

SLAVERY: Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis

Name:

Qualitative Analysis

Date:

WPA Slave Narratives

IB U.S. History

Mr. Clarke

Background

From 1936 to 1938, over 2,300 former slaves from across the American South were interviewed by writers and journalists under the aegis of the Works Progress Administration. These former slaves, most born in the last years of the slave regime or during the Civil War, provided first-hand accounts of their experiences on plantations, in cities, and on small farms. Their narratives remain a peerless resource for understanding the lives of America's four million slaves. What makes the WPA narratives so rich is that they capture the very voices of American slavery, revealing the texture of life as it was experienced and remembered. Each narrative taken alone offers a fragmentary, microcosmic representation of slave life. Read together, they offer a sweeping composite view of slavery in North America, allowing us to explore some of the most compelling themes of nineteenth-century slavery, including labor, resistance and flight, family life, relations with masters, and religious belief. It is worthwhile to read the narratives closely, watching and listening for unexpected details, unspoken feelings, and hidden meanings. Often the full meanings of the narratives will remain unclear, but the ambiguities themselves bear careful consideration.

Sample Slave Narrative



"Sometimes I kain't git my min' together so as I kin tell nothin'. I fell out t'other day and had a misery in my head ever since. I wish I could read, but I wa'n't never l'arnt nothin' 'ceptin' atter Surrender. Miss Sallie Cotes she showed us how to read printin'; but I kain't read ne writin. I kain't tell you so much 'bout de wah' ca'se my recollection ain't no 'count dese days. All I knowed, 'twas bad times and folks got whupped, but I kain't say who was to blame; some was good and some was bad. I seed de pattenrollers, and atter Surrender de Ku Kluxes dey come den, but didn't never bother me. See, I wa'n't so old and I minded ev'ybody, and didn't vex 'em none.

-Emma Crockett (80 Years Old at Time of Interview)
Recorded by Ruby Pickens Tartt, Livingstone, Alabama, July 1937

QUESTIONS

1. What can this narrative tell us about the experience of slaves around the time of the Civil War?
2. What do you think Crockett is trying to say about whippings?
3. What are some limitations of oral histories such as this?

ORIGIN:

Purpose:

Value:

Limitations:

Name: Date:

Quantitative Analysis

New Perspectives on Slavery Questions

IB History of the Americas ~~Mr. Clarke~~

Directions: Use the graphs, maps, and charts in the “New Perspectives on Slavery” to answer the following questions.

Annual Net Earnings and Prices of Slaves

1. What type of slave was worth more to an owner, men or women?

2. At what age could slaves earn the most for their masters?

Men: _____ Women: _____

Per Capita Income by Region for 1840 and 1860

Note: Per Capita means “Per Person”

3. How much money did the average American make in 1840? _____

1860? _____

4. Which sub-region experienced the largest rate of change in per capita income between 1840 and 1860?

5. Make a hypothesis to explain why this may be the case.

(Note: Per Capita = per person)

Comparison of Farm Efficiency

6. Which farms were the most efficient?

7. What does the farm efficiency graph suggest about why slavery continued for so long?

Comparison of Average Daily Food Consumption of Slaves

8. Who consumed more food on average, slaves or free people?

9. Make a hypothesis to explain why this is the case.

Slave States, Proportion of White and Black Population

10. In which states did free blacks and slaves make up a majority of the population?

Distribution of Whippings on the Barrow Plantation, 1840-1842

11. How many whippings per year did most slaves receive on the Barrow Plantation from 1840-1842?

Life Expectancy of U.S. Slaves and Various Free Populations

12. How did the life expectancy of a white American differ from that of an American slave between 1830 and 1920?

13. How did the life expectancy of an American slave compare with the life expectancy of someone in Manchester, England in 1850?

Percentage of Southern White Families Owning Slaves in 1860

14. How many slaves did most southern white families own?

15. Of the southern white families that did own slaves, how many slaves did most families own?

16. What does this graph indicate about the image of the South as a region consisting primarily of big plantations worked by large

numbers of slaves?

