

WOMEN IN FRONTIER ARKANSAS

Settlement in a Post-Reconstruction Racial State

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Abstract

Arkansas was a demographic frontier after the U.S. Civil War. Despite marked agricultural land deforestation and development after the 1870s, it remained agrarian well into the twentieth century. We fuse life course and racial state frameworks to examine Black and White women's settlement in Arkansas over the post-Civil War period (1880-1910). A racial state empowers residents and enacts policies based on race rather than equal citizenship rights. We highlight three institutional domains shaped by racial state policies: *productive economies* (subsistence, mixed commercialism, and plantation production); *stratification* on an agricultural ladder (from sharecropping to forms of tenancy to farm ownership); and *rules of raced (and gendered) social control*. We examine women's settlement patterns and related outcomes in an institutional context at different life course stages using mixed methods: women's oral histories and Census data analysis. We find that by 1880 White women and families, less attracted by forces of marketization, had largely migrated to subsistence and mixed commercial subregions. Black women and families, generally desiring to rise on the agricultural ladder to farm ownership, largely migrated to the rich lands found in plantation production counties. Black women in Arkansas could rise but, by 1910, new racial state (Jim Crow) policies more severely limited travel, material resources, and education for tenant farm families, predominantly Black, in the plantation subregion. Commensurate with this, Black women in the plantation subregion had experienced less status mobility on the agricultural ladder, with reduced living standards, by later life.

Keywords: Racial State Theory, Gendered Life Course, Mixed Methods, U.S. Postbellum South, Trans-Mississippi Settlement, Black Migration, Sharecropping System

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INTRODUCTION

Classical frontier and modern borderland studies view mid-to-late nineteenth century Trans-Mississippi settlement as a national expansion of civic and political life (Glenn 2015; Hogan 1985; Jensen 1980; Turner 1961[1893]). However, the studies associated with each paradigm make different assumptions and produce different findings. In classical studies, settlement is a *process* that unfolds across regions or sections¹ that lack political boundaries (Aron 2006; Steiner 1995; Turner 1961[1893]). Institution-building, primarily by White men, seemingly proceeds on never-peopled or indigene-relinquished lands after treaties or wars (Hurtado 2001; Steiner 1995; Turner 1961[1893]). In contrast, borderland studies highlight *conflict* between indigenous peoples and the settlers who seek control of contested land (Aron 2006; Glenn 2002). Institution-building proceeds as settler power grows and indigene power fades, ultimately, to the point of death and/or expulsion. Actors include indigenous and White men, women, and children (Cooper and Stoler, 1997; Glenn 2002, 2015; Kramer 2011; Perry 2001). Less visible, however, in both paradigms, are the historical Black actors who settled in mid-to-late nineteenth century Trans-Mississippi frontiers. We address this gap by fusing a racial state (James 1988; James and Redding, 2005; Jung and Kwan, 2013) to a gendered life course framework (Elman et al., 2013; Hareven 1996; Moen and Chermack, 2005) to examine Black and White women's settlement in post-Civil War Arkansas: as a borderland, a frontier, and yet, more.

By the early nineteenth century, shifting geo-political boundaries, alliances, and conflicts among indigenous and White settler groups had ended in Arkansas, as elsewhere in the United States with Indian epidemics, wars, removals West, and White political control (Aron 2006; Blevins 2002; Glenn 2002; McNeilly 2000). But Arkansas remained “a frontier society at the outbreak of the Civil War” (Gatewood 1993, p. 4; Jones 2015) and its population precipitously fell, by as much as half, during the war.² According to one settler (Dixon, WPA 1936-38), it was “a wild and sickly country”³ with an inhospitable natural terrain that did not well support commodified or even family-based subsistence agriculture (Bolton 1998; Hanson and Moneyhon, 1989; Valencius 2001). Mass Black and White settlement commenced as the postwar Arkansas Delta underwent deforestation and development and as planters offered generous tenancy terms and wages, under conditions that made land purchase possible (Lanza 1999; Matkin-Rawn 2014; Whyne 1992; Woodruff 2003). Beyond this, Arkansas was—symbolically, for postwar Black settlers—a Frontier state that promised opportunity (Gordon 1993). Of a half million southern-born Blacks who moved to a different southern state after the Civil War, about 100,000 chose Arkansas (Matkin-Rawn 2014). This half-century-long settlement pattern does not well fit borderland or frontier conceptualizations; neither Indian removal nor 1836 statehood (e.g., institutionalization of White settler power) was sufficient for mass settlement. Rather, initial settlement rested on the joint foundations of the *removal of indigenous peoples* to vacate and the *coercion of Black bonded labor* to transform “wild and sickly” land (Johnson 2013; McNeilly 2000). Opportunistic waves of Black and White settlement only commenced after the end of the Civil War.

