

“THE ART OF SERVING IS WITH THEM INNATE”: HUNTING, FISHING, AND
INDEPENDENCE IN THE POST-EMANCIPATION SOUTH, 1865-1920

by

Scott Edward Giltner

BA, Hiram College, 1996

MA, University of Pittsburgh, 1998

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

Arts and Sciences in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

University of Pittsburgh

2005

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH
FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

This dissertation was presented

by

Scott Edward Giltner

It was defended on

June 29, 2005

and approved by

Dr. Kathleen Blee, Sociology

Dr. Seymour Drescher, History

Dr. Marcus Rediker, History

Dr. Van Beck Hall, History
Dissertation Director

Copyright

By

Scott Edward Giltner

2005

“THE ART OF SERVING IS WITH THEM INNATE”: HUNTING, FISHING, AND
INDEPENDENCE IN THE POST-EMANCIPATION SOUTH, 1865-1920

Scott Edward Giltner, PhD

University of Pittsburgh, 2005

Abstract

This dissertation argues that hunting and fishing became central battlegrounds in the struggle over African-American independence between the end of the Civil War and the 1920s. Throughout that period, those deeply-rooted black cultural traditions, carried through centuries of bondage and further developed after 1865, remained important weapons in African Americans’ fight to control their own lives and labor. Drawing on narratives of former slaves, sportsmen’s recollections, records of fish and game clubs and resorts and sporting periodicals, I show that former slaves used hunting and fishing to reduce their dependence on agricultural labor in the service of whites and maximize their freedom. Because they reflected both symbolic and real African-American independence, hunting and fishing became central targets of white efforts to more firmly draw the racial line and protect their own economic and sporting interests.

My project contributes to Southern and African-American historiography by illuminating the overlooked connection between hunting and fishing and the evolution of the Southern racial divide. I show that African Americans’ right to hunt and fish became real and perceived sources of labor intractability, establish the importance of African Americans to a Southern sporting tourism industry dependent upon the physical and symbolic presence of subordinated former slaves, and expose fear of black independence as an overlooked motive in the rise of the

Southern conservation movement. I thus broaden our understanding of late nineteenth and early twentieth century Southern life by showing how African Americans cultivated long-cherished survival mechanisms to meet the changing conditions of freedom. In doing so I clarify how a coalition of whites worked to circumscribe black subsistence for their own ends and illustrate how hunting and fishing played a key role in both processes.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements.....	x
Prologue: Hunting, Fishing, and Freedom.....	xiii
The Problem of African-American Liberation	xviii
Dissertation Structure.....	xxii
1. Chapter One: “Idle Time Not Idly Spent”: African-American Hunting and Fishing in the Post-Emancipation South.....	1
Introduction.....	1
Hunting and Fishing & African-American Subsistence	5
Means, Methods and Social Tensions.....	17
Employment & Marketing	30
Conclusion	47
2. “You Can’t Starve a Negro”: Hunting and Fishing and the Problem of Independent Subsistence in the Post-Emancipation South.....	50
Introduction.....	50
Freedom and the Problem of Subsistence	55
Hunting and Fishing and Black Subsistence.....	63
Hunting, Fishing & the “Labor Question”	73
Conclusion	90
3. “The Pot Hunting Son of Ham”: White Sportsmen’s Objections to African-American Hunting and Fishing.....	93
Introduction.....	93
The Context of Postwar Southern Hunting and Fishing	96
African Americans & the White Sporting Ideal	101
Criticism of African-American Sporting Habits.....	117
From Sporting Inferiority to Racial Inferiority	130
Conclusion	144
4. “The Art of Serving is With Them Innate”: African Americans and the Work of Southern Hunting and Fishing.....	146
Introduction.....	146
African-American Sporting Labor.....	153
The Benefits of Sporting Labor, Part I.....	176
The Benefits of Sporting Labor, Part II	186
5. “With the Due Subordination of Master and Servant Preserved”: Race and Sporting Tourism in the Post-Emancipation South	199
Introduction.....	199
Southern Sporting Tourism.....	208
Nostalgia, Race, & Sporting Tourism.....	225
African Americans and Sporting Resorts/Plantations.....	234
Conclusion	245
6. “When He Should Be Between the Plow Handles”: Sportsmen, Landowners, Legislatures, and the Assault on African-American Hunting and Fishing.....	251
Introduction.....	251

Resistance to Southern Fish and Game Regulation	256
African Americans and Fish and Game Laws	269
Epilogue: Contradiction and Continuity in the Southern Sporting Field.....	301
APPENDIX A.....	313
Note on Sources	313
BIBLIOGRAPHY	319
Abbreviations Used.....	319
Primary Sources	319
Secondary Sources	331

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: 1910 African American Population, By Percentage, of 16 of the 17 South Carolina Counties Covered by the 1914 Ziegler Bill	316
---	-----

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: How Old Sport Stopped the Game Hog's Little Game.	183
Figure 2: National African American Population Concentration in 1910	315

Acknowledgements

Writing a dissertation can be a daunting and isolating experience at times and, for that reason, can never be truly an individual endeavor. This project could not have been completed without the intellectual, emotional, and moral support of many fine people. Thus my deepest appreciation and gratitude goes to my family, friends, and colleagues for their help, guidance, and patience through this challenging and sometimes difficult process.

My thanks go out to the members of my committee, past and present, for their efforts reading, criticizing, and sharpening my work over the years. Without welcome advice and keen insight from Professors Paula Baker, Kathleen Blee, Seymour Drescher, John Markoff, and Marcus Rediker, this project would not have been possible. My dissertation and my own understanding of history are much stronger for their efforts and I sincerely thank them for their interest and guidance.

I especially wish to express my sincere appreciation for the unbending support of my valued advisor, Professor Van Beck Hall. Dr. Hall's mentoring over the long years, from our explorations of Southern history in early independent studies (during which he first displayed his terrifying but inspirational knowledge of the region) to the final stages of dissertation writing, showed me what it truly means to be a dedicated scholar, thoughtful educator, and concerned advisor and friend. I intend to follow his fine example as best I can in my own career.

In addition to my committee, I have also been fortunate to share the wisdom and guidance of other distinguished professors at the University of Pittsburgh. I wish to thank William Chase, Maurine Greenwald, Bernard Hagerty, the late Michael Jimenez, Richard Oestreicher, Evelyn Rawski, and Rob Ruck. These individuals provided needed advice and kindly support throughout my graduate career, and I am grateful for their efforts.

Numerous organizations have provided generous financial support for my research and writing. I was fortunate to receive the Samuel P. Hays Research Award from the history department of the University of Pittsburgh in 2001 and 2004 which greatly aided in, first, locating and, later, completing the necessary research. In between those awards, I received valuable support from the Virginia Historical Society in the form of an Andrew W. Mellon Research Fellowship that funded my work in Richmond. For my work in the Southern Historical and North Carolina Collections at the University of North Carolina, I benefited from the Archie K. Davis Research Fellowship from the North Caroliniana Society. In addition to the above grants and awards, most valuable assistance was provided by the Lillian B. Lawler Predoctoral Fellowship which enabled me to complete the majority of my research. I sincerely thank each organization and the individuals involved for these much appreciated awards.

I also wish to acknowledge the librarians and archivists at the sites I visited for the research. Their help and interest in my project made the research process much easier. I wish to especially thank the staff of the Hillman Library at the University of Pittsburgh, particularly the Inter-Library Loan and Microfilm departments, who were a great help for this project and my graduate work in general. I also thank the staff of the Library of Virginia and Virginia Historical Society in Richmond, the North Carolina State Archives in Raleigh, the South Carolina Historical Society in Charleston, the South Carolina State Archives and South Caroliniana Library in Columbia, and the Southern Historical and North Carolina Collections at the University of North Carolina.

The cheerful and ceaseless efforts of the history department staff at the University of Pittsburgh were absolutely critical to completing both the dissertation and the PhD. These are the people who really make the history department go-the people without whom we graduate

students would have been lost in the tall grass. My deep appreciation to Graduate Secretaries Grace Tomcho and Molly Estes for their friendship, knowledge of University bureaucracy, and willingness to listen to and help with all problems great and small. I also wish to thank the other department staff, past and present, whose efforts have meant so much over the years. My thanks go to Kathy Gibson, Judy Macey, Faye Schneider, Anna Segreti, and Jialu Wu.

I wish to make special mention of the friends and graduate student colleagues whose friendship over the years have been so important to me personally and professionally. Without their interest in my work, enthusiasm for reading all or parts of the dissertation, thoughtful and insightful criticism, and steadfast intellectual and emotional support, this project would not have been started, let alone finished. In seminars, on the telephone, via e-mail, in the graduate student lounge, and in many bars, the network of friends I joined while in Pittsburgh proved invaluable. I deeply thank Tania Boster, John Donoghue, Mike Ervin, Jeff Forret, Andrew Haley, Jack Kapluck, Mike McCoy, Craig Marin, Dave Recht, Chad Statler, Vanessa Sterling, and Ellie Walsh for their steadfast friendship and valuable contributions to my work.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge the love and support from my family that made my graduate studies possible in the first place. Without the tireless and unwavering emotional (and financial!) support from my parents, John and Judy Giltner, I could never have reached this point. I thank them for their patience during this long process and for their faith that it would someday reach a conclusion. Ultimately, the existence of this dissertation is probably better testament to their hard work and dedication than to mine.

Prologue: Hunting, Fishing, and Freedom

This dissertation began as a proposal for a master's thesis on hunting and fishing in plantation slave communities. The logical starting point for such a project was the collection of former slave narratives compiled by George Rawick in the 1950s and 60s. A cursory examination of various state narratives revealed that many former slaves enthusiastically recalled moments stalking through the woods or quietly fishing at a nearby creek and that that such activities stood out as rare high points in a cold and capricious system based on brutal exploitation. Their descriptions, moreover, indicated that hunting and fishing as sport or recreation was at best a secondary consideration for slaves. Hunting and fishing served a more vital function. When former slaves described the primary benefits of hunting and fishing, they recalled not only recreation, but, more significantly, the crucial ability to feed themselves when sufficient food was denied them, the feelings of pride that came with providing for one's self and family within a system that sought to keep slaves in a state of dependency and the valuable market activities, both simple and elaborate, that provided bond people and their families with much-needed cash and goods. Much more than fun or sport attended such abilities. As Charles Ball remembered of the day he acquired an old musket for hunting, "I now began to live well, and to feel myself, in some measure, an independent man."¹

The hundreds of former and runaway slave narratives indicated that hunting and fishing gave bond people greater control of their time and cultivated independence rather than mere

¹ Ball, Charles, *Slavery in the United States: A Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Charles Ball, a Black Man, Who Lived Forty Years in Maryland, South Carolina and Georgia, as a Slave Under Various Masters, and was One Year in the Navy with Commodore Barney, During the Late War*, (New York: John S. Taylor, 1837), 352.

recreation, a theme which ultimately formed the heart of my master's thesis.² This work, based mostly on former slave narratives and elite, white accounts of plantation life, argued that such activities strengthened slaves' nutritional and material condition, provided food, money and material goods, and gave slaves time for family and community camaraderie. Hunting and fishing created and augmented feelings of independence among slaves and turned privileges masters granted into customary rights slaves expected. Once such privileges became established, slaves regarded them as part of a contract—informal, of course, yet important and worth defending. Moreover, just as some masters used hunting and fishing to solidify their hold on labor, slaves used it to make claims to their own time and cultivate opportunities to resist, subtly and overtly, the conditions of bondage. The thesis explained some of the ways slaves relied on the natural environment to ease the daily burdens of bondage, identified hunting and fishing as contested activities inseparably linked to the Southern racial divide, and raised important questions about the connection between hunting and fishing and race after Emancipation.

Despite the frequency with which hunting and fishing appeared in narratives of black life before and after slavery, those activities have received almost no attention from scholars of Southern or African-American history.³ With the exception of a few works on slavery and Southern culture, scholars have largely ignored black customary rights and their impact on

² Scott E. Giltner, "Whatever I Could Git': Slave Hunting and Fishing in the Plantation South," University of Pittsburgh MA Thesis, 1998. The thesis has since been published as "Subsistence and Subversion: Slave Hunting and Fishing in the Antebellum South," in *To Love the Wind and the Rain": Essays in African American Environmental History*, eds., Dianne Glave and Mark Stoll (University of Pittsburgh Press, Fall 2005).

³ This lack of scholarship is true of United States historians in general. With but few exceptions, American historians have lagged far behind their European, especially British, counterparts in using customary rights such as hunting and fishing as important lenses in rural and plebian history. See, for example, Douglas Hay's "Poaching and the Game Laws of Cannock Chase," in Hay, et al. *Albion's Fatal Tree: Crime and Society in Eighteenth-Century England*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1975); Roger B. Manning's *Hunters and Poachers: A Social and Cultural History of Unlawful Hunting in England, 1485-1640*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); and E.P. Thompson's *Whigs and Hunters: The Origins of the Black Act*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1975).

Southern society.⁴ Most studies of hunting and fishing in the United States between the eighteenth and twentieth centuries have focused on such topics as how elites used field sports to reinforce class distinctions; the ways hunting and fishing reinforced or redefined American masculinity; and how such activities fit into the ebb and flow of American evangelicalism.⁵ The few extant studies of Southern hunting and fishing fit this pattern, giving little more than passing notice to the ways that those activities reflected larger and longer-lasting racial conflict.⁶ Aside from Nicholas Proctor's study of hunting in the antebellum South, few scholars have addressed the importance of hunting and fishing to white and black Southerners or have placed those

⁴ The few works that discuss these topics either do so briefly, such as the classic plantation studies by George Rawick (*From Sunup to Sundown: The Making of the Black Community*, Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing, 1972), Eugene Genovese (*Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made*, New York: Vintage Books, 1974), and John Blassingame (*The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), or do so in short articles which do not have hunting and fishing as a central focus, such as John Campbell's "'My Constant Companion': Slaves and their Dogs in the Antebellum South" in Larry E. Hudson Jr., ed. *Working Toward Freedom: Slave Society and Domestic Economy in the American South*, (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 1994) and David K. Wiggins' "Good Times on the Old Plantation: Popular Recreations of the Black Slave in Antebellum South, 1810-1860." *Journal of Sports History* Volume 4 (1), (1977), 260-284. The most important exception to this lack of attention is Nicholas W. Proctor's fine *Bathed in Blood: Hunting and Mastery in the Old South*, (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002). Aside from these works, which do not address the post-Emancipation period, few works address the role hunting and fishing played in the lives of Southern African Americans through the nineteenth century and beyond.

⁵ For a discussion of hunting and fishing and class see Gary Kulik's "Dams, Fish and Farmers: Defense of Public Rights in Eighteenth Century Rhode Island," in Steven Hahn and Johnathan Prude, eds., *The Countryside in the Age of Capitalist Transformation: Essays in the Social History of Rural America*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985); and Harry L. Watson's "'The Common Rights of Mankind': Subsistence, Shad and Commerce in the Early Republican South," (*Journal of American History* 83 (1996): 13-43. For work that places such topics in the context of masculinity and nationalism, see Daniel Justin Herman's *Hunting and the American Imagination*, (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001). For analysis addressing hunting in terms of class, masculinity and religion, see Ted Ownby's *Subduing Satan: Religion, Recreation and Manhood in the Rural South 1865-1920*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990).

⁶ There are several exceptions to this general trend. Steven Hahn's "Hunting, Fishing and Foraging: Common Rights and Class Relations in the Postbellum South," demonstrates that Southern elite's loss of control over the lower classes, especially African Americans, proved an incentive for restricting the general right to hunt, fish, forage and graze beginning in the 1870s. *Radical History Review* 26 (October 1982): 36-64. Another exception is Stuart A. Marks, *Southern Hunting in Black and White: Nature, History and Rituals in a Carolina Community*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), which briefly discusses how hunting helped elites establish their identities in opposition to African Americans. Finally, Jacob F. Rivers' literary analysis of Southern hunting and fishing narratives, *Cultural Values in the Southern Sporting Narrative*, (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2002), briefly notes the ways sporting narratives reveal white elites' attempts to reinforce their cultural authority. Hahn, Marks and Rivers argue a general connection between hunting and fishing and race, but none gives the topic detailed analysis.

activities within the context of the Southern racial divide. However, when the larger economic and cultural meaning of African American hunting and fishing in the nineteenth century is more fully explored, we can learn much more about race in the antebellum and postwar South.⁷ By clearly establishing the impact of hunting and fishing on African Americans' lives—through acquiring food and money, creating physical and psychological distance between black and white, even advancing opportunities to resist economic exploitation and white supremacy—we can view the region's fields, forests and streams as contested arenas that reflect key tensions in Southern life. This study suggests that examining nineteenth-century African Americans' "larger landscapes of subsistence," to use historian Mart A. Stewart's phrase, can reveal as much about race and race relations as about class conflict, masculinity and American religiosity.⁸

Steven Hahn's work, a key exception to scholars' tendency to ignore customary rights, also advances an argument central to this thesis. With his 1983 study *The Roots of Southern Populism: Yeomen Farmers and the Transformation of the Georgia Upcountry, 1850-1890*, Hahn created controversy with his assertion that an attack by landed elites and industry-minded capitalists on the customary rights of lower-class blacks and whites, including access to waste lands, open pasturage, foraging, and hunting and fishing, became a powerful trend of the postwar South. Rural and urban Southern elites, Hahn argued, saw such rights as antithetical to economic development. Plebeians in the Southern uplands, however, saw those traditions as part of a

⁷ Nicholas Proctor has compared the meaning of hunting by white slave owners with hunting by slaves to great effect, clearly establishing hunting as an important way Southern elites defined and conserved both their class privilege and racial identity. For elite white sportsmen, according to Proctor, the act of hunting an animal "dramatized the wide-ranging mastery of white patriarchy" while "participation in the hunt made them more than men, it made them a master class." *Bathed in Blood*, 210.

⁸ Here Stewart specifically addressed the importance of swamp lands as a sort of "promised land" that African Americans could reclaim for their own economic and cultural betterment. But according to Stewart, the real and symbolic importance of swamp land was in fact "a story about every place in the South where undrained and unclaimed land offered a refuge for African Americans." *'What Nature Suffers to Groe': Life, Labor and Landscape On the Georgia Coast, 1680-1920*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996), 245.

loosely defined “cooperative commonwealth” which enabled them to use the spreading “free” market to their advantage and, for a time, resist the capitalization of traditional economic relations.⁹ While my work does not place hunting and fishing in the context of the capitalization of the rural Southern uplands, it does, by applying Hahn’s argument about customary rights to the Black Belt South, support and expand his position that white elites believed customary rights threatened both their economic and racial supremacy and therefore worked to restrict or eliminate these rights entirely, not only for poor whites but also for African Americans.

Hunting and fishing appeared frequently in postwar complaints about African Americans. Indeed one can hardly read a white Southerner’s description of post-Emancipation life without finding highly-critical references to black hunting or fishing. Far from decreasing after Emancipation, the number of such accounts that touched on issues of race seemed to expand. These descriptions, it must be noted, often took on a decidedly different tone than similar accounts provided by their antebellum counterparts. Antebellum accounts of slave hunting and fishing reflected white Southerners’ confident mastery over those in bondage, but postwar accounts often revealed a deep unease with black liberation and a growing anger over freed people’s customary rights. Hunting and fishing sometimes irritated and occasionally alarmed antebellum planters as sources of slave privilege and temporary independence, but they did not view them as serious threats to their basic control. After liberation however, white Southerners

⁹ Hahn’s arguments were widely criticized, particularly by scholars who disputed the notion of a plebian “cooperative commonwealth” and Hahn’s overall characterization of Southern capital development. Some scholars also criticized Hahn’s arguments about customary rights for failing to demonstrate precisely why Southern elites sought to eliminate plebian customary rights. Yet I would suggest that neither Hahn’s assertions of the importance of customary rights to rural plebeian Southerners, nor his discussion of the “mounting contentions over common rights and their role in the reshaping of Southern class relations,” have been sufficiently examined. “Hunting, Fishing, and Foraging,” 38. For a forceful critique of Hahn’s ideas, as well as his response to it, see Shawn Everett Kantor and J. Morgan Kousser, “Common Sense or Commonwealth? The Fence Law and Institutional Change in the Postbellum South,” *The Journal of Southern History* 59 (2), (May 1993), 201-242, and Steven Hahn, “A Response: Common Cents or Historical Sense?” *The Journal of Southern History* 59(2), (May 1993), 243-258.

saw that those same activities, performed by people free from white control, allowed African Americans to sometimes earn a living apart from regular labor in the service of whites, to challenge white sportsmen's monopoly over Southern hunting and fishing, and to create for themselves greater power and control over their own time and labor.

The Problem of African-American Liberation

Since the early colonial period, from tidewater Virginia to the Mississippi delta, from the South Carolina low country to the Alabama frontier, Southerners had hunted and fished for food, market or sport. For black and white and rich and poor alike, the exploitation of the sporting field became a key marker of racial and class status. For well-to-do whites, the ability to hunt and fish freely, to use certain methods and equipment, and to employ laborers to attend their excursions became ways to publicly display their wealth and social standing. To them, the pursuit of fish and game became purely a sporting activity, unburdened by the specter of necessity that drove lower-class hunting and fishing. For poor whites, the taking of fish and game, particularly the ability to do so without restriction, was a marker of their own sporting and financial competency—simultaneous expressions of their personal freedom and economic independence. And for African Americans, hunting and fishing were vivid symbols of economic, cultural and spatial separation from whites that reflected the struggle for control over their own lives and labors. For them, hunting and fishing became forms of work that demonstrated not aristocratic pretension but the need for food and income.

For Southerners, no matter their race or class position, hunting and fishing remained deeply rooted traditions that reflected their aspirations and reinforced their identity. Yet it is

essential to note that the hunting and fishing traditions of these different groups developed in opposition to each other. Elites followed established sporting codes carried over from the European aristocracy and hunted and fished in ways that those beneath them could not. Poorer whites freely exploited the products of the South's natural environment and strived for the leisure and liberty of elite sport but looked down upon the recently freed slave's ability to hunt and fish. In earning a part of their living away from agricultural labor in the service of whites, thereby confounding expectations of proper behavior for people of color, African Americans maximized their independence and challenged the Southern racial hierarchy through hunting and fishing.

Freedom forever altered the Southern sporting field. It encapsulated all of the tensions inherent in the transition from slavery to freedom. The ability to freely hunt and fish provided freed people with privileges that clashed with white, particularly agricultural employers' expectations of proper African-American behavior. Along with independent hunting and fishing came better control of subsistence, greater mobility, freer use of guns and dogs, and the ability to more easily avoid permanent labor in the service of whites. In the minds of white observers, these freedoms were incompatible with the future prosperity of the region. The increasingly bitter tone with which white Southerners discussed black hunting and fishing in post-Emancipation sporting narratives indicated that those activities would continue to be key points of conflict in Southern life for decades. Thus moving my study forward into the post-Emancipation period carried the potential for documenting how those customary traditions, born in slavery and later employed by freed people liberated from the master-servant binary that had previously characterized such activities, posed very real threats to elite whites' control.

Between the late 1860s and the mid 1920s, the role of hunting and fishing in Southern society changed. In addition to becoming a growing source of conflict between elite whites and

former slaves over black privilege, subsistence and labor, hunting and fishing also became increasingly important to the region's emerging tourism industry. Economic and cultural reunion between North and South heralded the South's emergence as a leading sporting destination. Thousands of visitors from around the country and world journeyed to Dixie seeking both ready supplies of fish and game and an "authentic" Southern experience that included, most importantly, the presence of subordinate African Americans to complete their vision of the mythical antebellum South. Elite, landowning Southerners thus had a direct vested interest in restricting former slaves' hunting and fishing even as their presence in the sporting field became more important to the region's fish and game industry. As sporting tourism garnered millions for the coffers of the leading resort and sporting states, particularly North and South Carolina, Georgia, Mississippi, Louisiana and Alabama, Southerners' need to protect fish and game, preserving it for whites only, became more urgent. As with agricultural employers and landowners, sportsmen and tourism investors increasingly realized that independent African-American hunting and fishing was bad for business.

With time, a coalition of white, Southern elites agreed on the need to control hunting and fishing in response to African-American liberation. For landowners and agricultural employers, former slaves' renewed ability to freely pursue fish and game challenged their quest for tractable labor and raised troubling questions about the harmful effects of black subsistence and mobility. For sportsmen, unrestricted hunting and fishing provided African Americans with the ability to both assail valuable wildlife and to engage in sporting behavior they thought to be the exclusive purview of elite whites. And for those involved in sporting tourism, independent African-American hunters and fishermen not only competed with native and visiting sportsmen for the products of the chase, thereby damaging the remunerative potential of an increasingly lucrative

industry, but also challenged the basic assumptions of black subordination that lay at the heart of the popularity of Southern tourism. For each of these groups then, African-American hunting and fishing both underscored the problems of black independence and presented immediate barriers to their respective economic and social positions. Between the last third of the nineteenth and first decades of the twentieth centuries, this coalition discussed, criticized and forcefully attacked independent hunting and fishing by African Americans in order to limit them to those who followed codes of proper sportsmanship, to those who brought tourist and investment capital into the region and to those whose labor did not bear the future of Southern economic prosperity. For elite whites, Southern hunting and fishing might remain permanently bi-racial, but control of it could not.

Between Emancipation and the early twentieth century, sportsmen, landowners and agricultural employers responded to black liberation by attacking black customary rights. If they could circumscribe how former slaves supported themselves, they might compel tractable labor. If they could force people of color to adhere to codes of proper sportsmanship or remove themselves from the sporting field altogether, they might maintain elite, white dominion over Southern fields, forests and streams. And if they could use regulation of hunting and fishing to keep African Americans both more dependent upon white employment and more susceptible to white control, they might simultaneously guarantee their future economic prosperity while preserving images of African-American inferiority for tourists. But the going was not easy. Before the coalition could effectively target those threats, they had to first convince a reluctant, and poorer, Southern public, long-suspicious of efforts to restrict general access to fish and game, that the need to control an increasingly independent-minded black population far outweighed traditional suspicion of legislative action targeting cherished customary rights.

By the second decade of the twentieth century, however, a half-century of vigorous public complaint from the coalition over African-American hunting and fishing had secured several important victories. With the explosion of sporting tourism, many Southerners began to understand the financial motivations for better protecting fish and game. With the rise of a national conservation movement, which by the late nineteenth century had penetrated even the reluctant South, sportsmen had begun to accept some limits on hunting and fishing as necessary to stop the abuses of immoderate lower-class sportsmen. And with the rise of Jim Crow, both Southern and national audiences agreed that black sporting and character excesses lay at the heart of the region's economic, social and sporting problems. The time had finally arrived for a wide-ranging legislative assault on African Americans' right to hunt and fish.

Dissertation Structure

The basic structure of the dissertation reflects the evolution of the process whereby a coalition of white interests came to view independent hunting and fishing by African Americans as a threat to their station and subsequently worked to eliminate it. The volume begins with a discussion of how African Americans across the Southern black belt carried hunting and fishing from slavery and made these activities key components of their post-Emancipation economic and cultural lives. Chapter One argues that through such "Idle Time Not Idly Spent," former slaves created economic and physical space between themselves and their employers and used hunting and fishing to enter into various market activities normally denied to people of color. After establishing the importance of hunting and fishing to freed people, the dissertation moves on to identify the several components of the coalition of white interests responsible for targeting freed

African Americans' customary hunting and fishing rights. Chapter Two, "You Can't Starve a Negro," argues that landowners and planters decried hunting and fishing as serious threats to the South's labor system. Fearing the apparent growing recalcitrance that seemed to characterize freed black labor, agricultural employers identified African-American customary rights as one of the biggest threats to their long-term economic security. Elite sportsmen from across the United States also grew increasingly hostile to black hunting and fishing through the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Chapter Three discusses the ways that these sportsmen, afraid that "The Pot-Hunting Son of Ham," as they rancorously identified the African-American sportsman, threatened both Southern wildlife and elite, white sporting privilege, worked hard to invalidate black sporting practices by portraying African-American sportsmen as unskilled and unrestrained.

Chapters Four and Five deal with the apparent paradox posed by the role of African Americans in Southern hunting and fishing. Despite the venom with which white employers, landowners and sportsmen criticized black customary rights, that coalition did not seek to remove former slaves from the sporting field entirely. As discussed in Chapter Four, "The Art of Serving is With Them Innate," slavery had taught white Southerners both that service to whites was a necessary adjunct of blackness and that African Americans proved the best sporting laborers. For those two inter-related reasons, former slaves remained the dominant source of sporting labor across much of the South. Chapter Five demonstrates that the ideal of white sportsmen taking to the field alongside African-American laborers, "With the Due Subordination of Master and Servant Preserved," proved a strong lure for the throng of sporting tourists who came South in the half-century after the Civil War. Believing that African-American subordinates made hunting and fishing more authentically "Southern" by meeting with their

expectations of the mythologized antebellum era, sporting tourists insisted on having black drivers, laborers, paddlers and guides close at hand. Ironically then, even as a coalition of white employers, landowners and sportsmen worked to restrict independent African-American customary rights, their need to carry on the supposed tradition of black sporting service led them to accept African-American hunting and fishing, at least when done so for the benefit of or in service to their white betters.

The dissertation concludes with a discussion of the vigorous attacks made on independent African-American hunting and fishing that became the culmination of decades of criticism of black environmental exploitation from a coalition of perturbed white landowners, sportsmen and lawmakers. Each of these groups had a vested interest in limiting the time African Americans spent hunting and fishing “When He Should Be Between the Plow Handles,” as Chapter Six argues. The coalition worked hard to overcome poor white Southerners’ deeply-rooted suspicion of restrictions on the right to hunt and fish and finally managed to enact regulations by emphasizing their role in limiting African Americans’ access to and use of Southern fields, forest and streams. The Southern public had long resisted such governmental measures as establishing fixed, permanent sporting seasons and requiring state hunting and fishing licenses which they perceived as attacks on lower-class rights; but they at last became convinced through assurances that African Americans, not poor whites, remained the intended targets of such laws. By assuring an otherwise recalcitrant public that restricting hunting and fishing might curb the excesses of black liberation, by persuading them that there was an unavoidable connection between conserving fish and game and conserving white supremacy, the elite coalition finally saw to the establishment of permanent and effective state-level wildlife protection.

1. Chapter One: “Idle Time Not Idly Spent”: African-American Hunting and Fishing in the Post-Emancipation South

I ain't never stole a moufful somepin' t'eat for [my family] in all my life. It's honest vittles dey et, and varmints I's killed in de woods, 'ca'se us raised chillum fast, and us had a heap of 'em, sixteen if I 'members right, and soon's I found out dat I could help feed em' dat way, I done a heap of hunting. And everybody knows I's a good hunter.

--W.P.A. testimony of former slave Josh Horn¹⁰

Introduction

In 1937, former Alabama slave Heywood Ford relayed the story of the escape of a slave named Jake Williams, who hated their plantation's overseer “case he was so mean an' useta try to think up things to whup us for,” to a WPA interviewer. For Williams, the last straw came one day when the overseer, after seeing him playing with his “ole red-bone houn” dog Belle instead of working, sternly reproached him and then “pick up a rock an' slam de dog in de back.” That night Williams told Ford he was running away and begged a favor. “I wish you'd look after my houn' Belle,” he requested. “Feed her an' keep her de bes' you kin. She a mighty good possum an' coon dog. I hates to part wid her, but I knows dat you is de bes' pusson I could leave her wid.” With that, Williams slipped out of the cabin and escaped into a nearby swamp. It did not take long for the overseer to notice the slave's absence and set after him with dogs. According to

¹⁰ George P. Rawick, ed., *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography*, 19 vols., (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1972) 6 (1), Alabama and Indiana Narrtives, 201.

Heywood Ford, they soon caught up with Williams, who climbed a tree to avoid his pursuers.

Angrily, the overseer climbed up after him. In desperation, Williams kicked the overseer to the ground. What happened next astonished the terrified runaway:

When he hit de earth dem houn's pounced on him. Jake den lowered hisself to de bottom limbs so's he could see what had happened. He saw the dogs a-tearin' at de man an' he holla: 'Hol' 'im, Belle!' 'Hol 'im, gal!' De leader of dat pack of houn's, white folks, warn't no blood houn. She was a plain old red-bone possum an' coon dog, an' de res' done jus' lak she done, tearin' at de oberseer's th'oot. All de while, Jake he a-hollerin' f'um de tree fer dem dogs to git 'im. 'Twarn't long afore dem dogs to' dat man all to pieces. He died raght under dat maple tree dat he run Jake up. Jake he an' dat coon houn' struck off through de woods.

Ford heard this remarkable tale from Williams himself. "I seed Jake after us niggers was freed," he recalled. "Dats how come I knowed all 'bout it. It must have been six years after dey killed de oberseer." By pure chance, Ford was reunited with his friend in Kentucky. "He was a-sittin' on some steps of a nigger cabin. A houn' dog was a-sittin' at his side. I tells him how glad I is to see him, an' den I look at de dog. 'Dat ain't Belle,' I says. 'Naw,' Jake answers, 'Dis her puppy!' Den he tol' me de whole story."¹¹

Ford's account, which the interviewer tellingly titled "Heywood Ford tells a story," is likely embellished or fictionalized.¹² But even if it was but a colorful tale to please the interviewer, it nonetheless reveals important facts about African-American life in the rural South before and after Emancipation. First, as evidenced by Jake Williams' attachment to Belle, slaves depended upon independent economic activities like hunting to help them survive the rigors of

¹¹ Ibid., 123-5.

¹² As numerous scholars have demonstrated, such sources as the WPA narratives, while invaluable sources of information on slave life, can be highly problematic as primary evidence. Problems with subjects' memory and their tendency to exaggerate or distort the truth for a variety of reasons necessitate that scholars use them with care. For two essays that deal with precisely this problem, see John W. Blassingame, "Using the Testimony of Ex-Slaves: Approaches and Problems," *Journal of Southern History* 41 (4), (1975): 473-492, and David Thomas Bailey, "A Divided Prism: Two Sources of Black Testimony on Slavery," *Journal of Southern History* 46 (3), (1980): 381-404.

bondage. Second, as demonstrated by Williams' flight when his ability to use Belle to meet his needs was challenged, slaves protected such activities as best they could and resisted attempts to deny them. Third, as seen in the story of the overseer's death, such assets as Belle became vital weapons in the battle of wills with slaveholders that helped bond people secure greater control over their own subsistence and labor. Finally, as shown by Ford's reunion with Jake Williams six years after the latter's escape, at which Belle's puppy happily sat by his side, the attachment to activities like hunting, and to loyal hunting dogs, did not end with Emancipation.

This chapter examines the place of hunting and fishing in the lives of freed people between Emancipation and the first decades of the twentieth century. Throughout that period, hunting and fishing remained important subsistence and market activities that aided African Americans in their struggle for greater freedom from white domination and more personal control over their lives and labor. Long-standing customary activities that benefited slaves and free blacks across the South, hunting and fishing joined critical independent economic activities like gardening, self-hire and marketing homemade goods through which African Americans loosened the hold of servitude.¹³ After the Civil War, hunting and fishing complemented such institutions as black churches, schools and mutual aid societies as crucial ways freed people guaranteed subsistence and avoided falling into dependency upon their former masters. Hunting and fishing thus demonstrates how former slaves turned to long-cherished survival strategies to meet the changing economic and social circumstances of life in the post-war South.

Hunting and fishing had long been critically important customary activities for slaves that

¹³ For a discussion of slave hunting and fishing, particularly how those activities helped slaves make life under bondage more bearable through providing food, money and material goods, creating times for family bonding, even carving out opportunities to resist slavery itself, see Scott E. Giltner, "Subsistence and Subversion: Slave Hunting and Fishing in the Antebellum South," in Dianne Glave and Mark Stoll, eds., *"To Love The Wind and the Rain": Essays in African American Environmental History*, (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, Forthcoming, Fall 2005). See also Nicholas W. Proctor, *Bathed in Blood: Hunting and Mastery in the Old South*, (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002), particularly chapter seven, "Slave Perceptions of the Hunt."

strengthened their nutritional and material condition, provided food, money and material goods, and gave them valuable time for familial and community camaraderie. After Emancipation, the tensions engendered by black hunting and fishing, including controversy over freed people's use of firearms, their ownership of dogs, their use of traditionally scorned plebian sporting methods, their entry into a variety of hunting and fishing related market activities, and, perhaps most important, their ability to use such traditions to supplement agricultural labor, grew as hunting and fishing became an important part of their transition from slavery to freedom.

Hunting and fishing created significant social tensions in the post-Emancipation South, and not because white and black hunted or fished in isolation. African Americans had long acquired fish and game away from prying white eyes; they had also, for centuries, taken to the field alongside, in service to, or with the full knowledge of whites. The Southern sporting field had long been racially integrated, a tradition that continued after Emancipation. Former masters and former slaves became well acquainted with each other's sporting aims and methods through decades of sharing common social and productive space. The many conflicts created by hunting and fishing helped define the nineteenth-century rural South, but deep traditions of cooperation often played a countervailing role. Hunting and fishing rested on a complex web of mutuality and interdependence. If familiarity indeed breeds contempt, then the tensions surrounding freed person hunting and fishing are perhaps the best testaments to the fact that Southern hunting and fishing in the region had been and would continue to be inescapably bi-racial.

In 1863, with war still raging across the South, Edward Philbrick, a New Englander working with Port Royal, South Carolina, freedmen, wrote a letter to his friend William Gannett describing the fishing of former slaves named Limus and 'Siah. Philbrick, a devotee of local fish and game who often employed African Americans as oarsmen and laborers, noted that former

slaves drew much of their subsistence from fishing. Uneasy with that fact, he demonstrated reluctance to order new seines [large nets that spanned a river or creek to ensnare fish] requested by Limus and ‘Siah. Not thinking such equipment a worthy investment, Philbrick had only one shipped, to Limus, and opted to wait on ‘Siah’s in the hopes that such activities might diminish:

Moreover, entre nous, I don’t believe it will do him any good to spend his time a-fishing. It has a sort of excitement, like gold-digging, which unfits a man for steady, plodding industry, witness Limus. Now the present demand for fish will not be permanent. After the war the negroes will have to fall back upon field-labor for a living, and it will be better for them if in the meanwhile they do not acquire a distaste for steady labor and get vagrant habits. I would talk this over with ‘Siah and ask him in serious mood if he really thinks best to spend so much money in fishing-gear, when he could buy land with it by and bye.¹⁴

Many other Northern and Southern whites, confident that former slaves would abandon such means of survival, believed the pull of agricultural labor, even the possibility of land ownership, would prevent them from developing such “vagrant habits.” It is unknown to what degree Limus and ‘Siah were convinced to “fall back upon field-labor for a living,” but it is clear that many freed people across the South had no intention of abandoning hunting and fishing.

Hunting and Fishing & African-American Subsistence

African Americans intended to maintain old customary rights to meet the new conditions of the post-war South. Although slavery had disappeared, former slaves’ nutritional, material and cultural needs did not.¹⁵ Former Hillsboro, North Carolina, slave Robert Glenn, asked by a

¹⁴ Elizabeth Ware Pearson, ed., *Letters from Port Royal, 1862-1868*, (Boston: W.B. Clarke Co., 1906), 220-1.

¹⁵ It is hard to underestimate how vigorously slaves worked to defend and expand their independent economic activities. Narratives reveal a tremendous determination to provide for themselves and their families despite the material circumstances of bondage. As former Kentucky slave Lewis Clarke asserted, “when we were cheated out of our two meals a day, either by the cruelty or caprice of the overseer, we always felt it a kind of special duty and privilege to make up in some way the deficiency. To accomplish this we had many devices.” Lewis Garrard Clarke,

WPA interviewer what he did in 1865 and 1866, replied simply, “I went back home [to the plantation] and stayed a year. During the year I hunted a lot at night and thoroughly enjoyed being free.”¹⁶ Likewise former Alabama slave George Fortman asserted that after liberation he became a “roustabout,” surviving by hunting between bouts of employment. “There was much wild game to be had and the hunting season was always open,” noted his WPA interviewer. “He also remembers many wolves, wild turkeys, catamounts, and deer in abundance near the Grand River.”¹⁷ African Americans’ continued reliance on the region’s wildlife even reached into popular literature. In George Washington Cable’s *John March, Southerner*, Cable tells of a post-war meeting between former slaveholder General Halliday and his former slave Cornelius Leggett. Asked if he and his kin were still on the old plantation, Leggett replied that “they ain’t ezac’ly on no plantation.” The freedman admitted that he and his were “mos’ly strewed round in the woods in pole cabins an’ bresh arbors.” Halliday asked if that meant they survived by hunting and fishing. “Yaas, sah, livin’ on game an’ fish,” replied Leggett.¹⁸

Hunting and fishing, long practiced by slaves, became natural remedies to the dislocations accompanying Emancipation. Many newly freed African Americans, lacking employment opportunities or sources of income, relied on fish and game to meet their needs. Numerous observers, southern and northern, commented on newly freed slaves’ tendency to

Narrative of the Sufferings of Lewis Clarke, During a Captivity of More than Twenty-Five Years, Among the Algerines of Kentucky, One of the So-Called Christian States of North America, (Boston: David H. Ela, Printer, 1845), 26. Documenting the American South Collection, UNC Chapel Hill, <http://docsouth.unc.edu/>, (hereafter DocSouth, UNCCH). For detailed discussions of slaves’ independent economic activities, see Ira Berlin and Philip D. Morgan eds., *The Slaves’ Economy: Independent Production By Slaves in the Americas*, (London: Frank Cass, 1991); Larry Hudson, ed., *Working Toward Freedom: Slave Society and Domestic Economy in the American South*, (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1994); and Betty Wood, *Women’s Work, Men’s Work: The Informal Slave Economies of Lowcountry Georgia*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995).

¹⁶ Rawick, *The American Slave*, 14 (1), North Carolina Narratives, 336.

¹⁷ Rawick, *The American Slave*, 6 (2), Alabama and Indiana Narratives, 93.

¹⁸ George Washington Cable, *John March, Southerner*, (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1899), 52.

retain such time-tested survival mechanisms.¹⁹ Immediately after Emancipation, many former slaves chose to eke out a living on the South's seemingly limitless supply of abandoned or unoccupied land rather than work for their former masters. One-time Virginia slave Minnie Fulkes asserted that freed people "stay in de woods an' git long best way dey could after freedom done bin 'clared," an ability that aggravated many white Southerners.²⁰ 1866 letters between North Carolina farmer and physician James Philip Jones and his cousin, farmer and physician Ethelred Philips of Marianna, Florida, indicate that owners disapproved of such activity. "The negroes are so fond of living off of public lands to themselves and stealing for a subsistence, I don't know who will work next year," noted the Floridian. "The most sanguine among us who early in the spring were hopeful of good crops, have changed their opinions now."²¹ His Carolina cousin described a similar type of squatting in the Old North State, noting that "the negroes settled on the public lands will soon not have a squirrel or possum left and then there will be trouble...I get a more unfavorable opinion of our future every year."²² Alarmed by the prospect of former slaves living by means other than white-controlled labor, farmers like James Philip Jones grew uneasy with freed people's ability to hunt and fish.

¹⁹ According to Sharon Ann Holt's *Making Freedom Pay: North Carolina Freedpeople Working for Themselves, 1865-1900*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2000), typical histories of the post-Emancipation period focus on income and property generated by African Americans through agricultural labor in the service of whites but ignore the variety of dynamic and creative forms of material and financial improvement cultivated by former slaves to better their lives, many of which can be linked to work and cultural traditions developed under slavery. Holt focuses on the various types of household production that buttressed African Americans' standards of living, but she could easily have included hunting and fishing among her list of ways freed people accumulated wealth or property.

²⁰ Rawick, *The American Slave* 16 (5), Virginia Narratives, 14. As will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2, it did not take planters long to realize that the ability to live off the products of the land slowed the process of returning former slaves to the service of their former masters. According to Steven Hahn, "planters recognized that customary use rights, along with the availability of public domain in some states, jeopardized labor supply and discipline and, by extension, the revitalization of the cotton economy." See his "Hunting, Fishing, and Foraging: Common Rights and Class Relations in the Postbellum South," *Radical History Review* 26, (1982), 36-64.

²¹ Letter from Ethelred Philips to James Philip Jones, September 5, 1866. James Philip Jones Papers, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Southern Historical Collections (hereafter UNCCH, SHC), # 972.

²² Letter from James Philip Jones to Ethelred Philips, December 19, 1866. James Philip Jones Papers, UNCCH, SHC, # 972.

Many white observers noted the omnipresence of freed person hunting and fishing. Ruth McEnery Stuart, in her recollection of nineteenth-century Simpkinsville, Arkansas, described former slave “Old Proph” (shortened from Jeremy the Prophet) who “never done nothin’ sence freedom but what he had a mind to,” but was nevertheless renowned as a woodsman. “They was only one thing Proph’ was, to say, good for. Proph’ was a capital A-1 hunter—shorest shot in the State, in my opinion, and when he’d take a notion he could go out where nobody wouldn’t sight a bird or a squir’l all day long, and he’d fill his game-bag.”²³ Sporting author Henry Edwards Davis, reared on a Gourdin, South Carolina, plantation, recalled huntsman “old George, who spent practically all of his time when awake hunting and fishing and who had as much aversion to work as a goat had to rain” and who “never had a mishap, although he killed hundreds of squirrels, and he died peaceably in his bed.”²⁴ According to first South Carolina poet laureate Archibald Hamilton Rutledge, such sportsmen ranked among the best, and most often overlooked, in the country. “And here I wish to mention perhaps the least known of all American hunters: I mean the Negro,” Rutledge declared. “Passing through the South in the autumn or the winter, you recall that you noticed as one of the standard features of the landscape a tattered Negro, with a battered gun under his arm, following a more or less physically shattered cur with no social background whatsoever.”²⁵ It seems white observers could hardly write about the region without commenting on African-American hunting and fishing.

²³ Ruth McEnery Stuart, *In Simpkinsville: Character Tales*, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1897), 13. DocSouth, UNCCH.

²⁴ Henry Edwards Davis, ‘*Old Betsy*’: *Stories of Hunting with the Old Percussion Muzzle-Loader and its Successors*, typescript, (South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, 1966), 23-4.

²⁵ Archibald Hamilton Rutledge, *Hunter’s Choice*, (New York: A.S. Barnes and Company, 1946), 21.

Scribner's Monthly correspondent Edward King gives perhaps the best account of such ubiquity, showing that across the South, from the Everglades to the Blue Ridge, from the Yazoo to the Chesapeake, former slaves expanded their traditional reliance on hunting and fishing. In San Antonio, Texas, King traveled the Gulf shore, where he watched “the negro fisherman as he throws his line horizonward, to see it swirl and fall in the retreating surf to come up laden with scaly treasure.” In a freed person’s community near Beaufort, South Carolina, King noted that “(m)ost of the men are armed; they manage to secure a pistol or a gun, and are as fond of hunting as their white employers.” Along Alabama’s Mobile Bay, King came across “a negro woman [who] fished silently in a little pool made by the tide.” And along the banks of the Savannah in Georgia, King saw that “[former slaves] are fond of the same pleasures which their late masters give themselves so freely—hunting, fishing, and lounging; pastimes which the superb forests, the noble streams, the charming climate minister to very strongly.”²⁶ For Northerners like King, a trip through the Reconstruction South left no doubt that hunting and fishing survived the end of slavery and remained important traditions for liberated African Americans.

To slaves, hunting and fishing had been first and foremost sources of food. As slave narratives make clear, masters rarely provided as much nourishment as slaves needed. Despite laws requiring minimum food allotments and despite claims by some ex-slaves that they had an adequate diet under slavery, it is clear that many wanted more. As former Texas slave Mary Reynolds put it “(w)e prays for the end of Trib’lation and the end of beatin’s and for shoes that fit our feet. We prayed that us niggers could have all we wanted to eat and special for fresh

²⁶ Edward King, *The Great South: A Record of Journeys in Louisiana, Texas, the Indian Territory, Missouri, Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, and Maryland*, (Hartford, Illinois: American Publishing Company, 1875), 60, 430, 321, 593, 372.

meat.”²⁷ This deficiency, whether induced by poverty or part of a purposeful strategy by white employers, continued after Emancipation.²⁸ Life remained hard for former slaves in the rural South in the decades after liberation; they were often forced, particularly as Southern agriculture became notoriously less efficient and more unpredictable beginning in the 1880s, to survive on the meanest subsistence. A. Fitz, of Albemarle County, Virginia, writing on “The Negro Share Farmer,” asserted that “(i)t would be difficult, probably, to get down to poorer and less profitable agriculture than the share farmer practices. But he manages to scrape a living out of the ground, exactly how he would perhaps sometimes find it difficult to explain himself.”²⁹

Some white observers celebrated such meager subsistence. For employers, often responsible for providing food rations, laborers’ and tenants’ “ability” to subsist on a limited diet proved a tremendous money saver. An 1875 *Southern Planter and Farmer* editorial, for example, argued that while white laborers expect more and better food, African Americans are...

...satisfied to eat what you leave, provided you leave him enough...The white laborer must have flour, bread, sugar, coffee, milk, butter, &c., with some one to cook and serve his meals, and costs double as much to feed as the Negro, constituting quite a

²⁷ Rawick, *The American Slave*, 5 (3), Texas Narratives, 240-1.

²⁸ Providing provisions was part and parcel of the slave/master relationship. Slaveholders’ had to provide the basic necessities of life, a duty formally established in various slave codes. Yet the fact that laws were necessary carries the implication that some slaveholders did not distribute sufficient provisions. Henry Bibb, a slave in Kentucky, described meager food allotments: “The food he [the master] allowed them per week was one peck of corn for each grown person, one pound of pork, and sometimes a quart of molasses. This was all that they were allowed.” (Gilbert Osofsky, ed., *Puttin’ On Ole Massa: The Slave Narratives of Henry Bibb, William Wells Brown, and Solomon Northup* (New York: Harper and Row, 1969), 119. Likewise, former Virginia slave William Grimes wrote of his cruel master, Colonel Thornton, who “made his slaves work harder than anyone about there, and kept them poorer. Sometimes we had a little meat, or fish, but not often anything more than our peck of meal.” (Ana Bontemps, ed., *Five Black Lives: The Autobiographies of Venture Smith, James Mars, William Grimes, The Rev. G.W. Offley, and James L. Smith* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1971.) Some masters preferred to keep their slaves hungry. Ex-slave Charlie Crump described this attitude. “De marster says dat empty niggers am good niggers an’ dat full niggers has got de debil in dem.” (Rawick, *The American Slave*, North Carolina Narratives 14 (1), 213.) Solomon Northup perhaps stated it best describing provisions under his former master: “I can say, from ten years’ residence with Master Epps, that no slave of his is ever likely to suffer from the gout, superinduced by excessive high living.” (Solomon Northup, *Twelve Years’ A Slave*, (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1968), 127).

²⁹ A. Fitz, “The Negro Share Farmer,” *The Southern Planter and Farmer*, December 1883, 611.

considerable item to be added to his wages account. The Negro is not only the cheapest laborer, but, for all ordinary work that the farmer needs, in the house or out of doors, he has no equal, present or prospective.³⁰

Prescriptive literature counseled that “(t)he negro, like the Mexican Peon, can eat as much as any race of beings on earth, or live on as little when it is necessary,” apparently cautioning planters against spending too much in feeding labor.³¹ As under slavery, post-war employers worked to provide laborers with enough to live, but little else.

Whether they liked it or not, freed persons usually had to provide themselves with sufficient food, money or material goods. Many therefore turned to hunting and fishing. Former North Carolina slave John Evans, for example, “a well-known character for fifty years among the summer residents along the sounds and on Wrightsville Beach” earned a solid living as a “fisherman and huckster in his palmy days.” Evans took advantage of coastal Carolina tourism after the war, noting that “when I growed up my job was fishin’. I made enough sellin’ fish to the summer folks all along Wrightsville and Greenville sounds to keep me all winter.”³² Former Florida slave Christine Mitchell described African-American life on Amelia Island—a small coastal barrier island near Jacksonville still a tourist draw for its resorts and fine fishing. According to Mitchell, former slaves turned the island into a community that was “practically self-sustaining, its residents raising their own food, meats, and other commodities. Fishing was a favorite vocation with them, and some of them established themselves as small merchants of sea

³⁰ “Manual Labor,” *The Southern Planter and Farmer*, March 1875, 149.

³¹ “How to Manage Labor,” *The Southern Planter and Farmer*, March 1878, 116.

³² Rawick, *The American Slave* 14 (1), North Carolina Narratives, 299-300.

foods.”³³ Like other aspects of slave culture redeployed after liberation, hunting and fishing became two dependable ways former slaves met the dislocation of Emancipation.

Former Sumter County, Alabama, slave Josh Horn, according to his WPA interview, was a renowned hunting guide. “Josh’s granddaughters still marvel at his proficiency with a gun,” noted the interviewer. “The Horn family grew up eating the raccoons, rabbits, opossums, and deer that Josh had shot...The most important meal of the week—Sunday dinner—consisted of possum, deer, or raccoons served with potatoes, collard greens and yeast bread.”³⁴ For Horn, this ability to stretch meager means into certain subsistence was a badge of honor:

I ain’t never stole a moufful somepin’ t’eat for [my family] in all my life. It’s honest vittles dey et, and varmints I’s killed in de woods, ‘ca’se us raised chillum fast, and us had a heap of ‘em, sixteen if I ‘members right, and soon’s I found out dat I could help feed em’ dat way, I done a heap of hunting. And everybody knows I’s a good hunter.³⁵

Years later, Horn still trumpeted that ability. “So I went every Friday night and went in de week too, and dat help a lot to feed de chillum,” he concluded. “I don’t owe nobody, not a nickel.”³⁶

Freedmen like Josh Horn plied their skills in a fish and game region that was the equal of any other, save perhaps the largely unspoiled American West. “That country was full of varmints,—just full,” remembered a former slave in the 1930s. “A man could go out and kill a dozen squirrels, they was that thick. Pigeons were thick too, thicker than hens and chickens. They would come over at night, and they would darken the sun, there were so many. Wild ducks

³³ Rawick, *The American Slave* 17 (1), Florida Narratives, 227.

³⁴ Alan Brown and David Taylor, eds., *Gabr’l Blow Sof’: Sumter County, Alabama, Slave Narratives*, (Livingston, AL: Livingston University Press, 1997), 69-70.

³⁵ Rawick, *The American Slave* 6 (1), Alabama and Indiana Narratives, 201.

³⁶ *Ibid*, 202.

were numerous; wild ducks came in droves.”³⁷ Such richness made hunting and fishing obvious options for supplementing poor diets. Former South Carolina slaves Toby Jones and his wife Govie, who emigrated to Texas in 1869, partly met the poverty of their hardscrabble existence by using hunting to supplement meager corn harvests. “We didn’t plant cotton, ‘cause we couldn’t eat that,” Jones recalled. “I made bows and arrows to kill wild game with, and we never went to a store for nothing. We made our clothes out of animal skins.”³⁸

Numerous African-American sources confirm former slaves’ attachment to hunting and fishing, but white descriptions, unsurprisingly, proved far more common. Frances Butler Leigh, in a memoir of her Butler’s Island, Georgia, plantation, described much hunting and fishing by freed people. One in particular, a “Fisherman George,” whom Leigh described as one of the area’s chief sources of fresh fish, was “a great character, and quite as enthusiastic about fishing as I am” and “brings in the most magnificent bass, and blue fish weighing twenty or thirty pounds.”³⁹ Such remembrances pervade white accounts. Of African Americans’ raccoon hunts near his Pooshee Plantation in Berkeley, South Carolina, botanist Henry William Ravenel noted “[c]oon hunting was profitable—it was looking after ‘fresh meat’ for the next day or week, besides being good sport to them.”⁴⁰ Likewise Mississippian Andrews Wilkinson described former slave Ebenezer, whose name he shortened to “Ebony for the convenience of brevity, and

³⁷ Rawick, *The American Slave*, 18 (1), “Unwritten History of Slavery: Autobiographical Accounts of Negro Ex-Slaves,” 95.

³⁸ Milton Meltzer, ed., *In their Own Words: A History of the American Negro, 1865-1916*, (New York: Ty Crowell Co., 1965), 4.

³⁹ Frances Butler Leigh, *Ten Years on a Georgia Plantation Since the War*, (London: Richard Bentley & Son, 1883), 42-3.

⁴⁰ A lifelong South Carolinian, Ravenel, who resided in Aiken from 1853 until his death in 1887, was known primarily for his work with South Carolina algae and fungi. At the time of his death, he was botanist to the South Carolina Department of Agriculture. Henry William Ravenel, “Recollections of Southern Plantation Life,” *The Yale Review*, (Summer 1936), Columbia: University of South Carolina, South Caroliniana Library, s.c. p917.57 R19r.

for cause,” who was a devoted hunter and fisherman. “He was born with a passion for hunting and fishing which far exceeded even his fondness for shirking his alleged work most of the day,” noted Wilkinson, “or loitering with idle companions of his own race half the night on the back streets of the little Mississippi town.”⁴¹ Elizabeth Alston Pringle, writing of plantation life near Georgetown, South Carolina, under the pseudonym Patience Pennington, asserted that because African Americans fished so often, they could not help but feed themselves. “There is a saying that one cannot starve in this country,” she declared, “and it is true.”⁴²

Generations of bondage taught former slaves that while customary rights could not guarantee material comfort, they could mean the difference between obtaining a degree of economic freedom and remaining dependent on labor in the service of whites.⁴³ As late as the 1920s, according to South Carolina Audubon Society President James Henry Rice Jr., African Americans on St. Helena Island—a small island north of Hilton Head populated by former slaves in the early years of freedom—guaranteed their living by oystering, fishing for mullet, and digging clams.⁴⁴ Northerner Julian Ralph, who toured the South in preparation of his nostalgic *Dixie; or Southern Scenes and Sketches*, believed that “the colored folks form the most interesting spectacle in the South.” Describing African Americans fishing in New Orleans, he noted that they dominated the Mississippi’s shores:

⁴¹ Andrews Wilkinson, “An Understudy in Black: The Excommunicated Fisherman of Huckleberry Hollow,” *Field and Stream*, February 1906, 1035.

⁴² Patience Pennington, *A Woman Rice Planter*, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1914), 14.

⁴³ The tradition of people relying on a combination of regular agricultural labor and hunting/fishing was common throughout the South’s best fish and game regions. According to David S. Cecelski, residents of antebellum coastal North Carolina relied on just such a mixture, employing fishing to such an extent during some parts of the year, even going as far as frequently privileging fishing ahead of their fields and gardens, that area observers later referred to such people as “saltwater farmers.” *The Waterman’s Song*, 63.

⁴⁴ James Henry Rice Jr., *Glories of the Carolina Coast*, (Columbia: R.L. Bryan Co., 1925), 89. Charleston, South Carolina Historical Society.

Somebody has called fishing “idle time not idly spent,” and that must be how the Southern colored people regard it, for they seem to be eternally at it wherever they and any piece of water, no matter how small, are thrown together...Those open waterways flowing between grassy banks out towards the west end might seem offensive otherwise, but when at every few hundred feet a calm and placid negro man or “mammy” with a brood of moon-faced pickaninnies sprawling beside her, is seen bent over the edges, pole in hand, the scenery becomes picturesque, and the sewers turn poetical. After one has seen a few darkies putting their whole souls into fishing it is painful to see a white man with a rod and a line. The white man always looks like an imitation and a fraud.⁴⁵

An 1895 study of the dietary habits of African Americans in Eastern Virginia presented to the USDA by Hampton Normal Institute President H.B. Frissel and Lake Erie College chemistry professor Isabel Bevier supports the above narratives. The study, “confined to families living in the region bordering the Dismal Swamp, where the style of living was very primitive and the income usually quite limited,” found that hunting and fishing contributed substantially to many families’ nutritional intake.⁴⁶ Family #211, for example, near Franklin, Virginia, depended heavily on game provided by a son who supplemented his parents’ income from odd jobs and midwifery, respectively. “The family used little or no beef, mutton or other lean meats,” the study found. “Muskrat, opossum, raccoon, and other game, fish, frogs, turtle, and even snakes in certain seasons, furnished part of their diet.” Fishing in the freshwater of the

⁴⁵ Julian Ralph, *Dixie; or Southern Scenes and Sketches*, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1895), 376.

⁴⁶ That African American families living along the edges of the Dismal relied heavily on hunting and fishing is no surprise to students of slavery in Virginia and the Carolinas. One of the richest fish and game regions of the South due to its renowned impenetrability, the “Great Dismal” was long a famed runaway slave destination. Sportsman G.E.W. recalled that “(d)uring slavery days it was said that many runaway slaves escaped into the Dismal Swamp and lived upon the small islands that jut up out of the oozy slime here and there, subsisting upon the wild berries, birds and animals. Even the bloodhounds could not track them successfully here, owing to the wet, boggy nature of the soil, which would completely throw them off their scent.” “Hunting in the Dismal Swamp,” *Forest and Stream*, March 21, 1896. Alexander Hunter also noted the Dismal’s role in runaway life, noting in 1895 that “the Great Dismal, in the *ante-bellum* days, was a famous resort for runaway slaves, and once in its recesses they were never heard of more.” “The Great Dismal Swamp,” *Outing* 27 (1), October 1895, 71 [Emphasis in original].

Dismal and the salt of the Atlantic proved even more important for the typically impoverished families studied. The study found the average protein in the typical African-American family's diet comparable to white persons "in moderately comfortable circumstances, such as families of mechanics and families of professional men." The reason was the proximity of food fish:

In the families studied near Hampton large amounts of various fresh fish were used. In fact, of the nineteen families studied there were but two who did not consume at least one meal of fish during the time of the dietary. The relative importance of fish in the diet of these people may be illustrated by the fact that in one instance nearly fifty percent of the total protein of the food was furnished by fish.⁴⁷

This dependence did not go away as the nineteenth century passed into the twentieth. A 1922 North Carolina State Cooperative Extension Service study of "How Farm Tenants Live" documented the subsistence of Old North State tenants. The study noted the near ubiquity of "dogs, guns and hunting parties—in these fifty-one tenant households there are fifty guns and forty-six dogs."⁴⁸ Crediting this to the long relationship between farm tenants and the natural bounty of North Carolina, the study declared "it is impossible to starve or freeze in the country regions of North Carolina. God almighty made the state a paradise for poor folks."⁴⁹

⁴⁷ H.B. Frissel and Isabel Bevier, "Dietary Studies of Negroes in Eastern Virginia in 1897 and 1898," United States Department of Agriculture, Office of Experiment Stations, Bulletin No. 71, (Washington D.C., Government Printing Office, 1899), 11, 40.

⁴⁸ An important governmental institution in the history of modern rural America, Cooperative Extension Services existed primarily as offshoots of efforts by the United States Department of Agriculture in the early twentieth century, to improve American agriculture, bring advances farming techniques and technologies to farmers in isolated rural areas and generally serve as a liaison between farmers and various branches of state and federal government. Extension services became especially active in the South, where problems of agricultural efficiency and technological backwardness proved particularly detrimental to the region's prosperity. For two insightful examinations of the actions, impact and limitations of extension agencies in the first half of the twentieth century, particularly as related to African Americans see William P. Browne's "Benign Public Policies, Malignant Consequences, and the Demise of African American Agriculture" and Jeannie Wayne's "'I Have Been through Fire': Black Agricultural Extension Agents and the Politics of Negotiation" in R. Douglas Hurt, ed., *African American Life in the Rural South, 1900-1950*, (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2003).

⁴⁹ J.A. Dickey and E.C. Branson, "How Farm Tenants Live," University of North Carolina Extension Bulletin, 1922, UNCCH, North Carolina Collection, C378 UJ3. Unlike the study undertaken by the USDA in Virginia, which focused specifically on African Americans, the North Carolina study documented life for white and black farm

Means, Methods and Social Tensions

The natural bounty of the South may have made it a “paradise for poor folks,” especially former slaves, but only because they were innovative in meeting subsistence requirements. Resourcefulness and opportunism became necessary hallmarks of African-American hunting and fishing in the latter nineteenth century. Under slavery, individual masters and local and state governments prevented slaves from possessing potentially harmful weapons, particularly firearms, and often circumscribed their hunting and fishing.⁵⁰ With Emancipation, the problem of obtaining time, equipment, and financial resources to hunt and fish effectively did not disappear. Guns, for example, though more widely and legally available to African Americans, remained difficult to obtain. White Southerners created barriers such as the various “Black Codes” implemented across the South in 1866. Prohibitions against gun ownership⁵¹ joined laws

tenants. The study revealed an unsurprising similarity between their respective subsistence patterns. Faced with comparable economic challenges, particularly as the South’s agricultural economy became increasingly volatile between the 1880s and the 1920s, white and black tenants and sharecroppers relied heavily on hunting, fishing and foraging to guarantee their subsistence. For a detailed discussion of rural Southerners’ deep-seated reliance on such customary activities, see Steven Hahn’s *The Roots of Southern Populism: Yeoman Farmers and the Transformation of the Georgia Upcountry, 1850-1890*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983).

⁵⁰ Despite prohibitions against slaves possessing dangerous weapons, they nonetheless often obtained them through a variety of means. Former slave Jacob Stroyer suggested three ways slaves could obtain weapons, all of which distressed slave owners. “My readers ask, how had they obtained arms and what were they, since slaves were not allowed to have deadly weapons? Some had large knives made by their fellow negroes who were blacksmiths, others stole guns from white men, who were accustomed to lay them carelessly around when they were out hunting game. The runaways who stole the guns were kept in powder and shot by some of the other slaves at home, who bought such from poor white men who kept little country stores in the different parts of the South.” That slaves would take such risks is testament to their value, not only for hunting but as potential tools of freedom. Jacob Stroyer, *My Life in the South*, (Salem, MA: Salem Observer Book and Job Print, 1885), 65. UNCCH, DocSouth.

⁵¹ Southern legislatures had long been concerned with slave gun ownership. Most Southern governments strictly forbid it. For example, one South Carolina law permitted slave patrols to confiscate any firearms found in a slave’s quarters during searches. H. M. Henry, *The Police Control of the Slave in South Carolina* (New York: Negro Universities Press, 1914 and 1968), 36-7. Likewise the Virginia State Legislature passed a number of statutes throughout the antebellum era to prevent/minimize slave weapon ownership. See for example, *Laws of Virginia*, Ch. XII, 1847, (Richmond: State of Virginia), (“Any slave who shall keep or carry any firearms, swords, or other

that regulated contract breaking, restricted mobility, established apprenticeship systems, cracked down on vagrancy and required African Americans to show proof of employment as attempts to return former slaves to semi-servitude.⁵² In many Southern states, they even had to obtain licenses to hunt and fish.⁵³ White fear of an armed black population lurked behind such measures but firearm restrictions also circumscribed hunting--a troubling source of subsistence and income that did not require black employment by whites.⁵⁴

weapon, powder or balls, or other ammunition shall be punished by stripes not exceeding thirty-nine..."). Yet in most states, slaves owning or using firearms for hunting was often tolerated or ignored. In some states it was required that slave owners seek written permission from state or county authorities before their slaves could hunt with a gun. They were also sometimes required to purchase a bond from the state to guarantee slaves' good behavior. Northampton County, North Carolina slave owner William B. Lockhart purchased a \$500 bond from the County Court to obtain permission for his slave Reuben to hunt with a gun on his plantation. The bond would never be paid if "the said negro slave shall be of good and honest behavior during the time he shall so carry and use a gun, and hunt in the woods." Northampton County Records, Miscellaneous Slave Records, "Bonds for Slaves to Carry Firearms," North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, North Carolina. C.R. 071.928.12. Yet even in cases where purchasing bonds was not an option and slave gun possession was strictly prohibited, individual masters, who in the end had more authority over their slaves than did lawmakers, often allowed the privilege.

⁵² According to Eric Foner's *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877*, (Perennial Classics Edition, New York: Harper Collins, 2002, 199), the "black codes" primarily existed to solve the "labor problem" posed by a freed African American population that, according to whites, had to be compelled to return to and stay at work as quickly as possible. Thus the overall purpose of the codes was to "stabilize the black work force and limit its economic options apart from plantation labor." With this larger goal in mind, the purpose of firearm ownership restriction, which limited African Americans' ability to both protect themselves and provide for themselves, was perhaps as much about regulating black subsistence as it was about preventing violence against whites.

⁵³ As will be discussed in detail in Chapter Six, agitation over African American gun ownership rights became inherently connected to intense debate over African American hunting rights. After a relative lull in the evolution of Southern hunting and fishing laws, the uncertainty of the immediate post-Emancipation years, which saw many elite, white Southerners cry for limits on gun ownership, also led many to consider widespread restrictions on the previously near-universal right of all Southerners to hunt and fish. Such restrictions, it was hoped, in the words of one white South Carolinian, would "keep the negroes more confined." Hahn, "Hunting, Fishing, and Foraging: Common Rights and Class Relations in the Postbellum South," 46.

⁵⁴ Many Southerners accepted the fact that African American hunting or fishing threatened labor discipline and general order in both the antebellum and post-war periods. Consider this 1850 petition from outraged citizens of Beaufort, North Carolina, who petitioned the state assembly to restrict free black gun ownership. The petition indicates that they sought redress not only because of fears of insurrection or violence, but because "their owning guns also gives them the opportunity which they make use of to kill a good many of our cattle hogs and sheep and to corrupt the morals of our slave population by loaning them guns and hunting with them on the Sabbath. Your petitioners would also suggest that their owning guns has the tendency to encourage their natural slothful and idle habits." General Assembly Session Records, Nov. 1850-Jan. 1851, Box 8, "Petitions," NCSA, Raleigh. As will be discussed in Chapter Two, this concern over former slaves' "natural slothful and idle habits," led to severe criticisms of independent hunting and fishing by freed people.

African Americans obtained guns despite these efforts. The federal government, to the chagrin of Southerners, provided many firearms after the war. A source of frequent, angry editorials in sporting periodicals, the governments' sale of tens of thousands of surplus firearms to all who could afford them put many military grade, albeit often obsolete, firearms into black hands. An anonymous 1886 editorial to the New Orleans *Times-Democrat*, for example, blamed the government for Louisiana's game depletion, noting that "after the war the government sold about a hundred thousands, more or less, condemned muskets here, at prices that placed them within reach of the lowliest Nimrod in the land; and the weapons which had been used in the attempted extirpation of armies were turned to the extermination of our feathered and four-footed game."⁵⁵ Henry Edwards Davis recalled a similar development in South Carolina:

After the War Between the States, the Carolina Low Country was flooded with old smooth-bore army muskets, and their sale continued until I was a well grown boy. I well remember a shipment of probably ten or more received by a local country merchant before the single barrel breech loader came into vogue. These were all of the bright finish and were quickly snapped up by local negroes and the cry went up for more; but they were evidently no available as these were the last ever sold in our section. The selling price, as I recall, was \$3.50 each.⁵⁶

With the demise of black codes, the states removed legal restriction of African-American gun ownership and the national government provided surplus weapons. According to one angry Mississippian, "the man and brother, liberated from his shackles, soon scraped up \$8 and invested in a pot metal blunderbluss, or an old 'war gun.'⁵⁷

Despite this wider availability, African Americans still had to scare up the cash to own and use such weapons. Even cheap guns could be out of reach of the poorest people in the cash-

⁵⁵ Quoted in "Louisiana Game Interests," *Forest and Stream*, September 16, 1886, 146.

⁵⁶ Davis, *Old Betsy*, 21.

⁵⁷ "Notes on Dogs and Game in Mississippi," *Forest and Stream*, July 2, 1874, 326.

strapped rural South. Former Alabama slave Mingo White overcame this by sharing with other former slaves, specifically his friend Ed Davis.⁵⁸ It is likely that many financially burdened African Americans acquired the use of a gun in that way.⁵⁹ Henry Edwards Davis recalled that the mate of his favored hunting gun, which had “always been known as the John Gordon gun, as it was one of a matched pair owned by the two brothers John Gordon and Captain Ervin Gordon,” made its way into African-American hands in this fashion. “After he bought a good double breech loader, Captain Gordon gave the mate to his son and namesake,” Davis recalled, “and it was subsequently acquired by a negro and thus passed into oblivion.”⁶⁰ Some worked for years to acquire such valuable means of earning a living. “I always wanted a home and a gun,” recalled one former slave, “and I got both of them, but my boy took my gun when they had the riot in St. Louis, and I never did buy another one.”⁶¹

⁵⁸ Yetman, Norman R., *Voices from Slavery*, (New York: Rinehart and Wilson, c. 1970), 315. According to White, one particular time he borrowed a gun from Ed Davis proved to have violent results. In his narrative he recounted how, against his normal habit, he left the gun loaded, a fact which became important later that evening when the Ku Klux Klan paid Ed Davis a visit. “When dey told him to open de door,” White recalled, “he heard one of ‘em say, ‘shoot him time he gets de door open.’ ‘Well,’ he says to ‘em, ‘Wait till I can light de lamp.’ Den he got de gun what I had left loaded, get down on his knees, and stuck it through a log and pull de trigger. He hit Newt Dobbs in de stomach and kilt him.”

⁵⁹ For slaves, opportunities at gun ownership were both rare and valuable. At the risk of oversimplifying, there were essentially three ways slaves could enjoy firearms in their independent hunting. First, they could be legally bonded by the state or county to carry a hunting weapon. Second, they could be given permission to hunt with firearms by their master in the absence of governmental sanction. Maryland slave Charles Ball, for example, was given an old, broken musket by his master which Ball took to a local blacksmith to be fixed. Through that gift, Ball “began to live well,” he recalled, “and to feel myself, in some measure, an independent man.” Charles Ball, *Slavery in the United States: A Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Charles Ball, a Black Man, Who Lived Forty Years in Maryland, South Carolina and Georgia, as a Slave Under Various Masters, and was One Year in the Navy with Commodore Barney, During the Late War*, (New York: John S. Taylor, 1837), 352. Finally, slaves could obtain firearms without permission. For an example of the latter, see the WPA narrative of former North Carolina slave George Rogers, who recalled “borrowing” guns to hunt when his master was away. “We used to kill squirrels, turkeys, an’ game wid guns,” Rogers recalled. “When Marster went off some o’ us boys stole de guns, an’ away we went to de woods huntin’. Marster would come back drunk. He would not know, an’ he did not care nuther, about we huntin’ game.” Rawick, *The American Slave* 15 (1), North Carolina Narratives, 222.

⁶⁰ Davis, *Old Betsy*, 10.

⁶¹ Rawick, *The American Slave* 18 (1), “The Unwritten History of Slavery: Autobiographical Accounts of Negro Ex-Slaves,” 251.

If aggravated whites can be believed, African Americans made good use of obsolete, damaged, or poor quality guns.⁶² Former slaves loved even these shoddy weapons because they greatly aided hunting and, according to Mississippian “Coahoma,” testified to their liberation:

The negroes in the South, at least in Mississippi, seem to have given up possum hunting entirely since they became freemen...I have an idea that they look back upon this nocturnal sport as one of the badges of slavery, when night was the only time they could call their own, except an occasional holiday, and then they were not allowed to own guns.

Now, nearly every negro owns a pot-metal shotgun or old musket, and he spends much of his time wandering about...in search of “Br’er Rabbit” or “Br’er Squirrel,” but eschews possum hunting at night, of which we, who were the sons of slave owners in the old times, cherish fond recollections, as the youthful romances of old plantation life.⁶³

For those who long depended on hunting but had difficulty maximizing those activities, even a poor gun symbolized and guaranteed freedom’s potential.

The constant grumblings of white sportsmen about African-American weaponry proves their importance to freed people. And no one, not even white critics, doubted such weapons’ effectiveness. Southern sporting authority Alexander Hunter found odd nobility in them. “The freedman’s musket, battered and patched though it be,” he asserted, “must look down upon the handsome, resplendent breech-loader, as a great orator upon the garrulous, loquacious youth who talks upon every subject at any time, and at any length, while he only opens his mouth to make knock-down arguments, or to utter words of great import that thrill and convince.”⁶⁴ Archibald Rutledge also noted the gap between such weapons’ appearance and their deadly accuracy.

⁶² For a more detailed discussion of how and why white sportsmen negatively characterized African American hunting means, methods and motivations, see Chapter Three, “‘The Pot-Hunting Son of Ham’: White Sportsmen’s Objections to African American Hunting and Fishing.”

⁶³ “Coahoma,” “The Possum ‘Sulls,’” *Forest and Stream*, June 25, 1891, 455.

⁶⁴ Alexander Hunter, “Sport—Past, Present, and Future, Part I,” *Outing*, V, n. XIII, December 1888.

Writing of his boyhood friend and hunting mentor Gabriel, “as fine a hunter as any Masai,” he recalled that “his weapon was a crude, single-barreled affair, but in this woodman’s hands it was deadly.”⁶⁵ Many former slaves could not afford new firearms, but they clearly found ways to both obtain reliable guns and make the most of them.

In addition to firearms, freedmen also needed powder and shot or cartridges. To deal with this demand, African-American hunters relied on a two-pronged method of conservation and cooperation.⁶⁶ Ammunition, African Americans had learned under bondage, could not be wasted.⁶⁷ Alexander Hunter recalled a conversation with a “weather-beaten old darkey” who always took the most careful aim for fear of wasting his ammunition. “It dun cos’ me nearly five cents to load that air musket, countin’ powder, caps, shot, and everythin’,” recalled the pragmatic huntsman, “an’ I ain’t gwine to let er off ‘less I knows I’s e sartin to make by de shot.”⁶⁸

African-American sportsmen first had to secure ammunition in order to conserve it. If they could not raise the money, they made other arrangements. Former slave “Uncle Ned” used borrowed ammunition to celebrate his wedding after nearly eighty years on the same plantation:

Of course Uncle Ned had to provide a feast befitting the occasion, and being a great hunter he determined upon making the rabbits furnish the principal part of the supper. As usual he was out of ammunition, and had to come to me on a borrowing expedition,

⁶⁵ Archibald Hamilton Rutledge, *Santee Paradise*, (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1956), 155, 169.

⁶⁶ The expense of providing ammunition also challenged poor whites. Indeed even whites of higher standing had problems in lean years. Former Rome, Georgia, slave Morris Hillyer, for example, recalled hunting with “Master William” before freedom. He recalled that Master William “never used a gun but very little. Lead was so scarce and cost so much dat he couldn’t afford to waste a bullet on rabbits or hares. He made his own bullets.” Ammunition scarcity was common both during and immediately after the war. It is likely that the shortage of lead that Hillyer spoke of was related to the deprivations of the war years. Rawick, *The American Slave* 7 (1), Oklahoma and Mississippi Narratives, 140.

⁶⁷ Former slave Sylvia King, for example, recalled the extreme care that her fellow slaves used in hunting, remembering that “(d)ey didn’t shoot if dey could catch it some other way, ‘cause powder and lead am scarce.” Yetman, *Voices from Slavery*, 200.

⁶⁸ Alexander Hunter, “Sport—Past, Present, and Future,” *Outing*, December 1888.

inviting me at the same time to come and see what a fool those young niggers could make of an old man...The old fellow was furnished with powder and shot, but I made him promise to take me along with him, for I had long been curious to ascertain by what means he invariably returned with one or more rabbits from his hunts.⁶⁹

With ammunition provided by a white benefactor, Uncle Ned personally obtained five rabbits for the feast. *Forest and Stream* contributor “Will Scribbler” traded ammunition for information from an African-American sportsman while on a plantation hunt. “Further on we met a native hunting rabbits with a hound and musket who volunteered to show a covey if we would repay his pains with a “load er two,” recalled Scribbler. “The terms were easy and we quickly emptied shells enough to satisfy his avarice, demanding that he lead us to the slaughter.”⁷⁰ Information and experience black sportsmen had in abundance, but, often lacking the financial means to obtain proper equipment, they depended upon such exchanges to maximize their hunting.

The difficulty in obtaining, equipping and maintaining firearms accounts for the use of so many sporting methods that did not involve guns. To the necessities of conservation and cooperation we can add a third characteristic—creativity. Not all African Americans could afford firearms; thus the essence of their hunting and fishing became the learned necessity of doing so whenever they could and through any available means.

Whether armed or unarmed, freed people also relied on dogs which, perhaps more common than firearms, became important additions to their hunting. Dogs excelled at catching small game such as the opossum or raccoon. One of the most cherished traditions carried over from bondage, as demonstrated by Jake Williams and his dog Belle, slaves’ reliance upon dogs is

⁶⁹ “Rabbit Hunting With Uncle Ned,” *Forest and Stream*, December 15, 1887, 406.

⁷⁰ “Will Scribbler,” “In November,” *Forest and Stream*, December 22, 1894, 334.

well known.⁷¹ Both because they provided meat and represented a part of life not dominated by the master, hunting dogs became ubiquitous in slave quarters.⁷² That attachment continued after Emancipation.⁷³ While on a Southern excursion, the African- American servant who awoke Harry Worcester Smith each morning regaled him with stories of his father's dogs and hunting prowess. "He told me the names of all the spaniels and how three of them would 'fetch' but he 'spected' the two younger ones would soon learn, that his papa could make a dog do anything," Smith recalled. "He told me the names of the Negroes and how one of them was death on coons and how his papa had killed a great big bear ever so big last fall and there was skin on the floor

⁷¹ White observers frequently commented upon the depth of attachment between slaves and their dogs. In her reminiscences of life on South Isle, Charlotte County, Virginia, between 1855 and 1885, Marie Gordon Rice recalled a hunting dog named Hero who was so beloved, especially by Rice's slaves, that his death occasioned great sadness. "His intelligence was so human that good old Aaron, [one of their slaves] who, in the fullness of time, buried him, confessed shamefacedly that he said 'a sort o' prar over him.'" Marie Gordon (Pryor) Rice *Reminiscences*, typescript, VHS Manuscripts, Mss5: 1R3652:1. For a detailed account of role of dogs in slave subsistence, the depth of the attachment between slaves and their dogs and white attempts to limit such ownership, see John Campbell's "'My Constant Companion': Slaves and Their Dogs in the Antebellum South," in Hudson, *Working Toward Freedom: Slave Society and Domestic Economy in the American South*, Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 1994.

⁷² J. Vance Lewis, born a slave in Louisiana, noted this dual importance. "The slave loves his dog," he wrote. "They are constant companions. He talks with him by day and hunts with him by night...His dog is the only thing under the sun that he can call his own; for the master claims the woman that is called his wife, his offspring, his hut, his pig, his own body—his very soul." J. Vance Lewis, *Out of the Ditch: A True Story Of an Ex-Slave*, (Houston: Rein & Sons Co., 1910), 17. DocSouth, UNCCH. After Emancipation, this draw of ownership remained important, at least according to one white observer. Noted Southern author Charles H. Smith, writing under the renowned pen name "Bill Arp," who became known for writing satirical letters to Southern newspapers about political and military matters during the war and remained famous after the war through his letters recounting the simple pleasures of Southern country life, reached a similar conclusion about former slaves' attachment to their dogs. "Dominion is the pride of man—dominion over something," Smith asserted. "A negro is proud if he owns a 'possum' dog." *Bill Arp: From the Uncivil War to Date, 1861-1903*, (Atlanta, GA: Hudgins Publishing Co., 1903), 48.

⁷³ More often than not, when white Southerners commented upon African Americans' hunting dogs, they did so with venom. Indeed "negro dogs" ranked among the most common targets of planters and farmers looking to rid the region of what they perceived to be leading causes of both livestock depredations and animal-borne diseases such as rabies. For that reason, Southerners flooded legislatures throughout the nineteenth century with angry appeals to limit slave and free black dog ownership and to enact restrictions. An 1856 petition from residents of Robeson County, North Carolina, provides an example of this sentiment. "First that no free negro or mulatto shall have but one dog in each family. Second that no free negro or mulatto shall be allowed to have or keep a gun of any kind unless he is a free holder and gives bond with good security and then not be allowed to carry it off his own land," State of North Carolina General Assembly Session Records, November 1856-February 1857, Box 10, "Petitions."

by my bedside.”⁷⁴ Traveling to Yorktown, Virginia, to teach at a freedman’s school, Northerner Sarah Carter encountered many dogs in a black community near Hampton. “Our driver’s two dogs, Noble and John Brown, trotted beside us and diverted us greatly with their canine tastes and gambols,” she noted in her diary. “From every house we passed there came out, at least, two, often three dogs. The houses were mostly back from the road, and the dogs ran along the lanes to meet us.”⁷⁵ Such numbers could be found in black settlements across the South. A 1922 study of North Carolina tenants, for example, found that in the fifty-one households studied, there were forty-six such dogs.⁷⁶ Travel writer Clifton Johnson noted bluntly that “(a) nigger always has a dog, a poor nigger has two, and a desperately poor nigger has half a dozen.”⁷⁷

Such assertions matched the realities of African-American life in the rural South that white observers knew all too well. Charles Hallock, describing hunting wild cattle on the Georgia coast, recalled a former slave named Sambo who, along with his loyal dog Sanch, led the hunts.⁷⁸ According to Hallock, “the twain are officially recognized as law and gospel on all occasions, especially in matters appertaining to the hunting of beasts, the catching of fish, or the entrapping of birds.”⁷⁹ Archibald Rutledge recounted another such relationship cultivated by his

⁷⁴ Harry Worcester Smith, *A Sporting Family of the Old South*, (Albany, NY: J.B. Lyon Co., 1936), 91. Virginia Historical Society (hereafter VHS) General Collection, SK 33.S63.

⁷⁵ “Sarah S. Carter Diary, 1866,” VHS, Manuscripts, Mss5: 1C2467: 1, 3.

⁷⁶ Dickey and Branson, *How Farm Tenants Live*, 35.

⁷⁷ Clifton Johnson, *Highways and Byways of the South*, (New York: Macmillan, 1904), 336.

⁷⁸ It is well known that a substantial portion of the South’s livestock was killed during the Civil War; much lesser known is the fact that thousands of hogs, sheep and cattle went wild due to the dislocation of the war, driven into area swamps and wild lands by combat or simply left unattended by their owners. Such animals, along with existing though rapidly decreasing supply of naturally occurring wild stock, became widely hunted in the years following the war. See Clarence Gohdes, ed., *Hunting in the Old South: Original Narratives of the Hunters*, (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1967), 68.

⁷⁹ Charles Hallock, in Clarence Gohdes, ed., *Hunting in the Old South: Original Narratives of the Hunters*, (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1967), 67.

African-American hunting mentor Gabriel Myers. According to Rutledge, Myers' bonds with his animals made him a great huntsman. "A more complete companionship between dog and man could not exist," Rutledge asserted, "for to it Gabe brought that strange, wise intimacy that he had with all animals, a peculiar fellowship and understanding that he shared with the creatures of the wild. This comprehension, turned to his account, was what made him the best trapper, hunter and general poaching rounder-up of game in all that country."⁸⁰

Even without dogs and guns, black hunters and fishermen possessed the necessary skill and flexibility to meet their needs. Like slaves before them, freed people learned to catch fish and game through a variety of methods, from the commonplace to the extremely creative. Without guns or dogs, they often turned to trapping skills learned under bondage when slaves, due to obvious time constraints, depended on devices requiring little attention.⁸¹ After Emancipation, the fact that a trap, snare or other such device, once set, required but daily or weekly checking and occasional repair ensured such methods a permanent place in African-American hunting and fishing. Moreover, the trapping of game animals and fish not only provided subsistence but also struck at elite, white ideals of sportsmanship. One *Forest and Stream* contributor noted their effectiveness, especially for small game. "I have never seen a trap of any kind set for one which...wouldn't catch a coon," recalled the contributor. "In my

⁸⁰ Rutledge, *Santee Paradise*, 156.

⁸¹ For descriptions of such devices, see the narrative of former slave Peggy Grigsby ("Sometimes dey caught rabbits in wooden boxes, called 'rabbit.' It had a trap in the middle, which was set at night with food in it, and when the rabbit bite at night, trap sprung, and the opening at the front was closed so he couldn't get out."), Rawick, *The American Slave*, South Carolina Narratives 2(2), 215.; former slave "Aunt" Esther Green ("old Ben, a nigger who had turkey traps, was always bringin' in lots of dem big fat birds."), Rawick, *The American Slave*, Alabama and Indiana Narratives 6 (1), 167; and Frederick Law Olmsted's *The Cotton Kingdom: A Traveler's Observations on Cotton and Slavery in the American Slave States: Based upon Three Former Volumes of Journeys and Investigations* (New York: Mason Brothers, 1861) ("The stock-tender, an old negro...had an ingenious way of supplying himself with venison. He lashed a scythe blade or butcher's knife to the end of a pole so that it formed a lance; this he set near a fence or fallen tree which obstructed a path in which deer habitually ran, and the deer in leaping over the obstacle would leap directly on the knife. In this manner, he had killed two deer the week before my visit."), 267.

boyhood days I have seen them caught in boxes set for rabbits at holes in the fence; I have seen them caught by the score in log traps set across fallen trees in the swamp, and by the way that is the darky's favorite way of trapping them."⁸² Alexander Hunter confirmed such efficacy:

The darkeys catch them in a peculiar trap; a great log, some eight feet long, is laid on the ground, and fenced in by shingles or palings being driven down on either side, thus when one of the logs is raised there is apparently a hollow running beneath it. A trigger is set and baited, and the coon has his life crushed out if he meddles with the dead chicken or fish on the end of the blade.⁸³

Virginian "Chasseur", writing to *Forest and Stream* in 1875, provides some idea of the magnitude of former slaves' reliance on trapping. Out hunting himself one day, he came upon a popular African-American trapping ground, recalling that "in this cornfield bordering the swamp...I counted sixty-eight log traps balled and set. They were placed at regular intervals of about ten yards distant; and this is just an instance—a thousand could be given."⁸⁴

Freedmen also continued to rely on fire hunting, a universal tool of plebian and primitive hunters despised by elite sportsmen who looked on it as dangerous and unsporting. The use of torches, hot coals, and even bonfires to illuminate the eyes and make easy targets of potential prey fire greatly increased a hunter's productivity.⁸⁵ Slaves had long fire hunted and,

⁸² "Any Old Way Will Catch a Coon," *Forest and Stream*, September 17, 1898, 228.

⁸³ Alexander Hunter, "The Great Dismal Swamp," *Outing* XXVII, n. 1, October 1895, 71.

⁸⁴ "Chasseur," "The Nottoway Region", *Forest and Stream*, December 30, 1875, 322.

⁸⁵ Published recollections of Southern sportsmen, as well as articles and editorials contained in nationwide sporting periodicals, are replete with criticism of fire hunting from outraged hunters. William Elliott, for example, in his *Carolina Sports By Land and Water: Including Incidents of Devil-Fishing, Wild-Cat, Deer and Bear Hunting, etc.* (New York: Derby and Jackson, 1859), noted that "the practice of fire-hunting, forbidden by the laws, is nevertheless but too much pursued in certain parts of the country. It is the author's aim...to expose the dangers to property and to life, attendant on this illicit practice. It is nearer akin to poaching than to legitimate hunting; and he professes no personal acquaintance with it, (258)."

unsurprisingly, freed people carried the practice into the post-war period.⁸⁶ Former Virginia slave Sarah Woods Burke recalled her father using fire to provide for the family. “The men folks would build a big fire,” she recalled, “and I can remember my Pappy a settin’ on top of the house at night with a old flint lock across his legs awaiting for one of these critters to come close enough so he could shoot it.”⁸⁷ Likewise John Fox Jr., in his *Blue-Grass and Rhododendron: Out-Doors in Old Kentucky*, described old Ash, “a darky coon-hunter who is known throughout the State,” who typically hunted with fire. “In his pockets were matches to build a fire, that the fight could be seen;” Fox recalled, “at his side hung a lantern with which ‘to shine his eye’ when the coon was treed; and under him was a meal-sack for Br’er Possum.”⁸⁸ Henry William Ravenel noted that farm tenants “would go, two or three together with a blazing torch, and a good supply of lightwood, into the swamps and thickets within a mile or two of the plantation. I have often, when a boy, gone out on these hunts.”⁸⁹ As will be discussed in Chapter Three, elite sportsmen despised such methods, declaring them both destructive to Southern forests and emblematic of black inferiority. Former slaves, however, prevented by necessity from giving primacy to sportsmanship, embraced any method that worked.

African Americans employed methods as simple as crude, wooden clubs and as complicated as intricate weirs across the South. North Carolinian James Lee Love recalled

⁸⁶ As former North Carolina slave W. Solomon Debnam described, fire hunting went a long way toward making up for a lack of guns. “I remember killin’ birds at night with thorn brush,” he wrote. “When bird blindin’ we hunt at night wid lights from big splinters. We went to grass patches, briers, and vines along the creeks and low groun’s where they roosted, an’ blinded ‘em ‘an killed ‘em when they come out.” Rawick, *The American Slave*, North Carolina Narratives 14 (1), 243. Robert Hinton also recalled the practice: “Yes sir, I went blindin’. I ‘members gittin’ a big light an’ jumpin’ ‘round de brush heaps an’ when a bird come out we frailed him down.” Ibid., 439.

⁸⁷ Rawick, *The American Slave* 16 (4), Ohio Narratives, 17.

⁸⁸ John Fox Jr., *Blue-Grass and Rhododendron: Out-doors in Old Kentucky*, (NY: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1901), 180.

⁸⁹ Henry William Ravenel, “Recollections of Southern Plantation Life,” *The Yale Review*, (1936), 753-5. University of South Carolina, South Caroliniana Library, s.c. p917.57 R19r

fishing as a child with an older, former slave companion using only “little hooks, baited with what we called ‘fish worms’—now called ‘red-worms or earth worms, or angle worms—the universal earth worm.”⁹⁰ Likewise Clifton Johnson witnessed was decidedly not elaborate. “If de ‘possum git in a small tree, we knock him out, an’ if de tree is large, we sometimes cut it down an’ sometimes climb up it,” noted one of his black companions, making clear that catching fish or game often required no more than determination and a blunt instrument. “We mos’ gener’ly ketch de ‘possum alive. He’ll bite yo’ if he can, an’ we tote him home bu puttin’ his tail in a split stick dat pinch it tight an’ keep him remind dat he is ketched. We carry de stick over our shoulder, an’ when we git home, we put him under a to stay till nex’ day.”⁹¹ But not all hunting and fishing was so simple. Henry Edwards Davis, for example, recalled that while some “old gun-carrying negroes” focused on shooting game on the ground because it is easier, “there were many negroes who were real shots and hunters who specialized on squirrels and ducks by day, and on treed raccoons and opossums by night. Most of the squirrels were taken at feed trees, especially oaks and hickories, and the ducks were shot on the water by hunters concealed either in the canes or in the shrubbery bordering it, or in a camouflaged boat.”⁹² The Reverend Peter Randolph, who hunted and fished as both slave and freed man, noted in his *From Slave Cabin to the Pulpit* that fishing was also sometimes quite elaborate, as in the case of a fish trap which “is made by cutting oak wood into very small strips, which are tied together with a great

⁹⁰ “James Lee Love Recollections: Volume Three,” James Lee Love Collection, Folder 67, UNCCH, SHC, #4139, 90.

⁹¹ Johnson, *Highways and Byways of the South*, 240.

⁹² This method of camouflaging a boat or shooting skiff was particularly effective for both white and black sportsmen of limited means. According to Davis, “the more expert market hunters, both white and negro, developed the method I have described in another chapter of camouflaging the front of a boat with brush so to make it resemble a floating tree, concealing a gunner in the boat and having a skillful paddler who would propel the boat slowly to a raft of ducks floating on the water. This method got results even with the old muskets.” Davis, *Old Betsy*, 22.

deal of ingenuity.”⁹³ This range of methods and devices confirms that function, not form, guided those who did not have the luxury of conforming to ideals of proper sporting practices.

Employment & Marketing

The ability to acquire fish and game through methods both commonplace and creative ultimately had value for both former slaves and their land lords. Like antebellum planters who reduced costs through slave hunting and fishing, post-war agricultural employers, in many cases still responsible for feeding tenants and laborers, often provided fish and game to African-American hands. Simeon H. Duffer, overseer for Isaac Coles Carrington’s Sylvan Hill plantation in Charlotte County, Virginia, relied on wild hogs to feed his laborers. Throughout November 1866, Duffer assigned between one and four hands the task of hunting such animals for the Southside plantation.⁹⁴ To provision hands on his Pampatike plantation in King William County, Virginia, Thomas Henry Carter relied on local fish. His 1875 ledger shows that he bought substantial amounts of shad from employees. Between April 5th and May 13th Carter received 34 shad from one Polk Gary, for which he paid a total of \$2.80 plus credit on an order to Hay & Co., presumably a general goods concern. Between April 6th and May 4th, Carter also received 41 shad from a Jim Nelson, for which he paid a total of \$4.30. So cheaply could fish and game be obtained in some parts of the South that many enthusiastically adopted this practice. Even as late as the first decade of the twentieth century, some planters made wildlife a substantial part of laborers’ diets. B.F. Fly, for example, lauded his ability to feed laborers on his Ogden, Arkansas,

⁹³ Peter Randolph, *From Slave Cabin to the Pulpit. The Autobiography of Reverend Peter Randolph: The Southern Question Illustrated and Sketches of Slave Life*, (Boston: James H. Earle, 1893), 159.

⁹⁴ Simeon H. Duffer Diary, 1866, VHS, Mss5:D8735: 1.

plantation in this fashion. “I have the finest hunting and fishing in all of the world, bar none,” declared Fly. This bounty reduced provision costs:

In the fishing season...niggers are fed black bass in preference to ‘sow belly’ because I find it much cheaper. In the winter months, I feed them canvas backs, mallards, sprig tails, swan bills, butter balls, teals, wood ducks and the like for the same reason, now and then giving them venison, turkey, quail, squirrel, coon, possum and the like for appetizers. The niggers all say that ‘Mars Frank sho do feed his niggers good.’⁹⁵

It is likely that employees’ approval, however, did not provide the central motivation. Much like antebellum masters who trumpeted their benevolent treatment of well-fed, contented slaves, post-war land owners couched their own drive to save money beneath a veneer of concern for laborers’ well being.⁹⁶ Although not legally bound to feed laborers like their antebellum counterparts, many thought it good business. South Carolinian John Edwin Fripp, before selling his plantation to become overseer for the Chelsea Plantation Club, a Beaufort County sportsman’s association, fed his laborers fish provided by area African Americans, many of whom were his own hands. Fripp’s account books from 1872 to 1877 show that he regularly rented boats to laborers (including “Glasgow,” “Greaves,” “Peter,” and “Tom”) for between \$1.00 and \$1.50 and purchased the fish they caught.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ B.F. Fly, “Arkansas Sport,” *National Sportsman*, November 1907, (Boston, MA: National Sportsman Press), 575.

⁹⁶ Southern planters had long been split over the issue of how much to feed laborers. Some believed that providing them with a comfortable living would ultimately reduce productivity by allowing workers to grow complacent. Others seemed mostly concerned about reducing food costs. Still others believed well-fed laborers to be contented, efficient workers and cautioned against decreasing rations. As professional planter Dr. Collins noted in his guide for plantation owners, reducing slave provisions may prove less expensive, but slaves “will never possess, under such a regimen, that vigor of mind and tone of muscles, which the service of the plantation demands.” The exact same question vexed post-war planters. Dr. Collins, *Practical Rules for the Management and Medical Treatment of Negro Slaves, in the Sugar Colonies by a Professional Planter*, (London, n.p., 1991), 75.

⁹⁷ John Edwin Fripp Papers, Series 1.2 Folders 1-7, Account Books, v. 4, SHC, UNCCH, #869.

The plantation huntsman or fisherman, usually a trusted hand who provided meat and fish for storehouse or table, remained another holdover from the antebellum period.⁹⁸ Henry Edwards Davis recalled “one of the old timers, Mr. John Cooper,” a former Gourdin, South Carolina, slave who served as huntsman for a Colonel Green. “Relating in his old age some of his experiences there, he said he was a special favorite of Mrs. Green, who used to call him and say: ‘John, we need some fresh meat, so go down to the bay and kill us a deer; and John, be sure not to kill a poor one.’”⁹⁹ After Emancipation, the use of African-American huntsmen continued. Co-founder of the South Carolina daily, *The State*, Ambrose Gonzales, recalled the prowess of former slave “Boatswain Smashum,” or “Bo’sun:”

Growing to young manhood, Bo’sun became an expert horseman, and as he was quick and intelligent...Major King made him his huntsman, or deer-driver, whose duties were, throughout the year, the care of hounds and saddle-horses, while in the hunting season he became at once master of hounds and whipper-in, putting the pack in the “drive,” following the hounds through, wherever the cry might lead, whipping them off the trails of bay-lynx or gray fox—outlawed by all lowcountry deer-hunters—and, at last, stopping them at the river’s brink, whenever the deer should take the water.¹⁰⁰

South Carolinian Anne Simon Deas, in her Comingtee Plantation memoir, described “old ‘Josh Lovely,’” huntsman for Alwyn Ball as slave and freedman. According to Deas, Lovely was “as fond of hunting as his master, to whom he was much attached. He was a daring rider, and would

⁹⁸ Former Arkansas slave Scott Bond, for example, remembered fellow slave Slade, “whose duty it was to hunt all night,” for the then frontier plantation. He could not bring in all the game he killed, hence the hands on our place would divide themselves into squads and take time about hunting with Slade at night until he had a load of coons, and they would then carry them home and go to sleep, leaving Slade to make the rest of the night alone. The meat secured in this way would last several families for some time. Daniel A. Rudd and Theophilus Bond, *From Slavery to Wealth: The Life of Scott Bond; The Rewards of Honesty, Industry, Economy and Perseverance*, (Madison, AK: The Journal Printing Company, 1917), 34.

⁹⁹ Davis, *Old Betsy*, 36.

¹⁰⁰ Ambrose E. Gonzales, *The Captain: Stories of the Black Border*, (Columbia: The State Company, 1924), 81.

risk anything when well mounted...One of the “bays”...between Cordesville and Midway was called “Josh’s Drive,” because in a wild dash through it while “driving” the deer, he had such a terrible fall that he was brought out for dead.”¹⁰¹

The descriptions of Bo’sun and Josh Lovely demonstrate the important fact that some former slaves often spent as much time doing so alongside whites as they did independently.¹⁰² One of the chief concerns of Texas slave J. Vance Lewis upon liberation involved dissolving his long-standing hunting relationship with his master’s son, Cage Duncan. Lewis recalled that “there was also a very difficult problem for us to solve--we had three coon dogs which we jointly owned, and I did not see how to divide the dogs without hurting his feelings, my feelings or the dogs’ feelings, without relinquishing my claims, which I was loathe to do.”¹⁰³ After liberation, such sporting ties often continued.¹⁰⁴ Louisianan B.H. Wilkins, whose family emigrated to

¹⁰¹ Anne Simon Deas, *Recollections of the Ball Family of South Carolina and the Comingtee Plantation*, n.p., South Carolina Historical Society, 171.

¹⁰² That some African Americans’ hunting and fishing was done alongside whites was true of the antebellum and postbellum periods. The reason for this consistency cuts to the heart of the role of African Americans in white Southerners’ sporting experiences. Whites desired the presence of African American subordinates not only to do the work, but also to strengthen the racial divide and sharpen the lines between the ruling class and subordinates. As Nicholas Proctor has argued, white-created images of slave subordinate-companions were attempts to create public images of the perfect servant that reinforced the social order. “By creating huntsmen who were attentive, loyal, and capable while remaining simpleminded, slothful, and somewhat childlike,” Proctor posits, “white writers provided their readers with a composite of the white image of the ideal slave.” *Bathed in Blood*, 123. In the post-war period, this desire to reinforce elite mastery became even more important, creating many employment opportunities (see Chapter Three, “‘The Pot-Hunting Son of Ham’: White Sportsmen’s Objections to African American Hunting and Fishing,”) for black sportsmen and carving out an important economic niche in the Southern tourism industry (see Chapter Five, “‘With the Due Subordination of Master and Servant Preserved’: Race and Sporting Tourism in the Post-Emancipation South”) for African Americans.

¹⁰³ J. Vance Lewis, *Out of the Ditch*, 10.

¹⁰⁴ As will be discussed in Chapters Four and Five, when African Americans hunted and fished in the half century after Emancipation, they very frequently did so in the company of white sportsmen. As under bondage, when white elites felt more like white elites when attended by slave subordinates, elites likewise used the presence of black laborers after Emancipation to help resurrect, in both real and symbolic terms, the racial hierarchy of the Old South. This need carved out an important economic niche for some freed people. As former North Carolina slave Robert Glenn noted of the immediate aftermath of Emancipation, “at this time I formed a great attachment for the white man, Mr. Atlas Chandler, with whom I hunted. He bought my part of the game we caught and favored me

Charles City County, Virginia, at war's end, recalled getting food secured by "a former slave named Robert," hired on to both labor and procure meat.¹⁰⁵ "He was a good trapper, hunter, and woodcraftsman," Wilkins recalled, "and could guide us hunting or fishing through the woods and swamps, when the crops were laid by."¹⁰⁶ Likewise Patti Jane Watkins Scott, diarist of the Charlotte County, Virginia, Barteas plantation, noted that her son often hunted or fished with hired hands. Entries, such as "Embry has been out nearly the whole day putting up the geese & hunting with Mose," entered February 9, 1883, typify the way whites used African-American sporting skill for their own benefit.¹⁰⁷

Aside from employing former slaves to hunt and fish for and with them, employers and landowners relied on freed people to protect their property from pests or predators. Certain animals proved expensive nuisances, and to counter such threats most state or county governments offered cash bounties on certain birds and animals, including, depending on the

in other ways." Large numbers of African Americans found regular employment in this fashion across the South well into the twentieth century. Rawick, *The American Slave* 14 (1), North Carolina Narratives, 336.

¹⁰⁵ Many African American plantation huntsmen described in post-war descriptions seemed to have served in that same capacity under slavery. The fact that so many huntsmen carried over from before the war is indicative of the strong attachment many slave owners and their families developed for the loyal slave hunting attendants that so powerfully symbolized white mastery in the antebellum South. Noted African American author and poet Charles W. Chesnutt, born the son of free black parents in Fayetteville, North Carolina, in 1858, included a post-war reunion between a former slave huntsman and his former master in his novel *The Colonel's Dream* (New York: Doubleday, 1905). For the old colonel, the sight of his former charge brought back thoughts of a by-gone era. "This meeting touched a tender chord in the colonel's nature, already tuned to sympathy with the dead past of which Peter seemed the only survival. The old man's unfeigned delight at their meeting; his retention of the family name, a living witness of its former standing; his respect for the dead; his "family pride," which to the unsympathetic outsider might have seemed grotesque; were proofs of loyalty that moved the colonel deeply. When he himself had been a child of five or six, his father had given him Peter as his own boy. Peter was really not many years older than the colonel, but prosperity had preserved the one, while hard luck had aged the other prematurely. Peter had taken care of him, and taught him to paddle in the shallow water of the creek and to avoid the suck-holes; had taught him simple woodcraft, how to fish, and, how to hunt, first with bow and arrow, and later with a shotgun. Through the golden haze of memory the colonel's happy childhood came back to him with a sudden rush of emotion" (26).

¹⁰⁶ B.H. Wilkins Memoir, 1856-1876, typescript, VHS, Mss5:1W6544:1.

¹⁰⁷ Pattie Jane Watkins Scott Diary, 1881-1885, "February 9, 1883," VHS, Mss5: 1Sco853:1.

region, wolves, crows, hawks, rattlesnakes, and others.¹⁰⁸ Such bounties primarily served agricultural interests, but also helped sporting clubs protect wildlife supplies from predators.¹⁰⁹ While overseer for the Chelsea Plantation Club, South Carolinian John Edwin Fripp offered bounties for hawks.¹¹⁰ He recorded them, paid when the claimant produced the head of each animal killed, in his daybook. At \$.15 per head, the bounties apparently became popular with area hunters. In 1904, the year Fripp kept best track of such payouts, a Charles Scott offered 58 hawks for a total of \$8.70. At a time when unskilled laborers might receive between \$6.00 and \$15.00 per month, depending on region, crop and prices, such income was extremely valuable. Other area laborers also collected Chelsea bounties, including Rufus Brown (\$1.80), “John Brown’s Children,” (\$2.10), and brothers Charlie and Frank Palmer (\$3.15). This extra money, which hands typically earned during free time, days off, and over winter months, provided a valuable source of income which white interests would likely not begrudge them.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ For examples of such government-sponsored bounties in the antebellum period, see *Acts of Assembly* for Virginia for 1820, Ch. 38; 1821, Ch. 43, 1829, Ch. 121; 1845, Ch. 141, 142; 1847, Ch. 118; 1849, Ch. 63. (Richmond: State of Virginia).

¹⁰⁹ Of course there were regional variations for which animals had bounties placed upon them. The best example is the fox. In many parts of the South the fox was thought merely an annoyance, a pest to be eliminated. Numerous states had fox bounties on the books throughout the post-emancipation period. Yet in those regions where fox hunting endured as an aristocratic tradition, most notably Southside Virginia, the South Carolina low country, parts of Mississippi and Louisiana, and other small, isolated pockets of “horn and hound,” such animals were coveted and thus protected from depredation. As J.H. Montague Jr., of Richmond, Virginia, noted in an 1899 editorial, “there is no bounty offered for his scalp in this region and any man caught shooting a fox would be severely censured by all true lovers of the sport.” *Recreation*, X, n. 2, February 1899, 125.

¹¹⁰ For the growing number of sporting clubs appearing across the South in the late nineteenth century, the position of overseer became an important one. Outfits like the Chelsea Plantation Club depended on men like Fripp. During the sporting season, Fripp had the responsibility of organizing the hunts, arranging guides and managing equipment; during the off-season, he protected supplies of game on club lands from depredations of poachers and trespassers. He rode the plantation each day, kept track of game animals found and investigating any that he found shot. In such a position he had substantial contact with area African American hunters and fishermen, either through paying bounties to them or through attempting to curtail their hunting and fishing activities.”

¹¹¹ “Daybook of Accounts with Chelsea Club,” John Edwin Fripp Papers, UNCCCH, SHC, # 869, Series 1.2 Folders 1-7, Account Books, v. 7.

African-American hunters, aside from earning bounties, also found employment protecting crops at harvest time. Birds could devastate ripe rice, corn and other fields if such marauders went unchecked. To meet this threat, planters sometimes employed bird-minders. According to Archibald Rutledge, “the only way to keep birds from ruining a crop is to send Negro bird-hunters into the rice after them.”¹¹² Fletcher Coyne, writing for New York’s *Frank Leslie’s Popular Monthly*, noted that “[t]he ‘bird-minders’ formed a very important and happy throng during the season when birds made their onslaught on the rice crop.” Squads of laborers took to the field each season when “it became necessary to keep the May-birds off at the early dawn, by the shooting of guns, the cracking of whips and the loud shouts of the merry ‘bird-minders.’”¹¹³ Scott Bond also commented on this necessity, noting that “(i)t was next to impossible to make a corn crop unless there was some one to hunt at night and guard the fields of ripening grain. If this was not done, the farms would be stripped of their corn.”¹¹⁴ As with bounties, the need to protect crops from birds proved a boon. African Americans ate or marketed birds taken in such work, making the practice both popular and remunerative. James Henry Rice Jr. recalled that to drive bobolink from fields, “little negroes were given muskets and plenty of cheap black powder. In bird season there was a continuous rattle, sounding like a battle was in progress.” Rice was careful to note, however, that real ammunition “was never given the negroes, because they would shoot down the birds and stop to pick them up, allowing others to devour rice,” demonstrating that, if given the opportunity, African Americans would first meet

¹¹² Archibald Hamilton Rutledge, *Days off In Dixie*, (London: Leonard Parsons, 1925), 228.

¹¹³ Fletcher Coyne, “In the Lowlands of South Carolina,” *Frank Leslie’s Popular Monthly*, March 1891, 286. South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina.

¹¹⁴ Daniel A. Rudd, *From Slavery to Wealth; The Life of Scott Bond, The Rewards of Honesty, Industry, Economy and Perseverance*, (Madison, Arkansas: Journal Printing Company, 1917), 34. DocSouth, UNCCH.

their own needs.¹¹⁵ Bounties and the income from bird minding, however, were only two ways former slaves reaped the financial benefits of fish and game. Just as under bondage, former slaves found numerous rewards in the long-cultivated ability to hunt and fish.¹¹⁶

Hunting and fishing also proved invaluable ways for freedmen to enter into crucial market activities. This middle ground between the cooperation and conflict that characterized Southern hunting and fishing provided the ability to market both fish and game that simultaneously made hunting and fishing so valuable to African Americans and made their hunting and fishing so irksome to whites. Marketing fish and game provided economic options for former slaves over which white land owners sometimes had no control and of which they often did not approve. Yet whites frequently employed African-American hunters and fishermen and often bought their fish and game. Without white involvement these market activities would not have been possible. It is ironic, then, that while white Southerners' role in and, as discussed in later chapters, dependence upon former slaves' hunting and fishing, guaranteed such activities would remain potentially lucrative for black Southerners, African Americans' marketing of fish and game guaranteed that it would remain a permanent source of conflict.

Most fish and game African Americans marketed provided only supplementary income. Due to the seasonal nature of hunting and fishing, and the fact that most rural blacks farmed for a

¹¹⁵ Rice, *Glories of the Carolina Coast*, 118.

¹¹⁶ Examples of slaves marketing the products of hunting and fishing abound. Former North Carolina slave George Rogers recalled how he and others traded fish to the folks in the "big house". "We fished a lot in Briar Creek. We caught a lot o' fish...We would trade our fish to missus for molasses to make candy out uv." (Rawick, *The American Slave*, North Carolina Narratives 15 (2), 222.) The Reverend Squire Dowd found such arrangements ideal for obtaining currency to purchase extra goods. "We hunted a lot, and the fur of the animals we caught we sold and had the money." (Ibid., 14, (1), 267) Fishermen on the Maryland plantation to which Charles Ball was bound "caught and sold as many fish and oysters, as enabled them to buy coffee, sugar, and other luxuries for their wives besides keeping themselves and their families in Sunday clothes." Ball, *Slavery in the United States*, (New York: John S. Taylor, 1837), 43. DocSouth, UNCCH. As Sam T. Stewart noted, "(w)e caught birds and game, sent it to town, and sold it for money. We caught birds and partridges in traps. Our master would bring them to town, sell them for us, and give us the money." Rawick, *The American Slave*, North Carolina Narratives, 15 (2), 318-9.

living, fish and game had to be taken and marketed wherever and however opportunities arose. Clifton Johnson met an unnamed African-American tar burner (a tedious occupation involving melting down pine and other soft wood tar to produce coating and sealant for the shipping and construction industries) who always brought his gun and hounds with him on the way to and from his daily work.¹¹⁷ Former Texas slave Virginia Bell recalled that “pappy used to catch rabbits and take them to town and sell them or trade them for somethin’ to eat, and you know that wasn’t much, ‘cause you can’t get much for a little ol’ rabbit.”¹¹⁸ *Recreation* contributor “Farner” described former slaves Gabe and his wife Clare who turned hunting into economic opportunities to which they both contributed. Gabe was known to take to the bayous near their Mississippi River basin home, catch small game such as opossum for his wife to prepare for hungry white travelers. In the case of Farner and his friend George, who traveled South for a bear hunt, Clare sold them a full opossum dinner, for what Clare decided was “‘mos too much faw sich a poo meal,” while Gabe informed the men of the best nearby places to hunt in exchange for “a generous quantity of flat sweet store terbacker.” Such income was important, particularly to a pair of ostensibly poor bayou denizens like Gabe and Clare.¹¹⁹

Narrative evidence indicates that African Americans marketed most fish and game locally, particularly to nearby whites with available hard cash. Describing South Carolina rice birds, or bobolinks, “Lawtonvillian” noted that former slaves killed them in great quantity, taking them to town to sell for whatever they could get. Consumers and wholesalers at the South Carolina markets which absorbed such game paid, in 1876, \$.05 per pound for turkey, \$.20 per

¹¹⁷ Clifton Johnson, *Highways and By-Ways of the South*, 298.

¹¹⁸ Norman R. Yetman, *Voices From Slavery*, 27.

¹¹⁹ “Farner,” “A Southern Bear Hunt,” *Recreation*, XVI, n. 4, April 1902, 264.

pair for quail, and individually negotiated prices for the scarcer, more coveted woodcock.¹²⁰

Georgian Frances Butler Leigh indicated that at war's end it became difficult to obtain much meat other than that obtained locally, often through former slaves:

Yesterday one of the negroes shot and gave me a magnificent wild turkey, which we roasted on one stick set up between two others before the fire, and capital it was. The broiling is done on two old pieces of iron laid over the ashes. Our food consists of corn and rice bread, rice, and fish caught fresh every morning out of the river, oysters, turtle soup, and occasionally a wild turkey or duck. Other meat, as yet, it is impossible to get.¹²¹

Touring the Norfolk, Virginia, waterfront in 1874, Edward King witnessed the work of “barelegged negro boys sculling in the skiffs which they had half-filled with oysters, and passed through streets entirely devoted to the establishments where the bivalve, torn from his shell, was packed in cans and stored to await his journey to the far West.”¹²² James Henry Rice Jr., claimed that African-American children dominated the trade at the Georgetown, South Carolina, rail terminus where fish and game was shipped north and west. The children descended on area rice fields near harvest season in the early morning when birds that had gorged themselves overnight had become sluggish to the point of immobility, collected large quantities of them and took them to town for sale. “They received two cents a dozen for this and made money at it,” noted Rice.

¹²⁰ “Lawtonvillian,” “Sports in South Carolina,” *Rod and Gun and American Sportsman*, October 28, 1876, 50.

¹²¹ Frances Butler Leigh, *Ten Years on a Georgia Plantation Since the War*, (London: Richard Bentley & Son, 1883), 20. Environmental historian Mart A. Stewart, in his *‘What Nature Suffers to Groe’: Life, Labor and Landscape on the Georgia Coast, 1680-1920* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996), also discussed the ability of former slaves on Butler’s Island to exploit hunting and fishing skills by “participating in the estuary’s informal economy to gain additional autonomy from the control of the planters when they were free” (195-6). Of all the environmental studies of Southern locales that document the importance of fish and game, Stewart’s study of the Georgia coast is perhaps the best for making plain the general plenty that initially made Southern fish and game such a valuable source of subsistence and income for poor Southerners and later such an increasing source of conflict over environmental use between different races and classes as the nineteenth century wore on.

¹²² King, *The Great South*, 593.

“To give an idea of the enormous number shipped, one firm in Georgetown shipped sixty thousand dozen or better in a single season.”¹²³

African Americans also marketed other animal products acquired through hunting and fishing besides meat. South Carolinian Elizabeth Alston Pringle recalled that two tenants, a husband and wife she called Mr. and Mrs. Z., obtained much food and money catching and selling area fish, often to Pringle herself. Mrs. Z also made “flowers” out of the fish scales, strung them and sold them as necklaces to area whites, obtaining \$.50 per necklace.¹²⁴ Such practices even pervaded sporting poetry. M.L. Murdock, for example, contributed a poem to *Recreation* in which he recalled the fine hunting dogs sold by African-American Pop Peters:

Pop Peters kep’ a beagle hound,
Bow-legged as a Turk,
Fer runnin’ rabbits, I’ll be bound,
She done jes fancy work.
Pop held her pups fer 5 apiece,
And fast as they wud wean,
He sold ‘em off as slick as grease,
Though they looked mighty mean.¹²⁵

With experience drawn from centuries of servitude, no one better knew how to exploit hunting and fishing than former slaves. African Americans sold meat and dogs (by reputation the best in the South if raised by former slaves) but they also marketed animals’ skins, teeth, bones, hooves, and products manufactured from them, such as Mrs. Z’s necklaces. Alexander Hunter once employed an aged African American named Zeb West to lead him and a cousin on an Eastern North Carolina raccoon hunt. In West’s cabin, Hunter noted, “there certainly must be plenty of coons, for scores of their skins were nailed over wall and roof to dry.” West later told him he

¹²³ Rice, *Glories of the Carolina Coast*, 118-9.

¹²⁴ Pennington, *A Woman Rice Planter*, 139.

¹²⁵ M.L. Murdock, “Pop Peters’ Pups,” *Recreation* 10 (1), January 1899, 76.

sold skins for \$.25 each. In that hunt alone, they caught nine raccoons. If Hunter allowed West to keep them, a customary practice among white sportsmen who typically felt the raccoon beneath them, that night's work could yield \$2.25.¹²⁶ *Forest and Stream* contributor "Chasseur," writing in 1875, asserted that with the growing popularity of keeping fawns [baby deer] as pets, African Americans in the Nottoway region of Virginia "catch many of them to sell in the Petersburg markets."¹²⁷ Hunting and fishing under bondage had imparted the crucial lesson that no part of an animal that could be conceivably sold or consumed would be squandered.

Freed people exploited fish and game to the fullest, making cash from marketing a larger part of their survival than did slaves. Alongside many extant references to African Americans supplementing their income through hunting or fishing there may even be found occasional examples of former slaves making all or nearly all of their living from them. Growing up on a Gourdin, South Carolina, plantation, Henry Edwards Davis knew African Americans would work for the Hickory Grove outfit only when necessary, preferring to survive through more agreeable means. There was "old George, who spent practically all of his time when awake hunting and fishing and who had as much aversion to work as a goat had to rain," who derived most of his living in that fashion. Of a "musket toter" named Old John, Davis recalled "I saw him frequently for years and I never saw him without his musket and I never knew him to do any work, as that was reserved for his wife and children." Finally there was Stephen Brown, "the best hunter and fisherman among the plantation negroes of Hickory Grove," who "had considerable aversion to work but who made a good living for himself and his family out of Santee Swamp with his musket, fishing cane and a few cur coon dogs...He specialized in ducks,

¹²⁶ Alexander Hunter, "A Coon Hunt," *Outing* 5 (18), September 1891, 457-61.

¹²⁷ "Chasseur," "The Nottoway Region," *Forest and Stream* 5 (21), December 20, 1875, 322.

turkeys, fish and coon hides.”¹²⁸ African Americans like old George, Old John and Stephen Brown struggled to avoid being forced to labor for whites. Hunting and fishing made such a relatively independent subsistence, while rarely lucrative, much more likely. Each animal killed or captured, each carcass or hide marketed, each pup trained and sold represented another step in the quest to cultivate that independence.¹²⁹ Edward King summarized the situation:

The planter always feels that the negro is irresponsible and must be taken care of. If he settles on a small tract of land on his own, as so many thousands do now-a-days, he becomes almost a cumberer of the ground, caring for nothing save to get a living, and raising only a bale of cotton or so wherewith to get “supplies.” For the rest he can fish and hunt. He doesn’t care to become a scientific farmer.¹³⁰

African Americans rarely completely escaped laboring for whites, but it did happen. If lucky and hard working, some might transform hunting and fishing into lucrative economic enterprises that became the envy, and sometimes the bane, of white observers.

Baltimore sportsman “Delmo,” for example, writing to *The Rod and Gun* in 1875, noted that African Americans dominated area terrapin hunting:

When the season for hunting them arrives, the terrapin hunters, who are generally colored men, go up the shallow streams in boats when the tide is out, in search of their game. While one man sits in the stern of the boat and paddles slowly along, another will take his station at the bow, armed with an iron-pointed pole, with which he will probe the mud in search of the terrapin. These men become so expert that as soon as the back of the terrapin is struck in the mud,

¹²⁸ Davis, *Old Betsy*, 23-4, 1.

¹²⁹ As will be discussed in the next Chapter, this fact was not lost on white observers, particularly planters and legislators well aware of the seeming increase in African American hunting and fishing after liberation. It did not take them long to realize that such independent subsistence could be a detriment to efficient labor. White observers like Henry Edwards Davis, Archibald Rutledge and others, who often spoke of black hunting and fishing skill with a certain degree of reverence, remained in the minority, especially among the planter class. When the typical Southern white spoke of African Americans’ involvement in field sports, he or she most often did so with contempt, fully aware that such independent subsistence challenged the Southern economic and racial hierarchy.

¹³⁰ King, *The Great South*, 274.

they know the fact by the peculiar sound, and dropping the pole, take a pair of short oyster-tongs, with which the terrapin is quickly dug out of the mud and lifted into the boat. These men make very good wages during the early part of the season, as two men will sometimes capture as high as twenty terrapins in a day...¹³¹

For well over a century, large-scale terrapin hunting on the East Coast, particularly in Maryland, Virginia and the Carolinas, had been dominated by African Americans.¹³² After Emancipation, their hold on the market continued.¹³³ The traditional association between hunting or fishing and slave labor, combined with the long-term material and financial products of such associations, provided rare opportunities for more formal, business opportunities.¹³⁴

¹³¹ “Delmo,” “Terrapins,” *Rod and Gun*, February 20, 1875, 331.

¹³² David S. Cecelski, in his wonderful *The Waterman’s Song: Slavery and Freedom in Maritime North Carolina*, describes slave terrapin hunting, as well as numerous other forms of slave individual and commercial fishing, in the Old North State. See especially Chapter 2, “‘Common as Gar Broth’: Slave Fishermen from Tidewater Plantations to the Outer Banks.”

¹³³ Baltimore resident Edward A. Robinson, writing to *Forest and Stream* in 1899, described African American terrapin hunting on Harris’ Neck, a small strip of land near Barbour Island River, McIntosh County, Georgia. Noting that Harris’ Neck is “owned and operated entirely by negroes” and that “many of the negroes follow catching [terrapin] for a living,” Robinson went on to describe the market work of an African American named Grant who ran the terrapin [also known as coot] market. “Each terrapin as it is brought out is held against a notched measure, and Grant would call out the size to Pat, who would put it down in his book. Grant would hold up a terrapin and say ‘count,’ the next one being short of the measure, he would say ‘three-quarters’; then the fellow who caught it would make a great fuss, wanting to see it measured over again, and trying in every way to stretch it to a count, but Grant was inexorable, and what he said first went. These fellows in the height of the season make from \$15 to \$20 per week.” “A Trip to Georgia,” *Forest and Stream*, March 18, 1899, 202.

¹³⁴ As rare as opportunities to create more formal and lucrative business opportunities through hunting and fishing remained for freed people, they were even rarer for slaves. Yet they did happen. Using hunting and fishing to develop commercial ties with neighboring planters, merchants, poor whites and free African Americans, slaves cultivated opportunities to engage in other substantial economic endeavors. William Hayden, for example, while a slave in Kentucky, used time away from regular labor to fish in the Kentucky River. “These fish I conveyed to market,” he recalled, “and obtained a considerable sum of spending money, without, in the least, encroaching on my master’s time, as I had in a short time become acquainted with all the inn-keepers, who did not hesitate to purchase my ‘FINNY TRIBE’ [capitalization his].” The contacts Hayden created through his fish selling turned into other opportunities. “Having become intimate in my fish speculation with the principal inn-keeper in Frankfort, I made arrangements with him to work for him on holidays and Sundays, cleaning boots, washing dishes, & c.; and in this capacity was my leisure moments employed, during my whole sojourn at Frankfort.” Commercial ties created by activities like fishing could be expanded into other valuable chances to both improve the material and financial condition of life in the quarter and counteract slave owners’ efforts at completely controlling their economic lives. William Hayden, *Narrative of William Hayden, Containing a Faithful Account of His Travels for a Number of Years, Whilst a Slave, in the South. Written by Himself*, (Cincinnati, OH: n.p., 1846), 25-6. DocSouth, UNCCH.

By the late nineteenth century, South Carolina rice planter Elizabeth Alston Pringle, against advice of family and friends, had managed to purchase her late husband's White House plantation near Georgetown, her own family's Cherokee, plantation, also in Georgetown, and even a summer home in North Carolina's renowned "Sapphire Country," the popular resort area in the state's mountain west. At both Georgetown and her North Carolina "castle in the air," Pringle's hands did substantial fishing, including netting and seining area waterways and establishing marketing networks to sell their shad. Problems began when a North Carolina hand named King, also called King Stork, started an efficient fishing business in the rich area rivers and streams. Pringle, at the time looking to sell the mountain getaway, discovered that such constant fishing was lowering the value of her property.¹³⁵ Once she even agreed to an offer to sell, "but the purchaser withdrew; it is so with everything - no one wants to buy anything. If our valiant, voracious, and vivacious King Stork would only desist from his activities while a few small creatures were left it would be a mercy; but I fear when he gets through, there will be none but sharks, devil-fish, and swordfish left." Sometime later, King asked to be given a house on the South Carolina White House property, where he might expand his business. "He is absolutely worthless and unreliable," Pringle declared, "but he spoke of his large family and how necessary it was for him to get where he could pursue his business of shadding, and Casa Bianca [White House] was the very best pitch of tide for the shad fishing." Pringle saw in King's request a way to keep him happy and protect the resale value of the North Carolina getaway.

¹³⁵ By the last decade of the nineteenth century, properties such as Pringle's, located in or near resort regions, stocked with vast quantities of fish or game, or situated in areas blessed with renowned natural beauty, became much sought after. Interested parties from across the nation, particularly wealthy Northern businessmen interested in pursuing their cherished hunting or fishing, came South in droves looking for just such properties. By the turn of the century, the resort/sporting regions of the South contained scores of such properties held by outside interests. If intruders reduced the available fish or game of a given property, as in the case of Elizabeth Waties Allston Pringle's mountain home, it would not be as attractive to potential buyers. For a more detailed discussion of these sporting resorts, particularly their connection to African Americans, see Chapter 5, "'With the Due Subordination of Master and Servant Preserved': Race and Sporting Tourism in the Post-Emancipation South."

“He gave me an idea, and I told him he could have the house if he would give me two shad a week during the shad season, two and a half months. This he most willingly agreed to do.”

Pringle hoped that through this accommodation, she could sell her property, obtain free fish and draw more efficient labor from a contented King. She would not have much success.

At the same time King was fishing in North Carolina, Pringle dealt with similar occurrences taking place at the White House and Cherokee plantations, where hands were taking shad and other fish without giving her anything in return. “I never have been able to get any tribute at all from the shad nets, which are set in front of my doors all winter,” she declared. “Five or six men shad there regularly, but they elude all demands, and I rarely eat a shad, as they are too great a luxury for me to buy unless I have company; they are like the wild ducks which swarm in the rice fields at night in the winter, ‘so near and yet so far.’” Worse still, her low country hands had more interest in fishing than in the rice fields. “They planted five acres of rice-land apiece,” she noted, “but did not work it at all, so they did not pay their rent, and I know they would do worse this year. It has proved a splendid crop year, and they could get \$1.15 a bushel for their rice, but they have none, because they were too lazy to work at it.” Desperate, Pringle promoted one Nat to overseer and charged him with stamping out the intractability. When that failed, Pringle discharged the most uncooperative of the crew. “I told Nat to do the best he could with the few left,” she recalled, “and to extract a shad a week from the fishermen who are now spreading their nets in the river just in front of the house.”¹³⁶

Likely few former slaves turned hunting or fishing into such lucrative, semi-permanent enterprises, but examples can be found, demonstrating that African Americans tried to expand customary activities to their limit. The Reverend Irving E. Lowery, once a slave in Sumter County, South Carolina, recalled that former slaves in Charleston seized every opportunity:

¹³⁶ Pennington, *A Woman Rice Planter*, 51-2, 142-3, 293.

It is true, and every intelligent person knows it, that every avenue of legitimate business is open to the negro in the South...For instance, in Charleston, the butcher's business is largely controlled by colored men. This is true both in the down-town market and also in the green grocery business, as it is called, throughout the city...C.C. Leslie, the colored fish merchant, did a fine business for nearly thirty years. He did a heavy business in supplying the local market, and shipped large quantities of fish to all parts of the State to both white and colored customers.¹³⁷

Cities like Charleston, blessed with plentiful nearby wildlife, accessible rivers and a thriving port, became key markets for African Americans' fish and game. C.C. Leslie was not alone in his success there. According to naturalist, United States Fisheries Commission founder, and uncle of Theodore Roosevelt, Robert Barnwell Roosevelt, "all around Charleston the Negroes seem to be in possession of the country...It is they who supply the Charleston market, it is they who do the fishing and the work." Roosevelt also commented on similar activities across the South, indicating that wherever there was money to be made through hunting or fishing, former slaves waited to take advantage. Traveling through Fernandino, Florida, Roosevelt noted that "we found the colored population, which takes to fishing as naturally as the bee is nautically supposed to take to a tar bucket, everywhere, pursuing the finny tribes through the numerous creeks and arms of the sea." He also claimed that by the 1880s, African-American market activities also threatened the South's once plentiful supply of rail (a wetland game bird found in many parts of the South). "It is only of late years that many of the rail were killed at the South," Roosevelt opined. "The old-time battue [sic] of the Negroes at night time, with paddles and torches, did not amount to much, but now hundreds are killed daily through the season in the

¹³⁷ I.E. Lowery, *Life on the Plantation in Ante-Bellum Days, or, A Story Based on Facts*, (Columbia, South Carolina: The State Company, Printers, 1911), 139.

rivers below Washington, although the weather is usually so hot that half of them spoil.”¹³⁸ For Roosevelt and other white observers, it was obvious that African Americans had stepped up their sporting activities since liberation; for many, particularly for some landowners and most sportsmen, that fact became a source of consternation.

Conclusion

Black Southerners hunted and fished all across the region, and, when able, used those activities to create market opportunities that sometimes allowed them to break free from the dependence upon white employers that circumscribed the lives of so many freed people. Independence became the greatest benefit of such marketing opportunities. Through them, African Americans cultivated independence from the poor nutrition that plagued so many lower class Southerners, particularly former slaves; independence from white-imposed definitions of acceptable means of earning a living; and, perhaps most valuable, independence from white efforts to restrict their subsistence options. That independence gave many African Americans opportunities to improve their financial and material condition and greater experience with a more unrestricted, autonomous subsistence than they had perhaps ever known, both of which carried the potential for increasing the distance between former slaves and their former masters.

In her reminiscence of nineteenth-century Fayetteville, North Carolina, Sally Hawthorne wrote of area swamps’ roles as safe havens for plebian populations. Hawthorne noted the tradition began with Native Americans who “were at home in the swamps, hunting and fishing,” eventually making them a sort of retreat for “a motley crew of free negroes who were no credit to

¹³⁸ Robert Barnwell Roosevelt, *Florida and the Game Water-Birds of the Atlantic Coast and the Lakes of the United States*, (New York: Orange Judd Company, 1884), 51-2, 60, 327.

their race, some runaway slaves, as well as by a few white men, who for one reason or another, were in hiding” who used the products of the swamp to eke out a living.¹³⁹ The existence of such a destination annoyed planters but, according to Hawthorne, none felt compelled to act. That changed after Emancipation when planters began having trouble acquiring “workers from among those who had always lived on the plantation”. Apparently too many former slaves had taken to area swamps, drawing upon customary practices like hunting and fishing to guarantee subsistence. “One and all, when they had no money to buy what the islands did not produce,” noted Hawthorne, “just paddled along the stream to the most likely place and helped themselves to anything that came in sight.” This led to a greater nuisance when the swamps became a base for depredations against local plantations, through the theft of livestock, food and goods from stores and smokehouses. According to Hawthorne, the military eventually stepped in to deal with the crime originating from this swamp community. Over time, as development intruded on the swamp’s isolation, civilization and capitalization transformed it from a site of potential escape from plantation labor, guaranteed by hunting and fishing. Within a few decades of the Civil War, according to Sally Hawthorne, the African-American population that had made the swamps their home had been driven out.¹⁴⁰

Within Hawthorne’s suspicious yet highly intriguing account is buried significant truths about African-American economic life and subsistence in the rural South before and after Emancipation. First, that the use of hunting and fishing to resist attempts to force former slaves into employment that limited their freedom had been deeply-rooted in black culture. As the similarities between African-American hunting and fishing before and after liberation suggest,

¹³⁹ “Memories,” Sally Hawthorne Reminiscence, North Carolina Division of Archives and History, P.C. 743.1, 109.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, 141.

the desire to exploit fish and game to its fullest reflected, like Jake Williams' hound Belle, African Americans' willingness to employ cherished survival mechanisms logically carried over from bondage. The nutritional and financial rewards of hunting and fishing, if utilized to their fullest, could dramatically improve former slaves' material circumstances. Some, like Elizabeth Alston Pringle's laborer King Stork, who turned shad into lucrative businesses in North and South Carolina, and Charlestonian C.C. Leslie, who became one of the best known fish merchants in the Deep South, seized the opportunity to take control of their own livelihoods. These benefits drawn from hunting and fishing in the aftermath of Emancipation did not fade away. Many freed people made them permanent strategies for providing economic opportunities, alternatives to backbreaking agricultural labor and, generally, a life over which they had greater control. Many white Southerners, evidenced by the reaction of Fayetteville residents towards the swamp community described by Sally Hawthorne, did not respond favorably to such long-term exploitation of Southern fields, forests, and streams. Planters and employers often thought of African-American hunting and fishing as strictly sources of money and provisions. But as independent actions that pulled former slaves away from regular labor, or as market endeavors that gave African Americans a chance to live apart from white control, hunting and fishing threatened the South's labor discipline and even its racial hierarchy. As will be seen in the next chapter, labor and land lords had long been anxious about labor tractability and would, as the post-war period wore on, become increasingly alarmed by the perceived erosion of white supremacy.

2. “You Can’t Starve a Negro”: Hunting and Fishing and the Problem of Independent Subsistence in the Post-Emancipation South

The time has now come when the white people of this country should unite in controlling the muscle, and not let the muscle control the brain, which can but culminate in agricultural bankruptcy and ruin to the best farming interest of the country...It is all privilege and little work when left to the darkey’s option.

--J.W.O., Stellaville, Georgia, 1880¹⁴¹

We try to treat them fairly, and to impress them with the idea that we take an interest in them, which we really do. Yet with all this, when fish bite, they will go fishing, no matter how important their labor may be.

--Virginia Commissioner of Agriculture Thomas Pollard, 1883¹⁴²

Introduction

It was clear to white Southerners, almost from the very moment of Emancipation, that former slaves had no intention of abandoning their cherished customary rights to hunt and fish. Indeed the frequency with which freed people of the rural South made fish and game crucial parts of their daily subsistence is confirmed by a virtually limitless number of narrative descriptions from both white and black Southerners. Likewise the extent to which African Americans used fish and game to enter into a wide array of valuable market activities demonstrated that former slaves exploited such time-honored survival strategies to the fullest. White Southerners recognized that hunting and fishing, more than mere sources of extra food,

¹⁴¹ J.W.O., “Labor Contracts for 1881,” *The Southern Cultivator*, December 1880, 444.

¹⁴² Thomas Pollard, “The Labor Question,” *The Southern Planter and Farmer*, November 1872, 671.

money, or material goods, provided avenues for liberated African Americans to work towards, and sometimes achieve, a life away from the oversight and control of exclusive agricultural labor in the service of whites. These activities posed a serious and continuing problem for Southern landowners. Both African Americans' reliance on hunting and fishing and white consternation over such customs, deepened as the subsistence and partial independence provided by fish and game remained an increasing point of conflict in the agricultural South during the last decades of the nineteenth and first decades of the twentieth centuries.

In December, 1900, Augusta County, Virginia, farmer George Washington Trimble received a letter from a fellow landowner voicing a common complaint among landed Southerners in the decades after the Civil War—the difficulty keeping and managing African-American farm labor. The letter recounted an incident involving a laborer both men knew named William Carter. It seems that a Mrs. Bell, a neighbor of Trimble's friend, was in the market for farm hands. Having employed William Carter in the past, Trimble's friend recommended him to Mrs. Bell, a gesture he came to regret. Upon that recommendation, Mrs. Bell hired Carter, gave him clothes, and even agreed to a requested months advance on his wages. To Mrs. Bell's chagrin, Carter, upon receiving the advance, "like a nigger,...skipped by the light of the moon.' The letter reported that Carter used the advance to reclaim "Jack" (a hunting dog) from a Mr. Michael. After redeeming the dog, Carter disappeared. "Where he went," he wrote to Trimble, "the lord only knows; but coon-hunting I guess." This was the last straw. After years of frustration with freed labor, he vowed never to be taken in again. "He [Carter] is one of the very few Negroes I would have recommended, but now there is none. I'll never, never again, endorse one of them to anybody for anything, under any circumstances."¹⁴³

¹⁴³ Letter to George Washington Trimble, December 29, 1900. Kelly Walker Trimble Papers, 1770-1954, Virginia Historical Society (hereafter VHS) Manuscripts, Mss10: no. 120 [underlining his].

The story of William Carter abandoning agricultural employment after gathering enough money to recover his hunting dog (in the process embarrassing the man who recommended him for the job) echoes several important facts about life in the agricultural South in the decades after Emancipation. First, that the “Labor Question,” as Southern farmers framed the problem of managing freed farm labor, became one of the central concerns of landowners striving to recover from the economic dislocation of the war and the loss of their slaves. Second, that although farmers and landowners worked to establish an economic system that gave most former slaves little choice but to make their living through farm labor, hunting and fishing gave freed people alternatives. Third, that the ability of African Americans to avoid being tied to laboring exclusively for whites became linked, as well understood by employers like George Washington Trimble and his friend, to their ability to employ alternative subsistence options. In the case of William Carter, the ability to recover his hunting dog enabled him to leave his employer, ostensibly draw a portion of his living away from agricultural work, and perhaps temporarily escape the control and oversight of his former employers. For African Americans, such long-cherished customary rights provided distance between themselves and their white employers by cultivating additional economic and nutritional options; but for Southern landowners they interfered with their own success because they made it more difficult to narrow former slaves’ subsistence options and better dominate black labor.

This chapter argues that Southern planters, seeking to recover the control they once had over the African-American population, related the economic difficulties of the new order with former slaves’ customary hunting and fishing rights. Well aware of the increased ability to provide for themselves these activities had given slaves, whites almost immediately realized that that ability could be a strong impediment to eventually salvaging a satisfactory labor system out

of the wreckage of slavery. In fact, frequent complaints appeared about hunting and fishing from landowners, sportsmen, politicians, and others from Emancipation well into the twentieth century as hunting and fishing became linked with their continuous effort to control African-American labor. When they set out to remedy the most serious limitations of that labor, including generally reduced working hours, withdrawal of women and children from the fields and the refusal of gang labor, they also included African Americans' traditional subsistence strategies among their list of targets. If the most effective tools of survival could be regulated or limited, rural African Americans would have fewer alternatives to working on the terms of their former masters. Slave owners had long known what hunting and fishing meant for Southern slaves, but chose to largely ignore them due to the difficulty of enforcing restrictions and their own ability to profit from such slave endeavors. With the stakes raised by Emancipation, they realized that those once-ignored activities might threaten their interests.

At the close of the war, Southern planters faced not only humiliating defeat, but also the possible loss of control over their entire labor supply. This great fear, although assuaged by Northern authorities who soon showed their intention to partially side with the landholding elite in matters of labor contracts, stayed with Southerners for decades after emancipation. Even if African-American labor could be temporarily forced, thanks to the various "black codes" designed to limit former slaves' mobility and ability to refuse laboring for their former masters, most land owners realized by 1867 and 1868 that a return to slavery, even quasi-slavery, given African-American resistance and the interference of federal authorities, had become impossible. The freedom that came with emancipation, albeit not total, gave freed people the power to modify the Southern labor system. By the close of the 1860s, the planter's dream of a return to a system similar to bondage and the former slave's dream of widespread fee simple land

ownership melded into the compromise provided by contract labor, tenancy and sharecropping. Former slaves, although largely unable to own land themselves, now had the ability to migrate elsewhere, to withdraw their families from field labor, to begin work later and quit earlier than they had before, to control the schedule and pacing of their work, and to hunt and fish.

These freedoms posed a serious challenge to Southern employers, who wrote of it often in the pages of newspapers and agricultural journals. Because they could no longer control the operation of labor as before, they now needed to guarantee its supply. As one contributor offered in the pages of *The Southern Planter and Farmer* in 1867, “the first and paramount necessity of the colored race within these States is *employment*—permanent and remunerative employment.”¹⁴⁴ Planters soon grew aware of a general drop in prices and production that only seemed to worsen in the years after the war. “The South is sparsely settled,” wrote one planter in 1867, “is scarce of labor, and what they have, in so much demoralized, by a surfeit of *freedom* ‘so called,’ that two laborers now perform but little more than one accomplished a few years since, and the loss of a hand or two at a critical time, may lead to most serious loss to the owner of the soil.”¹⁴⁵ They argued that laborers had become too independent, that they had too much control of their own workday. As members of the Goodwyn Agricultural Club declared in its “Essay Upon the Subject of Labor:

The wild ardor of the freedmen in the first years of their emancipation, during which they seemed to regard their broken shackles as introducing them to an independence of work, and which rendered them to some extent a positive nuisance to the farmer...requiring, as they still require, to be remodeled and adjusted to paid labor, and above all, the need to which we were reduced by war and its results enforcing us to look only to the most

¹⁴⁴ “Mutual Confidence and Reciprocal Fidelity Will Secure the Material Prosperity of the White Man and the Negro,” *The Southern Planter and Farmer*, August 1867, 400.

¹⁴⁵ “Hints on the Labor Question” *Southern Planter and Farmer*, Oct. 1867, 53 [Emphasis in original].

certain and immediate gains—these and other considerations of which we are so painfully reminded, left no opportunity to try conclusions or make choice of modes or terms of its employment...”¹⁴⁶

Put simply, freed people had become too independent—they had options. Such independence, particularly former slaves’ ability to provide for themselves, remained, in the minds of landowners, the single greatest threat to their ability to recover their wealth and prosperity.

Freedom and the Problem of Subsistence

Black codes and other like attempts to re-establish servitude may have failed between 1865 and 1869, but white Southerners’ control of most local governments in the South, combined with a federal commitment to stability which outstripped its commitment to the improvement of the African-American population, gave landowners the ability to challenge potential subsistence alternatives with increasing zeal, especially as Reconstruction gave way to Redemption across the South between 1870 and 1877. Landlords could not return freed people to slavery, but they could attack strategies African Americans used to expand their independence. Planters believed the problem lay not in labor shortage but laborers’ growing indolence and intractability. “All over the South, the expression, ‘Labor is Scarce,’ has become patent. What does this mean?” asked Cokesbury, South Carolina’s “Panola” in 1870. “Philosophically, it simply means that intellect has not its wanted control over muscle which usually enables the operator to produce the greatest result with the least outlay; practically it means, the nigger won’t work. Muscle is abundant—the power to control it is lacking.”¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶ *The Southern Planter and Farmer*, March 1871, 135-6

¹⁴⁷ “Panola,” “Labor is Scarce,” *The Southern Cultivator*, July 1870, 198. That Southerners believed African Americans had learned from freedom that work should be avoided is a common sentiment after Emancipation. They

The complex and amorphous web of customary rights first cultivated under slavery became an important foundation for the economic alternatives employed by rural African Americans to meet the challenges of freedom and free labor.¹⁴⁸ As discussed in Chapter One, such traditional customary rights formed part of the foundation upon which freed people built post-emancipation resistance to white efforts to control their lives and labor. For that reason, those same customary rights became obvious targets of employer's ire. This chapter suggests that a general assault on customary privileges, particularly those geared toward basic means of subsistence, remained one of the more striking characteristics of the post-war South. This campaign illustrates the battle during which African Americans made the transition from slaves to free workers and white elites made the transition from labor lords to land lords.

Given the overall lack of scholarly attention to such customary rights, it is not surprising that Southern historians have downplayed one of the central components of freed people's struggle for greater independence. One very important tool freed people had at their disposal in

roundly criticized anything that could potentially divert former slaves away from a focus on laboring for whites. In discussing the proposed construction of common schools for African Americans in parts of the South, R.L. Dabney, of Richmond Virginia's Union Theological Seminary asserted that such schools would only feed the natural African-American tendency to shirk work. "Another cause is the natural indolence of the Negro character, which finds precisely its desired pretext, in this pretended work of going to school," Dabney asserted. "Still another is the universal disposition of the young Negro to construe his "liberty" as meaning precisely, privilege of idleness...The only thing the most of them really learn is a fatal confirmation in the notion that "freedom" means living without work, and a great enhancement of the determination to grasp that privilege." Such notions became common to alarmed Southern whites convinced that freedom meant indolence. "The Negro and the Common School," *The Southern Planter and Farmer* 37 (4), April 1876, 254.

¹⁴⁸ Narratives of former slaves often reveal a tremendous determination on the part of slaves to provide for themselves and their families despite the limited material circumstances of bondage. As former Kentucky slave Lewis Clarke asserted, "when we were cheated out of our two meals a day, either by the cruelty or caprice of the overseer, we always felt it a kind of special duty and privilege to make up in some way the deficiency. To accomplish this we had many devices." *Narrative of the Sufferings of Lewis Clarke, During a Captivity of More than Twenty-Five Years, Among the Algerines of Kentucky, One of the So-Called Christian States of North America*, (Boston: David H. Ela, Printer), 26. University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, Documenting the American South Collection. <http://docsouth.unc.edu/>. For detailed discussions of how slaves employed a variety of customary independent economic activities to better life under bondage, see Ira Berlin and Philip D. Morgan eds. *The Slaves' Economy: Independent Production By Slaves in the Americas*, (London: Frank Cass, 1991); Larry Hudson, ed., *Working Toward Freedom: Slave Society and Domestic Economy in the American South*, (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 1994); and Betty Wood, *Women's Work, Men's Work: The Informal Slave Economies of Lowcountry Georgia*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995).

the fight against complete dependency on white landlords has been overlooked—their ability to partially provide for themselves without being hopelessly tied to permanent, regular agricultural labor in the service of whites. If basic survival could be made easier without depending on working for a landlord, landlords would obviously enjoy less power to govern the lives of their workers. Restricting mobility, defining terms of employment, controlling discharge of debts, and criminalizing unemployment became basic (and for scholars, well studied) tools of labor control; but controlling the basic common subsistence rights played an important role in that process.

Employers recognized almost immediately at war's end that their former slaves would resist attempts at re-instituting pseudo-slavery and that an overall decline in worker efficiency seemed imminent. In this environment, complaints about the “demoralization” of freed labor echoed throughout the South. According to Methodist minister James A. Riddick, who wrote in a June 1868 letter to his friend and Manchester, VA banker and tobacco factor William Gray, “the farmers and planters are greatly behind hand with their crops, and the corn crop is generally suffering greatly for the want of working...and the freedmen are working entirely at their leisure.”¹⁴⁹ Likewise Dr. J.R. Sparkman noted a similar unwillingness among freed slaves to work with their previous vigor:

Without providence for the future—without thought as to the wants of tomorrow, or necessities of declining age—with no appreciation of the privileges and obligations of the day, to improve himself, or better the condition of his dependent offspring, the freedman labors from necessity, and for a bare subsistence. He prefers little work and small compensation, to industry with full pay, and does not hesitate to say so...The lands are not less productive—the work not more arduous...What was ordinarily considered a reasonable day's work is now repudiated.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ William Gray papers, 1819-1875; VHS manuscripts, Mss1G7952aFA2 [underlining theirs].

¹⁵⁰ Dr. J.R. Sparkman, “Results of Emancipation,” *The Land We Love: A Monthly Magazine Devoted to Literature, Military History, and Agriculture*, 4 (1), November 1867, 26.

Confusing the drive to preserve their independence and control over their own labor with general laziness--a sentiment all too commonly attached to slaves and freed people by elite Southerners--farmers and landowners across the South observed the problem of African-American labor's intractability with growing alarm.

Such complaints, representative of the emphatic cries for action heard across the South in the decades following Emancipation, reflect two key facts about elite white farmers' attitudes toward freed labor. First, that they perceived the limitations of "demoralized" labor reflected the former slaves' unwillingness to continue to work for white planters. Second, that they believed those problems could and must be overcome to return the South to prosperity. The keys to salvaging a satisfactory labor system, they believed, must lay in vigilant control of black labor, specifically in identifying and eradicating support mechanisms through which labor might be avoided. They needed to make agricultural labor the only means with which African Americans could support themselves and their families. As *The Southern Planter and Farmer* declared in November 1875, the only solution was...

...for the whites to take the great business of agriculture into their own hands; then the reins will be held strong and steady, and the "world's backbone" kept in the proper position...It is generally admitted that the whites have "political supremacy," or the country is ruined. Be not deceived; it is just as necessary that the whites should have *agricultural supremacy* to save the country from ruin.¹⁵¹

Unlike white Southerners, who wrote extensively about the many possible targets of such actions and left no possible avenue unexplored, scholars have not examined one important factor that originated with African Americans' ability to feed help themselves through customary rights.

¹⁵¹ "A Very Important Question: Where Are We Drifting To?" *The Southern Planter and Farmer*, November 1875, 637.

Southerners complained vociferously about former slaves' skill at creating alternative sources of nutrition, ability to subsist on seemingly scant and unappetizing fare, and apparent willingness to get by on a bare minimum of food in order to avoid working for whites as intensely and faithfully as they demanded. Yet historians of the post-war South have done little with such complaints. Perhaps because such invectives have been perceived as nothing more than bitter grumblings of a displaced elite, or racist stereotypes that reflect white insecurities more than former slaves' material realities, scholars, with but few exceptions, have been reluctant to view elite complaints about African-American subsistence as the realization, on the part of threatened land and labor lords, that subsistence guaranteed apart from white-directed labor posed a real threat to both the Southern economic and racial hierarchy.

Indeed it did not take long for landowners to conclude that the ability to control freed labor often rose and fell with how much laborers had to eat. "When winter is upon Cuffee with all its rigors," declared *The Southern Planter and Farmer* in October, 1867, and when want threatens to pinch him, he eagerly agrees to a fair bargain—that shall give him a good home and stop hunger, but unfortunately he breaks a bargain with as much facility as he makes it, and moves from home to home with as much ease as a terrapin."¹⁵² Whites were convinced former slaves would work for them only if they had no other means of survival. "No negro will work if he can help it," recalled Frances Butler Leigh of the former slaves on her family's Georgia plantation, "and is quite satisfied just to scrape along doing an odd job here and there to earn money enough to buy a little food."¹⁵³ Whites believed African Americans would seize any opportunity to survive without regular labor. "I think there is a good deal of good sense in what

¹⁵² "Hints on the Labor Question" *The Southern Planter and Farmer*, October 1867, 573.

¹⁵³ Frances Butler Leigh, *Ten Years On a Georgia Plantation Since the War*, (London: Richard Bentley & Son), 1883, 25.

an old darkey said to me once, when I asked him why he was not at work,” noted an unnamed planter in 1878. “He said he solemnly believed there were times when there was less to be made at hard work than there was by “bruisin’ aroun’.”¹⁵⁴ As the above examples demonstrate, Southerners understood that many former slaves preferred to enter into work agreements only when necessity dictated. And they remained mystified when former slaves could refuse labor even when there seemed no other way to get by.

In the April 1885 issue of *The Southern Planter and Farmer*, an anonymous poem appears entitled “The Negro—Parody on Poe’s Raven” in which a planter turns away an African-American drifter who refuses to work for food, demonstrating that Southern elites, with Emancipation, had grown increasingly frustrated with former slaves’ ability to refuse labor despite their ostensible lack of another way to survive:

Much I marvel’d this ungainly nigger should refuse so plainly
On such terms to sate his hunger—hunger that must press him sore,
For he cannot help agreeing, that no living human being
Should refuse to labor seeing hunger pressing him sore—
Should refuse to earn the dinner he sees cooking from my door,
Tho’ he eats one nevermore.

Here the planter is stunned that the laborer can refuse work, even though he appeared to have no other source of food and despite the fact that “when on a rice plantation he out-ate the whole creation.”¹⁵⁵ This parody could be interpreted as nothing more than a racist characterization intended to entertain the journal’s readership, as scholars have typically treated such documents; however, if the general alarm over the post-emancipation “labor question” is kept in mind, the parody can be read as a reflection of white anxiety over lost labor control and over laborers’ ability to feed themselves apart from working for wages or shares in the service of whites.

¹⁵⁴ “Notes on Farming and Otherwise,” *The Southern Planter and Farmer*, April 1878, 181.

¹⁵⁵ “The Negro—Parody on Poe’s Raven,” *The Southern Planter and Farmer*, April 1885, n.p.

Planters understood the consequences of allowing workers to survive independent of farm work and employed any means available to keep their labor harnessed. They also appreciated the role of basic subsistence in that process. If former slaves' access to food could be limited, they would be forced to work. As the Goodwyn Agricultural Club reported in their 1871 proceedings, "nothing but 'hickory and hunger' will make a nigger work."¹⁵⁶

The pages of Southern agricultural journals and newspapers often contained employers' comments on the possibility of using hunger as a tool for labor compliance. Often heralded by elites as one of the greatest attractions of the region, the natural bounty of the South gave slaves and freed people the ability to stretch their meager subsistence.¹⁵⁷ When applied to former slaves' ability to survive apart from agricultural labor, they described that same natural wealth in decidedly negative terms. An 1868 editorial to the Charlotte, North Carolina, monthly *The Land We Love* asserted that "we might attribute the negro's indolence to nature's bounty which there often gave food in return for the mere stretching forth the hand."¹⁵⁸ Therefore, according to R.L. Dabney, in a region as rich as naturally blessed as the South, "the last freedman multiplies, unstinted by his poverty," allowing former slaves to survive without obligation to work as hard as they might:

¹⁵⁶ "Proceedings of the Goodwyn Agricultural Club", *The Southern Planter and Farmer*, November 1871. n.p.

¹⁵⁷ The South's many natural blessings provided a common selling point for both Southern state governments and companies operating in the South desperate to lure both tourists and immigrants (ideally white European immigrants) to the region in the decades after the war. Within that vast literature designed to trumpet the many natural advantages of the region to prospective visitors and residents, hunting and fishing held a prominent place. See, for example, North Carolina Literary Board, *The Swamp Lands of the State of North Carolina: Facts for Emigrants and Capitalists* (Raleigh, 1867), UNCCCH, NCC, C970 P18; Richmond and Danville Railroad, "Summer Resorts and Points of Interest of Virginia, Western North Carolina, and North Georgia," (New York: C.G. Crawford, 1884), UNCCCH, NCC, Cp 917.5 R 53s1; The Seaboard Air Line, "Winter Resorts Located on and Reached Via the Seaboard Air Line," (Portsmouth, VA, 1897-8), UNCCCH, NCC, Cp917.3 S 43w; and Frank Presbrey, "The Empire of the South: An Exposition of the Present Resources and Development of the South," (Washington, DC: The Southern Railway Company, 1898), UNCCCH, NCC, Cp 917 P92e.

¹⁵⁸ *The Land We Love: A Monthly Magazine Devoted to Literature, Military History, and Agriculture* 5(6), October 1868, 525.

The climate is genial, the winter is short, the persimmons and blackberries span the larger part of the year; the “old hares” are prolific; the old freedman, once slaves, still do about half work, and produce some provisions; and above all the process of eating up by the white people by petty pilferings is still far from completed. So, between these various resources, country Negroes manage to sustain those low conditions of existence, which enable so low a race to multiply; and they multiply on, as yet, very much as in old times.”¹⁵⁹

As whites had long been well aware, customary practices like hunting and fishing remained common ways former slaves exploited that bounty.¹⁶⁰ Frances Butler Leigh wrote described that connection in her 1883 memoir, noting that planters like her father had tried a variety of means to get their laborers to work but:

As for starving them into this, that is impossible too, for it is a well-known fact that you can’t starve a negro. At this moment there are about a dozen on Butler’s Island [Georgia plantation] who do no work, consequently get no wages and no food, and I see no difference whatever in their condition and those who get twelve dollars a month and full rations. They all raise a little corn and sweet potatoes, and with their facilities for catching fish and oysters, and shooting wild game, they have as much to eat as they want...not yet having learned to want things that money alone can give.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹ “The Negro and the Common School,” *The Southern Planter and Farmer* 37 (4), April 1876, 256.

¹⁶⁰ The idea that black laborers had it “too easy” remained common among frustrated postwar employers. Concerned not only about their laborers’ easy access to customary rights, landlords fretted over whether their laborers, because of their many privileges, lived lives devoid of sufficient challenges to induce hard work. British traveler Robert Somers, who toured the Reconstruction South in 1870 and 1871, and who witnessed what he saw as the absurdity of African-American laborers possessing too many privileges, wondered if such a system would induce black idleness and eventually fall apart. “In addition to half of the crops,” Somers noted, “he has a free cottage of the kind he seems to like,...he has abundance of wood from the planter’s estate for fuel and for building his corn cribs and other outhouses, with teams to draw it from the forest; he is allowed to keep hogs, and milch cows, and young cattle, which roam and feed with the same right of pasture as the hogs and cattle of the planter, free of all charge; he has the same right of hunting and shooting, with quite as many facilities for exercising the right as anybody else—and he has his dogs and guns, though, as far as I have discovered, he provides himself with these by purchase or some other form of conquest.” Somers concluded that most African Americans were too indolent to take advantage of such a system and work; most would use it to minimize the work they had to do. Thus “the fee negroes who are wise enough to thrive under this system take advantage of the abundance of land to rent and crop for themselves, while the planter is left to struggle with the mass who abuse the opportunities and privileges they possess; so that the worst results of the system are apt to be reproduced, if not aggravated, from year to year on the great majority of the farms.” Robert Somers, *The Southern States Since the War, 1870-71*, Reprint, (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1971), 128, 281.

¹⁶¹ Frances Butler Leigh, *Ten Years On a Georgia Plantation Since the War*, (London: Richard Bentley & Son, 1883), 124.

The quest for “things that money alone can give” was incompatible, in the minds of Southern landowners, with the freedom from controlled labor that customary rights could provide.¹⁶²

Hunting and Fishing and Black Subsistence

The almost constant complaints about African-American hunting and fishing made by frustrated Southern landowners, sportsmen and lawmakers from Emancipation through the first decades of the twentieth century demonstrates the vital link between the “the labor question” and African-American customary rights. Almost as soon as the Civil War ended, planters began to lodge complaints about labor irregularity that included hunting and fishing with other actions of former slaves that reflected their loss of control. Susan Dabney Smedes, daughter of Virginia and Mississippi planter Thomas S. Dabney, wrote that her father “had small patience for the shiftless, lazy ways of the negro race after they were set free. Very few of his own were left on the plantation...Tenants were brought in from other plantations, but they were more fond of barbecues and big meetings and hunting and fishing than of keeping the grass out of the

¹⁶² The belief, noted by Frances Butler Leigh, that black laborers tended to reject the values of the market in favor of a reliance on traditional ways of making a living through customary rights remained common among employers. White observers became certain of two things. They realized that a reliance on hunting and fishing seemed symptomatic of black idleness and immorality and that it could be a source of potential harm to their economic status. As Edward King noted of freedpeople at Port Royal in the early 1870s, “they know little about markets, surplus crops, and the accumulation of riches, and care less. They love hunting and fishing; they revel in the idleness which they never knew until after the war. But they are cumberers of the soil; their ignorance impedes, their obstinacy throttles. They are tools in the hands of the corrupt. They lack moral sense, as might have been expected, after a few generations of slavery. They are immoral and irresponsible; emotional and unreliable; not at all unfriendly in spirit toward the whites, their old masters, yet by their attitude in reality doing them deadly harm.” King, Edward, *The Great South: A Record of Journeys in Louisiana, Texas, the Indian Territory, Missouri, Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, and Maryland*, (Hartford, Illinois: American Publishing Company, 1875), 427.

fields.”¹⁶³ Indeed almost as soon as slaves became freed people, complaints linking hunting and fishing with labor evasion became commonplace. “The most of the former laborers are here, but won’t *labor*,” offered one South Carolinian. “The negroes...can do with very little bread—live on fish and oysters, coons, &c., &c. There being therefore but little necessity for labor, very little work is done by the negroes...I am fully satisfied the negro now...is not able to do more than one fourth of the hard work he could easily have done when a slave.”¹⁶⁴ The editor of *The Southern Planter and Farmer* put the matter even more bluntly in July, 1877. “There are portions of the state where it is almost next to impossible to procure any reliable labor,” he asserted. “In the ability on the part of the idle Negroes there to hunt and fish at will is to be found the cause; and the sooner that is corrected the better.”¹⁶⁵

Such antipathy for African Americans’ hunting and fishing represented an attitude shift on the part of Southern planters who, before Emancipation, often supported, in some cases quite enthusiastically, bound labor partially supporting itself through such time-tested means. For planters, allowing slaves to better their own lives helped achieve labor discipline and create order and stability on their farm or plantation. Any *sanctioned* independent economic activity became a tool for maximizing efficiency, either through refreshing slaves for labor or making them beholden to the benevolent master who indulged such privileges. Slave owners perceived hunting and fishing to be tools of maintaining authority that primarily served their interests. Hunting and fishing aided masters by using slave labor to obtain meat and fish to fill storehouses, to rid farms and plantations of harmful pests, and to provide real and (as will be

¹⁶³ Susan Dabney Smedes, *Memorials of a Southern Planter*, (Baltimore: Cushings & Bailey, 1887), 252.

¹⁶⁴ W.F. Robert, “Chinese Immigration” *Southern Cultivator*, January 1870, 15.

¹⁶⁵ “To the people of Virginia,” *The Southern Planter and Farmer*, July 1877, 474.

discussed in Chapters Four and Five) symbolic labor for elite sportsmen on their own sporting excursions. Some antebellum planters and lawmakers objected to slaves having the freedom to hunt or fish due to the potential consequences of unfettered slave mobility, access to weapons and distance from white oversight. But even critical planters begrudgingly tolerated them.

After liberation, Southern elites set out to continue the long-standing connection between African Americans and hunting and fishing for their own benefit in order to reduce costs, provide sporting labor, and hopefully create feelings of goodwill between planter and employee. As discussed previously, many landlords eagerly embraced opportunities to profit from freed person hunting and fishing. But, as landowners quickly learned upon Emancipation, slave hunting and fishing differed considerably from African Americans doing so as freed people. During the antebellum period, the most obvious benefits to slaves from hunting and fishing, including better food and material possessions, heightened privileges, and the drive to seek more control over their own time and labor, were limited by the powerful legal and cultural structures that existed to keep slaves forever at the bottom of the South's social hierarchy. Slaves, in short, faced limits on how much independence they could achieve through hunting and fishing.¹⁶⁶ Some whites viewed slave hunting or fishing as sources of potential resistance, but none suggested that such activities challenged their basic ability to dominate people of color. They remained confident

¹⁶⁶ Opportunities for flight and hunting and fishing complemented each other. From hunting and fishing, slaves acquired knowledge of a region's woods, fields and waterways, contacts with nearby slaves and free men and money—all useful for escape. In addition, they gave slaves tools for the journey, including the ability to provision at flight and protect themselves from patrols. As planter Edward J. Thomas noted of runaways on Georgia plantations, "(b)eing accustomed to the use of boats and firearms, and knowing every little inlet through the marshes, which furnished all the fish and oysters they needed, these runaways could keep up their frolic of idleness and theft almost indefinitely." Edward J. Thomas, *Memoirs of a Southerner*, (Savannah, GA: 1923), 10. DocSouth-UNCCCH. For specific examples of slaves using hunting and fishing to facilitate escape, see the narratives of former Virginia and Georgia slave James Smith in John W. Blassingame, ed., *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews and Autobiographies*, (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1977), 280-81; former Belmont, Missouri, slave William Nelson, in Rawick, *The American Slave* 16 (4), Ohio Narratives, 76; and former Alabama slave Thomas Cole in B.A. Botkin, ed., *Lay My Burden Down: A Folk History of Slavery*, (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1945), 198.

that customary activities such as hunting and fishing ultimately served their ends alone. Yet with liberation came important changes in planters' ability to control African Americans' time, labor, and mobility. Such basic alterations accompanying the transition to free labor created problems for agricultural employers. The increased ability of customary activities like hunting and fishing to create physical, economic and psychological space between former slaves and former slaveholders expanded these difficulties.

Edward King observed freed people's post-Emancipation economic and social activities in 1873 and 1874 and commented frequently on the labor problem. King's description of former slaves' attachment to hunting and fishing, as well the reactions of white observers to it, frames quite clearly the problem facing postwar planters and landowners. While sailing on the Mississippi from Vicksburg to New Orleans, King received a lecture on postwar labor relations from "a planter of the *old regime*" obviously dissatisfied with freed African- American labor and the means through which former slaves minimized employment in the service of whites. "Thar's what they call free niggers," the planter noted with disgust:

Thar's a change from a few years ago, sir. Them poor things thar are just idlin' their time, I reckon; and you notice, they're mighty ragged and destitute lookin'. Thar's a d—d nigger a-ridin' a mule, as comfortable like as ye please. Not much like the old times, when they were all working quiet-like in the fields...Now it's all frolic. I reckon they'll starve.

While King's later travels confirmed the planter's assertion of former slaves rejecting laboring exclusively for white employers, some sights he witnessed counter the assertion that "they'll starve." Traveling through the South Carolina Sea Islands, King discovered that while some former slaves rejected working for their former masters, they did not reject productive activities:

They seem, especially on Port Royal Island, contented with a small tract of land on which to raise cotton, and over which their hogs may wander. Some are very industrious; others never do any

work; the masses are satisfied with getting a living. They know little about markets, surplus crops, and the accumulation of riches, and care less. They love hunting and fishing; they revel in their idleness which they never knew until after the war.

Like so many observers of freed people's independent economic activities, Edward King showed incredulity at former slaves' rejection of laboring for whites which, in his eyes, should be the freedmen's logical path to prosperity. Yet King seemed to view the situation as a temporary one, symptomatic of slavery's dissolution. Despite the fact that Port Royal freed people "revel in their idleness" through hunting and fishing, "they are cumberers of the soil; their ignorance impedes, their obstinacy throttles...They lack moral sense, as might have been expected, after a few generations of slavery."¹⁶⁷ Like other white observers of the customary subsistence activities African Americans carried from bondage, Edward King misinterpreted former slaves' desire to subsist on their own terms as a sign of, whites hoped, only a temporary rejection of regular labor.

African Americans' willingness to subsist however and wherever they could, based, if possible, on their own choices, created a problem farmers and landowners grumbled about well into the twentieth century. Former slaves proved that if given the opportunity, they would abandon the plantation, relocate to another region or simply subsist on abandoned or unoccupied lands. In a letter to Amelia County, Virginia, planter Lewis E. Harvie, Thomas Freedman Eppes wrote that "so many of them are withdrawing themselves from useful and proper employment, and locating and squatting upon waste lands, as that the supply of labor is greatly impaired."¹⁶⁸ While squatting on such waste lands, former slaves found themselves, according to a *Richmond*

¹⁶⁷ Edward King, *The Great South*, 291, 428.

¹⁶⁸ Letter from Thomas Freedman Eppes to Lewis E. Harvie, October 12, 1874. Harvie Family Papers, 1831-1913, VHS Manuscripts, Mss1H2636c.

Times editorial, “drifting more and more from all regular work to desultory and precarious means of subsistence.”¹⁶⁹ Southern commentators recognized hunting and fishing as two of the most common means of subsistence employed in the cause of living away from the farm or plantation. The *Richmond Whig* noted that former slaves “will not labor for the white people, but prefer to squat and shiver and starve through the winter on a little plat of their own.” Such people remained “perfect barbarians, almost universally clothed in rags, and, in some instances, in garments patched with the skins of wild animals.”¹⁷⁰ “The curse of the region is the negroes.” opined “Chasseur” in a December 1875 letter to *Forest and Stream*. “The majority of them won’t work, but squat on somebody’s land, build a hovel, and live by hunting, trapping, and stealing. They are generally armed with an old army musket...and creep along all the paths in the late evening prowl; then they trap every living animal that can be caught.”¹⁷¹

Chasseur’s frustration over Nottoway County laborers’ ability to avoid regular work through hunting and fishing remained consistent with general ire over African Americans’ ability to feed themselves. Out hunting himself one day, he came upon a popular trapping ground for former slaves:

“In this cornfield bordering the swamp...I counted sixty-eight log traps balled and set. They were placed at regular intervals of about ten yards distant; and this is just an instance—a thousand could be given. I gave sixty-eight kicks and sixty-eight traps fell. I performed this duty religiously. An old darkey, telling the Captain about it, said: ‘de debble must a bin a meddlin’ wid dem traps; dey was all down, and no varmints caught, nuther!’”¹⁷²

¹⁶⁹ Undated letter from Charles Bruce to *Richmond Times*, Bruce Family Papers, 1665-1925, VHS Manuscripts, Mss1B8306b.

¹⁷⁰ Quoted in “Letter from Nottoway: the Railroad Meeting at Columbian Grove—The Colored People—Cost of the Railroad, etc.,” *Norfolk Journal*, n.d., James Booth Walters Papers, scrapbook 1870-1881, VHS Manuscripts, Mss1W1714a [Emphasis in original].

¹⁷¹ “Chasseur,” “The Nottoway Region”, *Forest and Stream*, December 30, 1875, 322.

¹⁷² Ibid.

“Chasseur” voiced, and acted on, a common sentiment among Southern landowners; he also continued writing editorials to rail against the problem. Six years after his first letter, he again wrote to *Forest and Stream* to describe a similar situation in Sussex County, Virginia, where laborers were apparently eager to hunt and fish for a living. Noting that “a darkey’s stomach is as different from that of a white man’s as a Congo African’s head is from the skull of the Anglo-Saxon” he offered that African Americans had no desire to obtain “fixed meals” through other means. “When the game is plenty they subsist entirely on that,” he wrote, “and in many of their cabins there has not been a dust of a meal for weeks.”¹⁷³

The ability to subsist with relative ease from the products of the natural environment, which Southerners advertised as one of the great lures for the prospective Northern and foreign immigrants, planters and landowners saw as a detriment to labor.¹⁷⁴ Planter Elizabeth Allston Pringle, while touring her South Carolina rice coast plantation, commented on this characteristic. “Near the bridge two negro women are fishing, with great strings of fish beside them. The streams are full of Virginia perch, bream, and trout; you have only to drop your line in with a wriggling worm at the end, and keep silent and you have fine sport. Then the men set their canes securely in the bank...and almost invariably find a fish ready for breakfast in the morning. There is a saying that one cannot starve in this country, and it is true.”¹⁷⁵ The bounty of

¹⁷³ “Chasseur,” “In the Old Virginia Lowland”, *Forest and Stream*, October 19, 1882.

¹⁷⁴ Scores of publications, printed throughout the South, designed to trumpet the various attractions for potential immigrants to the South make mention of rich supplies of fish and game as important resources. See, for example, “Northern Neck of Virginia as a Home for Immigrants,” which noted that the region “has in fish, oysters, wild fowl &c...an unfailing and inexhaustible supply of food, indeed so abundant, that it has been aptly termed by a distinguished writer ‘the poor man’s home.’” UNCCH, Rare Book Collection, F232N7N7, 9.

¹⁷⁵ Patience Pennington, *A Woman Rice Planter*, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1914), 13-4.

Southern wildlife, while trumpeted as one of the region's best assets, came to be identified by some farmers as a hindrance to labor control.

Rural African Americans had long drawn nutrition, money and goods, and a modicum of independence from the ability to hunt and fish. With the shackles of slavery thrown off, they continued to employ those skills to prevent total white control of their labor. In some cases they could avoid working for white planters entirely, as in the case of William Carter, who disappeared with his hunting dog Jack; in others they might work for whites only when absolutely necessary. For decades after Emancipation, agricultural employers were burdened by experience with the knowledge that their laborers could subsist from hunting and fishing.

Author Philip A. Bruce, in his *The Plantation Negro as a Freeman* discussed how such activities were an alternative to labor for former slaves. "He can labor for as short a time as he likes, and leave the field whenever he chooses," he lamented. "He can take part in excursions, attend court, hunt, fish, or call at the store, as his passing mood suggests. This ability to govern his own conduct...is highly valued by him, and he makes the most of it in so many ways that he pays little heed to the condition of his business."¹⁷⁶ The willingness of African-American laborers to abandon their duties for such activities became a common complaint. "In Tidewater Virginia there is frequently difficulty in getting sufficient supply of labor during the fishing season," wrote former Virginia Commissioner of Agriculture Thomas Pollard in 1883.¹⁷⁷ Likewise another observer noted that, "we try to treat [black laborers] fairly, and to impress them with the

¹⁷⁶ Philip A. Bruce, *The Plantation Negro as a Freeman: Observations on His Character, Condition, and Prospects in Virginia*, (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1889), 212.

¹⁷⁷ Thomas Pollard, "Agriculture in the South: Will Farming in the South Pay?" *The American Farmer*, December 1, 1883, 333-4

idea that we take an interest in them, which we really do. Yet with all this, when fish bite, they will go fishing, no matter how important their labor may be.”¹⁷⁸

White commentators believed such occurrences to be symptomatic of African-American idleness and used them to help form the foundation of many of the late nineteenth century’s most enduring racial stereotypes. But these accounts reflect much more than planter-supported racial stereotypes. They also reflect rural African Americans’ ability to use hunting and fishing to minimize white control of their labor, to avoid work relationships that smacked of quasi-slavery, and to reject elite-espoused values of the “free” labor system if that meant reduced freedom and the loss of cherished customary rights. “In the mind of the negro a great deal of idle time is the *sine qua non* of happiness,” wrote Jas. H. Oliphant of Stellaville, Georgia in 1875. “Since he has been set free, he has taxed his limited intellect to the utmost to discover some plan by which he can give a large portion of his time to fishing, hunting, meetings, visiting, politics, and general idleness; but how to make money, accumulate property, and secure the solid foundations of life, are questions with him of minor importance.”¹⁷⁹ Such comments are often dismissed as typical, racist frustration on the part of landowners like Oliphant, but I would suggest that for former slaves, accumulating money, property and “the solid foundations of life,” if that meant abandoning traditions which served them so well under bondage, might very well have been “questions of minor importance.”

Hunting and fishing, while critical sources of food that made living as wage laborers, tenants, or sharecroppers a bit easier, did not just provide food. It also, as some white’s recognized, helped freed people make the most of their freedom. Frances Butler Leigh noted

¹⁷⁸ “The Labor Question,” *The Southern Planter and Farmer*, November 1872, 671.

¹⁷⁹ Jas. H. Oliphant, “A Very Important Question—Where are We Drifting To?” *The Southern Planter and Farmer*, November 1875, 635.

that in Georgia freed people “were encouraged in the idea that freedom meant no work, twenty acres of land, a mule, a gun, a watch, and an umbrella,” things largely denied them as slaves and which symbolized both material improvement and independence from whites.¹⁸⁰ Philip A. Bruce hinted that this desire to avoid white control and achieve independent subsistence had strong links to the acts and products of hunting and fishing. He described the living conditions of freed people in Southside Virginia who managed to live away from white oversight “on a few acres that lie on the backbone of a vast ridge, far removed from every stream and apparently from all trace of civilization.” In these, at least to Bruce, harsh conditions, with their few crops, vegetables from their small patches, and...

...the animals that they trap or shoot in the neighboring woods, they keep their families alive, but the struggle to do so is continuous, and barely successful. And yet, precarious as their means and wretched as their surroundings are, they would not change their situation. They prefer to live as they do...where they are at liberty to act as they choose, to working on the most extensive and prosperous of the adjacent plantations.¹⁸¹

In customary rights like hunting and fishing, African Americans in the rural South found not only subsistence but independence, the drive for which many white observers, unlike Philip A. Bruce, who seemed to understand the connection between subsistence, independence and customary rights, usually confused with laziness. Thus when Evy Tucker Shields wrote in 1887 that “[t]he negroes naturally love coon-hunting, fishing, dancing, gaming, big meetings, and funerals, and they will risk anything to secure the enjoyment of any of these pleasures,” she simultaneously expressed both a string of stereotypes, which for whites were intimately

¹⁸⁰ Leigh, *Ten Years on a Georgia Plantation*, 295.

¹⁸¹ Bruce, *The Plantation Negro as a Freeman*, 220-1.

connected to avoiding work, and a list of important components of African-American economic and cultural life, which were connected to their desire for independence.¹⁸²

Hunting, Fishing & the “Labor Question”

In the minds of landlords, customary rights created idleness. “C.S.T.”, of Fluvanna County, Virginia, harshly criticized such freedom, describing “a lazy, shiftless set, who secure a precarious living by prowling about hunting...fishing, gathering berries and Sumac in the summer, stealing farming utensils, old iron, anything, everything...and doing an occasional day’s labor.” These abilities, which “C.S.T.” blamed on a lack of concerted planter action, “are just so many blots upon our farming system—just so many barriers to our progress and improvement.”¹⁸³ For employers, subsistence activities became sources of idleness and inefficiency; but to African Americans, they brought a measure of economic and physical independence.

Even if white observers misinterpreted former slaves’ attachment to hunting and fishing, they no doubt grasped their potential for reducing the efficiency of Southern agriculture by eroding labor discipline. “Colored hands are doing a poor business,” wrote the Russell County, Virginia correspondent for the state’s *Crop, Stock, and Labor Report* for June, 1878, and “do not work as steady hands—rather hunt squirrels and the like; contented if they have a days’ rations

¹⁸² Evy Tucker Shields, “Plantation Life ‘Since ‘Dis Time,’” (New Orleans: E.A. Brandao & Co., 1887), 12. UNCCCH, Rare Book Collection Pamphlet, 5833.

¹⁸³ “C.S.T.,” “The Labor Question,” *The Southern Planter and Farmer*, February 1877, 94.

on hand.”¹⁸⁴ Likewise in August 1874, *The Southern Planter and Farmer* listed fishing as one of the causes for lost time. “A wedding, a funeral, or a fishing frolic will take all the labor off a half a dozen large plantations for days even in the busiest season...just that our nations’ wards may be properly married, or buried, or enjoy the exhilarating sport of catching cat-fish or eels out of some muddy pond.”¹⁸⁵ An unnamed planter, in an 1869 survey of Southern cotton production, opined that their present system of wage labor might indeed function properly, “if the hands could be kept at work; there being no restraint, they quit when they please, go off to the villages, hunting, fishing, or sleeping, especially in the summer, when labor is most needed.”¹⁸⁶ Lunenburg County, Virginia, planter Robert Henderson Allen was even more specific about the harmful affects of such behavior. “No work done today,” he wrote in his diary on December 13, 1867. “All our Freedman laborers went hair (sic) hunting. Indeed they are perfectly worthless. Have not made expenses generally since the war, and there is no remedy...and the labor system grows worse and less effective every day.”¹⁸⁷

Common and continual complaints about hunting and fishing creating lost time on farms and plantations mounted in the postwar South. Elizabeth Allston Pringle, whose previously-discussed problems with laborer and fishing entrepreneur King Stork left her no doubt as to former slaves’ attachment to such customary activities, frequently lamented their penchant for abandoning work for field, forest and stream. Commenting on the changing river traffic of coastal South Carolina she declared “true it is that no longer are these people well-to-do

¹⁸⁴ Thomas Pollard, *Crop, Stock, and Labor Report for June 1878*, (Richmond, Virginia), 1878. 50. VHS General Collection, S123.A5 P6.

¹⁸⁵ “The Crops,” *The Southern Planter and Farmer*, August 1874, 2.

¹⁸⁶ F.W. Loring and C.F. Atkinson, *Cotton Culture in the South With Reference to Emigration*, (Boston: A. Williams and Company, 1869), 32. UNCCCH, NCC, C633L87c.

¹⁸⁷ Allen Family Papers, 1850-1910, Diaries, 1858-1895, VHS Manuscripts, Mss1A1546c.

neighbors going to visit each other, rowed by an ebony crew in uniform that chants plantation songs in rhythm to the strokes of its oars...They who go in the boats to-day are apt to be less prosperous...and when they are black they may very likely be poachers who do not sing.”¹⁸⁸

This statement echoes two common and inter-related sentiments among Southern elites--a lamentation about both the loss of the master/slave relationship and the prevalence of African-American hunting and fishing.

Pringle’s memoir also voices her dissatisfaction with her own “people’s” attachment to hunting and fishing, particularly a hand named Gibbie whom she scolded several times for bad work habits. “Yesterday I gave Gibbie a severe talk because of his total neglect of work,” she wrote, “the stables not cleaned, no pine straw hauled for bedding, the calves starved, yet the cows only half milked.” She suggested that he failed to complete certain tasks “because he is in such haste to go out hunting.” Gibbie was working less and hunting more, which alarmed Pringle both for its impact on her labor supply and its apparent influence on Gibbie’s interactions with his employers. Describing the chiding she gave him, she offered that “he is intoxicated with the rice bird and coot fever and spends every night out hunting, and of course in the day he is too sleepy to do anything. He answered almost insolently for the first time, for usually he has the grace of civility.” Gibbie’s excursions did not cease after that scolding; later in the memoir she recounted a daily inspection in which she “[g]ot down to the plantation early, expecting to send Gibbie out with the ox wagon to move the heavy things,” she wrote. “Found he had sent a message to say he was sick...I went to see Gibbie to see if he were really sick or only resting after his month’s night hunting.” Much to Pringle’s surprise, Gibbie was sick with pneumonia, no doubt, she believed, from so often hunting at night when he should have been resting. “I

¹⁸⁸ Pennington, *A Woman Rice Planter*, viii.

refrained from saying ‘I told you so,’” she noted, “but spoke very sympathizingly (sic) to him.”¹⁸⁹

It is likely that agricultural employers, especially those who railed against unrestricted African-American customary rights, had little sympathy when it came to time lost to hunting and fishing. “Our people are too much in the habit of hunting and fishing, of riding about, visiting public places, and lounging about little country stores,” wrote W. Holman of Cumberland County, Virginia, in 1875. “Let them quit all such bad habits, and betake themselves manfully to work,—for it is only by manly energy, industry, economy, and good management, that we can recover prosperity and happiness.”¹⁹⁰ Some harsher critics rejected the possibility that African Americans could long survive if they avoided work in such a fashion. *The Southern Review* declared in 1869 that such means of survival would stunt former slaves’ development because “[civilization] argues moderate labor and an abundance of food and clothing...He cannot live as he does under the equator, without clothes, and without labor, depending on the spontaneous productions of the earth for his support. He must labor, or starve. He will starve.”¹⁹¹

Although African Americans’ ability to subsist by hunting, fishing, or foraging created obvious conflicts for them, some employers found additional reasons to denounce the lack of restriction on these practices. Employers and landowners believed that hunting and fishing threatened their economic interests in a variety of ways. They worried about the safety of their livestock, the protection of their standing crops and the integrity of their fences, all of which, in their minds, African Americans endangered when hunting or fishing at will on either private

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, 217, 212, 217, 250.

¹⁹⁰ W. Holman, “A Few Practical Suggestions Touching the Management of Negro Labor,” *The American Farmer*, February 1875, 56.

¹⁹¹ “Chivalrous Southrons,” *The Southern Review* 6, 1869.

property or public lands. These common concerns, while distinct from the “labor question,” also associated hunting and fishing with general fear about the destructive potential of a largely unregulated black population.

The omnipresence of African Americans’ dogs led to one of the most common landowner complaint about hunting and fishing. Slaves and freed people had long relied on a close relationship with their dogs to secure part of their livelihood and ease the burdens of daily subsistence. Masters had long been aware of that time-honored connection, including almost stereotypical images of “negro dogs” in their discussions of slave subsistence patterns. Such agricultural employers had long had an uneasy relationship with the multitude of plebian dogs (both African-American and poor white) found across the South. Hunting dogs allowed planters opportunities to reduce their provision costs through their employees’ own efforts, but such animals created other problems when those “loose” dogs threatened Southern livestock.¹⁹² An unnamed, angry Virginian offered that “the hungry, half-starved dogs (owned by certain classes both black and white), are the principal sheep killers.”¹⁹³ Likewise an undated petition to the North Carolina State Legislature presented by “the undersigned citizens, farmers and sheep raisers of Iredell County” in late 1873 or early 1874, indicated that farmers and planters detested the “multitude of worthless Dogs, usually owned by persons who cannot be made to answer in damages for any injuries done to their neighbors.”¹⁹⁴ Some even believed a conspiracy was afoot. “The descendants of the proud cavaliers surrendered to a miserable rabble of *possum*

¹⁹² Although such complaints echoed throughout the South, they became perhaps loudest in the upper South where sheep ranching was most common. More than any other animal, sheep were the most vulnerable to the depredations of roving dogs. Thus many of the dog-related complaints lodged by angry landowners came from outraged sheep farmers, particularly in North Carolina and Virginia, among the region’s largest sheep producers.

¹⁹³ Untitled, *The Southern Planter and Farmer* 6 (10), October 1872, 579-80.

¹⁹⁴ “Miscellaneous Reports, Petitions,” General Assembly Session Records, Nov. 1873-Feb. 1874, Box 9. North Carolina Office of Archives and History.

hunters” and “*coon catchers*,” noted *The Southern Planter and Farmer* in 1874. “They turned over to ruin the most vital interests of that portion of their fellow-citizens who are laboring most earnestly to build up the waste places of Virginia, and lift her again to prosperity.”¹⁹⁵

Complaints such as these stretched far back into the antebellum period. Loose dogs also drew criticism because of their connection to waterborne diseases, particularly rabies, and the role they often played in landowners’ nearly constant anger over trespassing and fence-breaking, both common complaints in the agricultural South. Restricting uncontrolled dogs to prevent disease had been part of Southern legislative agendas for years. This accounts for the many antebellum and postbellum laws enacted to restrict slave dog ownership, place bounties on wild dogs, or enact restrictive taxes on ownership of multiple dogs.¹⁹⁶ Chesterfield, Virginia, planter Frank G. Ruffin, for example, writing on the “Proposed Law for Taxing Dogs,” believed that African Americans’ dogs posed a serious and habitual dilemma for planters, ranchers or grazers. Believing the dog problem often led to fence-breaking and crop trampling in addition to livestock injury, Ruffin refused African Americans permission to cross his lands:

Any decent white man is at liberty to hunt on my land if he does not take his dogs among my sheep, or shoot too near my dwelling or other houses or my straw or hay ricks. But in consideration of this free permit, I expect him to keep his dogs from my plantation at all other times, and if they are ever caught on it without their master, I kill them or have them killed. So far I have never had any serious trouble with any one; for all admit that the rule is a reasonable one. Negroes are not permitted to hunt on the premises under any circumstances.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁵ “The Dog Question,” *The Southern Planter and Farmer* 8 (3), March 1874, 138. [emphasis in original].

¹⁹⁶ For a detailed discussion of antebellum conflicts over slave ownership of dogs and white attempts to limit the practice, see John Campbell’s “My Constant Companion: Slaves and their Dogs in the Antebellum South” in Larry E. Hudson Jr., ed., *Working Toward Freedom: Slave Society and Domestic Economy in the American South*, (Rochester, NY: U of Rochester Press, 1994).

¹⁹⁷ Frank G. Ruffin, “The Proposed Law for Taxing Dogs,” *The Southern Planter and Farmer* 8 (5), May 1874, 244-5.

The problem of African Americans crossing over or hunting on private, often enclosed lands drew increasing consternation from Southern landowners. Sheep farmer W.L.J. King of King William County, Virginia, found such problems to be omnipresent. “I can safely say that every twentieth lock of a fence around my sheep pasture is a negro path,” King noted, “and where there is so much crossing by the darkies, it is reasonable to believe that there is a great many dogs passing, hence my sheep have been depredated on several times, but fortunately none have been killed.”¹⁹⁸ The furor over African-American dogs would add to the landowners’ efforts, discussed in Chapter Six, to see state level fish and game regulation enacted across the South for the inter-related purposes of protecting their land and livestock and controlling people of color.¹⁹⁹

Trespassing, particularly the damages attendant to such trespassing, led to a second complaint by Southern planters and farmers that accompanied their general discontent over African-American hunting and fishing. To get to area fields and streams to hunt and fish, former slaves often had to travel over land owned by less than enthusiastic whites. According to these landowners, such expeditions presented opportunities for mischief, including the theft of equipment, crops and standing timber, along with fence-breaking and livestock injury, that

¹⁹⁸ W.L.J. King, “Dog Tax,” *The Southern Planter and Farmer*, May 1875, 268.

¹⁹⁹ As will be seen in Chapter Six, the most common solution to the dog problem suggested by outraged planters and farmers was a hefty ownership tax on dog owners. Such a tax, ostensibly applicable to all Southerners, would place a heavier financial burden on poorer Southerners, especially African Americans. In the eyes of employers wishing to control black labor, this financial burden stood as one of the great selling points of such measures. For that reason, many called for dog taxes likely far out of reach to poorer Southerners. As one angry planter asked in 1873, “Why are there millions of acres in Virginia and the Carolinas, indeed in the entire South, growing up into a wilderness of briars and bushes for the want of the constant cropping of sheep?... Simply because we have no law taxing dogs, the most useless of all luxuries, as other luxuries are taxed, as the very highest rate they will bear without the tax amounting to virtual prohibition. We want a tax of not less than two dollars a head on every dog, and where more than one is kept by the same individual, not less than five dollars each on such excess.” “Legislative Protection,” *The Southern Planter and Farmer* 7 (7), July 1873, 355.

former slaves reputedly could not resist. African Americans that took to another's lands to hunt or fish also removed supplies of those animals that sportsmen and sporting landowners wished to reserve for themselves. One planter noted that...

...this trespassing is a cause of great annoyance to settlers from Northern States, where a man's rights over his own land are more carefully observed than here, and also to many of our own people, and should be stopped....Notices are required to be posted on a farm over which hunting is prohibited. This ought not to be necessary, but so it is. Probably an example of one or two persons would stop the trouble. We found this effectual.²⁰⁰

Georgetown, South Carolina, planter Charles Pringle Alston made such an example of African Americans in a lawsuit in the 1890s. Hoping to stop trespassing on his lands between the Waccamaw River and the Atlantic Ocean by people who "have undertaken to trespass and invade upon plaintiff's said marsh land and creeks, and to take and remove the clams and other shell fish from the beds of the creeks and also fish and seine and remove the fish from the said creeks and in addition to habitually trespass upon, shoot, frighten and scare off the game upon the said described property," Alston initially accused two area residents, Edmund Cain and Isam Miller, both white. Cain and Miller informed him that area African Americans were responsible. Alston eventually sued a white man named J.F. Limehouse, who the court found to have "a large number of flat bottom boats to lend to negroes to depredate all the surrounding creeks, & he continues to send up to the cannery every week oysters & clams by the flat load." In addition to Limehouse, Alston also sued other men, including Mitchell Nesbit, Faith Johnson, Max Sindad, Saul Carr, Peter Carr and D.H. Smith "fishermen who fish and gather oysters, clams and other shell fish for a living." For Alston, trespassing African-American and white hunters and

²⁰⁰ "Trespassing in Virginia," *The Southern Planter and Farmer*, February 1897, n.p.

fishermen, prompted by marketing opportunities, created both annoyance and a serious financial burden.²⁰¹

Fear of disease and outrage over livestock damage and trespassing did not end litany of issues raised by African Americans and their dogs in the nineteenth-century South. After Emancipation, agricultural employers added concern for the effectiveness of labor to these existing concerns, tying age-old issues like the “Dog Question” to renewed concern for the South’s economic future. The “Third Annual Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the State of North Carolina,” released in 1889, for example, for which farmers and planters of each county in the Old North State had been asked to identify the biggest problems facing them, frequently noted the negative impact of African-American dogs. “The average ‘darkey’ of this town is content if he owns a good axe, razor and ‘possum-dog,’” noted one Iredell County farmer. This attachment often worked to the detriment of labor. A Yadkin County planter offered that “such legislation as would diminish dogs and increase hogs, sheep, and cattle, would improve our laboring people. Hunting, fishing, and feeding dogs, instead of keeping hogs and sheep are some of the evils of this county. The poorest and most trifling persons in my community keep the most dogs, do the most hunting and drink the most liquor.”²⁰² Coupled with the ability to pursue fish and game at will, dog ownership, an important component of African-American subsistence strategies, remained a largely unchecked customary privilege that added to perceived labor intractability and proved another way for African Americans to survive away from regular, white-dominated agricultural labor. To put the matter succinctly, employers found in such subsistence apart from working for whites a serious challenge to their control over labor

²⁰¹ “Alston v. Limehouse Case Records, 1892-1902,” Mitchell and Smith Records. SCHS, 152.04.01, Box 12.

²⁰² North Carolina Department of Labor and Printing, “Third Annual Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the State of North Carolina,” (1890), UNCCH, NCC, NCC-C331 N87L 1887-1898, 285.

in the Southern economy. Anger over trespassing, fence-breaking, livestock assaults, and dog ownership, all related to hunting and fishing, can be interpreted as more than merely employers' concern for private property. Such problems illustrate a larger issue that went to the heart of the post-war South's most pressing requirement—making African-American labor more dependent and compliant.

Agricultural employers perhaps yelled the loudest in characterizing unregulated African-American customary rights, but others joined the chorus. Throughout the post-emancipation period, other groups, especially sportsmen, came to see that that threat to the Southern labor system dovetailed with their own interests. In 1881, a contributor to *Forest and Stream*, late nineteenth-century America's largest and most influential sporting magazine, hinted at a link between the unsettled state of affairs since Emancipation, Southern economic inefficiency, and their own sporting interests:

There is hardly a place in North Carolina where a true sportsman may not enjoy himself...Altogether we offer both a field of sport and interest. We are a peculiar people with our 'peculiar institution' gone, and although we have gotten used to the loss, we have not all learned the most profitable ways of the 'new departure'...The saying that it is hard to teach an old dog new tricks is as applicable to men as dogs, and I am inclined to think it especially so of men who live under a southern sun.²⁰³

Sportsmen frequently commented on the “new departure” accompanying the end of slavery and the position of sportsmen relative to that change. Like agricultural employers, they saw in unrestrained customary rights a very real threat to the Southern economy. For although much of the anger displayed by Southern devotees of field, forest, and stream was related, as will be discussed in the next chapter, to a perceived disparity between elite hunting and fishing for the sake of sport and that of African Americans done primarily for market and subsistence reasons,

²⁰³ “From North Carolina,” *Forest and Stream*, January 27, 1881, 505.

they also recognized that concern about proper sporting methods and concern about labor control oftentimes went hand in hand.

Simply put, many landowners hunted and many hunters owned land, and both found much common ground in their shared resentment of African-American customary rights. This 1881 complaint by “B.C.H.” of Hearn, Texas voices both concern over available supply of game and the way former slaves used hunting to avoid work. “Another thing that is driving the game away, though destroying comparatively little, is the negro with his old army musket....He’s one of the kind who is not afraid of work, no sir! He’d lie down and go to sleep by it. He carries his old relic of war-times wherever he goes, and no matter whether in season or out of it, he bangs away at everything...” Here is an overlapping of problems; African Americans both threatened the supply of game near the Brazos River and used the products of that slaughter to avoid work. “He is one of the evils with which this country has been afflicted ever since the war,” B.C.H. concluded. “You can’t get rid of him, nor away from him. He is in every clump of bushes in the country.”²⁰⁴

There is little doubt that Southern sportsmen, many of them agricultural employers or landowners themselves, believed former slaves’ hunting and fishing to be threats on several fronts and merged their grievances over labor with calls for proper sporting behavior. “The poacher will never work, and is always ready and willing to take his chances in private preserves, to kill game and fish in all seasons,” complained one observer in 1873, voicing unease about wildlife depletion, private property, and labor shortages.²⁰⁵ “N.A.T.,” of Palestine, Texas also mixed the former slave’s independence from labor with concern over African-American

²⁰⁴ “B.C.H.,” “The Pot-Hunting Son of Ham,” *Forest and Stream*, December 29, 1881, 431.

²⁰⁵ “Sportsmen v. Poachers,” *Forest and Stream*, November 20, 1873, 232.

sportsmen killing too many quail. “When they were ‘turned loose’...they became at once a race of sportsmen,” he wrote. “Every man and boy was eager to be the owner of a gun, and as old muskets and Enfield rifles were very cheap in those days, they had not much difficulty in supplying their wants,” an ease of subsistence that threatened employers’ control. “It may also be so, that they looked upon possession of firearms and gunning as the highest privileges of freedom,” “N.A.T.” continued. This feeling of freedom might indeed have unintended consequences. “Those were the halcyon days of the negro race in America,” he offered. “I must say that if the freedman ever put on provoking airs toward the white people, it was when he was met by the latter in those hunting expeditions of his early freedom.”²⁰⁶

Critiques of African Americans’ hunting and fishing, which both reflected and built upon long-standing anger over labor intractability offered by Southern landowners, continued throughout the nineteenth and into the twentieth century. “If our lands were not posted we would not have anything to hunt,” wrote H.P. Wilder of South Boston, Virginia in 1898, “nor would we be able to get any work here in the open season.”²⁰⁷ A contributor to Moore County, North Carolina’s *Pinehurst Outlook* opined in 1900 that many laborers had the ability to work despite their nightly hunting excursions, although it is unlikely planters would embrace a condition like the one described. “I have never seen one who wouldn’t chase any kind of wild varmint day or night,” the article noted. “I have known them to hunt all night long, and then work all day. With a well-trained mule they would walk down a furrow in the cornfields fast asleep.”²⁰⁸ This obviously apocryphal statement reflects landowners’ and sportsmen’s

²⁰⁶ “N.A.T.,” “The Freedman and the Quail,” *Forest and Stream*, March 1, 1883.

²⁰⁷ H.P. Wilder, “A Virginia Game Country,” *Forest and Stream*, November 10, 1898, n.p.

²⁰⁸ “Hunting in the South,” *Pinehurst Outlook*, December 14, 1900.

understandings of African American's deep attachment to hunting and fishing and how that attachment could undermine labor efficiency.

Such criticism offered by Southern observers about African-American customary rights and the linking of hunting and fishing with the "labor question," remained neither short-lived nor confined to landowners and sportsmen. These complaints, and the images of idleness, inferiority, and backwardness that came with them, became very public and very pervasive. They even seeped into popular culture and connected with the most enduring stereotypes that white America attached to African Americans in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. I would suggest that stereotypical images of African-American subsistence habits, created under slavery and carried over into the post-emancipation period, that linked food choice, leisure, and perceived evasion of labor, found their most obvious public expression in the raccoon loving, watermelon eating, shiftless black caricatures of earlier minstrel show and "negro music" fame. Such images can perhaps trace part of their origins, and certainly much of their pervasiveness, to white Southerners very publicly linking freed people's ability to feed themselves with the immediate postwar "labor question."

A postbellum Virginia broadside, containing a poem entitled, "The Late Innes Randolph's Famous Fish Story," illustrates the ways that popular images of African American's idleness and backwardness intersected with landowning Southerners' concerns with neglect of agricultural labor supported by customary rights like hunting and fishing. In the poem, a stereotypical "old darkey of the ancient *regime*," who "loved his old master, and hated his hoe," named "Old Ned" decided he had worked long enough. He "laid down the shovel and the hoe" and went fishing. While fishing, Old Ned was lulled to sleep by a melody he played on his fiddle to while away the time between bites. A drum fish caught the sleeping Ned's line, pulled

hard, and dragged him into the water, where he was drowned. When some white fishermen found Ned's body, tied to the drum fish by his own line, they were perplexed...

After all their thinking and figuring
Whether the nigger a fishing had gone
Or the fish had gone a-niggering!²⁰⁹

Such a poem might be interpreted in several ways. It is tempting to think of it as merely one in a multitude of black-themed poems, hugely popular in nineteenth-century America, in which African-American caricatures were placed in humorous situations to entertain white audiences and meet their expectations of racial inferiority. But perhaps there is another interpretation. In the poem, Old Ned, free and believing that "he had earned his play-time with labour long," quit working. He "laid down the shovel and the hoe" and went fishing, a decision that, it turned out, cost him his life. Clearly, the poem was designed to be humorous, but perhaps it had another message, one involving the connection between the labor question and former slaves' customary rights. At the very least it offers commentary on African Americans' fishing skills, suggesting that former slaves are incapable of successfully (or safely, in this case) performing such activities. But perhaps deeper still is an object lesson relayed to white Southerners on what fate should await those who abandon work.

A brief examination of African American-themed sheet music and written verse from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries also reveals a thematic confluence between images of idleness found in complaints about hunting and fishing and images of black intellectual and moral inferiority found in literary and musical representations of black life. This perhaps suggests that decades of complaints from angry white Southerners had had a noticeable impact on the development of African American stereotypes. Harris M. Branham's "Fishin' Time in

²⁰⁹ "The Late Innes Randolph's Fishing Story," n.d., n.p., VHS Broadides, La: 5.

Dixie,” a “dialect” poem appearing in *Field and Stream* in June, 1910, further exemplifies the link between hunting or fishing and assumed African-American character traits common in popular poetry and that such associations survived well into the twentieth century. In the poem, a black narrator is anxious for the arrival of spring and the eagerly-awaited fishing season, the pull of which, as many such poems stereotypically assert, African Americans could not resist:

Erbout dis time I’ses’sless
An’ disrespects er hoe,
Has got de fishin; feelin’
From head plum ter my toe.

For white observers, such near mania for fishing both confirmed African Americans’ connection to such activities and recast that attachment as little more than laziness induced by racial inferiority. As the poem concludes, the narrator’s love for fishing far outweighs any desire to remain at work:

Now what cares I fer farmin’
When on a mornin’ bright,
I sots dar by de riber,
An’ fish begins ter bite.²¹⁰

Hunting and fishing, presented as symptomatic of racial inferiority, also appeared frequently in another popular genre of the day--sheet music based on racist depictions of black life. In the song, “The Preacher and the Bear,” for example, African Americans’ connection to customary rights reflects their questionable morality. In the song, a black preacher goes out hunting one Sunday morning, and although “it was against his religion but he took his gun along.” The preacher got his just reward for his Sabbath breaking, however, as he “met a great big grizzly bear” which chased him up a tree and nearly killed him.²¹¹ Such music also

²¹⁰ Harris M. Buchanan, “Fishin’ Time in Dixie,” *Field and Stream*, June 1910, n.p.

²¹¹ “The Preacher and the Bear,” by Joe Arzonias, Capitol Music, 1904. Library of Congress, American Memory Collection.

employed hunting and fishing to reflect and cultivate stereotypes of African-American intellectual inferiority. In the 1897 song, “Just Say ‘Bye Bye’ Mah Honey,” an opossum is discovered by “a darkey with a musket an’ a ‘possum huntin’ whim.” The opossum prayed to God to be left alone, but the “darkey’s” love for such game, presented, just as in complaints about labor problems, as the acme of African Americans’ material and economic desire, would not allow it. “Jest say; ‘Bye-bye’ mah Honey, yer a goner sure as Satan!” said the hunter to the opossum. “Jest say; ‘Bye-bye’ mah Honey, O! I feels like jubilatin’. Mm mm, I’m gwine home to shout de jubilee!” But the opossum turned the tables on the hunter. When he fired his shotgun, the opossum fell to the ground and was carried back to his cabin seemingly dead. But before the hunter could fetch his knife, the opossum jumped up, a frightening sight which “paralyzed the coon.” Before he ran off, the opossum turned and shouted, “My honey, I’ll be missin’ ya mighty soon! I wuz only *playin’ possum*; tell your troubles to de moon!”²¹²

Supposed African-American inferiority, lack of ambition, and general backwardness provided common themes for these popular racist songs, themes that dovetail with the complaints about customary rights voiced by agricultural employers as sources of their labor difficulties.

Consider the stereotypical assertions that all rural African Americans cared for is food, assertions which echo Southerners’ frequent complaints about black subsistence traditions. In the 1903 song, “I’m an Old Virginia Nigger,” for example, the speaker’s attachment to his home is dependent upon food, including the products of hunting and fishing:

Shall I ev-er leave my ole Vir-gin-ia home?
 From my fam-ly fire side shall I be forc’d to roam?
 While de ‘Possum’s up de ‘Simmon tree, de chick-en on de pole

²¹² “Just Say ‘Bye-Bye’ Mah Honey,” Lyrics by Raymond A. Browne, Composed by Charles Coleman, Frank Tousey’s Publishing House, 1897. Historic American Sheet Music Collection, 1890-1899, Rare Book Manuscript and Special Collections Library, Duke University, Music B-768.

I'll never leave dis neighbor-hood while de good Lord spares my soul.²¹³

This theme appears as well in the 1897 "Sambo's Hunting Song." "De boys am out a chasin', An' de possum am a racin', Bring out de banjo my lub," begins the song, again presenting hunting small game as the very ideal of happiness.²¹⁴ "De hounds dey am a bayin' An' dis niggah am a sayin', Bring out de banjo, my lub, Bring out de banjo. Oh get yer feet a flingin!"²¹⁵ The glee felt by the speaker in these songs reflects the pervasive stereotype of the lazy, food-driven negro who wants nothing more than to survive on the products of his hunts. Yet if one factors in African Americans' deep cultural attachment to hunting and fishing, as well as how commonplace complaints linking such customary rights' with labor inefficiency became, then such songs perhaps reflect something more.

This brief aside on the ways African-American hunting and fishing, as well as white attitudes toward those practices, might be analyzed through widespread stereotypes contained in verse and music suggests that there is more to be drawn from such cultural forms than an understanding of how white America used racial stereotypes to solidify a certain image of African Americans. Hunting and fishing had become an important part of black material culture, a well-known fact about which farmers and landowners widely and loudly broadcast their displeasure. In time, hunting and fishing became thoroughly intertwined with the images of

²¹³ "I'm an Old Virginia Nigger: A Plantation Melody and Song," words and music by Howell C. Featherston, (Washington, D.C.: Sanders & Stayman Co., c. 1903), VHS Sheet Music Collection.

²¹⁴ There is no shortage of songs depicting African American's fondness for hunting and fishing from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For a few more examples, see "Nocturn," by Howard Weeden, in *Songs of the Old South*, (New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1900), 42, VHS General Collection; "Br'er Coon in Ole Kentucky," by John Fox Jr., in *Blue-Grass and Rhododendron: Out-Doors in Old Kentucky*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901), 179, and "I'm going to Old Virginny," by Polk Miller, (Roanoke, Virginia: Hobbie Piano Company, c. 1901, VHS Sheet Music Collection.

²¹⁵ "Sambo's Hunting Song," Composed by Richard Goerdeler, Lyrics by *The Washington Times*, 1897. Historic American Sheet Music Collection, 1890-1899, Rare Book Manuscript and Special Collections Library, Duke University, Music B-432.

black life that were eventually presented to white America as a whole in the racial stereotypes of “negro music.” Indeed such songs, and their representations of African-American life and character, suggest that many whites believed and disliked the reality behind those images.

Conclusion

In creating representations like the ones above, white artists, musicians, and cultural critics simultaneously reaffirmed their own notions of what black life in the post-Emancipation South entailed and built on angry agricultural interests’ complaints about former slaves’ reliance on hunting and fishing. At first glance, it seems as if such representations do little more than proffer tired stereotypes. Yet if one considers them in conjunction with the very real connection between former slaves’ quest for independent subsistence and their reliance on hunting and fishing, between farmers’ loud denunciations of African-American laboring habits and black customary rights, then they take on a broader significance. Indeed there is more than just thematic similarity between the dialect poem, “Fishin’ Time in Dixie,” in which an African-American laborer asks, “Now what cares I fer farmin’” when “fish begins ter bite,” and the Iredell County, North Carolina, farmer’s 1889 assertion that “the average ‘darkey’ of this town is content if he owns a good axe, razor, and a ‘possum dog’”.²¹⁶ There is more than just racial stereotyping in the confluence between cultural representations of African-American life in which a fictional former slave declares...

²¹⁶ North Carolina Department of Labor and Printing, *Third Annual Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the State of North Carolina*, (Raleigh: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1889), 281. UNCCH, NCC, C331 N87L 1887-1898.

...While de 'Possum's up de 'Simmon tree, de chick-en on de pole
I'll never leave dis neighbor-hood while de good Lord spares my
soul...

...and comments on freed people's subsistence activities like Edward King who declared that "[t]hey love hunting and fishing; they revel in their idleness which they never knew until after the war." Such depictions reflect an understanding of black life that an increasingly racist America wished to embrace after the Civil War, they also reflect the unavoidable facts that African Americans had long depended upon hunting and fishing for part of their survival and that Southern farmers worked to advertise that fact to the Southern and American publics. Thus images of black life found in late nineteenth-century popular culture, which saddled people of color with badges of inferiority, flowed from grossly stereotypical images that, in the minds of Southern planters and farmers, possessed an inescapable grounding in material reality.

Commentary on the impact of African-American hunting and fishing came from a variety of sources after Emancipation. It began with frustrated criticisms from Southern farmers anxious to reassert control over former slaves' labor and was later sounded by sportsmen who found that the connection between hunting and fishing and the labor question fit with their own motives for limiting access to Southern fields, forests, and streams. It was even reflected in Jim Crow era "negro music" that often used characterizations of black hunting and fishing to advance certain images of African Americans. The messages contained in these different sources share a common belief that hunting and fishing reflected former slaves' character traits, namely their idleness, aversion to work, and general backwardness. But those messages went deeper than building or reinforcing stereotypes. At the heart of the multitude of representations of African-American hunting and fishing lay the dual realities that former slaves remained firmly attached

to them and that former slaveholders understood those practices as threats to labor control and, therefore, the very foundations of Southern agricultural prosperity.

Whether in the form of agricultural employers' invectives over lost time, sportsmen's concerns over elite sporting privilege, or the marriage of customary rights and racial stereotypes, the relationship between hunting and fishing and the "labor question" remains clear. That association grew from Emancipation, remained widespread well into the era of segregation and endured longer even than Jim Crow. Though beginning with Southern farmers and landlords, complaints about African Americans pursuing fish and game without restraint would not end there. Elite sportsmen, who increasingly turned their gaze southward in the decades following Emancipation, also took up the cause of linking former slaves' exploitation of the Southern natural environment with a general lack of control over people of color. These sportsmen, more effectively than any other group, broadcast their problems with African-American hunting and fishing to a broad Southern and national audience. Their constant grumblings about black sporting practices, and the vagaries of black character that those practices supposedly reflected, seconded and expanded upon the concerns of agricultural employers and continually raised the need to curtail African-American hunting and fishing. Over time, the cacophony of angry white voices railing against such customary rights would lead to the adoption of widespread and comprehensive measures that left African Americans increasingly less able to use such deeply-rooted cultural traditions to subsist apart from agricultural labor in the service of whites.

3. “The Pot Hunting Son of Ham”: White Sportsmen’s Objections to African-American Hunting and Fishing

He is one of the evils with which this country has been afflicted ever since the war. You can’t get rid of him, nor away from him. He is in every clump of bushes in the county.

--Hearns, Texas, sportsman “B.C.H.,” on the hunting and fishing excesses of former slaves, 1881²¹⁷

The fact is the esprit has been destroyed since these hordes of negroes have taken to the pursuit of game as their principal occupation.

--*The Richmond Whig*, December 25, 1872²¹⁸

Introduction

Agricultural employers and landowners had allies in broadcasting black independence as the biggest problem facing the post-Emancipation South. These other groups, while not tied as directly by economics to cultivating labor tractability through circumscribing black subsistence, nonetheless detested former slaves’ ability to freely exploit the Southern natural environment. Led by the growing ranks of native Southern and visiting sportsmen, they identified former slaves’ hunting and fishing excesses as leading contributors to their own postwar difficulties. Alarmed by the frightful wildlife depletion of the latter nineteenth century, they sought solace in the South’s seemingly endless supply of fish and game, making Dixie, particularly its black belt, a leading sporting destination for visitors from the South and around the world. These sportsmen had different objections to African-American hunting and fishing than did landowners and

²¹⁷ “B.C.H.,” “The Pot-Hunting Son of Ham,” *Forest and Stream*, December 29, 1881, 431.

²¹⁸ “A Christmas in the Forks,” *Richmond Whig*, December 25, 1872, VHS, James Booth Walters Papers, Mss1W1714a. [emphasis in original].

employers who decried such long-held traditions because of the dangers posed by subsistence or semi-subsistence garnered independent from white control. Sportsmen took issue with even the basic acts of hunting and fishing by former slaves. White agricultural interests feared unrestricted black customary rights as threats to the South's labor system and future economic prosperity; sportsmen feared them because they believed that, if left unchecked, African Americans would deplete Southern wildlife and ruin their own cherished sporting interests.

In March 1888, an unidentified Louisiana sportsman angrily wrote to *Outing* magazine outlining the most serious barriers to wildlife preservation in Louisiana. "Even as late as twenty years ago, there was no lack of game...the emancipation of the negro changed all this," he began, echoing a common sentiment among many Southern sportsmen who equated black liberation with a precipitous decline in the quality of field sports in Dixie:

The first idea of the free negro was to become possessed of an old shot gun of some kind, a rejected army musket or rifle. This was proof positive of freedom since no slave was allowed to keep a weapon of any kind. The effect of arming some hundred thousand negro men and boys with shot guns can be imagined. When it is further stated that each negro possessed at least a half dozen worthless curs of the breed known in the South as "yaller, nigger dogs," and that these negroes and their hounds set to work diligently to hunt, shoot, or kill everything in the way of game they encountered, it can be readily understood that it did not take them long to exterminate the deer and rabbits...Their hunting, moreover, was carried on in the most unsportsmanlike manner and they killed anything they encountered, whatever its age or species.

The best solution to this problem, according to sportsmen, would be to strengthen fish and game laws. According to the above editorial, "sport has almost been killed in Louisiana, and it is quite evident that sportsmen will have to depend, more and more, on the English system, and that

game will have to be raised in preserves and poaching stopped, in order to prevent the complete annihilation, by the negroes and their dogs, of everything that can be styled game.”²¹⁹

Complaints such as these demonstrate several key components of white attitudes toward freed person hunting and fishing. First, elite Southern sportsmen, looking to the antebellum South as their model of social and sporting relationships, constantly harkened back to the Old South as the halcyon age of Southern sport. Second, many Southerners, blaming Emancipation for both labor problems and wildlife shortages, longed to return to that by-gone era of racial control. Third, white sportsmen, believing African Americans challenged their own sporting mastery, worked to create a public perception of them as immoderate, unsportsmanlike and dangerous. Ultimately the idea that freedom transformed Southern field sports, that unrestrained former slaves depleted Southern wildlife, and that African Americans made poor sportsmen who did not live up to the standards of their white betters, culminated in attacks on African Americans’ right to hunt and fish. These attacks intensified in the late nineteenth century and peaked in the early twentieth century when sportsmen, landowners, labor lords, and lawmakers exploited perceived connections between hunting and fishing and the race problem to establish effective state level fish and game regulation.

This chapter examines white sportsmen’s objections to African-American sporting behavior in the South between emancipation and 1920, a period which began with former slaves enjoying more ready access to the South’s natural environment than ever before and ended with a conglomeration of white interests employing fears of lost racial control and negative characterizations of black sporting behavior to convince Southerners to accept greater regulation of hunting and fishing. This chapter serves the dual purpose of showing that Southern sportsmen

²¹⁹ “Game Preserving in Louisiana,” *Outing* 11 (6), March 1888, 533-5.

held up African Americans as archetypes of poor sporting behavior and blamed them for destroying Southern natural environments and besmirching the good name of “legitimate” (meaning elite and white) sporting enthusiasts by serving as key examples of what they angrily referred to as “game hogs” and “pot hunters.” Sportsmen’s complaints, dependent upon the creation of negative representations of black sporting behavior, skill, and intelligence, both reflected their frustrations and served as another, and for historians largely overlooked, cultural space within which whites saddled African Americans with badges of inferiority. In both their own written sporting narratives and within the pages of sporting periodicals they sought to embed in the Southern, indeed, American mind that Africans Americans acted as bad, even dangerous, sportsmen and that the South’s biggest problem—its lack of control over the black population—could be seen in miniature through the struggle over hunting and fishing. “The negro is deteriorating from the civilization he possessed as a slave, and relapsing into his natural barbarism,” declared the *Southern Review* in 1869. “Will this process of deterioration tend to break down the characteristics of the white men?”²²⁰ In voicing such fears, this editor also spoke for white sportsmen who both experienced and exploited precisely those same sentiments.

The Context of Postwar Southern Hunting and Fishing

Between the 1870s and the 1920s sportsmen and conservationists made a number of gains in the South. After decades of resisting meaningful restrictions on the taking of wildlife due to a general distrust of such action, lawmakers finally took lasting steps to regulate

²²⁰ “Chivalrous Southrons,” *Southern Review* 6, 1869, n.p.

Southerners' hunting and fishing.²²¹ As observers of such legislation noted, Southern fish and game protection had long been inadequate to meet the concerns of sportsmen and nature enthusiasts.²²² Noted conservationist William Templeton Hornaday, for example, who willingly acknowledged the gains made in Southern fish and game protection by the 1920s, nonetheless remained critical of Southern lawmakers, noting sarcastically that "the Southern States have done less actual [game] extermination than our heroes of the North; but they are getting into shape to show more results."²²³ Clearly, even in an age when fish and game law was becoming more comprehensive nationally, more work had to be done.

For long suffering proponents of fish and game legislation, this problem stretched back more than a half century. Both the push for legal restrictions and the perceived shortages that brought them about had been debated in the South even before the Civil War. Sportsmen's concerns about the proper use of fish and game reached far back into colonial history, as agricultural elites sought to make field sports a strictly aristocratic affair, and developed its most vocal expression starting in the 1830s when changes in firearms and transportation technology dramatically increased the amount of fish and game consumed.²²⁴ By the 1850s the smoothbore musket had become obsolete, replaced by the rifled musket and, later, the breech-loading rifle, both of which allowed for greater accuracy, longer range of fire and decreased loading

²²¹ William Templeton Hornaday, *Thirty Years' War for Wildlife: Gains and Losses in the First Thankless Task*, (Stamford, CT: Gillespie Brothers, Inc., 1931), 42-4.

²²² According to environmental historian Albert E. Cowdrey, Southerners' tendency to resist restrictions on their environmental exploitation stretched far back into the colonial era. "The South tended to exalt," he noted, "sometimes with a special anarchic heedlessness, the contemporary American standard of exploitation without limit." *This Land, This South: An Environmental History*, (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1996), 83.

²²³ Hornaday, *Thirty Years War for Wildlife*, 42.

²²⁴ Proctor, *Bathed in Blood*, 23.

intervals.²²⁵ This development, coupled with the spread of steamboats and railroads, which greatly reduced the distance between urban populations and the previously isolated fish and game they craved, greatly increased the wildlife killed for food and sport. Through the balance of the antebellum period, as firearm and fish-taking technology evolved, and as transportation advances made Southern wildlife more widely available, the slaughter of fish and game continued apace.

Thus between the Civil War²²⁶ and the turn of the century, Southern sporting enthusiasts, including the former plantation elite, who had long sought exclusive hunting and fishing regulation; lower class Southerners, who had long hunted and fished to the chagrin of the upper classes; and, increasingly, sporting tourists from around the United States, grew increasingly alarmed about the slaughter without restraint that seemed to characterize the region. “Game is disappearing from our home country,” wrote Robert Barnwell Roosevelt in 1884, “and if we are to obtain satisfactory shooting, we must go some distance for it.”²²⁷ Likewise Henry B. Ansell, in his history of Knotts Island and Currituck County, North Carolina, lamented the decline of that once celebrated fowling region, noting “seventy years ago our country was thinly-populated; our gunners used the old flint and steel muskets to kill ducks...The ducks in those days had only to watch the margins of coves, creeks, ponds, bays and other shore lines for the shooters.” But,

²²⁵ Herman, *Hunting and the American Imagination*, 145-7

²²⁶ The war itself, because hunters abandoned the sporting field for the battlefield and because gunfire was focused on human targets, was heralded—in perhaps the only way the war was heralded by the Southern elite—as a break in the slaughter that characterized the antebellum period. But the abatement would not last. Alexander Hunter recalled that sportsman in his native Virginia, “who loved sporting, and had the good luck to return to the homes of their youth with their arms and legs intact, had a rare and royal time among fur and feather, and a moderate shot would return in the evening and show such a bag as the result of the day’s sport as would last the family for a week.” “Sport—Past, Present, and Future, Part II, *Outing* 13 (4), January 1889, 321-27.

²²⁷ Robert Barnwell Roosevelt, *Florida and the Game Water-Birds of the Atlantic Coast and the Lakes of the United States*, (New York: The Judd Company, 1884), 5.

as Ansell noted, between the Civil War and the early twentieth century, “the millions of wild fowl that once swarmed our waters have wonderfully decreased—all but disappeared.”²²⁸

Sportsmen offered numerous explanations for this decline. Some, like Henry Ansell, pointed to the transportation advances that brought more sportsmen South. “There are fast lines of steamers and rail-roads that care little for distance,” wrote Ansell, “these and most all commercial houses have refrigerators to keep ducks from taint; with the product of the ice plant ducks can now, if needed, be kept for months.”²²⁹ Others blamed the scores of Northerners who came South after the war. Virginian James Booth Walters noted it was “not an uncommon thing for hunting parties from a distance to visit here at any time during the shooting season.” Such visitors “sojourn for a season of one or two weeks and wage dreadful warfare upon the wild tribes of the surrounding county.”²³⁰ An anonymous sportsman, writing to *Forest and Stream* in 1885, described the “countless numbers of sportsmen and others from the North [who] are spending the entire winter in the South, and are making quail shooting a duty rather than a pastime. Many of these gentlemen can boast of records of from none to twenty birds daily for the season;” noted the quail hunter, “and will proudly produce their diaries showing their score.”²³¹

Still others blamed increasing firearms availability for the South’s wildlife woes.²³² The Civil War had made guns more available than ever before. In the years after the war, hundreds

²²⁸ Henry B. Ansell, “Tales of Knotts Island,” 90. Henry B. Ansell Papers, NCSA, P.C. 1431.1.

²²⁹ Ansell, “Tales of Knotts Island,” 90.

²³⁰ “A Christmas in ‘The Forks,’” *Richmond Whig*, December 25, 1872, VHS, James Booth Walters Papers, Mss1W1714a.

²³¹ Anonymous, “Southern Shooting Grounds,” *Forest and Stream*, February 26, 1885, 86.

²³² Both firearm production and per capita gun ownership rose dramatically in the decades after the Civil War. These concurrent increases, tied to both the supply of firearms coming from factories converted to arms production by the war and the dramatic increase in the number of men trained by war to use such weapons, made the ability to own firearms nearly universal. Herman *Hunting and the American Imagination*, 146.

of thousands of surplus military weapons, taken home by returning soldiers or sold cheaply by the federal government, made their way into the hands of those who previously could not afford such armaments. Echoing a common sentiment among wealthier Southerners angry at the wider availability of such weaponry, one Louisiana sportsman noted “in the ancient antebellum era the hunting grounds of this State were famous throughout the South. All over the State they were preserved and worked in the shooting season, principally, by gentlemen sportsmen.” But with the saturation of surplus weapons in the region, as Alexander Hunter lamented of Virginia, “every kind of gun, from the old Springfield musket to the modern-loader, is used relentlessly, and in the settled neighborhood, the deer are simply gunned to death.”²³³

Inadequate fish and game legislation provided another culprit. North Carolina Commissioner of Agriculture L.L. Polk opined that unpopular restrictions had become nonetheless necessary. “While I am aware that no general game law can be enforced effectually unless supported by an intelligent public opinion,” Polk suggested, somewhat optimistically, “yet I feel warranted in saying that...a law to prevent the indiscriminate slaughter which so seriously threatens extermination to many of our most valuable species of game, would be warmly received and endorsed.”²³⁴ Yet as late as 1894, according to North Carolina’s Shocco Association, “owing to the want of better game laws and lack of enforcement of existing laws for the protection of game, the quantity of game is rapidly diminishing in all parts of the country.” Many came to believe that only extreme measures could repair such a dire situation. “In order to remedy this evil, men of wealth who hunt for sport have in different places combined for the

²³³ Hunter, Alexander, “A Deer Hunt in Old Virginia,” *Outing*, 17 (1), October 1893, 61.

²³⁴ “Report of L.L. Polk, Commissioner of Agriculture, For 1877 and 1878,” NCSA, Legislative Documents, 14-5.

purpose of establishing game preserves similar to those of England and other parts of Europe.”²³⁵

South Carolina land and lumber speculator Robert Pinckney Tucker, for example, who grew wealthy purchasing abandoned lands and reselling lumber and sporting rights, agreed, noting “any sportsman not making provision for the future will find it increasingly difficult in a few years to obtain a days sport. The country everywhere is being shot out, taken up by the clubs, or posted by individual owners.”²³⁶ Put succinctly, Southern sportsmen, increasingly alarmed about dwindling fish and game, moved to make it more difficult to duplicate the slaughter that characterized the period from the end of the Civil War through the early twentieth century.

African Americans & the White Sporting Ideal

Despite the frequency with which sportsmen commented on transportation advances, sporting tourists, surplus firearms, and a lack of fish and game law, many others argued that freed African Americans perhaps provided a better explanation. Almost from the very moment of Emancipation, many sportsmen, both Northern and Southern, identified former slaves as one of the deadliest sources of fish and game slaughter. One can hardly glance at a late nineteenth century sporting periodical without being struck by the frequency with which they labeled black sportsmen as the force most destructive to that region’s field sports and characterized them as the epitome of the poor sporting behavior that would destroy the section’s wildlife. Sussex County, Virginia, sportsman and frequent *Forest and Stream* contributor “Chasseur” blamed freed slaves

²³⁵ “Prospectus of the Shocco Game Association,” UNCCH, NCC, Cp971.93s, 1894.

²³⁶ Letter from Robert Pinckney Tucker to B.R. Kittridge, Carmel, N.Y., August 9, 1904, Robert Pinckney Tucker Papers, UNCCH, SHC, #1010, Folder #99.

for the Old Dominion's lack of deer. "Where there were a dozen [deer shot each week] just after the war," he noted, "there is one now, and the ubiquitous darkey is the cause...Each African is the possessor of an old army musket and two or three mongrels, who will chase anything from a squirrel to an antlered buck."²³⁷ Clarksville, Tennessee, contributor "G.T.N.," writing to Baltimore's *American Sportsman* in 1875 about the state of his favorite South Carolina hunting grounds, wrote of "the terrible incubus of *blackness* which hangs over that commonwealth" due to "the constant stream of loafing Africans, each one with a musket on his shoulder," noting that "ten or fifteen years ago, I was accustomed to flush from twenty to thirty coveys [of quail] in a day, not more than six or eight can be found now. Duck shooting has been spoiled in the same way."²³⁸ Likewise English sportsman J. Turner-Turner, who in 1888 published a memoir of his North American hunts, recalled the scant game in Liberty, Virginia, noting that partridges and rabbits were by no means plentiful, but "not was this to be wondered at in a place where every nigger carried a gun."²³⁹

According to alarmed white observers, unrestrained African-American hunting and fishing since the end of slavery stood as the principal cause for the decline of good sport. James Henry Rice Jr., for example, describing hunting on St. Helena Island, South Carolina, noted that "several years ago, during the reign of crime around here, the negro played havoc with the fox squirrels, killing over two hundred in all. They have never recovered their numbers."²⁴⁰ Likewise South Carolina planter and sportsman J. Motte Alston noted that "the game, once so bountiful, is fast disappearing for various causes. The negroes previous to the war were not

²³⁷ "Chasseur," "In the Old Virginia Lowland," *Forest and Stream* October 19, 1882, 204.

²³⁸ "G.T.N.," "Sport in the South," *American Sportsman*, September 4, 1875, 339. [Emphasis mine].

²³⁹ J. Turner-Turner, *Three Years Hunting and Trapping in American and the Great Northwest*, (London: Maclure & Company, 1888), 12.

²⁴⁰ Rice, *Glories of the Carolina Coast*, 97.

permitted to kill the same for market, and so there was no visible decrease. But even the sea birds...that used to be so abundant have dwindled away in Carolina.”²⁴¹ Referring to the African-American sportsman as “The Pot-Hunting Son of Ham,” “B.C.H.” of Hearn, Texas, asserted that “he is very numerous in Texas, and especially so in the vicinity of the Brazos river.”²⁴² Linking game slaughter to black work habits, “B.C.H.” declared that...

...he’s [the “pot-hunting son of Ham] one of the kind who’s not afraid to work, no sir! He’d lie down and go to sleep by it. He carries his old relic of war times wherever he goes, and no matter in season or out of it, he bangs away at some nice pond or some place on the river where you have been preparing to go for a week, and know perfectly well that you will find duck there, and are “dead sure” no one knows of the existence of this particular “duck hole” except yourself. You go there at first peep of day—and there you find one of those animated black walnut statues, who has been there for two hours.²⁴³

Such complaints sounded across the country in the late nineteenth century as sportsmen and landowners linked black liberation and wildlife depletion in the minds of the public.

Southern sportsmen grew disgusted at the destruction of the old order when most wildlife had been reserved for men of means: “[T]he old time gentlemen hunter of Virginia is becoming a thing of the past,” a Doctor Macklin declared in 1872. “The fact is the *esprit* has been destroyed since these hordes of negroes have taken to the pursuit of game as their principal

²⁴¹ Childs, Arney R., ed., *Rice Planter and Sportsman: The Recollections of J. Motte Alston, 1821-1909*, (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1999), 77.

²⁴² The phrase “Pot-Hunting Son of Ham,” refers to the biblical “Curse of Ham,” a central justifying myth of trans-Atlantic slavery. According to the myth, Noah’s son Ham saw his father lying naked in a drunken stupor and invited his brothers, Shem and Japheth, to join him, thereby mocking his father. Upon learning of his son’s disrespectful act, Noah cursed Ham’s youngest son, Canaan, and his progeny to be slaves to his older brothers and their descendants. Slavery apologists used the story to explain how and why God ordained bondage for people of African descent. For two detailed analyses, see Benjamin Braude, “The Sons of Noah and the Construction of Ethnic and Geographical Identities in the Medieval and Early Modern Periods,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser., 54 (1), (January 1997), 103-142 and William McKee Evans, “From the Land of Canaan to the Land of Guinea: The Strange Odyssey of the Sons of Ham,” *The American Historical Review* 85 (1), (February 1980), 15-43.

²⁴³ “B.C.H.,” “The Pot-Hunting Son of Ham,” *Forest and Stream*, December 29, 1881, 431.

occupation.”²⁴⁴ Free of old restrictions on their long-cherished hunting and fishing, freed African Americans took to Southern fields, forests and streams with vigor. For white observers, this signaled danger for numerous reasons. African-American hunters carried weapons. They did not respect fish and game laws. Finally, they did not hunt according to white sporting codes. An unnamed 1874 *Forest and Stream* contributor summarized these problems, calling for new and stronger measures “especially needed at this time, when almost every gunner one meets is an irresponsible negro, delighted with his newly acquired privilege of ‘bearing arms,’ ignorant of the value and necessity of sumptuary laws, and intent the year round on filling his bag.”²⁴⁵

That freed black hunters and fishermen often carried weapons, that their mobility could no longer be circumscribed by slavery, and that they did not conform to behavior necessary for “true sportsmen” became the main components of white sportsmen’s complaints. At their heart lay a trope of lost control and a sense that a glorious epoch in Southern history had passed. One cannot glance at late nineteenth-century Southern sporting literature without being struck by the confluence between anger over perceived African-American hunting and fishing abuses and lamentations of lost racial subordination. Romantic longings for the slave South permeated postwar sporting literature. Harrisonburg, Virginia, attorney John Edwin Roller included old-time hunting in his lament, entitled “Doomed Race”:

To those who lived any part of their lives amid the surroundings of Southern slavery, in its better aspects, there [sic] come back from those days the sweetest memory possible. Who can forget the glorious hunts at night, the weird torches in the forests, the dogs barking and treeing the coon and the opossum, the shouts of merriment and triumph at the success when the toothsome game

²⁴⁴ “A Christmas in the Forks,” *Richmond Whig*, December 25, 1872, VHS, James Booth Walters Papers, Mss1W1714a. [emphasis in original].

²⁴⁵ “Game in Season for January,” *Forest and Stream* 1 (25), January 29, 1874, 395.

was secured; and then the long and wearied tramp back home to be followed by the sweetest slumbers that mortal man ever knew?²⁴⁶

Sportsmen coupled the heyday of the Southern racial hierarchy with the glory days of Southern field sports. Describing his former plantation, “Tower Hill,” Sussex County, Virginia, sportsman “Chasseur” recalled an age when “a rich Virginian counted his broad acres by the thousands, his sable servitors by the hundreds, his horses by the score, and he lived his life like a baron of the good old age of the squire.”²⁴⁷ In that golden age, whites stood as the unquestioned masters of the black population and thoroughly controlled Southern hunting and fishing. “The typical Virginian of those days was a thorough sportsman,” “Chasseur” continued proudly.” However, “the slaves, of course, were forbidden to carry or possess any firearm, and confined their hunting operations to the legitimate darkey game—the ‘coon, the rabbit, and the ‘possum.”²⁴⁸

Anger over African Americans abandoning stereotypically “black” sporting patterns also pervades Southern sporting narratives. “N.A.T.” of Palestine, Texas, argued that with Emancipation, “the ancestral instinct to go a-hunting broke out within [former slaves] in an ungovernable manner and hurried them forth into the road and briar patches.” He pined for the days “[b]efore the unpleasantness,” when “the only hunting enjoyed by the negroes was rabbit hunting on Sundays and ‘possum and ‘coon hunting o’ nights. They had no firearms in those days, and had to depend exclusively on the dog for their rabbits, and on the dog and ax [sic] for their ‘coons and ‘possums.” Sportsmen like “N.A.T.” lamented an age when African Americans confined themselves to certain kinds of game. “The negroes pursued these sports...with a

²⁴⁶ “Doomed Race,” Roller Family Papers, 1837-1917, VHS, “Miscellany,” “Notes and Essays” folder, Mss1R6498A2..

²⁴⁷ It is worth noting that at the core of this vision of the antebellum South is the common, yet fundamentally false, notion that the slave South was dominated by large plantations manned by hundreds of slaves. The Old South, as remembered by elites and sportsmen, reflected a longing for an age of aristocracy that never, in fact, existed.

²⁴⁸ “In the Old Virginia Lowland,” *Forest and Stream*, October 19, 1882, 204.

wonderful enthusiasm and enjoyment,” he continued, “and yet since they have become free they have totally abandoned the ‘possum and the ‘coon as far as I can learn...He seems to consider that he has entirely outgrown the ‘possum, got far above him in the social scale, and to look upon any reference to that animal in his presence as an intentional and heartless reminder of his previous condition of servitude.”²⁴⁹ Even as late as 1891, sportsmen looked back at African Americans’ rejection of exclusively small game as a turning point in Southern hunting and fishing. “Coahoma” argued that once “possum dogs” were highly valued by slaves, “but now one never hears of a ‘possum dog’ among the negroes. I have an idea that they look upon this nocturnal sport as one of the badges of slavery, when night was the only time they could call their own, except an occasional holiday, and then they were not allowed to own any guns.”²⁵⁰

Increased black gun ownership created another central concern embedded in such complaints. Free from antebellum restrictions on firearms, at least after most states had repealed their various “black codes,” freed slaves made firearms both a symbol and an immediate priority of liberation, a fact not lost on white observers.²⁵¹ “The negroes certainly rejoice in the possession of weapons to a large extent,” noted *Scribner’s Monthly*’s Edward King in 1875. “Since the war every black man has felt himself called upon to own a shot-gun...”²⁵² Likewise Northside Virginian “M,” noted that “having been previously prevented by law from carrying fire arms, [former slaves] naturally exhibited a childish delight in exercising their constitutional

²⁴⁹ “N.A.T.,” “The Negro and the Game,” *Forest and Stream*, March 22, 1883, 148.

²⁵⁰ “Coahoma,” “The Possum ‘Sulls,’” *Forest and Stream*, June 25, 1891, 455.

²⁵¹ For a detailed discussion of the increase in African-American gun ownership in the years following Emancipation, especially the response of white Southerners to it, see Stephen P. Halbrook, *Freedmen, the Fourteenth Amendment, and the Right to Bear Arms, 1866-1876*, (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1998).

²⁵² King, *The Great South*, 778.

privilege.”²⁵³ Texan “N.A.T.” asserted that when African Americans were ‘turned loose,’ as they generally express it...[e]very man and boy was eager to be the owner of a gun, and as old muskets and Enfield rifles were very cheap in those days, they had not much difficulty in supplying their wants.²⁵⁴ This increased gun ownership provided a way for African Americans to resist white domination and became both a powerful reflector of liberation from white control and, as some Southerners feared, a possible source of open violence against whites.

Black gun ownership also endangered Southern wildlife. The ability to obtain a gun, facilitated by the federal government’s sale of surplus weapons at dramatically reduced costs, made hunting more efficient for the average African-American sportsman who, prior to Emancipation, likely did not own firearms. According to Alexander Hunter, musing that not just firearms, but the users of such weapons, led to the destruction of game, argued that “even worse than the breech-loader [a relatively new innovation in the 1880s], was the old army musket, loaded with a handful of shot, with a lately enfranchised freedman behind the big end of it.” For Hunter, guns made freed persons a threat to all Southern game:

The darkey is a nocturnal prowler, as much so as a ‘coon or ‘possum, and his prowls through meadow, woods, and fallow cause him frequently to stumble on the wary turkey that forgets his cunning as he struts around preparatory to flying to his roost...But it is when “our friend and brother” catches sight...of a flock of partridges settling in some field for their night’s rest, that he becomes dangerous. It is then that the old army musket is converted into a terror, and when its muzzle bears upon the whole covey squatted in a space that can be covered by a bandana handkerchief, and its contents are turned loose, every bird will be either killed or crippled.²⁵⁵

²⁵³ “M,” “Quail in Virginia,” *Forest and Stream*, December 21, 1882, 409.

²⁵⁴ “Letter from N.A.T., Palestine, TX,” *Forest and Stream* March 1, 1883, 87.

²⁵⁵ Alexander Hunter, “Sport—Past, Present, and Future, Part II,” *Outing* 13 (4), January 1889, 322-3.

Others, like “N.A.T.,” tied such slaughter not only to guns but also to the ability of freed people to hunt at will. “I have often meditated over the sudden conversion of the colored race into sportsmen, which we witnessed at the close of the civil war,” he declared. “What was it due to? Perhaps to their wild ancestral instinct, which, suppressed so long in slavery, broke out beyond all reason when their freedom came...It may also be so, that they looked upon possession of firearms and gunning as the highest privilege of freedom and manhood.” Gunning without restraint, “N.A.T.” argued, became the best way African Americans testified to their freedom:

How often I have met these ebony sportsmen in their rounds, and how keen was their enjoyment of the fun! Usually there would be a flock of them together, and then there was an eager rivalry as to which would bag the most game. Sometimes I have met paterfamilias in the woods, musket on shoulder, attended by his wife and all his young. Oh, it was enjoyment keen, intense! Those were the halcyon days of the negro race in America.²⁵⁶

When sportsmen complained about black gun ownership, they simultaneously expressed fear and frustration over several separate, yet within the context of the sporting field, inter-related, developments. Newly-freed, and newly-armed, African Americans exploited freedom to the utmost, traversing the Southern landscape and competing with white sportsmen for the region’s best fish and game. When they took to the field they did so out of necessity with little regard for the practices espoused by their white “betters.” Sportsmen cried foul when African Americans engaged in activities considered either beyond the pale of acceptable black behavior or better reserved exclusively for whites. Guided by nostalgic longings for antebellum aristocracy and deep uncertainties over fish and game scarcity, sportsmen purposefully tied African-American sporting behavior to larger anxieties concerning Southern race relations. Sportsmen once celebrated a hard-working and mostly unarmed black population, but with

²⁵⁶ “Letter from N.A.T., Palestine, TX,” *Forest and Stream*, March 1, 1883, 87.

emancipation, “nearly every negro owns a pot-metal shotgun or old musket, and he spends much of his time wandering about...in search of ‘Br’er Rabbit’ or ‘Br’er Squirrel,’” noted a *Forest and Stream* contributor in 1891. Unfortunately, the former slave “eschews possum hunting at night, of which we, who were the sons of slave owners in the old times, cherish fond recollections, as the youthful romances of old plantation life.”²⁵⁷

Aside from abandoning “black” game, arming themselves and simply taking to the field in the first place, African-American hunters and fishermen angered whites by ignoring the code of fair sporting behavior which middle and upper class sportsmen claimed guided their actions in the field. For late nineteenth-century Southern sportsmen, particularly those who aspired to a fictionalized version of aristocratic antebellum plantocracy, pursuing fish and game carried certain obligations. Elites used that code of sportsmanship, always more idealized than actual, to separate true gentleman from those who hunted and fished for need or financial reward, drawing clearer lines of demarcation between aristocrats and the pot-hunting masses.

The amorphous codes binding the nineteenth-century American sporting fraternity contained certain key and constant components. Whether a huntsman or fisherman could be counted a “true sportsman,” as sporting publications used the term, depended upon a variety of factors, including his basic reasons for hunting and fishing, his methods of capturing prey once engaged, and his appropriate behavior in the field. Delaware, Ohio, sportsman “H.P.U.” succinctly summarized these key components in an 1881 *Forest and Stream* editorial:

This ideal sportsman is, first, a thorough-going business man...and not a loafer, dead-beat, nor bumner...He is a votary of art and science—not a mere *dilettante*—having a genuine love and admiration for the true and beautiful, wherever found...not a sneaking pot-hunter...nor a professional shot...but a lover of fair play, willing to match his keenness of sight, his coolness of nerve,

²⁵⁷ “Coahoma,” “The Possum ‘Sulls.’ Letter from Coahoma,” *Forest and Stream*, June 25, 1891, 455.

his endurance of fatigue and his subtleness of wood-craft against the speed of the hurtling grouse, the wariness of the trout, or the sagacity of the red-deer. He is a gentleman, not a butcher, and makes of hunting and fishing a noble pastime, and not a money-getting trade. He takes to the field not because he loves to kill, but because of the healthful influences with which a hunter's life surrounds him. He is, emphatically and above all, a lover of Nature, and rejoices more in the study of her subtle woods than the blood of slaughtered victims.²⁵⁸

As fish and game seemed to disappear at an increasing rate, sportsmen became more anxious to separate themselves from those who did not conform to such codes. Through that exclusion process, they “constructed a social identity for themselves by promoting the idea that while a hunter was a man, a sportsman was a gentleman.”²⁵⁹

Although rarely stated so bluntly in contemporary periodical literature, it is clear that only men of means could be ideal sportsmen. As H.P.U. demonstrated, a true sportsman had to be many things, including “a thorough-going business man,” “a votary of art and science,” possessed of “a genuine love for the true and beautiful,” a “lover of fair play,” and a “gentleman.” Sporting literature constantly referenced such qualities, making clear that worthy devotees of fur, fin, and feather possessed manhood, refinement, education, and wealth. In other words, true sportsmen ideally came only from the middle and upper classes. As numerous scholars have demonstrated, the sporting codes transmitted in print in the latter nineteenth century, created and upheld by and for those who could afford to uphold them, became inherently and intentionally exclusionary.²⁶⁰ Elite sportsmen thus worked to completely exclude the lesser sort including immigrants, poor whites and African Americans.

²⁵⁸ “H.P.U.,” “The Ideal Sportsman,” *Forest and Stream*, December 20, 1881, n.p. [emphasis in original].

²⁵⁹ Proctor, Nicholas, *Bathed in Blood*, 87-8. According to Proctor, the criterion of the hunting fraternity separated elite sportsmen from their supposed inferiors. “Hunters desired companions,” wrote Proctor, “but fraternities balanced their inclusiveness with exclusivity. By limiting the pool of possible initiates and imposing various social barriers, a hunting fraternity became a bastion of social power.” *Bathed in Blood*, 30.

True lovers of the chase hunted purely for sport, not for food or profit. According to Eugene P. Odom, in his biography of North Carolina naturalist Herbert Hutchinson Brimley, real sportsmen cared neither for killing nor for material or financial reward. In fact, noted Odom, “when the methods are fair and ‘sporting,’ comparatively few animals or fish are actually bagged, the ones that get away being both numerous and large! This is as it should be.” For Odom and his mentor Brimley, the goal of hunting or fishing was something higher:

The long hikes through country unspoiled by man, the chance to get away from petty troubles of complex modern civilization, the matching of wits with cunning wild kindred, the hearty meal cooked in the open, and the companionship around the campfire are things which appeal to the real sportsman and outdoorsman more than the actual game obtained. Of course, the hunter or fisherman is disappointed when he comes back empty-handed; partly, at least, because his friends expect him to have something to show for the trip besides his own mental and physical rejuvenation. Nevertheless, even the unsuccessful trip is a success to the true sportsman if he is also a nature lover.²⁶¹

For sportsmen, the hunting and fishing ideal was sport for sport’s sake; those activities should remain unencumbered by less pure motives.

The true sportsman’s arch nemeses--the “game hog” and the “pot hunter”--stood in marked contrast to these characteristics. These negative archetypes angered sporting gentlemen primarily because they rejected the above elite ideals. The proper sportsman hunted or fished for one of two reasons; for the love of pure sport or for the love of nature. Those who hunted or fished for money, dubbed “game hogs” by angry aficionados of the rod and gun, and those who did so for survival, dubbed “pot hunters,” did not deserve the appellation “sportsman”. “This is to say that the game must be saved for the enjoyment and benefit of those who pursue it for the

²⁶⁰ Proctor, *Bathed in Blood*, 76-8; Herman, *Hunting and the American Imagination*, 152-6.

²⁶¹ Odom, Eugene P., ed., “Brief Biographical Sketch of H.H. Brimley,” in “H.H. Brimley: North Carolina Naturalist. Selections From His Writings,” Herbert Hutchinson Brimley Papers, NCSA, P.C. 203.1, n.p.

sake of pursuit,” argued one *Forest and Stream* contributor in 1894. “A grouse which gives a man a holiday afield is worth more to the community than a grouse snared or shot for the market stalls.”²⁶² Lovers of nature and sport valued hunting and fishing for the pursuit, not merely the kill. Sportsmen who, according to A.M. Scudder, “have been heavily loaded with the ‘instinct’ to kill for the price, with an elastic conscience regarding the manner of capture, to say nothing of his faculty for not discerning between open and closed seasons” threatened supplies of fish and game better reserved for those who showed it the proper deference.²⁶³ “I do not believe any man has the right to kill more game than he can conveniently consume,” wrote “J.D.H.” of Savannah, Georgia, in 1899, laying bare the requirement that hunting and fishing be neither immoderate nor commercialized.²⁶⁴ Such unrestrained slaughter is the purview of the “game hog,” the man who both loves the kill and depends upon it for profits. “F.P.W.” left little doubt of his estimation of such “game hogs” in his poem “The Hog Behind the Gun”:

He kills whatever comes to hand,
Quails, grouse or rabbits, while they stand,
Death to the game till the game is done,
Death to the hog behind the gun²⁶⁵

Well-to-do sportsmen throughout the country shared this position and despised those who depleted fish and game without restraint or respect.²⁶⁶

It was not just market hunting “game hogs” that proved irksome. The pot hunter became the other great violator of sporting codes and the other great enemy of sporting gentlemen.

²⁶² Anonymous, “The Absolute Prohibition of Traffic in Game,” *Forest and Stream*, February 10, 1894, n.p.

²⁶³ A.M. Scudder, “Stop the Sale of Game,” *Forest and Stream*, June 2, 1894, n.p.

²⁶⁴ “J.D.H.,” “Some Georgia Game Hogs,” *Recreation* 10 (2), February 1899, 143.

²⁶⁵ F.P.W., “The Hog Behind the Gun,” *Recreation* 10 (4), April 1899, n.p.

²⁶⁶ For a detailed discussion of the conflict between those who hunted for sport and those who hunted for profit, see Daniel Justin Herman, *Hunting and the American Imagination*, 244-7.

These poor and lower middling sorts depended upon hunting and fishing for part or all of their living. Unlike “game hogs,” who flouted sportsmanship for commercial reasons, the “pot hunter” did so simply because he could not afford to do otherwise. According to the *American Sportsman*, they tended to be men “who break the laws, slaughter the game, and reckon up their trophies by the count of the bag and not by the skill shown in their day’s work.” Skill, moderation, and love of nature mean little because “the pot-hunter notoriously labors under the imputation of being obliged to bring home a bag which must be made, honestly if possible, but if not it must still be made.” Most granted that pot hunters performed their evil acts out of the necessity to make their catch by any means. Some may have even preferred restrained and respectful sport. “There are doubtless some pot-hunters of a good sort,” concluded the *American Sportsman*, “but we are afraid there are more of the other stripe.”²⁶⁷

Southern sportsman shared this hatred of those who hunted and fished for pot or market. A.S. Salley Jr. of Orangeburg County, South Carolina, for example, noted that “a pot hunter...always tries to kill as much as he can and as many at a shot as he can. He has no appreciation of sportsmanship; no respect for the ethics of the field and forest and only regards the game laws when there is grave danger of his getting entangled therewith.”²⁶⁸ Sportsmen agreed such destructive agents had to be eliminated one way or another. Of the sportsman “who kills brooding birds and their half-grown young for market or the tickling of his wolfish palate; and catches fish any way he can, the fish that are spawning or guarding their fry,” one angry sportsman asserted “he is a nuisance, that should be abated by any means within the law, or even

²⁶⁷ “The Pot Hunter,” *American Sportsman*, December 11, 1875, 168.

²⁶⁸ A.S. Salley, *The Happy Hunting Ground: Personal Experiences in the Low-Country of South Carolina*, (Columbia, S.C.: The State Company, 1916), 15.

by straining the law a little.”²⁶⁹ For the South, such complaints take on added significance if one considers that when sportsmen voiced anger over abuses by poor sportsmen, they were often simultaneously complaining about a loss of control over the black population.

Because of their more direct links to long-standing traditions of European aristocracy²⁷⁰, because elite sport became intertwined with the genteel life of leisure of the Southern plantocracy and, not least important, because the hierarchical sporting structure of the South mirrored and the regions’ racial and class structure, Southern sportsmen became perhaps the most zealous defenders of the sportsman’s ethos.²⁷¹ “Taken as a class, no finer sportsmen or better game shots ever lived in America than the landowners of the South Carolina Lowcountry during the latter two-thirds of the nineteenth century,” asserted attorney and renowned turkey hunter Henry Davis Edwards. “I grew to manhood under the tutelage of men of this class, and know from experience what they could do with either a shotgun or a rifle; and I had from them accounts of their predecessors with weapons of the same type.”²⁷² Many Northern sportsmen agreed. “Therefore I say that the South is the seat of the truest sportsmanship of America to-day,” declared Chicagoan Emerson Hough in 1895, “because there neither game nor sport is held

²⁶⁹ Anonymous, “Pot-Hunters,” *Forest and Stream*, XVIII, n. 2, April 20, 1882, n.p.

²⁷⁰ As Nicholas Proctor has noted, this ideal had strong European, especially English, roots. “Imported from Great Britain and quickly adapted for American audiences by the sporting press,” wrote Proctor, “the concept of sport elevated the act of hunting and the concomitant display of prowess, self-control, and mastery over the simple accumulation of corpses.” *Bathed in Blood*, 88. See also Roger B. Manning’s *Hunters and Poachers: A Social and Cultural History of Unlawful Hunting in England, 1485-1640* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993); P.B. Munsche’s *Gentlemen and Poachers: The English Game Laws, 1671-1831* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981); and Edward P. Thompson’s *Whigs and Hunters: the Origins of the Black Act* (New York: Pantheon, 1975).

²⁷¹ As discussed in Chapters Four and Five, sportsmen’s vigorous defense of this code can also be explained by the fact that the South’s aristocratic traditions and plantation past became parts of a mythology that drove the rise of Southern sporting tourism. The elite sporting code helped both Southern sportsmen and Southern business.

²⁷² Henry Edwards Davis, “*Old Betsy*”: *Stories of Hunting With the Old Percussion Muzzle Loader and its Successors*, typescript, Manuscripts P, SCL, Columbia. Considered one of the most influential turkey hunters in American history, Davis penned the influential *The American Wild Turkey* (Georgetown, SC: Small Arms Technical Publishing Company, 1949), which still stands as the classic treatise on the subject.

generally as matter for barter or sale. Both are held as the privileges of gentlemen, and this is the right way to look at it, too.” Openly hostile to hunting or fishing for any reason other than sport, declaring “[t]he wild animal should belong of right to the man who is enough master of the chase to reduce it to possession, and it should belong to no one else,” Hough concluded that “I would not change the old conservative ways of the South if I could and hope they never will change.”²⁷³

Like much of postwar Southern culture, the drive for exclusivity in hunting and fishing came in part from a longing for the mythologized antebellum plantation South. An anonymous 1880 *Forest and Stream* contributor argued that the best sportsmen in the United States—in his opinion usually lawmakers—came from Dixie. “Before the war the sporting gentlemen in Congress almost invariably came from the South,” it argued.

His kennels were filled with fox and deer hounds, and his stables contained hunters which would do credit to the fields of England and Scotland. To him the deep mouthing of his hounds was the sole music of the chase, and of the infinite pleasure of the silent tramp behind the setter and pointer he knew little or nothing. At that time the hunter in the East never came to Congress.²⁷⁴

Alexander Hunter also lamented the passing of such sport, noting that the fine Southern deer hound, once something of an art form, had disappeared for good. “Now all this is changed,” he concluded. “The two or three hounds that are found on the farm—plantation no longer—are all ‘round dogs, and will follow anything which leaves a scent...The sleek, well-kept dog of the Southern plantation is a thing of the past.”²⁷⁵

An almost palpable sense that the best days of Southern hunting and fishing had slipped away gave postwar sporting literature a decidedly nostalgic tenor that thoroughly romanticized

²⁷³ E. Hough, “The Sunny South—Part VI,” *Forest and Stream*, March 16, 1895, 206.

²⁷⁴ Anonymous, *Forest and Stream* 14 (2), February 12, 1880, 32.

²⁷⁵ Alexander Hunter, “A Deer Hunt in Old Virginia,” *Outing* 17 (1), October 1889, 61.

and inherently linked antebellum field sports and race relations. Indeed recollections of antebellum Southern sport invariably included slave subordinates. “Many a dark, drizzling night...when I was a small boy,” recalled sportsman “Coahoma” in 1891, “have I gone forth with my favorite negro ‘possum hunter’ Ellis, one of the plantation hands, and his two faithful ‘possum dogs’ in the old antebellum times; and with great exultation (sic) have I gone back to the house at 2 or 3 o’clock in the morning and waked up my parents to show the fine live possum I had in a bag.”²⁷⁶ *Forest and Stream* contributor “P” made the connection between Old South hunting and fishing and race relations even clearer:

When a possum hunt is on the tapis, it seems to get into the very air and become infectious, and by some sort of freemasonry is at once known to all male kind on the plantation, from the austere master and the young gentlemen of the “great house” to the white-wooled old “uncle” and monkey-like pickaninnies of the “quarters”—and I have often snatched one of those whimpering and dusky nimrods from the grasp and wrath of his irate “mammy” and borne him in triumph to the woods, he feeling that the luxury was cheaply purchased even at the expense of the severe paddling he was sure to get on the morrow.²⁷⁷

An idealized version of antebellum social relationships and, later, the drive to reproduce them, became important components of the Southern sporting code. John Fox Jr., in his *Blue-Grass and Rhododendron: Out-Doors in Old Kentucky*, made this point clear. Describing a hunting excursion he once witnessed involving a former slave called Old Ash, a poor white man named Tray and a well-to-do white man known simply as “young Captain,” Fox realized the scene resurrected the by-gone days of the Old South. “And there the three stood,” he noted, “the pillars of the old social structure that the war brought down—the slave, the poor white, the master of

²⁷⁶ “Coahoma,” “The Possum ‘Sulls,’” *Forest and Stream*, June 25, 1891, 455.

²⁷⁷ “P.,” “The Possum Hunt,” *Forest and Stream*, November 21, 1891, 326.

one and the lord of both. Between one and the other the chasm was still deep, but they would stand shoulder to shoulder to shoulder in the hunt that night.”²⁷⁸

That so many sportsmen made slaves a centerpiece of a romanticized Southern sporting field presents an apparent contradiction when examined in conjunction with the venomous attacks on African-American hunting and fishing after Emancipation. Yet this makes sense when one considers that both fond memories of slave companions found in antebellum narratives and harsh postwar criticisms of the “Pot Hunting Son of Ham” spring from a belief in black subordination. For Southern sportsmen, that subordination was best exemplified by the antebellum sportsman-servant relationship; the loss of which explained the destructive black sporting practices after Emancipation. Ultimately, criticism of African-American huntsmen and fishermen did not just reflect contemporary concern over wildlife. Such commentary simultaneously expressed fear for the future of Southern wildlife and white supremacy and lamented the racial subordination and labor control that anchored their vision of the Old South.

Criticism of African-American Sporting Habits

Several key components comprised white characterizations of black sport, each revolving around the core idea that class position and basic racial makeup made African Americans poor sportsmen who would not adhere to proper sporting behavior. Like all those dependent upon hunting and fishing for basic subsistence, African Americans privileged the quantity of their catch over the quality of their sportsmanship. They killed fish and game, in the minds of well-to-

²⁷⁸ John Fox Jr., *Blue-Grass and Rhododendron: Out-Doors in Old Kentucky*, (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1901), 189.

do, white sportsmen, at an alarming rate. Because of character traits peculiar to their race, black sportsmen lacked the basic competency, technological prowess and concern for rules possessed by their white counterparts. African Americans who hunted and fished *independent* of white oversight inevitably make bad, even dangerous, hunters and fishermen. Whites relied on these assumptions to convince the sporting public that former slaves threatened Southern wildlife and to exalt their own status, contrasting African Americans' immoderate, unskilled and ineffective sporting behavior with the restrained, refined and intelligent sport of their white betters.

Upper class sportsmen typically asserted that African Americans did not care for sport, but merely used hunting and fishing as sources of food and income.²⁷⁹ This characterization associated African Americans with inferior sporting practices and furthered the notion that black sportsmen only concerned themselves with inferior animals deemed "black game" or "negro game." Indeed an enduring stereotype of rural African-American life, frequently and energetically reinforced in the pages of nineteenth-century sporting magazines and narratives, portrayed them as driven, apparently by more than mere habit, to seek out the opossum and raccoon as their favorite quarry.²⁸⁰ Hoping to shed "More Light on the 'Possum Puzzle," "H.P.U." claimed to have consulted an African-American acquaintance:

Thinking I might possibly be able to throw some
light on the vexed question of "How to cook dat 'possum, I

²⁷⁹ The assertion that African-American hunters and fishermen did not care for sport does not survive scrutiny. Although the majority who hunted and fished did so for semi-subsistence and were thus less free to emphasize pure sport, narrative sources demonstrate that African Americans reveled in those activities. As slave narratives make clear, material and recreational benefits were not mutually exclusive. According to former slave Isaam Morgan, although slaves hunted out of necessity, "(i)t is sho' nuf' fun, dough, to go a-railin' th'ough de woods atter a possum or coon." James Mellon, ed., *Bullwhip Days: The Slaves Remember* (New York: Avon Books, 1988), 44.

²⁸⁰ The notion that African Americans possessed fanatical devotion to small game like raccoon and opossum has a long history in the South. Taking root under slavery as masters sought to separate aristocratic sport from the subsistence-oriented hunting of their slave property, the association between African Americans and small game became a standard trope of Southern sporting narratives. On one level, such associations reflect the reality of slave hunting. Small game was widely available, the easiest to trap or catch at night, and the least likely to draw the ire of white observers. Yet constantly linking African Americans with small game also reflected the wishful thinking of elites eager to believe that large game and fowl were safe from those whom their perceived sporting inferiors.

interviewed my ancient colored friend, Uncle Dan'l, with the following result.

Uncle Dan'l speaks:
Iz I ebber cooked a possum?
Yah! Yah! Yah! You'z shoutin' now!
Wan 'ter know the way to boss 'im?
Sho! Any fool nigga tell yo' how.²⁸¹

White sportsmen, desperate to believe that African Americans confined themselves to certain game and eager to saddle people of color with badges of inferiority, advanced such stereotypical assertions throughout the nineteenth century.²⁸²

Denver, South Carolina, sportsman "Blue Ridge" helped keep such associations alive. Commenting on South Carolina's small game, he noted that "a few opossums are still left to entice the night hunter to forego the pleasures of sleep for a time and ramble around in search of them." Moreover, marveling at "how so sluggish an animal as a possum survives the nightly attacks made on them by the proverbial darkey and his dogs," "Blue Ridge" assured readers they had reasonable prospects for survival.²⁸³ Likewise sportsman F.A. Olds, describing the popularity of the opossum in North Carolina, asserted that "there is no sport which possesses a tenth of the fascination for the negro, certainly for the North Carolina negro, that 'possum huntin'' does. The 'possum is something which brings to the surface all the unctuousness of the

²⁸¹ "H.P.U.," "More Light on the 'Possum Puzzle," *Forest and Stream*, July 21, 1881, n.p.

²⁸² It is worth noting that aspersions against black sporting practices served an interesting dual purpose. Not only did criticisms allow elite sportsmen to attack African American subsistence habits, but they also gave them the chance to launch veiled assaults on poor white sportsmen who, like former slaves, typically relied on hunting and fishing for subsistence and market. By invoking the black abuses, sportsmen could publicly decry lower class sporting habits and even demand legal restriction of the rights to hunt and fish, while not directly assailing poor whites. For elites, criticizing African Americans was rhetorically more effective and politically more cautious.

²⁸³ "The South Carolina Season," *Forest and Stream*, November 21, 1889, 347.

darkey, and the darkey does not live who can stop a smile at the sight of one of these queer animals.”²⁸⁴

Such assumptions even penetrated into late nineteenth-century sporting poetry, a common staple of sporting periodicals. The anonymous poem, “Coon,” for example, makes the point with a rhetorical question:

Dar’s a coon on de groun’
An’ a coon in de tree;
Now what do you think
De end will be?

Endorsing the stereotype that former slaves did virtually anything for a raccoon, the poem leaves little doubt as to the confrontation’s resolution. The African-American subject of the poem is driven, almost pathologically, to retrieve the raccoon from the tree:

An’ soon he will land
On dat coon in de tree,
With a club dat will end
Mr. Coon; you see.

For with a coon on de groun’
An’ a coon in de tree,
It is easy to guess
What de end will be.²⁸⁵

So strongly did white sportsmen connect African Americans to such game, all but unfit for proper sportsmen, the discussion apparently found their way into the debate over fish and game law. Noted conservationist and long-time Secretary of the American Ornithological Union T.S. Palmer, in a 1904 address before the North Carolina Audubon Society in Greensboro, speculated, likely for humorous effect, about the legal status of the raccoon: “An Iowa court decides that a coon is not the subject of larceny,” he offered, “but an Arkansas case criticizes this decision and

²⁸⁴ “A North Carolina ‘Possum Hunt,” *Outing*, 36 (1), April 1900, 33.

²⁸⁵ “Coon,” *Outdoor Life: A Magazine of the West* 9 (4), 1904, n.p.

takes issue with it, on the grounds that in some localities these animals are regarded as proper food and under such circumstances would be the subject of larceny...The Arkansas decision was doubtless deference to the tastes of our colored friends for that animal.”²⁸⁶

As eagerly as white commentators linked black sportsmen with certain game, they just as quickly pointed out times when African Americans regrettably strayed from such associations. Their reactions demonstrate both how jealously white sportsmen guarded their assumed dominion over larger game and how commonplace notions of “black game” had become. White sportsmen preferred to believe that former slaves rarely moved beyond their love for such small game, but not all remained so unrealistic. “Rallywood,” for example, in response to assertions that African-American sportsmen did not stray from traditional “black game” to assault the South’s quail population asked simply, “Is there a white man in the world so green as to believe that they refrain from shooting partridges whenever they come upon them, the game law to the contrary notwithstanding?”²⁸⁷ “N.A.T.” perceived that former slaves stepping out of place both threatened Texas’ fish and game supplies and reflected lost white control:

The negro now seems to regard it as almost an insult to talk to him about a ‘possum. He can stand reference to the ‘coon yet, not, however, with a very good grace, but the ‘possum is entirely too much for his philosophy...I have noticed this so frequently among our colored people that I am now very careful to abstain from all allusion to the ‘possum when in their hearing. Have the negroes in the other Southern states grown so proud as this? I hear that they have, but could not personally say so.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁶ T.S. Palmer, “Some Possibilities for Game Protection in North Carolina,” UNCCCH, NCC, Cp799P17s.

²⁸⁷ “Rallywood,” “The Negroes and the Birds,” *Forest and Stream*, February 1, 1883, 7.

²⁸⁸ “N.A.T.,” “The Negro and Game,” *Forest and Stream*, March 22, 1883, 148.

For former slaves, rejecting “black game” continued the age-old struggle to maximize customary activities like hunting and fishing. For former masters, it represented a sea change in Southern field sports that held dire implications for more than just sportsmen.

The manner in which African Americans assailed their quarry perhaps irritated white sportsmen more than their tendency to step away from wildlife stereotypically associated with people of color. According to the sporting press, former slaves inveterately slaughtered fish and game and lacked the decent restraint that supposedly characterized the refined, white sportsman. Free from both the Old South’s racial hierarchy and the code of sportsmanship that bound proper white sportsmen, African Americans took as much fish and game as they could without regard for future species propagation or standards of gentlemanly sport. Farmers in the South Carolina low country, for example, complained bitterly about such nuisances. Summerville resident F.C. Ford expressed such outrage in a letter to James Henry Rice Jr. in November 1909. Recounting a morning run in with a black huntsman on a train, Ford noticed the man carried an unusually large quantity of wild fowl. “On the rear of the street car I questioned him, but did not learn his name. However he advised me that he had killed some sixty odd coots, ducks, etc., last evening in Goose Creek.” The huntsman informed him that another African American, Frank Sharper, kept boats in the nearby marshes to rent to black hunters and fishermen. “This negro said that he had sold most of his game before reaching the City, and I judge his purpose in going to market was to sell the balance,” Ford continued. “It seems that he and others are making a practice of this thing.” For Ford, concerned about area wildlife and the violation of sporting rights purchased by area fish and game clubs, such behavior was unacceptable. He hoped that as President of the Audubon Society, at the time charged with limited power to enforce state fish

and game laws, Rice could have one of his agents detain such offenders as Sharper.²⁸⁹ “It is certainly distressing,” concluded Ford, “to feel that these negroes should be destroying the birds and other game which the Otranto Club, the Goose-Creek Club, the Liberty Hall Club and others in that section are trying hard to preserve by protection—in fact are spending money to feed them, etc., to encourage their increase. We hope that you will take quick action in this matter.”²⁹⁰

While most African Americans’ market hunting did not assume so large a scale, it nonetheless distressed white observers who fumed about immoderate black sportsman. “If our lands were not posted we would not have anything to hunt,” declared H.P. Wilder of South Boston, Virginia, in 1898, “nor would we be able to get any work done here in the open season, for the negro is a very persistent market hunter, and will kill more birds in one day than will one of our Northern friends in three.” The reason, according to Wilder, is the different intent of black huntsmen. “I do not mean to reflect on the ability of our visitors,” he was quick to point out, “but as they are out for sport and not for slaughter they do not exterminate the game like our own pot-hunters.”²⁹¹ Portraying black hunters along Texas’ Brazos River as unskilled and immoderate, “B.C.H.” noted that “[w]hen he finds where a covey of quail ‘use,’ he takes his gun...and watches for them. As soon as he gets them nearly in a bunch as possible, he ‘turns loose’ his old cannon. When he ‘come too’ and finds his gun hasn’t ‘busted,’ he takes what he

²⁸⁹ In the early twentieth century, before most states had fish and game commissions or game wardens, and before state legislators were willing to commit substantial funds to such endeavors, the task of disseminating and enforcing fish and game laws often devolved to private clubs or protection societies. For a time, in states such as South Carolina, that power rested with the Audubon society. This arrangement, while blurring the line between public and private wildlife protection, proved popular with many Southern sportsmen who had become convinced that state agencies would never adequately protect fish and game and that the gentlemen sportsmen who comprised the membership of organizations like the Audubon Society were the most willing and able to carry out such a task.

²⁹⁰ Letter from F.C. Ford to James Henry Rice Jr., November 19, 1909, Conner Family Papers, “Henry W. Conner II Correspondence,” SCHS, 28-228-6.

²⁹¹ H.P. Wilder, “A Virginia Game Country,” *Forest and Stream* November 10, 1898.

has killed, never getting what have only been crippled and hobbled off to die, and goes to town to sell his booty.”²⁹² According to “N.A.T.,” that slaughter began as soon as freed persons obtained weapons, asserting that “they made a rush for the fields and woods, and for a long time, summer and winter there was a perpetual fusillade. They slaughtered indiscriminately, shooting everything above the bluebird in size. Even the mocking bird, for all his songs, was not safe.”²⁹³

An excellent illustration of the perceived and actual differences between elite white and African-American conceptions of proper hunting and fishing comes from Fred Mather’s account of a journey down the Red River from Shreveport to Alexandria, Louisiana, while collecting specimens for the United States Fish Commission in the mid 1870s.²⁹⁴ To help him on the expedition, Mather employed Sam, an aging black laborer who supplemented his income by working as a guide. The two did not see eye to eye on matters of sport; their numerous disagreements provide valuable insight into the differences between black and white sporting habits. Their relationship became strained before the trip even began, as Sam landed a large catfish that dwarfed Mather’s personal best. “It was 3 ft. 4 in. long, and weighed 63 ½ lbs. It was a record catfish for me, for a 10-pounder...was my largest,” noted Mather of the fish. Obviously irked by Sam’s haul, and then by Sam selling the fish, Mather assumed he would use the money foolishly. “Uncle Sam, as [locals] called my lone fisherman, sold the fish for \$2.50, about 4 cents per pound, and with so much wealth in his possession I expected he would blow it all on booze,” Mather recalled. Once the two got underway, Sam impressed Mather with his

²⁹² “B.C.H.,” “The Pot-Hunting Son of Ham,” *Forest and Stream*, December 29, 1881, 431.

²⁹³ “Letter from N.A.T., Palestine, Texas,” *Forest and Stream*, March 1, 1883, 87.

²⁹⁴ Founded in 1871, the United States Commission of Fish and Fisheries, generally called the United States Fish Commission, was the nation’s first federal conservation agency. The Commission was charged with investigating supplies of food fishes along the coasts and in lakes and rivers of the United States and recommending strategies for preserving and protecting the same. From this early effort evolved the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

steering prowess, noting that “I thought I knew a trick or two in running streams with a boat, but now I had learned from another poor darky, and might truthfully say that I knew a trick or three.” Grateful for what he had learned, Mather began to inwardly regret his previous hard feelings. “I wanted to apologize,” he noted, “but that would never do.” Note that although it was not acceptable for Mather to be upstaged in terms of sporting prowess by Sam, within the subordinate role of paddler and guide, Sam could teach his employer new steering methods.

Needing samples for his study, Mather promised Sam new fishing hooks if the guide landed an alligator snapping turtle larger than 60 pounds, and the two began fishing in earnest. A running philosophical discussion of proper fishing began when they caught a number of turtles that, according to Mather, were too big to taste good. He wanted to throw them back, while the guide wanted to keep them. Mather eventually compromised, letting Sam keep one, but not before a discussion. “Sam and I discussed the snapper question for a while with no prospect of agreement,” noted Mather, “and then he said: ‘Yo ain’ gwine let all dese snappahs go ‘case dey ain’ de kin’ yo’ want an’ I want de big one to cook fo yo’, an’ yo’ll say he’s de bes’es tuttle yo’ eveh stuck a toof in.’” Mather gave in, but not before imparting a lecture on proper sport:

All right, Sam, what we catch is for our own use, if we want it, but I don’t want to kill any animal, fish, bird or turtle unless it is needed for food or it is my enemy, as a rattlesnake is. You have misunderstood me; take what turtles you want and let the rest go; do the same with catfish, but never waste animal life by killing more than you or your friends can get.

Just how far this new religion penetrated Sam’s brain is impossible to say, but the lesson may not have been entirely lost, for a few days later he carefully unhooked a big sunfish and let it go, when on previous trips he might have dropped it in the boat to die, and then have thrown it away.²⁹⁵

²⁹⁵ Fred Mather, “In the Louisiana Lowlands—I,” *Forest and Stream*, September 24, 1898, 247-8.

For Mather, releasing extra animals showed proper sportsmanship; to Sam it was wasteful. “Sam did not accord with my views of killing only for our needs,” Mather explained; “there was a market for food of all kinds in Alexandria, and now that we were capturing fish and turtles in greater number than we could use, he naturally desired to utilize them for that market.” Here lay the essential difference between white and black sporting habits: “From [Sam’s] point of view it was the height of idiocy to turn loose catfish and turtles which had a considerable market value; he could not understand it. As for me, I had not journeyed to the lake on a commercial venture.”

Believing the lake they had reached capable of handling some thinning out, Mather eventually acceded to some fishing, allowing Sam to sell any turtles he caught “as a perquisite, a tip or a reward.” Despite his largesse, however, Mather insisted on one more lecture, the main thrust of which he explained to readers of *Forest and Stream*:

From Sam’s point of view I had wasted many “gifts of nature” in releasing fish which might have been marketed, to our profit. He interpreted the law of “dominion” of man over “the beasts of the field” in a different manner from my interpretation. His application of the law was purely personal, like that of the game hog and the fish hog, who, although they may not kill for market, as my old colored guide did in his own way, kill for brag. They think that a day which sends them an extra lot of birds or fish is to be credited to them as a great sportsman, and don’t know that they are men of that abominable class called hogs; I have a vocabulary of words to describe them, but the editor would blue-pencil them all.²⁹⁶

Embedded in this account are essential features of white sportsmen’s attitudes toward black hunting and fishing. African Americans had long relied on the Southern environment to guarantee basic subsistence and provide a degree of material comfort and independence otherwise denied them. Slaves and freed persons could not adhere to sporting codes proffered by white sportsmen who eschewed the drive for food or profit as badges of personal and class

²⁹⁶ Fred Mather, “In the Louisiana Lowlands—II,” *Forest and Stream*, October 1, 1898, 272.

status. White sportsmen, eager to improve their sport and standing within the sporting fraternity, cultivated images of racial subordination and black sporting inferiority both to portray African Americans as archetypes of poor sportsmanship and to saddle them with badges of inferiority.

Whites like Mather believed African Americans incurable fish and game slaughterers, but they moved beyond wildlife depletion in their criticisms. They also condemned African Americans' supposed lack of concern for fair sporting methods. For whites, such behavior became more than a marker of bad sport; it was, as Daniel Justin Herman has demonstrated of both American hunting and conservation, a vibrant symbol of both racial identity and racial inferiority.²⁹⁷ Well aware that African Americans hunted and fished out of necessity, white sportsmen angrily decried the methods through which African Americans maximized their effectiveness. "We have many negroes who follow gunning as a means of livelihood in ducking season," wrote "N.A.T." in 1883. Noting that "he returns with just as many ducks as the white man, and even more if the latter not be a very good hunter," he explained the gunner's success:

The way he does it is this: he finds a good place for ducks; to that place he repairs early in the morning, and on that spot he stays all day long...When [ducks] come he will remain motionless and noiseless for hours, if need be, until he gets a perfectly satisfactory opportunity for a raking and destructive shot...Although his weapon may be an old musket, or an old rickety double-barreled muzzle-loader, he often kills as many birds at a fire, and indeed generally does...In this way they often make large bags in a day.²⁹⁸

²⁹⁷ Herman, *Hunting and the American Imagination*, 223. The idea that non-whites inherently lacked sportsmanship illustrated white sportsmen's belief that hunting and fishing encapsulated the identifiable hierarchy of races. An 1888 *Forest and Stream* editorial, for example, argued that hunting would play a role in an inevitable war between the races. Asserting that the "Sclav [sic] and Tartar and Latin races are not going to bow themselves politely out of the earth to make room for us," the editor reminded the audience that population pressures might someday lead to a "universal struggle for existence" between the races of the world. "For these inevitable wars," the editor asserted, "the hunting field is the best raining field. It improves a man's physique, gives him readiness of hand and eye, familiarity with weapons of war, inures him to hardship, and gives him that self-reliance born of assured skill in the handling of his weapon which is so much conducive to victory." Concluding that since "the United States at any rate is not likely to drop out of the struggle for existence so long as the love of hunting continues to be a leading characteristic," the editor declared such training essential for inculcating the attitudes and skills American men owed to the future. "The Ethics of Hunting," *Forest and Stream*, November 22, 1888, 1.

²⁹⁸ "Letter from N.A.T., Palestine, Texas," *Forest and Stream*, March 1, 1883, 87.

The above method, it should be noted, is nearly identical to that employed by poor white hunters across the South, particularly in such rich ducking areas as the Chesapeake Bay, the North Carolina sounds, the South Carolina Lowcountry, the Louisiana lowlands and the Mississippi flyway. Yet whites reserved special anger for African-American gunners who killed as many ducks as possible with each shot.

They also complained that African Americans killed anything that crossed their path, whatever the species or time of year.²⁹⁹ An unnamed contributor described such unlimited hunting in Louisiana, noting that it took a heavy toll. “It is no unusual thing to see a negro tramping over some back plantation road with a bag of that exquisite singer, the Southern nightingale or mocking bird, at his side...and were he to encounter the European nightingale itself, carrier pigeons, or any other fancy bird, it would make no difference to him, he would bang away at anything that looked as if it might be edible.” The frustrated sportsman also noted that Louisiana fowling enthusiasts had “to adopt some sort of system in hunting to protect themselves from the thousands of amateurs, boys and negroes, who go duck hunting during the season.”³⁰⁰ Another perturbed sportsman, writing as “E. Wanders On,” even more clearly expressed his outrage over freed persons’ tendency to shamelessly slaughter Southern wildfowl. Declaring that “the field is open to, and occupied by *heartless Senegambians*, who ruthlessly

²⁹⁹ In addition to killing game excessively, sportsmen also detested the practice of pursuing fish and game during breeding or, in the case of wildfowl, migrating season, when wildlife replenished itself and was more vulnerable to hunting and fishing. Sportsmen credited such practices with much wildlife depletion in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. For a discussion of the controversy surrounding spring shooting along the Mississippi flyway, the nation’s largest migratory route, and the efforts by sportsmen to eliminate such practices, see Karel D. Bicha, “Spring Shooting: An Issue in the Mississippi Flyway, 1887-1913,” *Journal of Sport History* 5 (2), 1978, 65-74.

³⁰⁰ “Game Preserving in Louisiana,” *Outing* 11 (6), March 1888, 533-4.

hunt and destroy our birds,” he declared that “[a]ll true sportsmen deprecate such conduct, and would be a unit in the effort to prevent it, if the law provided any remedy.”³⁰¹

Some complaints simultaneously criticized black methods while trumpeting those of white sportsmen. Stating that his preferred sport of turkey hunting “requires skill, patience and knowledge of the habits of the bird that few sportsmen indulge in it,” “M” lamented that poor sportsmen resort to unfair methods like trapping to overcome skill deficiencies. “It is considered as decidedly unsportsmanlike to “belt” or trap turkeys,” “M” concluded, “and no one but “cuffee” or a white pot-hunter ever does anything of the kind.”³⁰² David Brainard Whiting recalled an African American’s cowardly sportsmanship from his North Carolina youth. Remembering a winter when a wild cat was in the area, Whiting remembered “the few colored people there were too afraid to go out after sun set and the white people kept close at home too. Some of us took out guns and went where we heard him the night before but we only found his tracks.” Whiting concluded that they could have taken the wild cat with enough stout sportsmen to brave the danger.³⁰³ Here both “M” and Whiting relay the same basic idea that African

³⁰¹ “Letter from Virginia: Charlottesville, December 12, 1872,” *The American Sportsman*, February 1873, 77. As will be discussed in Chapter Six, the process of developing a comprehensive system of wildlife protection was long, uneven, and had a direct connection to the region’s racial hierarchy. Complaints about the lack of legal protection increased immediately following the war when Southerners first felt the sting of freed people exercising their right to hunt and fish. It is no surprise then that many sportsmen looked upon the end of Reconstruction as both a chance to establish “home rule” and to begin the work of protecting fish and game from freed people in earnest. It is no coincidence that one Louisiana sportsman argued that “it was not until 1877, we believe, that any successful steps were taken to protect our indigenous game from the perpetual warfare of the meat-seeking tyros, who slew the nesting quail and the nursing doe with as much avidity as they slaughtered the gallant five-pronged buck in the ‘blue,’ or swept away with one shot the autumnal bevy of birds in their ‘nooning’ retreats.” “Louisiana Game Interests,” *Forest and Stream*, September 16, 1886, 146 [Emphasis mine].

³⁰² “Wild Turkey Hunting,” *Forest and Stream*, October 20, 1881, 229. Notice that M declared turkey trapping fit only for African Americans and poor whites. These groups often appeared together in complaints about lower class sporting practices, illustrating that much of the controversy over Southern hunting and fishing depended upon class differences. Poor whites, in fact, remained frequent targets of elite ire, but it must be noted that sporting periodicals, particularly Southern contributors, reserved special criticism for African Americans. The unrestrained, unintelligent African-American sportsman became an archetype of poor sportsmanship, even at a national level, suggesting that conflicts over hunting and fishing were just as much about matters of race.

³⁰³ David Brainard Whiting *Reminiscences*, NCSA, P.C. 1822.1, 49.

Americans, lacking proper fairness and of courage, did not have stern enough stuff to be proper sportsmen.

From Sporting Inferiority to Racial Inferiority

For some observers, African Americans' lack of skill and technical adeptness, rather than a lack of courage or fairness, made them bad sportsmen. White sportsmen set themselves apart from their African-American counterparts by criticizing or poking fun at their seeming lack of skill, employment of outdated technology, or unfamiliarity with modern sporting methods. Sportsmen's recollections routinely compared black sporting methods unfavorably to their own. While on one of his Southern excursions, English sportsman J. Turner-Turner found great amusement in "an old nigger fishing with an enormous hook on the end of a piece of cord, and a stone for a sinker, the bait being a scarcely perceptible bit of worm somewhere on the hook; he told me he had never caught a fish there; and I was not much surprised."³⁰⁴ Sportsman "J.E.W.," who took to the field with an African-American laborer named Sparks, described his subordinate's astonishment at his employers' breech-loading shotgun.³⁰⁵ Noting that, "[m]y breech loading gun was a little too much for Sparks," he let the hand examine it:

³⁰⁴ J. Turner-Turner, *Three Years Hunting & Trapping in America and the Great Northwest*, 3.

³⁰⁵ A key development in both military and sport shooting, breech loading technology revolutionized firearms in America. Prior to this advancement, most firearms were muzzle-loaded, meaning that the charge was rammed down the barrel of the gun. When the trigger was pulled, a small amount of burning powder was sent into the barrel, igniting the main charge and forcing the bullet out of the gun. Because muzzled-loaded rifles and shotguns required several steps to load, it took a longer time between discharges, decreasing the rate of fire. Moreover, because gunpowder creates residue that clog a weapon's barrel and internal mechanisms, the range and accuracy of muzzle-loaded weapons could be limited if not properly cleaned. By contrast, breech-loaders use ammunition contained in a single cartridge inserted directly into the end, or breech, of the weapon. Breech-loaded firearms can be reloaded more rapidly than muzzle-loaders; hence a greater volume of fire can be maintained. By the late nineteenth century, breech-loaders were relatively new inventions, particularly for poor gunners like the above "Sparks" who was forced to rely on older firearm technology far longer than more affluent white sportsmen, such as his employer.

He noticed something peculiar about it, and asked to examine it. As I passed the gun to his hands, I pressed the lever, and as it touched his palm, the gun to his eyes broke in the middle. Astonishment was depleted upon every feature of his face, while his language deserves a place in “the archives of gravity,” as one of our colored members of the Legislature said in 1868.³⁰⁶

Whites also interpreted African American’s customary reliance on small game as emblematic of backwardness. In his collection of dialect stories, a popular literary genre in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries which relied on tales of supposed humor and homespun wisdom from African Americans told in the stereotypical black dialect common for the day, William H. Frazer, President of Charlotte, North Carolina’s Queens College, drew on the assumed connection between people of color and small game.³⁰⁷ The story of “The Possumist,” for example, presents rural African Americans as unintelligent and concerned only with their obligatory quest for the opossum. In the story, set at the end of Reconstruction, a meeting of black leaders convened to discuss the ramifications of a recently enacted grandfather clause. The first speaker rises, “a pompous brother...arrayed in broadcloth and patent leathers,” declaring that, given the forces arrayed against them, the situation was hopeless. “[Y]as sah, I’s er pessimist,” he conceded. A second speaker stood up, “another very pompous brother,” who asserted that given the relative equality in Northern states, there was reason to hope. “Brudder Cheerman,” he declared, “I’s er optimist.” Finally a third chimed in, “an old negro from the country” who “gives a loving description of catching a possum and his wife cooking it. ‘I ain’t none ob yo’ optimist, en I ain’t ob yo’ pessimist, but I’s er possumist, I is, yas sah, I’s er

³⁰⁶ “J.E.W.”, “The Game of North Carolina,” *Forest and Stream* 2 (3), February 1874, 36-7.

³⁰⁷ An example of literature in the “plantation tradition,” which romanticized the antebellum South and portraying slavery as a benign institution, Frazer’s collection was part of a genre that found considerable popularity with white audiences once the mythical Old South took hold in the American imagination in the late nineteenth century. For a well-known example, see Thomas Nelson Page’s *In Ole Virginia, or, Marse Chan and Other Stories*, (New York: Charles Scriber’s Sons, 1887).

possumist.”³⁰⁸ This story of how Africans Americans remained unprepared for the franchise hinges upon “the old negro from the country,” reared under the racial and sporting relations of slavery. He cares not for politics, only for the comfort of stereotypically “black game.” The story confirms basic white assumptions and hopes about African-American sporting behavior.

Contributor “L.J.M.” portrayed African-American sportsmen as both backward and in awe of white mastery over new weaponry. Recounting first using a new type of shell in his shotgun, he recalled that “[t]he darkies were amazed at the slight report and at the distance as well, and, as it is not etiquette in the South to enter, unbidden, into a conversation with a white ‘gemman,’ they followed...their usual custom of talking at him among themselves.” Quoted in the barely decipherable, broken English with which African Americans were typically credited—another badge of inferiority whites drew upon—L.J.M.’s African-American companions discussed the queer new weapon. One in particular, “‘Ras,”” was most impressed by the lack of a loud report. “‘Wot gits me’s dat lill snappy noise like w’en she shoots,” he declared. “‘Now ef I’d cut loose heah wif my ole smokestack [his older, louder weapon] ‘twud shake dis yer whawf off’n its laigs...”³⁰⁹ For L.J.M., black sportsmen like ‘Ras, while perhaps perfectly adept at performing the brute labor required of sporting excursions, lacked the intelligence or civilization to understand the weaponry and equipment of modern field sports.

Unless done so within the context of the white sportsman-black laborer relationship, whites rarely credited African Americans with true skill or knowledge. In fact, some narratives seemed designed to dispel the notion that African Americans could possess such attributes at all. A.J. Lipton, of Hobucken, North Carolina, describing a hunting trip with “a colored man named

³⁰⁸ William H. Frazer, ed., *The Possumist, and Other Stories*, (Charlotte, NC: The Murrill Press, 1924), n.p.

³⁰⁹ “L.J.M.,” “How ‘Ras Fools the Divers,” *Forest and Stream*, March 24, 1894, 244.

Jim,” illustrates this point well. According to Lipton, bears had been seen in that part of Pamlico County, “and Jim, who claimed to be a great bear hunter, proposed we should go after them.” The two set out one night for the tall corn and a chance to kill a bear. Jim lost his nerve. “Hadn’t we better be gwine home?” he asked. “I’s shibberin wid de cole.” Lipton agreed, but as the two departed, they ran into a bear. Despite his claim of being a skilled bear hunter, Jim ran for cover, leaving Lipton to shoot the bear. “I called Jim, and presently heard him coming through the canes,” Lipton recalled. He stopped at a prudent distance and inquired, ‘Has you shuah killed de bar?’ I told him to come and see it.”³¹⁰ Lipton’s narrative trumpets his own skill and bravery, but also attacks the notion that African-American sportsmen could equal their white counterparts. Jim made bold claims at hunting skill, even first proposing that he and Lipton should set out in search of a bear. But his claims ultimately proved false; he was proven not only a poor sportsman but a coward, who relied on his more competent white companion to save the day. Lipton’s message is clear. Any pretenses African Americans might make toward true skill would be invalidated by the inescapable vagaries of black character.

Such episodes stamp African Americans as bad sportsmen undeserving of praise. Henry Edwards Davis described a dubious claim from another black sportsman:

One of the musket toters I shall never forget was Old John. Recently I heard a missionary to the Congo state that the native African woman is the breadwinner and is the hardest working person in the world. He further stated that the native African man is also a hard worker, as he spends twenty-four hours a day and overtime at his job, which is doing absolutely nothing. This description fits old John perfectly. I saw him frequently for years and I never saw him without his musket and I never knew him to do any work, as that was reserved for his wife and large family of children.

³¹⁰ “Jim, I and the Bear,” *Recreation* 10 (1), January 1899, 41.

While similar to agricultural employers' complaints about black working habits discussed in Chapter Two, Davis' memories of Old John add a new component. Old John did not use hunting to avoid work; he used the illusion of doing so. According to Davis, Old John, an inveterate braggart, could be found every Saturday "in the local village leaning on his musket and telling the assembled audience of negroes about the many rattlesnakes he had recently killed after finding them by scent." Ultimately, his claims, like those of A.J. Lipton's Jim, proved false. "Despite all his boasting, however, about his prowess, Old John never produced any tangible evidence of it in the form of a dead rattlesnake or a dead wild turkey."³¹¹ His claims invalidated, Old John stood revealed as a poor sportsman who merely used hunting to avoid work. Whites eagerly consumed such archetypes of African-American behavior and used the pages of sporting periodicals to further imbed them in the minds of readers. Moreover, like Henry Edwards Davis and A.J. Lipton, they connected black sporting practices and black character, using sporting narratives to further stereotypes of African Americans as shiftless, unskilled, and unintelligent.

White frustration over black sporting behavior also grew from the concern that hunting and fishing might embolden African Americans to behave poorly. "N.A.T.," for one, asserted that "if the freedman ever put on provoking airs toward the white people, it was when he was met by the latter in those hunting expeditions of his early freedom. With what proud and scornful air he would carry that old musket on his shoulders, and how he would sometimes turn up the white of his eyes at the intruder with the white skin." Encouraged by their freedom and ability to engage in activities long circumscribed under bondage, African Americans seemed less willing to conform to codes of behavior that characterized race relations in the idealized, white sporting field. "I have seen them in such occasions puff up like a turkey gobbler in all his

³¹¹ Henry Edwards Davis, *Old Betsy*, 24.

glory,” concluded “N.A.T.”³¹² He was not alone in his fears that such hunting and fishing expedited the breakdown of traditional patterns of deference. Touring a plantation near Natchez in Louisiana in 1873, Edward King had an encounter that confirmed fears of black assertiveness:

In the forest through which ran the road leading to the Colonel’s plantation, we met a brown man mounted on a stout horse, and loaded with a small amount of fire-arms, in addition to which he carried a long knife and a hatchet, evidently intended for dissecting some deer.

“Ha!” said the Colonel pleasantly, yet with a touch of annoyance in his voice, “so you are going poaching on my land again? There will soon be no deer left.”

“Yas, Cunnel,” said the fellow, imprudently shifting his long rifle from his right to his left shoulder. “I reckon ef I see any deer I’s gwine to go fer ‘em, sho;” then, putting spurs to his steed, he galloped off.”

There was no redress, and the Colonel was compelled to submit anew to the plundering of his preserves.³¹³

Disturbed by the breakdown of the Old South’s social structure, afraid of the effect hunting and fishing at will would have on African American’s behavior, white sportsmen framed black sport to fit their insecurities about the emancipated freedman.

Yet despite the regularity of assertions linking African-American hunting and fishing with their basic character, despite the frequency with which they described black sportsmen as unskilled and ineffective, such contributors did not portray them consistently. The image of the poor and untalented black sportsman did not remain the only portrait of African-American hunting and fishing presented to the public. White contributors sometimes lauded black behavior afield, often presenting them as quite skilled. Indeed some of the very same sportsmen who created images of black inferiority could quickly change positions and compliment black sporting prowess only a few sentences later. The same African-American huntsman or

³¹² “Letter from N.A.T., Palestine, Texas, *Forest and Stream*, March 1, 1883, 87.

³¹³ Edward King, *The Southern States of North America*, 303.

fisherman initially depicted as lazy, improvident, and untalented one moment might easily be portrayed as shrewd and skilled the next. Here is another of several apparent contradictions of late nineteenth-century Southern hunting and fishing narratives. In opining about black sportsmen, white contributors often took two seemingly incongruous positions, simultaneously presenting them as slow-witted yet astute, inexperienced yet well-worn, unfamiliar with firearms yet crack shots, ineffective yet flush with fish and game. This seeming contradiction can be explained if the basic messages of the narrators can be decoded.

In the winter of 1882 and spring of 1883, a debate about black sportsmen raged in the pages of *Forest and Stream*. Motivated by the claim that freedmen bore the blame for Southern quail decline, Virginia sportsman “M” sparked a volley of opinions by asserting that freedmen should not be so accused. Declaring that “I dwell in one of the largest old slaveholding counties of Virginia, where the freedmen are in a large majority; that I am a ‘bourbon democrat’ ...and that I have been all my life an ardent and active sportsman,” “M” acknowledged the recent quail decline but argued that “it is a slander upon the freedman to charge him as the guilty party.” For “M,” freedmen, by habit and tradition, simply did not have the skill to hunt such wildfowl on the wing; nor did they own the proper guns and dogs for such challenging endeavors. “He is by no means the pest some believe him to be, but as a rule is useful, law-abiding, humble and contented, trusting implicitly those, who, by fair dealing, have won his confidence.”³¹⁴

Two months later “Rallywood” responded to “M’s” editorial, arguing that believing freedmen could not or did not destroy quail reflected wishful thinking. “Indeed his faith in their simplicity is childlike and bland,” Rallywood asserted; “whereas the craftiest diplomat that ever wore a white skin is a novice in the art of concealment compared with the Virginia negro.” For

³¹⁴ “Quail in Virginia,” *Forest and Stream*, December 21, 1882, 409.

Rallywood, freedmen, far from being incapable sportsmen, skillfully hid their true abilities.

“Does ‘M’ imagine that the colored brother never interviewed a henroost because he has never seen the trophies of the interview hanging on the outer walls of his log cabin?” he asked:

I do not mean to assert that the partridge has been exterminated by the freedman, or that he was the sole cause of scarcity, but I do affirm that scores of negroes from the James to the Mattaponi River, and east of the Richmond & Fredericksburg Railroad, hunt for squirrels and hares all through the spring and summer, skulking along the edge woods, swamps, and thickets, and keeping carefully out of sight of white folks; that he pretends to be nothing but a pot-hunter, and that there is no fairer marl for the pot-hunter than Bob White sitting on a rail, be he an African or an Anglo-Saxon.

Unlike “M,” who wished that African Americans remained poor sportsmen, Rallywood acknowledged their competence and threat to Southern game. “I have no apology to make to the good-natured, shrewd, shiftless freedman,” he concluded, “since I know he will take no umbrage at my saying he pops Bob White every time he sees him, if he has a fuse in his hand.”³¹⁵

This disagreement flared into a broader debate. In March 1883, “M” responded to “Rallywood”, questioning the idea that freedmen possessed enough intelligence to hide their sport. “It would be instructive for him [Rallywood] to tell us whether his experience bears out the assertion...as to the skill of the freedman as a diplomat,” “M” wondered.³¹⁶ And he did not stand alone. Texan “N.A.T.,” while acknowledging African American’s destructive potential, did not blame them for the quail. “My candid opinion is that while he is still entitled to high rank as a game destroyer, he is not quite as bad as he used to be,” he offered. He believed that although freedmen took to the field in large numbers after liberation, they gave up such sporting mania within a few years. “My judgment is that there is not one bird now killed by the freedmen where there were ten killed by him in the early days of his freedom,” “N.A.T.” declared.

³¹⁵ “Rallywood,” “The Negroes and the Birds,” *Forest and Stream*, February 1, 1883, 7.

³¹⁶ “M.,” “The Freedman and the Quail,” *Forest and Stream*, March 1, 1883, 87.

Unfortunately, “N.A.T.” argued, African Americans sportsmen accounted for much quail slaughter through trapping. “Bob White is the principal sufferer by these implements, and I believe his destiny is to be destroyed by the negro...The only way to stop him is to educate him into the conviction that he is behaving badly, and this, I fear, can never be done as long as Bob White exists,” he concluded.³¹⁷ Thus while freedmen lacked the will to assail the stately quail with guns, their poor sporting methods, through trapping, made them dangerous.

By April sportsman “A.F.R.” of Belvidere, North Carolina, had entered the debate suggesting a third possibility. Freedmen, he argued “in defense of the darkey,” could be perfectly fine sportsmen, at least for traditional black game. But they had neither an abiding interest in nor the talent required of quail hunting. As evidence, he found a large covey of quail near a freedman’s cabin. “The head of the family owned a gun, and was fond of hunting,” he remembered, “but, like most darkies, he didn’t hunt quail, because he didn’t feel sure of killing on the wing, and didn’t look for them on the ground. Nor is this an isolated instance. I can today, with my setter, find at least a dozen coveys of quail within 100 rods of negro cabins.” According to “A.F.R.,” freedmen might desire more “white” game, but they simply lacked the skill. They also lacked the drive. Like other contributors who linked African-American hunting and fishing to black shiftlessness, “A.F.R.” remained confident of Southern fish and game security because freedmen “are too lazy and worthless to hunt for a living. We have lots of negroes and plenty of quail, showing that the supply of quail is not cut off in this section by the freedman.” For “A.F.R.” the freedman was competent enough for raccoons, opossums, squirrels and rabbits, but lacked the skill and ambition to threaten white sportsmen’s best interests.

³¹⁷ “Letter from N.A.T., Palestine, Texas,” *Forest and Stream*, March 1, 1883, 87.

This debate, which began in *Forest and Stream* in 1882 and 1883, reappeared from time to time through the 1880s with contributors split over the basic question of precisely what threat African-Americans posed to Southern game. Some sided with “M,” believing that freedmen, by their very nature, remained too attached to smaller game and too unskilled to seriously threaten more advanced quarry. Moreover, for such observers, freedmen generally behaved properly, kept in line by the white community, and thus threatened only “black game”. Another group agreed with “Rallywood” and asserted that freedmen would, and did, kill whatever they could, often without white observers taking notice. To them, sporting freedmen, too free from decent restraint, posed a serious danger. Still a third group, as voiced by “A.F.R.,” believed freedmen showed competence as sportsmen, but only for traditional “black game.” They did not step out of place because they were content with small game and feared turning hunting into work. These three competing ideas formed the core of the discussions of African-American hunting and fishing that littered sporting periodicals in the late nineteenth century. They also account for the often contradictory assessments of black sporting habits and behavior offered by whites.

No less a distinguished source on Southern culture than author and first South Carolina poet laureate Archibald Rutledge, who was raised on field sports and later set many of his writings in and around the sporting field, reflects this tendency to mix messages regarding black sportsmen.³¹⁸ Reared on his family’s Hampton Plantation in the Santee River region near McClellanville, South Carolina, Rutledge learned to hunt and fish from family tenants and other area African Americans. In his *Hunter’s Choice*, he described his early sporting influences including “an old African named Galboa,” a slave huntsman and fisherman before liberation,

³¹⁸ It could be argued that Rutledge, who, in addition to his many books of verse and prose, penned poems and hunting stories for *Field and Stream*, *Harper’s* and *The Saturday Evening Post*, was the most important voice in spreading stories of the South Carolina sporting field to the wider American audience, helping to frame a particular vision of Southern hunting and fishing—a vision that drew heavily on representations of African Americans.

who “could always get what he was sent after; and he could get it with an ease and nonchalance that were impressive, and were likewise suggestive of a kind of eerie skill instinctive to him and a few others of his race but denied the white man.” Rutledge never actually took to the field with Galboa, who preferred to work alone. Another black huntsman, “Phineas McConnor, a slight, stooping, yellow Negro, who speaks with a lisping drawl,” played a more direct role. Rutledge learned much from McConnor, who “appears to have an especial insight into the ways of wild creatures; he seems to think their thoughts along with them (or a little ahead of them). And he knows his woods.” Rutledge, who himself later became a leading shaper of public images of the Southern sporting field, reported no greater influence. “Whenever I want to know definitely about game, whether of the moldering delta or of the swamps or of the pine-lands, I consult Phineas. Among the Negro woodsmen of my acquaintance, he is the authority.”³¹⁹

Yet as often as Rutledge praised sportsmen like Galboa and Phineas McConnor, he refused to consistently credit African Americans with true skill. One moment he praised them as the finest specimens of sport, and then later derided their performance in the field. Rutledge himself distinguished between two different kinds of black sportsmen. The most common is the “tattered Negro with a battered gun under his arm...with no social background whatsoever. If he brings home a rabbit or a squirrel or a ‘possum, he will be both lucky and happy.” The other is “an entirely different kind of Negro hunter,” who is “found only in the more remote wilds of the Deep South.” Such a sportsman, ostensibly because of his purer African heritage, “comes by his genius naturally.” According to Rutledge the former outnumbered the latter by a wide margin: “I personally know about a thousand Negroes who live in good hunting country. Few of them hunt at all; and only two or three are really gifted in the lore.”³²⁰ Notice again the apparent

³¹⁹ Archibald Hamilton Rutledge, *Hunter's Choice*, (New York: A.S. Barnes & Company, 1946), 22.

contradiction--Rutledge makes clear that African Americans made the best hunters and fishermen, but only a rare few could be counted as truly skilled sportsmen.

Rutledge would move back and forth between these positions in his writings. In *Home By the River*, he presented African-American sportsmen in one instance as more skilled than white sportsmen, in the next as decidedly inferior. This tension between positive characterizations of black sporting abilities and negative characterizations of their behavior, work habits and intellectual capacity underlay Rutledge's writings and those of other narrators of Southern field sport. Recalling a standing offer he once made to area African Americans to report game sightings in exchange for money, Rutledge recalled that no one had more skill at locating game. He asserted that "a Negro invariably sees more wild creatures than a white man," since the "Negro's quiet way of walking, his lack of stealth and purposeful intent, his happy blending with the plantation landscape—these things and perhaps others beyond my ken enable him to see much wild game that would be frightened by a plantation owner." Yet despite that skill, they usually lacked the intelligence to use it. One day a black man named Isiah came to Rutledge to report a flock of wild turkeys and collect his dime. Rutledge asked when he spotted them. "Well, sah," answered Isiah, "it would be about last Friday a week ago."³²¹ Rutledge explained this tendency, what he called "a Negro's lack of a sense of time" as part of basic African-American character and provided another example:

So accustomed is the Negro to having the white man set things straight that usually, instead of acting in an emergency, he will feel his duty done if he merely reports the trouble. I sent one of them to find a wild gobbler that I had badly wounded. The Negro found the great bird; it was unable to fly and could hardly stagger. But

³²⁰ Ibid, 21.

³²¹ Archibald Hamilton Rutledge, *Home By the River*, (Indianapolis, New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1955), 112.

my man did not catch it. He walked back five miles to tell me that he had seen it. We never saw it again.³²²

But as limited as Rutledge perceived African American's acumen for field sports to be, he did not doubt their skill in other areas. Less than three pages later, Rutledge described two tenants, Sam and Richard, whom he commissioned to build a cypress canoe. Despite the fact that "they had never made one before and had never seen one made," "with an ax and fire and adz they went to work; and by the next afternoon I had as pretty a ducking boat as you ever saw."³²³ Yet even Richard, whose craftsmanship Rutledge praised, was soon criticized as incapable in the field. Out shooting ducks one day, Rutledge asked Richard, who served as his boatman, to leave the boat and circle around a group of nearby ducks to drive them to his employer. According to Rutledge, Richard could not handle even such simple direction:

I did not realize what I was asking, and did not know what had happened until he had returned to me. More than a mile he had gone, swimming nine huge old canals; then he had come in on the ducks from that direction. On his return he took those nine canals on his stride, and when he reached me, mud and water from heel to head, he was all smiles because I had killed two mallards.³²⁴

Images of black sportsmen embedded in Rutledge's stories—instinctual yet unskilled, experienced yet unintelligent, loyal yet incompetent—reflect the common assertion that African Americans remained poor sportsmen because of essential racial characteristics. Yet despite the frequency with which Rutledge used stories of African-American sporting inadequacy to entertain his audience, he almost as frequently provided examples of personal experiences with black sportsmen--men like Galboa and Phineas McConnor and others--whom he claimed, "have

³²² Ibid, 117.

³²³ Ibid, 120.

³²⁴ Ibid, 123.

an instinct about problems of this kind that a white man rarely has,” and were thus some of the finest hunters and fishermen in the Lowcountry.³²⁵

White accounts oscillated between presenting African Americans as inept, bumbling sportsmen and savvy, veteran masters of hunting and fishing. Some even combined the two. One unnamed *Forest and Stream* contributor, commenting on the myth that African Americans lacked the skill to shoot “on the wing” (hit birds while in flight), described “three negroes in the country...who regularly shoot quail on the wing” and recalled meeting them in the field and hearing of their sporting prowess. Yet even in lamenting the loss of that cherished myth about black sportsmen, the white contributor found a way to devalue black sporting skill and exalt his own. One day in the field, an African-American sportsman who claimed mastery of wing shooting led him to a gang of partridges where he claimed he once bagged twenty-three with twenty-five shots. “Doubting his ability to repeat the performance,” noted the white sportsman, “I offered to lend him my gun, as I should be delighted to see the best record wiped out with my Harrington & Richardson.” The black sportsman, however, despite his claims of skill, was too inexperienced with and intimidated by such a modern firearm to attempt a repeat performance. “He declined on the ground that he didn’t understand ‘dem new fangled guns widout no hammers,’” noted the white man with satisfaction, obviously happy to have salvaged some personal pride out of the situation.³²⁶ African Americans may, regrettably, have become competent sportsmen, but only under limited circumstances. They may have some skill which might impinge on white huntsmen’s privileges, but in method, technological advancement, and sheer courage, they remained inherently inferior to their white counterparts.

³²⁵ Rutledge, *Hunter’s Choice*, 74.

³²⁶ Anonymous, “Southern Shooting Grounds,” *Forest and Stream*, February 26, 1885, n.p.

Conclusion

African-American hunting and fishing posed a dilemma for white sportsmen. If they acknowledged the damage done by black sportsmen, they risked both calling attention to lost racial control and narrowing the distance between themselves and supposed sporting inferiors. If they held to the notion that African Americans could not be effective sportsmen, preferring to uphold whites' supposed mastery of the Southern sporting field, they risked downplaying perceived wildlife depletion and delaying its remedy—the restriction of black customary rights. In the end, they chose a middle approach that explained both African-American sportsmen's regrettable effectiveness and predictable shortcomings as symptomatic of racial inferiority.

No matter if whites characterized African Americans as poor sportsmen, bound by their race to “black” game and improper sporting behavior, or as skilled sportsmen, bound by their race to abuse those privileges and slaughter indiscriminately, inferiority ultimately became the central message of criticisms of African-American hunting and fishing in the fifty years after the Civil War. Whether in written narratives of the field, in which African Americans typically appeared in subordinate, usually unintelligent, and often comical roles, or in sporting periodicals, where white sportsmen vented their most bitter complaints, white sportsmen carefully crafted a multi-pronged message about black sporting habits. African Americans could not be reliable trustees of the South's rich and increasingly valuable natural environment. The major ill of the South, an increasingly recalcitrant and devolving black population, could be seen and understood in microcosm in the sporting field. In other words, they portrayed the problems African Americans caused sportsmen as indicative of the problems they created for the region as a whole. Even if whites could not agree on the specific nature of African-American hunting and fishing,

they could agree on that. They also agreed that Southern field sports would be improved immeasurably if black hunting and fishing could be diminished or eliminated altogether.

With these ideas firmly embedded, it took only a small intuitive leap for Southern sportsmen to advocate restricting African-American hunting and fishing rights. Indeed those who called for local and state conservation measures between the 1880s, when such measures began in earnest, and the 1920s, when such protection became a permanent part of lawmakers' agenda, often used alleged African-American abuses as one of their prime justifications. African Americans played a critical role in the lives of white, Southern sportsmen, not only helping them to establish their own identities, but also providing an archetype of bad sporting behavior. That archetype would allow sportsmen, landowners, and lawmakers to use the "race question" to sidestep objections to fish and game legislation and establish a comprehensive system of wildlife protection in many Southern states by the second decade of the twentieth century that would regulate not only the region's hunting and fishing but also African-American independence.

4. “The Art of Serving is With Them Innate”: African Americans and the Work of Southern Hunting and Fishing

“The assistance of a negro is as necessary to the full enjoyment of a coon hunt as cranberry sauce is to the completion of a turkey dinner.”

--Charlotte, North Carolina, sportsman, 1901

Introduction

White sportsmen had long criticized African-American sporting practices as basic threats to wildlife that flew in the face of the codes of behavior and method that guided proper white sportsmen. They believed such conduct, symptomatic of general black inferiority, testified to the fact that former slaves ravished the Southern wilderness and further proved that freedom threatened Southern prosperity. Yet despite the venom with which sportsmen derided such practices, they did not wish African Americans to be completely banished from the Southern sporting field. Despite their anger, they maintained that people of color could and indeed must have a permanent place there. Independent hunting and fishing by former slaves revealed all the limitations of liberation, but when former slaves worked for and with their white betters, they acknowledged the subordination that confirmed white sporting and social superiority. As independent sportsmen, they threatened Southern wildlife and white sporting privilege; while dedicated servants, they became valuable sources of necessary labor and vibrant symbols of white mastery that helped white sportsmen reconnect with the idealized racial hierarchy of the antebellum South. African-American labor became indispensable physical and symbolic

components of proper Southern sport. Put simply, black service became, in the eyes of whites, a welcome antidote to black liberation.

In 1895 Chicago sportsman Emerson Hough contributed a series of articles to *Forest and Stream* that described his recent trip through Mississippi and strongly encouraged Northerners to head south for their field sports. Hough had several reasons for such enthusiasm. The South had richer resources in fish and game, and provided a friendlier welcome to sportsmen, than any other region. Southern hunting and fishing, which had yet to be commercialized to the extent it had elsewhere, provided a field for gentleman, not market hunters. Finally, and for Hough perhaps most importantly, Southern field sports demonstrated the proper ordering of the races. When Hough experienced firsthand the role of African Americans in hunting and fishing in Mississippi, he liked what he saw:

The negro makes a large factor in the field sports of the South. In the North we do our own camp work, team driving, etc., to a large extent, and when you speak of this to a Southern sportsman it always causes surprise. The Southern idea of comfort in camp means a large tent, abundant camp furniture and two or three servants to do the work—an idea which certainly grows upon one, and which one is not disposed to call a bad one after he has gained acquaintance with it.

For Hough, the North did not compare when it came to available and agreeable sporting labor.

“In the North if you want your team taken around three or four miles through the country,” he continued, “you may be able to get a farmer’s boy to do it, and usually you compromise by letting one of your own party do it.” This was not necessary in the South. “In the South you simply hail the first negro,” he continued, “and the negro doesn’t ask any questions, and doesn’t say anything about pay. A good deal of the time he doesn’t get any pay, but he has put in the time just the same, and feels as happy.”

For the thousands of Northern sportsmen who hunted and fished the Southern United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the central but inherently subordinate position of African Americans in white Southerners' sport provided a reason for heading South and a model of race relations for the rest of the nation to follow. "If I could have one of the most sincere wishes of my heart gratified," Hough concluded, inspired by the subordination he witnessed in Southern hunting and fishing, "I would export about four thirds of all the Chicago city Negroes, and I wouldn't send them to Liberia either."³²⁷

This chapter examines African Americans' vital role in the sport of white Southerners and visiting tourists from around the country and world who hunted and fished across the South in the decades after the Civil War, made Dixie one of the leading sporting destinations in the United States. Since the early days of slavery, black labor had been a central part of white Southerners' sporting ideal. Antebellum elites felt more like masters when they had African-American subordinates on hand to reinforce the line between owner and property.³²⁸ After Emancipation, black subordination became even more important to white Southerners.

Wherever elite sportsmen led, African-American laborers followed. Slave subordinates provided skilled and menial labor as huntsmen and fishermen, packed supplies and equipment, worked as guides, tracked, located and drove quarry, and performed many other tasks. Just as importantly, they provided key symbols of the subordination of black to white. Disrupted by war and Reconstruction, elite whites both symbolically resurrected and concretely reinforced their hold on African Americans through hierarchical relationships maintained in Southern hunting

³²⁷ Emerson Hough, "The Sunny South—Part VIII," *Forest and Stream*, April 1 1895, 284.

³²⁸ See Nicholas Proctor, *Bathed in Blood: Hunting and Mastery in the Old South*, (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2002); Kenneth S. Greenberg, *Honor & Slavery: Lies, Duels, Noses, Masks, Dressing as a Woman, Gifts, Strangers, Humanitarianism, Death, Slave Rebellions, the Proslavery Argument, Baseball, Hunting, and Gambling in the Old South*, (Princeton, NJ: University of Princeton Press, 1996); and Eugene Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1974).

and fishing. Myths of the “Old South,” which flourished from the late nineteenth into the early twentieth century, enabled whites to celebrate hunting and fishing as important institutions which helped preserved and relive that lost golden age. The racial subordination created and reinforced in the field provided a remedy for the South’s social, economic and labor problems posed by independent African Americans’ exploitation of Southern fish and game. Reasserting the antebellum sporting ideal of subordinate black sporting labor directed by wealthy Southerners provided a strategy for reclaiming lost control. Sportsmen simply needed black labor even more with slavery destroyed and Southern social relations restructured. Having such subordinates in the field provided a return to a mythical era of aristocratic sport and racial control, and projected to the world, including Northerners like Emerson Hough, a solution for the South’s “Negro Problem.”

The presence of subordinate black labor remained central to white Southerners’ quest to recapture the past and frame the future, and also became part of the sporting and social experiences of visiting sporting tourists who came South in droves after the Civil War. To these visitors, a Southern sojourn created an “Old South” that provided both enjoyable sport and an authentically “Southern” experience. Whether wealthy visiting sportsmen, whose sporting vision included the adoption of fine sporting attire and aristocratic field ethics, or middle class hunters and fishermen, whose primary concerns included steady supplies of fish and game, sporting tourists who headed South expected the constant presence of African-American subordinate-companions to make their glimpse of the now-mythic Old South more realistic.

The connection between elite sportsmen, African Americans, and field sports has been addressed to a degree by scholars. Growing a bit more popular in the past decade thanks, in part, to the mounting popularity of environmental history, the history of sports and the history of

tourism, a number of studies of hunting have emerged which demonstrate the connection between the social structures of such field sports and the construction of cultural values and institutions. The work of such scholars as Daniel Justin Herman, Stuart A. Marks, Ted Ownby, Nicholas W. Proctor, and Jacob F. Rivers has demonstrated that the social meanings ascribed to such sports, particularly in justifications for and written narratives of them, give excellent insights into American cultural, intellectual, and social life.³²⁹ None of these works, however, focuses specifically on the post-emancipation South, and none, despite the fact that each deals with race to varying degrees, attempts to connect the culture of Southern hunting and fishing to race relations from the late nineteenth through the early twentieth centuries.³³⁰

Nicholas Proctor's *Bathed in Blood: Hunting and Mastery in the Old South* is perhaps the most useful in laying out the antebellum antecedents to developing messages of race and racial control found in late nineteenth-century accounts of African Americans hunting and fishing with whites. Arguing persuasively that slaveholders used hunting to cultivate a sense of mastery over nature, their own emotional impulses, and, most importantly, over slaves, Proctor

³²⁹ See Daniel Justin Herman, *Hunting and the American Imagination*, (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001); Stuart A. Marks, *Southern Hunting in Black and White: Nature, History and Ritual in a Carolina Community*, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992); Ted Ownby, *Subduing Satan: Religion, Recreation, and Manhood in the Rural South, 1865-1920*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993); Nicholas W. Proctor, *Bathed in Blood: Hunting and Mastery in the Old South*; and Jacob F. Rivers, *Cultural Values in the Southern Sporting Narrative*, (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press), 2002.

³³⁰ Herman's study of how popular images of hunting both reflected and reinforced American ideals of manliness, racial identity, and nationalism, although effective in locating racial attitudes in sporting narratives, does not address the South or African Americans in any substantial way. Marks' study of the cultural permanence of hunting in rural North Carolina, although touching briefly on race, gives little attention to the post-Emancipation period and does not make an argument for the impact of such field sports on either rural African Americans or on Southern race relations in general. Ownby's study of the changes in male Southern recreational culture after the Civil War, while far-reaching and comprehensive, does not address hunting and fishing in any detail and does not devote much attention to black Southerners. Rivers' analysis of Southern sporting narratives is primarily a literary one, which, although allowing him to tease out some aspects of white attitudes towards African Americans, deals only briefly with the decades after Emancipation. Taken together, these works provide excellent markers for future scholars to follow in their attempts to locate aspects of American social, cultural and intellectual development in different groups' visions of such field sports, but scholars have yet to make a detailed attempt to do so for the post-war South.

presents white-created images of slave subordinate-companions as attempts to create public images of the perfect servant that reinforced the social order. “By creating huntsmen who were attentive, loyal, and capable while remaining simpleminded, slothful, and somewhat childlike,” Proctor posits, “white writers provided their readers with a composite of the white image of the ideal slave.”³³¹ Such images balanced any potential threat to white control over bound labor that might be engendered by slave’s customary rights to hunt and fish. Visions of docile slaves plying their owners with love and deference formed the foundation for the structure of post-Emancipation images of African Americans laboring for whites in the Southern sporting field.

White narrators described the role of freed people in their sport with a nostalgic longing which, in part, accounts for the thematic symmetry between antebellum and postbellum accounts of African-American hunting and fishing. As Nicholas Proctor points out, “white hunters often conceived of the hunt as a portal into an immutable (if substantially fictional) South.”³³² Yet accounts of black labor in white sport reflect more than an affinity for past achievements in racial domination. Such descriptions simultaneously focused on the present by responding to a changing Southern social structure in which whites had lost permanent, legal control of the black populace and faced a serious threat to the labor supply that provided the foundation for the Southern economy. Images of slaves in antebellum accounts of hunting and fishing had a substantial impact on the tenor of post-emancipation narratives and one must be careful not to label those narratives as merely backward looking. Visions of black inferiority and incompetence constructed in hunting and fishing narratives, like Emerson Hough’s endorsement of the servitude he found in Mississippi sport, while harkening to a lost golden age, also

³³¹ Proctor, *Bathed in Blood*, 123.

³³² Ibid, 171.

responded to contemporary threats to white supremacy. Post-war sporting narratives presented a longing for the past, a lamentation for the present, and a hopeful corrective vision for the future.

If it is incorrect to label such sportsmen's accounts as exclusively backward looking, it is equally problematic to interpret them as reflecting only notions of white supremacy. There is more to be gained from studying African Americans working for whites on hunting and fishing excursions than simply how such accounts solidified and refined images of racial control. Closely examining accounts of African Americans serving white sportsmen shows that black huntsmen, fisherman and laborers drew substantial benefits from their involvement in white sport. Most obviously they found a source of steady employment in such activities and an avenue of economic improvement that only grew as the South became a popular sporting destination. Ironically, whites' use of hunting and fishing to confirm racial subordination, which made black labor a permanent part of Southern hunting and fishing, created opportunities for some former slaves, particularly those highly skilled in the ways of fish and game and living in the popular resort areas of the South. For while the stereotypes of racial domination whites imparted in their narratives of Southern hunting and fishing reified white racial ideals, they also proved a benefit to some rural blacks by making their presence an indispensable part of the Southern sporting experience.

African Americans also made substantial material and financial gains from their work. Aside from wages, black laborers, in return for their services, often took home a portion of the products of the days' excursion, which supplied meat for personal and family subsistence; arranged future access to hunting and fishing grounds that might otherwise be denied them; and earned hunting and fishing supplies and equipment, including ammunition, tackle, even old firearms, as payment or gratuity, which provided opportunities to improve their own hunting and

fishing. In other words, some found important economic opportunities in working for whites. While such financial and material gain neither erased the negative impact of the images of inferiority proffered in white sporting accounts, nor changed the inherently unequal power relationships portrayed in them, it is clear that laboring for whites did not benefit whites alone. Some African Americans found a niche for themselves in the new sporting system.

In fact, if descriptions of the sporting interactions between white and black are examined closely, it is possible to uncover rare cases when black sportsmen-laborers did not become the victims of white exploitation and when stories of those interactions do not reinforce images of racial subordination. Sometimes incidents of African Americans working for white sportsmen provide glimpses into moments when they could turn the tables on their white employers by challenging the litany of racial stereotypes and supposed white mastery of field sports that demanded their presence in the first place. Indeed the very reason whites chose such laborers, for their skill and experience in the sporting field, became an avenue through which African Americans used hunting and fishing to demonstrate their own expertise, poke fun at their employers, and seize a level of authority they normally could not possess. For just as laboring for white sportsmen gave them important economic benefits from and greater access to Southern fields, forests, and streams, it sometimes provided opportunities to counterbalance the very images of mastery and subordination that Southern elites sought to perpetuate.

African-American Sporting Labor

Although the black presence in white Southerners' field sports remained a constant, the tasks they performed depended upon a variety of factors. Different kinds of excursions required different types of laborers. The fox hunts enjoyed by wealthy Southerners, as well as other large,

elite excursions designed to mirror aristocratic English sporting traditions, in which both full field regalia and large numbers of attendants played symbolically necessary roles, usually employed the largest numbers of black laborers. Such excursions, however, remained uncommon. It is easy to exaggerate the number of large plantations with hundreds of slaves and the degree to which Southern field sports mirrored the fox hunting ideal of the English country gentry. Indeed regal hunts like the one remembered by Savannah, Georgia, planter Edward J. Thomas, who engaged in them while vacationing at a relative's plantation in South Carolina, remained uncommon for all but the wealthiest sportsmen:

About two o'clock—it was in December--all hands would prepare for a fox hunt, horns blowing the signal would be heard from the stable yards, the baying of hounds would testify to their readiness; saddle-horses, held by negro-chaps in gay caps, would be waiting on the lawn, but not long waiting, for we would all soon be in the saddle and cantering to the forests. I never had anything to suit my taste as did these fox chases. We would take no guns, relying on the dogs and our swift horses, going pell-mell through fields, over fences and ditches, and once in a while bring home the tail of a fox stuck in some one's hat. Getting home about dark, a bounteous dinner would be served.³³³

Such hunts, while rare, demonstrate that the projection of aristocratic ideals remained one important function of elite field sports. The clarion call of horns, the use of proper livery, and other displays of pageantry, including placing the tail of the day's prey in one of the party's hat, proved that planter-sportsmen, like Thomas's South Carolina kinsmen Colonel Julius Huguenin, master of the above hunt, had the necessary refinement to follow the sporting codes perfected by the English country gentlemen whom they sought to emulate. The sheer size of such excursions, with many participants, well-trained hounds, the finest horses, and even the "bounteous dinner"

³³³ Thomas, Edward J., *Memoirs of a Southerner, 1840-1923*. (n.p., Savannah, GA, 1923), 25. DocSouth, UNCCH.

served afterwards, proved that planter-sportsmen also had the proper financial clout to provide only the most lavish sporting experience.³³⁴ And finally, the presence of the “negro chaps in gay caps,” central to Southern aristocratic sport, aside from providing labor, symbolically reinforced white’s mastery over the black population.

Aristocratic values lay at the heart of elite, Southern field sports, and the use of freedmen testifies to that aristocracy. Consider the language employed by “One of the Scribes,” as the 1872 contributor to *The Rod and Gun and American Sportsman* called himself, as he described time in camp on a Virginia hunt. Noting that the party spent much time “lying like kings upon our royal couch of cedar (sic) down, listening to the gossip of the huntsmen and the comicalities of the colored peasantry,” he suggested that having black labor on hand made them feel “like kings.” The descriptions of hunting and fishing native and visiting sportsmen used to create this fantasy of aristocratic mastery show that the appeal of the Southern sporting experience depended in part on subordinated African Americans. Northerner Edward King embraced this fantasy while touring near Mobile, Alabama. Overcome by the scenes he encountered, he wrote that “the long avenue seemed all my own; I could almost fancy that the coast was mine; the islands and the light-houses were mine, and that the two negro hunters, loitering by with guns on their shoulders, were my gamekeepers, come to attend me to the chase.”³³⁵ Elite sportsmen coveted such mastery, whether over the natural environment or over African Americans, which

³³⁴ Utilizing grandiose sporting traditions and methods available only to the very wealthy was one of many Southern sporting legacies that began early in the colonial era, carried over into the antebellum period and remained important after Emancipation. Southern elites, whether antebellum slaveholders or postwar sportsmen seeking to recapture lost aristocracy, used the barriers of class and race inherent in such sporting codes, as Nicholas Proctor has argued, for “promoting the idea that while a hunter was a man, a sportsman was a gentleman” (87-8). For a detailed discussion of how antebellum elites used sporting codes to celebrate their own status, see Proctor’s *Bathed in Blood*, particularly chapter 4, “Finding Peers: The Criteria of Exclusion,” 76-98.

³³⁵ King was dispatched by *Scribner’s Monthly*, “who desired to present to the public, through the medium of their popular periodical, an account of the material resources, and the present social and political condition, of the people in the Southern States” (i.) *The Great South: A Record of Journeys in Louisiana, Texas, the Indian Territory, Missouri, Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, and Maryland*, (Hartford, CT: American Publishing Company, 1875), 321.

they symbolically, and sometimes materially, constructed and re-constructed in the sporting field. As Nicholas Proctor has noted, “[t]he feeling of community that [elite field sports] helped create bound white males together. These ties supported abstract notions like white supremacy by providing concrete representations of white power.”³³⁶

Although the quest for aristocracy would remain an important part of Southern field sports, most sportsmen lacked the financial wherewithal to provide such pageantry. Large-scale hunts, such as an 1867 deer hunt on St. Helena Island, South Carolina, described by David Franklin Thorpe, in which “in the party we had nineteen white men, about a dozen negroes and eight hounds, six of them being young dogs,” remained rare.³³⁷ Most Southerners, even elites, hunted and fished on a smaller scale, and therefore most African-American sporting laborers toiled on more ordinary outings. Yet even on such smaller outings, they maintained their symbolic importance for demonstrating white mastery. Occasional larger hunting or fishing trips that carried a more symbolic or recreational function required more black labor. Most Southern sportsmen who frequently employed former slaves enjoyed the services of but one or two, with additional laborers added depending on the wealth of the white sportsmen involved, the number of people taking the field, the length of the outing, and the type of game sought. A two week trip, for example, required more gear and equipment and meant more portage for laborers than did a simple two or three-day excursion. Hunting or fishing trips in coastal, swampy, or other wetland regions, for which both boats and knowledge of landmarks and waterways were at a premium, demanded more skilled laborers, guides, and boatmen. Large game hunting, for such

³³⁶ Proctor, 118.

³³⁷ Letter from David Franklin Thorpe to John Mooney, February 6, 1867. David Franklin Thorpe Papers, UNCCCH, SHC, #4262, Folder 10, January-May 1867.

quarry as deer, bear, or catamount, which required more drivers and shooters, typically called for more laborers than did hunting for small game such as squirrels or opossums. No matter the magnitude of the excursion, African-American labor remained a necessity, both for labor and for the symbolic ideal of subordination that their service implied.

When whites, whether landowning elites or of the middling sort, took to the sporting field, they invariably sought out black subordinate labor to perform that important dual function. Oftentimes the recruitment of labor went hand in hand with other motivations for entering the sporting field, which involved more than just hunting or fishing. Some sportsmen, particularly visitors from other, more populated and urbanized regions, saw in the Southern sporting field a chance to venture into a wilder, less-developed part of the country that mirrored a by-gone America and required a shorter (and safer) trip than the Western frontier. J.B. Burnham, for example, saw a chance to escape crowded Northern cities and modern cultures. “To one whose nerves have been worn to the quick by the ceaseless hurry of city life the easy going ways of the South are balm and healing,” he declared. Leaving the North where he is “condemned to hustle and elbow and push lest he get eternally left,” the Northern visitor may envy the South for its “pleasing disregard of Father Time, whom he has been accustomed to respect and worship as coequal with the almighty Dollar.”³³⁸

The South, for many sportsmen, held the possibility of escaping modern life. As Chester L. Fidler opined when describing a hunt with black guides “‘Ace of Spades’ Cass” and “Bill,” “[w]hat was there about following those dogs that was so fascinating? I tried to solve the feeling, and I believe it was because it was primitive... We enjoy stepping down from the pinnacle of our civilization, and reverting for a time to the ways of our progenitors.”³³⁹ This

³³⁸ “Notes of a Shooting Trip South,” *Forest and Stream*, January 13, 1894, 29.

desire to seek untamed frontiers, to return to a less civilized era without truly abandoning the luxuries and refinements of modern America, seemed to have, as some hinted in their language, a more than tangential connection to the South's racial history. Consider this 1881 testimony from an unnamed sportsman celebrating the sporting virtues of North Carolina:

There is hardly a place in North Carolina where a true sportsman may not enjoy himself...Let one leave the false glare and glitter, the hollow show of a city life with a view to some weeks with nature and her charming loveliness, and he may be assured that he will find it, with fair sport added, in North Carolina. He can amuse himself with ignorance as primitive as the most fastidious could desire or test his manners with intelligence and grace as courtly as adorns any home in America...Altogether we offer both a field of sport and interest. We are a peculiar people with our "peculiar institution" gone, and although we have gotten used to the loss, we have not all learned the most profitable ways of the "new departure."³⁴⁰

This linking of hunting and fishing, a longing for a "primitive" past, the mythical Old South and the South's "new departure," demonstrate that sportsmen could be gratified both by the lures of the region's natural advantages and by its racial system.

Statements in which observers paired the South's sporting benefits with its race relations appear frequently in nineteenth-century sporting literature. Such discussions specifically included African Americans or, at least, idyllic memories of African Americans as slaves, as important parts of such experiences. For Southerners, this connection evoked memories of a time (at best exaggerated, at worst fictional) when the world had been properly ordered. Wirt Howe, who advertised his shooting grounds near Columbus, Mississippi, in *Outing* magazine, assured potential investors that "[t]he large plantations of the cotton belt, which present the same appearance that they did in ante-bellum days and which are operated upon methods that have

³³⁹ "A Possum Hunt," *Forest and Stream* 35 (3), December 1899, 240.

³⁴⁰ "From North Carolina," *Forest and Stream*, January 27, 1881, 505.

been in use for many years, are, from an agricultural point of view, unlike anything existing elsewhere in this country.” Moreover, he pointed out, each plantation had its own set of “‘quarters,’ parallel rows of log cabins where live the negro hands and their families, very much as they did in the days of slavery.”³⁴¹ Thus visitors could rest assured that their surroundings, physically and racially, mirrored the antebellum ideal that lured them south.

Sportsman “P,” clearly exhibited this longing for the stereotypical trappings of the Old South. “Of all the sports of the field or forest, mountain or plain, wooded hillside or swampy jungles,” he wrote, “none affords such real, genuine, jolly, rollicking fun as the old fashioned possum hunt, which is a peculiarly Southern institution, and can be seen in perfection only on the old plantation and among the darkies.” The opossum hunt “P” continued, “is eagerly entered into by all classes, from the learned judge to the irrepressible small boy and the happy-go-lucky cornfield negro.” No doubt lamenting the passage of another “purely Southern institution,” “P” saw in the old-style opossum hunt a glimpse of a particular past that had broad appeal. “There is a charm and a fascination in the possum hunt which always brings sweet memories to the country-raised southerner, and are not appreciated by others,” he continued. “I have known grave Senators, astute lawyers, millionaire business men, professional men and foreign travelers, men from almost every grade and pursuit of life, to return in their sixties for brief visits to the old plantation...and each had a stock of marvelous tales to tell of his glorious hunts.” According to “P,” those desperate to recapture old times must head South with all speed and, importantly, remember one critical ingredient of the old-time hunt. “Such an one would be repaid for a

³⁴¹ “With the Quail Among the Cotton,” *Outing* 33 (3), December 1898, 245.

journey to the favored land for that special purpose, though tyros [hunters] should by all means get some Uncle Sam, who is to be found on every plantation, to act as master of the hunt.”³⁴²

Liberty County, Georgia, planter Robert Q. Mallard made the connection between hunting and fishing, and the preference for former slave labor even more obvious. Fondly recalling his involvement in his slaves’ expeditions “churning” for fish³⁴³ and alligator hunting,³⁴⁴ Mallard pined for such halcyon days but more particularly lamented the loss of what those black/white interactions meant to Southern society:

It is easy to see how such a life, in which black and white, with the due subordination of master and servant preserved, shared the same sports, contributed to the familiar and affectionate relations which so notoriously from childhood bound master and servant together; and how it gave the Southern youth a skill with fire-arms rarely attained in a shooting gallery, and a free, firm and graceful seat in the saddle, seldom if ever acquired in the sawdust arena of the riding school; and how it developed a splendid physical manhood, unknown to the dwellers in the cities, with their billiard table exercise and theatrical diversions, and what is at best but a poor substitute for outdoor sports, the gymnasium.³⁴⁵

Such recollections often contained fond memories of masters and slaves interacting while hunting and fishing. Perhaps because, as Mallard opined above, the domination and subordination of such sports mirrored the ideal of the slave regime better than any other

³⁴² “The Possum Hunt,” *Forest and Stream*, November 12, 1891, 326.

³⁴³ Mallard referred to his slaves’ fishing as “a sport in which I sometimes shared,” but the large number of slaves participating, as well as Mallard’s direct supervision, indicates this was likely a commercial endeavor, done for market, fertilizer, or food. According to Mallard, slaves “churned” for fish by wading into a river with an empty flour barrel that had both ends knocked out. In unison, slaves brought the barrels to the bottom, hopefully trapping a fish inside. Once trapped, the slaves threw the fish to slave children on the shore, who put them on a string. Robert Q. Mallard, *Plantation Life Before Emancipation*, (Richmond, VA: Whittet and Shepperson, 1892), 26.

³⁴⁴ Alligator hunting, according to Mallard, was necessary in Georgia rice fields because alligators nesting there often fed on “uncured bacon” or “the tail of some thirsty cow.” Slave huntsman waded into the paddy with a large wooden pole with an iron hook attached to one end, feel around to locate an alligator, wrap the hook around a leg, and drag the thrashing creature to shore where its head was lopped off “by a well-aimed blow of the axe.” *Ibid.*, 27.

³⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 28.

antebellum cultural institution, hunting and fishing figure prominently in whites' antebellum recollections. The recollections of Gwinnett County, Georgia, lawyer and farmer Bill Arp, for example, paints a typically rosy, paternalistic picture of slavery that presents hunting with slaves as one aspect of life he missed most. Noting with sadness that, "the good old plantation times are gone," Arp recalled days when masters cared for their slaves and slaves reciprocated with loyalty, "times when these old family servants felt an affectionate abiding interest in the family." "We frolicked with their children," he remembered, "and all played together by day and hunted together at night, and it beat the Arabian Nights to go to the old darkey's cabin of a winter night and hear him tell of ghosts and witches." Arp later commented on the written recollections of his friend, a Dr. Curry, who also used the hunt to represent the lost social relations of slavery:

How feelingly he records his companionship with the family negroes—the servants of the household who were contented and happy and trusting, and who loved and honored every member of their master's family, and were loved by them! Oh, the tender and teary recollections of 'possum hunts and coon hunts and rabbit hunts and corn shuckings, and eating watermelons in the cotton patch and sometimes finding them while pulling fodder in the hot and sultry cornfield!³⁴⁶

For memorialists like Arp and Curry, whose sporting memories figured prominently in their reconstruction of the "golden age" of Southern cultural life, hunting and fishing provided a window into an ideal past with whites the kindly masters and people of color the loyal slaves.

Ultimately, white Southern sportsmen's attachment to the antebellum ideal reflects both a longing for a return to a largely mythical lost age of racial domination and a deeply-seated dissatisfaction with the post-Emancipation social order. By continuously returning to hierarchical social relations created and reflected by hunting and fishing, relations they

³⁴⁶ Bill Arp, *From the Uncivil War to Date, 1861-1903*, (Atlanta, GA: The Hudgins Publishing Company, 1903), 54, 327.

associated with antebellum life, white Southerners critiqued a version of Southern society, particularly its race relations, with which they became increasingly dissatisfied. As Jacob F. Rivers III noted in his literary analysis of nineteenth and twentieth-century Southern sporting narratives, the keepers of Southern hunting and fishing traditions found that “the principles underlying the aristocratic code of Southern sportsmanship provided an excellent cultural framework within which to think about and to articulate the negative changes they saw in their respective societies.”³⁴⁷ Several components linked African-American subordinates to white hunting and fishing in the post-emancipation South. White Southerners fond recollections of hunting or fishing with slave companions, sporting tourists’ idyllic vision of a romantic, aristocratic Old South and, not least, sportsmen’s need for steady labor, led thousands of sportsmen who traversed the South to rely on the presence of African Americans. For many, such an excursion simply could not be truly “Southern” without it.

Descriptions of African-American laborers permeate narratives of Southern hunting and fishing, from accounts of the very start of excursions through the scenes of sociable camp life that attended their conclusion. At all times when in the field, whites kept black subordinates with them to do their work, make them feel more like the aristocratic sportsmen of old, and reinforce feelings of racial mastery. C. Wayne Cunningham, in a 1900 letter to *Outing*, wrote that the arrival of white sportsmen created exciting social spectacle for African Americans on the Georgia coastal islands, especially for those who labored for sportsmen:

When we got across the sound, and in full sight of the wharf, one of the three deer-drivers, as was his wont, started blowing his bugle. This was to let the colored people on the island know that we were coming, and to be on hand at the wharf...We arrived at the wharf, and were greeted by several of the island negroes, and a few of the pack, which had sauntered down on the wharf, seeming to know that a few days hunting was before them,

³⁴⁷ Rivers, *Cultural Values in the Southern Sporting Narrative*, x.

and giving vent to their delight in such noises as only a pack of deer-hounds can make. No welcome could have been finer to a crowd like ours than seeing those hounds and hearing their familiar voices.

There was old Dick Shed, the stalwart, beaming-faced negro, who is kindness personified; and by his side was Daddy Bob, the short and dumpy, whose “whiskey-cough” is well known to all those who have ever hunted on St. Catharine’s Island.³⁴⁸

Such scenes demonstrate both the possibility of employment contained in such trips for black Southerners and the fact that whites thought such heraldry to be badges of their superior status and integral parts of the Southern sporting experience.

White sportsmen cultivated the notion that their sporting laborers experienced as much excitement over the prospect of service as whites did to have them at their disposal. One sportsman, identified as “C,” remembering his dealings with a gentleman sportsman from Maryland named Watkins, recalled that “[t]he negroes that country round looked on him as a kind of oracle, and when Massa Watkins arrived every darkey’s face beamed with pleasure; and when a coon hunt was proposed the entire darkey community went mad with joy.” On these excursions, “C” continued, Watkins usually took along with him “a small army of darkies, each one of them armed with an axe, or a half-starved, ragged cur,” to do the bulk of the work for him.³⁴⁹ An unnamed *Outing* contributor, recalling a similar enthusiasm for labor in the furtherance of white sport, wrote of his “loyal henchman, ‘Ole Brack Pete,’” and noted that each year as fishing season approached, Pete would sing excitedly of the upcoming chance to serve:

She’s a long time a-comin’,
She’s almost heah—
She’s dun bin erlong time on de way;
Russle wid dem gum boots,

³⁴⁸ “A Deer Hunt on the Coast of Georgia,” *Outing* 35 (4), January 1900, 370.

³⁴⁹ “A Coon Hunt,” *Forest and Stream*, April 21, 1887, 273.

Hump y'usef chile—
Marse Ned's gwine fishing'—rite erway.

"I am no singer...but I think I understand the feeling that drives that ebony rascal to caterwauling and bellowing when trout time's a-coming," he offered, explaining his loyal hand's excitement over "Marse Ned's" annual resumption of fishing. "It is the same spirit of restlessness, warmed to life by the first mild breezes, which sets me to rummaging and to fussing with flies and feathers, and to overhauling a certain old tackle-box as it has been overhauled these many years."³⁵⁰ According to this contributor, for laborers like "Ole Brack Pete," enthusiasm for service, optimistically presented as the pinnacle of black social ambition, came from a love of both field sports and for laboring for whites.

Once sportsmen departed for the field, they relied upon African Americans for all sorts of necessary tasks, including transport, particularly for visitors who might not know the lay of the land. "To enjoy good fishing at Beaufort the first thing you need is a good boatman," wrote South Carolinian "Cosmopolitan" in July, 1874. "Happily they abound, and Alfred or Henry Boyd, Stephen Turner or Caesar Davis will serve you well for a moderate compensation, procure stout lines and strong hooks, such as are used by the local fishermen."³⁵¹ While on an excursion near Lake Ellis, North Carolina, "J.E.W." recalled that through the railroad's station agent³⁵², his party secured the services of "'Sparks' a genuine North Carolina *collard stuffer*" who, "together

³⁵⁰ "Fishing," *Outing* 32 (1), April 1898, 93.

³⁵¹ "A Paradise for Sportsmen," *The Rod and Gun and American Sportsman*, July 18, 1874, 246.

³⁵² Railway interests became some of the most common and influential champions of Southern fish and game. Expanding rapidly since the end of the war, railroads sought to bring Northern and Western sportsmen south for the purpose of expanding their passenger traffic. For this reason, railroad companies, such as the Southern Railway Company, the Norfolk and Western Railroad, the Seaboard Air Line and others, published a large portion of the advertisements and sporting tourism manuals trumpeting Southern hunting and fishing. See for example, Richmond & Danville Railroad, "Summer Resorts and Points of Interests of Virginia and Western North Carolina and North Georgia," (New York: C.G. Crawford, 1884), UNCCH, NCC, Cp917.5 R53 s1.

with his cart and critter, form the transportation of ourselves and our traps.”³⁵³ Northerner Horatio Bigelow recalled that when he and a companion hunted at John’s Island, South Carolina, they employed African-American guides. “Bill had Uncle Joe, a coal black negro with a white wooly beard, to shove him around through the marsh,” Bigelow wrote, “while I drew two small nigs, each with a shoving pole, who managed to keep our clumsy old bateau moving.”³⁵⁴

Sometimes acquiring a skilled guide spelled the difference between sporting success and going home empty-handed. Baltimore, Maryland, sportsman Edward A. Robinson, recalling a trip through Georgia, noted “we stopped at several places as we went along to try the fishing, but did not have much success.” Finally frustrated, Robinson and his friends “made arrangements with a coal black fellow named Lewis to drive us across the island to a celebrated fishing place called Bluff Creek Hammock.”³⁵⁵ On a duck hunt on the Savannah River, one *Outing* contributor, writing under the name “Dick Swiveller,” unfamiliar with the scores of inlets and marshes that dot coastal Georgia, likewise relied on skilled black guides and pilots. “The bateau was commanded by Niger Joe, a prince of camp cooks,” he described, “while Aleck, his black friend, guided the shooting craft skillfully down the current, past the bending willows under which the wild fowl are found and flushed at the approach of the boat.”³⁵⁶ In the rural South, particularly in lowland and coastal regions where slaves had long been employed as huntsmen, fishermen and boatmen, African-American laborers remained both readily available and, more

³⁵³ “The Game of North Carolina,” *Forest and Stream* 2 (3), February 1874, 36-7. [emphasis in original].

³⁵⁴ Horatio Bigelow, *Flying Feathers: A Yankee’s Hunting Experiences in the South*, (Richmond, VA: Garrett and Massie, 1937), 22.

³⁵⁵ “A Trip to Georgia,” *Forest and Stream*, March 18, 1899, 202.

³⁵⁶ “Duck Shooting on the Savannah River,” *Outing* 27 (6), March, 1896, 419.

importantly, knew local fields, forests, and waterways better than most.³⁵⁷ They thus provided the best and most sought after transportation.

Once sportsmen reached their destination, they depended upon experienced black hunters and fishermen to locate their quarry and take them to it. As they well knew, this often provided the best chance for a successful expedition. Fishing for tarpon in an unspecified part of the region, Fred J. Wells employed “a colored man,” Louis Collins, who was “one of the best guides in the South.” Wells, in need of an experienced guide to locate and land the notoriously difficult tarpon, chose Collins because he “lived on the banks of the Fish River all his life, and is thoroughly acquainted with the habits and peculiarities of the different species of fish.”³⁵⁸ R. S. Pollard noted that he and his companions also relied on an African-American guide to locate their prey for a Virginia raccoon hunt. “The snow was at least 12 or 15 in. deep, which indicated at once that we were to have a glorious time,” he began, “and as our host’s old darky Coleman—had been reconnoitering the whole time of the day before to find out where the best hunting grounds were, and had just returned, informing us that “I neber see so many coon tracks before in all my born days,” we knew that our most ardent hopes were about to be realized.”³⁵⁹ If white sportsmen wanted their best chance at catching their prey, they knew to turn to the area’s most experienced black huntsmen and fishermen.

³⁵⁷ For a rare account of maritime black life and labor that takes the story into the post-Emancipation period, see David S. Cecelski’s fine study, *The Waterman’s Song: Slavery and Freedom in Maritime North Carolina*, (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 2001). While Cecelski’s analysis of black maritime labor barely stretches into the postbellum period and does not address former slaves providing sporting labor, it does, perhaps better than any book preceding it, make clear the centrality of African Americans to nineteenth-century coastal and maritime Southern economies.

³⁵⁸ “An Adventure with a Tarpon,” *Outing* 25 (5), February 1895, 389.

³⁵⁹ “A Coon Hunt in the Snow in Old Virginia,” *Forest and Stream*, Feb. 15, 1895, 140.

Indeed sportsmen often found their knowledge of a region's fish and game to be extensive. Naturalist Bradford Torrey, who toured the South in 1898, wrote with surprise of the knowledge demonstrated by an African-American guide he hired in South Carolina:

I quizzed him about birds. Yes, he had noticed them; he had been hunting a great deal. This and the other were named,-- partridges, pheasants, doves, meadowlarks, chewinks, chats, and night-hawks. Yes, he knew them; if not by the names I called them by, then from my descriptions, to which in some cases he proceeded to add some convincing touches of his own.³⁶⁰

White visitors, particularly sportsmen impressed with laborers' experiential knowledge, relied on it heavily, not only for transportation, but also for information and guidance. Describing a deer hunt on the Georgia coast, C. Wayne Cunningham noted that the guides determined the route he and his companions took. After finishing their breakfast, the party waited while their three guides, the previously mentioned Charles Grant, Dick Shed, and Daddy Bob, "fell to a discussion as to what drive we should first take. First, all three disagreed; then, after much expounding on Charles' part and assenting on Dick's, it was determined that we should take one of the drives near the house to start with."³⁶¹ White sportsmen, particularly if not natives, quickly learned what many Southerners had known since slavery—African Americans knew not only where to find fish and game, but also the best ways to get it.

An unnamed 1885 contributor to *Forest and Stream* described this connection between black knowledge and white sport. "While out one day with a friend we were joined by a strapping young fellow who volunteered to take us to every 'gang of pattidges' on the plantation," he recalled. "He informed us that he and another negro had only a short while

³⁶⁰ Bradford Torrey, *A World of Green Hills: Observations of Nature and Human Nature in the Blue Ridge*, (Boston and NY: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1898), n.p., UNCCCH, NCC, C917.5 T69w.

³⁶¹ "A Deer Hunt on the Coast of Georgia," *Outing* 35 (4), January 1900, 371.

before bagged twenty-three quail out of twenty five shots.”³⁶² The contributor gave a clear message to white readers. Black Southerners could both find game, and, to the distress of some white sportsmen, kill it with efficiency. Sportsmen Harry Worcester Smith, in his *A Sporting Family of the Old South*, recalled occasional visits to an acquaintance’s plantation for hunting and fishing trips. His friend often consulted “his overseer and factotum, old Black Sam” for advice on sporting matters. “On the farm and in matters pertaining thereto, Sam was the Chief’s [Smith’s friend] alter ego and he was universally admitted to be a first-rate judge and manager of farm stock generally,” he remembered, “but far above this the old darky prided himself on his knowledge of and skill in hunting raccoons, and other nocturnal ‘varmints.’”³⁶³

Not all white sportsmen would likely admit to relying on subordinates to find fish and game, but none hesitated to use them for the variety of tasks required once the prey was located. Black labor in those situations became an absolute necessity for many outsiders. Sportsman F.A. Olds opined in 1900 that “the prerequisites for a hunt are a negro, an elderly one preferred, a couple of dogs, kept up during the day so as to be “sharp” for the hunt, a light, an ax, and a sack,” making clear his dictum that African Americans were one of the starting points for a Southern excursion.³⁶⁴ “The assistance of a negro is as necessary to the full enjoyment of a coon hunt as cranberry sauce is to the completion of a turkey dinner,” wrote a Charlotte, North Carolina, sportsman in 1901. “When starting out to spend a night with the coons, we always took with us 2 or 3 darkeys, 2 sharp axes, and 2 large corn sacks.” As an example, he described one specific Virginia raccoon hunt involving African-American labor. “One day, about the first of the coon season, Arch [the contributor’s friend and hunting companion] sent over a darkey to

³⁶² “Southern Shooting Grounds,” *Forest and Stream*, February 26, 1885, 86.

³⁶³ Harry Worcester Smith, *A Sporting Family of the Old South*, Albany, NY: J.B. Lyon Company, 1936, 133.

³⁶⁴ “A North Carolina ‘Possum Hunt,” *Outing* 36 (1), April 1900, 33.”

ask if I would go hunting that night. I sent back word that I would, and would take Ned, Jake, and Dick, my father's 3 hired men, to cut down trees and carry the game..."³⁶⁵ Frank A.

Heywood also wrote of the need for black subordinates. Describing small game hunting in the Dismal Swamp of Virginia and North Carolina, he noted that "[f]or coon and possum hunting, provide yourself with plenty of "niggers" and coon dogs, and start into the swamp immediately after dark." For Heywood, having black laborers perform the heavy tasks was indeed necessary, but, perhaps, in some ways secondary to the spectacle of watching such laborers in action. "It will not be long before the dogs will have treed a coon. Then comes the fun," as Heywood noted of watching his hands carry out their appointed task:

Muscular negroes attack the tree with sharp steel or mount into its branches. Torches of lightwood blare brightly. The hunters gather about. The tree falls or the coon is shaken from the branches. In either case there is a conglomerate mass of negro, dog and coon. Thump! The dog has him; and a tussle occurs, but the dog wins. Thump again! A negro has smitten a brother in his anxiety to strike the coon. Yah! A negro has caught a possum, and inserting the beasts' tail in the clevis of a hickory stick, starts for home, the envy of his sable companions.³⁶⁶

In these hunts, black labor also served a key psychological function. Such scenes, "the height of fun," according to Heywood, which depicted African Americans as simultaneously lacking in grace and civility but still under the control of white sportsmen, formed one of the most common tropes of dominance found in white accounts of Southern field sports.

Black labor also cared for and managed the dogs, mainstays of Southern field sports, on white sportsmen's expeditions. Hunting dogs had long been one of the most effective means for locating a variety of small game, such as the fox, rabbit, and squirrel, and even for driving large

³⁶⁵ "Coon Hunting in Virginia," *Recreation: Sporting, Adventure, Travel, Fiction* 14 (3), March 1901, 193.

³⁶⁶ Frank A. Heywood, "The Game of the Dismal Swamp," *Forest and Stream*, May 5 1892, n. p.

game such as deer. Calling to mind both European aristocracy and the antebellum planter elite, a well-bred, finely trained pack of hounds symbolized sporting refinement.³⁶⁷ For Southerners, this dual function also found expression in the ubiquitous presence of the slave dog handler, who appeared frequently in antebellum Southern sporting narratives. After Emancipation, the loyal former slave who controlled the pack remained a staple of both Southern sport and sporting literature; with slavery gone, it was a particularly valuable icon for Southern elites who seemed to admire them as much for their symbolic value as their practical benefit. Andrews Wilkinson, while hunting in Lower Louisiana, took to the field in a multi-racial party that included a former slave dog handler who he recalled in regal tone and with more than a hint of longing for the “old days:”

We were seven, counting for the luck of odd numbers, Jean Baptiste, our colored “master of the hounds.” There were three creoles from neighboring rice plantations, three whites from a neighboring sugar estate, and the dog handler Jean Baptiste, who “was a born subject of one of the same sugar estates, where he had been brought up as a plantation huntsman. During his involuntary bondage he had endured no heavier tasks than were allotted to a hound master, gamekeeper, and venison provider of the old regime.

The high status accorded Jean Baptiste did not disappear with the end of slavery, nor did his function as a symbol of aristocracy and racial control. Representative of the desired continuity in race relations before and after Emancipation that whites recreated in the Southern sporting field, Jean Baptiste proved that freedom did not “ruin” all African Americans. “Though grizzled with advancing age and by thirty years of freedom, and blackened and warped by the winds and suns

³⁶⁷ According to Nicholas Proctor, elite, white possession of and control over the animals used in hunting, including horses, hounds, and hunting dogs, became another component of slaveholders’ sense of mastery of the world around them. *Bathed in Blood*, 65-6.

of half a hundred hunting seasons,” Wilkinson noted with satisfaction, “he still remained the guardian, trainer, and master of our general neighborhood pack of deerhounds.”³⁶⁸

It was also quite common, particularly with the end of slavery, for white sportsmen to hire African-American dog-keepers who used their own animals for hunts. F.A. Olds, on a hunt on the Cape Fear River in North Carolina, employed one Amos, “a faithful darky, to whom a hunt on Bald Head is a never-failing delight,” to provide trained hounds for the hunt, in this case “a sort of spaniel named ‘Jumbo’ and a non-descript cur named ‘Pete,’” and to manage them in the field. While Amos did not know Pete’s exact breed, he did not doubt his effectiveness. “Jes one o’ dem standard cur dogs, de most reliablest dog a nigger kin have,” Amos responded when asked by Olds about Pete’s lineage. “His faith in Pete was justified by results,” Olds decided of their overall effectiveness. While hunting in Maryland, H.M. Howard hired two black dog keepers, the first a “wiry little, old negro, with ill-fitting and discolored clothes, and run down boots” named uncle Ned, and the second, “another negro, a strapping young fellow,” named Lincoln. They brought along “three dogs of doubtful ancestry, popularly termed coon dogs” called “Dash,” “Spark,” and “Dandy.”³⁶⁹ The skill of laborers like Jean Baptiste, Amos, Ned, and Lincoln, who, since the early days of slavery, had been among the most skilled hound masters in the South, played a critical role in the success of white field sports and the maintenance of the illusion of racial aristocracy that seemed threatened in the decades following Emancipation.

This account from an unnamed Tennessee sportsman, describing an opossum shooting party he organized for his sister and a friend visiting from Boston, indicates that black labor

³⁶⁸ Andrews Wilkinson, “Horn and Hound in Grande Cheniere, Louisiana,” *Outing* 29 (5), February 1897, 437.

³⁶⁹ “Coon-Hunting in Maryland,” *Outing* 24 (5), August 1894, 345-6.

often bore the success of an excursion, and not just while in the field. Leaving with a large party of perhaps 20 young men and women, in addition to his mother and another married woman along as chaperones, the party soon met “the negro I had hired, and his pack of dogs.” On the hunt itself, the dogs located their quarry. They treed an opossum which, after being shaken out by one of the laborers, fell to the ground dead. By the end of the evening they had caught four more. “When we started homeward all agreed we had never had a better time,” the narrator recalled. But something had happened unbeknownst to the party, some of whom long afterward expressed surprise that a fall from a tree could so frequently kill an opossum. What they did not know was that the narrator had again relied on his African-American laborer. “They do not know that when I hired the negro I saw 4 ‘possums in his cabin and bought them; instructing him to send a small boy ahead of our party to plant dead ‘possums in trees at ½ hour intervals.”³⁷⁰ Because it would not do to allow guests to go home empty-handed, the laborer not only worked the hunt, but, more importantly, kept his white employer from losing face.

There was practically no limit to the tasks black laborers performed on white expeditions. While at their father’s “Myrtle Grove” plantation south of New Orleans, Andrews and H.W. Wilkinson employed “Tom Howard, our reliable colored cook and camp servitor, and old Jean, the ante-bellum plantation deer-hunter, [who] loaded up our cat-rigged hunting-boat with a big tarpaulin tent, camp-beds, provisions for a week’s cruise, and a good supply of hunting and fishing accoutrements.”³⁷¹ When S. Phelps sought good sport near Pine Bluff, North Carolina, he did so “with a prominent State officer [whom he met through the recommendation of an officer of the Seaboard Air Line Railroad, one of the leading promoters of hunting and fishing in

³⁷⁰ “A ‘Possum Shooting Party,” *Recreation* 14 (4), April 1901, 287-8.

³⁷¹ “Christmas Week Among the Lagoons of Lower Louisiana,” *Outing* 31, (3), December 1897, 211.

North Carolina], his keen scented pointer in front and a well scented darkey behind.”³⁷² C.W. Boyd and a companion set out for a winter shoot in South Carolina “determined to go in style.” One of their first tasks was finding a black laborer to serve their camp. After being “overwhelmed with applications,” they settled on one Barney, “a genuine Southern negro, with thick lips, broad, good-humored face, and somewhat of a character in his way,” who met their needs perfectly:

His accomplishments were considerable. From heeling a gamecock to turning the jack in “old sledge” his skill was unrivaled among his colored brethren. Not an event of importance took place in local sporting circles of which Barney did not know, and of which he was not magna pars, as Virgil puts it. Add to this that he was a first-rate cook, and in social intercourse constantly inclined to risibility, with a never-failing flow of conversation, and no one, I think, can disapprove of our choice.”³⁷³

It was important for Boyd and his friend to employ an experienced sportsmen, but they specifically sought one with a particular personality type—a “genuine Southern negro,” of “good-humored face,” who “in social intercourse constantly inclined to risibility”—that fit their preconceived idea of a properly subordinate African-American companion.

Black labor’s role in white sport did not end with the set camp, baying hounds or captured fish or game. Whites used black labor in all stages of Southern hunting and fishing. African Americans carried the products of such excursions from the field, cleaned and refitted equipment and supplies, even provided entertainment for sportsmen once they returned to camp. Jobs like these were seen as ideal for black subordinates since proper sportsmen, particularly those with aristocratic pretension, would not perform such tasks themselves. R.S. Pollard, for example, relied on his guide to find a laborer to carry home their game for them. “It was now

³⁷² “In the Carolina Woods,” *Recreation* 15 (5), November 1901, 336.

³⁷³ “Winter Shooting in South Carolina,” *Outing* 8 (5), February 1889, 401.

impossible for us to carry all our game,” Pollard remembered. “We were getting more or less tired from our tramp, so we sent Coleman over to a neighboring colored man’s home to ask him if he would not take our game home for us. Coleman soon returned with this man, and after telling him he could take one of the coons for his trouble, we were off again.”³⁷⁴ When sportsman “Mortimer” and a companion returned from the field near Virginia’s York River, they were met by “several of the darkies, who took our traps in charge, and we started for the house.”³⁷⁵

Even the sociability that awaited sportsmen at their destination sometimes included African Americans. Both in the stereotypical Southern sporting camp, of which nineteenth-century sportsmen wrote often or, for well-heeled sportsmen who belonged to such organizations, the more upscale sporting lodge or resort, black subordinate companions remained visible. One unnamed sportsman, describing an 1875 trip to South Carolina, indicated that the presence of former slaves, as well as their activities and behavior while in camp, helped white sportsmen judge the caliber of camp life. Contrasting both the social distance between black and white as well as their respective food, this contributor again demonstrates the multi-varied importance of African-American subordinates. “The negroes were grouped around their own fire at a respectable distance eating their store of provisions contained in one iron kettle, consisting of hominy with the addition of a few birds,” he noted. “We, of the white, or ‘plain’ skins, as our dusky friends are pleased to call us, made an ample meal of a more luxurious character, and chatted merrily till late hours.”³⁷⁶ Such accounts again suggest that white

³⁷⁴ “A Coon Hunt in the Snow of Virginia,” *Forest and Stream*, February 15, 1895, 140.

³⁷⁵ “A Trip to the York River, Virginia,” *The Rod and Gun and American Sportsman*, January 9, 1875, 243.

³⁷⁶ “Shooting in the South,” *Forest and Stream* 5 (15), November 18, 1875, 226.

sportsmen used the presence of African Americans to cultivate their own sporting identity as much as for labor. The entertainment provided between excursions, which sometimes included black performers, also indicates a close relationship between African Americans and white notions of a complete sporting experience. The program to open the 1889 season at the North Carolina Health and Sporting Resort in Avoca, North Carolina, for example, was made more authentic by the presence of black chorus.³⁷⁷ As reported in the Chowan County, *Edenton Fishermen & Farmer* the gathering consisted of a prayer, a welcome address, a formal speech by an R.B. Creecy, “then an old plantation and fishing beach song by a choir of colored singers then dinner.”³⁷⁸

Whether at a resort or in camp, on a bateau or in the field, steering or shooting, trapping or carrying home trophies of the day’s endeavors, African Americans never strayed far from the thousands of white sportsmen who traversed the South in the decades after the Civil War. Such subordinate companions performed the countless, often menial and thankless, functions that enabled Southern hunting and fishing, at least as recognized by white sportsmen, in the first place. They also carried out the other crucial function of being black. Sportsmen who hunted

³⁷⁷ The entertainment value of “authentic” African Americans apparently attracted a following across the Atlantic as well. When renowned sportsmen Harry Worcester Smith, born in Massachusetts but famous for his Southern fox hunts, took a hunting holiday in Ireland in 1912, he brought his favorite African American servants, including Norman Brooks, Dolph Wheeler, Sam Webster, Wiley Thrash and Joe Thomas. These servants charmed a crowd of guests at a Christmas gathering at Middleton Park. According to Smith, he arranged numerous American delicacies, including confectionery from New York, Ham from Virginia, Deerfoot sausages from Massachusetts and grapefruit from Florida. But none seemed as big a hit as Smith’s servants. “They were loud in their praises of the viands and the efforts of my colored cook; and between the courses, Wheeler, my trainer, charmed them with his beautiful double-note whistle, and time and time again the colored quartette would sing and all hands join in the chorus. Finally, after coffee, the table was moved and the rugs withdrawn, and such step dancing as only a Southern darkie can give was shown to those assembled.” *A Sporting Tour Through Ireland, England, Wales and France in the Years 1912-1913*, (Columbia: SC: The State Company, 1925), 214. A lifelong devotee of elite sport hunting, Smith was co-founder, in 1907, of the famed Masters of Foxhounds Association of America.

³⁷⁸ “Avoca; The Health and Sporting Resort—A Big Time Ahead,” *Edenton Fishermen & Farmer*, February, 1889, n.p.

and fished the Southern states demanded the presence of African Americans to make the South seem more like “The South,” as they wished to either remember or experience it, to help transform white sportsmen into country gentlemen of days passed, and to reaffirm, even celebrate, the racial hierarchy that had been muddled by emancipation. Indeed African Americans provided whites not only luxury and labor, but an inexorable link to their cherished identities as sportsmen, Southerners, and whites.

The Benefits of Sporting Labor, Part I

Although African Americans found themselves firmly wedded to the Southern sporting ideal because of whites’ willingness to profit from their hunting and fishing talents and desire to use the presence of people of color to validate their identities, one must not make the mistake of assuming that such exploitation remained completely one-sided and that black sporting laborers did not benefit from their standing as essential to Southern field sports. Such sportsman-laborers drew substantial benefits, some not just financial or material, from laboring for whites. Wages, the most common way that African-American sporting laborers benefited from their work, gave them a chance to earn a cash income in a money scarce economy. Sporting labor gave African Americans, particularly those in the most popular sporting states of the South, including, but not limited to, the Carolinas and Georgia, Florida, Louisiana, Alabama and Mississippi, the chance to secure a ready supply of hard money.

Given the geographic and demographic diversity of the South, and the fact that African Americans worked for whites all across the Southern states, it is difficult to determine if any standard wage levels existed for sporting laborers. Any standard must have been local which, combined with the fact that narrators rarely mention specific payment to laborers, makes it

difficult to determine typical compensation. “Cosmopolitan” asserted in 1874 that black labor “will serve you well and faithfully for a moderate compensation,” a sentiment typical of white sportsmen who rarely discussed specific terms of employment. Likewise B.H. Wilkins, in his memoir “War Boy,” noted that “[t]he poor folks used to make a few dollars poling the sportsmen around” but provided no detail.³⁷⁹ The previously mentioned “J.E.W.,” by contrast, who took to the fields near Lake Ellis, North Carolina, with a laborer named Sparks, offers one of the few examples of specificity. “The best of our guides can be heard for one dollar per day and rations,” he wrote, “and almost every man in the country owns one or more hounds.”³⁸⁰

Evidence indicates that many black sporting laborers sold their services on their own terms, informally, and oftentimes not for cash. The jobs provided not only wages, but also opportunities to earn a share of the fish or game caught or to exchange their skill for sporting gear and equipment that also became part of the pay. The informal economy of sporting labor enabled black laborers, the vast majority of which did not hunt or fish exclusively for a living,³⁸¹ to secure the best deal they could for themselves at a given moment, using the products of their work, earned in cash or kind, to supplement their normal income. It is impossible to determine with certainty how often whites paid African Americans in cash and how often they paid them in animals, skins, or other goods or services, but narrative evidence indicates that such non-cash rewards remained commonplace.

³⁷⁹ B.H. Wilkins, “War Boy,” B.H. Wilkins Memoir, 1856-1876, VHS, Mss5:1W6544:1, n.p.

³⁸⁰ “J.E.W.,” “The Game of North Carolina,” *Forest and Stream*, 2 (3), February 1874, 37.

³⁸¹ An indeterminate number of African Americans, particularly in coastal regions, did secure a close to full-time living serving as hunting and fishing guides and laborers. These workers, who staffed the sporting plantations that became ever more popular with Southern elites and Northern sporting tourists in the late nineteenth century, carved out a substantial and long-lasting economic niche for themselves through their skill in the sporting field. These permanently or semi-permanently employed laborers will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

The previously-mentioned R.S. Pollard, while hunting raccoon in Virginia with his guide Coleman, solicited an area African American to carry his party's game home "after telling him he could take one of the coons for his trouble."³⁸² A former slave named John accompanied George Clark Rankin on his nighttime raccoon hunts. John kept the raccoons for his own use because whites like Rankin perceived raccoons, although great sport to hunt, to be food fit only for African Americans. After returning from the field, "a few nights later John would have a coon supper. But right there I drew the line. No coon for me."³⁸³ For his service to Andrews Wilkinson on an expedition near New Orleans, "Old Jean," who served as a slave huntsman before Emancipation, received a share of the meat as payment. According to Wilkinson, this was ideal because "we had all the snipe and duck shooting that we wanted, while 'Malviny and the chilluns' (ostensibly Jean's family) were provided with enough smoked coon-meat and pickled *poules d'eau* [also commonly called the batfish] to last them for the remainder of winter."³⁸⁴

In addition to the unspecified wages Fred Mather paid laborer and guide "Uncle Sam" for his work on Mather's specimen collecting expedition near Catahoula Lake, Louisiana, he included a number of incentives. To keep Sam happy, he allowed him to sell a portion of the fish and game caught, "as a perquisite, a tip or reward."³⁸⁵ A single catfish Sam landed, which Mather allowed him to sell because "it was a record catfish for me," brought the laborer "\$2.50,

³⁸² "A Coon Hunt in the Snow in Old Virginia," *Forest and Stream*, February 1895, 140.

³⁸³ Small game like raccoon or the opossum was often not eaten immediately, at least if the hunter had time to spare. In order to make the dinner as palatable as possible, raccoon hunters frequently kept the animal alive to fatten it up. It was also common to hang the carcass for a day or two in order to remove the animal's strong "gamey" taste. George Clark Rankin, *The Story of My Life, Or, More Than a Half Century as I Have Lived It and Seen It*, 1912, 67.

³⁸⁴ "Christmas Week Among the Lagoons of Lower Louisiana," *Outing* 29 (5), December 1897, 216.

³⁸⁵ "In the Louisiana Lowlands—II," *Forest and Steam*, October 1 1898, 272.

about 4 cents per pound,” not an insignificant amount of money in 1898.³⁸⁶ Mather also used the opportunity to acquire equipment as incentive for Sam. While searching for a turtle specimen for his collection, Mather promised Sam, who noticed the fine set of hooks and lines used by Mather and remarked that “Golly, I’d like to get some o’ dem hooks fo’ big catfish, dey’s de bes’ I ever see,” that he could indeed earn those same hooks. “Sam, if you can put me where I can get an alligator snapper of 60 lbs. or more,” he promised, “you shall have all these hooks and lines.”³⁸⁷

Aside from the financial and material windfalls, sporting labor also created rare opportunities to display skills in the sporting field that many of their employers believed remained a prerogative of whiteness. Hunting and fishing sometimes gave African Americans a showcase for their own mastery over the natural environment and its products that whites wished to deny them. At times they could exploit their key role in Southern field sports to challenge white authority by embarrassing their employers or engaging in inter-personal behavior vis-à-vis white companions that would be almost unheard of outside of the sporting field. Sporting laborers had a certain amount of social leeway that most other black Southerners, particularly as Reconstruction turned to redemption, and, eventually, segregation, did not enjoy. Put simply, because African Americans became indispensable to “proper” Southern hunting and fishing, they could push at the limits of “proper” behavior for people of color and assert themselves in ways they could not elsewhere.

White accounts of taking to the field with black companions provide occasional glimpses of times when African Americans could proudly display their own skills in front of, and sometimes at the expense of, their white employers/companions. C. Wayne Cunningham, for

³⁸⁶ “In the Louisiana Lowlands—I” *Forest and Stream*, September 24 1898, 247.

³⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 248.

example, on a previously-mentioned deer hunt in coastal Georgia, recalled that one of his laborers loudly displayed confidence in his own talents by blowing a bugle upon arriving at their destination. The bugle call alerted the island's black population to be ready for an approaching white sporting party, but according to Cunningham, "[t]he bugler claimed that the reason he blows his bugle is not so much to warn the colored people of our approach, as the deer. Drawing himself up in a proud manner he would say, 'Boss, when I blow dis horn I can hear dem deer say, "Dere come Chas. Grant."'"³⁸⁸ It would typically be unheard of for a black subordinate to display such braggadocio in the presence of whites, but within the context of field sports, within the safety provided by their service, African Americans could trumpet, or bugle, their own skill.

Consider this account of a 1902 Pinehurst, North Carolina, hunt from an unnamed white sportsman who took to the field with "Tom, my colored guide." While stalking a bevy of quail, some birds were scared up into the air. Both men fired but with very different results:

To be sure it was in the open and the flight was not a hard quarter, but I missed, missed badly, and a half a second later Tom's gun scored a kill. Simultaneously the bevy which had been lying a bit forward went into the air like the sparks of a fourth of July flower pot! Try as I might I couldn't pick a bird and at last, I blazed at the bunch. Tom's gun had cracked with mine and two birds fell. He had waited until they were in line and killed both!

Tom hit both of his targets, a fact not lost on the employer. The guide, however, perhaps not wanting to endanger future employment, and likely well acquainted with the dangers of stepping "out of place" in 1902 North Carolina, downplayed showing up his white companion. Instead he was content to let him stew in his own juices, even attempting to give his employer credit for one of the kills. "'Berry good shot, sah!' he remarked, indicating that one of the birds was mine, and I was too chagrined to contradict him," the embarrassed sportsman noted. "I knew he had

³⁸⁸ "A Deer Hunt on the Coast of Georgia," *Outing* 35 (4), January 1900, 370.

‘wiped my eye’ once and killed two birds with his second barrel, but I kept quiet and guiltily took the bird and tucked it away in my coat, when the old dog brought it to me.” Tom’s importance to the white sportsman’s hunting allowed him to use his skill to the utmost, in the process proving himself the better marksman and attacking the notion of African Americans’ inherent inferiority as shooters and sportsmen. Notice, however, that Tom minimized his challenge to white racial assumptions and his violation of codes of black behavior in relation to whites by not calling attention to it. Indeed that ability probably allowed him to annoy his employer with his magnanimous demeanor in the first place. The narrator noted Tom’s discretion when describing their journey home. “As we rode I held an interesting colloquy with myself, and Tom very kindly confined his remarks to his horse and the dogs.”³⁸⁹

African Americans’ ubiquity in Southern hunting and fishing allowed them to occasionally turn tables on white sportsmen with their centrality to “proper” Southern sport offering a measure of protection in the process. Such examples are rare in sporting narratives, since, as one can imagine, white narrators would be most eager to present themselves and their fellows in a good light, but they do exist. An August 1903 *Recreation* cartoon, for example, demonstrates how subordinate companions might position themselves to counter an employer’s interests. Entitled “How Old Sport Stopped the Game Hog’s Little Game,” the anonymous cartoon depicts the return from the field of the stereotypical “game hog”—the wealthy

³⁸⁹ “With the Quail!: A Day Afield at Pinehurst,” *The Pinehurst Outlook*, November 28, 1902, n.p. White sportsmen valued such discretion in their sporting laborers. It simply would not do for a black subordinate, even if he proved himself the equal or the better of his employer, to make such an occurrence public. Providing for the reputation of a sporting employer was sometimes another requirement of African American sporting subordinates. Suzanne C. Linder, in her *Historical Atlas of the Plantations of the ACE* [Ashepoo, Combahee, Edisto] *River Basin—1860*, described the sporting histories of South Carolina’s Lavington, Bugbee, The Oaks, Drainfield, Fee Farm, and Godfrey plantations and recounted the services of “local African Americans [who] served as paddler and guides.” One in particular, named Bristow, possessed this quality of prudence regarding his employers. According to Linder, Bristow “was especially valuable because it was said he could paddle with one hand and shoot with the other. Given enough compensation, he could also be discreet about just who did the shooting.” *Historical Atlas of the ACE River Basin—1860*, (Columbia: South Carolina Division of Archives and History, 1995), 309.

sportsman who cares little for the careful management of wildlife and thus slaughters more than he should. Accompanying him is “Old Sport,” a laborer who, in the first panel, struggles under the burden of so many animals. Faced with legal limits to how much game he can kill and transport, the Game Hog devises, in the second panel, a clever scheme to evade eager game wardens by stowing his trophies in his luggage. Old Sport, however, who watches the subterfuge with a subtle smile, found a way to repay the Game Hog for making him bear such a burden. The final panel finds the Game Hog smugly awaiting his train seemingly unaware of the warden searching his luggage.³⁹⁰ I do not suggest that black laborers turned in employers who violated bag limits; in fact I have not found an example of this. But this cartoon does show that sporting laborers, because of their near centrality to white field sports and subsequent close proximity to whites while in the field, knew employers’ sporting habits well, would know if any laws were violated, and might have the ability to use such knowledge to their advantage.

³⁹⁰ “How Old Sport Stopped the Game Hog’s Little Game,” *Recreation*, August, 1903, xxviii-xxx.

HOW OLD SPORT STOPPED THE GAME HOG'S LITTLE GAME.



Ah! A good day and a fine bag. Now I must get this stuff home somehow.



This old trunk's the very thing, and a few coats on top will put the warden off the scent.



How easy! Won't the boys laugh when I tell them.

Figure 1: "How Old Sport Stopped the Game Hog's Little Game," *Recreation*, August 1903, xxviii-xxx.

William Allen Bruce provides a more concrete example of a laborer stepping "out of place" in his account of a Charlotte County, Virginia, fox hunt in which a black sporting companion seized the opportunity to prove his skill and knowledge at the expense of white employers. Noting with pride that "no where else on earth does fox hunting yield so much pleasure as here, sir!," Bruce described a hunt in which a particularly sly fox had kept him and

his companions at bay for months. Eventually, Bruce organized a large party to dispatch the fox once and for all. Again the fox eluded the hounds and disappeared, a scene which repeated itself numerous times. Finally, Bruce called on Old Moses, “the ‘darkey’ hand,” for his opinion:

The Old darkey fairly swelled with pride at being able to enlighten so many white folks on such an important topic.

“Does yo’ all see dat scrub oak up dar in de corner, ob dis fence wid dem grape vines a-growin’ ober it?” he asked. “And does yo’ see dat nest in de middle ob dem grape vines? Well, dars de fox right up dar. Ain’t dat a trick?”

After enjoying the expression of astonishment on our faces, Mose continued.

“Dat ar fox cum ‘cross dat field more’n a mile afore dem dogs an’ went ober dis yer fence right dar. He run down dar in de woods an’ walked on dem logs an’ on dat stump an’ into de tops ob dat tree what’s cut down dar. Den he come back in de same track an’ jumped up on dis fence right whar he went ober de fust time; he walked on de top rails tell he cum to dat big nest, den jumped right up into it. He is a layin’ dar yit, jes’ as scrumptious as you please.”

Moses’ proud exhibition of knowledge allowed the party to quickly catch the fox and allowed Moses to display his prowess in that form of hunting most closely associated with Virginia’s aristocracy, a fact which, according to Bruce, the hand let no one forget. “Mose had the pelt to make him a pair of ‘glubs’ [gloves],” he noted, “and he never tires of telling how this sly old fox was caught.”³⁹¹ Protected by the real and symbolic value of his labor, Moses earned not only fox gloves, but a chance to display talents that proved a source of pride long afterwards. Such occurrences often annoyed or embarrassed narrators like William Allen Bruce but, since laborers like Old Moses resided in an inherently subordinate capacity, they could perhaps be dismissed as aberrations that neither questioned assumptions about black sporting skill nor posed any real threat to the racial hierarchy.

³⁹¹ “How a Sly Old Fox Was Caught,” *Recreation* 5 (3), September 1901, 193.

One must therefore be careful not to overstate any leveling effect provided by the importance of African-American sporting labor. For though they remained critical to white sportsmen, black subordinate companions stayed precisely that—subordinate. Ultimately, no matter how skilled the laborer and no matter how much whites claimed to value certain loyal, trustworthy and dear servants, African Americans' key role in Southern field sports could only push at the boundaries of the social hierarchy so far. The ever-growing racial divide limited that ability in the post-emancipation South. If certain black laborers found opportunities to temporarily “turn the world upside down,” those instances remained exceptional. African Americans who relied on hunting and fishing for employment performed difficult and often dangerous work for the benefit of white sportsmen who cared for their subordinates only as far as their own conceptions of proper and enjoyable sport were served.

Consider the story of South Carolina sporting laborer Isaac Polite, who took to the field for the St. Helena Island Rifle and Sporting Club in 1867. Polite departed in a large party that included “nineteen gentlemen consisting of members of the Club both active and honorary, and a number of invited guests from the Navy, from Hilton Head, and from Beaufort.” It was a genteel affair, and, according to David Franklin Thorpe, the club's recording secretary, all had a good time. “The intervals of active field sport were filled with abundant entertainment in camp,” he offered. “The generous good cheer of the tables was discussed with zest and the songs, the speeches and exhibitions of heroic valor in the field were heartily enjoyed.”³⁹² In fact an accident involving Polite became the only mark on the whole affair. In a letter to an acquaintance, Thorpe wrote that a gun belonging to a Mr. William H. Alden severely injured the laborer:

³⁹² Ledger of the St. Helena Rifle and Sporting Club, David Franklin Thorpe Papers, UNCCH, SHC, #4262.

[Alden] had cleaned his hands before cleaning his gun, then not wanting to soil his hands he asked a negro Isaac Polite to fire his gun and to clean it for him. Isaac took the gun, clasped his left hand about the barrels, and with his right hand pulled. The barrels opened outward under his left hand. He has undergone amputation saving the wrist joint and thumb. Alden gave his family fifty dolls, and a sum was made up at once of one hundred and thirty dolls, but that money can't replace a hand.³⁹³

Thorpe recounted the incident in the St. Helena Club ledger, asserting it was “the single untoward incident” of the trip and that “through the generosity of the club, [Polite’s] misfortune was mitigated by the prompt contribution of the sum of one-hundred and thirty one dollars, which *was placed in the hands of his employer* for the benefit of his family.” In addition to the money given Polite’s employer, “a meeting of the Club convened at the camp voted a further donation be made at the next meeting.”³⁹⁴ Their concern had limits however. At the club’s next meeting on February 14th they made no effort to vote additional funds for Isaac Polite who, ostensibly, would no longer be able to secure part of his living through sporting labor.

The Benefits of Sporting Labor, Part II

Despite the chance to earn money, fish or game for themselves, despite the opportunity to display their own skills and experience and despite rare instances when African-American subordinates utilized their own labor’s importance to poke fun at or embarrass their white employers, it must be remembered that white sportsmen employed black labor to serve their needs and did not particularly care if subordinates benefited. African-American sporting laborers

³⁹³ Letter from David Franklin Thorpe to John Mooney, February 6, 1867, David Franklin Thorpe Papers, UNCCH, SHC, # 4262.

³⁹⁴ Ledger of the St. Helena Rifle and Sporting Club, David Franklin Thorpe Papers, UNCCH, SHC, #4262. [emphasis mine].

faced unavoidable limits to their ability to benefit from their own work. Such labor first served the needs of white employers, a fact plainly demonstrated by the tragic story of Isaac Polite.

Whites used narratives of sporting excursions involving African Americans to proffer certain images of people of color to the sporting and reading public that helped to both create and reify notions of black inferiority and white supremacy. For just as antebellum narrators of Southern field sports used descriptions of slaves and masters hunting and fishing together to create the archetype of the docile, blissfully ignorant slave, post-emancipation sporting narrators, writing in a transitional period of Southern race relations spanning the insecurity of Reconstruction and the racial domination of Jim Crow, used the presence of former slaves to create portraits of black (and by reflection white) character that lionized white control over the sporting field and African Americans. Within the pages of sporting periodicals, newspaper accounts and published sportsmen's recollections, writers constructed images of black Southerners that meshed with existing and helped solidify emerging stereotypes of African Americans as unintelligent, uncivilized, incompetent brutes.

White narratives of Southern hunting and fishing from the late nineteenth through the early twentieth century served a variety of inter-related functions in regard to their construction of particular images of African Americans. They recreated in the sporting field, via images of black loyalty, subservience, and docility, the racial hierarchy swept away by Emancipation. They provided humorous and/or degrading scenes of sport involving black companions that met with white readers' stereotypical associations. They contrasted white skill in the sporting field with subordinates' incompetence and poor behavior to solidify their own sense of mastery over hunting and fishing. Finally, they depicted African Americans as inferior sportsmen who lacked skill, intelligence, and moderation in the field for the purpose of furthering efforts to conserve the

South's fish and game. Put simply, white authors crafted stories of the bi-racial sporting field to reinforce white social and cultural authority. For that reason, such stories abound in narratives of Southern hunting and fishing.

The "Old-Time Negro" became one common device used to display white authority. This invention of disgruntled Southerners in the decades after Emancipation displayed a longing for the days of slavery. In such descriptions, elderly former slaves who remained loyal and true to their former masters are contrasted with the younger generation of African Americans not born into slavery and not as dependent upon or deferential to whites. The faithful, antebellum archetype appears in the story "Moses, the Tale of a Dog," by Francis J. Hagan, which appeared in *Outing* in September 1898. In the story, "The Colonel" is on a sporting trip with two servants, one a former slave named Uncle Ephe, the other a young hand named John White, who brought along one of his young hunting dogs. While hunting, the Colonel commented on the dog's obvious good breeding. "[The puppy] looks to me stouter than the sire, and, I dare say, has speed," he offered. Forgetting his place, the brash John White, "carried away by this need of praise for his idol from such an imminent source," spoke up. "Yes, sah, he pintedly (sic) is fast—scuse me, Kunnel, scuse me, sah." White spoke before realizing it was not his business to offer his opinion on such matters. The remark left White "confounded by his own temerity, bowing and scraping, with his hat off." Loyal Uncle Ephe, who knew the propriety of such occasions, admonished the youngster for his infraction. "'Laws-a-me,' said Uncle Ephe, sotto voce, enviously, 'what's this new generation o' niggers a-comin' to, a-takin' de words out o' their master's mouths?'"³⁹⁵ For white readers of sporting magazines such as *Outing*, particularly Southerners, Uncle Ephe would have been a welcome character who provided reassurance that the racial deference of the "Old South" remained alive and well in the sporting field.

³⁹⁵ "Moses, the Tale of a Dog," *Outing* 32 (6), September 1898, 576.

Such accounts of black loyalty to white superiors appeared frequently in narrative accounts of Southern hunting and fishing. For some sportsmen, broadcasting African-American laborers' deferential demeanor vis-à-vis whites became itself a worthy endeavor. An unnamed sportsman who described an 1875 trip to coastal South Carolina noted that he employed former slaves as a "study of character afforded by the negroes, decidedly the most primitive in manners and speech of the Southern blacks, [which] is extremely interesting." The contributor then recalled the role of African Americans in his hunting party. After the pre-trip meal, "a little darkey popped his head in at the door" to inform them that it was time to ready their traps and equipment and prepare to depart. Before leaving headquarters, "an old Southern mansion with broad piazzas, large high studded rooms, and chimneys built out-side, formerly occupied by the plantation overseer, an important personage in those times," the narrator described the captain of the company's laborers, "a negro by the name of Sergeant Parker." Parker was a kind and skilled hand, but more importantly "understood his place thoroughly." Whites had their minds set on tractable, dependable black labor and made it a necessary part of their sport. "What servants these colored men are," he concluded. "The art of serving is with them innate."³⁹⁶

White commentators presented the sporting field as a place where racial subordination remained intact, where white sportsmen must and did dominate. African Americans neither controlled the sporting field nor had authority in relation to whites. When the races met in the field, which they did in so often in accounts of Southern hunting and fishing, whites remained invariably in charge and African Americans ideally deferential. Consider this account of "A Quail Hunt in North Carolina" by "H.W.K.," during which his party met a group of black huntsmen. "Two of them had guns, the others were apparently unarmed, and they had a half a

³⁹⁶ "Shooting in the South," *Forest and Stream* 2 (3), November 1875, 226.

dozen dogs of as many breeds and colors. Evidently they were rabbit hunters. A North Carolina negro is a born rabbit hunter,” he noted. “A dozen or more of them will get together with possibly two or three guns among them and a horde of dogs of all kinds. Then they will have a rabbit hunt.” Apparently the sight of the huntsmen inspired the band of whites to temporarily suspend their search for quail and try for a rabbit. Standing on a railroad embankment, a few of the white huntsmen spied a rabbit and opened fire. They missed their mark, which the black huntsmen, gathered nearby, enjoyed very much. “Of course they were highly delighted,” noted H.W.K., “and their remarks were anything but complimentary to our skill; but we didn’t say a word—at least not aloud.” Then the group of African Americans fired. Apparently believing one of their party made the kill, “a shout of joy went up as one of the rabbit hunter’s dogs trotted in with the dead rabbit in his mouth.” Their glee soon abated, as the whites, either believing that they had shot the rabbit, or simply sure that the animal belonged to them by right, demanded it. According to H.W.K., the African Americans offered no debate or resistance. “Upon our claiming the game it was handed over, and the gift of a ten-cent piece sent off the colored contingent with many grins of delight.”³⁹⁷ Properly deferential, the black huntsmen did not question the white men’s right to the rabbit, thereby affirming their racial authority in the field. The whites responded by offering a gift of money to show their largesse.

Comic relief provided another obvious function of the frequent inclusion of African Americans in white descriptions of Southern hunting and fishing. Nineteenth-century sporting narratives, designed to sell books, newspapers, and magazines, often contained humorous and farcical occurrences from the field that focused on people of color. These descriptions of Southern excursions appeared at the same time American racism reached an all-time high. In

³⁹⁷ “A Quail hunt in North Carolina,” *Forest and Stream*, February 27, 1890, 104.

such narratives, white authors often poked fun at African Americans. Such humor painted subordinate companions as unintelligent, unrestrained, and uncivilized to contrast stereotypical black character with the intelligence and self-control of white sportsmen.³⁹⁸

In this account of a Charlotte County, Virginia, raccoon hunt, for example, an anonymous contributor portrayed his three African-American companions, Ned, Jake and Dick, as stereotypically overemotional and unable to restrain their excitable natures. When they reached the field and their hounds began to bay, the excessive exuberance of the hands made it difficult for the white sportsman to clearly assess the situation:

The Negroes could no longer contain themselves and began to yell.

“Dat varmint better be a shakin’ heseff. Whoop dar! Ain’t dem dogs a singin’? I dun tole you Bright [one of their dogs] would be a good coon dog, cose he got a black roof in he mouf!”

Then he chimed in the old song: “Rac-coon up de gum stump holler/He so fat he jes kin waller.”

“Keep still,” I said. Red [another dog] had not been heard from, and we were in doubt whether we were really on the trail of a coon.³⁹⁹

This juxtaposition of white and black sporting behavior is typical of nineteenth-century narratives. The white hunter is in complete control of his emotions while his black companions are not, a contrast which lays bare one of the stereotypes with which white sportsmen maintained the racial divide and labeled African Americans inferior sportsmen.

Outing contributor John Mortimer Murphy relied on the popular notions that African Americans possessed mortal fear of wild animals and remained ignorant of the ways of the

³⁹⁸ As Nicholas Proctor has argued, the gentleman sportsman remained calm, self-assured and restrained. Antebellum planters had to exude such confident control at all times to maintain the social order of a slave society. The sporting field then, because of the increased chance of chaos, fear and emotional outbursts, was ideal for elites to display their ability to keep their passions in check (63-5). This emphasis on self-control, particularly as a foil to stereotypes of black behavior, remained a part of the culture of Southern field sports after Emancipation

³⁹⁹ “Coon Hunting in Virginia,” *Recreation* 14, (3), March, 1901, 193.

natural environment, both staples of nineteenth-century racial stereotypes and sporting narrative humor, to entertain the reading audience. Describing shooting in Florida, Murphy commented on African Americans' alleged fear of alligators:

I have enjoyed some ludicrous situations while engaged in saurian [lizard] hunting with our colored...brethren, for if there is any living thing of which they have a wholesome fear it is an alligator, and next to that, a "bad-dog." Bayonets have no terrors compared with the jaws of these two creatures. I asked one athletic individual why he was so much afraid of alligators, and he replied: "I heard a man in Jefferson County say dat de reason 'gatahs was so black was, kase in old times, 'bout de flood time, 'gatahs used to live on collude people, and dat made 'em so bad they was kicked out o' d' Ark by Noah or his mudder. Now I don't want 'em to get any blacker by eatin' me; not if I kin help it. No sir, you can't get me to tech de tail of a possuming 'ole gatah. I ain't ready to die yet."⁴⁰⁰

Here Murphy uses African Americans' supposed mortal fear of alligators, as well as the ludicrous explanation of the alligator's color offered by one of them, to entertain readers likely well-versed in assumptions of black intellectual inferiority. The account would also further demonstrate to a white audience that African Americans possessed an inherent fear and misunderstanding of the natural world and the creatures therein that both contrasted with whites' keen knowledge and further proved African Americans to be incompetent sportsmen.

Sometimes the "humor" of such narratives came less from poking fun at black character than from entertaining the audience by placing them in physical danger. Such examples often had a cruel edge that reveals much about both the nature of the Southern racial hierarchy and the racism of the American sporting public. In *The Glories of the Carolina Coast*, one-time South Carolina Audubon Society Secretary James Henry Rice Jr., who, as we will see, would become one of the leading proponents of using the "negro question" to convince Southerners to accept restrictions of their hunting and fishing, fondly recalled a contest between an African-American

⁴⁰⁰ "Alligator Shooting in Florida," *Outing* 15 (4), January 1890, 303.

laborer and a tenacious raccoon on St. Helena Island. “One of the most laughable sights I ever witnessed,” he recalled, “was a fight between a negro man and a “tiger” raccoon. The negro had cut down a big tupelo in which the raccoon was hiding. I had promised him a dollar for the job.” When the laborer went into the tree after the raccoon, a fierce wrestling match ensued:

Such spitting, growling and cursing mixed together I never heard before or since. The raccoon was biting off pieces of skin and the negro trying to tear him loose. It was worth a dollar of anybody’s money. When the negro finally got free, he went sailing through the woods without a hat, his shirt almost torn off him...A dollar and a new shirt made things right; but he had enough raccoon to do him.⁴⁰¹

Rice took enormous delight in watching a subordinate risk his personal safety for his employers’ benefit. The enjoyment of that “laughable sight” seemed to come from his companion’s loss of both the clothes and skin off his back and from the fact that he could cause such mayhem simply by offering a dollar. Such stories, in which African Americans were placed in dangerous, humiliating and, for white readers, “humorous” situations, were common in sporting narratives and helped sportsmen clarify who was in control of hunting and fishing in Dixie.

“Will Scribbler” wrote of another incident involving African Americans designed to amuse the reading public that also had a decidedly dark edge that would likely have been understood and appreciated by a Southern audience. His account of a hunt on an unspecified plantation, like so many other sporting accounts, may have been highly fictionalized or told as much to “entertain” or “instruct” as to recount a real incident. Scribbler described a party of white hunters who came across a black sportsman in the field. The “native,” as they called him, hunting with an old musket and a frail hound, volunteered to lead the men to a covey of quail if they repaid him with a few loads of shot. The men agreed and set off with their new companion. The route they took led them through a nearly impassable wall of briars and brush

⁴⁰¹ James Henry Rice Jr., *The Glories of the Carolina Coast*, (Columbia, SC: R.L. Bryan, 1925), 90-1.

that yielded but one rabbit and a single bird. Angry at “the native” for producing poor results, the sportsmen became infuriated when he made another offer:

“Hi, gemmen, I tecks yer whar dar’s er nudder gang ef gim’e sum mo’ loads!”

In answer we presented arms as if to deliver the desired ammunition at easy gunshot, but our tormentor tumbling heels over head into a convenient briar patch in a frantic effort to dodge behind a mammoth oak, we concluded that sufficient retribution had found him out and so left him wondering what effect our nitro powder, wadded with paper, would produce when fired from that rusty musket.⁴⁰²

In this vignette, the guide failed in his duty to provide the white sportsmen with a sufficient quantity of game. For that, the whites made their “tormentor,” pay a price by threatening him, scaring him into fleeing for his life. Certainly the author intended the story to be humorous, but there are other messages imbedded that would not be lost on white sportsmen. Incompetent subordinates deserved what they got if their presumptuous claims of knowledge or authority proved detrimental to their social betters. African Americans, such as the “sable equivocator” appearing here, because of his “rusty musket” and inability to deliver on his promise, could not be taken seriously as skilled sportsmen. Unlike the laborers described earlier, lauded because they made good on the terms of their employment and because their status as trusted servants made whites view them as extensions of their own skill, a poor sportsman who operated away from white oversight and then failed to deliver on his word should be treated with nothing but contempt.

Indeed even the entertainment drawn from cultivating mastery over African Americans in the field could barely qualify as sporting, at least as presented by some white commentators. Taking to the field with black companions, some asserted, when done so by an otherwise refined,

⁴⁰² “In November,” *Forest and Stream*, December 22, 1894, 334.

white sportsman, required stepping down from a higher level of civilization and temporarily embracing a less evolved form of sport. Edward W. Sandys described such excursions with something of a nostalgic longing, even as he made it clear that such endeavors were not true sport as he understood the term. When asked if he was familiar with raccoon hunts, he recalled that “[b]efore I ever attained the dignity of a full-fledged sportsman, while yet the complete outfit of cords and canvas, high-priced breech-loaders and well-broken dogs, was a fascinating dream of the future, I knew the coon.” Sandys knew that raccoon hunts were not proper for a true sportsman, but admitted that he still secretly engaged them from time to time. “And, let me confess it,” he continued, “long after I down my quail and break my own dogs, I have sneaked away of an August night to join a crowd of ‘brack niggers’ for a good old-fashioned coon hunt.” Notice again the dual message of such descriptions. African Americans cannot be true sportsmen because they do not hunt properly, yet it is perfectly acceptable for whites to join in such occasions because they provide both a temporary escape from the trappings of civilization and a valuable study of black character. “Ah, those old nights!” Sandys concluded. “What jollifications, what carousals of boisterous, harmless savagery were they!”⁴⁰³

Characterizations of black intellectual and technological backwardness appear frequently in accounts of the bi-racial Southern sporting field. Describing a turkey hunt with his friend Matthew Dickerson, apparently a notable area hunter, David Dodge recalled that area African Americans stood in awe of the skill and technological advancement of the white sportsman. “Nearly every negro man and boy on the plantation came up to have a look at the famous turkey hunter,” Dodge remembered. “His amazingly long-barreled gun, which was an old “flint-and-

⁴⁰³ “Paw Ducket’s Coon-Hunt,” *Outing* 26 (6), September 1895, 434.

steel” converted into a percussion, was an object of unbounded interest.”⁴⁰⁴ The previously mentioned “J.E.W.,” who employed a laborer named Sparks, described his subordinate’s astonishment at his employers’ breech-loading shotgun. Noting that, “[m]y breech loading gun was a little too much for Sparks,” he let the hand examine it:

He noticed something peculiar about it, and asked to examine it. As I passed the gun to his hands, I pressed the lever, and as it touched his palm, the gun to his eyes broke in the middle. Astonishment was depleted upon every feature of his face, while his language deserves a place in “the archives of gravity,” as one of our colored members of the Legislature said in 1868.⁴⁰⁵

Note, however, that although “J.E.W.” delighted in Sparks’ backwardness, he deigned to complement him on one of his skills. “But Sparks could shoot,” he concluded, “and had a splendid pair of barrels.” As a sportsman, Sparks, because of the unfamiliarity with new technology endemic to African Americans, could never equal his white employer; yet as a trusted servant, “J.E.W.” could acknowledge his fine shooting. The lesson of such accounts is obvious. Black subordinate companions were perfectly adept at performing brute sporting labor, but were not intelligent enough, perhaps even civilized enough, to understand the means and methods of modern, indeed white, field sports.

Conclusion

African-American labor had long been a critical component of antebellum sportsmen’s notions of proper sport. For white Southerners of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the presence of loyal, dedicated black attendants reinforced their sense of mastery over

⁴⁰⁴ “A Turkey Hunt,” *Outing* 27 (3), December 1895, 233.

⁴⁰⁵ “The Game of North Carolina,” *Forest and Stream* 2 (3), February 1874, 36-7.

the natural world and their assumed dominion over people of color. With slavery gone, the dual function of black sporting labor became even more important. As they recovered from the war and Reconstruction, as they struggled with black independence, as they grew increasingly frustrated with African Americans' slaughter of fish and game, white sportsmen looked to the traditionally hierarchical race relations of Southern hunting and fishing to help resurrect the control and subservience that characterized the slave system and to recapture the mythologized interactions between white superiors and black subordinates that anchored their rosy remembrances of antebellum life.

African-American labor played a central role in the South's emergence as a sporting destination. Sporting tourists saw in Southern locales not only rich supplies of fish and game but also places where the pressures of Northern, industrial life might be set aside, where life remained simpler and more natural, and where society existed as it had before the Civil War. These romantic longings, applied to the South, meant enjoying pristine natural areas unspoiled by over-population and modern development, a physical backdrop that included living reminders of the antebellum South and, perhaps most importantly, the employment of skilled and loyal African Americans who simultaneously performed necessary labor and placed a capstone on white visitors' reconstruction of a mythologized Old South. This vision connected proper sporting behavior, gentility, intelligence, self-control, and skill to racial domination.

Careful reading of Southern sportsmen's accounts reveals the sporting field as an important site of white efforts to construct and reaffirm stereotypes that both harkened back to slavery and provided concrete examples of white supremacy in the contemporary United States. Significantly, this process occurred at a time when the race issue exploded onto the national scene and Southerners struggled with what the press often termed the "Negro problem." For

their part, African-American subordinate companions found working for whites a valuable source of money, equipment, and fish and game that would normally not be available to them. Beyond these advantages, which should not be understated, taking to the field with white sportsmen sometimes served a less material, though no less important, function. The centrality of black labor to the real and symbolic operation of Southern hunting and fishing sometimes created rare moments when sporting laborers used their skill and experience to counter their employer's vision of social and sporting mastery. But ultimately, for African Americans in the rural South, being a necessary component of Southern hunting and fishing proved a double-edged sword. It provided opportunities for material and psychological benefit that are hard to precisely measure but harder to completely discount, but it also gave white sportsman an arena from which to celebrate white supremacy, to invalidate black sporting practices, and to cultivate stereotypes of black character that persisted even longer than Jim Crow.

5. “With the Due Subordination of Master and Servant Preserved”: Race and Sporting Tourism in the Post-Emancipation South

A great country is the South! I love every yard of it; its straggly roads, with pigs, pickaninnies and game cocks always in sight; its pine shake shacks, with mammy in the door, pipe in mouth and mongrel puppy barking at you from the porch...Some day I may settle there; or perhaps my youngest son, whose bent is decidedly agricultural, may buy him a plantation there in preference to bucking the game in our cold, hard North.

--Sportsman Warren H. Miller, writing to *Field and Stream* in 1918⁴⁰⁶

Introduction

By 1902, Theodore Roosevelt was America's best known sportsman. Co-founder of the world-famous Boone and Crockett Club and one of the key figures in the rise of the conservation movement, Roosevelt had hunted all over the world, killing most animals sought by big game hunters. Yet despite his many conquests, Roosevelt had yet to land one of the United States' most famous trophies, the Southern black bear. A living symbol of sporting privilege, Roosevelt had long desired to kill such a bear in the manner practiced by antebellum elites. "I was especially anxious to kill a bear in these canebrakes after the fashion of the old Southern planters," noted Roosevelt in *Scribner's Magazine* in 1908, "who for a century past have followed the bear with horse and hound and horn in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Arkansas."⁴⁰⁷ With his long-held goal of killing a Southern black bear, and a long-standing invitation from Mississippi Governor Andrew H. Longino to hunt in the Magnolia State, Roosevelt decided to head south at last for his bear. Preparations took months due to the need for secrecy and

⁴⁰⁶ "With Tad and Gosh in Cotton Land," *Field and Stream*, February 1918, 847.

⁴⁰⁷ Theodore Roosevelt, "In the Louisiana Canebrakes," *Scribner's Magazine* 43 (1), January 1908, 47.

security, but finally, in November 1902, the President set out by train on the long journey to the famous hunting grounds of the Yazoo Delta.

In addition to Roosevelt, the hunt, which took place largely on plantation lands in Sharkey County, Mississippi, featured a “who’s who” of Northern and Southern sporting elites, including Illinois Central Railroad President Stuyvesant Fish, who organized the hunt for the President; future Louisiana Governor John M. Parker, who used his considerable Mississippi sporting connections to arrange its location; Tabasco Sauce heir and former “Rough Rider” John McIlhenny; planter Huger Foote (grandfather of noted Civil War historian Shelby Foote); and planter and future Mississippi Senator LeRoy Percy. These leading political and financial figures, all avid sportsmen, eagerly joined Roosevelt’s expedition both for political reasons and to enjoy the famed spectacle of an authentic old-style Southern bear hunt. Parker and his associates did everything to make the hunt a success. They scouted the best hunting grounds, chose the best laborers to accompany the President’s entourage and, perhaps most importantly, contracted Major George M. Helm, tapped to lead the hunt, to find the best sportsman in the region to guide the party. Helm chose renowned Mississippi huntsman Holt Collier, a fifty-six year old former slave who would become one of the most famous sportsmen in Southern, indeed, American history.⁴⁰⁸ The choice of an African American to lead a hunt comprised of such important personages may be remarkable to those unfamiliar with Southern hunting and fishing, but to those who understood what sportsmen of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries understood to be a “truly Southern” sporting experience, it came as no surprise.

⁴⁰⁸ Minor Ferris Buchanan, *Holt Collier: His Life, His Roosevelt Hunts, and the Origin of the Teddy Bear*, (Jackson, MS: Centennial Press, 2002), 154-7.

This chapter examines the culmination of the association between African Americans and “authentic” Southern hunting and fishing drawn by native and visiting sportsmen in the post-emancipation South. Aside from becoming the preferred source of sporting labor for native Southern sporting elites, African Americans, as ideal servants, played a vital role in the growth and popularity of Southern sporting tourism, most notably in the elite sporting clubs and plantations located particularly in coastal and low country regions of the Deep South. Wealthy Northerners and local speculators who saw the economic potential of such tourism eagerly snatched up affordable undeveloped and unused land to attract those who wished to indulge in Southern field sports. Between the mid 1880s and the 1920s, largely in but not limited to such places as the coastal parts of the Carolinas and Georgia, Northwestern Florida, Southwest Louisiana, South-central Alabama and the Mississippi Delta, they purchased hundreds of plantations and vast tracts of unused or abandoned lands and converted them into sporting retreats where visitors, wishing to experience the Old South firsthand, could relive the natural and social worlds of a recreated “Dixieland.” There sportsmen could experience the stereotypical trappings that made the mythologized plantation South attractive to Northern tourists. These included Southern hospitality, largely undeveloped natural surroundings, stately plantation houses and sporting excursions “after the fashion of the old Southern planters,” whom sportsmen, like Theodore Roosevelt, admired for both their gentility and sporting acumen.

Essential for recreating the social and cultural world of the antebellum South, such hunting and fishing venues required black laborers. From the 1870s, when the movement to establish such tourist retreats began, African Americans provided the best and most readily available sporting laborers and, in the process, satisfied visitors’ expectations of the Southern experience. In North Carolina, black labor worked such places as the famed Pinehurst Resort,

once a renowned sporting and health resort now famous as a Professional Golf Association tour stop. In South Carolina, black labor dominated places like Beaufort's Chelsea Plantation club, managed by the fore-mentioned John Edwin Fripp, as well as the coastal Broadwater Club, which owned the celebrated Hogs Island preserve, reportedly Grover Cleveland's favorite retreat. In Georgia, African Americans added "authenticity" to white sport in places like Brunswick's Jekyll Island Club, once directed by New York Judge Henry E. Howland, by reputation among the most exclusive sporting clubs in the world, as well as stately Cumberland Island, most famous as the home of "Dungeness," the getaway of Mrs. Thomas M. Carnegie [brother of Andrew] of Pittsburgh. At these and other recreations of the Old South, African Americans worked as scouts, drivers, watchmen, guides and general laborers, providing employers with experienced and skilled labor that completed visitors' expectations of a by-gone era of racial subordination that proved a strong lure for tourists seeking to escape the confines of their increasingly industrialized and urbanized worlds to a reconstruction of what seemed to them a close approximation of the romantic Old South.

The ever growing number of visitors who sought this idealized Southern past made nostalgic tourism an increasingly important part of the Southern economy. As the presence of loyal black attendants became more closely associated with that recreation many African Americans carved out an important and long-lasting economic niche by meeting those expectations.⁴⁰⁹ In fact the association between Southern sporting tourism and African Americans eventually became so total that black laborers became a sporting necessity. In the

⁴⁰⁹ For a discussion of the process whereby tourism, due to a decline in large-scale plantation agriculture in certain parts of the South that created vast acreage of superfluous land, became both a critical part of the Southern economy and a key way for Northern capitalists to invest in the development of the region, see J. William Harris' outstanding *Deep Souths: Delta, Piedmont and Sea Island Society in the Age of Segregation*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), especially Chapter 4, "Capital at Work, Capitalists at Play;" and Nina Silber's *The Romance of Reunion: Northerners and the South, 1865-1900*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), especially Chapter 3, "Sick Yankees in Paradise: Northern Tourism in the Reconstructed South."

minds of many white sporting enthusiasts, a Southern hunting or fishing excursion could not be complete without the black presence. *Subordinate* African Americans used hunting and fishing employment to their own benefit at precisely the time when increasing dissatisfaction with black customary rights led sportsmen, landlords and legislators to work to generally restrict *independent* African Americans' access to Southern fish and game.

The necessity of having skilled African Americans on hand, both for real and symbolic reasons, made conditions right for former slave Holt Collier to one day lead the hunting party of President Roosevelt.⁴¹⁰ A sporting legend while alive, Collier has again become something of a celebrity more than sixty years since his death at age 90. The most famous black huntsman ever, his exploits have recently become the subject of children's novels in 1991 and 1993 and a scholarly biography in 2002.⁴¹¹ In addition, Collier's renown as a guide, especially his involvement with the Roosevelt hunts, has led to the placement of an historical marker at the site of his hunt with the President and, in March 2004, the dedication of an environmental education and resource management center at the Yazoo National Wildlife Refuge as the Holt Collier Wildlife Interpretation and Education Center.⁴¹² As a guide and bear hunter, Collier had few

⁴¹⁰ Holt Collier was not the only African American on the hunt with Theodore Roosevelt. Collier selected guides Frank Dorsey, Calvin Dorsey, Bill Ennolds and Thomas McDougall to attend the President's party while in the Delta. In addition, John M. Parker employed African Americans Ben Johnson and Freeman Wallace as guards, whom he charged with maintaining the perimeter of the hunt to keep out reporters who might seek to intrude on the President's outing. According to Minor Ferris Buchanan, this outraged both reporters and local whites, who strongly objected to being kept away at gunpoint by African Americans. Buchanan, *Holt Collier*, 158, 162-3.

⁴¹¹ See Jim McCafferty, *Holt and the Teddy Bear*, (Gretna, LA: Pelican Publishing, 1991) and *Holt and the Cowboys*, (Gretna, LA: Pelican Publishing, 1991) and Buchanan, Minor Ferris, *Holt Collier: His Life, His Roosevelt Hunts, and the Origin of the Teddy Bear*, (Jackson, MS: Centennial Press, 2002). McCafferty's novels, intended to entertain children with the colorful exploits of this legendary figure, are based on a romanticized version of Collier's life. They are not intended to be factual accounts of incidents in Collier's life.

⁴¹² The dedication to Holt Collier was part of a 2003 Congressional bill, sponsored by Mississippi 2nd District Congressman Bernie Thompson, entitled the "Theodore Roosevelt National Wildlife Refuge Act" which established a federal wildlife refuge in the part of the Yazoo-Mississippi delta known as the "Lower Delta." House of Representatives of the United States, H.R. 2894, "Theodore Roosevelt National Wildlife Refuge Act," 108th Congress, 1st Session (July 24, 2003).

equals. According to his WPA testimony and the recent biography by Minor Ferris Buchanan, Collier averaged around 125 bears per season and owned an account book that listed over 2,100 bears killed through 1890.⁴¹³ Few Southern sportsmen remained unfamiliar with Holt Collier and his sporting prowess. For decades he reigned as reportedly the surest shot, keenest tracker, ablest guide and most famous huntsman of the Delta. His reputation led to demands for his services for wealthy landowners, politicians and sporting tourists from around the country.

The 1902 Roosevelt hunt, along with a later October 1907 hunt with the President in the northern Louisiana canebrakes,⁴¹⁴ brought Holt Collier national attention and secured his place as an almost mythic figure among American sportsmen.⁴¹⁵ Yet despite such achievements and many others in Collier's unmistakably amazing life, his wide renown remains a bit of a mystery. That an African American in the turn of the century rural South could find such valuable means of support is unusual considering the limited economic and social opportunities open to African Americans at the time. That a former slave could become so trusted as guide and huntsman that

⁴¹³ According to Buchanan, "Collier earned more than nine hundred dollars in one season and was known to have as much as two thousand dollars in his possession at one time. These were phenomenal amounts of money for a black man in the Mississippi Delta and more than most people earned in a year." Buchanan, *Holt Collier*, 138-9.

⁴¹⁴ According to the story, Holt Collier, who solemnly promised the President he would at last get a bear on that hunt, stunned and hobbled a black bear that the party presented to Roosevelt. According to Collier's account of the hunt, "I said to him, with my head down, 'Don't shoot him while he's tied,'" referencing the idea that true elite big game hunters avoid killing helpless quarry. Rawick, *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography*, Supplement Series 1, 7(2), Mississippi Narratives, 455. The other hunters called for Roosevelt to shoot, but he refused. Soon after, accounts of the outing, particularly the incident with the bear, began to receive wide circulation in the national press. Numerous cartoonists, most famously Pulitzer Prize-winner Clifford Kennedy Berryman of the *Washington Post*, began to include images of helpless bears, often released by the honorable Roosevelt, in depictions of the President. These bears, which occasionally accompanied Roosevelt in cartoons for years afterwards, were soon dubbed "Teddy Bears." Capitalizing on the popularity of the "Teddy Bear" image, toy manufacturers began attaching the name to their new lines of stuffed animal toys. Buchanan, *Holt Collier*, 171-2, 178-83.

⁴¹⁵ Both Collier's narrative and Roosevelt's personal accounts indicate that the President was most impressed with Collier. According to Roosevelt, Collier was "in his own way as remarkable a character as Ben Lilley [the renowned white hunter who led the 1907 Louisiana hunt]. He was a man of sixty and could neither read nor write, but he had all the dignity of an African chief, and for half a century he had been a bear hunter, having killed or assisted in killing over three thousand bears." Nothing better attests to Roosevelt's fondness than the gift made to the guide after the 1907 hunt, during which Roosevelt finally got his elusive black bear. Aware that Collier was impressed by Roosevelt's rifle, the President sent Collier a 45-70 caliber model 1886 Winchester lever action rifle, which became Collier's most treasured keepsake until his death. Roosevelt, "In the Louisiana Canebrakes," 50.

he would one day hunt with the President of the United States (who called Collier the best guide and hunter he had ever seen) is remarkable given the strictures of Jim Crow. And that the same African American would become so revered that he would one day be the subject of children's novels and historical markers and have parts of a national wildlife refuge dedicated in his honor seems nothing short of astonishing. Taken together, the events of Holt Collier's remarkable life must represent more than just the story of how one man employed incredible sporting skill to create opportunities typically denied people of color in the decades after Emancipation.

Holt Collier's life tells us more than a story of his sporting excellence and white contemporaries revered him for more than his abilities in the field. Holt Collier's entire life of ninety years involved unending labor in the service of whites. Before becoming a legendary sportsman, Collier had been a loyal slave whose fidelity led him to go off to war as personal attendant to his master, Colonel Howell Hinds.⁴¹⁶ Collier then became a recognized African-American Confederate combat veteran, fighting as a scout and ranger with the Ninth Texas Cavalry, for which the Sons of Confederate Veterans honored him with a gravestone dedication in 2004.⁴¹⁷ Before becoming a faithful huntsman entrusted with the safety of a President, Collier

⁴¹⁶ According to his WPA interview, when Collier asked his master to allow him to accompany him and his son to war, he was refused. Collier was only about fourteen at the time and they deemed him too young to fight. "I begged like a dog, but they stuck to it--'You are too young,'" recalled Collier about the exchange. Collier would not be dissuaded. When Howell and Thomas Hinds departed for Memphis via steamboat, the young slave stowed away. Apparently impressed with such unflappability, Hinds dropped the matter and Collier spent the war serving his master and fighting at his side. Rawick, *The American Slave*, Supplement Series 1, 1(1), "Mississippi Narratives," 449-450. Minor Ferris Buchanan gives an excellent account of Collier's service in Company I of the 9th Texas Brigade, providing a detailed look at both the battle by battle movements of the company and Collier's contributions in such battles as Shiloh, Vicksburg, Corinth and Holly Springs. See, Buchanan, *Holt Collier*, especially Chapter 5, "Ninth Texas Cavalry," Chapter 6, "Boots and Saddles," Chapter 7, "Vicksburg," and Chapter 8, "Delta Rangers."

⁴¹⁷ Due in part to the efforts of Collier biographer Minor Ferris Buchanan, whose research raised awareness among Mississippians as to Collier's life and deeds in and out of the sporting field, a Confederate headstone was dedicated at Collier's formerly unmarked grave on February 28, 2004 at the Live Oaks Cemetery in Greenville, Mississippi. The ceremony featured guest speakers, including Buchanan, descendants of both Holt Collier and the Hinds family, representatives from numerous chapters of the Sons of Confederate Veterans and an honor guard, which presented the Confederate flag covering the marker for the dedication to Holt Collier's great niece. "Confederate Headstone Dedication to Holt Collier, Private; Company I, Ninth Texas Cavalry," Mississippi Division, Sons of Confederate Veterans, July 2004, <http://www.mississippiscv.org/collier.htm>

served as a devoted former slave, who proved his loyalty to the Hinds family by shooting a train conductor who pulled a knife on his former master.⁴¹⁸ He reportedly marched alongside residents of Greenville, Mississippi, “the only negro among 500 white men,” during Reconstruction to “protest against the insults to the white men and women of Greenville” by the military government. And, if rumor can be believed, Collier even perhaps killed Freedman’s Bureau officer Captain James King who, after beating the aging Colonel Hinds over a business dispute, was found shot to death in an area canebrake in December 1866.⁴¹⁹ Holt Collier, while a remarkable sportsman; remained a loyal servant dedicated to the white elite.

Holt Collier’s current fame may rest on his sporting legacy, but white contemporaries revered him as much for his fidelity to whites during an age when slavery ended, when control over freed people remained uncertain, and when whites fought back with a system of segregation to limit black freedoms. During that period, whites remained endlessly uneasy about their status as unquestioned masters of the Southern social structure and, as scholars have shown, looked

⁴¹⁸ According to Minor Ferris Buchanan, Howell Hinds was escorting his daughter Alice back to school in Kentucky with Collier along as manservant. Alice’s presence presumably led the conductor to object to Collier remaining in the sleeping car and demand that Collier exit, prompting Hinds to insult and shove the conductor, who brandished a bowie knife and threatened the aging colonel. At this point, Collier drew his pistol and shot the conductor in the leg. After the shooting, Collier was understandably afraid for his life; likely few white train conductors were shot by former slaves without consequences. Fortunately for Collier, numerous friends of Colonel Hinds subsequently persuaded authorities not to press charges. According to Collier, “[t]he white folks got me out of that trouble, ‘cause the Cunnel had a world o’ friends on that train. Gen’l Cheatham, he was there and Doctor Newman and they all took care o’ me.” Minor Ferris Buchanan gives no date for the incident, noting only that it occurred “following the end of hostilities.” Buchanan, *Holt Collier*, 109-110.

⁴¹⁹ Immediately after King’s death, Collier disappeared. Some speculated that Thomas Hinds, son of Colonel Howell Hinds, may have exacted revenge on his father’s assailant and then killed Collier to eliminate any witnesses; others believed Collier himself had committed the act. It was known that Collier had personally delivered a note to King informing him that he could come to Plum Ridge (a Hinds plantation) that night to collect monies owed to him by Colonel Hinds. Immediately upon his return to Greenville, Collier was arrested and tried under military court martial. But due to an overall lack of evidence, combined with the fact that the struggling Colonel Hinds nonetheless found the money to secure the services of a leading attorney to defend his former slave, Collier was acquitted. Several times military agents tried to take action against Collier, but nothing stuck. “They arrested me by the military laws, but they never could prove anything and they turned me loose.” Collier recalled. “Five different times the provost marshals come and got me.” According to Minor Ferris Buchanan, after the acquittal, fear of reprisals by occupying forces, angry at the death of the popular colonel, led Collier to join other former Texas Ninth soldiers and seek work in Texas, first as a cowboy and later as huntsman. *Holt Collier*, 110-117.

wistfully to an antebellum South age when they were truly masters and people of color surely knew their place. The presence of loyal former slaves like Holt Collier helped resurrect Southern elites' lost sense of control and allowed them, symbolically and concretely, to reconstruct the lost hierarchy and aristocracy of the antebellum period. They built their mythical reconstruction in the sporting field. Holt Collier, then, while respected and admired for his sporting prowess, won more renown for his service. His life intersected with stereotypes of African Americans created in myths of the Old South and cultivated at precisely the time Collier achieved regional and then national fame.⁴²⁰ These myths portrayed slaves as loyal, well cared for and, indeed, happier than freedmen. Holt Collier's life of service, in and out of the sporting field, confirmed the myth and provided a living, breathing example of the ideal, dedicated former slave.

The presence of black sporting subordinates in the postwar South proved a key feature of the region's hunting and fishing for visiting sportsmen. Southern sportsmen and outside tourists felt more like aristocrats of old when accompanied by African-American attendants. They felt more like antebellum planters with former slaves on hand to recall a lost era of racial subordination. Tourists from around the country or world could feel they lived a uniquely Southern experience when hunting or fishing with a black laborer, guide, huntsman or fisherman. Slavery had passed away, but visitors could yet recapture the mythological, highly-romanticized

⁴²⁰ Studies of Old South myths, including stereotypical images of antebellum plantations, assertions about the benevolence of slavery and the glory of the "Lost Cause," have become popular in recent years. The best example of the recent scholarship on Americans' struggles over the meaning and memory of slavery, the Civil War, and the age of Reconstruction is David W. Blight's *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001). Blight demonstrates that within a few decades of the war, ideas of sectional reconciliation, particularly seen through literary works, recast African Americans to fit one of two archetypes, either the devoted former slave longing for the old order or the bumbling freedman bewildered by freedom's misfortunes. Since the realities of slavery and its obvious legacy—the presence of and dissatisfaction with the presence of freed African American—could not be reconciled with the "noble catastrophe that the Confederacy's war increasingly became in reminiscence and fiction," Southerners altered that reality by transforming public memory of the antebellum South and African Americans' place in it. According to Blight, African Americans "were rendered faithful to an old regime, as chief spokesmen for it, and often confused in—or witty critics of—the new. The old-time plantation Negro became the voice through which a transforming revolution in race relations and the remaking of the republic dissolved into fantasy and took a long holiday in the popular imagination" (221).

relationship between benevolent, honorable masters and loyal, contented slaves. By recreating a key symbol of the antebellum elite in the post-Emancipation sporting field, native and visiting sportsmen insisted that the racial subordination of the Old South had not died. To put it another way, African Americans remained absolutely necessary for recapturing the version of antebellum social relationships that Southern elites wished to relive and sporting visitors desired to consume.

Southern Sporting Tourism

Some chroniclers of Southern hunting and fishing have argued that the bi-racial sporting field foreshadowed social integration as a harbinger of racial equality.⁴²¹ “There are no lines of caste or class in this scene,” wrote literary scholar Jacob F. Rivers III of Southern hunting as described by planter William Elliott in his famous *Carolina Sports by Land and Water*, “no judges or doctors; no neophytes or veterans; no blacks or whites; no masters or slaves. Instead, through their total involvement in the magic of the chase, the men have transcended their societal positions and temporarily exchanged them for their primordial identity as predator.”⁴²² For wealthy planters like Elliott, indeed all true lovers of the chase seeking to escape the drudgery of daily existence in a rapidly-changing world, field sports might offer an opportunity to forget the modern world and immerse oneself in nature. While so immersed, men might escape the Southern social structure and exist only as part of the fraternity of sportsmen. “Long before the advent of Jack Johnson and Willie Mays, hunting was a factor which promoted integration,”

⁴²¹ As Daniel Justin Herman noted, “[f]or American men, to hunt for sport was another way to claim the status of gentlemen. Not only was sport hunting intrinsically genteel, but it was also a ritualistic means of demonstrating self-assertion and social authority, rights once available to the members of then aristocracy and gentry alone. Thus sport hunting could express middle class and aristocratic values simultaneously.” *Hunting and the American Imagination*, 138.

⁴²² Jacob F. Rivers, III, *Cultural Values in the Southern Sporting Narrative*, (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2002), 18.

asserted literary scholar Clarence Gohdes, arguing that because African Americans figured prominently in whites' hunting excursions, they were a force for breaking down racial barriers.⁴²³ Minor Ferris Buchanan also sees a story of emerging racial equality in the life and sporting experiences of Holt Collier. Arguing that since Collier achieved a level of respect, financial success and lasting fame quite rare for a former slave, Buchanan, like William Elliott, considers the sporting field a bastion of democratic equality:

Social ranks and taboos of caste and class were suspended on the hunt, especially in such interior and frontier regions as the Mississippi Delta. At least temporarily, a man's skill and courage were the only criterion for acceptance. In this gentleman's pursuit Holt Collier was able to earn the respect of others and establish his own reputation as a giant among men. He earned honor as a hunter and guide irrespective of race.⁴²⁴

Such statements about the leveling power of Southern hunting and fishing cannot withstand close scrutiny. The bi-racial sporting field did not produce racial equality. African Americans had a permanent role in Southern hunting and fishing, but only because of their subordination to whites while in the field. These scholars overlook the reasons that elite, white sportsmen took to the field in the first place. They sought not to erase social distinctions, but to idealize and more clearly define them. They did not intend to become members of a larger, interracial fraternity through their sporting activities, but a smaller and more exclusive white one.⁴²⁵ In the South, where African Americans had helped draw such lines for over two

⁴²³ Clarence Gohdes, *Hunting in the Old South: Original Narratives of the Hunters*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967), xvi.

⁴²⁴ Buchanan, *Holt Collier*, xv.

⁴²⁵ Here is one of the great contradictions of the rise of hunting and fishing as the two great American pastimes of the nineteenth century; those middle and upper class sportsmen who wished to make such sports a key marker of American national identity were themselves torn between viewing hunting and fishing as democratizing forces that reduced class distinctions and elevate the common man and viewing them as ways of demarcating their own aristocratic privilege and separating themselves from the masses. As Daniel Justin Herman noted, "within the

centuries, native and visiting sportsmen found it even easier to immerse themselves in such distinctions.

As numerous scholars of hunting and fishing, including Daniel Justin Herman, have noted, white sportsmen had long used such activities to demonstrate their innate class, national and racial superiority. Hunting and the codes of behavior and method attendant to it separated elite white, American sportsmen from Native Americans, immigrants, and poorer Americans whose hunting they despised. For sportsmen like Theodore Roosevelt, “hunting became more than the mystical source of American manliness; hunting became the mystical source of American national and racial identity. Now Roosevelt’s noble, light-skinned race of American hunters spoke of world dominion.”⁴²⁶ In the South, field sports had long served a similar goal of allowing the elite to trumpet its domination over the whole of Southern society, particularly African Americans. But unlike elite hunters of the West or the Adirondacks, who used the sporting ethos to disestablish competing traditions of Native Americans, poor whites or the foreign born, Southerners did not use sport to distance themselves from African Americans; they used such subordinates to symbolically solidify their position as masters of Southern society. For Western big game hunters, their identity as manly defenders of American democracy required rejecting Native American hunting and fishing and completely discrediting their skill

hunter’s heart was a paradox. In engaging in rural sport, middle-class hunters cast themselves as heirs to rustic frontiersmen, yet they also cast themselves as heirs to the chivalrous hunters of England...Two images of the hunter—one democratic and native, the other elitist and foreign—coexisted uneasily, epitomizing the classic dilemma of nineteenth century Americans.” *Hunting in the American Imagination*, 11.

⁴²⁶ Not just a golden age of sport hunting, the second half of the nineteenth century also witnessed the conquest of the frontier, the influx of millions of immigrants, and the emergence of the United States as an imperial power. As Herman demonstrates, elite sportsmen sought to link these processes to field sports, using hunting to display white, American superiority, decry the sporting habits of non elites, non whites and non Americans and, argue for hunting as emblematic of America’s rise to global dominance. *Hunting and the American Imagination*, 223.

and experience.⁴²⁷ For elite Southern sportsmen, many planters and former slaveholders, mastery required the presence of black subordinates and the cultivation of the idea that former slaves remained both the best and most natural sporting laborers.

The rise of sporting tourism, predicated upon black service and subordination, reached its peak at the same moment when African Americans' place in the Southern social and political structure reached its nadir. It represented late nineteenth and early twentieth-century racism at its finest. The inescapable connection between prevailing myths about the antebellum South, the rise of a nostalgia-oriented tourism industry, and white ideas of race and racial hierarchy manifested itself in the region's hunting and fishing. In order to understand these connections, one must first have a better understanding of the great changes, both physical and symbolic, that took place in Southern field sports through the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These changes made the South, particularly its romanticized antebellum version, an important destination for American tourists and sportsmen. The presence of African Americans played a vital role since, in the minds of potential visitors and investors, black subordination added to the myth's "authenticity." Discussions of the region's hierarchical race relations often appeared alongside descriptions of its natural and sporting advantages.

When the North Carolina State Board of Agriculture published *North Carolina and its Resources* in 1896, it emphasized the fine hunting and fishing in the Old North State. Like many

⁴²⁷ According to environmental historian Carl Jacoby, both Western big game hunters and administrators of places like Yellowstone National Park, established by congressional act in 1872, worked hard to write Native American hunting and fishing traditions from the story of hunting and Western history in general. Essential to both projects was defining Native American hunting and fishing practices not as the continuation of ancient environmental usage patterns but as illegal and irresponsible poaching. See Jacoby's *Crimes Against Nature: Squatters, Poachers, Thieves and the Hidden History of American Conservation*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), especially Chapter 4, "Nature and Nation." This process of rejecting and then redefining traditional lower class subsistence as, at best, gross misuse of environmental resources, and, at worst, a criminal assault on elite and national privilege, was common throughout the world wherever elites sought to control plebeians' customary uses of natural resources.

other Southern states⁴²⁸ that used hunting and fishing to lure visitors, North Carolina had long worked to make tourism, especially sporting and resort tourism, one of the centerpieces of its recovery from the physical and economic dislocation that marked the last third of the century. By the 1890s North Carolina could be counted among the nation's leading vacation getaways. The Board trumpeted its virtues as a pleasure-seeker's paradise worthy of visitation and investment. Yet the attractions broadcast by the Board of Agriculture, as in other such guides published across the South between the end of the Civil War and the early twentieth century, did not end with natural beauty, luxury hotels or even plentiful fish and game. As such literature often makes clear, North Carolina also offered the advantage of the proper ordering of the races. "The people are sociable and hospitable, and the colored people as civil as those whom they like to imitate," the Board of Agriculture noted. Laying bare the common assertion that the South's racial situation played just as important a role as its wildlife, hotels and climate, the guide declared North Carolina a white man's country with a properly controlled black population:

No part of the South offers greater attractions to the investor and the seeker for health or pleasure, or is more interesting to the student than this. Incalculably rich in minerals and timber, perfectly suited for growing grasses, cereals and fruits; with a climate bland, strong, stimulating and restful, it also has the purest strain of Anglo-Saxon blood in the country, and with the possible exception of Kent and Devon the purest in the world.⁴²⁹

⁴²⁸ North Carolina did not stand alone in working to attract potential visitors and investors. Both state agencies and business from various states produced similar guidebooks beginning in the late nineteenth century. The Salem Improvement Company, for example, published *Salem, VA; Its Attractions and Advantages. Climate, Health, Churches and Schools, Railroads, Iron, Coal and Coke, Timber, Labor & c.* to encourage immigration and investment. (Lynchburg, VA: J.P. Bell, 1890), VHS, General Collection, F234. S21. The Richmond and Danville Railroad published *Summer Resorts and Points of Interest of Virginia, Western North Carolina, and North Georgia* in 1884 to lure people and money south. (New York: C.G. Crawford, 1884), UNCCH, NCC, CP917.5R53S1. And the Southern Railway published a guidebook for hunting and fishing across the South, *Hunting & Fishing in the South: A Book Descriptive of the Best Localities in the South for Various Kinds of Game and Fish*, in order to advertise the region's sporting advantages. (Washington: Southern Railway Company, 1904).

⁴²⁹ North Carolina State Board of Agriculture, *North Carolina and its Resources*, (Raleigh: M.I. & J.C. Stewart, Public Printers and Binders, 1896), 282, 296. UNCCH, NCC, CR917 N87a.

As such appeals for Northern visitors made clear, the region had important vacation advantages that became linked, as they also made clear, to equally important racial advantages.

Of the thousands of visitors who came South in the half century after Emancipation, the two most important groups included Northern investors, who capitalized on the region's depressed economy, low labor costs, and abandoned or undeveloped lands, and an ever-growing number of tourists who, investors quickly learned, came for the South's unique combination of natural bounty and real and mythologized history. Indeed that combination became a godsend to those who wished to focus part of the region's economy on leisure and tourism. After decades of waiting in vain for real economic recovery and growth, Southerners realized that such a transformation could offer, according to historian Edward Ayers, "a way for places that had languished for years with unpromising agriculture finally to come into their own."⁴³⁰ According to the *Baltimore Journal of Commerce*, "the capitalist seeking profitable employment for his money finds in the South a rapidly developing country, where the growth is absolutely solid and permanent, and where money is in demand, yielding large profits, whether invested in banking, in manufactures, in railroad building, or in real estate."⁴³¹ With Southern landlords increasingly frustrated over the inefficiency of the tenant system and the general problem of labor control, many Southerners pinned their hopes on outside investors.⁴³²

⁴³⁰ Edward Ayers, *The Promise of the New South: Life After Reconstruction*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 61.

⁴³¹ "Moving Forward," quoted in *Edenton* [North Carolina] *Fisherman and Farmer*, April 13, 1888, n.p.

⁴³² "What happened to the South's natural wealth depended very largely upon the action of outsiders," noted environmental historian Albert E. Cowdrey of Southern natural resource depletion after Emancipation, "who cut its forests, bought up its land, and financed its railroads and many of its nascent industries." Albert E. Cowdrey, *This Land, This South: An Environmental History*, rev. ed., (Lexington: The University of Kentucky Press, 1996), 103. Indeed the list of Northern speculators and investors who made their way South between the 1880s and the 1930s reads as a "who's who" list of the nation's wealthy and powerful. Along the South Carolina coast, home to perhaps the most famous and desired sporting destinations, the surnames of the families invested in sporting tourism included Vanderbilt, Pulitzer, Guggenheim, Field, Whitney, DuPont, Dodge and Roosevelt

The decline of rice in the Georgia and South Carolina low country perhaps best illustrates the process whereby owners turned agricultural land to other uses.⁴³³ After the war, the economy of the low country, once home to the wealthiest Southern planters, fell to ruin as the migration of black labor, the widespread adoption of small farming by former slaves, a lack of operating capital caused by the war, growing international competition and, in the last decade of the nineteenth century, severe damage caused by intense storms, marked the final end of commercial rice cultivation in South Carolina.⁴³⁴ When rice declined, the area fell into growing poverty. As landowners worked to solve their postwar difficulties, many sought alternatives to large-scale tenant labor and searched for ways to exploit the huge amounts of available land and large supply of fish and game that remained their best assets. Low country elites and other landowners across the South increasingly realized that financial advancement, even survival, required finding wealthy investors. “Lord, please send us a rich Yankee,” declared South Carolina planter Sam Stoney Jr., in 1920, echoing a half century of hopes and frustrations of low country landlords.⁴³⁵ They found such investors in the many Northerners seeking vacation destinations to combat their unease with urban life.⁴³⁶ As environmental historian Mart A. Stewart noted of coastal Georgia, Northerners provided an ideal market for idle and under-developed lands:

⁴³³ For a discussion of the abandonment of cotton and rice production by Sea Island and low country planters in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, see J. William Harris’ *Deep Souths: Delta, Piedmont and Sea Island Society in the Age of Segregation*, (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001). According to Harris, Sea Island planters, due to labor problems, low prices and seasonal weather catastrophes, had begun to abandon cotton soon after Northern investors pulled out with the end of Reconstruction. Rice planters lasted a bit longer, with most ceasing production by the end of the century. By World War One, rice and cotton production in South Carolina and coastal Georgia had all but disappeared. *Deep Souths*, 140-1.

⁴³⁴ Harris, *Deep Souths*, 139-141.

⁴³⁵ John H. Tibbetts, “The Bird Chase,” *Coastal Heritage*, 15 (4), Spring 2001, 3.

⁴³⁶ According to the *South Carolina Historical Magazine*, “Following the decline of rice agriculture, the South Carolina tidewater plantations began to be adapted to a number of largely non-agricultural uses...The final widespread adaptation of former rice plantations was the development of these former agricultural units into winter residences, year-round private residences, and hunting reserves. The ease of adapting rice plantations to duck

As the tidewater became a backwater, the sea islands became a retreat. The unique environmental qualities of the island—mild winters, refreshing sea breezes, and good beaches—made them appealing locations for investors who wanted to cater to the increasing number of middle class Americans who sought vacations from city life.⁴³⁷

Hunting and fishing, by the last third of the nineteenth century perhaps the most popular outdoor amusement for the middle and upper classes, became another key attraction.⁴³⁸

The South became part of the “golden age” of elite hunting and fishing in America. At no other time did field sports enjoy such a combination of middle and upper class involvement, national acceptance and available wildlife as in the Gilded Age.⁴³⁹ Because so many from the upper and middle classes became devotees of the sporting field, hunting and fishing became lucrative endeavors for sporting goods manufacturers, fish and game dealers, sporting laborers,

hunting has made the former use extremely popular in this century.” William B. Lees, “The Historical Development of Limerick Plantation, A Tidewater Rice Plantation in Berkeley County, South Carolina, 1683-1945,” *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 82 (1), 1981, 60-1.

⁴³⁷ Stewart, ‘*What Nature Suffers to Groe*’, 216.

⁴³⁸ For the South Carolina low country, the decline of rice and cotton culture created perfect conditions for wildlife propagation. *Field and Stream* contributor D.J. Hart, who spent a month on plantation lands in the Georgetown area, recalled that the region was once home to vast plantations of rice and cotton, “but little farming is done in this section at present, especially on these large estates and this old plantation.” That change, however, created the conditions that led investors to purchase such lands and invite sportsmen like Hart to hunt on them. “It is nearly all woodland and a large part of it heavy timber; old-growth long- and short-leaf pine which grow on the dry soil, and cypress, gum, oak, etc., in the swamps.” Such lands proved ideal for wildlife recovery. “Wild Turkey Hunting in South Carolina: The Ways and Habits of Meleagris Gallapavo,” *Field and Stream*, December 1915, 778.

⁴³⁹ According to Daniel Justin Herman, hunting first became widely popular in the United States as a sport (as opposed to a mere subsistence activity) during the late antebellum period, when the American middle class embraced it because it “flavored the English tradition of genteel sport with the American tradition of frontier self-reliance.” Before it was embraced by a wider audience, sport hunting was largely the domain of elites who patterned themselves after English aristocrats and sought to make the sport as exclusive as possible. As it was embraced by the masses, a sense that hunting, with the supposed egalitarian, democratic legacy of real and fictional frontiersmen like Daniel Boone and James Fenimore Cooper’s Natty Bumppo, could break social barriers instead of reinforce them took hold. Hunting would no longer be just for elites. By the Civil War a simultaneous legacy of field sports as markers of aristocracy and as social levelers on the other had taken hold among American sportsmen. The addition of this democratic ethos to the ideology of the hunt brought many new middle and lower class devotees to field sports, people who previously cultivated a distaste for such sport because of the perception that it was a bastion of elitism and gentility. This dual tradition, combined with that most Americans remained farmers--many of whom owned their own land--in large measure accounts for the rapid growth in popularity of sports like hunting in the second half of the nineteenth century. Herman, *Hunting and the American Imagination*, 125.

and resort owners, prompting an increasing number of landowners and speculators to turn land to sporting uses.⁴⁴⁰ Moreover, because that popularity put great pressure on national fish and game supplies, sporting enthusiasts searched for new regions to exploit, which became more difficult as the century drew to a close.⁴⁴¹ By the late nineteenth century the South ranked among the richest wildlife regions in the United States.⁴⁴² Speculators realized that many fish and game regions, such as the former sportsman's epicenter in New York's Adirondack Mountains, faced both wildlife depletion and overcrowding, and that Southern lands that produced millions in lumbering and mineral rights might also create fortunes in sporting tourism. "Dakota is shot out. Wisconsin is fished out. The Adirondacks were tramped out long ago. The tide of sporting travel is settling back on itself," conservationist Emerson Hough noted. "There will be plenty of it turn and go in the South. The longer the South has attractions, the longer it will go."⁴⁴³

Certainly, the Southern states faced wildlife depletion, but the region's natural richness, a relative lag in slaughter compared to other sections and the rise of protected club lands purchased

⁴⁴⁰ According to Virginia Christian Beach, who chronicled the history of the famed Thomasville, Georgia, *Medway* plantation, this "second Northern invasion," of wealthy capitalists and sporting enthusiasts lasted into the 1940s before dying out. During that period, "having been stripped of their agricultural wealth by an invading army, plantation owners invested themselves, economically and emotionally, in one of their few remaining assets, the hunting grounds." Virginia Christian Beach, *Medway*, (Charleston, SC: Wyrick & Company, 1998), 38.

⁴⁴¹ As Daniel Justin Herman put it, "hunting and angling had become by the Gilded Age the most popular middle-class participatory sports in America, far exceeding baseball, football, and boxing in popularity. Yet to celebrate Americanness through hunting, Americans had to have game, something that the popularity of hunting was making problematic." *Hunting and the American Imagination*, 199.

⁴⁴² According to William Bruce Leffingwell, who wrote an extensive Southern hunting and fishing guide for the Southern Railway, "We take pleasure in presenting this book to the sportsmen of America," asserted Leffingwell, "and through it extend an invitation to them to visit the South and hunt game where it is more plentiful than in any other section of the United States." Of lands in Mississippi, for example, Leffingwell asserted that "[s]portsmen of the North, especially those familiar with the hunting grounds in the Northern and Western States in times extending back some thirty years, will recall the abundance of game which existed everywhere...Many portions of the South recall to mind the game sections of the North as they were years ago; but it is questionable if there ever existed in any Northern State such a variety and abundance of game as is found in Mississippi to-day." *The Happy Hunting Grounds, also Fishing, of the South*, (Chicago: Donohue & Henneberry, 1895), 1, 51. UNCCH, NCC, Cp799 L49h.

⁴⁴³ "The Sunny South—Part VI," *Forest and Stream*, March 16, 1895, 206.

by sportsmen and speculators made the South an attractive sporting destination.⁴⁴⁴ Agricultural uncertainty after the war proved another reason for the abundance of fish and game in some parts of the South. Volatile cotton prices in the black belt, combined with labor instability, declining crop yields, soil exhaustion and erosion, and the boll weevil led many landlords to abandon significant acreage of cotton land which, according to Mississippi planter Wirt Howe, “effect the result that these plantations are natural shooting grounds. Covering, as they do, an immense acreage, they present almost every variety of cover, affording not only the best of breeding grounds for the quail, but admirable protection from their enemies and the mild attacks of a climate that is rarely severe.”⁴⁴⁵ In other words, as agriculture declined, as more lands fell fallow, the abundance of certain species of wildlife actually increased.⁴⁴⁶ As “An Old Sportsman,” lamenting that “the old haunts of the North have become drained,” suggested in

⁴⁴⁴ The fact that Southerners simultaneously trumpeted the rich fish and game of the region while constantly accusing African Americans of seriously depleting wildlife presents an apparent contradiction. For how could Southern wildlife be so rich if the depredations of former slaves remained as bad as sportsmen and landowners claimed? The answer to that question is two-fold. First, since African Americans freely hunting and fishing alarmed elite whites as much or more for what such privileges indicated about unchecked black independence as for its impact on the natural environment, it is likely that some white narrators exaggerated their claims about wildlife depletion to maximize their message about the dangers of unrestricted customary rights. Second, since Southern wildlife depletion, by all accounts, lagged behind other sporting areas, a fact that proved increasingly beneficial for the Southern economy, Southern sportsmen and landowners had a vested interest in rallying the reading public with stories of unrestrained hunting and fishing to slow the pace of destruction that the region would inevitably face. That Southerners advertised a rich supply of wildlife while accusing former slaves of hurting that supply is, in truth, not a contradiction but a logical expression of elite’s inherently-related economic, sporting and racial interests.

⁴⁴⁵ “With the Quail Among the Cotton,” *Outing* 33 (3), December 1898, 245-6.

⁴⁴⁶ The late nineteenth century was a period of crisis for American wildlife; even the seemingly endless supplies of Southern fish and game were decreasing. Yet where land was left undeveloped or where the advent of row-crop agriculture created new cover for small game, certain species actually increased. Some of the larger species of big game had dwindled dramatically, including the rare Southern black bear, the catamount, panther, and the once plentiful deer, yet the South’s widespread economic decline and regional shifts in agriculture would see certain species thrive. Wildlife would rebound even more once the region was saturated with sporting preserves, whose presence led to increased protection and propagation of favored species of game. As Archibald Rutledge noted of the impact of preserves on Southern duck populations, “at one of these clubs, twenty-five ducks is the morning’s bag-limit; yet I well remember the day when men, shooting in island-ponds over decoys, would bring back as many as two hundred big ducks, and sometimes more. Therefore, these great preserves, passing from the hands of the original owners, have come under the control of men who have the time and the money and the interest to care for the wild life on their lands and waters.” “Wild Ducks and Rice Fields,” *Field and Stream*, November 1920, 709.

Field and Stream, “of late years it has become a known fact that the only ready good shooting to be had is in the South.”⁴⁴⁷ Sportsman William Bruce Leffingwell put the matter plainly when he asserted that “a hunt in this beautiful country will prove a revelation to the Northern sportsman.”⁴⁴⁸

Hoping to reach as many potential investors as possible, many Southern landowners advertised their lands in national sporting periodicals.⁴⁴⁹ A 1902 *Field and Stream* article advertised the \$20,000 Hutchinson Island Preserve along the Carolina coast, “embracing 12,000 to 15,000 acres of land” and “eligibly situated.” “It is ideal as a stock range or game preserve,” noted the article, “and is large enough to combine both. It was a famous ante-bellum Sea Island cotton plantation.”⁴⁵⁰ Some landowners did not sell their lands outright but, desiring to profit from the explosion in hunting and fishing, sold or leased the right to hunt or fish on their holdings.⁴⁵¹ One Elkton, Maryland, sportsman noted that on the Eastern shore “[m]any a farmer,

⁴⁴⁷ “Shooting in the South on the Gulf Coast,” *Field and Stream*, January 1913, 1019.

⁴⁴⁸ Leffingwell, *The Happy Hunting Grounds*, 8. UNCCCH, NCC, Cp799 L49h.

⁴⁴⁹ Southerners knew they had a potentially lucrative asset in wildlife, and not only for its sporting appeal. Visiting sportsmen who came south would bring not only money to infuse into local economies but investment capital that might find its way into other areas of the Southern economy. According to Dr. Richard H. Lewis, one-time president of the North Carolina Audubon Society, “North Carolina has a great asset in her game. Leaving out the immediate profit and enjoyment to our people, it is an asset in that it attracts and brings into the State a larger number of outside sportsmen than come into any other State in the Union, except Maine. These sportsmen, many of whom are of standing and influence in their respective communities, as well as of wealth, coming into the State not only leaving us a large amount of actual cash, but, seeing and appreciating our natural resources and special advantages in soil and climate, etc., advertise the same most effectively being unpaid and disinterested.” Unsigned, blank letter from Richard H. Lewis, Dr. Richard H. Lewis Collection, NCSA, #1347.1.

⁴⁵⁰ “Two Famous Island Preserves,” *Field and Stream*, January 1902, 703.

⁴⁵¹ Charleston, South Carolina, developer Robert Pinckney Tucker, for example, made millions purchasing Southern lands for sale to wealthy investors. “I can furnish timber lands...mineral lands...rice plantations, farms, pasture lands and hunting preserves,” Tucker wrote to an unnamed newspaper editor, whose help he sought in advertising his properties, in 1901. “I now have on hand some very valuable hunting preserves within easy reach of Charleston, South Carolina, by rail and water.” Tucker also promoted his properties to Northern interests, hoping to lure wealthy sportsmen south. In response to an inquiry by St. Julian Grimke of New York City, Tucker guaranteed “there is a good opportunity or both of us to make some money. I now have in my books some of the finest hunting preserves in the United States. Most of them are smaller than 20,000 acres, but I can make them any size desired by purchasing adjoining properties.” Noting that his best available lands were 10,000 acre tracts along the Ashepoo

who cares nothing about the pleasure of guns and dog, would be glad to sell the exclusive privilege of gunning on his land for a small sum, to an association, and the price could be graduated to the amount of game on his place, which would be a strong inducement for him to feed and protect the game.”⁴⁵² As frustrated landowners saw their chance to blunt the effects of agricultural and labor inefficiency, an increasing number turned to selling or leasing land or use rights to the throng of sportsmen and speculators who looked South with increasing interest.⁴⁵³

Railroads, including the Richmond and Danville Railroad, the Seaboard Airline, the Atlantic & North Carolina Railroad, and the Southern Railway, advertised available hunting and fishing lands.⁴⁵⁴ The Southern Railway, for example, trumpeted itself as “the Samaritan of the South” because of its role in advertising resort and sporting lands to the Northern public.⁴⁵⁵ “No

River, Tucker nonetheless assured him that “there are other properties that can be purchased, and I could deliver, in this locality, anywhere from 10,000 to 50,000 acres of as fine hunting lands as can possibly be had.” Letter from Robert Pinckney Tucker to Herbert Wythe, December 16, 1901, Folder 96; Letter from Robert Pinckney Tucker to St. Julian Grimke, October 13, 1902, Folder 97. Robert Pinckney Tucker Papers, UNCCH, SHC # 1010.

⁴⁵² “Letter from Elkton, MD,” *Rod and Gun and American Sportsman*, October 17, 1874, 43.

⁴⁵³ The Southern sporting elite eagerly broadcast this fact to Northern investors. Like many others who saw in the region’s hunting and fishing a chance to lure outside capital that might revitalize the region’s economy and return them to their former economic preeminence, elite sportsmen, many from the former planter class, embraced the “second Yankee invasion.” As one 1880 *Forest and Stream* contributor asserted, “Here, at the South, the sporting class is, as a general rule, found among the refined and cultivated gentlemen, who were formerly the large slaveholders, and who controlled the sentiment and politics of the South; and now, since the fortune of war has gone against them, they have buried the hatchet, and will be found ever ready to smoke the pipe of peace with their Northern brethren and will go as far as any man men toward maintaining the honor and glory of America.” “A Sporting Reminiscence of the War,” *Forest and Stream*, May 20, 1880, 306.

⁴⁵⁴ See, for example, M. Slaughter and Sol. Haas, “Summer Resorts and Points of Interest of Virginia, Western North Carolina, and Georgia,” (New York: C.G. Crawford, 1884), UNCCH, NCC, Cp917.5R53S1; The Seaboard Air Line Railway, General Passenger Department, “A Guide to the Famous Hunting and Fishing Grounds of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia Traversed by the Seaboard Air Line, With a Synopsis of the Game Laws of Those States,” (Richmond: A. Hoen & Company, 1898), Columbia: University of South Carolina, South Caroliniana Library [hereafter SCL] 799Se1g; Atlantic & North Carolina Railroad, “Hunting and Fishing in Eastern North Carolina,” (Goldsboro: Atlantic & North Carolina Railroad, 1905), UNCCH, NCC, microform CO92S68, reel 81, item 5; Frank Presbrey, “The Empire of the South: Its Resources, Industries, and Resorts,” (Washington, D.C.: The Southern Railway Company, 1898), UNCCH, NCC, Cp917P92e.

⁴⁵⁵ The spread of Southern rail lines was one of the most important factors in both the explosion of sport hunting as a middle class pastime and the increased pace of fish and game depletion. Expanded railroads brought would-be sportsmen closer to their desired prey; with dependable railways, sporting tourists could reach remote destinations in hours, instead of days and weeks. In some more remote areas, hunting and fishing became no more than a week

section of the country is comparable to the South to-day in the great variety of game,” the Washington, D.C. based railway declared in 1898. “There are excellent game laws in nearly all the States, and visiting sportsmen are always welcome.”⁴⁵⁶ Even as late as 1927, the Charleston & Western Railroad published descriptions of South Carolina sporting lands, confirming that such lands were the playgrounds of wealthy visitors, not the average, resident sportsman:

Some of the Beaufortland game preserves are not only spectacular in their acreage, but they are exceedingly costly affairs. Some are individually owned and serve as winter residences as well as shooting lodges...More and more every winter Beaufort is filling up, and many of them are millionaires, with men who spend the season here and who fill up much of their time in hunting, fishing and boating.⁴⁵⁷

Avid hunter Grover Cleveland, who visited Georgetown, South Carolina, in 1894, went south drawn by news of good sport. Hunting near South Island, a stiff wind threw the President from his skiff, forcing his host and an African-American guide to rescue him. According to George C. Rogers Jr., “This gale proved to be no ill wind for Georgetown, for it also carried news of the President’s rescue. The nation thereby became informed of the fine duck shooting available in Georgetown waters. The rich Yankees began to fall in love with the ready-made plantations, all with historic pasts and with the appropriate settings for their gentlemanly

long, even a weekend long, excursion. According to South Carolina land speculator Robert Pinckney Tucker, the ease of rail travel was one of the great lures of Southern hunting and fishing. Describing better access to lands “on the main line of the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad, within easy reach of Charleston and quite convenient for Northern members, there being three daily trains from New York and three daily trains from the South for New York, enabling one to leave New York in the morning, to have a comfortable night’s rest and to be in the field the next morning by nine o’clock.” (Letter from Robert Pinckney Tucker to B.R. Kittridge, August 9, 1904, Robert Pinckney Tucker Papers, Folder # 99, UNCCCH, SHC, #1010).

⁴⁵⁶ Southern Railway Company, “A Samaritan of the South is the Southern Railway,” (Washington, D.C.: The Southern Railway Company, 1898) 1, UNCCCH, NCC, Cp917.5S72sa; Frank Presbrey, “The Empire of the South: Its Resources, Industries and Resorts,” 33.

⁴⁵⁷ N.L. Willett, “Game Preserves and Game of Beaufort, Colleton and Jasper Counties, South Carolina: Hunter’s Paradise Manly Sports,” (Beaufort: Charleston & Western Carolina Railway Company, 1927), 1, 7-8.

sports.”⁴⁵⁸ A contemporary source confirms this Cleveland-induced fad.⁴⁵⁹ According to newspaper editor William Page McCarty, who in 1897 tried to sell hunting land he owned below Virginia Beach, such lands attracted “the class of Northern millionaires who affect the sporting fad like our late ‘fat friend’ of the White House and think that to shoot ducks is a certificate of aristocracy that can lift a soap factor or hog packer out of the native patch of mushrooms.”⁴⁶⁰

As McCarty suggests, more than just the lure of a Presidential retreat or available land teeming with wildlife attracted Northerners. They also quested for what McCarty called “a certificate of aristocracy that can lift a soap factor or hog packer out of the native patch of mushrooms.” Potential visitors fantasized not only about sport but also about an imagined South. As early as the 1870s, Northerners, especially sporting elites, members of the growing middle class and potential capitalist investors, looked to the South as a place of welcome escape. According to historian Nina Silber, “no longer preoccupied with wartime anguish and destruction, Northerners of the post-Reconstruction years increasingly thought of the South in tourist terms, as a land of leisure, relaxation, and romance.”⁴⁶¹ The appeal of the region thus

⁴⁵⁸ President Cleveland visited the famed South Carolina ducking grounds at the invitation of one-time Savannah and Memphis Railroad executive and former Confederate general Edward Porter Alexander, himself an avid hunter. George C. Rogers Jr., *The History of Georgetown, South Carolina*, (Spartansburg, South Carolina: The Reprint Company, 1990), 487.

⁴⁵⁹ President Cleveland’s low country hunts brought significant attention to the low country. Stories of the President, for example, figured prominently in the received and documented history of the low country Santee Club, founded in 1898, of which Cleveland was an honorable. In his “Early History of the Santee Club,” Henry H. Carter recounts a memorable story told by Colonel Henry May, an original club member who went duck hunting with the former President on the Santee. “When we went to his blind we got out the big boat, which was built for the President,” May recalled. “Getting into the blind was a feat. The darkey guide and myself boosted him out of the mud, which was a job—265 pounds and deep mud.” Such recollections illustrate both the omnipresence of African Americans in elite, white hunting and way that such important visitors found a permanent place in low country sporting lore. Henry H. Carter, “Early History of the Santee Club,” 21. Charleston: SCHS, Pam 799.2

⁴⁶⁰ Letter from William Page McCarty to Alice Beulah, May 28, 1897, “McCarty Family Papers, 1859-1898, Richmond, VHS, Mss2M1278b.

⁴⁶¹ The late nineteenth century was a time of great growth for the American middle class, particularly in terms of income. Along with that growth came an explosion in travel and vacationing. With more money to enjoy and better

became a key factor in sectional reunion, making the South, by the late 1880s, a favored middle and upper class tourist destination.

Southern locales became increasingly popular with Northern tourists in the latter nineteenth century for several reasons. Mild climate perfect for visitors suffering from maladies including “nervous exhaustion” and various respiratory ailments provided one major lure.⁴⁶² Advertisers and resort managers made the region’s healthfulness an important part of marketing strategy, as appeals for visitors make clear.⁴⁶³ The South, unlike Northern resorts and spa areas, such as New York’s famous Saratoga Springs, remained unburdened by too many visitors. The region’s less well-known and less accessible tourist destinations reputedly offered more spacious and, compared to Northern tourist retreats, more exclusive vacation destinations.⁴⁶⁴

Population growth in Northern urban centers became yet another reason for heading south. Frustrated well-to-do Northerners saw in Southern locales a chance to venture into a wilder, less-developed part of the country that mirrored a by-gone America and lay closer and

rail transportation, Northerners could experience parts of the country previously denied them. For many travelers, the vacation experience meant passive activities, like staying at resorts and going on tours; for others, a vacation meant an active sporting vacation. Such was the case with the South. Silber, *The Romance of Reunion*, 66-7.

⁴⁶² Silber, *Romance of Reunion*, 68.

⁴⁶³ Most such advertisements emphasized the health benefits of Southern climes. The vacation town of Aiken, South Carolina was advertised as “A Winter Resort for Invalids.” E.J.C. Wood, “Aiken, S.C. as a Winter Resort for Invalids or a Desirable Location for Permanent Residents, with Catalogue of Properties for Sale,” (n.p., 1871), Columbia: SCL, 917.57751 W85a. The North Carolina Board of Immigration, Statistics and Agriculture, advertising the states’ many advantages in 1875, emphasized its “serenity of climate, and chances of health.” (“North Carolina: Its Resources and Progress; its Beauty, Healthfulness and Fertility; and its Attractions and Advantages as a Home for Immigrants,” (Raleigh: Josiah Turner, 1875), 68. Raleigh: North Carolina State Archives. Even visiting narrators of post-Emancipation Southern life commented upon the region’s healthfulness. Of Mississippi, Northerner Julian Ralph assured visitors that “the white people are law-abiding and hospitable, the climate is healthful, the heat is by no means unendurable or such as need deter a Northern man from going there, and, indeed, Northern men have told me that the Northern midsummer heat is far more trying.” *Dixie Or Southern Scenes and Sketches*, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1895), 159. Of the region of Florida near the Oclawaha [sic] River, *Scribner’s Monthly* correspondent Edward King asserted that “[t]he invalid from the North, anxious to escape not only from the trying climate which has increased his malady, but also the memories of the busy world to which he has been accustomed, could not do better than to drift up and down this remote and secluded stream, whose sylvan peace and perfect beauty will bring him the needed repose.” *The Great South*, 408.

⁴⁶⁴ Silber, 68-9.

with easier access to the wilder, and seemingly more dangerous, Western frontier. For some visiting tourists and sportsmen, the desire to seek untamed environs, to return to a less hectic era without abandoning the luxuries and refinements of modern America and to experience the legendary trappings of entrenched aristocracy, could only be achieved in the South, where time seemed, to many, to stand still. Consider this 1881 testimony from an unnamed *Forest and Stream* contributor celebrating the virtues of North Carolina:

Let one leave the false glare and glitter, the hollow show of a city life with a view to some weeks with nature and her charming loveliness, and he may be assured that he will find it, with fair sport added, in North Carolina. He can amuse himself with ignorance as primitive as the most fastidious could desire or test his manners with intelligence and grace as courtly as adorns any home in America... It is sad to think that many years will come before a clear, round shape will be given to what should be the prosperity of a people so blessed in soil, climate and mind.⁴⁶⁵

This linking of hunting and fishing with a longing for a “primitive” yet aristocratic past demonstrates that visitors sought more than just the region’s natural advantages.

By reputation, the South seemed friendlier to overburdened urban dwellers than other destinations. Such openness to visitors, linked to the mythology of the antebellum planter class whose legendary hospitality became a hallmark of Northern perceptions of the South, became a great inducement for tourists. “I would not change the old conservative ways of the South if I could and hope they never will change,” noted Emerson Hough, “and I know all readers of this journal will be glad to rest their future acquaintance with the South upon its unasked and unpurchaseable hospitality.”⁴⁶⁶ Hinton A. Helper assured visitors to Aiken, South Carolina, of a hospitable local population. “Let him try this experiment of calling at some of the farm houses

⁴⁶⁵ “From North Carolina,” *Forest and Stream*, January 27, 1881, 505.

⁴⁶⁶ “The Sunny South, Part IV,” *Forest and Stream*, March 16, 1895, 206.

he may pass, and make any excuse, such as inquiring the way, or offering to purchase a glass of milk, or ask for a glass of water; and...he will be surprised to see how ready he will be met and welcomed.”⁴⁶⁷ Northerners envisioned the South as the model of old-time hospitality; with the economic potential of tourism, Southerners did all they could to confirm that stereotype.

Outsiders seemed to admire Southern hunting and fishing as much for its ability to recapture lost aristocracy and gentility as for sport. As *Field and Stream* contributor “Halycon Hale” noted, “[t]he average American is not insensible to the charm of historic association in his pursuit of sport. He may not deliberately choose his field with a view to its historic surroundings, yet once brought to his attention he is prompt in responding to their sympathetic appeal.” No other destination captured the Northern imagination as did Dixie. Despite the recent bloodshed, promoters of Southern tourism whitewashed the region’s history to the point where its violent past, including the war, became quaint. As “Halycon Hale” concluded of hunting and fishing in the Old Dominion, “[f]ew places in America offer so rare a combination of good sport and historic interest as the easterly part of Virginia.”⁴⁶⁸ Even the poverty of the region might restore vestiges of the Old South: “Occasionally for the northern tourist, [vacationing South] meant enduring the real experience of drafty old houses and broken-down beds, but it might also meant an up-close encounter with the ruins of an old plantation, a rundown former slave cabin, or an old Confederate soldier,” writes historian Nina Silber. “In the

⁴⁶⁷ Hinton A. Helper, “Aiken: A Popular Winter Resort for the Tourist and Health-Seeker,” (New York: The South Publishing Company, 188-), 12. Columbia: SCL, s.c. p917.57751 H36a. It is interesting to note that Hinton Alexander Helper, who authored numerous guides, was the nephew of Southern author Hinton Rowan Helper, whose 1857 treatise on slavery *The Impending Crisis of the South: How to Meet It* (New York: Burdick Brothers, 1857), which argued for abolition based on slavery’s negative impact on poor Southern whites, was widely distributed before the 1860 Presidential campaign. The book made Helper, although no champion of social equality, as demonstrated by his subsequent works outlining black racial inferiority, one of the most despised men in the South. It is ironic then that Hinton A. Helper would play a role in proffering Southern tourism when just three decades earlier his uncle’s treatise played such a notable role in exacerbating the sectional tensions.

⁴⁶⁸ “For the Tourist Sportsman,” *Field and Stream*, January 1905, 286-7.

tourists' eye these sites were seldom problematic and they were certainly not political; they only heightened the image of Southern distinctiveness which the Northern traveler craved."⁴⁶⁹

Publicists cleansed negatives from the region's history; slavery, war and poverty became monuments that heightened visitors' sense that they experienced something uniquely Southern.

Nostalgia, Race, & Sporting Tourism

"Sportsmen, historians, antiquarians and nature lovers will find great delight in visiting Beaufortland," wrote Charleston & Western Carolina Railroad agent N.L. Willet. "This section has a history that is all romantic wonderland...It has been a shining mark for wars: Spanish, Revolutionary, Indian and the Civil War with its horrible Reconstruction era. It has been the mother of crops for world use, such as silk, indigo, rice, Sea Island cotton and rock phosphate was mined in large quantities."⁴⁷⁰ The war was over and Northerners now craved remnants of the Old South. "There must be amusements, mental and physical, and inducement to out-door life and exercise," declared F.W. Eldredge in a guide book for Camden, South Carolina, "and certainly nothing more perfect can be wished for in a place of this kind than a quaint, quiet, old village to which nature and history have vouchsafed much that is beautiful and romantic, clinging fondly to its old dwellings, customs, and memories of the past."⁴⁷¹ Sporting tourism relied heavily on such "memories," though it must be noted that the past, as tourists wished to

⁴⁶⁹ Silber, *Romance of Reunion*, 69-70.

⁴⁷⁰ Willet, "Game Preserves and Game of Beaufort, Colleton and Jasper Counties, South Carolina," 16. Columbia, SCL, s.c. p639.1 C38g.

⁴⁷¹ F.W. Eldredge, "Camden, South Carolina as a Winter Resort," (New York: Mook Brothers & Co. Printing, 1880), 1. Columbia, SCL, s.c. 917.57611 E12c, 1.

see it, had little to do with realities of antebellum or post-Emancipation Southern life. This is especially true for one important part of a fictionalized South--the plantation experience.

The importance of the plantation to stereotypical images of the South cannot be overstated. Southerners had long touted the plantation as the seedbed of aristocratic virtue and manly skill, arguing that there men learned command of slaves, became intelligent farmers, and engaged in sporting activities that cultivated martial skill. Noted scientist and Georgia native Joseph LeConte credited his plantation upbringing, particularly frequent hunting and fishing excursions, for his mental and physical prowess, asserting that “[t]his kind of life is an admirable culture for a boy. It not only contributes to physical health but also to mental health, by continual contact with nature and by cultivation of the powers of observation. In addition, it cultivates in an admirable way quick perception, prompt decision, and persistent energy and patience in pursuit.”⁴⁷² Many Northerners accepted this romanticized vision. For visiting sportsmen, experiencing the grandeur of plantation life enabled them to enjoy an opulent vacation while recapturing a patina of celebrated social hierarchy that they associated with the antebellum plantocracy. These newly arrived elites did not make their fortune in plantations, but they believed such regal estates could best display it. According to historian George C. Rogers Jr., “[p]roperty in land was no longer the basis for power, but instead property in railroad companies, public utilities, banks, lumber companies, and rice mills. Eventually the holders of new money would wrap themselves in the old plantation myth through marriage alliances, patriotic societies, and an emulation of a style of family living that hearkened back to antebellum times.”⁴⁷³

⁴⁷² Joseph LeConte and William Dallam Armes, *The Autobiography of Joseph LeConte*, (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1903), 25. During the war, LeConte used his training in chemistry and medicine to manufacture medicine for the army and, for a time, serve as chemist for the Nitre and Mining Bureau, the department charged with finding materials and perfecting processes used in manufacturing gunpowder and ammunition (178-203).

Visible continuity between idealized, antebellum plantations and the postwar South became an important selling point for land and sporting rights. Buyers wanted reminders of the Old South plantation, complete with stately old buildings, scenic farm lands and African-American dependents. The Southern Railway described lands along South Carolina's Congaree River in just such romantic terms, noting that the river "is a beautiful, navigable stream that winds its way through pine stretches, cotton fields and all manner of plantations. Picturesque is a poor word for its wooded banks, its unexpected turnings, the scenes of cotton and tobacco fields and quaint log cabins galore."⁴⁷⁴ According to F.W. Eldredge, such plantations carried on the rich sporting traditions of their antebellum counterparts:

The plantation life was royally hospitable and generous, and as royally reckless and extravagant. A passion for field sports was a part of its very being—an inheritance from the earliest settlers, their ancestors, the English, the Irish and the Scotch. The horse, dog and gun were apart of their daily lives, and following the hounds across the country was as much a matter of course as the bounteous hunting breakfast afterwards. Packs of imported deer and fox hounds were numerous, systematically cared for and regularly hunted; while some of the best hunters and racers of which our country could boast in those days were raised and trained in these stables. To-day the love of field sports is as keen as ever.⁴⁷⁵

Advertisers stressed that Southern sporting plantation lands both teemed with fish and game and maintained cherished antebellum traditions. Speculators made certain that Southern sportsmen

⁴⁷³ George C. Rogers Jr., *The History of Georgetown, South Carolina*, (Spartansburg, South Carolina: The Reprint Company, 1990), 463. According to Rogers, native Southerners also embraced a highly mythologized version of the plantation past at precisely the same time as visitors from outside the region. Spurred on by the massive influx of immigrants to the United States in the period, old stock Southerners eagerly sought their roots, real or imagined, to more firmly establish themselves as native-born Americans. This fear over lost status, according to Rogers, accounts for much of the reason why so many memory groups in both the North and the South, such as the Daughters of the American Revolution and the United Daughters of the Confederacy, were born at this time (485).

⁴⁷⁴ "Columbia, South Carolina, as a Winter Resort," (Southern Railway, 1908), Columbia: SCL, 917.57711 C72w, n.p.

⁴⁷⁵ F.W. Eldredge, "Camden, South Carolina, as a Winter Resort," Columbia: SCL, s.c. 917.57611 E12c, 16.

became the logical inheritors of aristocratic field sporting traditions that remained alive and well in their resurrected Old South. According to *Outing* contributor Wirt Howe, such sports on Columbus, Mississippi, plantations lands had actually changed very little:

The large plantations of the cotton belt, which present practically the same appearance that they did in ante-bellum days and which are operated upon methods that have been in use for many years, are, from an agricultural point of view, unlike anything existing elsewhere in this country. Each plantation covers a large amount of land, and the cultivation, which is, with few exceptions, entirely that of cotton and corn, centres [sic] about the plantation store, carried on by the owner through his manager, and the “quarters,” parallel rows of log cabins where live the negro hands and their families, very much as they did in the days of slavery.⁴⁷⁶

Tourist literature stressed the continuity between Old South and New. Those that benefited from an influx of northern visitors and capital stressed that the basic social structure of the antebellum South, especially white domination over a subservient black population, remained intact.

As seen previously, just as antebellum planters used the presence of African Americans to mark their mastery, so too did white Southern sportsmen after Emancipation rely on former slaves to assure them of their place in the social order. For visiting sportsmen seeking to recapture the Old South, African Americans, ideally working for whites just as they had done under slavery, formed an essential part of an authentic reconstruction. Loyal former slaves, like Holt Collier, played as important a role in Old South mythology as the presence of skilled slave subordinates had played for antebellum planters’ sporting expeditions. Visiting sportsmen hungry for the Old South expected dutiful black servants who mirrored those traditions to be constant parts of the scenery. For how could a reconstruction of Old South aristocracy be complete without those people who made antebellum planters a master class in the first place?

⁴⁷⁶ “With the Quail Among the Cotton,” *Outing* 33 (3), December 1898, 245.

African Americans' importance to reconstructions of the Old South can be demonstrated by examining advertisements for and descriptions of Southern locales in tourist guides, personal accounts and national sporting periodicals. Soon after the close of the war, for example, Sea Island cotton plantation superintendent David Franklin Thorpe wrote to his friend, sporting enthusiast John Mooney, that St. Helena would make a fine destination both for its sport and the presence of African Americans. "You would find a great deal to interest you here in the fields, in the woods, by the shore, and in the water besides what you would find of interest in the character and habits of the negroes lately come out of slavery," Thorpe assured his friend.⁴⁷⁷ Julian Ralph found black Southerners one of the most crucial parts of his Southern experience, noting that "to me the colored folks form the most interesting spectacle in the South...As I think of them, a dozen familiar scenes arise that are commonplace there, yet to a Northerner are most interesting." Describing fishing along the many canals crossing New Orleans, Ralph indicated that African Americans completed the scene. "It is delightful to see them," he asserted. "Those open waterways flowing between grassy banks out towards the west end might seem offensive otherwise, but when at every few hundred feet a calm and placid negro man or 'mammy' with a brood of moon-faced pickaninnies sprawling beside her, is seen bent over the edges, pole in hand, the scenery becomes picturesque, and the sewers turn poetical."⁴⁷⁸ Such scenes, quaint holdovers of a by-gone age necessary for recreating that age in the present, added to the authenticity of a Southern sojourn. Elite sporting tourists therefore cherished the symbolic

⁴⁷⁷ Letter from David Franklin Thorpe to John Mooney, June 24, 1866, David Franklin Thorpe Papers, Folder 8, "January-June, 1866," UNCCH, SHC, #4262.

⁴⁷⁸ Julian Ralph, *Dixie*, 376.

importance of African Americans almost as much as Old South mythology claimed benevolent antebellum planters cherished their dutiful slaves.⁴⁷⁹

Although visiting sportsmen needed African Americans to complete their Old South experience, they still felt uneasy about them. While advertisers and speculators trumpeted “authentic” African Americans living as they had done under slavery, they carefully avoided the impression that the South was anything less than a white man’s country. Romantic descriptions of black life went hand in hand with assurances of a clearly drawn racial hierarchy. The obvious message that the South existed first and foremost for white men resonated with many Americans. According to the *Southern Cultivator*, “there is not elsewhere upon the globe as a territory open to the Anglo-Saxon race with such varied and great resources and such propitious and easy conditions of life and labor, so abundantly supplied with rivers, harbors, and with lines of railroad transportation, or so well located to command the commerce of both hemispheres.”⁴⁸⁰ Fred W. Wolf Jr., of Green Bay, Virginia’s, “The Jasmine Farms,” left no doubt about Anglo-Saxon superiority, asserting that “‘Virginia is heaven,’ where the white man is a gentleman—he hunts all day and never works.” According to Wolf, African Americans in Virginia did the dirty work. “The men-folks are off before daylight with their horn, ‘hosses’ and dog, for deer or fox,” he continued, “while the family’s boys do the chores and the plantation work. A colored man

⁴⁷⁹ George C. Rogers Jr., *The History of Georgetown, South Carolina*, 496. Rogers takes this argument even further, suggesting the popularity of Southern destinations actually blunted Northern efforts to reform the South in the decades after the war and made whites outside of the South more readily accept the region’s racial chasm as a necessary adjunct to Old South mythology. For Rogers, the purchase of plantations became part of the process whereby Americans accepted Southerners’ revision of their own history, noting that “the second Yankee invasion of Georgetown County,” as he called it, “strengthened the national myth about the glories of the Southern plantation past, a movement of which the film *The Birth of a Nation* was an early teaser and *Gone With The Wind* the final statement. It was under this blanket of national public opinion that the Solid South was put together. These Yankees had no desire to reform the South in any way” (489).

⁴⁸⁰ “The Future of the South,” *Southern Cultivator*, January 1893, 23.

servant in Virginia, irrespective of age, is a boy. Imagine an eighty-year-old boy.”⁴⁸¹ Sporting tourists relied on African Americans to help make their resurrection of the Old South complete, provided, of course, that they remained controlled and subordinate.

Advertisers carefully assured potential Southern visitors of both excellent sport and well-behaved African Americans whose appearance and demeanor called to mind the mythical antebellum aristocracy. Sportsman B.W. Mitchell’s description of North Carolina’s Currituck Sound, asserting that African-American houses outnumbered those of whites by perhaps four to one, assuaged visitors’ fears by highlighting black subservience. According to Mitchell, there were “[d]arkies, darkies everywhere! Of all sizes, shades and conditions; but one and all, old or young, respectful, polite, obsequious; tacitly acknowledging racial inferiority by an extreme deference.”⁴⁸² H.F.C. Bryant wrote of such when describing authentic, old-style fox hunts in Alamance County, North Carolina, particularly loyal former slave laborer Uncle Simon Bolick. According to Bryant, Bolick too longed for the Old South:

The old darkey was in earnest. His memory carried him back and he lived in days gone by. He scoffed at the things of the present. Life was not as sweet to him as it had been when he served his owner, Colonel William Bolick, the famous old farmer-sport of Piedmont, North Carolina, for then every day was a holiday. He hunted and traveled with his old master, who kept fine wines, blooded horses, and fast dogs. Truly, those were glorious days for Simon, and he has never become reconciled to the prosaic life of freedom.⁴⁸³

⁴⁸¹ “From Virginia,” *Field and Stream*, February 1902, 749-50.

⁴⁸² “Quail and Duck at Currituck,” *Field and Stream*, October 1901, 451.

⁴⁸³ “A Southern Fox Hunt,” *Field and Stream*, September 1903, 343.

Such stories assured Northern audiences that former slaves still served as loyal retainers and that white visitors had nothing to fear from them. They claimed the South functioned as more than just a sportsman's paradise; it was, more importantly, a white man's paradise.

Even though Southern elites had lost much of their previous authority over African Americans, some mastery could be retained, both literally and figuratively, in the sporting field. There would be no threat to white control facing "those Northerners who spend part of their winters here in hunting and resting" along the Georgia and South Carolina coasts, according to *Southern Cultivator* contributor "G.A.G." in 1894. "The country, although the blackest of black counties, in population, is one of the most orderly in the world," he assured potential sporting visitors. "Crime is almost unknown. This is largely due to the fact that the better class of Negroes, with that characteristic imitativeness of their race, try to copy the manners of their old masters, whom they still look upon as the best of the white race."⁴⁸⁴ Real estate agent E.J.C. Wood assured Northern audiences that African Americans near the resorts of Aiken, South Carolina, "are very industrious and saving, and some of them are very lazy and improvident, but all of them are orderly. Indeed, the streets of Aiken are safer than those of New York; and...I will add, as safe as any Northern village. Even vicious negroes are not disposed to commit offences against the person."⁴⁸⁵ Wood sent a clear message to potential sporting visitors that tractable, well-behaved African Americans could and would perform all necessary labor and that freed people, like slaves before them, knew their place.

⁴⁸⁴ "A Southern Coast Home," *The Southern Cultivator*, August 1894, 402-3.

⁴⁸⁵ E.J.C. Wood, "Aiken, South Carolina as a Winter Resort for Invalids or a Desirable Location for Permanent Residents, with Catalogue of Properties for Sale," (n.p., 1871), Columbia: SCL, 917.57751 W85a, 6.

New Yorker Henry Wellington Wack, who gained a measure of fame in the first third of the twentieth century as a landscape artist and illustrator of hunting and fishing scenes, demonstrated both the virulent racism of Southern hunting and fishing and the degree to which Northerners embraced the ideals of domination and subordination proffered by Southern sporting tourism. Wack found black labor to be a key marker of authenticity for his trip to Florida. “To kill tarpon you require first of all an experienced ‘nigger,’ Wack asserted. “He is as necessary as bait, from which purpose however, the law exempts him. And I believe Henry Guy Carleton when he says only a ‘nigger’ will do—no colored person, or darkey or mulatto, but a genuine ‘nigger.’” With the peculiar mix of overt racism and respect for African American’s sporting prowess common among white chroniclers of the Southern sporting field, visiting sportsmen like Henry Wellington Wack seemed to draw as much pleasure from the presence of their subordinate companions as from their sport. He began with advice on ensuring that your guide or laborer would be awake for the journey, suggesting that sportsmen first “fix the nigger”:

Hang an alarm clock around his neck and arrange with the stable boy to blast a can of giant powder under him at seventeen minutes past three in the morning. Then go to bed with the assurance that you’ll have to wake that nigger yourself about five o’clock. The Florida negro is a specialist on sleep and melons; but properly ‘fixed’ he is an invaluable aid in your quest for tarpon.⁴⁸⁶

According to Wack, neither the sportsman’s difficulties with the laborer nor his enjoyment of those difficulties ended with such precaution. Warning that sportsmen, upon commencing the day’s sport, would soon “find your nigger fast asleep,” Wack suggested a course of action that suggests the degree to which many visiting sportsmen accepted and desired such hierarchy as part of a Southern excursion. “Leave him in peace for the present,” Wack offered, “but have a

⁴⁸⁶ Henry Wellington Wack, “The Sportsmen’s Elysium of the South, Part II: The Game Animals of Florida,” *Field and Stream*, March 1901, 21-2.

club handy, for when the king of game fish starts your line for Jamaica you'll need vigorous inducements to bring that nigger to consciousness. By lambasting his feet you awaken his head; besides, the damage is not so permanent." Once such problems had been dealt with, the sportsman is left to enjoy the relaxed pleasures of Southern tarpon fishing, pleasures which reveal both interest in black laborers and a certainty in their overall inferiority. Describing passing the time on an excursion, Wack suggested that "some [sportsmen] lounge back in attitudes of the surest comfort and read and smoke; some write, some beguile the wait by discovering that the nigger is an intelligent companion, teeming with ideas about tarpon and local taxes, national politics and peach brandy. I say you may learn all this if your nigger is so obliging as to stay awake."⁴⁸⁷ It seems as if sporting tourists like Henry Wellington Wack desired African-American subordinates as much for their own sense of racial hierarchy as for their labor.

African Americans and Sporting Resorts/Plantations

African Americans became so linked with Southern hunting and fishing that the two became almost inseparable. Advertising quail hunting on Alabama's Mobile Bay Shell Road, Edward Cave assured potential visitors that "one can secure a negro guide there at the rate of one dollar per day."⁴⁸⁸ Describing a game preserve on the Virginia and North Carolina border, Herbert K. Job recounted the fine hunting to be had "accompanied by a negro servant on horseback."⁴⁸⁹ Instructing the caretaker of a preserve near Marion, South Carolina, Robert

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁸ "A Southern City's Door Yard," *Field and Stream*, December 1904, 193.

⁴⁸⁹ "The Story of a Game Preserve: Told Chiefly by the Camera, with A Trifle of Supplementary Detail," *Field and Stream*, Sept. 1909, n.p., UNCCH, NCC, Cp799 J 62s.

Pinckney Tucker told his agent R.L. Montague that visitors must enjoy the services of “a competent boy employed as waiter during their stay”⁴⁹⁰ And recounting the fine fishing near Savannah, Georgia, Baltimore sportsmen Edward A. Robinson guaranteed that when fishing near St. Catherine’s Island, tourists could depend upon “arrangements with a coal black fellow named Lewis to drive us across the island to a celebrated fishing place called Bluff Creek Hammock.”⁴⁹¹

The public and private hunting and fishing clubs that bought or leased so much of the South’s abandoned and fallow plantation and woodland acreage between the 1880s and the 1920s employed large numbers of black sporting laborers. We have noted that due to the uncertain future of agriculture, dissatisfaction with tenant labor and the simple desire to make money, landowners across the South sold or leased shooting rights to millions of acres to firms and individuals interested in either preserving good sport for themselves and their friends or making money by attracting visitors from across the country. Such sportsmen demanded African Americans for both labor and symbolism. Happily, for white sporting interests and for African Americans seeking employment that would provide at least a temporary alternative to regular agricultural employment, such sporting preserves and plantations could typically be found in old plantation areas with large black populations. These regions, including the South Carolina and Georgia Low Country, the Mississippi and Alabama black belts and the Mississippi and Yazoo Deltas, had no shortage of potential sporting laborers. Indeed the overall popularity of sporting resorts in such areas perhaps owed as much to the ready supply of African Americans as to the

⁴⁹⁰ Letter from Robert Pinckney Tucker to R.L. Montague, November 24, 1904, Robert Pinckney Tucker Papers, UNCCCH, SHC, # 1010, folder 99.

⁴⁹¹ “A Trip to Georgia,” *Forest and Stream*, March 18, 1899, 202.

availability of plantation lands. Areas that boasted large black populations could provide cheap sporting labor and more easily fulfill visitors' notions of aristocratic hunting and fishing.

Portions of land purchased as sporting retreats remained in crops after conversion from strictly agricultural uses, and black tenants or sharecroppers living on such lands often remained.⁴⁹² Permitting African Americans to remain in residence had numerous benefits. By keeping tenant farms in working order, new owners might make enough money to help finance club operations and reduce the financial pressures on their dues-paying membership.⁴⁹³ Lands, buildings, and equipment sustaining agricultural operations sometimes became an important part of purchases. Advertisements for the Glynn County, Georgia, Altama and Hopeton properties, being considered as sportsmen's retreats, for example, emphasized their potential as working plantations.⁴⁹⁴ Restoring old plantations to working order provided crops for game, especially coveted game birds like quail, and made lands more attractive to sportsmen.⁴⁹⁵ These sporting

⁴⁹² According to Suzanne C. Linder, black tenants were frequently allowed to remain in residence on plantations after they were converted. For example, when a firm of Savannah, Georgia, professionals purchased the Beaufort County, South Carolina, "Hobonny" plantation in 1925, they allowed the fifteen African-American families to remain as independent farmers for a rental fee of \$12 per year. *Historical Atlas of the Rice Plantations of the ACE River Basin--1860*, (Columbia: South Carolina Division of Archives and History, 1995), 244.

⁴⁹³ The New York-based founders of South Carolina's Palmetto Club, for example, which in 1893 built club houses on the 3,600 acre Cote Bas plantation on the Cooper River, restored the plantation to working order in the hopes of supporting the club through plantation income. According to the *Charleston Daily Sun*, the Cote Bas lands "have been restored to their former elegant conditions, and crops of rice, corn, potatoes, sorghum, &c., have been put in, under experienced labor...The present repairs are only a beginning, as the new owners, who are gentlemen of wealth and leisure, are determined that it shall be restored to all its former greatness, and in time, not distant, be a planting and hunting cynosure." *Palmetto Club*, (n.p.), 1894, Columbia: SCL, s.c. 799 P18p, 39, 46.

⁴⁹⁴ According to Jordan S. Thomas, reporting on the advantages of the Altama plantation, "[t]here is also standing on this tract a large two story barn or rice mill, which is now equipped with engine and machinery, the engines and attachments being practically new, the rice machinery, of course, being not so valuable; and in addition to these buildings, there are several buildings, outhouses for servants, &c. &c., which are of some value, especially adaptable for occupancy by the attendants of a shooting and fishing club." "Description of Altama and Hopeton Plantations," Jackson and Prince Family Papers, Subcollection 2, Subseries 9.2, Miscellaneous Items, UNCCCH, SHC, # 371.

⁴⁹⁵ In 1912, North Carolinian James A. Bryan was pitching his Lake Ellis hunting lands to potential buyers. According to Bryan's agent George T. Nichols, the sporting quality of the lands was to be greatly improved by planting rice. "With a little money spent in planting rice for feed for the Water Fowl," Nichols asserted to a potential buyer, "thousands would congregate on Lake Ellis, which as you know is a typical feeding ground for

retreats, appearing as they did during the antebellum period, helped craft the “authentic” plantation experience sporting tourists craved. The presence of black tenants on a working plantation added to visitors’ sense that they had returned to a mythical Southern “golden age.” Keeping African-Americans laborers on converted plantation lands also kept a supply necessary sporting labor, often people who had worked those same lands for years, close at hand.

Extensive, but unfortunately rare, records of sporting plantations that kept careful account of laborers’ activities do exist and provide glimpses at the valuable employment opportunities available to African Americans and their families. South Carolina’s Kinloch Gun Club, located on South Island near Georgetown, left substantial records outlining African Americans’ role in Southern sporting tourism. Owned and operated by the DuPont Corporation and headquartered in the DuPont Building in Wilmington, Delaware, the company established the club to provide good Southern sport to DuPont executives and clients, and it served, like many other sporting clubs, as a functioning plantation. Indeed a majority of the hands employed at Kinloch provided typical plantation labor and appeared in surviving payroll records in occupations similar to any Southern plantation, including “laborer,” “regular hand,” “teamster,” “gardener,” “carpenter” and “plowman.” These hands, typically listed in Club records as less than full-time employees, appeared in ledgers as one-half or one-quarter time employees and likely served the sporting activities of the plantation as well. But in addition to the farming job classifications, many other

Geese, Mallards, and Black Duck, the water being of an average of 18 inches deep and the bottom covered with a grass that the fowl seek. I have seen as many as 10,000 Duck and 5000 Geese in the air at one time. By planting the field adjacent to the lakes in rice, at a cost of \$10.00 per acre, a yield of 20 to 30 bushels of rice can be had. The market value is \$1.00 per bushel, by leaving ½ of the rice in field the Geese for twenty miles around would come to it.” Letter from George T. Nichols to A.R. Rogers, April 6, 1912, Bryan Family Papers, Series 1.4; Correspondence, 1912, UNCCH, SHC, # 96.

listings, including “boatman,” “watchman,”⁴⁹⁶ “marsh hand,” “bird minder,”⁴⁹⁷ “driver” and “guide” reflected the clubs’ sporting activities.⁴⁹⁸

As discussed previously, sporting labor, whether in the service of native or visiting sportsmen, rarely provided more than supplementary income. This remained true of labor at larger sporting plantations or hunting and fishing clubs. Sporting hands at Kinloch typically worked less than half the month, with some employees paid per day and others, apparently those who served more regularly, receiving monthly pay.⁴⁹⁹ Each classification paid a different rate which the club Superintendent recorded in his ledger. Boatmen, apparently the only sporting hands who frequently worked full time, earned the highest rate of \$10.00 for a full month’s work. Bennett Wiggins and William Singleton, for example, who appear frequently as boatmen in the Kinloch payroll records for 1914 and 1915, earned \$5.00 or \$10.00 per month depending, ostensibly, on the number of guests present. Watchmen, who performed the critical task of tracking wildlife and reporting its location, also received good pay at Kinloch. Some, like Nelson Anderson, Jim Mitchell and Toby Vanderhorst, earned between \$2.50 and \$7.50 for their

⁴⁹⁶ In antebellum plantation parlance, “watchman” referred to a trusted employee who served as a look-out or guard during the evening. With regard to sport, watchmen were those hands responsible for culling plantation or club lands for wildlife, tracking its location and movement and reporting such to their superiors. This was typical of Southern sporting retreats, especially the larger ones that ranged over thousands of acres.

⁴⁹⁷ As the supplies of Southern game birds dwindled throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, more and more sporting clubs and plantations adopted the practice of raising birds, such as quail and coot, specifically for seasonal hunts. Club agents spent the off-season caring for such birds, some of which were raised in captivity, others let loose on club lands, employing bird minders to track the birds, cultivate their habitat and protect them from then threat of poachers. This decidedly elaborate process was undertaken simply to guarantee visiting sportsmen a fine winter’s sport with plentiful supplies of game birds.

⁴⁹⁸ Kinloch Gun Club Records, 1914-1922, “Payroll, 1914-1922,” Charleston: SCHS, 25/148/2.

⁴⁹⁹ Sporting laborers likely worked most often for sporting visitors during the peak season. Between early autumn and late winter, when most fish and game was in season and when the majority of Northern sporting tourists went south seeking escape from Northern climes, hands worked larger portions of each month. During the remainder of the year, most worked half the month or less.

month's work.⁵⁰⁰ Others, like Peter and Richard Legare, served as watchmen for a daily rate. In December 1915, for example, one of the busiest bird hunting months of the year, the Legares received \$.50 per day and earned a total of \$7.50. Other jobs paid considerably less. Bird minders, men like Samuel Glover and Peter Legare (the only employee to appear in the ledger in two separate occupations), received between \$.25 and \$.30 per day to care for the club's game birds. Although extant Kinloch records only list accounts paid in 1914 and 1915, and changes in individual employees' job status over time cannot be determined, it is reasonable to assume that better paying positions went to hands who consistently demonstrated the most skill and loyalty.⁵⁰¹

The club employed guides and huntsmen, the most visible and, since entrusted with the safety of sporting tourists, likely the most experienced and trusted employees at places like Kinloch, though a different system. Visitors, not the club itself, paid these workers and each guest kept account with the employee, recording the kind of excursion undertaken and how much time was expended.⁵⁰² For a guide and boat for shooting duck and other birds, visitors paid \$1.25 per day or \$1.00 per day without a boat. For a guide for quail, turkey, deer or other land

⁵⁰⁰ From the Kinloch records, it is impossible to determine why some hand of the same job classification were paid different rates for the same monthly work; a good guess would be that hands were paid different rates based on skill and experience and performance over, with the hands that had demonstrated their competency earning top rates.

⁵⁰¹ Kinloch Gun Club Records, 1914-1922, "Payroll, 1914-1922," Charleston: SCHS, 25/148/2.

⁵⁰² African-American guides were, of course, not the only sporting laborers available in Southern fish and game regions. Like hunting and fishing for basic subsistence, doing so for employment was sometimes done by poor whites as well. In some sporting areas, particularly where black populations were relatively small, whites had a substantial presence in the sporting labor trade. Many of the sporting laborers along the Eastern shore of North Carolina, for example, in popular gunning destinations along the Chesapeake Bay and Currituck Sounds, were white. But in black belt regions or sporting areas that were majority African American, the typical sporting guide would likely be African American. The Oakland Club, in St. Stephens, Berkeley County, South Carolina, told potential visitors that "[c]olored guides can be obtained at \$1.00 per day. White guides are more expensive." This cost difference might indicate two things. First, in an area as predominantly black as Berkeley County, it simply may have been difficult to find white guides. A second possibility is that as the association between African Americans and subordinate sporting labor grew, white laborers, in order to preserve their own sense of separation from the black population, refused to perform such labors for the same wages earned by their black counterparts. "Oakland Club, St. Stephens, P.O., Berkeley County, South Carolina," (1908), 5. Columbia: SCL, 799.2026.

game hunting, visitors paid \$.75 per day.⁵⁰³ Larger parties required more guides and huntsmen.

In December 1916, for example, Philadelphia engineer Herbert T. Hartman and two companions spent three days at the club, employing Tommy Anderson, Sampson Edwards, Abram and John Michel and Bennett Wiggins for a total of \$18.75.⁵⁰⁴ The club encouraged guests to settle accounts at the conclusion of their visit and warned them not to offer gratuities. Echoing old assumptions about black laboring and sporting habits, Superintendent R.M. Doar assured visitors that excessive tips or gifts ruined laborers' efficiency:

It is considered very undesirable to tip the guides, as they have regular rates. In some cases in the past where excessive tips have been given, the guides who received same became utterly and absolutely worthless for a considerable time thereafter, not only causing inconvenience and annoyance to the members and club management, but the tipping was a positive harm to the guides so tipped.

Kinloch did accept some gifts, however. "There seems to be no harm in giving the guides cheap cigars and chewing tobacco, of which they are very fond," read the club rules for 1915.⁵⁰⁵

Gift-giving may or may not have been customary at sporting destinations like Kinloch, but surviving records show that some visitors offered presents to their guides. Herbert T. Hartman, for example, sent guide Abraham White "a sweater as a little remembrance," hoping it would "remind him of the sweating he did in pulling that boat through to Duck Creek." DuPont

⁵⁰³ "Rules and Regulations for the Season Beginning November 15, 1914," Kinloch Gun Club Records, 1914-1922, "Correspondence, 1913-1914," Charleston: SCHS, 24/47/1. The prices quoted by the Kinloch Club are consistent with prices occasionally listed for sporting guides in national sporting periodicals and Southern sporting advertisements beginning in the late nineteenth century. A guide published by the Seaboard Air Line in 1898, for example, indicated that guides typically earned between \$.50 and \$2.00 per day, depending on the region. In Southampton County, Virginia, guides could be had for between \$.50 and \$1.00 per day. In Northampton County, North Carolina, guides cost \$1.00 per day with \$.50 extra for the use of dogs. In Gwinnett County, Georgia, reported the railway, two or three experienced guides could be purchased for between \$1.00 and \$2.00 per day. Seaboard Air Line Railway, General Passenger Department, "A Guide to the Famous Hunting and Fishing Grounds of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia," 13,16,20.

⁵⁰⁴ Kinloch Gun Club Records, 1914-1922, "Correspondence, 1916," Charleston: SCHS, 24/14/5.

⁵⁰⁵ Kinloch Gun Club Records, 1914-1922, "Correspondence, 1915," Charleston: SCHS, 25/147/2.

executive R.R.M. Carpenter likewise sent his guide a gift of a sweater, asking Doar to present said sweater to “‘Boney,’ the guide whom I had when I was at the club, with my compliments.”⁵⁰⁶ Several other examples of white sportsmen presenting such remembrances of journeys together can be cited. Archibald Rutledge recalled that the most prized possession of his boyhood hunting companion Gabriel Myers was a hunting horn presented him by a John Toland of Philadelphia after the former helped the latter land a fourteen point buck on a low country hunting expedition. “So delighted had Toland been that he had asked his dusky guide what he would like best in all the world” Rutledge recalled, “and Gabe, who had for days been casting languishing glances at the polished horn that hung over the white man’s shoulder, had indicated, with the huge shyness of a modest man, that the horn looked to him like a million dollars.”⁵⁰⁷ Likewise, after an October 1907 bear hunt in the Louisiana canebrakes, Theodore Roosevelt presented Holt Collier with a Winchester 45-70 model 1886 that became the famous guide’s most cherished possession until his death.⁵⁰⁸

Such gifting seemed permissible, but other offerings, especially liquor, might destroy laborers’ discipline. “The House Committee specially urges all members not to give wines or liquors to the guides,” Kinloch’s Doar cautioned.⁵⁰⁹ Worried about the deleterious effects of alcohol, and subscribing to the common stereotype of the drunken, irresponsible African American, clubs wished their employees to avoid the dangers of drink. They also had other restrictions on their employees. Aside from fear of drunkenness, clubs also worried employees would use their extensive knowledge of club lands to destroy area wildlife on their own,

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁷ Rutledge, *Santee Paradise*, (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1956), 155.

⁵⁰⁸ Buchanan, *Holt Collier*, 198.

⁵⁰⁹ “Fees and Tips,” Kinloch Gun Club Records, 1914-1922, “Correspondence, 1915,” SCHS, 25/147/2.

independent hunts. For that reason, clubs like the Berkeley County, South Carolina, Oakland Club limited their employees' hunting activities as best they could. "No guide or other employee of the Club shall shoot game of any kind on lands owned or controlled by the Club, or on any lands over which Club members may, from time to time, shoot by courtesy, unless so directed to do in writing by a member of the Executive Committee;" declared the club's rules for 1908...

...nor shall any guide or other employee of the Club shoot game of any kind within five (5) miles of any land owned or controlled by the Club, unless so directed to do in writing by a member of the Executive committee. This five-mile limit, however, does not apply to lands lying east of the main line of the Atlantic Coast Railroad, between Lanes and Charleston.⁵¹⁰

Such restriction reminds us that, despite their employment of black labor, white sporting interests still felt deeply uneasy about African-American hunting and fishing and that racial control remained as important a term of employment as sporting skill. It also indicates continued white resistance to the independent subsistence earned through hunting and fishing.

It is impossible to know how often sportsmen gifted or tipped their sporting laborers but, regardless of such gratuities, African Americans worked in many capacities all across the richer hunting and fishing regions of the South, leaving an indelible mark on the region's sporting tourism. While serving as overseer for the Beaufort, South Carolina, Chelsea Plantation Club, John Edwin Fripp protected Club lands from poachers and trespassers⁵¹¹ by employing an

⁵¹⁰ "Oakland Club, St. Stephens, P.O., Berkeley County, South Carolina," (1908), 5. Columbia: SCL, 799.2026.

⁵¹¹ Owners of sporting plantations and preserves typically employed people to watch over their lands and protect wildlife from human predators. Investors who sank so much capital into Southern lands for the specific purpose of providing keen sport had no intention of surrendering fish and game to the many poor whites and African Americans who often depended upon such quarry to maintain their basic subsistence. Of North Carolina sporting lands reached by their rail service, the Richmond and Danville Railroad noted that "some New York gentlemen have 13,000 acres of land reserved and in charge of a keeper, for the sole purposes of hunting and fishing." ("Summer Resorts and Points of Interest of Virginia, Western North Carolina, and North Georgia," New York: C.G. Crawford, 1884), 68. Robert Pinckney Tucker, in order to protect wildlife on his Savannah, Georgia, employed the services of a Wesley Cone. Tucker instructed Cone that "[y]ou are expected to ride over them and carefully inspect them often enough to detect any depredation within a few days after it has occurred or commenced. You are expected to ascertain the depredators and report the matter immediately to us. You are expected to prevent all hunting on the properties that

African American man referred to only as Kit to help him manage club lands and report incursions.⁵¹² Northerner Frank A. Heywood asserted that preserve lands near Virginia Beach, Virginia, proved quite fruitful provided one has a guide, “an absolute necessity to a stranger.” Fortunately for Heywood, they were plentiful:

Guides can be obtained at all these places, and good horses will be furnished at moderate prices. At Pantego last week Sam Shavender, who appears to have been built after sketches by “Porte Crayon,” drove me eighty two miles with the rain pouring torrents in eleven hours, changing horses but once. For this service he charged me but \$5.⁵¹³

After 1910, when investors John and Joseph Maybank purchased the South Carolina Low Country’s Lavington, Bugbee, Oaks, Drainfield, Fee Farm, and Godfrey plantations, converting them into hunting preserves, “local African Americans served as paddlers and guides,” according to Suzanne C. Linder. “One named Bristow was especially valuable because it was said he could paddle with one hand and shoot with the other. Given enough compensation, he could also be

we own in fee simple, and to do all in your power to advance our best interests” (Letter from Robert Pinckney Tucker to Wesley Cone, July 12, 1902, Robert Pinckney Tucker Papers, Folder #97, UNCCH, SHC, #1010). Likewise the fore-mentioned Mr. Morris, owner of Tangipahoa, Louisiana’s Hennen plantation, protected his guests interests by employing a “corps of hunters, consisting of old professionals who have been in the business for years, [that] act as a police and makes a daily round of the estate, killing hawks, snakes, foxes, and other enemies of the birds and beasts, and at the same time distributing food where the pheasants, rabbits, and partridges can get it” (“Game Preserving in Louisiana,” *Outing* 11(6), March 1888, 534).

⁵¹² John Edwin Fripp Papers, Series 1.2, Volume 5, UNCCH, SHC, #869. Very frustrating for Fripp were the constant depredations against Chelsea game made by area African Americans. These were the people he most often complained of in his daily journal. Fripp often had difficulty identifying and stopping such poaching, as demonstrated by an August 30, 1899 entry. Desperate to protect plantation deer until the Club season opened, Fripp questioned area African Americans and found them less than forthcoming. “Renty Houston told me another deer was killed on Monday the 28th over on the Glover place; and some white young man started a deer on Fisher Flats. Ran through his place, jumped the wire fence near his mill and got away. That’s three that have been killed out there in the neighborhood. Saw John Brown. Swears he knows nothing about any deer being hunted or killed there.” Fripp often seemed skeptical of such stories. On August 9, 1902, Fripp complained that even though he frequently questioned area African Americans about incidents of poaching, “[t]hey all lie and pretend to know nothing.” Fripp also had difficulty with a Kit, whom he hired to help safeguard the Club. On August 15th, 1899, for example, Fripp heard shooting and was certain it was Kit. The following week he confronted Kit about the incident but with no success. “Got lot of sass from Kit for shooting on 13th,” Fripp declared. “He don’t like being spoken to about his neglect of duty.” It seems that one problem sporting plantation or club officials had to deal with was keeping their own employees, who would be the people most familiar with area fish and game and best equipped to catch it, from taking too much fish and game away from their affluent visitors from across the country.

⁵¹³ “North Carolina Game Region,” *Forest and Stream*, November 5, 1891, 308.

discreet about just who did the shooting.”⁵¹⁴ Northern visitors to the Charleston and Georgetown County, South Carolina, lands of the Santee Gun Club, founded in 1901 and host to many sporting tourists, enjoyed the option of taking “out the negro Henry Snyder as master of the hunt. His language and grammar are worth the price. He also understands driving.”⁵¹⁵

All across the South, white sportsmen called upon the services of black subordinates. Harry F. Lowe, on a hunt just south of Washington D.C., “took to the field with our negro guide [who] led the way for our party,” and greatly enjoyed such “common purpose between black and white kin.” When taking to the field with the famed African American-trained hounds of Berkeley County, South Carolina’s Oakland Club, Archibald Rutledge witnessed the exploits of renowned “dusky scout” Henry Washington, “a Negro who knows horses, dogs, and deer; who has a voice that carries miles; and who would rather hunt than sleep in the sun—the utmost compliment for any activity that can be paid a negro.” A.S. Salley Jr. described white sportsmen’s pleasure of being led through the old rice fields of the Santee Country by preacher and sporting laborer “Isaac, who spends his week days guiding for hunters and his Sundays guiding the spiritual welfare of an ebony-hued congregation of the neighborhood.” Nash Buckingham described duck hunting along the Mississippi Sound’s Ship Island, especially “with Horace, colored factotum of our Beaver Dam Duck Club,” who had charge of white visitors to the island. In these and scores of other hunting and fishing destinations across the South, white sporting tourists eagerly took to the field with black subordinate companions. Such laborers completed the Southern sporting experience for those who glimpsed vestiges of aristocracy in the resurrected Old South that a biracial sporting field called to mind. Hunting and fishing in post-

⁵¹⁴ Linder, *Historical Atlas of the Rice Plantations of the ACE River Basin—1860*, 309.

⁵¹⁵ Entry for November 23, 1904, Santee Club Records, 1901-1969, SCHS, 34/423/9.

Emancipation Dixie, integrated but not bastions of social equality, sources of valuable income for many African Americans, but only because visitors equated such labor with the region's racial legacy, demanded black hunters, fishermen, drivers, and guides who remained loyal, dedicated, skilled and, above all else, clearly subordinated to their white betters.⁵¹⁶

Conclusion

African Americans' customary attachment to hunting and fishing and tourists' idealized visions of the South, both of which made black labor indispensable, did not vanish as the nineteenth century passed into the twentieth. Beaufort, South Carolina's, Medway plantation perhaps best illustrates black sporting labor's longevity. Owned before the war by rice planter Peter Galliard Stoney, Medway had long been renowned as a hunting plantation. In 1906, Stoney's nephew Samuel Galliard Stoney converted the property into a well-known tourist retreat.⁵¹⁷ For manpower, he relied on laborers whose families had lived there for generations. Two in particular, a descendant of area slaves named David Gourdine, who was born at Medway, and Cy Myers, men "whose families have lived and worked at Medway for more than a hundred years," became the plantation's two leading huntsmen and drivers,⁵¹⁸ This type of generational

⁵¹⁶ Harry F. Lowe, "Our Coon Hunt and What We Got," *Field and Stream*, January 1909, 757; Archibald Rutledge, *Days Off in Dixie*, (London: Leonard Parsons, 1925), 205; A.S. Salley Jr., *The Happy Hunting Ground: Personal Experiences in the Low-Country of South Carolina*, (Columbia, South Carolina: The State Company, 1916), 38; Nash Buckingham, "The XIVth of John," in Lamar Underwood, *Hunting the Southlands*, (Clinton, New Jersey: Amwell Press, 1986), 175.

⁵¹⁷ According to Virginia Christian Beach, Stoney and his compatriots tried to make hunting at Medway as aristocratic as possible. "The mounted deer drive had been practiced on Lowcountry plantations for generations," Beach noted. "Often hunters fired from horseback, which required a great deal of skill. They likened their sport to that of fox hunting in England and followed a prescribed social code." African Americans were essential to that code. Beach, *Medway*, 77.

⁵¹⁸ So revered was David Gourdine Jr., affectionately referred to as "Davy," that when he died, he was interred in the plantation cemetery where the Stoney's placed a remarkable epitaph: "A Keen Sportsman and/Famous Deer Driver/No More His Mellow Horn/Shall Sound/His Echoing Voice Rouse/Flagging Hound" Ibid., 85.

service did not end there; two of Gourdine's sons, David Jr. and Walter, later worked as laborers, drivers and huntsmen at Medway. They have since been followed by David Jr.'s grandson, Sam Washington, who, as late as 1999, still worked at the sporting plantation."⁵¹⁹ Such generational continuity became common. According to Titus Brown and James Hadley, who compiled the oral histories of sixteen African-American families who lived and worked on and near Thomasville, Georgia's Pebble Hill Plantation, a popular sporting destination in the first half of the twentieth century, Pebble Hill employees worked there for generations, passing on both jobs and important requisite skills from father to son, mother to daughter.⁵²⁰ Such continuity demonstrates both the degree to which Southern sporting resorts depended upon black labor and that such labor provided long-term employment opportunities that some wished to preserve.

African Americans drew substantial material, economic, even psychological benefits from sporting labor in the service of white sportsmen. But that employment remained sporadic and could never be guaranteed. The steady employment provided by long-term, sometimes multi-generational service to a sporting club or plantation proved much more valuable, allowing some to use such employment as a starting point for their family's future economic betterment. Far beyond the first two decades of the twentieth century, the true peak of Southern sporting

⁵¹⁹ Ibid, 86.

⁵²⁰ Located near the Florida border on a major railroad terminus, Thomasville, Georgia, became one of the South's leading winter resort destinations, particularly for elite sportsmen. Home to numerous tourist plantations, Thomasville's crown jewel, along with the stately Melhana Plantation, was Pebble Hill. As the number of Northern visitors increased year after year, much of the areas' plantation lands, some 300,000 acres in all, were converted to sporting preserves. To staff and run those preserves, resort owners turned to those who knew the sporting ways of the Deep South perhaps better than anyone. "To operate these large, specialized plantations, a skilled management and as well as a talented and industrious workforce were needed," note Brown and Hadley. "The continued operation of these hunting plantations for more than a century is the testimony to the diligence of the men and women who lived and worked for the northern plantation owners." They found just such a workforce in area African Americans and their families, people who worked generation to generation at Pebble Hill from the turn of the century into the 1940s. Titus Brown and James "Jack" Hadley, *African American Life on the Southern Hunting Plantation*, (Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2001), 8.

tourism, African Americans continued to play a critical role. Some of the Pebble Hill families, for example, worked at area sporting plantations for over fifty years. Interview subject Sam Green, born in 1914, spent some 37 years at Pebble Hill from 1934 to 1970, working in the dog kennel, driving a hunting wagon and working in the flower garden. His brother Sidney Green worked there for 36 years from 1942 to 1978. Dock Hadley worked at the nearby Fair Oaks plantation from 1941 to 1984, serving as huntsman and working with the plantation's dogs. His forty-four years at a sporting plantation allowed him, upon his retirement, to use savings to buy land and build a house and to live, in his own words, "just like Alice in Wonderland."⁵²¹ African Americans remained the key source of sporting labor across the black belt South well past World War II. When W. Ancrum Boykin founded the Boykin Hunting Club near Camden, South Carolina, in 1948, members relied, like Southerners had done for centuries, on black laborers, including "Uncle Jimmy" Boatwright, who "became a friend of the hunters from across the river," "'Little Boy,' who was 'a welcome addition because he was a good cook and 'help' around the camp,'" and three drivers named Spaniard, Rabbit and Bootie. In describing the work of those valued drivers, Henry D. Boykin II, with a touch of nostalgic lament, calls to mind not only the history of skill which made black labor attractive to white sportsmen but also demonstrates a clear appreciation for the tradition of service that made their presence symbolically indispensable:

Listening to the drivers' voices echoing through the swamp, I knew that one day there would be new ways and new drivers, but what makes a driver good? He knows the swamp and how the deer run, he knows each of his dogs and how they work, and with other drivers, he is a part of the team. Add to those qualities a voice that can resound with a jubilation of excitement and a horn that can capture your attention with a happy note or bring tears to your eyes with melancholy sensitivity, and you have a great driver. For me,

⁵²¹ Titus Brown and James Hadley, *African American Life on the Southern Hunting Plantation*, 22, 46, 50.

the talents of Spaniard, Bootie and Rabbit, the fine quality of their voices and the sounds of their horns could never be surpassed. The thrill of many ancient hunters must surge up from the shadows to join the sweet song of those three dark experts. Maybe those good drivers were more of Dad's time than mine. He expected to hunt with the help of his black friends, as he had always done.⁵²²

This quotation reminds us that, despite the high praise meted out to African-American sporting laborers by white employers, the other side to the dependence upon black labor cannot be ignored. While some former slaves, their children and their children's children carved out lasting advantages by turning hunting and fishing traditions cultivated under bondage into opportunities for regular employment, it must be remembered that such opportunities permitted both white Southerners and visiting sportsmen to make the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century sporting field fit their notions of genuine antebellum social and racial relationships. Ultimately, black sporting laborers, like Archibald Rutledge's companion Gabriel Myers, Kinloch's Abraham White and "Boney," Medway's renowned David Gourline and Cy Myers, and Pebble Hill's Sam and Sidney Green, although credited with impressive, sometimes legendary skills, in the end received as much praise for their loyal service to whites. African-American laborers helped Southerners reconstruct the racial hierarchy of the Old South and allowed a variety of sporting and tourism interests to use the long tradition of the bi-racial sporting field to sell their symbolic reconstructions of a vanished plantation South.

We now return to the person with whom we began, Holt Collier, the most famous African-American sportsmen ever. If African Americans' subordination in the sporting field overshadowed their skill at hunting, fishing or boating, then we are compelled to again ask a question. Is there more to the widespread regard which Holt Collier received than just sporting talents? Did Collier become a legend simply because he killed over 2,200 bears or because he

⁵²² Henry D. Boykin II, *Looking Back at the Boykin Hunting Club*, (Camden, South Carolina: H.D. Boykin, 1984), 34. Columbia: SCL, 799.2B69L.

demonstrated, from his days of Confederate service to his time hunting in the Delta with Theodore Roosevelt, a ceaseless devotion to white superiors? Did he become such a renowned and respected figure among the white residents of Greenville, Mississippi and, eventually, the entire region simply because of his more than three quarters of a century of unparalleled sporting excellence or because during that time he remained, in many ways, a living, breathing example of the survival of idealized Old South social relationships that so moved and reassured white observers? Holt Collier never failed to demonstrate the kind of unwavering loyalty that white Southerners wished to think characterized the master–slave relationship and that white visitors to the South believed made such a journey more authentic.⁵²³ He simultaneously showcased what sporting visitors thought idealized African Americans had become and what native Southerners wished they would always be—perfect servants.

In the end we must conclude that while no one can deny Holt Collier’s obvious skill in the field or the appeal of the incidents drawn from his undeniably remarkable life, the fame he and many other sporting laborers achieved cannot be separated from the fact that white sportsmen valued African Americans as subordinate companions at least as much for what their skilled service symbolized as for that skill itself. While sporting laborers described in this and the previous chapter sometimes earned respect and admiration as skilled sportsmen, they also drew praise as loyal servants who exemplified the highest achievements of the Old South. We must remember that while both native Southerners and sporting tourists both frequently lauded

⁵²³ Collier demonstrated just such loyalty in his WPA interview when recalling his late master: “I am black, but my associations with my Old Col. gave me many advantages,” he remembered. “‘I was freer then than I have ever been since and I loved him better than anybody else in the world. I would have given my life for [him],’ said Holt with tears rolling down his withered cheeks.” Such emotional declarations on the part of former slaves would, for white audiences uneasy about the state of race relations in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, bring to life a mythical past and assuage their fears about an often worrisome present. George P. Rawick, *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography*, Supplement Series 1, v. 7, “Mississippi Narratives, Part 2,” 464.

and definitely depended upon African American's skills and experience, they never conceived of that role as anything but inherently subordinate. No matter how skilled they perceived their laborers to be, no matter how kindly or admiringly they spoke of them in the field, the hallmarks of such relationships always remained service to whites and subordination of African Americans. Indeed elite, white sportsmen would ultimately have it no other way.

6. “When He Should Be Between the Plow Handles”: Sportsmen, Landowners, Legislatures, and the Assault on African-American Hunting and Fishing

Here we are to-day, going up only because the nigger is going down, and only by hammering on the subject is it that we have inspired the legislators with resolution enough to introduce a bill on the subject.

--A member of the Georgia State Agricultural Society, on the difficulty of enacting laws restricting African-American dog ownership, 1876

The fight made by the Audubon Society is a fight to save the birthright of a people, now being wrested from them by the hireling and the lawless.

--James Henry Rice Jr., Secretary, South Carolina Audubon Society, 1909

Introduction

By 1915, a half century of controversy swirling around African Americans' use or, in the eyes of whites, misuse, of Southern fields, forests, and streams brought a number of key factors into alignment. Landowners, who had broadcast the connection between former slaves' independent subsistence and the problem of labor intractability since Emancipation, eagerly sought to limit black hunting and fishing. Sportsmen, who had long charged people of color with violating elite, white sporting codes and contributing to the epidemic of wildlife depletion, joined in the desperate attempt to make the Southern and national publics realize the dangers of unrestricted African-American environmental exploitation. Yet despite their efforts, a half century's worth of debate and agitation had seen such restrictions evolve slowly through fits and starts. By the early twentieth century, however, the pieces had finally fallen into place for long-suffering sportsmen and landowners. With the explosion of Southern sporting tourism, which proved increasingly lucrative for landowners, resorts and developers, many Southerners began to

understand the financial motivation for better protecting fish and game. With the rise of a national conservation movement which, by the late nineteenth century, penetrated even the recalcitrant South, sportsmen had begun to accept limits on their own hunting and fishing as perhaps necessary to stop the abuses of immoderate lower class sportsmen. With the evolution of Jim Crow segregation, which coincided with a dramatic increase in racism nationally, Southern and American audiences both agreed that black sporting and character flaws were the root cause of Dixie's wildlife woes. The time had finally arrived for a wide-ranging legislative assault on African Americans' right to hunt and fish.

On July 1, 1915, a law requiring state hunting licenses, long sought by sporting enthusiasts, finally went into effect in 17 of South Carolina's 44 counties.⁵²⁴ The new law required hunters to purchase--at the cost of \$1.10 for native and \$10.25 for non-resident sportsmen--a state hunting license and corresponding display tag for their guns that identified them as lawful hunters, and to seek written permission from landowners over whose property they pursued their quarry. Hunting without a license would earn a fine of \$25.00 to \$100.00 or, if the offender could not pay, a day on the county chain gang for each dollar fined. On August 13, an excited editorial appeared in the coastal *Beaufort Gazette* heralding the first conviction and sentencing of an area game law violator. According to the article, the "incident is one of the most encouraging that have come to the attention of the thousands of people in this region, who want to see game and useful birds saved from extermination." Tellingly, an African American who, "has just been given a chain gang sentence because he hunted without the license which the

⁵²⁴ This law, known as the Ziegler Bill, initially passed on January 31, 1914. According to observers such as the low country *Georgetown Times*, the bill was long overdue because "anything that would tend to restrict killing of game birds and reckless use of firearms was along the right lines." "Hunter's License Law is Effective Today," *The Progressive Democrat*, July 1, 1915. "Tinkering the Game Laws," *Georgetown Times*, January 31, 1914, Columbia: South Caroliniana Library Microforms, GeT6. The counties affected included Lexington, Barnwell, Beaufort, Calhoun, Charleston, Chester, Darlington, Dillon, Dorchester, Florence, Greenville, Hampton, Jasper, Laurens, Marion, Oconee, and Orangeburg.

law now requires every hunter to have,” became the first target of this new effort to protect fish and game in one of the South’s most popular sporting destinations.

That a person of color became one of the first people given a chain gang sentence for violating the new licensing law should not surprise us given the importance of fish and game in black life and the frequency with which landowners and sportsmen bitterly derided African American’s ability to hunt and fish in the years following Emancipation. After decades of pointing out the inadequacy of Southern fish and game law and loudly linking black sporting abuses to the problems of wildlife depletion and labor intractability, landowners, sportsmen, and sporting investors could point to the new law with satisfaction. Indeed the *Beaufort Gazette* left no doubt that the law specifically intended to combat such problems:

Throughout this region the negro hunter is one of the worst enemies of game and birds. Protective laws mean nothing to him. In season and out of season he goes out with his single-barreled shotgun and kills everything that comes his way...It is hard to curtail his pernicious activities because if you find him in the woods with his gun in spring or summer time he will tell you that he is just after rabbits and there is no closed season for rabbits. As a matter of fact, he is after anything and everything from a redbird to a wild turkey, and the damage that he does by killing game and wild birds during the breeding season is incalculable.

Long overdue redress, for which a variety of Palmetto State interests had been lobbying for well over a decade, had finally appeared and combated one their biggest nuisances:

The new hunter’s license law offers an opportunity to cure or mitigate this evil. Now that this law is on the books every one of the thousands of negroes who infest the woods in spring and summer hunting ‘rabbits’ is liable to arrest unless he can show a hunter’s license and unless he has written permission from the owner of the land to hunt upon it...Restriction of the indiscriminate slaughter practiced by the negroes means so much to the cause of bird and game protection that the Summerville

conviction, the first of its kind to be reported, should be regarded as an incident of no small significance.⁵²⁵

For many white South Carolinians, both the licensing system and its strict enforcement marked tremendous victories for the state's beleaguered wildlife. But as earlier discussions demonstrate, neither such laws nor their proponents concerned themselves exclusively with fish and game.

This chapter examines the culmination of white Southerners' frustration with black hunting and fishing in the half-century after Emancipation and the calculated implementation of fish and game legislation that both specifically targeted African Americans and drew upon fears of lost racial control to convince lawmakers of the need for such legislation. Planters and landowners, angry over the possibility of black self-subsistence and the resultant ability to avoid agricultural labor; sportsmen, frustrated by perceived black abuses of cherished sporting codes; and owners of sporting retreats and plantations, eager to preserve wildlife for tourists, sought to circumscribe African American hunting and fishing that they might exercise better control over black subsistence, sport, and labor.

A shared attitude toward black independence became the critical link between these vociferous complaints. In the decades since Emancipation, former slaves eagerly embraced, doggedly protected and openly flaunted their freedom, particularly through hunting and fishing. To the above coalition of white interests, then, African-American reliance on Southern wildlife proved doubly vexing. For landlords, it created both labor inefficiency and irksome reminders of the loss of their slaves. For elite sportsmen, abuse of sporting codes endangered fish and game supplies and affirmed that former slaves freely engaged in activities ideally reserved for whites. And for purveyors of Southern tourism, who depended upon black sporting labor, African

⁵²⁵ "Inforcing [sic] the Hunter's License Law," *Beaufort Gazette*, August 13, 1915, Columbia: SCL, Microforms, Reel BfG2.

American's independent hunting and fishing jeopardized the real and symbolic reconstruction of the Old South that visitors craved. For decades since Emancipation, as agricultural employers struggled to control labor, as wildlife depletion increasingly alarmed sportsmen, and as sporting tourism grew more popular, such threats had grown more onerous. As a common solution, this conglomeration of interests sought to strengthen fish and game laws, and thereby circumscribe African American's ability to survive independent of white control. The future prosperity, wildlife resources and racial hierarchy of the South had therefore to be defined and dominated by whites alone.

Customarily suspicious of hunting and fishing restrictions, many, especially poorer, whites, themselves often dependent upon fish and game for semi-subsistence, had long rejected such legislation. Yet when couched within appeals to racism and racial control, wildlife legislation found a more receptive audience. It is no coincidence, then, that effective and permanent protection of Southern fish and game, seen most notably in the establishment of comprehensive licensing systems and state level fish and game agencies, took hold at precisely the same time fears over African-American independence became widespread and Jim Crow laid siege to black Southerners' political rights. The maturation of Southern wildlife conservation, then, became part of the larger goal of "racial conservation." By invoking the need to circumscribe and subvert black subsistence traditions, conservationists helped to implement long sought, and long resisted, protective measures. And by directing such measures specifically at African Americans' customary use of the natural environment, they worked towards achieving greater control over African Americans' lives and labors. Ultimately, white Southerners' efforts to restrict black hunting and fishing must be understood as both a faithful reflection of long-

standing fears of black independence and an important part of the system of segregation created to assuage such fears.

Resistance to Southern Fish and Game Regulation

The idea of using fish and game legislation to target African Americans did not begin in the twentieth century. In fact, sportsmen, among the first and loudest to link protecting Southern wildlife with controlling recently-freed African Americans, had agitated for protective measures for decades. “For the last ten years I have witnessed the rapid decrease of game with feelings of disgust,” asserted sportsman “Venatoe” in *Forest and Stream* in 1877. “In many places where I used to get good shooting, game is almost annihilated.”⁵²⁶ An anonymous, Louisiana sportsman likewise lamented the state of Southern hunting and fishing, noting that “in the ancient antebellum era the hunting grounds of this State were famous throughout the South. All over the State they were preserved and worked in the shooting season, principally by gentlemen sportsmen.” But with the end of the war and the proliferation of surplus firearms, especially to former slaves, “the weapons which had been used in the attempted extirpation of armies were turned to the extermination of our feathered and four-footed game.”⁵²⁷ Since the South presented an ideal sporting location, its wildlife demanded a corresponding system of laws to protect it. As one *Forest and Stream* contributor suggested, the need for fish and game protection originated precisely from that richness. “There is no other civilized land on all the globe where the supply is so abundant, and the privilege of taking it so free,” he began, echoing the common sentiment

⁵²⁶ “Venatoe,” “Pot-Hunting,” *Forest and Stream* 8, (8), March 29, 1877, 117.

⁵²⁷ “Louisiana Game Interests,” *Forest and Stream*, September 16, 1886, 146.

that wildlife availability reflected American democracy.⁵²⁸ “There is no other land where the obligations of good citizenship demand more imperatively of the individual that these privileges be conserved and perpetuated; no other where such obligations should be recognized more cheerfully, nor where the rewards of such recognition are more generous and certain.”⁵²⁹

Eventually planters and landowners, often sportsmen themselves, and owners/operators of sporting resorts and preserves joined the cause.⁵³⁰ But progress did not come easy. Such efforts had long been met with, at best, reluctance from a suspicious Southern populace and, at worst, outright hostility from many, both rich and poor, who viewed wildlife laws as assaults on their liberties. “H.W.D.L.” writing in 1896, summed up that hostility. “I put myself in the list when I say that probably the most selfish class of people on earth are the sportsmen,” he began:

⁵²⁸ According to an unnamed *Field and Stream* contributor, the fact that America enjoyed a history of free fish and game taking explained why so many European visitors to America, particularly immigrants entering the country between the 1870s and the turn of the century, brought with them both a general hostility toward legal restriction and a proclivity towards poaching. According to the contributor, sporting in Europe was stratified by class, “but in the United States the conditions of game and shooting are quite different. In America the pursuit of game is as yet in no sense a class privilege. The covers are free to all alike, under laws which in theory, intent and practice are for the common control of all alike, and for the benefit of all alike.” For many sporting periodical contributors, the message was clear; hostility to fish and game laws reflected not the long-standing suspicion of lower class hunters and fishermen unsurprisingly distrustful of elite measures to regulate fish and game but the undue influence of traditional European society and the undesirable culture of unwelcome immigrants. “They regard all game laws as obnoxious and tyrannical, and imagine that liberty in America means license to kill game according to the individual sweet will,” he concluded. “Trace back the lineage of the poacher wherever you find him in this country, and you will discover the poacher blood in his veins.” “Blame the Grandfather,” *Forest and Stream*, October 13, 1900.

⁵²⁹ ““Shotgun and Citizenship,” *Forest and Stream*, August 23, 1894, n.p. The idea that the blessings of American citizenship required accepting some restriction on the right to hunt or fish was frequently expressed in the pages of sporting periodicals. According to the above editorial, “[t]he duty imposed on the individual citizen to respect the common interest of all, as embodied in the game and fish statutes, is a duty quite as binding as are other obligations of good citizenship. No one, whether of longest lines of native descent or fresh from the other side, may ignore this principle, set up shooting and fishing license for himself, and yet make claim to good American citizenship.”

⁵³⁰ Finding common cause with landowners was long a goal of American sportsmen. In an 1888 editorial entitled “Why Game Laws,” for example, an anonymous sportsman asserted that “there is no reason why a person not a land-owner, yet desiring the advantages of the pursuit of game, should be at issue with the land-owner. Their interests are the same...Let the land-owner and the true sportsman consult and act together for the preservation of the game, then there will naturally follow mutual methods for its protection. There is no natural antagonism between the farmer or the land-owner, and the decent man who desires to hunt for game in a legitimate and proper way.” As I hope to demonstrate, one component of this union, at least in the American South, was a common attitude towards African-American hunting and fishing that cut across the interests of those two groups. “Why Game Laws,” *Forest and Stream*, February 2, 1888, 26.

One man wants the game laws changed so that the open season will come at a time of his vacation; another cries ‘abolish hounding;’ a dozen others, backed by our beloved journal, shout, ‘stop the sale of game.’ A few wealthy ones banded together and by virtue of a large outlay of money block out a tract from the virgin forest for their very own, police it and protect it for their selfish purpose.⁵³¹

Suspicion of hunting and fishing restrictions, which, by the last third of the nineteenth century, sportsmen had battled for decades,⁵³² had, in the South, long been tied to elites’ position at the top of Dixie’s social strata. Poorer Southerners had long taken cultural and social cues from the planter class, but had never been willing to do so if that amounted to an outright restriction of their liberties.⁵³³ Poor and middling Southerners became perhaps even more suspicious of efforts to impose fish and game law since such efforts coincided with serious [and very noticeable] wildlife depletion in the region. It seemed to many that well-to-do sportsmen acted not to protect dwindling wildlife for all, but to preserve it exclusively for themselves.

⁵³¹ “H.W.D.L.,” “Don’t Shoot,” *Forest and Stream*, January 25, 1896, n.p.

⁵³² According to Daniel Justin Herman, the example of England, long the standard bearer of aristocratic, exclusive hunting privileges, accounted for much suspicion of game laws among America’s lower class sporting enthusiasts. “Despite hunting’s egalitarian tradition, conflicts between market and subsistence hunters, on the one hand, and gentlemen sportsmen, on the other,” Herman writes, “gave the United States more than a superficial resemblance to England.” As Herman points out, in mid to late nineteenth-century England, “less than one Englishman in ten thousand was legally eligible to hunt. England had restricted the right to hunt to nobles and gentry since the early Middle Ages, but the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries saw particularly bitter conflict between poachers and squires.” The English example, combined with the explosion in the number of exclusive sporting preserves in several parts of the United States, helped keep the “cry of aristocracy” fresh on the lips of lower class sportsmen. Herman, *Hunting and the American Imagination*, 247-8.

⁵³³ This was especially true of lower class whites living in parts of the South where plantation agriculture was not practiced. In the Upcountry South, where, according to Steven Hahn, “narrower economic horizons, a less significant concentration of wealth, and a much smaller slave population,” reduced both the economic power and cultural influence of the planter class. *The Roots of Southern Populism: Yeoman Farmers and the Transformation of the Georgia Upcountry, 1850-1890*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), 52. For two other discussions of the heritage of independence among poorer white Southerners, see Charles Bolton, *Poor Whites of the Antebellum South: Tenants and Laborers in Central North Carolina and Northeast Mississippi*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994); and Frank L. Owsley’s classic *Plain Folk of the Old South*, (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1982).

Despite efforts to reform Southern wildlife protection between the 1870s and the 1890s, criticism from a distrustful public sometimes killed measures before they could even reach a vote. Moreover, the ability of counties to opt out of approved laws blunted the best efforts by interested parties.⁵³⁴ By the early 1900s, nearly a half centuries' efforts to see Southern fish and game protection catch up to the rest of the United States, particularly the establishment of state-wide fish and game licensing systems, had produced few lasting results.⁵³⁵ Hunting and fishing clubs and wildlife protection societies spent an increasing amount of time attempting to sway the sporting, landowning and voting public, but few arguments resonated. The Virginia Fish and Game Protective Association framed the need for legislation in terms of the inter-related economic benefits of population maintenance and land value. Treasurer John Ott assured the public in 1879 that "what is of far greater moment is the keeping of Virginia's own native born sons at home," warning that many Virginians "are attracted to the far off wilds of the West by the great abundance of fish and game reported to exist out there." But the problem did not end with immigration.⁵³⁶ Ott also asserted that hunting and fishing restrictions guaranteed higher

⁵³⁴ According to Eugene P. Odom, biographer of noted North Carolina naturalist Herbert Hutchinson Brimley, another significant problem was a lack of concern for fish and game slaughter among Southerners as a whole. "The reader should remember that prior to 1900 there were virtually no laws restricting the taking or sale of game, or non-game animals, for that matter...The average person thought nothing of this unrestricted slaughter because the game seemed so abundant then, an attitude not uncommon today concerning things...of which we still have a good supply." Eugene P. Odom, ed., "H.H. Brimley: North Carolina Naturalist. Selections from His Writings," 9, Herbert Hutchinson Brimley Papers, 1861-1940, Box 203.3. Raleigh: NCSA, P.C. 203.1

⁵³⁵ While many fish and game laws appeared in the nineteenth century, it was not until the early twentieth century that effective laws became common across both the South and the United States as a whole. Herbert Hutchinson Brimley commented on this explosion in wildlife legislation in the Old North State. "In 1909, 43 States in which the Legislature has been in session passed 215 laws relating to game—and North Carolina was responsible for 79 of them! In 1911, the 43 States adopted game laws to the number of 260, of which 71 were passed by the Legislature of this State. In 1915, North Carolina put 61 new laws relating to game on the statute books, out of 240 by the 43 States as a whole. Can you beat that!" "A Sketch of the History of Wildlife Conservation in North Carolina," in Eugene P. Odom, ed., "H.H. Brimley: North Carolina Naturalist. Selections from His Writings," typescript, Herbert Hutchinson Brimley Papers, Raleigh: NCSA, P.C. 203.1.

⁵³⁶ As discussed previously, the need to preserve fish and game to lure emigrants and immigrants was an often-cited justification for wildlife laws. See for example, North Carolina Board of Immigration, Statistics and Agriculture, "North Carolina: Its Resources and Progress; its Beauty, Healthfulness and Fertility; and its Attractions

demand for available lands. “If anybody, even in Virginia, has a farm to sell, and there is good fishing and shooting in that locality, he will be sure to advertise that fact, and it will often bring him a purchaser, he declared.” The Virginia association confidently believed these benefits would create a more positive attitude towards wildlife legislation. “We can personally testify,” Ott asserted, “to the fact that, in our experience, when the people of Virginia know what is right, they are going to do it.”⁵³⁷ But this justification proved inadequate.

Promoters of tourism, which by the late nineteenth century had become a major source of revenue for states like Virginia, the Carolinas, Georgia, Florida, Louisiana, and Alabama, made every effort to convince the public of the need for comprehensive protective measures.⁵³⁸ T.S. Palmer, conservationist, U.S. Department of Agriculture representative, and one-time Secretary of the American Ornithological Union, assured the Audubon Society of Greensboro, North Carolina, in 1904 that “the game is really an undeveloped resource which under favorable conditions can be so managed as to bring in large returns.”⁵³⁹ Sporting tourism could provide fabulous wealth, but only if residents had the will to take the necessary steps:

and Advantages as a Home for Immigrants,” (Raleigh: Josiah Turner, 1876), UNCCH, NCC, C917 N87i.1; and, Virginia Board of Immigration, “The Northern Neck of Virginia as a home for immigrants, by the Board of Immigration for the Counties of Richmond, Westmoreland, Lancaster & Northumberland Virginia,” (New York: Schmidt & Curtius, 1872), VHS Rare Books, F232N7N7.

⁵³⁷ John Ott, “Fish and Game,” *The Southern Planter and Farmer*, September 1879, 495-6.

⁵³⁸ Numbers cited by South Carolina Game Warden A.A. Richardson in 1915 point to the value of preservation. According to Richardson, the number of quail alone killed in the sixty-seven counties of Alabama each year totaled around 8,040,000. “At ten cents each,” he asserted, “which is a ridiculously low price for the actual food value of quail, the annual quail crop is worth the enormous sum \$804,000. When the bag annually made by Alabamians of doves, duck, geese, snipe, plover, woodcock, wild turkey, squirrel and other game, birds, and animals, is computed the aggregate becomes so amazingly large as to astound the experienced and observant mind with the value of the wild life of the State.” “Annual Report of A.A. Richardson, Chief Game Warden of the State of South Carolina (for 1914),” (Columbia: Gonzales & Bryan, State Printers, 1915), Columbia: SCL, s.c. 799 So8re, 12-3.

⁵³⁹ According to Palmer, wildfowl produced much revenue for North Carolina. In Currituck County, the State’s richest fowling region, Palmer estimated annual game revenue pulled in by visitor’s to the sounds at around \$25,000. T.S. Palmer, “Some Possibilities for Game Protection in North Carolina,” UNCCH, NCC, 7, 8.

Anything which tends to increase the number of these visitors must necessarily redound the welfare of the State. Last year more non-resident hunting licenses were taken out in North Carolina than in any other States in the Union except Illinois, Wisconsin, and Maine, and these licenses show that about one-third as many sportsmen came to this State as went to Maine to hunt big game. Under favorable conditions this travel can be increased very largely, but only by preserving the game which is the chief attraction to this class of visitors—in short by maintaining a comprehensive and well-devised system of game protection.⁵⁴⁰

According to Palmer and his fellow field worker H.W. Olds, “well devised” game protection provided the key. The South, like the rest of the nation, had done a fair job of enacting fish and game statutes in the late nineteenth century, but general suspicion and local exemptions and amendments weakened them.⁵⁴¹ “In some States certain counties have special statutes or are partially or entirely exempt from the operation of the general game laws,” asserted Ott and Olds. “In...Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee...there are probably more game laws for the three hundred or more counties than in all the rest of the United States.”⁵⁴² Despite their numbers, such scattershot laws could never protect fish and game to observers’ satisfaction.

The North Carolina Audubon Society agreed with this assertion, arguing that until the early twentieth century, “many magistrates found it difficult to bring themselves to believe that game laws were seriously intended to be enforced, and as a result in a great many cases it was exceedingly difficult to secure convictions for violations of these laws.”⁵⁴³ Not just laws but the

⁵⁴⁰ Ibid., 11.

⁵⁴¹ Virginia sportsman and sporting author John Sargent Wise agreed with the assertion that legislation and enforcement were not necessarily one in the same. “The Southern States still have an abundance of quail, turkeys, ruffed grouse, and in some sections deer;” he noted hopefully, “but, so far as legislation goes, they extend very little protection to game and the enforcement of the laws is not seriously attempted.” “The Game Law Problem,” *Outing: Sporting, Adventure, Travel, Fiction* 38 (1), April, 1901, 47.

⁵⁴² T.S. Palmer and H.W. Olds, “Digest of Game Laws for 1901,” United States Department of Agriculture, Division of Biological Survey, (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1901), 11.

⁵⁴³ Audubon Society of North Carolina, “Fifth Annual Report of the Audubon Society of North Carolina,” (Greensboro, North Carolina, 1907), 7.

will to enforce and fund them had to be created. As North Carolina naturalist Herbert Hutchinson Brimley put it, “the ‘Conservation of Natural Resources’ was unknown to us and we blindly went ahead passing additional county game laws at every session of the Legislature. So many people thought—and often still think—that all we have to do to relieve a situation is to Pass a Law.”⁵⁴⁴ Without both state action and, more importantly, a significant turn in public opinion, supporters feared, Southern fish and game would all but disappear.⁵⁴⁵

Finally, by the first decade of the twentieth century, states that had long lagged behind in wildlife legislation and whose citizenry had long resisted bag limits, fixed open and closed seasons, and restrictions on certain methods and weapons began to catch up. Concerted efforts of state and local government, local sportsmen’s organizations, state and national fish and game protective organizations like the Audubon Society, and national sporting periodicals like *Outing*, *Recreation*, and *Field and Stream*, had at last begun to turn public opinion toward accepting limits on access to wildlife. Southern hunting and fishing law had evolved slowly as measures appeared and disappeared with the ebb and flow of public discontent, but between the last decade of the nineteenth and first two decades of the twentieth century Southerners became more receptive. Laws establishing permanent open and closed seasons appeared on the Southern legislative agenda for good beginning in the early 1890s. By the turn of the century, statutes requiring written permission from landowners to hunt and fish had become widespread. By the

⁵⁴⁴ Eugene P. Odom, ed., “H.H. Brimley: North Carolina Naturalist. Selections from His Writings,” typescript. Herbert Hutchinson Brimley Papers, 1861-1940. Raleigh: NCSA, p.c. 203.1, n.p.

⁵⁴⁵ As late as 1910, when wildlife legislative had become more common, officials still feared that laws were inadequate. As John H. Wallace Jr., State Fish and Game Commissioner for Alabama, asked, “the trend of public opinion being decidedly favorable to fish and game preservation, the problem which confronted the legislature in the enactment of a statute looking to this end was how is such a law to be enforced and from whence are the funds to be obtained for this purpose?” “Game and Bird Protection in Alabama: Reasons for Enactment of the Game Laws,” *Field and Stream*, April 1910, 1156.

teens, some Southern states, including Virginia, North and South Carolina, and Alabama, had established permanent state agencies to regulate and oversee wildlife and some even enacted the statewide licensing systems long sought by many sporting enthusiasts.

Southerners finally accepted such restriction on a more permanent, and centralized, basis for several reasons. First, the pressures of wildlife decline had become obvious to everyone.⁵⁴⁶ Like the rest of the country, Southerners had begrudgingly accepted the notion that some legal protection would end the slaughter that led to, for example, the extinction of the American passenger pigeon in the late nineteenth century. The obvious profitability of sporting tourism also reinforced the movement.⁵⁴⁷ The flow of well-to-do Northerners to Dixie's sporting lands proved a source of income that land and club owners, as demonstrated in their public appeals for legislative action, wished to maintain. The third and central reason, black independence, expressed through their perceived abuses of the right to hunt and fish, has long been overlooked by scholars of hunting and fishing, conservation, and the South.

Hunting and fishing had long been included in both lamentations of the paucity of wildlife protection and general grievances about African-American independence. According to

⁵⁴⁶ According to an unnamed *Outing* contributor, "the South needs more stringent game legislation, and while violators of the half-hearted laws which exist are shameless and bold, it is to be said that the spirit of sportsmanship is becoming stronger in that section, as is evidenced by the increasing number of sportsmen's clubs formed or forming, and the generally high tone of the requirements of these organizations. Nearly all of them are pledged by their constitutions to work for the protection of game, and there is no reason to suppose that they will not do their duty in the matter. It is a case of better late than never. They can do much, and much needs to be done...A leader in the work of game protection is what the South needs." "Improved Southern Game Laws," *Outing* 37 (2), December 1900, 355.

⁵⁴⁷ As Dr. Richard H. Lewis, one-time President of the North Carolina Audubon Society, noted, "North Carolina has a great asset in her game. Leaving out the immediate profit and enjoyment to our people, it is an asset in that it attracts and brings into the State a larger number of outside sportsmen that come into any other State of the Union, except Maine. These sportsmen, many of whom are of standing and influence in their respective communities, as well as of wealth, coming into the State not only leaving us a large amount of actual cash, but, seeing and appreciating our natural resources and special advantages in soil and climate, etc., advertise the same most effectively being unpaid and disinterested." Unsigned letter from Richard H. Lewis to T. Gilbert Pearson, n.d., Dr. Richard H. Lewis collection, 1897-1942, Raleigh: NCSA, p.c. 1347.1.

angry Southerners like Polk Miller, the antebellum social order featured “three distinct classes of sportsmen,” including elite hunters and fishermen, poor whites who hunted and fished for meat, and the “all round sportsman,” the slave. Before Emancipation, they kept their appropriate places. But, according to Miller...

...the wall of separation which once divided the people into classes, having tumbled down, we've got into a state which calls for the most rigid enforcement of the game laws, for there is a certain class of both whites and blacks who never leave their homes to visit a neighbor a mile away without carrying their guns along, and will shoot anything that comes their way in any month of the year.⁵⁴⁸

Indeed soon after liberation, proponents of fish and game laws suggested a connection between wildlife protection and race. Some, like an unnamed Laurenceville, Virginia, sportsman, made the connection obliquely. “As yet we have not presumed to indulge in any ‘long-range’ recreations,” he asserted, “for fear his Excellency the President might deem that we are preparing to resist the Civil Rights Bill, and send down little ‘Phil’ [referring to General Philip Sheridan, one-time head of the military Reconstruction governments of Texas and Louisiana]... We have, however, a game association, and our county authorities have taken action to protect our small game from unlawful and unseasonable destruction.”⁵⁴⁹ Others made the point more directly.

Southerner “Cosmopolitan,” responding to an editorial by “F.A.B.,” who earlier argued that legislation best protected sportsmen from vagabond “pot hunters,” argued that, in the South, mere laws could not stop such violators because of the region’s experiments with enforced social equality. “The vilest old negro vagabond who takes an old rusty musket which he got for nothing from the United States and goes on a man’s land under pretense of shooting, but for the

⁵⁴⁸ Polk Miller, “Hunting in the South,” *Forest and Stream*, December 1, 1900, 426.

⁵⁴⁹ “Game Fish in Virginia,” *The Rod and Gun and American Sportsman*, August 28, 1875, 323.

purpose of shooting his fowl or stealing his corn his fruit or his hogs, (as many do in Louisiana),” he began, echoing the common assertion that hunting masked black property crimes, “is in the eye of the law just as much a sportsman as anyone else.” The root cause of this situation? According to “Cosmopolitan” and many others it lay with the Emancipation. “F.A.B. is no doubt well aware of the great struggle going on in this country for years for equal rights and universal suffrage, until one man is just as good as another and better too. How then is the law to make distinctions between sportsmen and vagabonds?” The message was clear. Protective laws had to be strong enough to combat the basic facts of black liberation. “Equality before the law,” Cosmopolitan reminded, “don’t forget that, F.A.B.”⁵⁵⁰

For elite sportsmen and landowners then, black liberation had to be met with vigorous legal measures to restrict, even deny, their ability to hunt and fish. “The South as a section, is sadly deficient in game laws,” declared *Forest and Stream* in 1874, “which are especially needed at this time, when almost every gunner one meets is an irresponsible negro, delighted with his newly acquired privilege of ‘bearing arms,’ ignorant of the value and necessity of sumptuary laws, and intent the year round on filling his bag.”⁵⁵¹ Such complaints often found their way into the platforms of hunting and fishing related organizations. In 1877, “now that the public mind has become quiet, through the restoration of good local government to the several states of the South,” a group of sportsmen and landowners created the Virginia Fish and Game Protective Association to coordinate fish and game protection with local and regional groups and lobby the Commonwealth for legislation action. Among the reasons for its founding they included the frightful pace of fish, game, and timberlands destruction, the need to protect wildlife to attract

⁵⁵⁰ “Cosmopolitan,” “A Paradise for Sportsmen,” *The Rod and Gun and American Sportsman*, July 18, 1874, 246.

⁵⁵¹ “Game in Season for January,” *Forest and Stream* 1 (25), January 29, 1874, 395.

immigrants and tourists, and, not least, the conduct of African Americans. “There are portions of the state where it is almost impossible to procure any reliable labor. In the ability on the part of the idle Negroes there to hunt and fish at will is to be found the cause; and the sooner this is corrected the better.”⁵⁵² Some thought the problem too complicated to be settled by protective legislation alone. According to sportsmen “M,” African Americans, ostensibly the prime destroyers of valuable Southern quail, “take entire flocks at a time, and they never set any of the captured birds free for seed...Hence they make a regular business of destroying Bob White.” To combat that problem, Southern states must combine protective legislation with a campaign “to educate him [the freed man] into the conviction that he is behaving badly, and this, I fear, can never be done as long as Bob White exists.”⁵⁵³

Such observers had good reason to doubt that legislation would prove a panacea. Despite the frequent linking of African Americans to problems with Southern hunting and fishing, resistance to state and local efforts to limit the free taking of fish and game remained powerful. “The Southern states, as a whole, have been slow in taking a serious and broad-minded view of the problems of game protection and of the conservation of bird-life in general,” admitted North Carolina naturalist Herbert Hutchinson Brimley, indicating that the legislative victories of the teens and 20s had been long in coming.⁵⁵⁴ For decades, each time a politician proposed comprehensive protection, a backlash developed. Fears of class bias and aristocratic privilege trampling the rights of the middle and lower classes had long been a part of Southern culture and

⁵⁵² “To the People of Virginia,” *The Southern Planter and Farmer*, July, 1877, 473-4.

⁵⁵³ “M,” “The Freedman and the Quail,” *Forest and Stream*, March 1, 1883, 87.

⁵⁵⁴ Eugene P. Odom, ed., “H.H. Brimley: North Carolina Naturalist. Selections from His Writings,” typescript. Herbert Hutchinson Brimley Papers, 1861-1940. Raleigh: NCSA, p.c. 203.1.

tended to reappear when elites challenged free hunting and fishing. One anonymous 1898

Outing contributor recalled that any proposed restrictions would meet heavy opposition:

This chiefly comes from the men who shoot for the market, and their friends; from the dealers and their friends, and from a certain class of persons who know nothing whatever about game, yet who are always ready to set up a howl against any measure which they fancy tends to give the rich privileges which are denied to the poor. 'Thou shalt not rob the poor man of his bit of sport' is the burden of their cry, at which the poor man, fancying that something is being done for him, hurrahs most vigorously.⁵⁵⁵

For proponents of fish and game law, particularly those anxious to restrict former slaves' independence, such "clamor for 'equal rights' and kindred nonsense," remained a handicap. Poor whites would not accept restrictions that smacked of attacks on their own customary rights. Landowning and sporting interests learned the important lesson that they could not limit hunting and fishing generally, could not crack down on the sporting abuses of all non-elite Southerners, without finding a way to make such restriction acceptable to poor whites.

Starting in the 1870s, dozens of local and regional fish and game associations sprang up across the South to preserve hunting and fishing for elite whites.⁵⁵⁶ Outfits like the Thomasville, Georgia, Goslings Hunting Club, which became the Oaks Hunting Club in 1876, Deal's Island, North Carolina's Currituck Shooting & Fishing Club, founded in the 1870s, and Berkeley

⁵⁵⁵ "The Working of the No-Sale Law," *Outing: Sport, Adventure, Travel, Fiction*, 31 (4), January, 1898, 101.

⁵⁵⁶ For nearly a half century, private shooting and sporting clubs, along with semi-official wildlife protective societies, remained the prime movers of fish and game legislation in the Southern states. Lacking public enforcement agencies, and unwilling to commit state and regional law enforcement officials to the task, states relied on the clubs, even going as far as empowering club officials to make arrests and levy fines against offenders. According to a 1911 manual produced by the Wilmington, Delaware, DuPont Corporation, a long-time sporting club sponsor in the South, "Someone has aptly said: 'A sufficient number of gun clubs in a State is better than the best game law.'" E.I. DuPont De Nemours Powder Company, *The Sport Alluring: Trap Shooting*, UNCCCH, NCC, Cp799 S76 e, 11. Clubs asked members not only to pledge to observe fish and game laws themselves, but also to serve as game wardens and, if necessary, initiate suits for trespassing when required. According to the rules of North Carolina's Onslow Rod and Gun Club, "It shall be the duty of every member of the Club to act as a detective, and every member shall have the power to institute suit and prosecute any one for trespass, in the name of the Club," "By-Laws of the Onslow Rod and Gun Club," 1921, UNCCCH, NCC, Cp799059n.

County, South Carolina's Otranto Club, founded in 1872, dedicated themselves, in the words of the Otranto Club Constitution, "to the increase and protection of game. A game keeper reports poachers and trespassers; and the Club prosecutes them."⁵⁵⁷ The Virginia Fish and Game Protective Association, for one, grew quite optimistic. "We observe a great deal of interest throughout the State on the subject," it declared in 1877, "and this interest is bound to crystallize into something substantial."⁵⁵⁸ Southerners, however, particularly African Americans and poor whites long suspicious of fish and game law, proved a difficult challenge. Even when a law passed, politicians often repealed it upon hearing the cry of enraged voters. A tax enacted by the Virginia General Assembly in 1873, for example, designed to protect sheep from unrestrained dogs, especially those of freed persons, raised the cry of aristocracy by requiring owners to pay a fee for each dog owned. This cry, often irresistible to politicians, meant that...

...when the Legislature came together last winter a howl came up from the vagabond canines and their vagabond masters, demanding a restoration of their ancient rights to despoil, without restraint, the flocks of their neighbors in the counties that had voted the dog tax. The Legislature heard and trembled like the kid at the donkey's bray, in the ancient fable. They took fright and stampeded like whipped spaniels.⁵⁵⁹

For the coalition of whites eager for protection, this served as another example of how "the descendants of the proud cavaliers surrendered to a miserable rabble of '*possum hunters*' and

⁵⁵⁷ "Otranto Club: Constitution and By-Laws, 1916-1924," Mitchell and Smith Records, 0152.02.08, Box 8, Charleston, SCHS, 35.

⁵⁵⁸ "A Medley of Suggestions to Farmers," *The Southern Planter and Farmer*, December 1877, 810.

⁵⁵⁹ According to dog tax supporter Frank G. Ruffin of Chesterfield, Virginia, former slaves were one of the key sources of the dog problem. "My rule is a very plain one," declared Ruffin. "Any decent white man is at liberty to hunt on my land if he does not take his dogs among my sheep, or shoot too near my dwelling or other houses or my straw or hay ricks. But in consideration of this free permit, I expect him to keep his dogs from my plantation at all other times, and if they are ever caught on it without their master, I intend to kill them or have them killed...Negroes are nit permitted to hunt on the premises under any circumstances." "The Proposed Law for Taxing Dogs," *The Southern Planter and Farmer* 8 (5), May 1874, 244-5.

‘coon catchers’”.⁵⁶⁰ Such barriers had to be removed before effective fish and game enforcement was possible. As South Carolina Audubon Society President James Henry Rice Jr., noted in 1925, “whatever else of blessing may lie in democracy, there can be no denial that natural resources are uniformly destroyed when the people control.”⁵⁶¹ Sportsmen and landowners needed a justification that outweighed traditional hostilities. Men like Rice found one in fears of black independence. By linking racial control with fish and game laws, white sportsmen and landowners finally found a way to pass protective measures and see them remain in force.

African Americans and Fish and Game Laws

Complaints connecting African Americans to perceived fish and game abuses appeared regularly throughout the nineteenth century. Many Southerners had long thought unrestrained black hunting and fishing a problem, but not until the second decade of the twentieth century did the combination of agricultural inefficiency, fish and game depletion, the profitability of sporting tourism, and Jim Crow make Southerners begin to take heed. In the pages of agricultural and sporting periodicals, interested parties set out to convince the reading public that the black contribution to their common problem had long gone understated. They had to persuade audiences that controlling African Americans through hunting and fishing restriction served larger social interests than just those of sportsmen and large landowners. One unnamed Virginian used a *Southern Planter and Farmer* editorial to link such laws to labor efficiency.

⁵⁶⁰ “The Dog Question,” *The Southern Planter and Farmer* 8 (3), March 1874, 138.

⁵⁶¹ James Henry Rice, *The Glories of the Carolina Coast*, (Columbia, S.C.: R.L. Bryan, 1925), 112. UNCCH, NCC, C917.11 R49g.

Laws requiring a tax on dogs, designed to protect sheep farmers by reducing the number of dogs owned by poor whites and, especially, African Americans failed, the commenter asserted, because “some of the country people, and especially demagogues seeking office, complain bitterly of the present law, in order to get votes of the grumblers.” To overcome such concerns, supporters emphasized the connections between those laws and former slaves. “To every reflecting man these objections are groundless,” the angry Virginian asserted, noting that “in the present demoralization and prostration of our labor system, and in every pursuit, which promises remunerative results for light and easy labor, ought to be fostered and encouraged by the state.”⁵⁶²

The South Carolina Audubon Society used the pages of the *Beaufort Gazette* to remind the public, particularly recalcitrant landowners, of the connection between black hunting and fishing and property crime. In pushing for a licensing system in Texas, Louisiana, and Alabama, the Society reminded readers of the situation when African Americans first obtained their freedom. “Conditions in these states were similar to conditions in South Carolina,” asserted the editorial. “Negro labor was employed on the farms and in winter, negroes scoured the fields, roaming them at night with fire, often firing timber and thereby destroying both timber and fencing, and sometimes buildings as well. Stock and cattle were also destroyed. But most of all the game and fish were wiped out.”⁵⁶³ Supporters of more vigorous restrictions presented their common problem as symptomatic of black liberation. According to sportsman G.G. Ford:

⁵⁶² According to the unnamed commentator, there was a simple way to eliminate dogs, “owned by certain classes both black and white.” He suggested the state sell dog licenses and distribute ownership tags to each purchaser. Once such a system was in place, it would be “the duty of public officers and the privilege of all citizens to kill every dog they find without this device. This would be effective.” *The Southern Planter and Farmer*, 6 (10), October 1872, 579-80.

⁵⁶³ “Aububon Society Favors Hunter’s License Measure,” *Beaufort Gazette*, January 20, 1911, Columbia, SCL Microforms, Reel BfG2.

After the war there was little or no law for the preservation of game in our section—Georgetown, S.C.—and for several years it was a common thing to ride up on a negro, generally followed by a cur, sneaking through the underbrush and trying to walk up a deer; or we would hear, far into the night, the yelping of a cur on the trail of some poor deer that had gotten a charge of turkey or squirrel shot. Hence in a few years the entire country was changed, and instead of one of the best hunting grounds for all sorts of game, miles of riding were required to jump a deer or roost a flock of turkeys.⁵⁶⁴

Such linking of African Americans to the South's perceived fish and game shortage became favored techniques of contributors to sporting periodicals in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Throughout the second decade of the twentieth century there appeared a regular column in *Field and Stream* called "Unkel David's Letter," in which fictional former slave Unkel David meted out homespun wisdom to white readers. In January 1911, Unkel David editorialized about recent complaints linking immigrants, particularly Italian and Polish laborers, to fish and game depletion. According to "Unkel David," if America really wanted to get at the heart of the problem, they "shood have said sumthing abowt our cullerd feller voters of the solid South, where the race problem is whitch nigger will beet tothers to the robbin pie." In fact, there could really be no comparison between former slaves and European immigrants. "As a gaim killer," the editorial declared, "I will bak Sambo against a dozen Spagettys & Kazookowskis & keep mi man shet up in the smoak hous haff the time." From there, Unkel David further outlined the problem posed by black independence, framing it as a threat to both labor and tourism:

The time the nigger is sure deth on game is dooring the cotton seezun, whitch begins abowt the first of Aprile & ends when they pull & burn the stawks along the last week in March & in that bizzy time a plantashun hand is too valyoobel to be shet up in jail for killing a little wild meet...I have found that a nigger makes a good gide, becos he wunt foarse you to shoote gaim that he has a

⁵⁶⁴ G.G. Ford, "Deer Hunting in South Carolina," *Field and Stream*, August, 1908, 358.

chance to kill hisself after you go bak hoam. Two (2) nigger gides is better than one (1), as you will find when it comes to enny thing like work. If they have a reputashun as hunters you will need twice that menny.

The broader point would have been obvious to America's sportsmen. Something had to be done if the South would be protected from this threat to both labor and tourism. But it would not be easy, at least according to Unkel David. The column concluded with an ominous word of warning about the severity of the problem:

I see that there is a move to hed off the forren gaim butchers hear in the North by taking their guns awat from them, but to choak off a nigger you'd have to kill his dogs, take away his ax & pokkit nife, & then hogtie him with a haff-inch roap. If you ketch him up in coart, his white boss pays the fine; & if you shet him up in the callyboos, that means a mewl withowt a driver, & a plow standing idul in the furrer. It is upp to Booker Washington to teech gaim conservashun at his...seminery, & it mite be well for the different Staits to pay the niggers a bounty on all the gaim they don't kill.

The intersection of landowning, sporting, and tourist interests made this problem a complex one. "Something must be did," Unkel David concluded, "if the Suthern white man hoaps to feed gaim to his projinny, but I can't say off hand what it will be."⁵⁶⁵ Fictional former slaves, however, were not alone in offering solutions.

By the turn of the century, the combination of wildlife depletion, the labor problem and the profitability of sporting tourism showcasing African Americans led to concerted efforts to restrict hunting and fishing. Southern fish and game clubs and state and local protective associations, organizations comprised of frustrated sportsmen, angry landowners, and eager investors led the crusade. Among these groups, the Audubon Society became the most famous, and perhaps the most active, in the fight for fish and game legislation aimed at African

⁵⁶⁵ "Unkel David's Letter," *Field and Stream*, January, 1911, 893.

Americans. Initially founded in 1896 in Massachusetts⁵⁶⁶, it rapidly became one of the most effective organs for permanent fish and game protection in the turn of the century South. The South Carolina State Audubon Society, for example, organized January 4, 1900, as the first in the Southern States, tirelessly worked to win over the public. To carry out the task, the chapter dispatched its secretary, James Henry Rice Jr. According to a 1909 Society history, “it was urged on all sides that the causer should be carried to the people and taking a cue from this, although the society had spent two years carrying it to the people at its’ own expense, Secretary Rice was sent into the field and kept throughout the year.”⁵⁶⁷ In 1900 alone, he spoke in front of many groups including the James Island Agricultural Society, Christ Church Parish Agricultural Society, the Farmers’ Institute at Yorkville, Farmers of Oconee, Farmers at Walhalla, Elenton Farmers’ Club, Farmers Union of Newberry County, the farmers of Lee, Clarendon and Sumter counties at Mayesville and the farmers of Lexington, Saluda and Aiken counties at Delmar.⁵⁶⁸

⁵⁶⁶ The first national Audubon Society was founded by George Bird Grinnell in 1896 after the naturalist and *Forest and Stream* editor invited readers to sign a pledge to join a group dedicated to protecting birds. He named this early group, which consisted of about 40,000 people who responded to the call, the Audubon Society for the Protection of Birds after famed American naturalist John James Audubon. Grinnell soon grew frustrated with the group when it grew too rapidly and disbanded the organization. The first permanent local Audubon Society, formed in Massachusetts in 1896, grew out of efforts by Bostonians Harriet Hemenway and her cousin Mirna B. Hall to stop fellow socialites from promoting bird slaughter by wearing feathered hats. “Over a Century of Audubon: A Timeline,” Natural Audubon Society homepage, <http://www.audubon.org/>, January 12, 2005.

⁵⁶⁷ Benjamin Franklin Taylor, “The Audubon Society,” typescript. 1909. Kosmos Club Records. Columbia: SCL Manuscripts, MS R, 3.

⁵⁶⁸ Ibid. This emphasis on farmers and landowners is unsurprising. Farmers had long been both suspicious of fish and game legislation and angry with sportsmen who exercised little caution when hunting or fishing on someone else’s property. Thus much of Rice’s work, indeed much of the work of Southern fish and game proponents in general, consisted of winning the support of landowners and agricultural employers. Farmer “E.H.A.” wrote of this need to win over farmers and landowners in an 1880 editorial to *Forest and Stream*, noting that “[i]t is generally conceded that the influx of sportsmen into any locality is the means of carrying a good deal of money into that place. This being so, why not give the farmers whose land furnishes the game the benefit of that money? It will also be the means of bridging the two into contact, and if the sportsmen be a gentlemen he may make a convert of the farmer, whose previous ideas of a sportsman may have been formed from the roughs or market hunters he may formerly have thought fit to order off his place.” “Sportsmen and Land-owners,” *Forest and Stream*, December 9, 1880, 368. But such assertions about the difference between true sportsmen and vagabonds and market hunters and about the remunerative potential of allowing hunting or fishing on their lands proved inadequate to convince suspicious landowners that severe legislative restriction was necessary. Many had to be shown that unrestrained hunting and fishing was enough of a threat to be worth risking such legal measures.

Rice traversed the state, driving home the point to farmers generally, not just those with tenants, that “the enforcement of game laws requires something more than sentiment; it requires the stern and inflexible determination to make the offender suffer for the offense.”⁵⁶⁹ And who, according to Rice, committed most offenses? He listed the usual suspects, including pot hunters, game hogs, market hunters and, particularly and unsurprisingly, African Americans. James Henry Rice and the Audubon Society cultivated general acceptance of a licensing measure of one dollar on each hunter in the state to fund wildlife protection and discourage undesirables who likely could not afford such a fee. “Is it better,” Rice asked, “to permit the vagrant negro and a few exuberant sportsmen in a community to kill all the game and the community get nothing but a vain regret, or make the sportsmen stay within reason and the negro go to work?” Again appears the old message, proffered by landowners for decades, that unrestrained black hunting and fishing caused “vagrancy in acute form.” This threat had to be eliminated, even if “drastic treatment is required to cure it.” The Audubon Society, and later other local and state fish and game protective associations argued that African-American hunting and fishing challenged future prosperity. “The fight made by the Audubon Society is a fight to save the birthright of a people,” Rice concluded, “now being wrested from them by the hireling and the lawless.”⁵⁷⁰

⁵⁶⁹ Benjamin Franklin Taylor, “The Audubon Society,” typescript, 1909. Kosmos Club Records. Columbia: SCL Manuscripts, MS R, 5.

⁵⁷⁰ Ibid., 8,10. In the case of South Carolina, the phrase “the fight being made by the Audubon Society” was literally accurate. Until the creation of the office of Chief Game Warden in 1912, the Audubon Society was the state’s official enforcement agency in matters relating to fish and game preservation. By 1910, the Society had grown weary of this arrangement, and had begun to push the State to assume responsibility for passing and enforcing laws and hiring and paying fish and game wardens. According to Society President B.J. Taylor, “[u]p to the present time, the Audubon Society has had charge of the enforcement of the laws, and has had to raise its own revenue for the payment of wardens and other expenses. The Society has been very successful in its efforts, and the reason for changing is that we believe it is better for the state to take charge of the enforcement of these laws itself, rather than to commit this work to any society or body of men.” The fact that the state was willing to formally assume such responsibilities is a testament to both the effectiveness of lobbying by groups like the Audubon Society and the growing public awareness that the inter-related causes of preserving fish and game supplies, maximizing the

For that reason, the Audubon Society, which in several Southern states, became the primary enforcer of wildlife law in the absence of formal state agencies, urged decisive action in locating offenders. “My orders to all wardens are to arrest any men found hunting without a license,” noted James Henry Rice Jr., in a 1908 *Beaufort Gazette*, “and to bring a case against him for the offense which is a misdemeanor under our laws, punished by fine up to \$100 and imprisonment for 30 days for each day’s hunting without license.”⁵⁷¹ Medoc, North Carolina, sportsman M.G. Vinson argued that a lack of enforcement of existing laws remained the key problem. “We have enough laws for the protection of game,” he declared, “but with no one to enforce them they amount to nothing...Not a permit has been written; nor has a shot the less been fired. The negro makes war on the squirrel and rabbit, and the white man plays havoc with the quail and turkey.”⁵⁷² For sportsman “T.H.W.” of Kyle, West Virginia, the lack of enforcement played into the black tendency toward lawlessness. “Most of the Southern States have excellent laws, made by our fathers, but they are not enforced,” he lamented. “The negroes know that it is illegal to trap quails or to dynamite fishes, but they realize the indifference of the authorities and seldom hesitate to break the laws.”⁵⁷³

For many white observers of black sporting habits, taxes on firearms ownership became a logical partner of the Audubon Society’s quest for licensing systems and stricter enforcement of existing statutes. This idea, tried with mixed success across the South between the last third of

profitability of Southern sporting tourism and working to control the black population demanded such institutional formalization. “South Carolina’s Needs,” *Field and Stream*, January 1910, 847.

⁵⁷¹ James Henry Rice Jr., “As to the Game Law,” *The Beaufort Gazette*, December 24, 1908, Columbia: SCL Microforms, Reel BfG2.

⁵⁷² M.G. Vinson, “From the Game Fields,” *Recreation*, January 1901, 38. For sportsmen like Vinson, this was a clarion call to action. “Have our Southern men and women forgotten that refinement which once characterized them? No country is complete without its birds, animals and fishes...Give us laws, protect our game birds, animals and fishes. Do not say ‘tomorrow’ but act today.”

⁵⁷³ “T.H.W.,” “Some Southern Needs,” *Recreation*, September 1903, 198.

the nineteenth and first decades of the twentieth century, led to hot debates among advocates of wildlife protection. As with many other restrictive measures that met with public disapproval, supporters employed the race issue to make the tax more palatable. They hoped that Southerners, particularly rural poor whites who would likely consider such a measure an attack on their liberty, might begrudgingly consider a similar tax, if born of the need to restrict African-American firearm usage, a practical necessity. “The negro has a childish love of firearms,” declared attorney Thomas P. Devereux in an 1867 letter to the North Carolina State Assembly...

..the indulgence of this passion provokes the ill-will of the whites, and to see a negro parading the country with a revolver in his belt has a tendency to produce bloodshed. The remedy is a heavy tax upon all arms not used in militia drill. Some tribunal might be allowed to license *guns* for the protection of crops from vermin at a reduced taxation; but a revolver, as an article of dress, is more than useless to a negro.⁵⁷⁴

But resistance to such measures remained high throughout the post-Emancipation period despite supporters continually returning to the so-called “Negro question” to garner support.⁵⁷⁵

By the early twentieth century, proponents had learned to carefully couch such measures, particularly those that would affect poor whites, in the language of race. According to K.H. Schuricht of Cobham, Virginia, the *lack* of a tax on guns and dogs put *all* farmers at a disadvantage and led to mischief on the part of the poorest blacks and whites. “As long as every colored and white man is allowed to keep, untaxed, as many curs as he likes to feed upon game...and which dogs are compelled by the pangs of hunger to despoil chicken-houses, every

⁵⁷⁴ Letter from Thos. P. Devereux, esquire,” Legislative Documents, 1866-7, NCSA.

⁵⁷⁵ Although supporters of taxing guns believed such measures a step forward in the South’s effort to cure its wildlife woes, it did have detractors. Some, like “M,” believed black sportsmen to be most dangerous when they lacked firearms. “According to my best thinking the colored brother is much more destructive to game now with his old traps and blinds than with his guns,” he declared. “These implements don’t need to be fed with ammunition, which costs money, and they do their work while the freedman is also at his work in the cotton or cornfield.” “The Freedman and the Quail,” *Forest and Stream*, March 1, 1883, 87.

farmer must suffer. Is this fair—is this charity, or something worse?”⁵⁷⁶ Likewise the South Carolina Audubon Society reminded voters that the absence of such restriction only helped the very richest and poorest. “It has been shown time and again that unrestricted hunting and fishing bear with particular hardship on the poor man and the man of average means,” declared the 1915 annual report. “The vagrant and the idle rich can spend all their time in woods and fields; the hard working man cannot. He has to trust the State to preserve fish and game, or he will have none.”⁵⁷⁷ Here the Audubon Society spoke directly to working class Southerners long deeply suspicious of fish and game law. “The vagrant” meant the independent African American or “poor white trash” whose lack of both steady employment and firm guidance from white betters gave them privileged access to fish and game most whites could not enjoy. Proponents of wildlife law wished to make clear that such measures were not aimed at hard working whites, but primarily at an increasingly indolent and independent African-American population.⁵⁷⁸ Elite sportsmen, mindful of the sporting excesses of poor whites and blacks, found in calls for racial control a way to restrict the sport of both while blunting the expected public backlash by claiming to protect working whites. It is likely that proponents relished this opportunity to kill those two proverbial birds with one stone. They could use lower class whites to simultaneously help them remove both African Americans and poor whites from the Southern sporting field.

⁵⁷⁶ K.H. Schuricht, “Is this Fair?” *The Southern Planter and Farmer*, April 1896, 1790-80.

⁵⁷⁷ “Fifth Annual Report of the Audubon Society of South Carolina,” (Columbia: R.L. Bryan, State Printers, 1915), 5-6, Columbia, SCL, 586.06 Au2a.

⁵⁷⁸ Supporters of legislative restriction went to great pains to assure white Southerners that only the lowest sorts would be harmed. Conway, South Carolina’s, *Horry Herald*, for example, in trying to convince its white readers of the need for shorter open seasons for fish and game, stated that “it must be remembered that long seasons work in favor of the pot-hunter and pot-fisherman and against the working man. The idle pot-hunter can go everyday—the business man cannot.” “Birds and Game: Their Great Value to the People of the State,” *Horry Herald*, May 13, 1909, Columbia: SCL Microforms, ConH3.

Advocates of hunting and fishing restriction made clear that farmers and hard-working poor whites had not been targeted while simultaneously assuaging the fears of sportsmen as well. Laws requiring written permission from landowners for hunting or fishing on their property enacted across the South between the 1870s and the second decade of the twentieth century seemed to aid both rich and poor landowners.⁵⁷⁹ “One of the best game laws which has been passed in our State is the law making it a misdemeanor to hunt on any man’s land without his permission,” asserted the North Carolina Audubon Society in 1907. “The law was not made with a view of giving trouble to every hunter who goes into the field with a gun, but was made in order that our farmers may have redress under the State game laws when they wish to prevent people from hunting on their lands.”⁵⁸⁰ Likewise Virginian Polk Miller assured sportsmen that “farmers never objected to shooting on their premises by men of respectability, but when these ‘game hogs’, as they are called, go prowling about with guns...it is but natural that they should ask our legislatures to pass the most stringent laws with regard to trespass.”⁵⁸¹ Concerned sportsmen were assured that such laws did not threaten them. They targeted false sportsmen, a “worthless class” who, according to Alabama Fish and Game Commissioner John H. Wallace, “would patrol the farmer’s lands, and, while ostensibly they were in quest of game, they would knock up the crops, shoot up the cattle, and purloin every species of small stock and poultry that

⁵⁷⁹ For many supporters, one of the biggest benefits of such laws was that they did not require land owners to post their lands to prevent hunters and fishermen from using them. Previous to such laws, owners relied on posting notices in different locations on their land and in surrounding public buildings to keep their property safe from depredations. Numerous broadsides have survived advertising just such prohibitions. See, for example, “Warning!” (“We, the undersigned, hereby warn the public against Hunting or trespassing on our farms.”) Richmond: VHS Broad­sides, Po: 3, n.d.; “Posted Keep Off.” (“Hunting, Fishing, or in Any Way Trespassing on This Property is Prohibited and anyone found violating this law will be prosecuted.”) VHS Broad­sides, Po: 4, n.d.; and “Notice to Trespassers!” (“Notice is hereby given that any entry for any purpose whatsoever upon the lands of the Kinloch Gun Club is hereby prohibited. All trespassers on said lands will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.”) Kinloch Gun Club Records, 1914-1922, “Correspondence, 1915” Charleston: SCHS, 1246.00.

⁵⁸⁰ “Fifth Annual Report of the Audubon Society of North Carolina,” (Greensboro, NC, 1907), 13. UNCCH, NCC, C598.2 A91.

⁵⁸¹ Polk Miller, “Hunting in the South,” *Forest and Stream*, December 1, 1900, 426.

could be easily transported.” Such regulations did not restrict law abiding, white sportsmen’s access to sporting lands, but, in fact, protected and nourished it.⁵⁸²

By the middle of the first decade of the twentieth century, many Southerners could proudly write to national sporting periodicals trumpeting both the passage of fish and game laws and their use in stopping African-American hunting and fishing abuses. Looking back on the actions of his Georgetown, South Carolina, sporting club in the decades since its inception, Georgian G.G. Ford noted several accomplishments. “The organization of this club has already put a stop to pot-hunting, and to-day there are more deer in this country than there has been since the close of the war,” Ford noted. Yet the club’s work could not truly begin until it addressed the African-American question. “A negro is not allowed in the woods with a gun,” Ford concluded, “and a negro’s dog is not permitted in the woods even if his master carries no gun.”⁵⁸³ By the first decades of the twentieth century, sporting periodicals had become more critical of African-American hunting and fishing than perhaps ever before. As Northerner T.N. Buckingham’s description of a sporting trip to Aberdeen, Virginia, indicates, Southern sportsmen continued to unite in support of the notion that black sport had to be restricted. While quail hunting with a planter acquaintance, Buckingham encountered a black huntsman stalking prey normally reserved for area whites.⁵⁸⁴ His friend explained the problem:

⁵⁸² John H. Wallace Jr., “The Direct Benefits Accruing to the Farmers and to the State as a Resultant Effect of Model and Modern Game Protective Legislation,” (Montgomery, AL, 1912), VHS General Collection, SK457.C6.

⁵⁸³ G.G. Ford, “Deer Hunting in South Carolina,” *Field and Stream*, August 1908, 358.

⁵⁸⁴ As discussed in Chapter Four, white Southern sportsmen had well-defined notions of “white” and “black” game. “White game” connoted large game, like bear, deer, and, when they were still reasonably plentiful, catamount, or small game that was highly desired by elite huntsmen, like fox and quail. “Black game” was loosely defined as small game in which whites had little interest or game that was not considered sporting for proper sportsmen to pursue. South Carolina poet laureate Archibald Hamilton Rutledge indicated that these divisions were so well-recognized that even animals became aware of them. Writing about black sporting habits, Rutledge asserted that “I have been frequently been persuaded that deer pay less attention to Negro rovers of the woods than they do to white men. Nor would this be unnatural; for it is a law of the caste system of the South that Negroes shall not kill

“You see,” remarked Joe... “we don’t mind how many rabbits they kill, but that’s just an example of how well the colored brother is learning to shoot when he grabs a chance. They get hold of dogs like that pointer yonder or else half-breeds that can cold trail just well enough to give Mr. Nigger a pot shot on the ground. And, believe me, they never overlook many bets when it comes to killing out a covey wit hone shell. Many a nigger takes a train to town with his battered suit-case full of birds and comes home with one box of shells and the rest in liquor. And that one box will kill many a bird.”

Yet despite game slaughter, market hunting, killing “white game,” and drunkenness, Buckingham’s planter friend Joe did not turn to legal remedies. He had his own solution. When asked if African Americans engaged in similar mischief on his land, the planter proudly described his own ability to solve the problem:

You bet my niggers don’t shoot our birds unless they take a long chance,” Joe asserted, “and besides, I sorter control their dog harvest, not only by a cabin-to-cabin inspection but, he added with a quizzical smile, a terrible hound dog sickness breaks out on my place every fall about open season time.⁵⁸⁵

Stories of the growing black threat and contributors’ proud tales of action taken to correct it appeared frequently in periodical literature. Many refused to wait for legal changes and took immediate extralegal action. One unnamed sportsman indicated in 1882, that “every right minded man detests the brute who ‘crust-hunts’ deer,”⁵⁸⁶ who “kills brooding birds and their

deer.” Rutledge, *Those Were the Days*, (Richmond: The Dietz Press, Incorporated, 1955), 108. The many complaints made by white sportsmen about former slaves’ willingness to ignore such cultural restrictions, however, belies the inaccuracy of Rutledge’s idealized assertion.

⁵⁸⁵ T.N. Buckingham, “Bob White, Down’t Aberdeen,” *Field and Stream*, September 1913, 460.

⁵⁸⁶ The term crust-hunting refers to the effective yet often disdained practice of pursuing game, especially large game like deer, elk, buffalo and bear, in deep mud or snow when its mobility was limited and its chances of escaping drastically reduced. This was a preferred method of market and subsistence hunters who used any available advantage. Long reviled by sportsmen, crust-hunting is illegal in many parts of the United States today.

half-grown young for market,” and who “catches fish any way he can. He is a nuisance, that should be abated by any means within the law, or even by straining the law a little.”⁵⁸⁷

According to some sources, even the common practice of landowners posting their land off limits to sportsmen related to the need for action against unrestrained African-American hunting and fishing. Writing to inform *Forest and Stream* readers of sporting conditions in the Old North State, Frank A. Heywood asserted that “[m]ost lands in North Carolina are posted, but this is chiefly for the purpose of keeping off the negroes, who with a gun in their hands are as dangerous as cans of dynamite. Permission to shoot can be obtained of any owner by any gentleman.”⁵⁸⁸ Such declarations, with the typical mixture of concern for the sporting privileges of white sportsmen (especially tourists), unease over black sporting practices, and, not the least, fear over black firearm possession, typified late nineteenth-century sportsmen eager to broadcast the problem while creating at least a partial solution. Marguerite Tracy, describing restricted lands near Petersburg, Virginia, for *Recreation*, also indicated that African Americans’ excesses drove legal prohibitions. “The laws governing the pursuit of game and protecting the lands from trespass are very rigid as you read them, and penalties for their violation are seemingly severe, but,” Tracy carefully pointed out, “they are necessary, owing to our peculiar population, and are never enforced against gentlemen sportsmen. Personally, I have never had any difficulty in obtaining all the shooting I wanted, either for myself or friends.”⁵⁸⁹

The market hunter, who destroyed fish and game for money, remained a common target of wildlife law advocates. As discussed in Chapter Four, those who preferred profit to sport had

⁵⁸⁷ “Pot-Hunters,” *Forest and Stream*, 18 (12), April 20, 1882, n.p.

⁵⁸⁸ Frank A. Heywood, “North Carolina Game Region,” *Forest and Stream*, November 5, 1891, 308.

⁵⁸⁹ Marguerite Tracy, “Hunting a Holiday,” *Recreation: A Monthly Magazine Devoted to Everything the Name Implies*, November 1898, 353.

long been targets of gentleman sportsmen who wished to curtail such practices. “That interest must give way which is of least advantage to the community,” noted an 1894 *Forest and Stream* editorial, “and that one must be preserved which is of paramount public importance.” Such “public importance” would be determined by whether or not a sportsman killed something for the love of the chase or to indulge his baser market sensibilities. “A grouse which gives a man a holiday afield,” he concluded, “is worth more to the community than a grouse snared or shot for the market stalls.”⁵⁹⁰ Such sentiment accounts for the many state laws enacted to curb market hunting beginning in the late nineteenth century.⁵⁹¹ Yet white observers often interpreted even these efforts as being partially directed at African Americans. According to an 1897 *Charleston Evening Post* article, a recent law designed to decrease the sale of terrapin at the Charleston markets proved effective mostly because it deterred African Americans. “Perhaps the darkey, who has a wholesome fear of the law, may hesitate about offering the reptile on the home market,” the article theorized, “but of one thing we are sure, and that is the people of this section never saw less terrapin offered in this market than there has been in the last year or two.”⁵⁹²

Supporters of tougher legal restriction reassured an uneasy public, but the slow pace of turning that ill ease into action remained vexing. Some frustrated sportsmen, landowners, or

⁵⁹⁰ “The Absolute Prohibition of Traffic in Game,” *Field and Stream*, February 10, 1894, n.p.

⁵⁹¹ According to sportsman A.M. Scudder, “the market shooter is the man we are after...All ‘sportsmen’ belonging this species that it has been my misfortune to run across have been heavily loaded with the “instinct” to kill for the price, with an elastic conscience regarding the manner of capture, to say nothing of his faculty for not discerning between open and closed seasons.” “Stop the Sale of Game,” *Forest and Stream*, June 2, 1894, n.p.

⁵⁹² “Terrapin,” *Charleston Evening Post*, January 28, 1897, Columbia: SCL Microforms, n.p. Yet, as one observer pointed out, this decrease in market terrapin proved a double-edged sword. On one hand, many whites were relieved that such a potentially lucrative means of employment was closed to former slaves who might better expend labor in the service of whites. On the other, asserted another *Evening Post* editorial, such restrictions may ultimately make it more difficult for the average consumer to purchase cheap terrapin, since the law would likely “frighten the humble darkey who has been in the habit of supplying the local market with a few bivalves or reptiles...thereby depriving the home consumer of previously enjoyed advantages of having a home dish at low cost.” “To Protect Terrapin and Oysters,” *Charleston Evening Post*, March 11, 1897, Columbia: SCL Microforms, Reel 51.

tourism interests grew tired of waiting and opted for more extreme measures. “W.L.J.” of King William County, Virginia, writing of a proposed 1875 tax measure targeting African-American dogs, asserted that he liked the plan to heavily tax dogs but had a much cheaper idea than “pleading with our lawmakers” for remedy. His devised a more direct solution:

I can safely say that every twentieth lock of a fence around my sheep pasture is a negro path, and where there is so much crossing by the darkies, it is reasonable to believe that there is a great many dogs passing, hence my sheep have been depredated on several times, but fortunately none have been killed. At these gaps, I have a small piece of meat, placed with about one grain of strychnia on it in a very secure place, so that nothing will be apt to see it but a dog...Any person who has a valuable dog, if he will keep him chained during the day and perfectly fat, will not leave his premises during the night.⁵⁹³

Since state and county governments remained reluctant to halt such marauding, more extreme private action became, for many, a necessity.

A Dr. Lavender, speaking before the Georgia State Agricultural Society in 1876, lauded such measures because they seemed the best way, in the absence of real legislation, to mitigate such practices. “I kill every dog that I find prowling on my plantation,” he began, “when his master is not with him. I have killed within the last two or three years, about three hundred dogs on my plantation. [Laughter and applause.] They have learned and their owners have learned not to let them come about me.” A member of the convention identified as Colonel Howard agreed, noting that private action often forced lawmakers’ hands. “Here we are to-day,” he asserted, “going up only because the nigger is going down, and only by hammering on the subject is it that we have inspired the legislators with resolution enough to introduce a bill on the subject.”⁵⁹⁴

⁵⁹³ “W.L.J.,” “Dog Tax,” *Southern Planter and Farmer*, May 1875, 268.

But would the spread of such sentiment, even, as Dr. Lavender and Colonel Howard hoped, among lawmakers, lead to the adoption of effective legislation? Would the widespread antipathy towards African-American independence translate into broad public acceptance of measures Southerners had distrusted for decades? According to many sportsmen, much more had to be done to protect Southern fish and game; but popular resistance always tempered such calls to action. “Our game laws are very loosely drawn and are a dead letter upon the Statute Book,” noted North Carolinian “J.E.W.” of the situation in the Old North State in 1874, pointing to the general reluctance to accept such laws.⁵⁹⁵ Efforts to enact long-overdue protection often failed, even into the early twentieth century. The voting public, legislators, landowners, and even some elite sportsmen, felt too uneasy over the perceived loss of cherished sporting freedoms and remained, at best, lukewarm. According to Herbert Hutchinson Brimley, each time backers proposed a law, lower class Southerners asked, “‘How are we goin’ to git fresh meat in summer if we kaint go out and kill us a deer,’ or ‘There allus been plenty of chub in the crick and we aim to keep on ketchin’ ‘em when we damn please.’” which, according to Brimley “represent the attitude taken by many of the old-time hunters and fishermen of those days.”⁵⁹⁶

Proponents tried numerous means to advertise the positive benefits and benign operations of such protections. The Virginia Fish and Game Protective Association assured the public in 1878 that “the game laws are founded on the laws of nature, and are not arbitrary in spirit, nor

⁵⁹⁴ “Proceedings of the State Agricultural Society, With the Actions of the Farmers’ Convention and the Agricultural and Manual Association of Georgia,” (Macon, GA: n.p., 1868), 16, 18. UNCCCH, Rare Book Collection, Southern Pamphlet Collection, 6487.

⁵⁹⁵ “J.E.W.,” “The Game of North Carolina,” *Forest and Stream* 2 (3), February 1874, 37.

⁵⁹⁶ Herbert Hutchinson Brimley, “A Sketch of the History of Wildlife Conservation in North Carolina,” Herbert Hutchinson Brimley Papers, Raleigh: NCSA, p.c. 203.1.

designed to deprive any person of any right that he may possess.”⁵⁹⁷ One *Forest and Stream* contributor declared that restrictions only hurt those sportsmen “of least advantage to the community,” namely individuals who exploit wildlife for food or profit. “The game supply which makes possible the general indulgence in field sports is of incalculable advantage to individuals and the nation,” he concluded, “but a game supply which makes possible the traffic in game as a luxury has no such importance.”⁵⁹⁸ According to the South Carolina Audubon Society:

It must always be remembered that bird, game and fish laws are made with the fundamental desire of affording protection to the birds, game and fish, and are not made for the convenience of sportsmen...It is ridiculous, but true, that the game seasons in South Carolina are practically as long as they were thirty years ago, when game and fish were everywhere abundant and hunters were few.⁵⁹⁹

Stacked against age-old hostility to wildlife restrictions, such statements often failed to convince.

Even the idea that laws could control the black population or regulate their sporting abuses sometimes did not resonate. That elites would use the “race card” to convince voters of the need to pass an unpopular measure is not surprising, and legislators and voters knew this time-honored practice well. “Every time a man does some foolish thing politically, he gives as his excuse the fear of the nigger!,” declared the South Carolina Low Country’s *Georgetown Times* in 1905. “It seems to us that certain people will never recover from the fright we all had twenty and thirty years ago. In our opinion, there is no more danger of negro domination in

⁵⁹⁷ Virginia Fish and Game Protective Association, “The Virginia Fish and Game Protective Association to the People of Virginia; With the Laws of this Commonwealth Relating to Fish and Game,” (Richmond, Virginia: Clemmitt & Jones, 1878), 7. Richmond: VHS General Collection, SK 457.V5.

⁵⁹⁸ “The Absolute Prohibition of Traffic of Game,” *Forest and Stream*, February 10, 1894, n.p.

⁵⁹⁹ “Third Annual Report of the Audubon Society of South Carolina,” (Columbia: R.L. Bryan, State Printers, 1910, 38-9. Columbia, SCL, 598.06 Au2a.

these days than there is of another improbable thing.” Frustrated with attempts to sway legislators by cultivating fears of black independence, the author reminded readers that...

...the negro is used to scare everyone into accepting other people's views and opinions as to the expediency of doing this, that and other things they would not think of doing were it not for this bugaboo of nigger...As for the Times, we have outgrown our swaddling clothes as infants and generally do as we please. We are no longer afraid of the nigger in the woodpile.⁶⁰⁰

Yet not all observers shared this view. For many, the need for racial control outweighed the need to preserve the unfettered freedom to hunt and fish at will.

From Natural Conservation to “Racial Conservation”

As seen in Chapter Two, proponents of Southern economic and labor reform missed no opportunity to broadcast the dangers of black liberation. “Here are a million negroes who can not claim the roof that shelter them as their own, and yet they are more independent than the richest man in the country,” declared Charles H. Otken in his 1894, *The Ills of the South*, reasserting that African-American independence and white control of labor were mutually exclusive. “A vast number of them would rather work by the day than by the week, and so on through the other time periods...They believe in the blessings of procrastination...Do the work as they please, quit when they please, begin when they please—this is the Hamitic idea of labor.”⁶⁰¹ To some, this intractability might be traced to the freedom to exploit the natural environment at will. In 1906, for example, a *Field and Stream* article entitled “The Fishing of

⁶⁰⁰ “Nigger in the Woodpile,” *Georgetown Times*, January 11, 1905, Charleston: SCL microforms, Reel GeT6.

⁶⁰¹ Charles T. Otken, *The Ills of the South or, Related Causes Hostile to the General Prosperity of the Southern People*, (New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1894), 241.

Mr. and Mrs. Bias,” in which sportsman B.W. Mitchell commented on the behavior of “dusky old guide, philosopher and friend of many a camp, Joe Bias” since Emancipation. According to Mitchell, while still an excellent sporting laborer, Bias had been changed because freedom...

...had made him a bit more crafty and canny, just a shade more unreliable, and had added vastly to his self-respect—which with him was a mild term of vanity...The key to old Joe Bias’ heart, the best and only way to win to your service all his ancient energies, was never to forget the ‘Mr.’ Mr .Bias would willingly perform the most irksome tasks that Joe Bias would have resisted with all the inertia of his race, a well-known form of inertia best spelled l-a-z-i-n-e-s-s.⁶⁰²

Whites had long found in activities like hunting and fishing the most common stereotypes of African Americans. The idea that black sporting practices reflected black idleness illustrated a cherished belief about slave and free black life. In the decades following Emancipation, the idea that hunting and fishing also guaranteed such idleness likewise became a fixture of Southern cultural and sporting mythology.

“Fishin’ Time in Dixie,” a vernacular poem appearing in *Field and Stream* in 1910 advertised the association between African Americans and the free ability to hunt or fish:

Kase dar shuld be sum plowin’
But hit will hab ter wait
Until I ketch sum fishes,
Or use up all de bait.

Now what cares I fer farmin’
When on a mornin’ bright,
I sots dar by de riber,
An’ fish begins ter bite.⁶⁰³

Observers linked black independence with field sports in prose as well. Sporting gospels such as *Forest and Stream* had long asserted that while true sportsmen ranked among society’s best men,

⁶⁰² B.W. Mitchell, “The Fishing of Mr. and Mrs. Bias: in which the former discourses upon angling ethics and the latter on domestic matters,” *Field and Stream*, n.d., 1906, 41.

⁶⁰³ Harris M. Branham, “Fishin’ Time in Dixie,” *Field and Stream*, June 1910, n.p.

those who did so for survival or profit could be counted among its worst. “The poacher will never work,” a contributor declared in 1873, “and is always ready and willing to take his chances in private preserves, to kill game and fish in all seasons. For what benefit? Certainly not for his poor wife and family.”⁶⁰⁴ Likewise an 1876 *Southern Planter and Farmer* editorial suggested that the ease of subsistence guaranteed by the South’s natural advantages accounted for many problems with free labor. Asserting that “the last freedman multiplies, unstinted by his poverty,” the unnamed contributor explained such survival by noting that “the climate is genial, the winter is short, the persimmons and blackberries span the larger part of the year; the ‘old hares’ are prolific” and that “between these various resources, country Negroes manage to sustain those low conditions of existence, which enable so low a race to multiply.”⁶⁰⁵ For sportsmen, landowners, and, with time, legislatures, unrestrained African-American hunting and fishing posed a common problem. Their ability to make a living for themselves from fish and game challenged the white control of black labor upon which Southerners depended.

For their part, sportsmen carefully linked concerns about wildlife depletion with concomitant labor issues that spoke to frustrated farmers and landowners. Virginia Fish and Game Protective Association Treasurer John Ott, for example, called for vigilance among Virginians and carefully added a nod to the need for labor, reminding readers that the Old Dominion had long been “addicted to forest and stream and rod and gun and horse and hound *in the intervals of a hard-working life*, and so long as the eye is not dim and the natural force not abated, we shall continue in that practice, and teach our children so.”⁶⁰⁶ Maryland’s *Cecil Whig*

⁶⁰⁴ “Sportsmen v. Poachers,” *Forest and Stream* 1 (15), November 20, 1873, 232.

⁶⁰⁵ “The Negro and the Common School,” *Southern Planter and Farmer* 37 (4), April, 1876, 256.

⁶⁰⁶ John Ott, “Fish and Game,” *The Southern Planter and Farmer*, September 1879, 496.

also asserted the common interests of sportsmen and agricultural employers, noting that fish and game laws are particularly useful in stopping “the race of Arabs, who lead a vagabond life of hunting and fishing at all seasons and in the most destructive manner,” and curtailing “irresponsible and ignorant parties, who would rather fish and gun than do honest, profitable labor.” The article warned both that if those who will not perform regular labor “are allowed to work their own pleasure without a wise restraint being placed upon their actions,” then “the entire species...of wild game and fish will be sacrifice, and none left to propagate.”⁶⁰⁷ Fortunately for sportsmen and landowners, some proponents of restricting African-American hunting and fishing believed they knew precisely what needed to be done.

Even the various state Audubon Societies, long champions of Southern natural resource conservation, realized the discursive power of laying the region’s wildlife woes at the feet of independent African Americans. The South Carolina chapter, for instance, had grown increasingly frustrated with the slow evolution of wildlife protection through the early twentieth century. Its resultant transformation into a standard bearer for the “negro problem” is a good case study of the way race became a larger part of such organization’s appeals in the early twentieth century. By 1908, the Palmetto State’s association, commenting on “Existing Conditions” in the Deep South, noted with alarm that “game birds and deer were constantly killed out of season” and “fish were being slaughtered in immense numbers by means of traps and dynamite.” Of meager laws and overworked officials, “owing to inadequate pay, lack of State supervision, and for other causes, they had been practically inactive, one of them only reporting two convictions for violation of the Game Laws for the year previous.”⁶⁰⁸ Such a

⁶⁰⁷ “Poachers, Law Officers and Sportsmen,” *The Cecil Whig*, n.d., quoted in *The Rod and Gun and American Sportsman*, October 9, 1875, 26.

situation raised two issues. First, that “the game of the State is being exterminated and that extermination is going on very rapidly.” Second, that the racial component of wildlife usage, particularly African Americans’ use of it to avoid regular agricultural labor, to flaunt white codes of sportsmanship, and to engage in unregulated market-related activities, had to be finally appreciated and addressed by both fish and game interests and state legislatures.⁶⁰⁹

“The second fact that impressed me was that negroes and other irresponsible vagrant hunters are responsible in large measure for the disappearance of game,” noted James Henry Rice. “A case is known where thousands of ducks have been killed in one day by rice field negroes and these ducks were sold to markets and shipped.” Worse than that slaughter, those same African Americans “supply town patrons with game in return for ammunition and other supplies furnished. This goes on to an extent that no one would suspect that had not investigated the subject as the Audubon Society has done.” The Societies promoted the dual realization that African-American hunting and fishing constituted a wide-ranging and serious problem and that strong laws must be adopted to directly and specifically target that threat:

It has been a subject of serious inquiry and discussion on the part of the South Carolina Audubon Society to learn how to meet this case, for manifestly, owing to the great number idle field hands in the fall and winter and their wide dispersion over the State, it would be impracticable to reach them in the ordinary way. I suggest, for consideration, the laying of an annual tax of one dollar (\$1.00) on every shotgun in the State...Such a tax would add a fund to the schools or roads, over and above anything that might be required for enforcing the law, of several thousand dollars in each county.⁶¹⁰

⁶⁰⁸ “First Annual Report of the Audubon Society of South Carolina,” (Columbia: R.L. Bryan, State Printers, 1908), 3. Columbia: SCL, 598.06 Au2a.

⁶⁰⁹ Ibid., 13

⁶¹⁰ Ibid.

Southern conservationists suggested licensing measures as one of their ultimate goals. These would provide revenue for future enforcement, take money away from detested market hunters, and discourage pot hunting (and, when similar licensing measures later appeared, fishing) by poor white and, especially, black Southerners who, it was hoped, could neither afford a license nor risk punishments by breaking the law.

From that call in 1908, the Audubon Society stepped up its efforts to implement a licensing system in South Carolina. By the following year, its campaigns launched in sporting periodicals and in speaking tours undertaken by people like James Henry Rice Jr., began to have an impact. In 1909, the Society could report that all States except Georgia, Oklahoma and Nevada required non-resident licenses and that twenty-four States, including “in the South, Alabama, Tennessee and Louisiana” had adopted a licensing measure for all resident sportsmen.⁶¹¹ Yet South Carolina still lagged behind. To redress this situation, membership redoubled its efforts to, according to a 1910 report, “keep the question of bird and game protection alive in the press. This has proved a powerful means of enlisting public sympathy.”⁶¹² To do that, the Society returned to the common theme that the lack of fish and game legislation encouraged unlawful and unsportsmanlike hunting and fishing by African Americans. The murder of game warden L.P. Reeves near Orangeburg in September of that year by an assassin laying wait in the woods near the Edisto River “without excuse, except that Warden Reeves had determined to enforce the law and had thereby incurred the hatred of certain criminals,” underscored the threat from illegal sportsmen. The Society reminded the public that because of

⁶¹¹ “Second Annual Report of the Audubon Society of South Carolina,” (Columbia: R.L. Bryan, State Printers, 1909), 8. Columbia: SCL, 598.06 Au2a.

⁶¹² “Third Annual Report of the Audubon Society of South Carolina,” (Columbia: R.L. Bryan, State Printers, 1909), 36. Columbia: SCL, 598.06 Au2a.

such disorder, the failure to act decisively “at the present time, with hunters multiplied by the score, and the negro hunting along with the white hunter, thus bringing another destructive element into play, is so unwise and wasteful that a mere statement ought to be enough to put a stop to it.”⁶¹³ The report did not claim that African Americans murdered Warden Reeves, but the implication hung in the air. Such associations, in fact, grew stronger as the fight for a state licensing system intensified and the Audubon Society increasingly used race to press its agenda.

“Under the lack of system prevailing for fifty years in South Carolina, the laws had the practical effect of putting a premium on vagrancy, for the major benefit of all natural resources was enjoyed by the vagrant alone,” declared the Society’s fifth annual report. “The wage-earner and the busy professional man were tied down by the responsibilities, while the vagrant hunted and fished at will.” Such appeals resonated with agricultural employers angry over decades of abuses by African Americans who distanced themselves from white control through customary activities carried over from slavery. Thus the clarion call against such abuses included more than just an appeal to Southerners’ sporting ethos, conservationist sensibilities, or economic interests; it cried for redeeming and strengthening core social values. “In other words, there will be more liberty, fuller life, for all, and the great principle of American citizenship, ‘the greatest good to the greatest number,’ will be in operation. This is the only true liberty. The rest is license and lawless living, out of which only the idle and vicious may reap temporary benefits.”⁶¹⁴

While the Audubon Society projected the loudest voice in decrying “the idle and vicious,” it neither did so alone, nor only in South Carolina. A similar process of using race to

⁶¹³ Ibid, 38-9.

⁶¹⁴ “Fifth Annual Report of the Audubon Society of South Carolina,” (Columbia: R.L. Bryan, State Printers, 1915), 5-6, 9. Columbia: SCL, 598.06 Au2a.

stimulate wildlife reform resonated across the South. By the second decade of the twentieth century, when efforts at implementing state licensing systems had developed across the region, proponents celebrated such measures as important not only for the economy, the protection of sportsmen, and the sake of future generations, but also for the connection between conserving wildlife and protecting white supremacy. In 1912, Virginia conservationists distributed a pamphlet in support of the Moncure and Rutherfoord Bill, which would guarantee the rights of landowners to hunt and fish on their own property, make it more difficult for non-landowners to hunt on another's land, and enact a licensing system requiring all persons to pay a \$1.00 county and a \$3.00 state licensing fee.⁶¹⁵ This bill, "supported by the farmers and sportsmen of the State, the game protective association of Virginia, the Virginia Audubon Society, the National Audubon Society, the American Game Protection and Propagation Association, the United States department of Agriculture, the Virginia Department of Agriculture, and the Press of Virginia," had originated in Alabama in 1907 and "in the space of four years, has been copied by twelve States of the Union, Georgia putting it into effect September 1, 1911."⁶¹⁶ Supporters hoped the Alabama law, held up as a model for other states to follow, would spread throughout the South, making clearer the connections between statewide licensing measures and racial control.

Its champions in Virginia and Alabama claimed the law would have three distinct results. It would conserve important economic resources. It would bring capital into the state from non-resident sporting tourists. Most tellingly, it would provide for the "disarmament of a multitude

⁶¹⁵ The Moncure and Rutherfoord Bill, according to its supporters, "is proposed to allow owners to hunt on their own lands in Virginia without a license; to require a county hunting license, at a cost of \$1.00, of all persons hunting in their own county, or those adjacent thereto; to require persons to secure a State license, at a cost of \$3.00 permitting them to hunt anywhere in the State; and to continue the present non-resident license, at a cost of \$10.00. This system, in effect, requires a farmer to pay \$1.00 for his hunting privileges, provided he shoots over land other than his own, and requires city people to pay \$3.00 if they hunt outside their own county." "The Conservation of Bird Life and Game Preservation in Virginia: Reasons Why the Moncure and Rutherfoord Bill Should be Enacted into Law Without Amendments," VHS General Collection, SK457.C6, 1912.

⁶¹⁶ Ibid.

of town and negro loafers, forcing them to legitimate pursuits during the hunting season.” The protection of fish and game remained driving forces behind such legislation in the South, but it must be remembered that these measures also possessed an inherent racial component. In the longstanding connection between African Americans and hunting and fishing, particularly how those activities had helped people of color maximize and, in the eyes of whites, flaunt their freedom for a half century, lay a long-overlooked impetus for such legislation.⁶¹⁷

In an essay appended to this pamphlet, Alabama Fish and Game Commissioner John H. Wallace Jr. wrote that “the farmer...has the right to pursue the wild life found on his premises, without license, and, in order for anyone else to hunt, legally, on his lands, a written permission to do so is imperative.” Such restriction “keeps out of the fields a class that should not, under any circumstances, have the right to hunt.” According to Wallace, African Americans should never have that right. “The sale of single-barrel shot-guns has been cut down at least five hundred per cent,” he wrote, “as has the sale of black powder shells, the kind that pot-hunters and negroes used.” For Wallace, it did not really matter if African Americans lost much of their ability to hunt because, as sportsmen had claimed for decades, they never *truly* hunted in the first place, merely using customary rights as excuses to loaf or commit property crimes against whites. Moreover, if such restrictions passed, rural African Americans would possess fewer subsistence options, a condition which employers had sought since the end of slavery.⁶¹⁸ Even if Wallace oversimplified black sporting practices, his zeal in trumpeting the bill suggests the

⁶¹⁷ Ibid.

⁶¹⁸ John H. Wallace Jr., “The Direct Benefits Accruing to the Farmers and to the State as a Resultant Effect of Model and Modern Game Protective Legislation,” (Montgomery, AL, 1912), VHS General Collection, SK457.C6.

continuing evolution of a commitment to use fish and game legislation in the cause of racial control.

Through such state by state action, a conglomeration of agricultural and sporting interests embedded the link between fish and game depletion and black independence in the minds of Southerners. The biggest victories, especially the adoption of the Alabama law by other states, came later. In South Carolina, the state government, specifically its Game Warden, took up the cause. When A.A. Richardson inaugurated the office in 1913, he found that although local wardens had been employed in many areas, “in most localities of the State the game laws were looked upon as a joke, and that the wardens had lost interest.” To fix this situation, he suggested more money, more wardens, and, most importantly, a resident licensing system. The scheme Richardson endorsed became law two years later and was implemented as described in the opening vignette of this chapter. He proposed requiring the purchase of a fish and game license for \$1.00 and a fine of between \$25.00 and \$100.00 or time on the chain gang for hunting without said license. To convince doubters, Richardson avoided both vague appeals to Southern values and American democracy and oblique references to the perils of vagrants. Indeed he went beyond reminding the public of the problems posed by, according to the Audubon Society, “hunters multiplied by the score, and the negro hunting along with the white hunter.”

For the final push to enact a licensing measure, Richardson appealed bluntly and directly to the “negro problem,” specifically the central issues of African Americans arming themselves and avoiding regular labor through unrestricted exploitation of the natural environment:

To be perfectly plain with you the point I am driving at is this, I wish to have a law that will be constitutional, and that will give every decent citizen of South Carolina the right to hunt and bear arms, whilst, on the other hand, we will be in a position to stop the irresponsible drunken Saturday night negro from firing promiscuously up and down the public roads and in front of our

homes at all times of the night. By refusing to issue a license to such a character he could not lawfully carry a gun.⁶¹⁹

By calling for restricting hunting and gun ownership, and indeed hinting that state agents should refuse to sell such permits to African Americans, Richardson drew on the relationship—in fact counted on the relationship—that existed in the minds of Southerners between customary sporting activities, people of color, and firearms, “which becomes so deadly in the hands of the lawless negro.”⁶²⁰ He summed up these fears by posing a simple question to the public:

I ask you, gentlemen, is there a man in South Carolina who would not be willing to pay one dollar to reduce the number of those guns? I wish it understood that I am by no means trying to disarm the negro as a race or in general, but there are certain classes that should be stopped from carrying guns, and as far as I can see the hunter’s license is the only constitutional way that you can do it.⁶²¹

He also emphasized other threats posed by African-American hunting and fishing, particularly to the South’s economic prosperity, to convince the public of the need for a strict licensing system:

⁶¹⁹ “Report of A.A. Richardson, Chief Game Warden of the State of South Carolina,” (Columbia: Gonzales & Bryan, State Printers, 1914), 7, Columbia: SCL, s.c. 799 So8re.

⁶²⁰ Richardson claimed to have personal reasons for being angry about the issue of firearm ownership. The previous May, three of Richardson’s friends were killed in Barnwell county by “the negro outlaw Richard Henry Austin.” While reluctant to summarize the incident in the report to the State, Richardson took the opportunity to “call your attention that had there been a hunter’s license, and had each gun been required to be tagged, the chances are that Austin would not have been able to carry a gun in South Carolina, or that the gun would have been taken from him by a game warden before he had committed these terrible crimes.” While serving on the posse that chased Austin for twenty-nine days, Richardson was stunned to realize just how many African Americans in the region possessed guns. “I saw negro houses through Hampton and Barnwell counties searched by the posse, and in all these houses were found guns. In some houses only one, in some others two, three, or four, and in some instances as high as six guns, and in nearly all instances they were guns of the latest improved type. In fact, much better guns than those that were carried by the majority of the white men that were on this man-hunt. In this part of the State the negroes are vastly in the majority of the white people. Therefore, you can readily see what I mean when I say that I found conditions that were alarming.” Ibid.

⁶²¹ Ibid. Southerners occasionally lamented that they could not enact enough prohibitions against the perceived inadequacies of black laboring habits. “Were we at liberty and had we the power to enact penal laws against every negro, who did not either follow some mechanical trade, cultivate land of his own, or contract with others, white or black, for farm work, to be paid in wages, or in a portion of the crop...we would be, as producers, as successful as we have ever been; although even then, from the peculiarity of the negro character, we should have many difficulties to encounter,” wrote attorney Thomas P. Devereux to the North Carolina legislature in 1867. “Those peculiarities may be shortly stated thus; his love of ease, his disregard of that elevation which is generated by property, and his recklessness of the future.” “Letter from Thos. P. Devereux, esquire,” Legislative Documents, 1866-7, 9. Raleigh: NCSA.

I have found that the greatest destroyer of game out of season, and also of the insectivorous birds, is the negro, who is continually hunting at the very season of the year *when he should be between the plow handles*. This class violates the game laws and would be abusing a hunter's license if they had one. Therefore, you will further see that the resident hunter's license law will in a great measure improve laboring conditions. I feel sure that every farmer in South Carolina will welcome such a law.⁶²²

As tenaciously as the Audubon Society had stuck to its essential message since the turn of the century, the South Carolina Game Warden now stuck to his. The following year Richardson continued to push the need to restrict black liberties as the essential reason for enacting a statewide licensing system. He asserted that while, he believed, three-fourths of South Carolinians favored strong fish and game laws, he reminded the public that supporters “constitute the better element of the people” and that both legislative action and game wardens had their enemies. This was aptly demonstrated by three acts of violence against game wardens in the State during 1914. “A warden in Aiken County was badly beaten whilst making an arrest,” Richardson reported, “another in Dorchester was seriously shot *in a battle with eight negroes*, and the Chief Game Warden was cut and stabbed nearly to death whilst fighting for his life in Barnwell County.”⁶²³ Such incidents helped convince a recalcitrant public and an unresponsive legislature to act in the name of wildlife conservation and “racial conservation.”

Once state officials, like South Carolina's A.A. Richardson and Alabama's John H. Wallace Jr., began to lobby for increased funding and legislation, lawmakers began to act. Licensing measures that had previously failed now passed. In South Carolina, the Zeigler Bill, based on the example of the Georgia and Alabama measures, which failed in the state house by

⁶²² Ibid [emphasis mine].

⁶²³ Annual Report of A.A. Richardson, Chief Game Warden of the State of South Carolina,” (Columbia: Gonzalez & Bryan, State Printers, 1915), 3, Columbia: SCL, s.c. 799 So8re. [emphasis mine].

five votes in 1907⁶²⁴, finally passed in July 1915, joining similar statewide systems, like the Moncure and Rutherford Bill, passed earlier in Virginia. With the establishment of state fish and game protective organizations and the implementation, in many states, of licensing requirements, proponents of protection laid a foundation upon which to build both further wildlife regulation and greater restriction of black subsistence. “Now that we have an undoubtedly constitutional State-wide Hunter’s License Law [the state’s] business during the current season is growing by leaps and bound,” asserted South Carolina Chief Game Warden W.H. Gibbes in 1919. Its passage presented an opportunity to go farther. “If our game fish are to be saved we must have a State-wide Fishing License Law, and this will double the activities of our Wardens and enable us to pay competent men to specialize in the work.”⁶²⁵ Thanks to the concerted efforts of sporting periodicals, fish and game clubs, semi-official protective associations like the Audubon Societies and, by the end of the second decade of the twentieth century, the states themselves, sportsmen, landowners, and tourism interests could look at the state of Southern fish and game with growing satisfaction.

Conclusion

Objections to black subsistence and sporting practices, like other criticisms of African Americans’ behavior lodged by uneasy whites during Jim Crow, did not end with the establishment of fish and game departments. But such complaints seemed to have become more hopeful. N.B. Landy of Lynchburg, Virginia, acknowledged that while abuses remained a

⁶²⁴ “Audubon Society Favors Hunter’s License Measure,” *The Beaufort Gazette*, January 20, 1911.

⁶²⁵ “Report of W.H. Gibbes, Chief Game Warden of the State of South Carolina, 1919,” *Reports and Resolutions, South Carolina, 1921*, Volumes II, n.p. Columbia: SCDAH.

problem, they could be addressed. “Aside from an occasional severe winter,” he wrote to *Field and Stream* in 1919, “the greatest hindrance to the birds of our State is the immense number of mongrel dogs around every Negro cabin and tenant house, but these we are gradually ‘weeding out’ by State laws, more efficient game wardens, and county officials.”⁶²⁶ African-American sporting, laboring, and subsistence habits had long frustrated white Southerners, but by the early decades of the twentieth century there had been much for them to celebrate. The long struggle for fish and game protection, while unfinished, had produced tangible victories that provided for the future protection of wildlife and the continued restriction of black customary rights.

While African Americans did not, indeed never would, abandon hunting and fishing, it became harder for them to use such traditions to provide food for themselves and their families, engage in marketing activities of their own design and control, and escape dependency upon regular agricultural labor in the service of whites. Through private property and posting laws, written permission requirements, comprehensive licensing systems, and stricter penalties for fish and game violations, whites made it more difficult for African Americans to draw a considerable portion of their livelihood from practices that they had so long cherished and protected. Indeed a brief, yet telling, response from former Kentucky slave Samuel Sutton to WPA interviewer Miriam Logan illustrates that wildlife reformers had perhaps achieved some desired results. When asked if he and other former slaves still hunted like in the old days, Sutton responded simply, “No ‘em, no huntin’ no mo...They aint’ wuth the price ob a license no mo.”⁶²⁷ At first glance, such a statement may seem like a simple financial choice to abandon a once widely used means of acquiring food or money. Yet when placed within the larger context of the more than

⁶²⁶ N.B. Landy, “A Fair Crop of Virginia Quail,” *Field and Stream*, January 1919, 704.

⁶²⁷ Rawick, *The American Slave* 16 (4), 96.

half century of complaints about African-American hunting and fishing, Samuel Sutton's decision may be seen as the culmination of a long process that many white Southerners would have viewed with satisfaction. Indeed this was a condition that many had worked for since Emancipation. "They have become," celebrated Alabama Fish and Game Commissioner John H. Wallace, "completely disarmed under the game law, and must now pursue the avocation of an honest and industrious life."⁶²⁸

The restrictions lauded by Wallace circumscribed African Americans' ability to freely use the South's natural environment. Fines, licensing fees, and chain gang sentences, along with the many other legal and extra-legal methods employed by landowners, sportsmen, and sporting clubs and resorts to combat unrestricted African-American hunting and fishing, brought to bear both public attention and the legal weight of legislatures on deeply-rooted cultural traditions that had served slaves and former slaves for centuries. By the time Southern race relations reached their nadir in the 1920s, African American's free use of the natural environment had also declined. This was no coincidence. The long assault on black customary hunting and fishing rights, which occurred at precisely the same time whites stripped black Southerners of their civil and political rights, must be seen as a part of the broader evolution of white efforts at racial control. For just as white Southerners hoped to divide Southern society writ large into white and black, so too did sportsmen, landowners, and lawmakers hope to impose a similar division on Southern hunting and fishing. In the end, the long campaign to disrupt age-old patterns of black exploitation of fish and game became part of a larger strategy that included disfranchisement, chain gangs, lynching, and segregation, which whites deployed in the hopes of eroding African Americans' control over their own lives and labor.

⁶²⁸ John H. Wallace Jr., "The Direct Benefits Accruing to the Farmers and to the State as a Resultant Effect of Model and Modern Game Protective Legislation," (Montgomery, AL, 1912), VHS General Collection, SK457.C6.

Epilogue: Contradiction and Continuity in the Southern Sporting Field

In October, 1911, a group of wealthy Low Country denizens gathered in Berkeley County, South Carolina, for a meeting of the St. John's Hunting Club, an organization whose history stretched back to before the Civil War. Since 1900, the Club had ceased to be a functioning hunting club and had become solely a social exercise for wealthy South Carolinians. But although the Club had abandoned hunting as its central activity, it did not completely give up the traditions associated with it. Hunting continued to play an important symbolic role for the club's membership. First, while no longer directly involved in field sports, the club's long history of hunting in the Low Country provided members with a connection to, in their minds, an immutable past where hunting both reflected and solidified white elites' position at the top of the Southern social structure. Second, while clinging to the tradition, if not the act of hunting, club members preserved the connection between hunting and race relations that elite sportsmen had long cultivated. At the October 1911 meeting, for example, members gathered around to listen to a poem entitled "Opening the Hunt" by Low Country resident M.E. Ravenel.

The poem, written in the stereotypical black dialect common to sporting literature of the period, left no doubt that the symbolic place of hunting, as a reflection of elite, white status and African-American subordination, remained important to Club members.

Look sharp dere boys, quit your foolin' roun',
It's time you was ready for true;
Uncle Quash done loadin' ol' Maussa gun,
An' de hosses don saddle too.
An' quick as de brekfas' is done at de house
Ole Maussa gwine blow 'im a blas'.
So he 'spectin' de dribers and dogs waitin' den
To git in de woods bery fas'.

Written from the perspective of devoted servant “Pompey,” the poem confirms both the importance of African-American labor to Southern hunting and the centrality of the ideal of black service to elite, white sportsmen of the latter nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Indeed the verse seems to celebrate racial subordination as much as the tradition of hunting. Narrator “Pompey” goes on to enthusiastically express the degree to which “ol Maussa” depends on him and his fellows for their service as well as his own level of excitement at the opportunity to meet his master’s expectations for that service.

For Maussa got cump’hy wid ‘im today
Which he anxious to gi’ dem some shootin’;
He countin’ on Pompey to clean up dese woods
An’ bring out de game a-skootin’.
An’ I says moreober on cashuns like dis,
Do its me dats doin’ de praisin’,
(What perhaps I isnt ought to) but yet I does say
Dat I gin’rally shows my raisin’.⁶²⁹

Nearly a half-century after the end of slavery, Ravenel’s poem, complete with a loyal, black servant eager to impress his employer with both his skilled service and the valuable chance to “rally shows my raisin’,” reminded St. John’s Hunting Club members that while the Club’s active sporting days had ended, the Club’s lofty social position, typified by the historic white over black mastery found in the hunting field, lived on. By 1911, with Jim Crow firmly in place and with the legislative assault on black customary rights in full swing in such states as Virginia, Alabama, and South Carolina, it seemed that, at least for members of the St. John’s Club, preserving and celebrating the racial significance of hunting had perhaps become more important than the act itself. By the early twentieth century, some Southern elites had abandoned hunting as a pastime, but not as a vibrant symbol of white supremacy.

⁶²⁹ M.E. Ravenel, “Opening the Hunt,” St. John’s Hunting Club Manuscripts, Columbia: SCL, R1236.

Yet even if hunting and fishing or, in the case of the above poem, the memory of Southern hunting and fishing, is understood to have been an important part of the evolution of the Southern racial divide, it must also be remembered that such “racial conservation” did not impact all African Americans equally. Indeed the process ironically coincided with the booming popularity of Southern sporting tourism which guaranteed that African American hunters and fishermen would enjoy a permanent, if limited, place in fish and game plantations and sporting resorts. The establishment of private clubs and preserves may have dramatically decreased the amount of land available for the free taking of wildlife, but some African Americans nonetheless carved out a long-term place for themselves in Southern hunting and fishing. Even as the creation of state fish and game departments and the employment of a growing number of wardens dramatically challenged African Americans’ ability to freely hunt and fish, native and visiting sportsmen’s dependence on black labor or, in the case of the St. John’s Club, the memory of such labor, guaranteed that Dixie’s fields, forests, and streams would not be lily white. While whites celebrated the restriction of African-American independence, their own desire to recapture the mythical Old South guaranteed that part of the region’s sporting field would remain permanently bi-racial.

For well over a century, the sporting exploits of slaves and freed persons had been criticized if not done in proximity to white superiors. Only when done away from the prying eyes of white observers, when carried out for the betterment of African Americans and their families, and particularly when used, after Emancipation, as both powerful symbols and key protectors of black independence, did whites cry for action. The cultivation of independence was the most important benefit African Americans drew from their long-standing reliance on such customary rights. That independence became the most convincing reason whites offered for

their efforts to make those practices more expensive, more restrictive, and more exclusive. The realization that whites had more to protect than fish and game, that hunting and fishing had a strong racial component, and that the Southern conservation movement used racism to garner support is central to any understanding of the fight to regulate hunting and fishing.

The story of the place of African Americans in Southern hunting and fishing between 1865 and the 1920s is thus one of apparent contradictions. For former slaves, the Southern sporting field became both a place of economic opportunity where valuable wildlife, marketing opportunities, and steady employment awaited them. Yet it was also a space of continued-white-over-black domination where elites reconstructed the racial hierarchy swept away by Emancipation. For Southern elites, particularly landowners, the Southern sporting field became a site where they celebrated both their continued mastery over people of color by recreating the old master-servant relationship and an arena in which they expressed their fears regarding black liberation through their antipathy toward unrestricted African-American customary rights. For sportsmen, Southern hunting and fishing led them to celebrate their own traditions and acumen and at the same time lament an apparent black rejection of white hunting and fishing codes that threatened fish and game supplies, and challenged their own sense of sporting dominion. For those directly touched by former slaves' long relationship with Southern wildlife, black and white, rich and poor, the story was a complex and multi-sided one. Southern hunting and fishing reflected both African Americans' ability to use long-cultivated subsistence traditions to better their lives and a coalition of whites' willingness to circumscribe that freedom to combat the negative consequences of black independence. Simultaneously providing economic competence and racial subordination, guaranteeing long-term employment and economic exploitation, foretelling physical and symbolic liberation and emerging segregation, hunting and fishing

encompassed all of the racial tensions of the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century South and thus defies simple labels.

It is therefore difficult to describe hunting and fishing in the post-Emancipation South as exclusively either a source of African-American independence or white supremacy--an ambiguity belied by the uncertainty of even contemporary observers. When Archibald Rutledge described a former slave sportsman as possessed of a “kind of eerie [hunting] skill instinctive to him and a few others of his race but denied the white man” while also declaring that “if he brings home a rabbit or a squirrel or a ‘possum, he will be both lucky and happy,” he expressed the inescapable fact, in the eyes of whites, that African-American hunting and fishing could be either good or bad, effective or immoderate depending on the observer’s point of view.⁶³⁰ Likewise when Henry Wellington Wack asserted that black subordinates are “teeming with ideas about tarpon and local taxes, national politics and peach brandy” and thus make valuable sporting companions, he nonetheless warned readers to “have a club handy, for when the king of game fish starts your line for Jamaica you’ll need vigorous inducements to bring that nigger to consciousness,” and furthered the notion that while hunting and fishing could reflect African Americans’ competency and skill, those traits were invariably bound by the limitations of black character.⁶³¹ And when C. W. Boyd described hunting with “a genuine Southern negro” named Barney whose sporting “accomplishments were considerable,” noting that “not an event of importance took place in local sporting circles of which Barney did not know,” he was careful to point out that Barney was still a devoted servant who “in social intercourse constantly inclined to risibility,” further demonstrating that whites only recognized black sporting skill if accompanied

⁶³⁰ Rutledge, *Hunter’s Choice*, 22, 21.

⁶³¹ “The Sportsmen’s Elysium of the South, Part II: The Game Animals of Florida,” *Field and Stream*, March 1901, 21-2.

by a tacit acknowledgement of white supremacy. At first glance, then, few observers of African-American hunting and fishing failed to at least grasp such contradictions.⁶³² Yet if one examines such statements closely, the apparent contradictions begin to unravel.

Despite the often conflicting descriptions of African-American hunting and fishing, there is one essential component of each that makes the story clearer—the attitude of white observers towards black independence. When commentators like Rutledge, Wack, Boyd, and the scores of other whites who spent so much time assessing those activities, criticized African-American sporting practices as dangerous threats to labor, wildlife, and white supremacy, they invariably referred to those times when African Americans hunted and fished on their own and for their own benefit. Away from white oversight, African-American hunting and fishing represented the loss of white Southerners' power since the war and Emancipation, and reminded white observers that former slaves now possessed the freedom to earn a living apart from exclusively white-directed labor and to express that freedom by trespassing onto Southern cultural traditions believed ideally reserved for whites.

While taking to the field in the service of white elites, African Americans did so as extensions of the sportsmen whom they served. In these instances, black skill ceased to be a threat because, while in the field with their employers, everything African-American subordinates did fell under the umbrella of service. In that context, white sportsmen believed, all challenges to assumptions of white supremacy and black inferiority proved fleeting. Even the great skill demonstrated by so many African-American hunters and fishermen, when plied under a rubric of subordination, became testaments to whites' own position at the top of the racial and sporting hierarchy. As independent sportsmen, African Americans might threaten white

⁶³² "Winter Shooting in South Carolina," *Outing* VIII, n. 5, February 1889, 401.

economic and cultural interests, but as subordinated laborers, they could only serve and reinforce them. The relative levels of freedom expressed through hunting and fishing thus became the axis upon which white assessments of such activities turned. For white observers, struggling to come to grips with the loss of their slaves and eager to maintain control over black labor, independent African-American hunting and fishing expressed the worst consequences of black liberation. Yet at the same time, when black subordinates hunted and fished for and with white superiors, those same activities proved a proscriptive for the many problems posed by that liberation.

The two great transformations in Southern hunting and fishing between the end of the Civil War and the 1920s--the rise of the tourism industry and the rise of the conservation movement--reflect these two distinct sides of African-American liberation. Much of the popularity of Southern sporting tourism may be explained by the lasting appeal of the idealized antebellum master-servant relationship that comforted native whites and created for visitors a sense of Southern authenticity. The central role of black labor in maintaining that relationship made hunting and fishing a powerful celebration of white sporting and social supremacy and an effective means of exploiting African-American skill and labor for the continued benefit of white elites. Likewise, much of the force behind the drive to enact wildlife protections in this period may also be laid at the doorstep of black liberation. For as much as subordinated African-American hunting and fishing helped native and visiting whites resurrect lost control over people of color, independent hunting and fishing by former slaves, bringing with it the specter of black self-subsistence, labor intractability, and open challenges to elite, white sporting privilege, reflected the consequences of the loss of that control. If advertising former slaves' abilities as sporting laborers became an indispensable way for elites to profit from and express their belief in continued racial subordination, then creating a comprehensive legal apparatus to restrict long-

cherished customary rights became an essential strategy for Southerners to minimize the freedoms African Americans expressed through independent hunting and fishing.

Yet despite such efforts, African Americans would never completely abandon Southern hunting and fishing. As demonstrated by the long relationship between African-American sporting employees and resorts and plantations like Thomasville, Georgia's Pebble Hill and Beaufort, South Carolina's Medway plantations, the presence of black subordinates remained crucial parts of Southern hunting and fishing for generations to come. Physically dependent upon black labor and, more importantly, symbolically tied to the tradition of racial subordination that labor symbolized, white Southerners refused to give up African-American sporting labor. For white Southerners hoping to use the sporting field to recapture the social and racial trappings of the antebellum era even into the middle of the twentieth century and beyond, the presence of black labor proved a continued comfort. Indeed as men like South Carolinian Henry D. Boykin insisted with his romantic description of his father's loyal huntsmen Spaniard, Rabbit, and Bootie, "the thrill of many ancient hunters must surge up from the shadows to join the sweet song of those three dark experts."⁶³³ For many white sporting enthusiasts, African Americans remained a key part of a particular version of Southern sporting and racial relationships that had to be preserved and celebrated.

White Southerners and visiting sportsmen did not remain the only champions of the bi-racial Southern sporting field. Yet despite the decades-long struggle to restrict black customary rights, despite the imposition of legal measures to circumscribe African-American access to hunting and fishing, whites failed to completely eliminate such practices altogether, and, in time, African Americans emerged as notable advocates of the hunting and fishing tradition. In 1996,

⁶³³ Henry D. Boykin II, *Looking Back at the Boykin Hunting Club*, (Camden, South Carolina: H.D. Boykin, 1984), 34. Columbia: SCL, 799.2B69L.

the United States Fish & Wildlife Service conducted the *National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation* in the hopes of gathering information on how and why different groups spent their time engaged in wildlife-related recreations in order to better identify those groups of people whose participation has traditionally lagged. The study found that “hunting and fishing have predominantly been white male activities since at least 1955 when the Fish and Wildlife Service began tracking the demographics of hunters and anglers. Participation rates of females and minorities have consistently been below the national average.” That finding led to a 2000 addendum analyzing the “Participation and Expenditure Patterns of African-American, Hispanic and Women Hunters and Anglers.”⁶³⁴ The addendum revealed that while African American’s participation trailed that of white hunters and fishermen by a wide margin⁶³⁵, black hunting was far more concentrated regionally than white hunting. According to the study, 73% of all African-American hunters lived in the South.⁶³⁶ The same was true for fishing since 64% of all black fishermen reside in the Southern United States.⁶³⁷

Two facts emerge from the Fish and Wildlife survey. The first is that a noticeably large gap exists between the hunting and fishing frequency of white and black Americans. According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, that contemporary gap exists because of “cultural differences” that are “deep-seated enough to transcend the effects of income, education, age and

⁶³⁴ U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, “Participation and Expenditure Patterns of African-American, Hispanic and Women Hunters and Anglers: Addendum to the 1996 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-associated Recreation,” (Washington, DC: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2000), 4.

⁶³⁵ According to the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, African Americans in 1996 were more than three times less likely as whites to hunt, with seven percent of white respondents age sixteen or older, compared to two percent of African-American respondents, participating in that activities. Moreover, of the \$10,674,456 Americans spent on hunting in 1996, a mere \$174,186 of that was spent by African Americans. Ibid., 5.

⁶³⁶ Ibid., 8.

⁶³⁷ Ibid., 16.

other factors normally assumed to have a large influence on behavior.”⁶³⁸ Yet one must wonder if a more penetrating and persuasive answer might be found by looking at the historic relationship between African-American hunting and fishing and legal efforts to restrict it same beginning in the late nineteenth century. In considering why minorities tend to hunt and fish far less than whites, Fish and Wildlife researchers may wish to consider the position that that present-day disparity represents exactly what beleaguered elite, white sportsmen had fought for so long--the evolution of a sporting field dominated by white sportsmen. They might also consider the possibility that “cultural differences” between white Americans and minorities may be less critical a factor in modern-day hunting and fishing differences than the creation in the early twentieth century of wildlife regulations that privileged men of means and, at least in the Southern United States, specifically targeted African Americans as a threat to elite, white sporting privilege.

The other key fact that emerges from the 2000 addendum is that Africans Americans in the Southern states are far more likely than African Americans nationally to hunt or fish. Nearly three-quarters of all African-American hunters and nearly two-thirds of all African-American fishermen lived in the South in 2000, statistics which both confirm the deep roots of those customary practices for black Southerners and demonstrate that white efforts to eliminate independent African-American hunting and fishing in the early twentieth century did not completely eliminate the practices. Even if white participation in hunting and fishing nationally outstripped black participation by more than three to one, the concentration of African-American hunting and fishing in the Southern states indicates that the roots of those practices run deep. This was confirmed by another U.S. Fish & Wildlife study undertaken two years later.

⁶³⁸ Ibid.

Lamenting the relative lag in minority participation in the United States and hoping to find ways to increase it in order to make the outdoor recreation and boating industries more profitable, the Sport Fishing and Boating Partnership Council commissioned a focus group report on “Women’s, Hispanics’, and African Americans’ Participation in, and Attitudes toward, Boating and Fishing,” in 1998. This report, drawn from ten focus group interview sessions with women, Hispanic, and African-American volunteers, demonstrates that some African-American interview subjects not only seemed well aware of the long-standing connection between people of color and hunting and fishing but worked to cultivate that heritage. According to one female African-American interview subject...

I was a born fisherman...I come from a long line of fishermen. I like fresh water because I like to fish with a cane pole, I like the traditional way. With a rod and reel you have to work...A lot of African Americans before us didn’t have a lot of things to do. It’s been passed down through the generations. I have relatives from (north) and whenever they come down, the first thing we do is have a fishfry. And, certain kids cling to that. For our ancestors, there was nothing else for them to do.⁶³⁹

Other subjects confirmed this appreciation for the deep, generational roots of African-American wildlife exploitation. “I’ve got an uncle who just passed. He could go out and catch fish to fill this table,” noted a Tampa, Florida, interview subject. “I just inherited it from him I guess. It’s a family thing. At family reunions, we all go fishing.”⁶⁴⁰ A third subject, clearly aware of the historic connection between hunting and fishing and the black community, indicated that such tradition influenced his choice to continue hunting and fishing. “When I was little, you fished or hunted because you had to,” the subject noted, pointing to the connection between hunting and

⁶³⁹ Interview with Unnamed African-American Interview Subject in Tampa, Florida, Responsive Management, “Women’s, Hispanics’, and African-Americans’ Participation in, and Attitudes Toward, Boating and Fishing: Submitted to the Fishing and Boating Partnership Council,” (Harrisonburg, VA: Responsive Management, 1998), 8. <http://www.responsivemanagement.com/focusgroupprojects.html>, (accessed May, 2005).

⁶⁴⁰ Ibid., 9.

fishing and African-American subsistence. “I still hunt (and fish), (but) there’s not very good hunting in this area, but I still enjoy it. Since my family has been connected to it for over 200 years, I still do it.”⁶⁴¹

African Americans’ participation levels may be down for the United States as a whole, but the above testimonials indicate that the rich tradition of hunting and fishing has not died. Such studies in fact suggest that at least some contemporary African-Americans hunters and fishermen continue to roam Southern fields, forests and streams for food or sport well aware of the long connection between hunting and fishing, people of color, and the struggle for subsistence and independence. Despite elite, white attempts to drive them out of the sporting field, the decline of the Southern sporting tourism industry since mid-century, the advent of the Civil Rights movement, and the death of Jim Crow segregation, that rich tradition has endured, and continues to influence how African Americans spend their leisure time.

⁶⁴¹ Interview with unidentified African-American interview subject in York, Pennsylvania, *Ibid.*, 9.

APPENDIX A

Note on Sources

My investigation of African American customary hunting and fishing activities relied on a wide array of sources to form a coherent narrative about Southern hunting and fishing. Magazine literature became the most important source. National periodicals dealing specifically with hunting and fishing, such as *Forest and Stream*, *Field and Stream*, *Outing*, *Recreation*, and *The Rod and Gun* and *American Sportsman* provided the heart of the dissertation. A number of regional and agricultural periodicals dealing with specifically Southern and/or agricultural issues, including *The Southern Planter and Farmer*, *The Southern Cultivator*, and *The American Farmer* supplemented these. The other main sources for this dissertation come from the many extant published recollections of nineteenth-century life produced by both sportsmen and non-sportsmen. The period spanning the last third of the nineteenth century through the early twentieth century represented not only the peak popularity of elite sport hunting and fishing, but also the high water mark of sporting literature. Hundreds of native and visiting sportsmen wrote accounts of Southern hunting and fishing that provide scholars with vibrant and readily available accounts of its methods, means and attendant social conflicts. Valuable information can also be found in the scores of general narratives of postwar Southern life produced by both native Southerners and visitors. While hunting and fishing are rarely a topic of lengthy discussion in such accounts, they are often mentioned.

These published sources, supplemented by private archival collections, proved rich enough to sketch the basic outline of conflicts over Southern hunting and fishing; but they nonetheless present problems. The many published recollections of Southern life required extensive reading with no guarantee of much material relating to hunting and fishing, let alone their connection to race relations. This fact became even more obvious for archival sources, particularly private collection materials such as diaries and account ledgers, which required time-intensive exploration that frequently yielded little more than passing mention of hunting and fishing. Little more than my belief in the ultimate richness of the topic warranted such laborious, sometimes scattershot, research.

The broad geographic spread of the sources posed a second problem. Due to an unavoidable lack of specific sources concentrated in one particular state or region, and because the majority of the available source material, particularly periodical literature, is not geographically specific beyond sometimes identifying the location of individual contributors, it became difficult, if not impossible, to limit the discussion of Southern hunting and fishing to one part of the South. While such a localized study is often preferable to a more sweeping one, the material did not exist to execute such a detailed, community or county-based analysis. Periodical literature, sportsmen's narratives, published diaries and recollections and even travel literature, which together provided the richest sources for the project, addressed the connections between hunting and fishing and race relations in broad terms, omitting description and analysis of particular locales. This fact left no alternative to making this dissertation a study of the South as a whole, employing evidence from across the region as a proscriptive to the geographic ambiguity of source material.

This is not to say that the dissertation lacks any geographic focus. Thick description of hunting and fishing in specific parts of the South remained elusive, but sources did provide a geographic framework for the project. Hunting and fishing, particularly for market or as part of the emerging sporting tourism industry, became contested in regions with large African American populations. With only a few exceptions, most accounts come from areas with large black populations, including north central North Carolina, coastal South Carolina and Georgia, north Florida, south-central Alabama, western and southern Mississippi, southern Louisiana, eastern Arkansas and western Tennessee. These areas correspond to the “black belt” that snaked across the South between the 1860s and the 1920s. Note, for example, the following map outlining the concentration of the African American population in 1910:

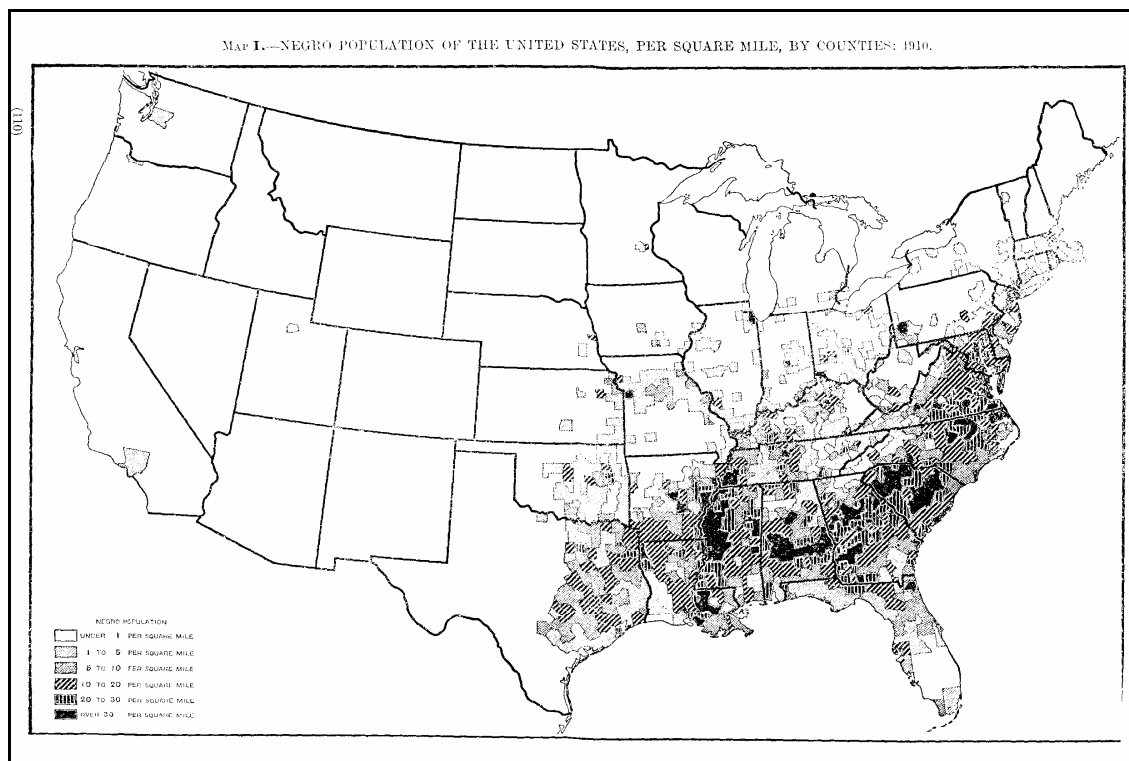


Figure 2: National African American Population Concentration in 1910 [Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Negro Population 1790-1915*, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1918) in William Loren Katz, General Editor, *Negro Population in the United States, 1790-1915*, (New York: Arno Press, 1968), 110.]

The areas with the densest black population loosely correspond to the most popular Southern sporting destinations. The fact that the majority of my evidence originates from such black belt areas allows me to demonstrate both that African Americans hunted and fished most substantially and effectively in areas where their numbers were high and that complaints about black exploitation of those traditions drew the most criticism in areas where whites contended with a large black population. It also, unfortunately, prevents a thorough discussion of hunting and fishing by poor whites in those same areas.

Consider as well the seventeen counties affected by the Ziegler Bill, the 1914 South Carolina hunter's license law, discussed in Chapter Six, passed for the "restriction of the indiscriminate slaughter practiced by the negroes." Of the seventeen⁶⁴² counties, only Greenville, Lexington, and Oconee had a predominantly white population, according to the 1910 census:

Table 1: 1910 African American Population, By Percentage, of 16 of the 17 South Carolina Counties Covered by the 1914 Ziegler Bill [Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Negro Population 1790-1915*, (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1918) in William Loren Katz, General Editor, *Negro Population in the United States, 1790-1915*, (New York: Arno Press, 1968), 829.]

Barnwell	72.0%	Florence	57.0%
Beaufort	86.9%	Greenville	30.5%
Calhoun	76.6%	Hampton	64.2%
Charleston	63.2%	Laurens	54.8%
Chester	65.0%	Lexington	36.3%
Darlington	59.1%	Marion	54.4%
Dillon	51.0%	Oconee	25.1%
Dorchester	61.4%	Orangeburg	65.8%

⁶⁴² The above table possesses information for only sixteen of the seventeen counties covered by the Ziegler Bill. Jasper County, created from portions of Beaufort and Hampton counties in 1912, was also affected but population numbers do not exist for 1910.

Thirteen of the seventeen counties had an African American majority, and eight had over sixty percent. This demonstrates that despite the wide evidence base, the large black population of areas from which most evidence originates gives the project some regional specificity.

The overwhelming majority of sources for this dissertation are anecdotal. The traditional tools of social history analysis, including statistical analysis of voting, court, and employment records, either do not exist, have yet to be located or do not apply to this project. Aside from being the best evidence available, anecdotal sources were often the only extant sources. While the majority of material is anecdotal, it is often deep and detailed anecdotal evidence. Contributors to sporting periodicals did not hesitate to bloviate on all aspects of Southern field sports, making hunting and fishing one of their favorite subjects. Sportsmen, wealthy Southerners, and even former slaves who produced scores of published and unpublished narratives and autobiographies through the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, wrote frequently about the relationship between hunting and fishing and race relations. When they did, they did so at length and through the use of detailed, personal narratives that bring to life their pride, frustration or anger better than any numerical analysis could. What the dissertation lacks in quantification, it hopefully makes up for with stories and characters.

A final source limitation that needs to be acknowledged is the paucity of black voices in a body of sources dominated by whites. As with many studies of slaves or freed people, there are a limited number of available sources in which African Americans speak for themselves. Former slave narratives, both those published by escaped slaves throughout the nineteenth century and those collected by the WPA in the 1930s, often contain commentary on life after liberation, sometimes addressing their continued reliance on customary rights cultivated under slavery.

These sources, along with a number of black autobiographies produced between the latter nineteenth and early twentieth century, represent the best available source material for uncovering the voices of black Southerners typically unavoidably left underrepresented by scholarly attention. Aside from these valuable documents, however, the bulk of the story of post-Emancipation hunting and fishing is told by white observers. There is no shortage of African American participants in accounts of the Southern sporting field. But with the exceptions of a few African American narratives, black actors in most extant sources are but characters in white-centered narratives reflecting white attitudes and perceptions. This sometimes makes the dissertation seem more about white responses to those customary traditions than of former slaves' relationship to them. For while it is possible to reconstruct African Americans' attitudes about and dependence upon hunting and fishing with attention to their own voices and recollections, historians of African American life in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century South, particularly the rural South, are forced to draw such voices from mostly white sources. Hopefully those extracted voices, along with available African American narratives, will insure that the elite, white side of Southern hunting and fishing does not overwhelm African American perceptions and participation.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abbreviations Used

DocSouth, UNCCH:	Documenting the American South Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
NCC, UNCCH:	North Carolina Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
NCSA:	North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh
RBC, UNCCH:	Rare Book Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
SCHS:	South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston
SCL, USC:	South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, Columbia
SCSA:	South Carolina State Archives, Columbia
SHC, UNCCH:	Southern Historical Collections, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
VHS:	Virginia Historical Society, Richmond

Primary Sources

Archival Collections Used

North Carolina Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
Southern Pamphlet Collection

North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh, North Carolina
County Records, State of North Carolina
David Brainard Whiting Reminiscences, P.C. 1822.1
Dr. Richard H. Lewis Collection, P.C. 1347.1.
General Assembly Session Records, State of North Carolina.
Henry B. Ansell Papers, P.C. 1431.1.
Legislative Documents, State of North Carolina
Sally Hawthorne Reminiscence, P.C. 743.1.

South Carolina Historical Society, Charleston, South Carolina

Anne Simon Deas Collection, 43/0470.
Conner Family Papers, 28/228/6.
Kinloch Gun Club Records, 1914-1922, 25/148/2.
Mitchell and Smith Records, 152/04/01.
Santee Gun Club Records, 1901-1969, 34/423-429 OvrSz.

South Caroliniana Library, Columbia, South Carolina

Henry Edwards Davis Papers, Manuscripts P.
Kosmos Club Records, Manuscripts, MS R, 5.
St. John's Hunting Club Manuscripts, Manuscripts R 1236.

Southern Historical Collections, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Bryan Family Papers, # 96.
David Franklin Thorpe Papers, #4262.
Jackson and Prince Family Papers, # 371
James Lee Love Collection, #4139.
James Philip Jones Papers, # 972.
John Edwin Fripp Papers, #869.
Robert Pinckney Tucker Papers, #1010.

Virginia Historical Society (VHS), Richmond, Virginia

Allen Family Papers, 1850-1910, Mss1A1546c
B.H. Wilkins Memoir, 1856-1876, Mss5:1W6544:1.
Broadsides Collection
Bruce Family Papers, 1665-1925, Mss1B8306b.
Harvie Family Papers, 1831-1913, Mss1H2636c.
James Booth Walters Papers, 1870-1881, Mss1W1714a.
Kelly Walker Trimble Papers, 1770-1954, Mss10: no. 120.
Marie Gordon (Pryor) Rice Reminiscences, typescript, Mss5: 1R3652:1.
McCarty Family Papers, 1859-1898, Mss2M1278b.
Pattie Jane Watkins Scott Diary, 1881-1885, Mss5: 1Sco853:1
Roller Family Papers, 1837-1917, Mss1R6498A2.
Sarah S. Carter Diary, 1866, Mss5: 1C2467
Sheet Music Collection.
Simeon H. Duffer Diary, 1866, Mss5:D8735.
William Gray papers, 1819-1875; Mss1G7952aFA2

Newspapers & Periodicals

American Farmer, Baltimore, MD, 1844-1883.

American Sportsman: Devoted Exclusively to Shooting, Fishing and Practical Natural History,

West Meridien, CT, 1871-1875.

Beaufort Gazette, Beaufort, South Carolina, 1908-1918.

Edenton Fisherman and Farmer, Elizabeth City, NC, 1887-1895.

Evening Post, Charleston, SC, 1914-1915.

Field and Stream, St. Paul MN, 1898-1920.

Forest and Stream, NY, 1873-1901.

Georgetown Times, Georgetown, SC, 1905-1915.

Horry Herald, Conway, SC, 1908-1920.

National Sportsman, Boston, MA, 1899-1920.

Outdoor Life: A Magazine of the West, Denver, CO, 1898-1920.

Outing: Sporting, Adventure, Travel, Fiction, Albany, New York, 1885-1901.

Progressive Democrat, Georgetown, South Carolina, 1913-1915.

Recreation: A Monthly Magazine Devoted to Everything the Name Implies, New York, 1875-1902.

Rod and Gun and American Sportsman, New York, 1875-1877.

Southern Cultivator, Atlanta, GA, 1844-1891.

Southern Planter and Farmer, Richmond, VA, 1852-1901.

Southern Review, Baltimore, MD, 1869-1878.

Books & Articles

Ana Bontemps, ed., *Five Black Lives: The Autobiographies of Venture Smith, James Mars, William Grimes, The Rev. G.W. Offley, and James L. Smith*, Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1971.

Ansell, Henry B., "Tales of Knotts Island," 90. Henry B. Ansell Papers, Raleigh: North Carolina State Archives, P.C. 1431.1.

- Arp, Bill, *Bill Arp: From the Uncivil War to Date, 1861-1903*, Atlanta, GA: Hudgins Publishing Co., 1903, DocSouth, UNCCH.
- Arzonia, Joe, "The Preacher and the Bear," Capitol Music, 1904. Library of Congress, American Memory Collection.
- Atlantic & North Carolina Railroad, "Hunting and Fishing in Eastern North Carolina," Goldsboro: Atlantic & North Carolina Railroad, 1905. UNCCH, NCC, microform CO92S68, reel 81, item 5.
- Audubon Society of North Carolina, "Fifth Annual Report of the Audubon Society of North Carolina," Greensboro, North Carolina, 1907. UNCCH, NCC.
- . "Fifth Annual Report of the Audubon Society of South Carolina," Columbia: R.L. Bryan, State Printers, 1915, 5-6, Columbia, SCL, 586.06 Au2a.
- Audubon Society of South Carolina, "First Annual Report of the Audubon Society of South Carolina," .Columbia: R.L. Bryan, State Printers, 1908. Columbia: SCL, 598.06 Au2a.
- . "Second Annual Report of the Audubon Society of South Carolina," Columbia: R.L. Bryan, State Printers, 1909. Columbia: SCL, 598.06 Au2a.
- Audubon Society of South Carolina, "Third Annual Report of the Audubon Society of South Carolina," Columbia: R.L. Bryan, State Printers, 1910, 38-9. Columbia, SCL, 598.06 Au2a.
- Ball, Charles, *Slavery in the United States: A Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Charles Ball, a Black Man, Who Lived Forty Years in Maryland, South Carolina and Georgia, as a Slave Under Various Masters, and was One Year in the Navy with Commodore Barney, During the Late War*, New York: John S. Taylor, 1837.
- Bigelow, Horatio, *Flying Feathers: A Yankee's Hunting Experiences in the South*, Richmond, VA: Garrett and Massie, 1937.
- "Birds and Game: Their Great Value to the People of the State," *Horry (South Carolina) Herald*, May 13, 1909, Columbia: SCL Microforms, ConH3.
- Blassingame, John W., ed., *Slave Testimony: Two Centuries of Letters, Speeches, Interviews and Autobiographies*, Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1977.
- Botkin, B.A., ed., *Lay My Burden Down: A Folk History of Slavery*, Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1945.
- Boykin, Henry D. II, *Looking Back at the Boykin Hunting Club*, Camden, South Carolina: H.D. Boykin, 1984. Columbia: SCL, 799.2B69l.

- Brown, Alan and David Taylor, eds., *Gabr'l Blow Sof': Sumter County, Alabama, Slave Narratives*, Livingston, AL: Livingston University Press, 1997.
- Brown, Titus, and James "Jack" Hadley, *African American Life on the Southern Hunting Plantation*, Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2001.
- Browne, Raymond A. Browne "Just Say 'Bye-Bye' Mah Honey," Frank Tousey's Publishing House, 1897. Historic American Sheet Music Collection, 1890-1899, Rare Book Manuscript and Special Collections Library, Duke University, Music B-768.
- Bruce, Philip A., *The Plantation Negro as a Freeman: Observations on His Character, Condition, and Prospects in Virginia*, New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1889.
- Cable, George Washington, *John March, Southerner*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1899.
- Carter, Henry H., "Early History of the Santee Club," Charleston: SCHS, Pam 799.2
- Chestnutt, Charles W., *The Colonel's Dream*, New York: Doubleday, 1905.
- Childs, Arney R., ed., *Rice Planter and Sportsman: The Recollections of J. Motte Alston, 1821-1909*, Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1999.
- Childs, Arney R., *Rice Planter and Sportsman: The Recollections of J. Motte Alston, 1821-1909* Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1953.
- Clarke, Lewis Garrard, *Narrative of the Sufferings of Lewis Clarke, During a Captivity of More Than Twenty-Five Years, Among the Algerines of Kentucky, One of the So-Called Christian States of North America*, Boston: David H. Ela, Printer, 1845.
- Coyne, Fletcher, "In the Lowlands of South Carolina," *Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly*, March 1891, 286. Columbia: South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina.
- Davis, Henry Edwards, *'Old Betsy': Stories of Hunting with the Old Percussion Muzzle-Loader and its Successors*, typescript, Manuscripts Division, South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina, 1966.
- . *The American Wild Turkey* Georgetown, SC: Small Arms Technical Publishing Company, 1949.
- Deas, Anne Simon, "Recollections of the Ball Family of South Carolina and the Comingtee Plantation," typescript. Charleston: SCHS.
- Dickey, A. and E.C. Branson, "How Farm Tenants Live," University of North Carolina Extension Bulletin, 1922, UNCCH, NCC, C378 UJ3.
- Dr. Collins, *Practical Rules for the Management and Medical Treatment of Negro Slaves, in the*

- Sugar Colonies by a Professional Planter*, London, n.p., 1991.
- E.I. DuPont De Nemours Powder Company, "The Sport Alluring: Trap Shooting," UNCCCH, NCC, Cp799 S76 e.
- Eldredge, F.W., "Camden, South Carolina as a Winter Resort," New York: Mook Brothers & Co. Printing, 1880. Columbia, SCL, s.c. 917.57611 E12c.
- Elliott, William, *Carolina Sports By Land and Water: Including Incidents of Devil-Fishing, Wild-Cat, Deer and Bear Hunting, etc.* New York: Derby and Jackson, 1859.
- Featherston, Howell C., "I'm an Old Virginia Nigger: A Plantation Melody and Song," Washington, D.C.: Sanders & Stayman Co., c. 1903, VHS Sheet Music Collection.
- Fox, Jr., John, *Blue-Grass and Rhododendron: Out-doors in Old Kentucky*, NY: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901.
- Frazer, William H., ed., *The Possumist, and Other Stories*, Charlotte, NC: The Murrill Press 1924.
- Frederick Law Olmsted's *The Cotton Kingdom: A Traveler's Observations on Cotton and Slavery in the American Slave States: Based upon Three Former Volumes of Journeys and Investigations*, New York: Mason Brothers, 1861.
- Frissel, H.B., and Isabel Bevier, "Dietary Studies of Negroes in Eastern Virginia in 1897 and 1898," United States Department of Agriculture, Office of Experiment Stations, Bulletin No. 71, Washington D.C., Government Printing Office, 1899.
- Goerdeler, Richard, "Sambo's Hunting Song," n.p., 1897, Historic American Sheet Music Collection, 1890-1899, Rare Book Manuscript and Special Collections Library, Duke University, Music B-432.
- Gohdes, Clarence, ed., *Hunting in the Old South: Original Narratives of the Hunters*, Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1967.
- Gonzalez, Ambrose E., *The Captain: Stories of the Black Border*, Columbia: The State Company, 1924.
- Hayden, William, *Narrative of William Hayden, Containing a Faithful Account of His Travels for a Number of Years, Whilst a Slave, in the South. Written by Himself*, Cincinnati, OH: n.p., 1846. DocSouth, UNCCCH.
- Helper, Hinton A., "Aiken: A Popular Winter Resort for the Tourist and Health-Seeker," New York: The South Publishing Company, 188-. Columbia: SCL, s.c. p917.57751 H36a.
- Helper, Hinton Rowan, *The Impending Crisis of the South: How to Meet It*, New York: Burdick

- Brothers, 1857.
- Holman, W., "A Few Practical Suggestions Touching the Management of Negro Labor," *The American Farmer*, February 1875.
- Hornaday, William Templeton, *Thirty Years' War for Wildlife: Gains and Losses in the First Thankless Task*, Stamford, CT: Gillespie Brothers, Inc., 1931.
- House of Representatives of the United States, H.R. 2894, "Theodore Roosevelt National Wildlife Refuge Act," 108th Congress, 1st Session (July 24, 2003).
- "Hunter's License Law is Effective Today," *The Progressive Democrat* (Georgetown, SC), July 1, 1915. Columbia: South Caroliniana Library Microforms, GeT6.
- "Hunting in the South," *Pinehurst* [North Carolina] *Outlook*, December 14, 1900.
- "Inforcing [sic] the Hunter's License Law," *Beaufort* (South Carolina) *Gazette*, August 13, 1915, Columbia: SCL, Microforms, Reel BfG2.
- Johnson, Clifton, *Highways and Byways of the South*, New York: Macmillan, 1904.
- King, Edward, *The Great South: A Record of Journeys in Louisiana, Texas, the Indian Territory, Missouri, Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, Florida, South Carolina, North Carolina, Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, and Maryland*, Hartford, Illinois: American Publishing Company, 1875.
- LeConte, Joseph and William Dallam Armes, *The Autobiography of Joseph LeConte*, New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1903.
- Leffingwell, William Bruce, *The Happy Hunting Grounds, also Fishing, of the South*, Chicago: Donohue & Henneberry, 1895. UNCCH, NCC, Cp799 L49h.
- Leigh, Frances Butler, *Ten Years on a Georgia Plantation Since the War*, London: Richard Bentley & Son, 1883.
- Lewis, J. Vance, *Out of the Ditch: A True Story Of an Ex-Slave*, Houston: Rein & Sons Co., 1910. DocSouth, UNCCH.
- Loring, F.W. and C.F. Atkinson, *Cotton Culture in the South With Reference to Emigration*, Boston: A. Williams and Company, 1869. UNCCH, NCC, C633L87c.
- Lowery, I.E., *Life on the Plantation in Ante-Bellum Days, or, A Story Based on Facts*, Columbia, South Carolina: The State Company, Printers, 1911.
- Mallard, Robert Q., *Plantation Life Before Emancipation*, Richmond, VA: Whittet and Shepperson, 1892.

- Mellon, James, ed., *Bullwhip Days: The Slaves Remember* New York: Avon Books, 1988.
- Meltzer, Milton, ed., *In their Own Words: A History of the American Negro, 1865-1916*, New York: Ty Crowell Co., 1965.
- Miller, Polk, "I'm going to Old Virginny," Roanoke, Virginia: Hobbie Piano Company, c. 1901, VHS Sheet Music Collection.
- North Carolina Board of Immigration, Statistics and Agriculture, "North Carolina: Its Resources and Progress; its Beauty, Healthfulness and Fertility; and its Attractions and Advantages as a Home for Immigrants," Raleigh: Josiah Turner, 1875. Raleigh: NCSA.
- North Carolina Department of Labor and Printing, *Third Annual Report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the State of North Carolina*, Raleigh: Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1889. UNCCH, NCC, C331 N87L.
- North Carolina Literary Board, *The Swamp Lands of the State of North Carolina: Facts for Emigrants and Capitalists*, Raleigh: North Carolina Literary Board, 1867, UNCCH, NCC, C970 P18.
- North Carolina State Board of Agriculture, *North Carolina and its Resources*, Raleigh: M.I. & J.C. Stewart, Public Printers and Binders, 1896. UNCCH, NCC, CR917 N87a.
- "Northern Neck of Virginia as a Home for Immigrants," UNCCH, Rare Book Collection, F232N7N7.
- "Notice to Trespassers!," Kinloch Gun Club Records, 1914-1922, "Correspondence, 1915" Charleston: SCHS, 1246.00.
- "Oakland Club, St. Stephens, P.O., Berkeley County, South Carolina," 1908. Columbia: SCL, 799.2026.
- Odom, Eugene P., ed., "Brief Biographical Sketch of H.H. Brimley," in "H.H. Brimley: North Carolina Naturalist. Selections From His Writings," Herbert Hutchinson Brimley Papers, Raleigh: NCSA, P.C. 203.1.
- Olmsted, Frederick Law, *The Cotton Kingdom: A Traveler's Observations on Cotton and Slavery in the American Slave States: Based upon Three Former Volumes of Journeys and Investigations*, New York: Mason Brothers, 1861.
- Onslow Rod and Gun Club, "By-Laws of the Onslow Rod and Gun Club," 1921, UNCCH, NCC, Cp799059n.
- Osofsky, Gilbert, ed., *Puttin' On Ole Massa: The Slave Narratives of Henry Bibb, William Wells Brown, and Solomon Northup*, New York: Harper and Row, 1969.

Otken, Charles T., *The Ills of the South or, Related Causes Hostile to the General Prosperity of the Southern People*, New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1894.

Page, Thomas Nelson, *In Ole Virginia, or, Marse Chan and Other Stories*, New York: Charles Scriber's Sons, 1887.

Palmer, T.S. and H.W. Olds, "Digest of Game Laws for 1901," United States Department of Agriculture, Division of Biological Survey, Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1901.

Palmer, T.S., "Some Possibilities for Game Protection in North Carolina," UNCCCH, NCC, Cp799P17s.

"Palmetto Club," n.p., 1894. Columbia: SCL, s.c. 799 P18p.

Pearson, Elizabeth Ware, ed., *Letters from Port Royal, 1862-1868*, Boston: W.B. Clarke Co., 1906.

Pennington, Patience, *A Woman Rice Planter*, New York: The Macmillan Company, 1914.

Polk, L.L., "Report of L.L. Polk, Commissioner of Agriculture, For 1877 and 1878," Raleigh: NCSA, Legislative Documents, 1878.

Pollard, Thomas, *Crop, Stock, and Labor Report for June 1878*, Richmond, Virginia, 1878. VHS General Collection, S123.A5 P6.

"Posted Keep Off.," VHS Broad sides, Po: 4.

Presbrey, Frank, "The Empire of the South: An Exposition of the Present Resources and Development of the South," Washington, DC: The Southern Railway Company, 1898, UNCCCH-NCC, Cp 917 P92e.

"Proceedings of the State Agricultural Society, With the Actions of the Farmers' Convention and the Agricultural and Manual Association of Georgia," Macon, GA: n.p., 1868. NCC, UNCCCH, NCC, Southern Pamphlet Collection, 6487.

"Prospectus of the Shocco Game Association," UNCCCH, NCC, Cp971.93s, 1894.

Ralph, Julian, *Dixie; or Southern Scenes and Sketches*, New York: Harper & Brothers, 1895.

Randolph, Peter, *From Slave Cabin to the Pulpit. The Autobiography of Reverend Peter Randolph: The Southern Question Illustrated and Sketches of Slave Life*, Boston: James H. Earle, 1893, 159.

Rankin, George Clark, *The Story of My Life, Or, More Than a Half Century as I Have Lived It*

- and Seen It*, Nashville: Smith and Lamar, 1912. DocSouth, UNCCH.
- Ransom, Roger and Richard Sutch, *One Kind of Freedom: The Economic Consequences of Emancipation*, 2nd ed., New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001.
- Ravenel, Henry William, "Recollections of Southern Plantation Life," *The Yale Review*, (Summer 1936), Columbia: University of South Carolina, SCL, s.c. p917.57 R19r.
- Ravenel, M.E., "Opening the Hunt," St. John's Hunting Club Records, Columbia: SCL, Manuscripts R 1326.
- Rawick, George P., ed., *The American Slave: A Composite Autobiography*, 22 vols., Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1972.
- "Report of W.H. Gibbes, Chief Game Warden of the State of South Carolina, 1919," *Reports and Resolutions, South Carolina, 1921*, Volume II. Columbia: SCSA.
- Responsive Management, "Women's, Hispanics', and African-Americans' Participation in, and Attitudes Toward, Boating and Fishing: Submitted to the Fishing and Boating Partnership Council," Harrisonburg, VA: Responsive Management, 1998.
<http://www.responsivemanagement.com/focusgroupprojects.html>, (accessed May, 2005).
- Rice, James Henry, Jr., *Glories of the Carolina Coast*, Columbia: R.L. Bryan Co., 1925.
- Richardson, A.A., "Annual Report of A.A. Richardson, Chief Game Warden of the State of South Carolina (for 1914)," Columbia: Gonzales & Bryan, State Printers, 1915.
Columbia: SCL, s.c. 799 So8re.
- Richmond and Danville Railroad, "Summer Resorts and Points of Interest of Virginia, Western North Carolina, and North Georgia," New York: C.G. Crawford, 1884, UNCCH-NCC, Cp 917.5 R 53s1.
- Roosevelt, Robert Barnwell, *Florida and the Game Water-Birds of the Atlantic Coast and the Lakes of the United States*, New York: The Judd Company, 1884.
- Roosevelt, Theodore, "In the Louisiana Canebrakes," *Scribner's Magazine* 43 (1), January 1908.
- Rudd, Daniel A. and Theophilus Bond, *From Slavery to Wealth: The Life of Scott Bond; The Rewards of Honesty, Industry, Economy and Perseverance*, Madison, AK: The Journal Printing Company, 1917.
- Rutledge, Archibald Hamilton, *Days off In Dixie*, London: Leonard Parsons, 1925.
- . *Home By the River*, New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1955.
- . *Hunter's Choice*, New York: A.S. Barnes and Company, 1946.

---. *Santee Paradise*, New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1956.

---. *Those Were the Days*, Richmond: Dietz Press, Incorporated, 1955.

Salem Improvement Company, *Salem, VA; Its Attractions and Advantages: Climate, Health, Churches and Schools, Railroads, Iron, Coal and Coke, Timber, Labor &c. to Encourage Immigration and Investment*. Lynchburg, VA: J.P. Bell, 1890. VHS, General Collection, F234. S21.

Salley, A.S., *The Happy Hunting Ground: Personal Experiences in the Low-Country of South Carolina*, Columbia, S.C.: The State Company, 1916.

Seaboard Air Line Railway, General Passenger Department, "Winter Resorts Located on and Reached Via the Seaboard Air Line," Portsmouth, VA, 1897-8, UNCCCH-NCC, Cp917.3 S 43w.

---. "A Guide to the Famous Hunting and Fishing Grounds of Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia Traversed by the Seaboard Air Line, With a Synopsis of the Game Laws of Those States," Richmond: A. Hoen & Company, 1898. Columbia: SCL 799Se1g.

Shields, Evy Tucker, "Plantation Life 'Since 'Dis Time,'" New Orleans: E.A. Brandao & Co., 1887, 12. UNCCCH, Rare Book Collection Pamphlet, 5833.

Smedes, Susan Dabney, *Memorials of a Southern Planter*, Baltimore: Cushings & Bailey, 1887.

Smith, Harry Worcester, *A Sporting Family of the Old South*, Albany, NY: J.B. Lyon Co., 1936.

---. *A Sporting Tour Through Ireland, England, Wales and France in the Years 1912-1913*, Columbia: SC: The State Company, 1925.

Solomon Northup, *Twelve Years' A Slave*, Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1968.

Somers, Robert, *The Southern States Since the War, 1870-71*, Reprint, Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1971.

Southern Railway Company, "A Samaritan of the South is the Southern Railway," Washington, D.C.: The Southern Railway Company, 1898. UNCCCH, NCC, Cp917.5S72sa.

---. "Columbia, South Carolina, as a Winter Resort," Southern Railway, 1908. Columbia: SCL, 917.57711 C72w.

---. *Hunting & Fishing in the South: A Book Descriptive of the Best Localities in the South for Various Kinds of Game and Fish*, in order to advertise the region's sporting advantages. Washington: Southern Railway Company, 1904.

- Sparkman, Dr. J.R., "Results of Emancipation," *The Land We Love: A Monthly Magazine Devoted to Literature, Military History, and Agriculture*, 4 (1), November 1867, 26.
- Stroyer, Jacob, *My Life in the South*, Salem, MA: Salem Observer Book and Job Print, 1885. DocSouth, UNCCH.
- Stuart, Ruth McEnery, *In Simpkinsville: Character Tales*, New York: Harper & Brothers, 1897. DocSouth, UNCCH.
- Taylor, Benjamin Franklin, "The Audubon Society," typescript. 1909. Kosmos Club Records. Columbia: SCL Manuscripts, MS R.
- "Terrapin," *Charleston Evening Post*, January 28, 1897. Columbia: SCL Microforms, Reel 51.
- "The Conservation of Bird Life and Game Preservation in Virginia: Reasons Why the Moncure and Rutherford Bill Should be Enacted into Law Without Amendments," VHS General Collection, SK457.C6, 1912.
- "The Late Innes Randolph's Fishing Story," n.d., n.p., VHS Broadsides, La: 5.
- Thomas, Edward J., *Memoirs of a Southerner*, Savannah, GA: 1923. DocSouth, UNCCH.
- Tibbetts, John H., "The Bird Chase," *Coastal Heritage*, 15 (4), Spring 2001.
- "Tinkering the Game Laws," *Georgetown Times*, January 31, 1914, Columbia: South Caroliniana Library Microforms, GeT6.
- "To Protect Terrapin and Oysters," *Charleston Evening Post*, March 11, 1897, Columbia: SCL Microforms, Reel 51.
- Torrey, Bradford, *A World of Green Hills: Observations of Nature and Human Nature in the Blue Ridge*, Boston and NY: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1898, UNCCH, NCC, C917.5 T69w.
- Turner-Turner, J., *Three Years Hunting and Trapping in American and the Great Northwest*, London: Maclure & Company, 1888.
- Underwood, Lamar, ed., *Hunting the Southlands*, Clinton, New Jersey: Amwell Press, 1986.
- Virginia Board of Immigration, "The Northern Neck of Virginia as a home for immigrants, by the Board of Immigration for the Counties of Richmond, Westmoreland, Lancaster & Northumberland Virginia," New York: Schmidt & Curtius, 1872, VHS Rare Books, F232N7N7.
- Virginia Fish and Game Protective Association, "The Virginia Fish and Game Protective

Association to the People of Virginia; With the Laws of this Commonwealth Relating to Fish and Game,” Richmond, Virginia: Clemmitt & Jones, 1878, 7. Richmond: VHS General Collection, SK 457.V5.

Wallace, John H. Jr., “The Direct Benefits Accruing to the Farmers and to the State as a Resultant Effect of Model and Modern Game Protective Legislation,” Montgomery, AL, 1912, VHS General Collection, SK457.C6.

“Warning!,” Richmond: VHS Broadsides, Po: 3.

Weeden, Howard, *Songs of the Old South*, New York: Doubleday, Page & Company, 1900.

Willett, N.L., “Game Preserves and Game of Beaufort, Colleton and Jasper Counties, South Carolina: Hunter’s Paradise, Manly Sports,” Beaufort: Charleston & Western Carolina Railway Company, 1927.

“With the Quail!: A Day Afield at Pinehurst,” *The Pinehurst Outlook*, November 28, 1902.

Wood, E.J.C., “Aiken, S.C. as a Winter Resort for Invalids or a Desirable Location for Permanent Residents, with Catalogue of Properties for Sale,” n.p., 1871, Columbia: SCL, 917.57751 W85a.

Yetman, Norman R., *Voices from Slavery*, New York: Rinehart and Wilson, 1970.

Secondary Sources

Books and Articles

Altherr, Thomas L., “The American Hunter-Naturalist and the Development of the Code of Sportsmanship,” *Journal of Sport History* 5 (1), (Spring 1978): 7-22.

Anderson, Eric, *Race and Politics in North Carolina, 1872-1901*, Baton Rouge: LSU, 1981.

Ayers, Edward, *Vengeance and Justice: Crime and Punishment in the 19th Century American South*. New York: Oxford U Press, 1984.

---. *The Promise of the New South: Life After Reconstruction*, New York: Oxford, 1992.

Bailey, David Thomas, “A Divided Prism: Two Sources of Black Testimony on Slavery,” *Journal of Southern History* 46 (3), (1980): 381-404.

Beach, Virginia Christian, *Medway*, Charleston, SC: Wyrick & Company, 1998.

- Bellesiles, Michael P., *Arming America: The Origins of a National Gun Culture*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000.
- Berlin, Ira and Philip D. Morgan eds., *The Slaves' Economy: Independent Production By Slaves in the Americas*, London: Frank Cass, 1991.
- Bicha, Karel D., "Spring Shooting: An Issue in the Mississippi Flyway, 1887-1913," *Journal of Sport History* 5 (2), 1978, 65-74.
- Blassingame, John W., "Using the Testimony of Ex-Slaves: Approaches and Problems," *Journal of Southern History* 41 (4), (1975): 473-492.
- . *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1972.
- Blight, David W., *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory*, Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2001.
- Bolton, Charles, *Poor Whites of the Antebellum South: Tenants and Laborers in Central North Carolina and Northeast Mississippi*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994.
- Braude, Benjamin, "The Sons of Noah and the Construction of Ethnic and Geographical Identities in the Medieval and Early Modern Periods," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser., 54 (1), (January 1997), 103-142.
- Browne, William P., "Benign Public Policies, Malignant Consequences, and the Demise of African American Agriculture," in R. Douglas Hurt, ed., *African American Life in the Rural South, 1900-1950*, Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2003.
- Buchanan, Minor Ferris, *Holt Collier: His Life, His Roosevelt Hunts, and the Origin of the Teddy Bear*, Jackson, MS: Centennial Press, 2002.
- Campbell, John, "'My Constant Companion': Slaves and their Dogs in the Antebellum South" in Larry E. Hudson, Jr., ed. *Working Toward Freedom: Slave Society and Domestic Economy in the American South*, Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 1994.
- Cecelski, David S., *A Historian's Coast: Adventures into the Tidewater Past*, Winston-Salem, NC: Blair Publishing, 2000.
- . *The Waterman's Song: Slavery and Freedom in Maritime North Carolina*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001.
- Cowdrey, Albert E., *This Land, This South: An Environmental History*, Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1996.

- Craton, Michael, *Testing the Chains: Resistance to Slavery in the West Indies*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1982.
- Cronon, William, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the Ecology of New England*, New York: Hill and Wang, 1983.
- Dabbs, Edith M., *Sea Island Diary: A History of St. Helena Island*, Spartansburg, SC: The Reprint Company, 1983.
- Danielson, Michael N., *Profits and Politics in Paradise: The Development of Hilton Head Island*, Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1995.
- Eugene Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made*, New York: Vintage Books, 1974.
- Evans, William McKee, "From the Land of Canaan to the Land of Guinea: The Strange Odyssey of the Sons of Ham," *The American Historical Review* 85 (1), (February 1980), 15-43.
- Fogel, Robert William, *Without Consent or Contract: The Rise and Fall of American Slavery*, New York: Norton, 1992.
- Foner, Eric, *Nothing But Freedom: Emancipation and its Legacy*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983.
- . *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877*, Perennial Classics Edition, New York: Harper Collins, 2002.
- Giltner, Scott E., "'Whatever I Could Git': Slave Hunting and Fishing in the Plantation South," University of Pittsburgh MA Thesis, 1998.
- . "Subsistence and Subversion: Slave Hunting and Fishing in the Antebellum South," in Dianne Glave and Mark Stoll, eds., "'To Love The Wind and the Rain': Essays in African American Environmental History", Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, Forthcoming, Fall 2005.
- Greenberg, Kenneth S., *Honor & Slavery: Lies, Duels, Noses, Masks, Dressing as a Woman, Gifts, Strangers, Humanitarianism, Death, Slave Rebellions, the Proslavery Argument, Baseball, Hunting, and Gambling in the Old South*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996.
- Hahn, Steven, "A Response: Common Cents or Historical Sense?" *The Journal of Southern History* 59(2), (May 1993), 243-258.
- . "Hunting, Fishing and Foraging: Common Rights and Class Relations in the Post-Bellum South," *Radical History Review* 26 (October 1982): 36-64.

- . *The Roots of Southern Populism: Yeoman Farmers and the Transformation of the Georgia Upcountry, 1850-1890*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1983.
- Halbrook, Stephen P., *Freedmen, the Fourteenth Amendment, and the Right to Bear Arms, 1866-1876*, Westport, CT: Praeger, 1998.
- Harris, J. William, *Deep Souths: Delta, Piedmont and Sea Island Society in the Age of Segregation*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001.
- Hay, Douglas, "Poaching and the Game Laws of Cannock Chase," in Hay, et al. *Albion's Fatal Tree: Crime and Society in Eighteenth-Century England*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1975.
- Henry, H.M., *The Police Control of the Slave in South Carolina*, New York: Negro Universities Press, 1914 and 1968.
- Herman, Daniel Justin, *Hunting and the American Imagination*, Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001.
- Hilliard, Sam Bowers, *Hogmeat and Hoecake: Food Supply in the Old South, 1840-1860*. Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1972.
- Holt, Sharon Ann, *Making Freedom Pay: North Carolina Freedpeople Working for Themselves, 1865-1900*, Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2000.
- Hudson, Larry E. Jr, *To Have and to Hold: Slave Work and Family Life in Antebellum South Carolina*, Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1997.
- . *Working Toward Freedom: Slave Society and Domestic Economy in the American South*, Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 1994.
- Ives, Edward D., *George Magoon and the Down East Game War: History, Folklore and the Law*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988.
- Jacoby, Karl, *Crimes Against Nature: Squatters, Poachers, Thieves and the Hidden History of American Conservation*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.
- Jordan, Laylon Wayne and Elizabeth H. Stringfellow, *A Place Called St. John's: The Story of John's, Edisto, Wadmalaw, Kiawah, and Seabrook Islands of South Carolina*, Spartansburg, SC: The Reprint Company, 1998.
- Joyner, Charles, *Down By the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community*, Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984.
- Kantor, Shawn Everett and J. Morgan Kousser, "Common Sense or Commonwealth? The Fence

- Law and Institutional Change in the Postbellum South,” *The Journal of Southern History* 59 (2), (May 1993), 201-242.
- Kerr-Ritchie, Jeffrey R, *Freedpeople in the Tobacco South, 1860-1900*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998.
- Kulik, Gary, “Dams, Fish and Farmers: Defense of Public Rights in Eighteenth Century Rhode Island,” in Steven Hahn and Johnathan Prude, eds., *The Countryside in the Age of Capitalist Transformation: Essays in the Social History of Rural America*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985.
- Lees, William B., “The Historical Development of Limerick Plantation, A Tidewater Rice Plantation in Berkeley County, South Carolina, 1683-1945,” *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 82 (1), 1981, 44-62.
- Lichtenstein, Alex, *Twice the Work of Free Labor: The Political Economy of Convict Labor in the New South*, New York: Verso Books, 1996.
- Linder, Suzanne C., *Historical Atlas of the ACE River Basin—1860*, Columbia: South Carolina Division of Archives and History, 1995.
- Manning, Roger B., *Hunters and Poachers: A Social and Cultural History of Unlawful Hunting in England, 1485-1640*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.
- Marks, Stuart A., *Southern Hunting in Black and White: Nature, History and Rituals in a Carolina Community*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991.
- McCafferty, Jim, *Holt and the Cowboys*, Gretna, LA: Pelican Publishing, 1991.
- . *Holt and the Teddy Bear*, Gretna, LA: Pelican Publishing, 1991.
- McDonald, Roderick, *The Economy and Material Culture of Slaves: Goods and Chattels on the Sugar Plantations of Jamaica and Louisiana*, Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1993.
- McTeer, J.E., *Adventures in the Woods and Waters of the Lowcountry*, Beaufort, SC: Beaufort Book Company, 1972.
- Mintz, Sidney, *Caribbean Transformations*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1989.
- Morgan, Lynda J., *Emancipation in Virginia’s Tobacco Belt, 1850-1870*, Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1992.
- Munsche, P.B., *Gentlemen and Poachers: The English Game Laws, 1671-1831*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.
- National Audubon Society, “Over a Century of Audubon: A Timeline,” Natural Audubon

- Society homepage, <http://www.audubon.org/>, accessed January 12, 2005.
- Nieman, Donald G., ed., *From Slavery to Sharecropping: White Land and Black Labor in the Rural South, 1865-1900*. New York: Garland, 1994.
- Orser, Charles E. Jr., *The Material Basis of the Postbellum Tenant Plantation: Historical Archaeology in the South Carolina Piedmont*, Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1988.
- Owsley, Frank L., *Plain Folk of the Old South*, Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1982.
- Ownby, Ted, *Subduing Satan: Religion, Recreation and Manhood in the Rural South 1865-1920*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1990.
- Proctor, Nicholas W., *Bathed in Blood: Hunting and Mastery in the Old South*, Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2002.
- Rawick, George P., *From Sunup to Sundown: The Making of the Black Community*, Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing, 1972.
- Reiger, John F., *American Sportsmen and the Origins of Conservation*, Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1986.
- Rivers, Jacob F. III, *Cultural Values in the Southern Sporting Narrative*, Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2002.
- Rogers, George C. Jr., *The History of Georgetown, South Carolina*, Spartansburg, South Carolina: The Reprint Company, 1990.
- Scott, James C., *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990.
- . *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985.
- Silber, Nina, *The Romance of Reunion: Northerners and the South, 1865-1900*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993.
- Singleton, Theresa A., ed., *The Archaeology of Slavery and Plantation Life*, Orlando, FL: Academic Press, 1985.
- Stewart, Mart A., 'What Nature Suffers to Groe': *Life, Labor and Landscape On the Georgia Coast, 1680-1920*, Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996.
- Strickland, John Scott, *Traditional Culture and Moral Economy: Social and Economic Change in*

- the South Carolina Low Country, 1865-1920, in Steven Hahn and Johnathan Prude, eds., *The Countryside in the Age of Capitalist Transformation: Essays in the Social History of Rural America*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985.
- Thompson, Edward P., *Whigs and Hunters: The Origins of the Black Act*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1975.
- Tober, James A., *Who Owns the Wildlife? : The Political Economy of Conservation in Nineteenth-century America*, Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing, 1981.
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, "Participation and Expenditure Patterns of African-American, Hispanic and Women Hunters and Anglers: Addendum to the 1996 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-associated Recreation," Washington, DC: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2000.
- Warren, Louis, *The Hunter's Game: Poachers and Conservationists in Twentieth-Century America*, New Haven: Yale, 1997.
- Watson, Harry L., "'The Common Rights of Mankind': Subsistence, Shad and Commerce in the Early Republican South," *Journal of American History* 83 (1996): 13-43.
- Wayne, Jeannie, "'I Have Been through Fire': Black Agricultural Extension Agents and the Politics of Negotiation," in R. Douglas Hurt, ed., *African American Life in the Rural South, 1900-1950*, Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2003.
- White, Richard, *The Roots of Dependency: Subsistence, Environment, and Social Change Among the Choctaws, Pawnees and Navajos*, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983.
- Wiggins, David K., "Good Times on the Old Plantation: Popular Recreations of the Black Slave in Antebellum South, 1810-1860." *Journal of Sports History* Volume 4 (1), (1977), 260-284.
- Wood, Betty, *Women's Work, Men's Work: The Informal Slave Economies of Lowcountry Georgia*, Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1995.