Critical Analysis

17. Do you think that the graphs on food consumption, whippings, and life expectancies indicate that slavery wasn't that bad?

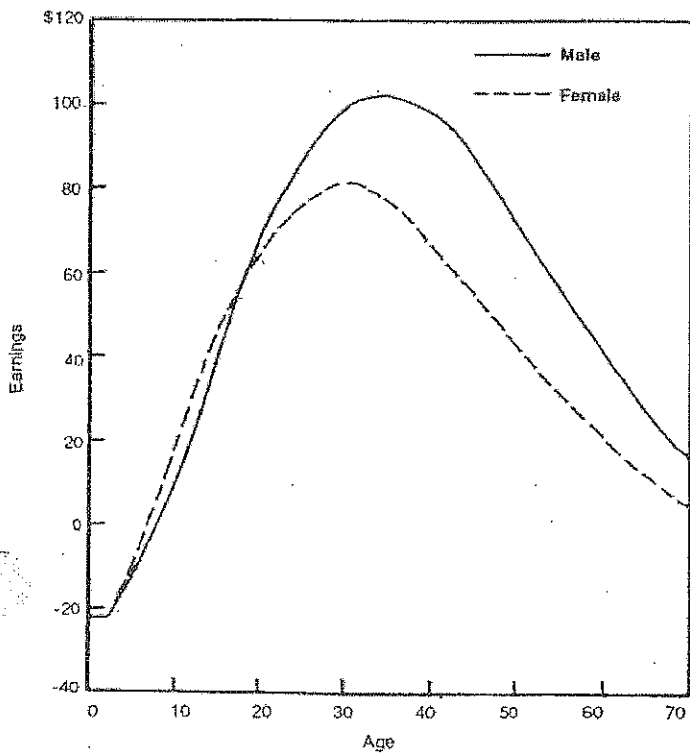
Explain why or why not.

Slavery: Quantitative Analysis

New Perspectives on Slavery

Below is a series of charts, tables, and graphs giving statistical information about American slavery. Use them to answer the questions at the end.

Annual Net Earnings from Slaves by Age and Sex about 1850, Old South



Prices of Slaves by Age and Sex about 1850, Old South

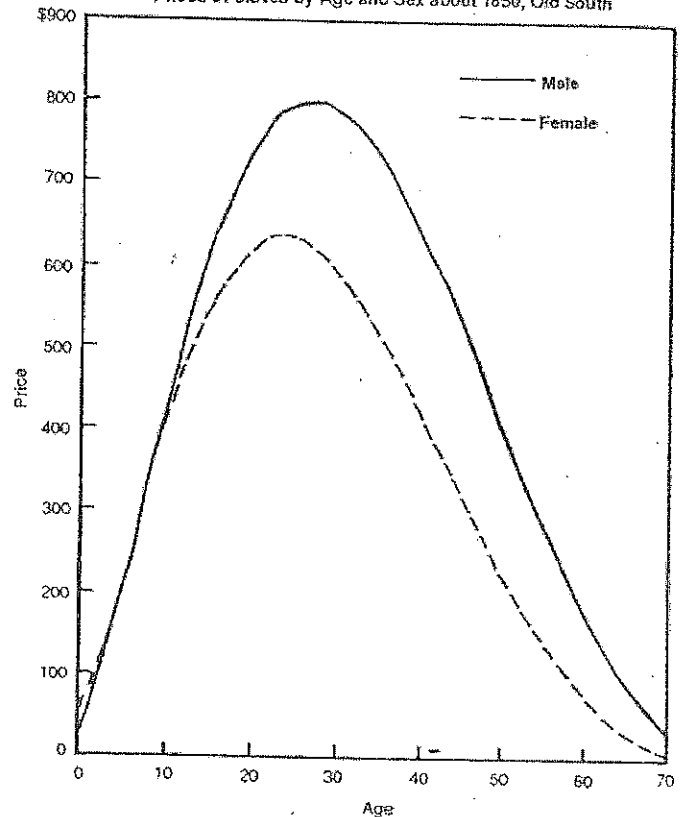


Figure 33.1 Robert William Fogel and Stanley Engerman, *Time on the Cross* (Boston, Mass.: Little Brown and Company, 1974), 248.