How did postwar settlers fare? We focus on women, exploring their settlement patterns and consequent life circumstances using qualitative sources, including first-person Black women's narratives from the Arkansas volume of the Works Progress Administration (WPA 1936-38), Duke University's collection of Arkansas Behind the Veil (BTV 1995) interviews (Chafe et al., 2001), and diaries and

memoirs of White women. We highlight the 1880 to 1910 period when more than half of the women in Arkansas were settlers. They could have settled just before, during, or after the Civil War, in one of three state subregions; the sources above provide rich accounts of settlement and daily life across period and subregion. We use quantitative Census microdata (IPUMS 1880, 1910) and county-level U.S. Plantation Census data to examine state and subregional settlement patterns, women's family and work roles, and economic mobility. We contextualize women's accounts across periods by using a racial state framework that addresses *shifting* political-economic contexts of settlement: the transformation of an "old" prewar to a "new" postwar racial state regime (James 1988). Our multiple-methods approach provides insight into how women's lives strongly reflected the dominance hierarchies that operated at a great distance from their personal experience (cf. hooks 1994 in Smith 1987; Maynes et al., 2008). Race and gender are relational, heterogeneous categories (Glenn 2002) and we examine historical social differentiation in women's life course experiences across categories, as structured by racial state apportioning of material and social dis/advantage.

INSTITUTIONAL DOMAINS, STRUCTURED DIS/ADVANTAGE, AND THE GENDERED LIFE COURSE

Our gendered life course approach focuses less on the unique biographical accounting of individual women's lives than on uncovering commonalities and differences in women's lives as shaped by personal and social factors, life events, and historical social institutional forces (Elman et al., 2013; Hareven 1996). Both classical frontier and settler colonial paradigms are limited for this purpose. Classical studies explore sectional differences in U.S. institution-building more than the structuration of individual life experiences (Hogan 1985; Turner 1961[1893]). Settler colonialism studies locate women's family and work relations in the context of expanding White territorial and hegemonic power relative to indigenous populations (Glenn 2002; Kramer 2011). In addition, classical and settler frameworks center White males as colonizers under Manifest Destiny, with White women's support contributing to expansionist domesticity (Shire 2016). Our life course approach centers women, taking a "long view" of their lives. Settler women's activities (e.g., work roles) and life circumstances shifted over life stages, from early adulthood to older age. Their lives reflected opportunities and resources that were available (or not) at a given life stage as well as those accumulated over a lifetime (Moen and Chermack, 2005).

Classical and settler colonial frameworks are also theoretically silent about Black co-migrants during and after colonialization, even though "the settler project constructed various racialized gender and gendered racial dualisms" that produced different outcomes for men and women in subjugated groups (Glenn 2015, p. 71). In classical studies, social and ethnic relations are assumed to transform through citizenship (Steiner 1995). Colonial settler scholarship maintains that "the otherness of colonized persons was neither inherent nor stable... [and] had to be defined and maintained" (Cooper and Stoler, 1997, p. 7) but focuses on indigenous peoples who, as in Arkansas, faced colonial domination and/or removal prior to or soon after statehood and settler control (Blevins 2002; Glenn 2015; McNeilly 2000). Neither paradigm has accounted for shifting directions in social relations, as occurred between African Americans and European Americans, over time and place (Glymph 2008; Moneyhon 2014; also Feagin and Elias, 2014; Omi and Winant, 2015; Wacquant 2002). For example, a shift away

from legal master-slave relations after the Civil War coincided with Arkansas losing frontier status. While settlers of all ethnic backgrounds poured into the state, Black settlers entered at higher rates to escape the ravages of war and to (re)gain land, family, and community (Gordon 1993; Matkin-Rawn 2013, 2014; Nash 1989). This wave was soon followed by a second, out of the South altogether, as relations shifted again, for the worse (Wilkerson 2010; Woodson 2002 [1918]). Each migratory wave was rooted in a *re-alignment* of state-sponsored social relations—slavery’s abolition and the institutional maturation of Jim Crow, respectively.

We fuse a gendered life course to a racial state framework⁴ (James 1988; James and Redding, 2005; Jung and Kwan, 2013; Werum 1999) in order to contextualize continuity and change in racial state policies across old (prewar) and new (postwar) state regimes. The framework relaxes an implicit assumption of “constant, unified, and cohesive” southern state and class structures over time and place (Tomaskovic-Devey and Roscigno, 1996, p. 566). It instead highlights fragmented and fluid sovereignty such that, at a given time and place, power might reside with federal and/or state-local actors (e.g., state or county executives), and/or class interest groups (e.g., planters, financiers, urban elites) (James 1988; James and Redding, 2005; Werum 1999). The framework accommodates our exploration of how initial settlement and then mass settlement reflected policies at different time points and at the state-local and national levels. Most importantly, the framework highlights how post-Reconstruction policies ultimately shaped intersectional processes, (re)constructing frontier-borderland women’s race and gender relations and life roles in ways that could “account [for] the appropriation of labor and formation and circulation of wealth” (Choo and Ferree, 2010, p. 135) in the rising Jim Crow South.

We use a second macro-level framework of “economic outsider” (e.g., extra-regional, often international, hereafter Outsider) influences on institution-building. The mechanism resembles internal colonialism and uneven economic development in that net outflows of state and local resources and commodities benefitted Outsiders to a greater extent than residents or the state (Hind 1984). This dynamic of extraction differs from settler land appropriation (Hind 1984; Hogan 1985). White Arkansas elites may have facilitated the outflows by designing or abetting key policies and may have therefore benefitted (Blair and Barth, 2005; Feagin and Elias, 2014; Hogan 1985). However, this study’s concern is that resource-draining policies impacted localities, hence the lives of women therein, well into the twentieth century (Alston and Ferrie, 1999; Blair and Barth, 2005; Moneyhon 1994, 1997).

Analytic Model

Our analytic model is in Figure 1. Women’s life course circumstances partly reflected their embeddedness in historically-established institutional arrangements (Figure 1, Box 1). The American South, prior to the Civil War and just after, was primarily an agricultural region “short on towns, railroads, factories, schools, and universities” (Wright 2006, p. 82). Yet the South was quite diverse, in that it contained different forms or modes of agricultural production. Modes were partly rooted in geography; topographic factors such as water, soil, and climate; and the commodities cultivated (Aiken 1998; Wright 2006). Prior to the Civil War, large-scale agriculture (plantations) prevailed in geographic zones with rich (hence, more expensive) soils and crop-friendly climates. Postwar, old plantations were subdivided into tenant farms while new plantations were built as modern, multi-unit farms (Woodruff 2003; see also Aiken 1998; Mandle 1992; Whyne 1992; Virts 1991). U.S. Census enumerators in 1910 identified, in a geographic Belt extending from Virginia to Texas, 39,073

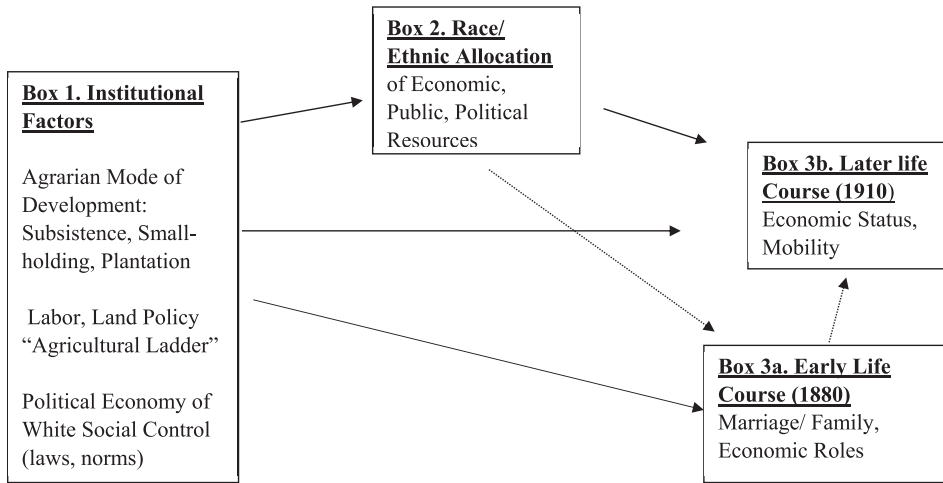


Fig. 1. A Model of Women’s Life Course Outcomes*

* Adapted from Moen and Chernack (2005)

plantations holding 398,905 tenant farms in 325 counties of eleven states, including Arkansas (U.S. Department of Commerce 1916, p. 16). Other productive modes, both before and after the Civil War, involved basic subsistence or essentially living off the land, and mixed farming as subsistence with some commercialism. These modes prevailed on poorer quality, less valuable soils over different contiguous portions of the South, for example mountainous Appalachian and Ozark lands and the pine-forested Atlantic and Gulf Coasts, respectively. Productive modes cut across boundaries, bisecting or trisecting southern states (Harris 2001; McKenzie 1994; Woodruff 2003).

In Arkansas, as shown in Figure 2, “a diagonal line drawn from the northeast corner of the state to the southwest corner” separated mountainous *upcountry* from *lowlands* (McNeilly 2000, pp. 1, 2). Lowlands are further divided into a Mississippi River alluvial plain (Delta) bordering Tennessee and Mississippi, and a sandy soil Coastal Plain bordering Louisiana and Texas. Different topographic environments supported different productive modes: subsistence (often no farming at all) in the mountainous Upcountry Ozarks; plantation farming in the rich Delta bottomlands; and mixed self-use/commercial small-holding on the pine-forested, sandy Coastal Plains. A first measure of women’s institutional embeddedness pertains to their residence with regard to subregional agricultural mode.

However, productive modes were as much rooted in organizational factors, aligned with federal and state-local political-legal supports, as in topographical factors (Alston and Ferrie, 1999; Jones 2009; Woodman 1979; Wright 2006). Variants of subsistence and plantation farming in Arkansas, as elsewhere in the South, historically differed in terms of farm organization, labor management, and the goals of production (Brannen 1924; U.S. Department of Commerce 1916; Virts 1991). Prior to the Civil War, bondsmen on plantations primarily produced for external markets under planter direction. Their high levels of productivity for plantation-use, however, did not obviate their dependency on planter good-will for sustenance (Johnson 2013). In contrast, prewar White yeoman, tenants, and squatters in Upcountry and Coastal Plains subregions had more autonomy and could produce for home-use and/or markets (Blevins 2002; Bolton 1994; McNeilly 2000).⁵ After the Civil War, Black farm families aspired to land ownership and its associated high status and autonomy; freedom, for them, entailed exiting dependent labor relations imposed by planters under old racial state

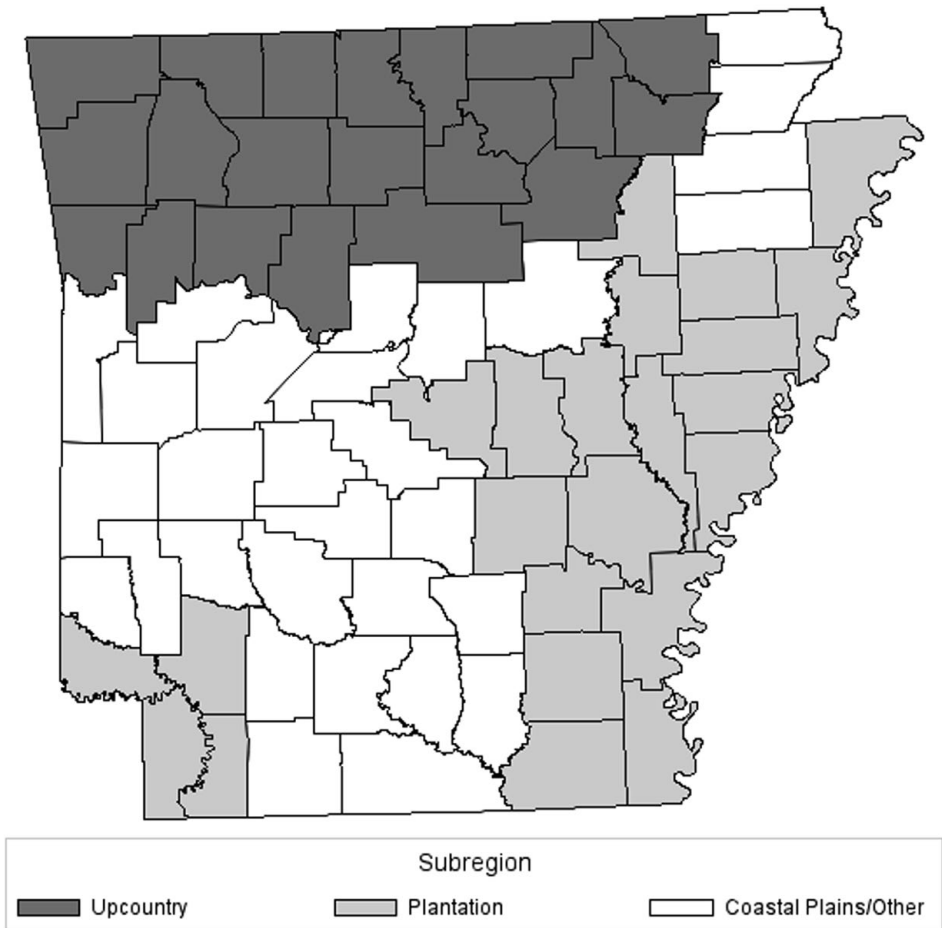


Fig. 2. Arkansas Subregions

Note: Upcountry Counties in Blevins (2002:5), Plantation Counties in U.S. Census Bureau (1916)

rules (Glenn 2002; Jaynes 1986; Jones 2009; Mandle 1992; Steedman 2008). But how could they get there? Under new postwar rules, economic mobility toward land ownership entailed movement on an “agricultural ladder” where the “first rung...is represented by the period during which the embryo farmer is learning the rudiments of his trade...The hired man stands on the second rung, the tenant on the third, while the farm owner has attained the fourth or final rung of the ladder” (Spillman 1919, p. 170; Woodman 1979; Wright 1986). Thus, southern Black and White farmers after the Civil War—unless gifted a farm, or able to inherit, buy, or homestead a farm—moved toward ownership through assortments of *contracted family labor* arrangements (Alston and Higgs, 1982; Jaynes 1986; Mann 1989; Steedman 2008; Woodman 1979, 1995). Upward mobility on the agricultural ladder was also contingent on whether contracted work took place in plantation or in subsistence agriculture (Alston and Higgs, 1982; Woodman 1995). Moving to farm ownership was more difficult under the contracted terms of plantation production, especially for Black farmers (Alston and Kauffman, 1998; Du Bois 1912; Mandle 1992; Woodman 1995). A second measure of women’s embeddedness is their placement on the agricultural ladder, an institutional system of *stratification*, in subregional context.

Women's lives reflected (re)emergence of new racial state rules of *social control*, a third domain of embeddedness. New rules leading to disenfranchisement, segregation, and labor control (Alston and Ferrie, 1999; Jaynes 1986; Woodman 1979) were also designed to re-introduce and reinforce social relations marked by dependency and subordination, countering Black aspirations for freedom and autonomy (Jones 2010; Steedman 2008). For example, segregation policies created, then imposed, then reified, categories of racial distinctions that permeated daily life, from social interaction to the distribution of public resources (e.g. education). Yet, the new rules of social control that blanketed the South by 1910—reinforced by threat of violence—varied by context: they more explicitly limited interpersonal interracial contact and shared space in urban places and imposed behavioral etiquettes of social dependency in rural places (Jones 1992; Schultz 2005; Steedman 2008). Rural patterns of daily life involved a series of long term, face-to-face encounters between small numbers of people, Black and White, who needed to sustain relations (e.g., tenants and landowners) (Schultz 2005). Rural norms sustained White social control in that etiquettes confirmed, at least outwardly, Black dependency and [feigned] acquiescence, not upward mobility (Steedman 2008). We examine, in still-rural Arkansas to 1910, women's accounts of (non)dependence and mobility on the agricultural ladder, linked to forces of social control (Schultz 2005; Steedman 2008).

Continuing with our model in Figure 1, the construction/attribution of race, as legitimated by policy, lies at the core of the racial state (Box 2), thereby filtering the levels and types of natural and social resources available to residents (James 1988). By 1910, Jim Crow laws in Arkansas, as elsewhere in the South, (re)constructed racial identities and regulated the allocation of land ownership, transportation, political action, markets, education, housing, and health care (Feagin and Elias, 2013; Omi and Winant, 2015; Patterson 1982; Winant 2000). We ask: On these late-settling Trans-Mississippi frontier-borderlands, to what degree did women's early lives (Box 3a) and later life economic status (Box 3b) reflect attribution of race (Box 2), and institutional forces underlying productive mode and social control (Box 1)?

BACKGROUND: INITIAL SETTLEMENT

The federal or superordinate state (James 1988) shaped Arkansas well before statehood in 1836. Large tracts of Trans-Mississippi land came under federal control by purchase or treaty following wars with native peoples (Hogan 1985; Johnson 2013). Beginning in 1812, the U.S. General Land Office surveyed, mapped, and apportioned all acquired federal lands into 160-acre parcels that were federally awarded as grants to veterans and other groups or distributed via mechanisms of sale or lottery (Blair and Barth, 2005; Johnson 2013). Surveyors did not reach the western Arkansas border until 1841 but lowland sales began in 1821 (Hanson and Moneyhon, 1989). Below, we can only briefly describe how a dense network of federal, state, and Outsider policies and practices enabled initial Arkansas settlement and its terms.

Superordinate Policies of Labor and Land

Federal policy, grandfathered in as part of the 1803 Louisiana Purchase, supported the territorial practice of holding slaves as property. Congressional debate on slavery in the newly established Arkansas Territory (1819) ended with refusal to limit slavery in the new territory; a motion to reject the practice was defeated, 68 to 80 (Cathey 1944). Defenders of slavery argued that Whites lacked the endurance to settle and

farm south of 35° latitude and that ownership of slaves, already viewed as “property” in the territory, should not be restricted (Cathey 1944; see also Aron 2006). National discussion at the time of statehood (1836) again proclaimed slavery necessary for settlement, land deforestation and development, and national wealth (Johnson 2013). Plantation owners, the most powerful elite⁶ in Arkansas and across the South, exerted power at the federal level in 1850 to promote passage of the federal Fugitive Slave Act, which further strengthened property rights in slavery (Glenn 2002; Johnson 2013). The translation of coercive labor policy from abstract federal law to everyday practice fueled an entrepreneurial and speculative regional market in slave labor (Baptist 2010; Beckert 2016; Johnson 2013), although most slave traders lived in earlier-settled plantation states of Louisiana, Missouri, and Virginia (Deyle 2005; McNeilly 2000). In all, federal promulgation, legitimation, and enforcement of slavery alongside state policies (addressed in the next section), drove considerable deforestation and large-scale (plantation) cotton marketization across the Arkansas Delta and Coastal Plains riverbed sections by 1850 (McNeilly 2000; Poe 2011).

Public lands had originally been intended for small-holder farming but federal actors in state land offices and state elites—assuming future profitable plantation growth—fueled a land entrepreneurialism that resulted in vast tracts of acreage falling into speculative, often Outsider hands (Bolton 1994). Acquiring land and labor required financing. Until statehood in 1836, buyers made federal land payments directly to the Federal Bank via land offices. The first business of the newly-established Arkansas Congress was to establish two state banks, run by bank trustees and investors, to retain revenues from land sales in the state (Worley 1950). The banks, from their inception, channeled loans to state and local elites and Outsider speculators who bought large parcels, sometimes the whole of future counties, of mostly federal lands. By 1840, speculative loans on the overvalued land had bankrupted both state banks. The state lacked enough capital to bail out its insolvent banks; to continue operations, bank trustees sold bonds and other instruments to state elites and Outsider northern and global capitalist agencies (Blair and Barth, 2005; Worley 1950). Arkansas commercial farmers, however, did not rely on banks to finance year-to-year operations. Instead, they used Outsider regional or extra-regional/global merchants, known as factors, to advance “fictitious capital” or credit before planting season to support commodity production; farmers then settled accounts at harvest (Johnson 2013, p. 258; see also Jaynes 1986). By 1850, inflated land prices had placed land ownership out of the reach of most poor Arkansas Whites (Bolton 1994; Brown 2013; Johnson 2013; McNeilly 2000). Indebtedness plagued the state throughout the century (Blair and Barth, 2005).

State Policies and Initial Settlement

Different population streams, in terms of place of origin, settled the different Arkansas subregions prior to the Civil War, in the context of the land, labor, and finance policies above (Blair and Barth, 2005; