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NO. 2

JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY STUDIES
IN
HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

Under the Direction of the
Departments of History, Political Economy, and
Political Science

SLAVERY IN MISSOURI
1804-1865

BY

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PREFACE

The subject of this study was suggested to the writer several years ago by Professor Jonas Viles of the University of Missouri. Later it was again taken up and expanded when the author entered the Seminary in American History at the Johns Hopkins University. The writer is under great obligations to Professor J. M. Vincent for his advice throughout the preparation of the study, especially for the idea of emphasizing the economic side of Missouri slavery. Dr. R. V. D. Magoffin facilitated the work of collecting material both by his own efforts and by pointing out efficient methods of research. Although this study was practically completed before the election of Professor J. H. Latané to the chair of American History at the Johns Hopkins University, he has critically examined the entire work and made many suggestions which were gladly received.

To Mr. William Clark Breckenridge of St. Louis the writer owes much of the best that the study may afford. Mr. Breckenridge not only pointed out many valuable lines of work, but submitted for use his large private collection of manuscripts, newspaper files, and pamphlets. He also introduced the author to many collections of materials and made possible interviews with many antebellum citizens of St. Louis and Missouri. The writer is also indebted to Miss Mae Symonds of the Mercantile Library of St. Louis, Mr. Gaillard Hunt of the Library of Congress, Messrs. F. A. Sampson and F. C. Shoemaker of the State Historical Society of Missouri, Dean Walter Williams and Professor Jonas Viles of the University of Missouri, and to Judge Walter B. Douglas of the Missouri Historical Society for his cooperation and aid in finding materials in St. Louis.

In addition the writer wishes to express his thanks to Mr. K. Roberts Greenfield of the Historical Department of the

Johns Hopkins University for his aid in correcting manuscript. Above all he wishes to acknowledge the faithful and untiring assistance of his wife in collecting and organizing the materials of this study.

H. A. T.

SLAVERY IN MISSOURI, 1804-1865

CHAPTER I

MISSOURI SLAVERY AS AN ECONOMIC SYSTEM

When Louisiana was purchased in 1803, there were between two and three thousand slaves within the present limits of Missouri, of which only the eastern and southern portions were then settled.¹ By 1860 the State contained 114,931 slaves and 3572 free negroes.² Natural increase was one cause for this increase in the number of slaves, and importations from other slave States represented the other. The relative number of negroes gained from these two sources cannot be learned with any accuracy. The number of slaves born within the State is not given in the Federal census returns. In 1860 of the 1,063,489 whites of Missouri 160,541 were foreign born, and 475,246 were natives of the State. Of the remainder, 273,808 were born south of Mason and Dixon's line, and 153,894 in the free States and Territories.³ It may fairly be assumed that these slave-state immigrants brought most of the slaves imported. Of these southern settlers 99,814 were from Kentucky, 73,594 from Tennessee, 53,957 from Virginia, and 20,259 from North Carolina. It would perhaps be incorrect to assume that the slaves brought to Missouri were in exact proportion to the whites from the several Southern States, yet one may assert with a fair measure of safety that the imported blacks came from the four slave States named and from

¹ In 1810 there were 17,227 whites, 3011 slaves, and 607 free blacks in Missouri Territory (Eighth Federal Census, Population, p. 601). For a summary of the various census returns of the Missouri country before the cession of Louisiana see J. Viles, "Population and Extent of Settlement in Missouri before 1804," in *Missouri Historical Review*, vol. v, no. 4, pp. 189-213.

² Eighth Federal Census, Population, pp. 275, 281-282.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 301.

the other slave States in some rough proportion to the whites from those States.⁴

To some counties immigration came in waves. In the thirties Carolinians settled in Pike County with their slaves; later others came from Virginia and Kentucky.⁵ A large body of Union sympathizers from eastern Tennessee took up land in Greene County; Kentuckians and Virginians also settled on the rich soil of this county.⁶ Other counties experienced similar movements. By no means all of the settlers who came from slave States brought negroes or favored slavery, but, as will be learned in another chapter, hundreds of immigrants, especially those coming from Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia, brought negroes, and some of them considerable bodies of slaves.⁷

The birth-rate was perhaps about the same as it is among the negroes of the State today, but because of the property interest of the master the death-rate may have been lower. For the year ending June 1, 1850, the slave births in Missouri numbered 2699, while the deaths amounted to 1293.⁸ If these figures are correct, the births were double the death toll. It would be unsafe, however, to generalize from these limited data.