Per Capita Income by Region for 1840 and 1860 (in 1860 prices)

	1840	1860	Average Annual Rates of Change (Percent)
National Average	\$ 96	\$ 128	1.4
<i>North:</i>			
Northeast	109	141	1.3
North Central	129	181	1.7
North Central	65	89	1.6
<i>South:</i>			
South Atlantic	74	103	1.7
East South Central	66	84	1.2
East South Central	69	89	1.3
West South Central	151	184	1.0



Table 33.1 Ibid., 76.

Table 33.2 Ibid.

Slavery: Quantitative Analysis

U.S. History: Book 1 America: Creating the Dream
 Lesson 33
 Handout 33 (page 2)

Name _____
 Date _____

The Distribution of Whippings on the Bennet H. Barrow Plantation during a Two-Year Period Beginning in December, 1840

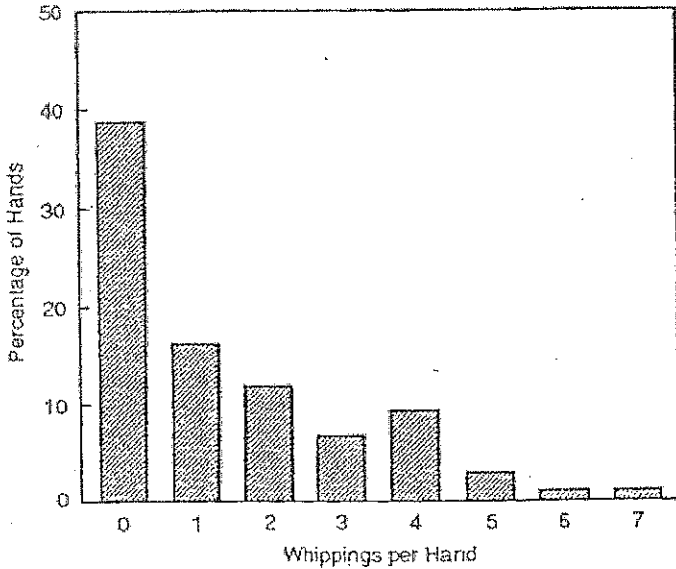


Table 33.3 Ibid., 145.

The Life Expectation at Birth for U.S. Slaves and Various Free Populations, 1830-1920

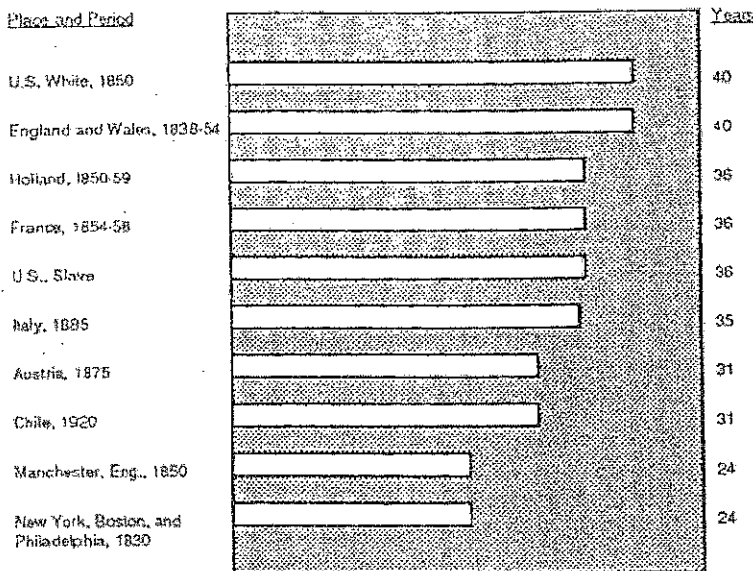


Table 33.4 Ibid., 125.

Percentage of Southern White Families Owning Slaves in 1860

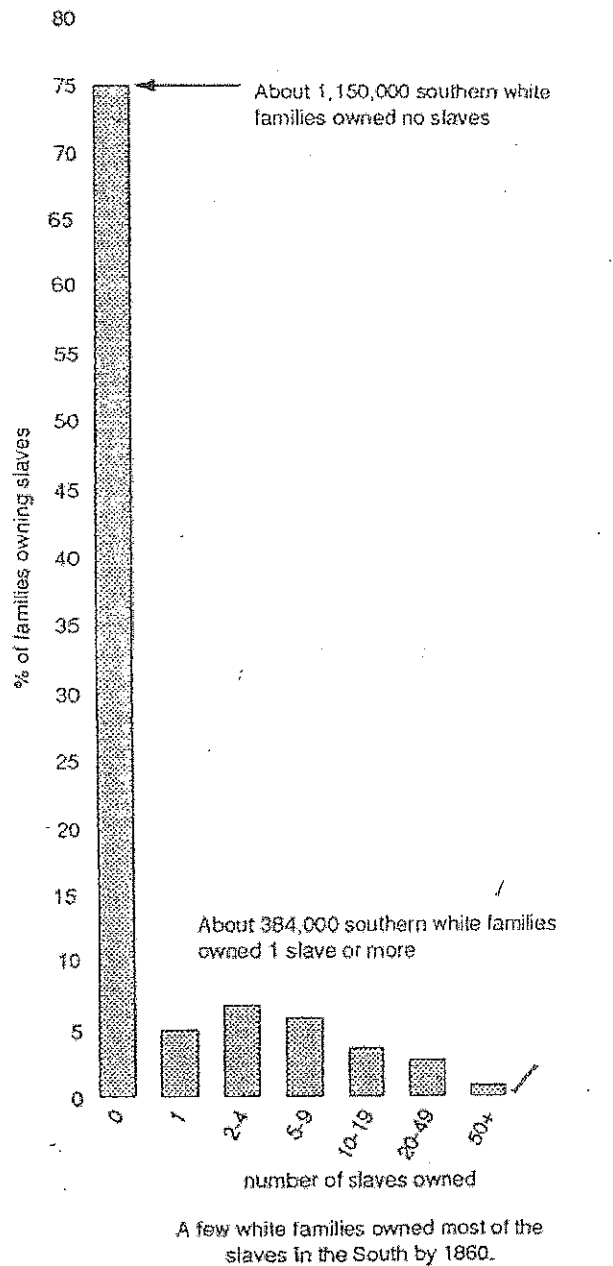


Table 33.5 Clarence L. Ver Steeg, *American Spirit* (Chicago, Ill.: Follett Publishing Company, 1982), 334.

A Comparison of the Efficiency of Old South Farms with Northern and New South Farms

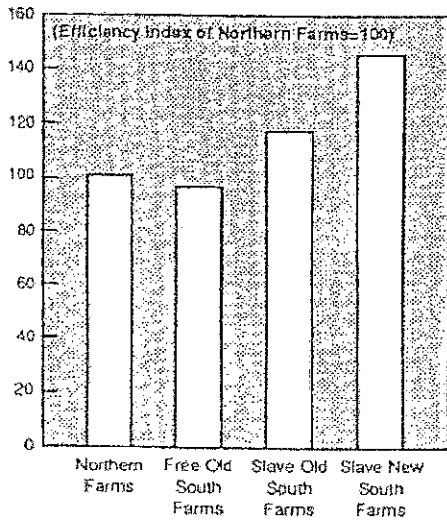


Table 33.6 Fogel and Engerman, *Time on the Cross*, 195.

