners had to continue to utilize African American labor as a primary vehicle through which to regulate and profit from the agroecosystem. Significantly, the overall trend toward higher labor costs also created a larger incentive to shift toward less labor-intensive forms of production, favoring livestock over some crops.

For their wages laborers on Bedford's farm performed a wide variety of tasks, each of which played some role in shaping the agroecosystem. They selectively logged woodlands to create pasture or fields or for lumber, hauled logs to local mills and constructed and repaired the fences that were frequently knocked or burned down.[241] Their lumbering activities also provided the raw materials for stables that housed Bedford's prized livestock.[242]

After cutting down trees and hauling them out of the clearing Bedford and his labor force "cleaned up after the wood choppers" often by burning the brush and scrub growth.[243] After burning, hands plowed the land to sow in crops.[244] Fire also functioned

[238] Ibid, April 1, 1873, April 20, 1876, February 11, 1878 and in "Memoranda" at back of 1879 Diary dated March 11, 1879.
[239] Ibid, April 3, 1869, June 22, 1869.
[240] Ibid, September 28, 1871, September 13, 1872, September 12-13, 1873.
[241] Ibid, January 29, 1878, February 28, 1868, December 7, 1871, February 24, 1877.
[242] Ibid, January to August 1872.
[243] Ibid, April 15, 1875.

as a weapon against unwelcome species as acres were often burned when a farmer transitioned a section from one crop to another as when Bedford burned a field of hemp stubble and weeds before sowing it in rye and timothy.[245] Fire also cleared underbrush in orchards in order that other crops like potatoes could be cultivated in their shade. The pastureland that was such a prominent feature of the agroecosystem was also influenced by fire, farmers wielded it in "cleaning up trash off of the grass."[246] Used for this function of releasing grass for rapid growth by removing competing species, returning nutrients to the soil, and the associated beneficial effects on herbivores, have analogs in the natural and native histories of the region. Essentially, Inner Bluegrass farmers modified and integrated natural processes into their system of control over the agricultural environment.

African American labor continued to play an important role in the region's production of both food and cash crops after the Civil War. Unsurprisingly, given corn's prominent place in the agroecosystem, its growth and harvest accounted for a large portion of their work. Planting was an important annual activity that could span weeks in the spring, and fighting the weeds that constantly encroached on the fields meant days running plows through fields multiple times per growing season. Bedford hired extra laborers for peak periods like cutting the crop and paid by weight.[247] Bedford's increased use of corn planters, often run by his nephew Eddie, over the course of the 1870s acted to decrease his labor requirements, though in many cases he continued to "have a lot of hands covering the corn with hoes" if the ground was less than ideal.[248]

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[244] Ibid, February 26, 1878.
[245] Ibid, October 29, 1875.
[246] Ibid, May 5, 1875.
[247] Ibid, September 23, 1869, May 7, 13, 28, 1873 June 12, 1873
[248] Ibid, April 22, 1879, June 6, 1879.

As Bedford placed greater and greater emphasis on wheat culture over time, his work force spent more time and effort on the crop as well. African American laborers sowed and harrowed the seed and they continued to play a major role in processing and stacking the wheat even after Bedford began to utilize reapers to cut the plants and threshers to process them.[249] Running the machines however was a job reserved for white men, often other local farmers or his nephew Eddie.[250] By hauling threshed wheat to the Hutchison railroad station to be shipped to local, regional and national markets laborers demonstrated their importance to profiting from the agroecosystem via this increasingly important cash crop.[251]

Harvesting hay resembled the general process used for wheat. A white laborer typically ran the machine and hands worked at stacking the crop.[252] What grass was stripped for seed required relatively little labor. It was sown in the spring and stripped in the summer utilizing a specialized seed stripper, which both white and black workers used.[253] Crops like rye and oats, relatively minor products in the scheme of Bedford's farm, nonetheless posed semi-annual labor requirements from planting to harvest.[254] Orchards, and particularly gardens, received a great deal of attention from farmers and their labor force. The size and diversity of gardens meant weeds were a constant problem that was addressed through hands-on labor.[255] The women of the farm, white women included, often took the lead in overseeing the day-to-day operations of many gardens.[256]

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[249] Ibid, February 14, 1867, September 30, 1872, June 30-July 3, 1873, July 16, 1874.
[250] Ibid, June 18, 1874.
[251] Ibid, July 18, 1879.
[252] Ibid, July 11, 1876.
[253] Ibid, March 13, 1876, June 13, 1876.
[254] For rye example see Bedford, Diaries, October 6, 1870, June 19, 1871 for oats see March 23, 1871, July 10-12, 1871.
[255] Ibid, July 2, 1868.
[256] Ibid, March 2, 1871.

Gardens or orchards could also be spaces of confrontation between laborers and exotic threats to a smoothly functioning agroecosystem, like the Colorado potato bug.[257]

Hemp culture continued to rely on African American labor, much as it did during the antebellum period, though on a shrinking number of farms. Bedford hired large numbers of hands to deal with seasonal peaks in labor requirements. Individuals were paid according to the amount of work done. Bedford took care to "measure off the acre blocks, setting up stakes every 250 ft." when sowing the crop in order to accurately judge how much hemp each hand cut later in the year.[258] Cutting continued to be done by hand often in taxing physical conditions such that Bedford complained that it was "very warm and dusty in the hemp and my throat is very sore" after a brief visit to check on his laborers progress.[259] The workers themselves, who spent long days in the environment, naturally experienced greater effects from these conditions than their visiting supervisor. The number of African Americans employed at breaking Bedford's hemp crop to separate the usable fiber from the husk varied each winter from around ten to almost thirty depending on his success recruiting workers from the countryside or Paris.[260] Breaking hemp was extremely taxing labor that often left hands cracked and bleeding in addition to muscles worn out at the end of a workday.[261]

Given the difficult labor associated with hemp culture, African American agricultural workers expected higher rates of compensation and continued a tradition of negotiation within the system that stretched back to the task system of the antebellum period. In the new system of wage labor, workers approached Bedford when they were

[257] Ibid, June 8, 1874, May 31, 1875.
[258] Ibid, May 16, 1877.
[259] Ibid, August 23, 1875.
[260] Ibid, January 6, 1876, March 27, 1879.
[261] Ibid, January 7, 1876.

"dissatisfied with the price of cutting hemp," which tellingly led him to comment, "Mr. Wilson, I fear, is changeable or the hands are lying to me."[262] This shows the new bargaining position free labor had in relation to their employers and hints at employer collusion in maintaining wage levels. The trend in these negotiations was generally toward slightly higher wages over time. Combined with a falling price for hemp in local markets, rising labor costs because of African American hesitancy, and white refusal, to perform the laborious tasks associated with the crop led to some farmers abandoning its cultivation.[263]

To a greater extent for livestock than crops, Bedford employed white labor to manage his investment after the Civil War. He hired men like James Remington, Walter Reid, Robert Parks and John Tanner as "herdsmen" to work with his stock for extended periods.[264] Tanner in particular worked for Bedford for years during the 1870s and performed a wide variety of tasks including occasionally working in the fields, but his focus was on managing the livestock. He rotated herds between pastures and between properties and to local markets. Tanner also acted as Bedford's agent by scouting the countryside for promising stock to purchase.[265] When Bedford participated in distant national markets, like those in New York and Pennsylvania, Tanner often travelled as a middleman to negotiate deals for his employer.[266] Bedford's nephew Eddie also performed a large portion of the labor associated with livestock.

Bedford's large holdings of cattle, sheep, hogs and horses meant there was more work than a couple of white laborers could do, however, so much still fell to African

[262] Ibid, August 7, 1878.
[263] Ibid, January 27, 1877, February 15, 1878, January 21, 1879.
[264] Ibid, April 3, 1869, September 28, 1871, September 13, 1872, September 12-13, 1873.
[265] Ibid, December 31, 1873 for example.
[266] Ibid, October 6, 1875.

American hands. This seems to have been particularly true for the male children of families living on Bedford's farm. Billy, Jo, and Ben Small, sons of George Small who rented a cabin on the property, often took care of feeding the animals or moving them in and out of the stables or fields, as the 1878 incident described above demonstrates.[267] The regular hands on Bedford's farm also took part in annual events like the hog slaughter and processing each fall and contributed in many other ways to the livestock raised in the agroecosystem.

George Small and his family provide an illustration of a system of renting that in some ways resembles the larger African American hamlets found on the estates of large Bluegrass farmers and in others resembled the system of tenancy that developed in by the 1880s. The Smalls moved into a newly constructed cabin, made of local lumber with a stone chimney and glass windows, on Bedford's property in January 1873. Rent cost five or six dollar per month.[268] George was listed as a brick maker in the 1870 Census, and was 51 years old when he moved his family onto Bedford's farm. His son, Jo (12) was listed as a farm laborer by the Census. His wife Martha (38), daughters Fannie (14), Hannah (8), and Ella (1), and youngest son Ben (9), completed the family residing together in 1870.[269] While the family lived on Bedford's farm an older son, Billy, moved back in with the family and joined his brothers laboring for their landlord.[270] Father George appears to have worked for Bedford occasionally, but his sons acted as part of his permanent labor force while they lived there.

[267] Ibid, February 8, 1878.
[268] Ibid, December 25, 1875, September 7, 1879.
[269] 1870 United States Census of Population.
[270] Bedford, Diaries, July 14, 1873.

On September 26, 1873 "George Small was found dead on R[ail] R[oad], torn to pieces;" Bedford speculated it "most likely he was killed and out on the R[ail] R[oad] Track to hide his murder," but did not comment further on his suspicions.[271] He did, however, begin to note his frustration that "Billy Small [was] not at work today" a mere three days later.[272] Left without a primary breadwinner the Small family chose to stay on living and working on Bedford's land for a half decade, until the disagreement over whether or not Ben Small left imported sheep out in the cold of a February night in 1878.[273] Bedford secured a stable portion of his labor force that was capable of doing much of the day-to-day work around the farm by providing housing and a small plot of land for a reasonable rate of rent.[274] That he owned the land and cabin, kept close record of items he sold them on credit, and provided the bulk of their wages meant the Smalls lived very much under Bedford's influence and the power in the employee/employer and tenant/landlord relationships rested almost entirely on Bedford's side. This could not be more obvious than when Ben and Jo Small were fired and kicked off the property after almost five years of labor because Ben "lied" about his care for imported sheep and Jo backed his claim. The single opinion that counted was Bedford's, and in much the same manner that his antebellum view of slaves hinged on their value as agricultural implements, he judged his wage laborers and tenants by how useful they were implementing his vision. Valuable sheep left out over night were not a part of the vision thus Ben had to go. The insubordination of Jo supporting his bother was another unacceptable insult to Bedford's control so he was fired as well. The power relationships

[271] Ibid, September 26, 1873.
[272] Ibid, September 29, 1873.
[273] Ibid, February 8, 1878.
[274] Ibid, it seems Bedford might not have charged the Small's rent at all as I came across no mention of it.

evident in Bedford's relationship with the Small family were mirrored in an emerging system of tenancy that was evident by 1880.

Some Bourbon County farmers began to transition toward tenant labor, which existed alongside continued employment of wage labor. The new system granted tenants a share of the crop in an attempt to get more work out of their employees. The rise in tenancy can be seen in Bedford's diaries as he outlined the terms for each of his tenants each year. The terms were variable depending on the resources the tenant brought to the table, but an example should give some idea; the tenant received use of "the house in the Kenny pasture, also a garden free of charge, for which he is to cultivate in Tobacco a plot of land Supposed to be about 8 acres, also a field to be cultivated in corn lying east of the Kenny pasture, the corn and tobacco to be cultivated on equal halves, I am to furnish a Plow and Harrow and Horses if necessary to work in breaking and cultivating the crop."[275] Thus, by allowing the laborer a half stake in his farms agricultural production, Bedford and other Bluegrass farmers sought to create a more stable workforce to bring production, and their profits, back up to pre-Civil War levels.

If tenants hoped for an equal share of the profits or to enter a truly equal partnership with the landowners though, their hopes were often dashed. As the meticulous accounts of tenant debt kept by Bedford demonstrate, they often became dependent on their landlord to supply basic necessities to get their crops in the ground and keep their families alive until harvests. In years with low prices or crop failures tenants could slip into a cycle of debt. The new system placed a greater emphasis on producing a cash crop that could pay off these debts and burley tobacco slowly came to

[275] Bedford, Diary 1884, Box 2. "Memo at the back"

occupy that role after its introduction into the Bluegrass in 1868.[276] Combined with the decline in hemp production, this change amounted to a slow revolution in Inner Bluegrass agriculture. The dominant cash crop changed in part because of the transformation of the labor system and the choices blacks made in this new system. African American hesitancy to perform the dirty and difficult work of hemp production contributed to its decline, and the rise of tenancy (itself a response blacks' different priorities for their labor) contributed to burley tobacco's ascendancy. In no small measure then, the choices of the formerly enslaved black labor force determined the path of Inner Bluegrass agriculture in the post-war period.

African Americans living in Bourbon County, and in the Inner Bluegrass region generally were absolutely central to the agricultural success of the region both before and after the Civil War. They formed the core of the work force that implemented the diversified agriculture of the area, and it was largely their efforts that built the Bluegrass into one of the richest regions in the state. Through a careful examination of demographic trends it becomes clear that upon emancipation, African Americans asserted their new freedom by focusing on institution and community building, which often centered on the county's largest town, Paris, more than they focused on maintaining or increasing agricultural production in the countryside. This shift in focus led to increased independence for African Americans and even the modest beginnings of property accumulation.

[276] Clark 396, also note that Bedford makes specific provisions for tobacco production in his agreement with his tenant.

Nevertheless, Bedford and his peers continued to view their African American labor force as little more than agricultural implements in the decades after the Civil War, though now the implements had grown more intractable and harder to manage.

Chapter Four: The Georgic Ethic, Voluntary Organizations and Inner Bluegrass Agriculture

The landholding class played an important role in creating the Inner Bluegrass agroecosystem. Bluegrass farmers implemented their vision of a productive agrarian landscape through their decisions about what crops their labor force would cultivate, what livestock it would raise, and what woods it would clear. To frame their role in Odum's terminology, landowners shaped the agroecosystem via "external and goal-oriented" control based on "artificial rather than natural selection" and reduced diversity "in order to maximize [the] yield" of certain species.[277] As biogeographer Joy Tivy argued "the farmer works within the limits of his inherited or acquired cultural and technical abilities to achieve the 'best fit' between the crops he chooses to grow and the physical habitat…the farmer is an essential ecological variable in influencing or determining the composition, the functioning and the stability" of the agroecosystem that he or she helped create.[278] The decisions farmers made to shape the landscape were directly tied to their economic prospects and subsequently received their utmost attention and debate.

Farmers' efforts to make the best and most profitable decisions led them to create and join a wide variety of voluntary organizations and associations. Individuals pooled their resources to import the highest quality livestock to the region or to participate in distant markets. County agricultural societies formed to promote "improved" practices and played important social and economic roles in the area. Even specialized ventures like thoroughbred horse breeding and racing benefited from an organizational structure

[277] Odum, 5.
[278] Joy Tivy, *Agricultural Ecology* (Harlow, Essex, England: Longman Scientific & Technical, 1990), 2.

designed to emphasize both agricultural improvement and access to markets for local agricultural products. Mid-nineteenth-century Inner Bluegrass farmers were far from individualists narrowly concerned with the production of their single farms, instead they formed a rich community that built organizational structures to define and disseminate information on "improved" agriculture in a local context and provide market access for the region's farms.

Georgic Ethic & Improvement

In *Notes from the Ground: Science, Soil, and Society in the American Countryside* (2009) Benjamin R. Cohen introduced a useful conceptual framework for understanding antebellum Americans' connection to the environment. He characterized agrarian Americans' relationship with their land as embodying a georgic ethic. Based on Virgil's *Georgics*, this ethic differs from the pastoral ethic often found in the works of artists and philosophers of the time period. While "Grand portraits of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century America, of flowing fields and frolicking planters, speak to the idyll of a pastoral landscape," they obscure the actual relationship most Americans had with the land.[279] The georgic ethic was based on recognition of the land as a site of labor, not idyll. The vast majority of early Americans, and Inner Bluegrass residents, developed their understanding of the environment, and their role in it, through their labor.[280] The georgic ethic provides a lens to focus on this lived relationship with the land that characterized nineteenth-century Kentuckians and the agroecosystem they created.

Agricultural improvement was firmly tied to the georgic ethic. "Improvement" was not a one-size-fits-all proposition packaged by scientific "experts," instead it

[279] Benjamin R. Cohen, *Notes from the Ground: Science, Soil, and Society in the American Countryside* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 9.
[280] Cohen 18-28.

represented an on-going dialogue over best practices based on local experience and experiments. Inner Bluegrass farmers' experience taught they could achieve "improvement" only through human labor and ingenuity in the natural world. Indeed, as Cohen demonstrated, early scientific agriculture grew out of an existing rural culture founded on praxis-based knowledge of their land and widely accepted improvement values. In *Larding the Lean Earth: Soil and Society in Nineteenth-Century America* (2002) Steven Stoll defined "improvement" as applied to mid nineteenth-century agrarian reformers as embracing "the changes that enabled land to be cultivated in the most prosperous possible way over the longest possible time. It meant to invest in something unique in the nineteenth century—a highly managed natural environment, an ecology at once profoundly disturbed by humans and made more productive by them."[281] The goal of permanence motivated farmers to look beyond a single year's crop or profit to creating a viable long-term system. Stoll focused on Pennsylvania and South Carolina, two seaboard states undergoing emigration prior to the Civil War, for his study of agricultural improvers, but Inner Bluegrass farmers embodied many of the same characteristics. They also sought to create a diverse and shifting landscape capable of producing agricultural profits indefinitely by aggressively manipulating the environment to promote selected biological processes, while suppressing others.

Inner Bluegrass landholders applied their georgic perspective to their improvement efforts. The decisions they made, and saw carried out, to shape the agroecosystem, through their own labor or through the labor of others, were informed by a lifetime working on the land. Farmers' faith that their efforts would create positive change in the agricultural system grew from personal experience. "Improvement" was a

[281] Steven Stoll, *Larding the Lean Earth,* 21.

nebulous concept that encompassed issues ranging from livestock bloodlines and seed varieties to agricultural machinery and stone fences. Farmers defined "improvement" for themselves on a local basis, while drawing from regional and national trends. The ultimate test of any agricultural breed, technique, or technology was its' performance in, and impact on, the local environment. Inner Bluegrass farmers based their improvement strategies on what they found to be effective through their work on the land and communicated their successes and failures to their peers.

It bears mentioning that agricultural laborers' relationship with the earth was formed from a similar georgic perspective. To an even greater extent than was true for prosperous farmers who employed slave or wage labor, workers' knowledge of the agroecosystem developed directly from intimate, hands-on experience. Employers often recognized, and seemingly respected, the knowledge their workers gained in the fields. Men like Edwin G. Bedford, who viewed and treated African American "hands" as little more than unreliable, irritating, yet indispensible farm implements, nevertheless regularly based their evaluations of crop production on the knowledge and opinions of black workers. Bedford would not likely have acknowledged any respect for the agricultural insights of black laborers, yet he made predictions like "I think [the Pryor hemp field] will make more to the acre" than the previous year because the "hands say it is better."[282]

Despite the shared georgic ethic that defined both laborers' and landowners' relationship with the environment, the landowners' view took on a magnified importance as they occupied the privileged position to enact their vision of the agroecosystem. Each landowning farmer wielded control over the region's rural environment in proportion to the acres they possessed. Thus, the decisions of the proprietor of a ten-acre farm made

[282] Bedford, Diaries, August 21, 1879.

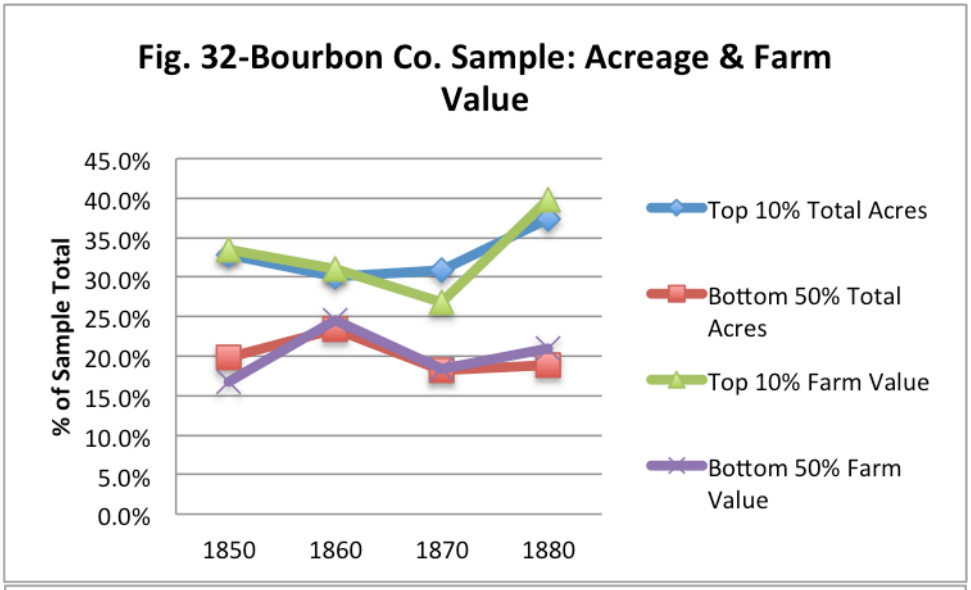
one-tenth the impact of the choices made by the owner of a hundred-acre farm, which made one-tenth the impact on the ecology of the region of those made by a farmer with one thousand acres.