The growth of the different classes of the population of Missouri was as follows:—⁹

Year	Whites	Free Colored	Slaves]
1810	17,227	607	3,011
1820	54,993	376	9,797
1830	115,364	569	25,091
1840	322,295	1,478	57,891
1850	592,004	2,618	87,422
1860	1,063,489	3,572	114,931

⁴ Six thousand and fifteen whites came to Missouri from Maryland, 4395 from Arkansas, 3913 from South Carolina, 3473 from Alabama, 3324 from Mississippi, and so on (*ibid.*).

⁵ Statement of Ex-Lieutenant Governor R. A. Campbell of Bowling Green.

⁶ Statement of Mr. Dorsey D. Berry of Springfield.

⁷ See below, pp. 102-103.

⁸ Seventh Federal Census, p. 665.

⁹ The figures for 1810 are from the Eighth Federal Census, Population, p. 601. The other returns are from the Fourth Census, p. 40; Fifth Census, pp. 38, 40-41; Sixth Census, p. 418; Seventh Census, p. 655; Eighth Census, Population, pp. 275-283.

It appears from these figures that the slaves increased in number but at a decreasing ratio to the whites. Between 1810 and 1820 the slave increase was 239.48 per cent, in the next decade 145.46 per cent, in the next 132.11, in the next—1840 to 1850—50.1 per cent, while between 1850 and 1860 the increase was only about 33 per cent.¹⁰ We must not conclude that slavery was declining because the increase was less decade by decade while that of the whites was continually greater. It must be remembered that the land of greatest fertility was naturally occupied first, and as a result there was less and less room for expansion. The back counties were not so rich and were more difficult to reach. By 1840 Texas and other new regions were beginning to divert settlers from Missouri. However, non-slaveholding whites continued to fill the towns and the rougher land which was less adapted to slave labor. Agriculture was the great source of slave profit. The artisan class was white, and the filling up of the country rather increased than decreased their possibilities in developing manufactures. Had slave labor in Missouri been as profitable as was German labor in Illinois, the occupation of the best soils would have limited its growth in time. Increase in population means more intensive agriculture. Slave labor, being largely unintelligent and lacking initiative, is better suited to extensive farming.

The fact that the increase of the slave population of Missouri was limited by the supply of new lands was first noticed in the old Mississippi River settlements. The old French counties along the Mississippi from St. Louis south—Jefferson, St. Genevieve, Cape Girardeau, and so forth—contained 11,647 slaves in 1850 and but 11,528 in 1860.¹¹ Another decrease is found in the counties along the Missouri from its mouth to the boundaries of Callaway and Cole—St. Louis, St. Charles, Franklin, Warren, Montgomery,

¹⁰ Seventh Federal Census, p. 665.

¹¹ For these and the following figures see the Seventh Federal Census, pp. 654-655, and the Eighth Federal Census, Population, pp. 280-283.

Gasconade, and Osage—which in this decade fell from 11,732 to 11,597 slaves. Increases are found in the counties lying on the Mississippi from the mouth of the Missouri to the Iowa line,—St. Charles, Lincoln, Ralls, Pike, Marion, Lewis, and Clark. In 1850 these counties contained 13,171 slaves and in 1860 there were 15,618. The slaves in the counties along the Iowa border increased from 897 in 1850 to 1009 in 1860.

To find the real location of the slave increase of the State we must turn to the west. The large and excessively rich Missouri River counties from Callaway and Cole to the Kansas line—Boone, Howard, Chariton, Cooper, Saline, Lafayette, Ray, Clay, Jackson, and Manitou—contained 34,135 slaves in 1850 and 45,530 ten years later.¹² The whole series of counties along the Kansas border from Iowa to Arkansas—Atchison, Buchanan, Platte, Jackson, Cass, Jasper, and the rest—had but 20,805 bondmen in 1850, while in 1860 they contained 29,577.

For two reasons these western counties increased in slave population faster than the eastern. In the first place, the land of the western counties was better, and hemp culture made slave labor profitable. A soil map of Missouri shows that the rich loam along the Missouri River surpassed any other land in the State. Here the slaves increased both in value and in price as in no other section. The eastern region was earlier settled, and as a consequence fewer and fewer slave-owners came from the South to locate there, while to the west settlers were still coming in large numbers when the Civil War opened.

The distribution of the slaves, as well as of the free population of Missouri, was controlled by the same conditions. The French and Spanish located along the Mississippi both because the land was fertile and because the river offered the

¹² Some of these counties are counted twice where they are located at corners, or where two series of counties meet. In 1860 the counties ranked as follows in slave population: Lafayette, Howard, Boone, Saline, Callaway, St. Louis, Pike, Jackson, Clay. All of these counties save Pike are on the Missouri River.