A Comparison of the Average Daily Food Consumption of Slaves in 1860 with the Average Daily Food Consumption of the Entire Population in 1979

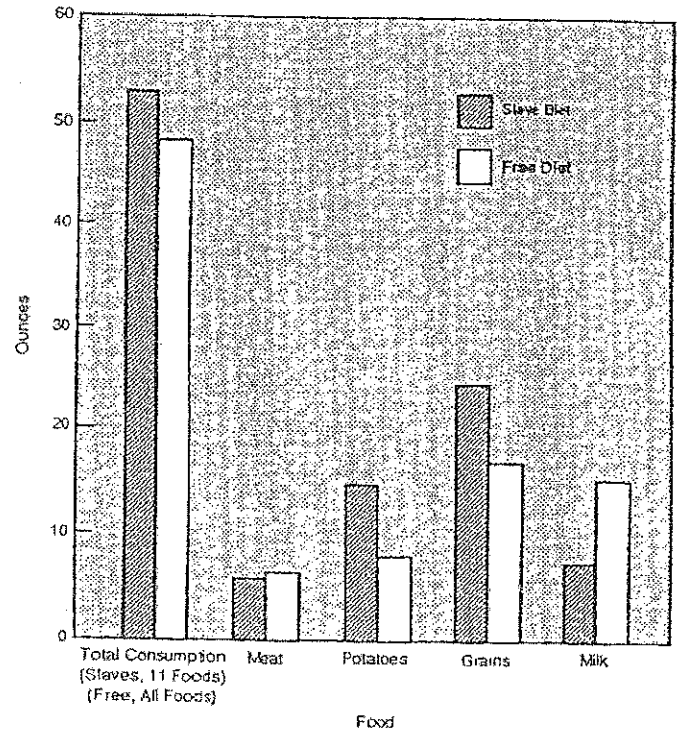


Table 33.7 *Ibid.*, 112.

SLAVE STATES, 1869--PROPORTION OF WHITE AND BLACK POPULATION
 (Figures rounded off to the nearest whole percentage point)

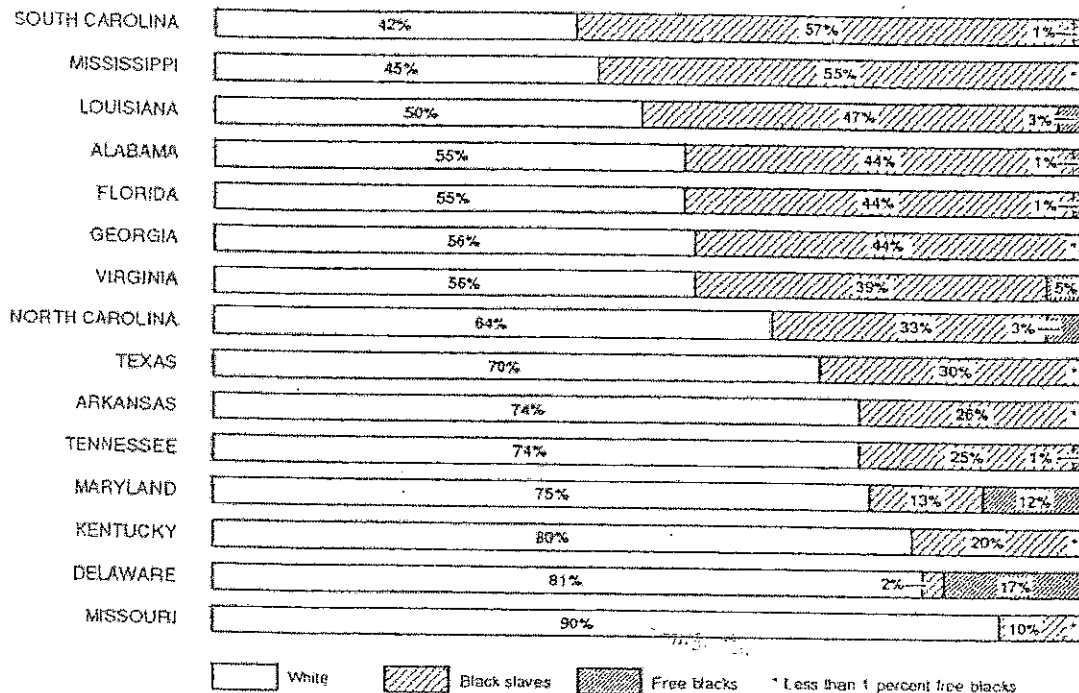


Table 33.8 Allen Weinstein and R. Jackson Wilson, *Freedom and Crisis* (New York: Random House, 1974), 308.



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