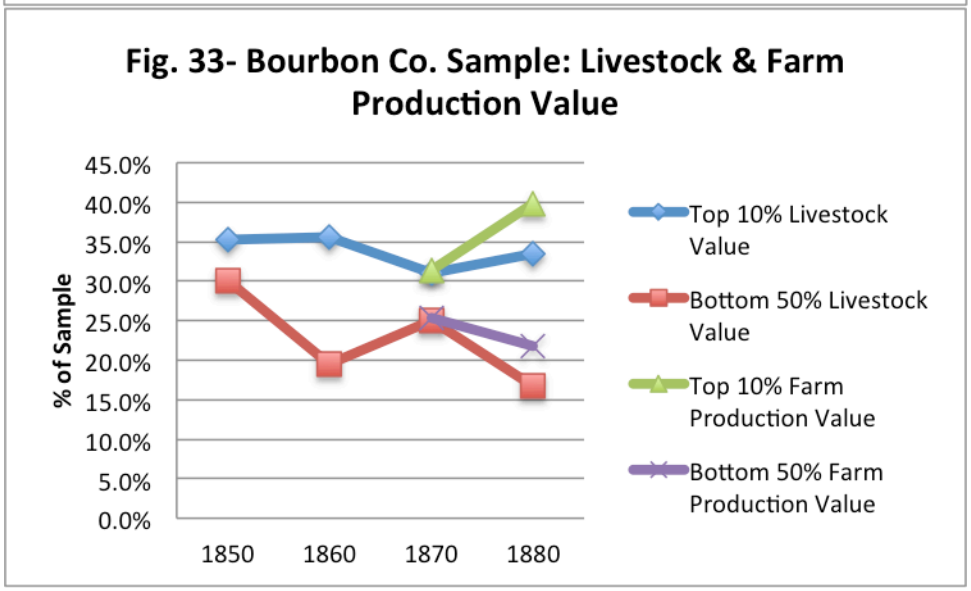
Economic inequality in the Inner Bluegrass meant a small number of men controlled an outsized portion of the landscape and exerted inordinate influence over the agroecosystem. Richard Troutman's study of antebellum agriculture in Kentucky found a tremendous concentration of wealth among the large slaveholders, a group he defined as owning more than ten people and comprising approximately 25% of the slaveholding class, that exceeded the wealth of all non-slaveholders combined.[283] A similar pattern existed for control over improved lands, crop production, and livestock.[284]

Examining a sample of Bourbon County Agricultural Census returns from 1850 to 1880 reveals the statewide pattern of economic inequality Troutman described existed during the antebellum period and continued after the Civil War in the Inner Bluegrass. Rather than recreate Troutman's categories, this analysis examines the resources controlled by the top 10% of farmers from the samples compared to those controlled by the bottom 50%. The upper echelon owned more than 30% of the total acres in the sample for every census and peaked at over 37% by 1880. The bottom half controlled 23% of the land in 1860, but this figure fell under 20% in 1870 and 1880. Unsurprisingly, the farm value curve closely mirrors the acreage curve.[285] The top tenth also owned a third or more of total livestock values and accounted for up to 40% of the total value of farm production in the sample. The bottom half of farmers saw their proportion of livestock wealth decline precipitously from 30% in 1850 to just over 16% by 1880 and

[283] Troutman, 39.
[284] Troutman, 54.
[285] See Figure 32 "Acreage & Farm Value."

their share of overall farm production value seemed on a similar downward trend from 1870 to 1880.[286] Livestock and farm production values for the top 10% of farmers and the bottom 50% most closely approached each other in 1870 before separating again over the next decade, which hints at the problems elite farmers encountered after the Civil War, but also at their subsequent recovery and expansion of their control over the agroecosystem.[287]





[286] See Figure 33 "Livestock and Farm Production Value."
[287] See Figure 32 & 33 "Livestock and Farm Production Value" and "Acreage & Farm Value."

In short, statistical evidence supports the logical position that elite farmers played a disproportionately large role in shaping the rural environment. Outside of their large acreages, successful farmers also carried a great deal of cultural credibility. These were economic, social and political leaders in the community and people emulated their examples. Elite landholders effectively controlled or influenced the ecology of vast stretches of the rural landscape; thus, understanding the elites' view and use of the land is essential to understanding the Inner Bluegrass agroecosystem. The agricultural organizations these men formed, and joined, embodied their attitudes and promoted their vision.

Agricultural Markets

One feature common to the variety of agricultural associations found in the Inner Bluegrass during the nineteenth century was an emphasis on market access. Whether groups of two or three neighbors who sold their stock together or the hundreds of members from different counties who made up the Kentucky Association for the Improvement of Breeds of Stock, each organization aimed at entering or creating a market for their agricultural products. Bluegrass farmers and groups bought and sold livestock and crops local, regional, national and even international markets. At each level, organizational structures provided advantages to individual farmers. Their successful participation in these markets provided the rationale for the choices landowners made about crops, livestock and land use. In a sense then, market forces indirectly modified the agroecosystem through the proxy of the landholders and their perceptions.

Associations of Stockmen

The economic motivations that prompted the creation of Inner Bluegrass agricultural organizations can be seen most clearly in the groups formed specifically to facilitate importing or exporting livestock. The North Kentucky Cattle Importing Company provides an antebellum example. Subscribers from Bourbon, Fayette and Clark counties met in Paris during March 1853 and raised $25,000 in capital stock. Representatives of the company then travelled to England to procure world-class cattle to sell at auction upon their return. The Company only sold to Kentuckians and buyers were required to keep the animals in the state for at least one year. Proceeds from the auction totaled over $55,000, which demonstrated the appetite central Kentucky farmers had for such "improved" stock and netted the organization's subscribers a healthy return on their investment.[288] By coming together in an organizational structure, a group of Inner Bluegrass farmers effectively spread the risks of participating in an international market for superior livestock and aimed to improve the quality of animals living in the local agroecosystem. The auction's stipulations that only Kentucky farmers could bid and animals must remain in the state for a year demonstrates the group's desire that their imports benefit their community.

Determining whether individual buyers at the auction profited from their purchases is more difficult, but the evidence speaks to the trial-and-error nature of agricultural improvement. For example, "Bedford and Co. of Bourbon County" purchased a bull named Diamond for $6,001, but the imported bull proved impotent.[289] Breeding cattle was an inexact science and such setbacks were a part of the business.

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[288] "The Introduction of Imported Cattle in Kentucky: Extracts from the Herd Book of the North Kentucky Cattle Importing Company, 1853," Register of the Kentucky State Historical Society, XXIX (1931), 400-401.
[289] Troutman, *Plantation Life*, 63.

Even when Bedford felt "all [his] hopes are gone" after the unexpected death of the 2nd Duke of Geneva, a prized bull, he did not abandon or decrease his breeding operations, instead he imported the 5th Duke of Geneva from the same breeder and bloodlines in upstate New York.[290] Bedford's successful georgic experience breeding the 2nd Duke with heifers in the Inner Bluegrass prior to his death, both his own and on a stud-fee basis for other farmers, encouraged his decision to buy the 5th Duke and insert him in the role of short horn stud.

Bluegrass farmers often joined together in livestock ventures, forming companies to buy and sell stock both locally and nationally. Bedford and his neighbor John B. Kennedy partnered to form "Bedford & Kennedy," "B & K & Co," or "B K & Co.," as Bedford alternately referred to the group.[291] At times this was functionally a two-man organization that purchased cattle locally and fed them on their pastures for a season before selling them in northeastern markets.[292] Often however, more farmers joined the group, particularly for the marketing benefits it created. Beginning in 1868, Bedford recorded annual trips to cities like Pittsburgh, Harrisburg, New York, Philadelphia, Albany and Buffalo where he sold Inner Bluegrass cattle, both his own and others', under the auspices of "B & K & Co." Equally important, he recorded the trips of other farmers sent as agents to sell stock for the group. Having different representatives of Inner Bluegrass cattle farmers capable of adjusting to market conditions in these northern cities multiple times throughout the season allowed members to spread risk and participate in more distant markets than they could have individually.

[290] Bedford, Diaries, June 14, 1868, January 8, 1869.
[291] Ibid, June 24, 1868, November 20, 1869, June 19, 1878.
[292] Ibid, June 1868.

Despite these advantages, success and high profits were by no means assured and the efforts of such organizations were subject to the volatility of agricultural prices. Bedford's record of Inner Bluegrass farmers in northeastern markets during 1868 demonstrates both the obstacles they faced and how the group attempted to overcome them. Bedford and a herd of "B & K & Co." cattle left Paris on a train for Covington on June 16 and travelled through Pittsburgh, Harrisburg, Philadelphia and New York City and tested the livestock markets in each city.[293] He sold a few in New York at the 100 St. Market Day, though he complained "such a day will be remembered by all who have cattle to sell…The cattle have made heavy loses for their owners. I hope never again to be in such a market." Bedford sold the majority on his return trip through Philadelphia where he found prices more favorable, if still less than ideal; "No life in the cattle market, very poor offering to buy at any price. Cattle are selling from 5 to 8 ½ [cents per pound] and very dull. I sold this evening at 8 ¾ cents to Mowery and Smith" for a total of $7993.62.[294] While this trip might have failed to live up to his expectations, his numerous stops in different cities decreased the likelihood that he would be forced to sell the organization's cattle in a catastrophic market.

The group further reduced the risk of temporary and localized market conditions undermining the value of their agricultural production by selling herds of the organization's cattle throughout the season. Bedford's record of the reports members made when they returned from their selling trips reveal a mixed bag of results; "Mr. Rowe came home from Albany" in July and reported "the cattle better than last week and

[293] Ibid, June 16-July 1, 1868.
[294] Ibid, June 28-29, 1868

all sold or will be," but by August the "news from the cattle trade is very bad. Berry [Bedford] writes to stop shipping for the present."[295]

In late September Edwin Bedford again boarded a train headed north with his and other farmers' cattle following close behind. On this trip he tested the markets in Pittsburgh, Buffalo and Albany. In Albany Bedford simultaneously complained and boasted the "cattle trade is very dull, there is no good cattle but the Ky [sic] stock," but ultimately "sold out [his] cattle…at 9 cents [per pound] and 1.00 [dollar] off the head" before he travelled to Buffalo.[296] There he predicted the "prospect is very bad this week for the trade" and he unhappily sold "the Proctor cattle at 8 ¾ cents and 50 cents off the head" to a New Yorker and "the Beakley cattle at $98 per head" to a Kentucky farmer.[297] Bedford then returned to Albany where he "sold the Ashbrook cattle…at 9 cents and $100 off" with "the black oxen thrown in" and his brother Benjamin Bedford's lot at 8.4 cents per pound.[298]

The group of farmers organized into "B & K & Co." pooled their resources in order to directly participate in wider markets with less risk than would have been possible for individuals. The damage done when "cattle hit a very bad market" could be calamitous for a single farmer whose herd might represent a significant portion of his or her wealth and an important opportunity to realize a profit from their farm's production. Distance only compounded the problem. When livestock hit a bad market in Paris or Lexington they could turn around and return to the farm in hopes of a price rebound at very little cost to the farmer. However, when Bluegrass livestock hit a bad market or a

[295] Ibid, July 8 and August 19, 1868
[296] Ibid, September 27, 29, 1868
[297] Ibid, October 1-3, 1868.
[298] Ibid, October 5-6, 1868.

series of bad markets in New York, for example, returning home to wait out the low prices was an unattractive option since a significant investment had already been made to ship these cattle to this market and it would be equally expensive to send them back to Kentucky, where prices were presumably lower from the start. With few alternatives, farmers sold for the best price they could get and took the loss. More often, the potential hazards facing an individual Bluegrass farmer trying to sell his stock in distant markets discouraged such risky behavior. Bedford, Kennedy and Company spread the negative impacts of cattle arriving in bad markets over a number of farmers and shared the benefits from those that arrived in good markets. This group, and others like it, provided the organizational framework through which certain products of the Inner Bluegrass agroecosystem reached national markets.

On the local level, farmers often held joint sales in order to attract more buyers. Joint sales were an adaptation of the more common practice of individual agricultural sales held by elite farmers. The auctions on famous Bluegrass properties like Woodburn farm in Woodford County drew hundreds of visitors from neighboring counties and distant states to bid on fine livestock.[299] However, successful farmers of less renown than R.A. Alexander, the proprietor of Woodburn, did not attract the same interest in their sales and sometimes collaborated with a friend or neighbor to auction off their products in hopes of drawing more bidders and driving up prices.[300] Similarly, in some cases farmers split the cost of renting a convenient venue like the Bourbon County Agricultural

[299] *Ohio Farmer*. September 13, 1856. "Kentucky Stock Sales." *Spirit of the Times*. July 4, 1857. "R.A. Alexander's Sale of Short-horned Cattle." *Spirit of the Times*, June 12, 1858. "The Woodburn Stud Farm." *The Cultivator*. July 1859. "Mr. Alexander's Annual Stock Sale." *Spirit of the Times*. June 15, 1859. "Great Sale of Kentucky Blood Stock." *Spirit of the Times*. July 7, 1860. "Visit to R.A. Alexander's." *New York Times*. August 31, 1860. "Turf Intelligence: Great Sale of Blood Horses in Woodford County, Ky.." Bedford, Diaries, June 25, 1873.
[300] Bedford, Diaries, October 19, 1876.

Society Fair grounds in hopes of increasing traffic to their sale.[301] Temporarily joining with other farmers to sell their livestock and crops in the same location might seem insignificant, but these basic organizations shared the goal of facilitating market access to maintain the profitability of the agroecosystem.

Kentucky Hemp Producers' Association

In addition to the associations designed to facilitate aspects of the livestock trade, elite Central Kentucky farmers also created organizations to promote favored crops. The Hemp Growers Association, also known as the Kentucky Hemp Producers' Association, formed in 1879 to encourage cultivation of the formerly important cash crop and provides an example of just such a group.[302] The Bureau of Agriculture, Horticulture, and Statistics of the State of Kentucky included correspondence between John R. Proctor and P.P. Johnston, the President of the Kentucky Hemp Producers' Association based in Lexington, in their 1880 annual report. The editors from the Kentucky Geological Survey prefaced the farmers' letters by boldly stating "indications are unmistakable that hemp-growing in Central Kentucky is to resume the position it once held…Indeed, everything would indicate that it is to be grown in the future on a more extended scale than at any time hitherto." They recommended farmers trust in Proctor, who wrote the bulk of the discussion, claiming "there is not a man in Kentucky who has such accurate and thorough information on the subject."[303] For his part, Proctor wrote hoping to aid "however little, so commendable a cause" as that undertaken by the Kentucky Hemp Producers' Association.

[301] Ibid, May 10, 1873, August 5-8, 1873. Bedford and "Mr. Hall" rented the grounds together for $50. Bedford and other farmers also rented the grounds for a sale in October 1874.
[302] Paris *True Kentuckian*, December 24, 1879.
[303] Third Report 210.

Their cause was nothing less than the revitalization of a rapidly declining agricultural industry. By 1880 the Inner Bluegrass produced little more than one-third the hemp harvested in 1850, a development historian James F. Hopkins traced to a declining market share for hemp bagging and rope as jute bagging made from flax fiber and "iron hoops" became the preferred bailing materials for southern cotton planters, in addition to labor difficulties.[304] Proctor's 1880 essay on the potential he saw for hemp culture presented his argument for the crop in the familiar context of agricultural improvement. He warned that Kentucky possessed no innate immunity to the problems of "some of the older States" that left "large areas of once fertile lands now so exhausted as not to repay for the cultivation" and already "a pernicious system of agriculture" threatened the continued productivity of the rural landscape.[305] Proctor argued hemp could help slow or reverse the declining fertility of fields previously sown in grain for export and cautioned farmers against adopting tobacco in large quantities as he viewed it as an extremely toxic crop for soil health. He marshaled the "Chemical investigations" of Sir R. Kane and Dr. Robert Peter to support his contention that not only did hemp remove fewer nutrients from the soil than other crops, most of the nutrients it did remove were simply cycled to another part of the farm via the rotting and breaking process. Proctor knew his audience too well to rely entirely on abstract, "scientific" agricultural knowledge and so clinched his argument for the beneficial effects hemp could have on the agroecosystem with a nod to farmers' georgic sensibilities by suggesting the truth of his position "is made manifest by the experience of the hemp-growers of Kentucky, where hemp has been grown for a

[304] See Figure 12 "IBG Hemp (lbs)" and Hopkins, 198-201.
[305] John R. Proctor to Hon. P.P. Johnston, President of the Kentucky Hemp Producers' Association, Lexington, Kentucky. Published in the *Third Annual Report of the Bureau of Agriculture, Horticulture, and Statistics of the State of Kentucky* (Frankfort KY: Kentucky Bureau of Agriculture, Horticulture and Statistics, 1880), 210.

number of years on the same ground, without an appreciable deterioration in the fertility of the soil."[306]

No matter the agroecological benefits, a crop with such high labor requirements had to offer an opportunity for profit to induce landholders to devote acreage to its' cultivation. To this end, both Proctor and the Kentucky Hemp Producers' Association promoted the bright future of hemp, based on recent technological advances that allowed hemp to be spun with flax "into yarns, for fine twines, twines for binding grain…towelings, and fabrics of various kinds" in addition to its traditional uses for bagging and cordage. However, the improved machinery capable of spinning hemp with other fibers into blends to form more delicate products also required an "improved" method of treating the cut hemp to produce a finer quality fiber. Proctor believed the key innovation of water-rotting would allow Inner Bluegrass farmers to break into the east coast markets for textile-quality hemp, which were largely supplied by imported hemp from places like Russia and Italy. Proctor predicted Inner Bluegrass farmers could double the value of their hemp production by abandoning the traditional dew-rotting process that left the crop in the field for a couple of months to allow the elements to begin to break down the resin that connected the stalk to the fiber in favor of a slightly more labor intensive process of water-rotting that submerged the plants in specially excavated tanks.[307]

In their excitement at identifying new markets and their rush to implement "improved" practices that would allow them to participate in them, both Proctor and the Kentucky Hemp Producers' Association overlooked how water-rotting hemp appeared

[306] Proctor to Johnston in *Third Annual Report*, 211.
[307] Proctor to Johnston in *Third Annual Report*, 214.

from a georgic perspective. A Navy contractor introduced water-rotting techniques during the antebellum period and promised Bluegrass farmers higher profits that would more than offset the increased labor requirements, but the experiment ended in failure and many local residents believed the rotting pools caused disease.[308] According to the georgic knowledge of almost every farmer, dew-rotting was the appropriate technique to prepare hemp for breaking and if it could not be grown profitably using what they judged to be the best-fit practices of local agriculture then its' decline was unavoidable.[309] The Hemp Producers' Association improvement efforts could have overcome this georgic bias against what the majority of farmers viewed as inferior methods only if it enjoyed sufficient success by implementing its ideas to provide local examples of how these techniques could be profitably incorporated into the agroecosystem. Unfortunately for the Hemp Producers' Association, their rosy predictions about the future markets for hemp were off the mark and successful examples of their particular brand of agricultural improvement declined over time.

County Agricultural Societies

In *Agrarian Kentucky* (1977) Thomas D. Clark described the "agricultural society idea" that appeared and thrived in Central Kentucky from 1820 to 1880 as combining the functions of "pressure, scientific, and social groups." Clark emphasized their political role arguing they were the vehicles through which "prevailing agrarian sentiments were translated to governors and legislators."[310] Others placed a greater weight on American

[308] Hopkins, 160-165.
[309] Another flaw experienced Inner Bluegrass farmers might have found with water-rotting as "improvement" was that moving the partial decomposition process necessary to break down the resin binding the fiber to the stalk to pools from the fields the hemp was grown in undermined one of the major ecological advantages the crop had over grains and tobacco. A greater portion of the plants' nutrients cycled directly back into the system via the dew-rotting process.
[310] Clark, *Agrarian Kentucky*, 37.

agricultural societies' role in promoting agricultural improvement.[311] Cohen identified a georgic orientation in the Virginia organizations he studied, an outlook shared by those formed by Kentucky farmers. He believed "County-based agricultural societies…offered community members of the time a site for organizing, discussing, and debating the merits of field experiments while structuring activities to impose a more focused gaze on local lands."[312] Cohen argued "civic societies established to promote local values and agricultural virtue" carried the "cultural cachet…to reach a potentially broader audience" and so functioned as "the agents of agricultural improvement in America."[313]

The Bourbon County Agricultural Society, founded in 1836, represents the type of voluntary organization that stimulated the evolution of the Inner Bluegrass agroecosystem. The group defined its objective as "the improvement of Stock, Agriculture, and Domestic Manufactures" in the county.[314] The breadth of their goals allowed for considerable debate over the meaning of "improvement" and provided a venue for the term to be defined in a local, georgic context. The group met regularly and held elections each February to select officers and a board of directors to steer the Society for the following year. Leaders often came from the highest ranks of Inner Bluegrass society. For example, Brutus J. Clay, Bourbon County's largest slaveholder and among its most wealthy citizens, served as president from 1855 to 1878 and successful farmers and breeders like Edwin Bedford occupied seats on the board of directors. [315] The

[311] Douglas R. Hurt, *American Agriculture: A Brief History* (Ames: Iowa State University Press,1994), 149.
[312] Cohen 134.
[313] Cohen 41.
[314] Bourbon County Agricultural Society (Ky.). *Constitution and by-Laws of the Bourbon County Agricultural Society: Adopted July 30th, 1836* (Louisville, KY: Morton & Griswold, 1851), Article II, pg. 3.
[315] Everman 46. United States Census Bureau. 1860 Slave Schedule original returns. Record of Brutus Clay of Bourbon County, District 1. Accessed via ancestry.com. Bedford served on the board of directors in 1867, 1868, 1870, 1871, 1872, 1873 and 1875 per his Diaries.

Society's elected leadership held considerable authority, particularly in regards to determining the categories, awards, and judges at each year's exhibition.

The Bourbon County Agricultural Fair, held in early September, was the Society's culminating event each year and acted as its' best instrument for advancing an improvement agenda. By the 1870s, the organization offered premiums "paid in greenbacks or silver plate" ranging from one to one hundred dollars to the best entries in hundreds of categories from "Best bull of any age" to "Best corn planter."[316] Each September the fair grounds outside Paris reflected the tremendous diversity of Inner Bluegrass agricultural production. Major livestock species such as cattle, horses, sheep, and hogs were split into divisions based on age, gender and breeding, with "sweepstakes" awarded to the best from any division. Over the five days of the fair, entries paraded through the Society's amphitheater allowing those in attendance to evaluate the stock and debate their merits. The full range of crops produced in the region, from corn to Catawba grapes, were also represented, but these were relatively minor categories that offered premiums of five dollars or less.[317] The seventeen categories of farm implements, including many different types of machinery, revealed an emphasis on the latest improvements and allowed local farmers to appraise technological developments.[318]

Judges embodied the Society's improvement ethos and made their evaluations based on their georgic experience with the animals and crops. The group's by-laws stipulated judges were to be elected at a meeting of the whole Society, but by the 1860s

[316] Bourbon County Agricultural Society (Ky.) *The Thirty-Fifth Annual Fair of the Bourbon County Agricultural Society*. (Paris, KY: the True Kentuckian Office, 1872) 3, 9, 16.
[317] Bourbon County Agricultural Society. *The Fortieth Annual Fair of the Bourbon County Agricultural Society*. (Paris, KY: Printed by McChesney & Johnson, 1877).
[318] Bourbon County Agricultural Society (Ky.) *The Thirty-Fifth Annual Fair of the Bourbon County Agricultural Society*. (Paris, KY: the True Kentuckian Office, 1872), 9.

this duty had largely fallen to the board of directors.[319] The board selected judges who came from a similar privileged position in Kentucky society and reflected their belief in georgic improvement. Prominent farmers and breeders came from as far as Illinois to serve as judges, but the vast majority were from Inner Bluegrass counties and thus based their evaluations on their experience in the local agroecosystem.[320] The Society took explicit steps to ensure other factors did not influence judges' decisions. Owners were barred from showing their own stock in order to avoid the appearance of favoritism and informing the judges of an animal's pedigree prior to exhibition was grounds for disqualification.[321] These competitions functioned to establish and reinforce the standards by which local agriculture was judged.

A successful showing in the exhibition ring acted as a virtual advertisement for the animal's owner. Farmers often took advantage of this publicity and utilized the Fair to market their livestock. Bedford acted as both buyer and seller in these types of transactions. For example he purchased a 1-year-old heifer from Ben Warfield in 1865, "a fine mare" in 1866, and a thousand dollar heifer from H. Rice in 1867.[322] In each case, Bedford's interest in the animal stemmed directly from seeing it in the show ring. Other farmers found themselves similarly taken with Bedford's livestock and he often entertained offers for prize-winning individuals like the bull, Romeo, which he sold in

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[319] Bourbon County Agricultural Society (Ky.). *Constitution and by-Laws of the Bourbon County Agricultural Society: Adopted July 30th, 1836* (Louisville, KY: Morton & Griswold, 1851) Section X, pg. 11. Bedford, Diaries May 23, 1868, May 21, 1870, March 25, 1871.
[320] Bourbon County Agricultural Society (Ky.) *The Thirty-Fifth Annual Fair of the Bourbon County Agricultural Society* (Paris, KY: the True Kentuckian Office, 1872).
[321] Bourbon County Agricultural Society (Ky.). *Constitution and by-Laws of the Bourbon County Agricultural Society: Adopted July 30th, 1836* (Louisville, KY: Morton & Griswold, 1851), Section IX, pg. 11.
[322] Bedford, Diaries, September 5, 1865, August 28, 1866, August 27, 1867.

1866.[323] In other cases, a farmer's display at the fair could spark interest in his livestock in general, as when out-of-state judges visited Bedford's farm to look over his herds and purchased several Berkshire hogs.[324] The Society's annual fair brought farmers together in a friendly, yet competitive setting that facilitated livestock transactions.

County agricultural societies also played important social roles in the community. Annual fairs provided excitement and entertainment. Thousands of people attended the events and the Bourbon County Agricultural Society created an amphitheater by terracing a hollow to accommodate the crowds, but despite their best efforts the grounds were often "filled to over-flowing."[325] Events were created to cater to women as well as men. The "Industrial and Floral Hall" at the Bourbon County Fairs housed competitions and exhibitions of domestic production from cloth and needle work to honey and peach preserves.[326] Girls under the age of 14 competed in a similar, though smaller, list of categories and boys younger than 12 vied in the exhibition ring for the custom-made saddle and bridle awarded to the best rider.[327] The last event each year, the "Ladies Ride-out," during which the ladies of the county rode through the ring on exhibition and the "great crowd laughed and yelled to their utmost capacity" before dispersing in "high good humor" highlights the festival-type atmosphere the fairs created.

The organizations themselves engendered a sense of community among the members and fostered pride in the agroecosystem they helped create. Bedford often

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[323] Ibid, September 4, 1866, November 23, 1866.
[324] Ibid, October 17, 1873.
[325] Ibid, September 8, 1865.
[326] Bourbon County Agricultural Society. *The Fortieth Annual Fair of the Bourbon County Agricultural Society*. (Paris, KY.: McChesney & Johnson, 1877).
[327] Bourbon County Agricultural Society. *The Fortieth Annual Fair of the Bourbon County Agricultural Society*. (Paris, KY.: McChesney & Johnson, 1877), "Children's Department," 12. Bourbon County Agricultural Society (Ky.) *The Thirty-Fifth Annual Fair of the Bourbon County Agricultural Society*. (Paris, Ky: the True Kentuckian Office, 1872), "Boys' Riding Ring," 7.

rhapsodized about the quality of Bourbon County livestock, boasting its "choice exhibition of cattle, sheep and hogs" was "better in quantity and quality" than other counties could produce.[328] The annual fairs provided an opportunity for farmers to recognize and celebrate the production of the whole agricultural system and relish their role in steering it. A successful fair was "Glorious for the county" because it highlighted the rich production of the local agroecosystem.[329]

Colored Agricultural Society

The desire for agricultural improvement was not unique to white Inner Bluegrass residents and on March 25, 1873 the Kentucky General Assembly passed an act incorporating the Agricultural and Mechanical Association for the Colored People of Bourbon County, through which African Americans sought to advance the interests of black farmers and promote manufacturing.[330] The Association functioned much like white agricultural societies of the time, which were popular in Central Kentucky. It staged fairs, which served as amusement and recreation for people living all over the county, and held contests for superior agricultural products that aimed to improve the techniques of local farmers. The Colored Agricultural Society rented the grounds from their white counterparts once a year in order to stage these fairs, and achieved many of the same goals, including fostering a sense of pride in the rural community.[331]

Horse Industry

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[328] Bedford, Diaries, September 7, 1869.
[329] Ibid, September 8, 1865.
[330] Kentucky. *Acts Passed at the ... Session of the General Assembly for the Commonwealth*. (Frankfort Kentucky: State Printing Office, 1873), 129.
[331] Bourbon County Agricultural Society Board of Directors Records, 1875-1887. In University of Kentucky Special Collections, Lexington Kentucky. June 10, 1876. See also July 1877, February 1878, August 17, 1878, June 8, 1878.

Thomas D. Clark's reminder that horseracing represented a "highly specialized para-agricultural" venture that only a minority of elite farmers possessed the necessary resources to enter serves as a useful counter-weight to a popular imagination that over-emphasizes images of lush green pastures filled with fast, beautiful, expensive horses in front of the stately homes of prosperous Bluegrass gentlemen and obscures the rich diversity of the nineteenth-century rural landscape. Yet placed in its proper context, breeding racehorses did play a significant, and increasing, role in shaping the agroecosystem beginning during the nineteenth century. Inner Bluegrass breeders' success in national markets and the region's growing reputation for producing superior racing stock were in part the result of the efforts of organizations founded on the familiar themes of agricultural improvement and increased market access, such as the Kentucky Association for the Improvement of Breeds of Stock.

In 1826, a group of sixty subscribers organized themselves into an Association "for the purpose of promoting the purchase and sale of stock, and to encourage the breeding of horses."[332] The men who formed the group came from near the top of the area's socioeconomic ladder, as was characteristic of most organizations of agricultural improvement. However, the members of the Kentucky Association were likely more wealthy than the average member of Bourbon or Clark County Agricultural Societies. Several were prominent local politicians or former sheriffs. Successful merchants, doctors, and even a reverend were among the founders. Many, if not most, were well

[332] Kentucky Association, *A Souvenir from the Kentucky Association, Centennial Meeting, Spring 1926*.

educated for the time and several sat on the Board of Trustees or taught at Transylvania University. All bred racehorses.[333]

Each share of stock in the Association cost fifty dollars and, in theory, drew six percent interest per year, a financial obligation that proved difficult to meet. In 1828 a committee formed to find a suitable tract of land for the Association's grounds. The committee did not have to look very far. Subscriber John Postlethwaite sold the Association thirty acres of land just outside of Lexington for $1,400.[334] Subsequent purchases of adjoining land brought the Association grounds to nearly seventy acres by 1834.[335] In its early years the group held annual agricultural fairs that offered premiums for a wide range of categories of livestock, much like those held by the county agricultural societies of the time, but the members discontinued exhibitions by the 1840s citing financial difficulties that rendered the Stock Fair Department unable "to sustain the charges which [were] absolutely necessary in order to render it useful and respectable."[336] After 1840 the Association left general agricultural improvement to the local Societies and focused exclusively on promoting the local horse breeding and racing.

The Association track replaced less standardized courses when it opened in 1828. Early on, races were only held during the fall, but by 1835 the organization held spring meets as well. Typically, meets lasted four or five days with a race or two per day. Normal purses ranged from $100 to $1000 depending on the number and quality of

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[333] Robert Peter. *History of Fayette County, Kentucky with an Outline Sketch of the Blue Grass Region*. (Chicago: O.L. Baskin and Co., 1882), 63-64, 80, 303.
[334] Elisha Warfield, July 22, 1828. Box 1, Folder 1. Kentucky Association for the Improvement of the Breeds of Stock records, 1828-ca. 1935, 1828-1869 (bulk dates), Special Collections and Digital Programs, University of Kentucky (hereafter cited as Kentucky Association Papers).
[335] List of land purchases and costs, June 1, 1831. Agreement and receipts for purchase from Jeremiah Murphy, April-July 1834. Box 1 Folder 1. Kentucky Association Papers.
[336] Meeting Minutes, Box 1, Folder 1. Kentucky Association Papers. May 21-22, 1828, T. H. Pindell, Box 1 Folder 2. Kentucky Association Papers. September 7, 1837, and Meeting Notes, 1839. Box 1 Folder 3. Kentucky Association Papers.

horses entered. Occasionally, however, the Association offered much larger prizes to the victors in high-profile contests. The 1843 Gold Stake exemplified these more lucrative races. Seventy-two breeders entered the race at a cost of $500, with $100 paid to forfeit. The take home prize for the winner "Ruffin," a Kentucky horse owned by Association member Joseph G. Boswell was $7,500, a significant figure considering the entire Association was capitalized at only $3,000 fifteen years prior.[337]

The career of a single horse can illustrate the financial value of a champion, the competition between regions for equine supremacy, and the Bluegrass' growing reputation for producing quality thoroughbreds. Dr. Elisha Warfield entered his three-year-old colt named Darley in the Kentucky Association's spring races in 1853. Warfield, a prominent founding member of the group and owner of an adjacent stock farm, commonly entered his horses in Association races. Darley's impressive showing, however, was no common occurrence. The horse won two races with purses totaling $2,700, in the span of 4 days which convinced Richard Ten Broeck, a horseman of national fame, working on behalf of a syndicate that included two Association members, to purchase Darley from his Fayette County breeder. [338] Ten Broeck renamed the colt Lexington and guided his racing career to fantastic success.

After relocating to New Orleans, Lexington ran a challenge race against the favored Sallie Waters of Alabama. Despite the race being made at odds, $5,000 on Sallie against $3,500 on Lexington, the underdog made quick work of the mare. An observer for the *Spirit of the Times* reported, "the story of the race is easily told. Lexington took the lead at the tap of the drum, and maintained it throughout both heats, distancing Sallie

[337] *Spirit of the Times: A Chronicle of the Turf, Agriculture, Field Sports, Literature and the Stage*. Lexington (Ky.) Fall Races. September 30, 1843.
[338] *Spirit of the Times*. "Blood Tells," June 18, 1853 and "American Turf Statistics." October 24, 1854.

in the last."[339] The victory was more impressive because of the stature of Sallie Waters, who had previously been viewed as the "champion of Alabama" and an early favorite in the "'Great State Post Stake'" scheduled for April 4, 1854.[340]

In that $20,000 stake race matching the best horses bred in Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama and Kentucky against one another, Lexington was Kentucky's representative. Over 20,000 spectators gathered to witness "the great struggle of States for superiority in that contest which had for months enlisted so much feeling, so much State pride, [and] so much individual competition."[341] Lexington ran for the financial benefit of his owner, but he also raced for the pride and reputation of Kentucky, and specifically for the Inner Bluegrass Region in which he was bred and raised. In many ways, he embodied the goals of the Kentucky Association for the Improvement of Breeds of Stock, namely that the local agroecosystem characterized by large expanses of semi-wooded pasture could produce world-class racehorses. It was fitting that two of the three gentlemen from Kentucky who pledged themselves as official backers of Lexington, Willa Viley and James K. Duke, were founding members of the Association and the third, James B. Clay, was from a family with strong ties to the group.[342] The Great State Post Stake was a national stage on which to demonstrate the superiority of Kentucky stock.

The race consisted of two four-mile heats. In the first, Lexington jumped out to an early lead that he maintained through the first mile. Lecomte of Mississippi, half brother of Lexington, the two sharing a sire in Boston, surged to the front position during the second mile. Lexington was able to respond and retook the top spot, which he held for the

[339] *Spirit of the Times*. "The Great Match Race at New Orleans." December 17, 1853.
[340] Ibid.
[341] *Spirit of the Times* "New Orleans (La.) Spring Races." April 15, 1854.
[342] Ibid. & *Centennial Anniversary Souvenir* for the list of founding members.

remainder of miles three and four, holding off strong challenges from both Lecomte and Highlander, the pre-race favorite from Alabama. In the second heat Lecomte, looking to better his second place finish, broke to an early lead and managed to open an eight horse-length gap between himself and second-running Lexington. On the backstretch of mile four, Lexington "went to work in earnest, gradually closing the gap…both striving hard for the supremacy." The dueling thoroughbreds thundered into the homestretch to the roars of the crowd. Each raced at top speed, "as if life depended upon every jump, but the speed of Lexington was superior," and he was pulling away from Lecomte as they passed the judges stand, managing a four-length victory. In "a brilliant event in the racing annals of this country" Lexington won an impressive victory, both for his owner and for Kentucky thoroughbred breeders as a group.[343]

Lexington's owners did not allow him to rest on his laurels for long. On April 9, six days before an enthusiastic report of his victory in the Great State Post Stake was published in the *Spirit of the Times*, Lexington and Lecomte met again in New Orleans, again racing two four-mile heats. The result was quite different. Lecomte won both heats and recorded the fastest time ever over four miles, 7:26. That this second race was reported in the same edition of *Spirit of the Times* only encouraged the budding rivalry between the half-brothers.[344] Mr. Ten Broeck did not take Lexington's defeat as a matter of course. On the contrary, he wrote to the *Spirit of the Times* on April 30, maintaining that it was only "the mistake made by the rider of Lexington, in pulling up at the end of three miles, in the recent fast four mile race at New Orleans" that gave Lecomte the victory and new fastest time. To prove his point, Ten Broeck issued two challenges to the

[343] Ibid.
[344] *Spirit of the Times*. "By Telegraph!" April 15, 1854.

horseracing world. First, for the sum of $10,000 Lexington would run against Lecomte's record time. Second, Lexington would race any challenger in four-mile heats according to the odds of $25,000 to $20,000.[345]

A pair of sportsmen from Virginia accepted the first challenge.[346] The second became the object of much national speculation and veiled accusations by supporters of both Lecomte and Lexington that the other was intentionally avoiding a race they knew they would lose.[347] The race against Lecomte's time was run on April 2, 1855 amid much fanfare and debate. Lexington did not disappoint. In what was called "the most remarkable racing event of modern times, and indeed of all time" the Fayette County horse clocked the extraordinary time of 7:19, an American record that would stand for two decades. [348] The impressive performance was not enough to convince supporters of Lecomte of Lexington's superiority, but his dominating victory in a match race on April 17 fairly settled the issue.[349]

His victory in the rubber match against Lecomte proved to be Lexington's last race. Blindness forced him from the track, as it had his sire, and Ten Broeck and the syndicate he represented sold him for $15,000 the following year to Robert A. Alexander of Woodburn Farm in Woodford County, Kentucky. Many questioned Alexander's decision to pay such a large sum for an unproven, nearly blind, sire, but he maintained "'the day would come when he would sell one offspring of the horse they despised for

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[345] Richard Ten Broeck. Letter to the editor. "Challenge from Lexington!" *Spirit of the Times*. June 3, 1854.
[346] "Lexington's Challenge Against Time Accepted" *Spirit of the Times*. June 17, 1854.
[347]"Lexington to Lecomte," *Spirit of the Times.* July 8, 1854, "Lecomte and Lexington—Letter from Gen. Wells, owner of Lecomte." *New York Times*. September 5, 1854.
[348] "The Great Match vs. Time" *Spirit of the Times* reproduced accounts of the race from New Orleans papers the *Daily Crescent*, the *Picayune*, the *Courier*, the *Delta*, the *True Delta*, and the *Richmond (Va.) Daily Dispatch*. April 14, 1854.
[349] "The New Orleans Races—Lecomte Beaten" *New York Daily Times*. April 17, 1855.

more money than he had paid for him.'" [350] Time justified Alexander's confidence. Lexington's son Norfolk sold for $15,001 in 1864, and a later offspring named Kentucky sold for $40,000.[351] Chronicling his accomplishments as a sire is beyond the scope of this paper, but his sixteen years at the top of the sire list gives an idea of his importance to the sport.[352] As his obituary in the *New York Times* proclaimed, Lexington "founded a line of racehorses unequaled by the offspring of any other stallion in this country or England," a feat that brought considerable fame to the Inner Bluegrass.[353] The list of his champion progeny would have been even longer had the Civil War not erupted and pulled many of his offspring into its destructive vortex.

It is fitting that Lexington raced in the South while many of his offspring won fame on racecourses in the North because the Civil War acted as a watershed event that changed the face of the industry. By "1865 there was hardly a thoroughbred or a dollar in the racing states of the South;" racing and breeding was permanently stunted in the former Confederate states.[354] While Kentucky avoided the worst impacts of the war, the diminution of their traditional southern markets meant Bluegrass breeders needed new buyers for their bloodstock. They found them in the northern "capitalistic aristocracy which had both leisure and cash" to take up the "breeding and racing of superior horses." As northern tracks like the Union and Saratoga racecourses became the center of the American racing scene, Kentucky's "native nurserymen were essentially the suppliers of

[350] "Lexington" *Prairie Farmer* Reprinted from the *Frankfort Yeoman*. July, 17, 1875.
[351] Ibid.
[352] National Museum of Racing and Hall of Fame. Lexington. http://www.racingmuseum.org/hall/horse.asp?ID=102 (accessed March 10, 2010).
[353] "The Race-Horse Lexington." *New York Times*, July 5, 1875.
[354] Roger Longrigg. *The History of Horse Racing*. (New York: Stein and Day Publishers, 1972), 222.

that larger racing market."[355] Thus, "Kentucky benefited greatly from the destruction of the old South," as it transitioned from the position of first among equals, competing particularly with states such as Virginia, South Carolina, and Louisiana, to clear leadership in breeding thoroughbreds.[356]

Lexington's careers, in both racing and breeding, illustrated the vast sums of money to be made in the horse industry. The promise of these profits induced some elite landholders to devote large portions of the agroecosystem to breeding and raising the expensive animals. Lexington also highlights the importance of the connections to larger regional and national markets provided by the Kentucky Association track. The racetrack created a venue for Inner Bluegrass breeders to test and demonstrate their horses' speed and stamina and allowed outside interests to evaluate their abilities in a competitive setting. Success on the local level led to racing opportunities in regional or national markets. Strong showings in places such as New Orleans or New York dramatically increased a horse's value and could mean thousands or tens of thousands of dollars in breeding income for its' owner. The Kentucky Association track provided an essential intermediary linkage between elite Inner Bluegrass farmers and the nation's wealthy sportsmen who were willing to pay top dollar for proven bloodlines. The income generated from horse sales helped determine the composition of the agroecosystem by allowing farmers to profitably maintain large sections of the landscape in semi-wooded pasture.

[355] Mary E. Wharton & Edward L. Bowen. *The Horse World of the Bluegrass* (Lexington, Kentucky: John Bradford Press, 1980). x.
[356] Longrigg, 222.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

The picturesque green fields of Kentucky bluegrass dotted with old trees and expensive, fast horses, so prominent in imagery of the region, comprised just one aspect, albeit an important one, in a dynamic and diversified agroecosystem. The patchwork landscape also included managed woodlands, an array of single-species fields, multi-crop gardens and orchards, was laced with creeks and dotted with ponds. Thousands of animals, both domesticated and wild, thrived in the system. The complex rural environment of the Inner Bluegrass during the mid to late nineteenth century was the product of diverse influences ranging from the natural to the cultural. The agroecological perspective creates an emphasis on the dynamics behind what is too often taken as permanent or given, the landscape itself.

Bluegrass farmers fully understood their agricultural system was no given and that a permanently profitable farm depended on daily decisions and the labor to carry them out. Elite farmers occupied a privileged position of control over large expanses of land and possessed the resources to marshal the labor necessary to shape it to their wishes. This meant their choices played an outsized role in determining the composition of the agricultural system for the region as a whole. The decisions farmers made were shaped by their georgic relationship with the land and influenced by market forces.

The voluntary organizations Inner Bluegrass farmers created and joined provide a window to examine the mechanisms through which these factors impacted the landscape. Each association, from the groups of cattle breeders and sellers who pooled their resources in order to minimize the risk of participating in distant markets, to the Kentucky Association that held bi-annual meets to promote the thoroughbred horseracing

industry, sought greater market access and hence higher returns for their members' agricultural production. The groups also aimed for "improvement," a term with multiple meanings, but which typically included an emphasis on long-term productivity. "Improvement" was deeply embedded in farmers' georgic outlook and their lived experience working in the local landscape. Technological advances like the mechanical reaper could be adopted rapidly once they proved an efficient modification of existing practices, but introducing entirely new techniques based solely on market conditions quickly encountered opposition from farmers, as the Hemp Growers Association's attempt to promote water-rotting hemp demonstrated. Farmers made their agricultural decisions and shaped the rural landscape based on a mix of market influences and their cultural experience of what constituted proper land use.

The vision elite farmers had for the environment meant little without the labor necessary to implement their choices. During the antebellum period enslaved African Americans formed the core of this workforce and many continued to labor for wages in much the same capacity after emancipation. Given the scope of their contributions, Inner Bluegrass African Americans must rightly be viewed as literal creators of the agroecosystem. Through their work clearing woods, erecting and repairing fences, planting, tending, harvesting and processing crops, feeding and butchering livestock and all the other tasks they completed, black laborers transformed the environment around them.

The transformation of labor relations that accompanied emancipation allowed African Americans greater control over their labor and the freedom to pursue opportunity as they saw fit. Many Inner Bluegrass blacks exercised these rights to allocate less of

their time and energy to laboring in white-owned fields and more toward building community institutions. The greater levels of economic, educational and social opportunity available in local urban or semi-urban centers like Lexington, Paris and Millersburg illustrate the incentives that drew many African Americans out of the countryside. The resulting labor shortage caused a decrease in agricultural production and contributed to subtle alterations in the local agroecosystem, such as decreasing levels of average crop and livestock diversity, as farmers adjusted by narrowing their focus to fewer species. The transition away from hemp as a primary cash crop was in part a reaction to African American hesitancy to perform the physically exhausting labor associated with its harvest and processing for the wages white farmers offered. The decline of hemp opened a niche for a new cash crop to expand into and burley tobacco eventually emerged to fill it, thus further modifying the agroecosystem.

In "Toward an Agroecological Perspective in History" (1990), Donald Worster argued "the capitalistic agroecosystem shows one clear tendency over the span of modern history: a movement toward the radical simplification of the natural ecological order in the number of species found in an area and the intricacy of they interconnections," and Central Kentucky during the mid to late nineteenth century fit that general pattern, though it retained a relatively high level of diversity compared to many contemporary practices.[357] However, applying the agroecological perspective to a limited geographic area over a specific time period allows for a more nuanced account. It sheds light on the complex processes and influences that shaped the dynamic rural landscape. The illusion that history takes place against a static environmental backdrop is shattered by directly

[357] Donald Worster, "Transformations of the Earth: Toward an Agroecological Perspective in History" *The Journal of American History*. 76, no. 4 (1990): 1101.

addressing the intersections of the “natural” world and human agency. Examining the wide variety of factors that helped mold the agroecosystem restores a sense of contingency to the historical landscape that nineteenth-century Inner Bluegrass farmers would have recognized.

Appendices:

Appendix A: Bourbon County Racial Breakdown

	White	Black	Total	% White	% Black
1850	7,155	7,311	14,466	49.46%	50.54%
1860	7,793	7,067	14,860	52.44%	47.56%
1870	8,186	6,677	14,863	55.08%	44.92%
1850	245 free blacks				
1860	300 free blacks				

Appendix B: 1850 Slave Statistics

	1850 Complete												
	Size by Slaves		Size by Slaveholders		Gender			Race				Age Breakdown		
Slaveholding Size	Number	Percentage	number	percentage		Number	Percent		Number	Percent	Avg. Age		Number	Percentage
1 to 5	625	64.10%	136	69.39%	Female	528	54.15%	Black	755	77.44%	17.87542	0 to 10 yr	388	39.79%
6 to 10	199	20.41%	37	18.88%	Male	447	45.85%	Mulatto	220	22.56%		11-20 yr	266	27.28%
11 to 25	122	12.51%	20	10.20%								21-30	149	15.28%
26 to 50	29	2.97%	3	1.53%								31-40	91	9.33%
51 to 100	0	0.00%	0	0.00%								41-50	46	4.72%
> 100	0	0.00%	0	0.00%								51-60	19	1.95%
Total	975	100.00%	196	100.00%	Total	975	100.00%		975	100.00%		> 60 yrs	16	1.64%
												Total	975	100.00%
	1850 Rural													
	Size by Slaves		Size by Slaveholders		Gender			Race				Age Breakdown		
Slaveholding Size	Number	Percentage	number	percentage		Number	Percentage		Number	Percent	Avg. Age		Number	Percentage
1 to 5	444	58.12%	81	62.31%	Female	394	51.57%	Black	590	77.23%	17.48115	0 to 10 yr	313	40.97%
6 to 10	171	22.38%	28	21.54%	Male	370	48.43%	Mulatto	174	22.77%		11-20 yr	205	26.83%
11 to 25	120	15.71%	18	13.85%								21-30	118	15.45%
26 to 50	29	3.80%	3	2.31%								31-40	70	9.16%
51 to 100	0	0.00%	0	0.00%								41-50	33	4.32%
> 100	0	0.00%	0	0.00%								51-60	14	1.83%
Total	764	100.00%	130	100.00%	Total	764	1	Total	764	100.00%		> 60 yrs	11	1.44%
												Total	764	1
	1850 Pilburg													
	Size by Slaves		Size by Slaveholders		Gender			Race				Age Breakdown		
Slaveholding Size	Number	Percentage	number	percentage		Number	Percentage		Number	Percent	Avg. Age		Number	Percentage
1 to 5	55	78.57%	17	77.27%	Female	47	67.14%	Black	55	78.57%	19.55357	0 to 10 yr	20	28.57%
6 to 10	14	20.00%	4	18.18%	Male	23	32.86%	Mulatto	15	21.43%		11-20 yr	25	35.71%
11 to 25	1	1.43%	1	4.55%								21-30	11	15.71%
26 to 50	0	0.00%	0	0.00%								31-40	9	12.86%
51 to 100	0	0.00%	0	0.00%								41-50	4	5.71%
> 100	0	0.00%	0	0.00%								51-60	1	1.43%
Total	70	100.00%	22	100.00%	Total	70	1	Total	70	100.00%		> 60 yrs	0	0.00%
												Total	70	1
	1850 Paris													
	Size by Slaves		Size by Slaveholders		Gender			Race				Age Breakdown		
Slaveholding Size	Number	Percentage	number	percentage		Number	Percentage		Number	Percentage	Avg. Age		Number	Percentage
1 to 5	126	89.36%	51	89.47%	Female	87	61.70%	Black	110	78.01%	19.17858	0 to 10 yr	55	39.01%
6 to 10	14	9.93%	5	8.77%	Male	54	38.30%	Mulatto	31	21.99%		11-20 yr	36	25.53%
11 to 25	1	0.71%	1	1.75%								21-30	20	14.18%
26 to 50	0	0.00%	0	0.00%								31-40	12	8.51%
51 to 100	0	0.00%	0	0.00%								41-50	9	6.38%
> 100	0	0.00%	0	0.00%								51-60	4	2.84%
Total	141	100.00%	57	100.00%	Total	141	1	Total	141	100.00%		> 60 yrs	5	3.55%
													141	100.00%

Appendix C: 1860 Slave Statistics

Appendix C: 1860	1860 Complete													
	Size by Slaves		Size by Slaveholders		Gender			Race				Age Breakdown		
Slaveholding Size	Number	Percentage	number	percentage		Number	Percent				Avg. Age		Number	Percentage
1 to 5	766	54.91%	140	63.93%	Female	697	50.00%	Black	1098	78.77%	19.8	0 to 10 yr	497	35.63%
6 to 10	301	21.58%	38	17.35%	Male	697	50.00%	Mulatto	296	21.23%		11-20 yr	378	27.10%
11 to 25	288	20.65%	35	15.98%								21-30	234	16.77%
26 to 50	40	2.87%	6	2.74%								31-40	142	10.18%
51 to 100	0	0.00%	0	0.00%								41-50	73	5.23%
> 100	0	0.00%	0	0.00%								51-60	37	2.65%
Total	1395	100.00%	219	100.00%	Total	1394	100.00%		1394	100.00%		> 60 yrs	34	2.44%
												Total	1395	100.00%
	1860 Rural- Non Paris													
	Size by Slaves		Size by Slaveholders		Gender			Race				Age Breakdown		
Slaveholding Size	Number	Percentage	number	percentage		Number	Percentage		Number	Percent	Avg. Age		Number	Percentage
1 to 5	348	46.84%	40	45.98%	Female	358	48.18%	Black	646	86.94%	18.3	0 to 10 yr	287	38.63%
6 to 10	189	25.44%	20	22.99%	Male	384	51.68%	Mulatto	97	13.06%		11-20 yr	200	26.92%
11 to 25	188	25.30%	23	26.44%	missing	1	0.13%					21-30	127	17.09%
26 to 50	18	2.42%	4	4.60%								31-40	68	9.15%
51 to 100	0	0.00%	0	0.00%								41-50	28	3.77%
> 100	0	0.00%	0	0.00%								51-60	15	2.02%
Total	743	100.00%	87	100.00%	Total	743	100.00%	Total	743	100.00%		> 60 yrs	18	2.42%
												Total	743	100.00%
	1860 M'burg													
	Size by Slaves		Size by Slaveholders		Gender			Race				Age Breakdown		
Slaveholding Size	Number	Percentage	number	percentage		Number	Percentage		Number	Percent	Avg. Age		Number	Percentage
1 to 5	82	84.54%	20	83.33%	Female	50	51.55%	Black	82	84.54%	22.7	0 to 10 yr	34	35.05%
6 to 10	12	12.37%	3	12.50%	Male	47	48.45%	Mulatto	15	15.46%		11-20 yr	24	24.74%
11 to 25	3	3.09%	1	4.17%								21-30	12	12.37%
26 to 50	0	0.00%	0	0.00%								31-40	10	10.31%
51 to 100	0	0.00%	0	0.00%								41-50	7	7.22%
> 100	0	0.00%	0	0.00%								51-60	6	6.19%
Total	97	100.00%	24	100.00%	Total	97	100.00%	Total	97	100.00%		> 60 yrs	4	4.12%
												Total	97	100.00%
	1860 Paris													
	Size by Slaves		Size by Slaveholders		Gender			Race				Age Breakdown		
Slaveholding Size	Number	Percentage	number	percentage		Number	Percentage		Number	Percentage	Avg. Age		Number	Percentage
1 to 5	336	60.54%	80	74.07%	Female	289	52.07%	Black	370	66.79%	21.2	0 to 10 yr	176	31.71%
6 to 10	100	18.02%	15	13.89%	Male	266	47.93%	Mulatto	184	33.21%		11-20 yr	154	27.75%
11 to 25	97	17.48%	11	10.19%								21-30	95	17.12%
26 to 50	22	3.96%	2	1.85%								31-40	64	11.53%
51 to 100	0	0.00%	0	0.00%								41-50	38	6.85%
> 100	0	0.00%	0	0.00%								51-60	16	2.88%
Total	555	100.00%	108	100.00%	Total	555	100.00%	Total	554	100.00%		> 60 yrs	12	2.16%
													555	100.00%

Appendix D: Free Blacks

Paris 1850	
# Free Blacks	46
# Women	30
# Men	16
Average Age	26
Average Real Estate Value	$43.48
Professions	
Unlisted	27
Shoemaker	1
Laborer	1
Stone mason	1
Children under 15	16
Paris 1860	
# Free Blacks	149
# Women	90
# Men	59
Average Age	25.6
Total Real Estate Value	$10,000
Average Real Estate Value	$67.11
Total Personal Property	$10,220
Average Personal Property	$68.59
Professions	
Barber	2
Brickmaker	1
Confectioner	3
Cook	2
Horse Breaker	1
Horse Trainer	1
Laborer	13
Rope Maker	1
Servant	11
Shoemaker	1
Silversmith	1
Stone Mason	1
Unlisted	30
Wash Woman	21
Work Hand	1
Children under 15	59

Appendix E: 1870 Statitics

1870 – All

Age			Living in a White Dwelling			Real Estate Value			Personal Value			Gender		
	Number	Percent		Number	Percent		Number	Percent		Number	Percent		Number	Percent
0 to 10	488	27.54%	Yes	679	38.32%	$0	1696	95.71%	$0	1759	99.27%	Female	981	55.36%
11 to 20	451	25.45%	No	1093	61.68%	$1 to $250	3	0.17%	$1 to $250	9	0.51%	Male	791	44.64%
21 to 30	382	21.56%				$251 to 500	24	1.35%	$251 to 500	1	0.06%			
31 to 40	183	10.33%				$501 to 1000	31	1.75%	$501 to 1000	2	0.11%			
41 to 50	132	7.45%				$1001 to 2500	11	0.62%	$1001 to 2500	0	0.00%			
51 to 60	76	4.29%				$2501 to 5000	4	0.23%	$2501 to 5000	1	0.06%			
> 60	60	3.39%				> $5001	3	0.17%	> $5001	0	0.00%			
total	1772	100.00%	total	1772	100.00%	total	1772	100.00%	total	1772	100.00%	total	1772	100.00%
Average	22.9					Average	58.76129		Average	4.596501				

1870 – Rural

Age			Living in a White Dwelling			Real Estate Value			Personal Value			Gender		
	Number	Percent		Number	Percent		Number	Percent		Number	Percent		Number	Percent
0 to 10	200	33.22%	Yes	258	42.86%	$0	584	97.01%	$0	598	99.34%	Female	283	47.01%
11 to 20	148	24.58%	No	344	57.14%	$1 to $250	2	0.33%	$1 to $250	3	0.50%	Male	319	52.99%
21 to 30	110	18.27%				$251 to 500	14	2.33%	$251 to 500	1	0.17%			
31 to 40	63	10.47%				$501 to 1000	2	0.33%	$501 to 1000	0	0.00%			
41 to 50	40	6.64%				$1001 to 2500	0	0.00%	$1001 to 2500	0	0.00%			
51 to 60	23	3.82%				$2501 to 5000	0	0.00%	$2501 to 5000	0	0.00%			
> 60	18	2.99%				> $5001	0	0.00%	> $5001	0	0.00%			
total	602		total	602	100.00%	total	602	1	total	602	1	total	602	
Average	21.5					Average	13.49668		Average	1.204319				

1870 – Mberg

Age			Living in a White Dwelling			Real Estate Value			Personal Value			Gender		
	Number	Percent		Number	Percent%		Number	Percent		Number	Percent		Number	Percent
0 to 10	49	28.32%	Yes	93	53.76%	$0	170	98.26%	$0	173	100.00%	Female	115	66.47%
11 to 20	46	26.59%	No	80	46.24%	$1 to $250	1	0.58%	$1 to $250	0	0.00%	Male	58	33.53%
21 to 30	50	28.90%				$251 to 500	0	0.00%	$251 to 500	0	0.00%			
31 to 40	9	5.20%				$501 to 1000	1	0.58%	$501 to 1000	0	0.00%			
41 to 50	13	7.51%				$1001 to 2500	1	0.58%	$1001 to 2500	0	0.00%			
51 to 60	3	1.73%				$2501 to 5000	0	0.00%	$2501 to 5000	0	0.00%			
> 60	3	1.73%				> $5001	0	0.00%	> $5001	0	0.00%			
total	173	100.00%	total	173	100.00%	total	173	100.00%	total	173	100.00%	total	173	100.00%
Average	24.7					Average	13.87283		Average	0				

1870 – Paris

Age			Living in a White Dwelling			Real Estate Value			Personal Value			Gender		
	Number	Percent		Number	Percent		Number	Percent		Number	Percent		Number	Percent
0 to 10	239	23.97%	Yes	328	32.90%	$0	942	94.48%	$0	988	99.10%	Female	583	58.48%
11 to 20	257	25.78%	No	669	67.10%	$1 to $250	0	0.00%	$1 to $250	6	0.60%	Male	414	41.52%
21 to 30	222	22.27%				$251 to 500	10	1.00%	$251 to 500	0	0.00%			
31 to 40	111	11.13%				$501 to 1000	28	2.81%	$501 to 1000	2	0.20%			
41 to 50	79	7.92%				$1001 to 2500	10	1.00%	$1001 to 2500	0	0.00%			
51 to 60	50	5.02%				$2501 to 5000	4	0.40%	$2501 to 5000	1	0.10%			
> 60	39	3.91%				> $5001	3	0.30%	> $5001	0	0.00%			
total	997	100.00%	total	997	100.00%	total	997	100.00%	total	997	100.00%	total	997	100.00%
Average	24.2					Average	93.88164		Average	7.442527				

Appendix F: 1870 Occupations

1870							
	Rural	%	Millersburg	%	Paris	%	Total
at Home	16	2.7%	0	0.0%	24	2.4%	40
at School	4	0.7%	0	0.0%	57	5.7%	61
Barber	0	0.0%	1	0.6%	7	0.7%	8
Blacksmith	3	0.5%	1	0.6%	3	0.3%	7
Brick Mason	1	0.2%	0	0.0%	8	0.8%	9
Carpenter	4	0.7%	0	0.0%	9	0.9%	13
Chaimbermaid	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	0.3%	3
Cook	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	7	0.7%	7
Day Laborer	5	0.8%	0	0.0%	78	7.8%	83
Dining Servants	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	8	0.8%	8
Domestic Servants	121	20.1%	71	41.0%	263	26.5%	456
Dragman	1	0.2%	0	0.0%	6	0.6%	7
Farm Labor	164	27.3%	18	10.4%	63	6.3%	245
Farmer	6	1.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	6
Grocer	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	6	0.6%	6
Grocery Clerk	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4	0.4%	4
Horse Trainer	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	0.2%	2
Huckster	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.1%	1
Hustler	0	0.0%	1	0.6%	15	1.5%	16
Keeping House	53	8.8%	10	5.8%	128	12.9%	191
Laborer	0	0.0%	3	1.7%	1	0.1%	4
Laundress	3	0.5%	0	0.0%	12	1.2%	15
No Occupation	2	0.3%	0	0.0%	20	2.0%	22
Notion & Fancy Merechant	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.1%	1
Notion Clerk	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.1%	1
Nurse	0	0.0%	3	1.7%	2	0.2%	5
Overseer of a Poor House	1	0.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1
Painter	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.1%	1
Pauper	13	2.2%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	13
Plasterer	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	4	0.4%	4
Porter	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	0.3%	3
Preacher	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.1%	1
Saloon Keeper	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	0.2%	2
Seamstress	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	18	1.8%	18
Shoemaker	0	0.0%	1	0.6%	1	0.1%	2
Silversmith	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.1%	1
Stone Cutter	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.1%	1
Stone Mason	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	6	0.6%	6
Teacher	1	0.2%	0	0.0%	4	0.4%	5
Unclear	2	0.3%	0	0.0%	1	0.1%	3
Unlisted	1	0.2%	6	3.5%	1	0.1%	8
Wagon Worker	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	1	0.1%	1
Wagoner	0	0.0%	1	0.6%	2	0.2%	3
White Washer	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	2	0.2%	2
BLANK	200	33.3%	57	32.9%	216	21.7%	474
Totals	**601**		**173**		**994**		

Appendix G: Bourbon County Agriculture

	1850	1860	1870	
Farms	734	*	776	
Improved Acres	168,891	176,916	155,304	
Unimproved Acres	1,111	0	37,549	
Value of Farms ($)	7,901,450	13,036,380	15,945,373	
Implements & Machinery ($)	*	142,240	150,170	
Horses	*	7,397	5,214	
Horses & Mules	11,902	*	*	
Asses & Mules	*	8,984	5,119	
Cattle	17,396	17,875	20,499	
Sheep	25,288	16,639	11,028	
Swine	39,492	25,584	19,387	
Wheat (bushels)	78,133	293,259	71,717	
Corn (bushels)	1,705,599	1,364,285	1,220,515	
Hemp (tons)	1,202	846	569	
Tobacco (lbs)	0	860	750	
*blank spaces were not reported in the Agricultural Census for that year				

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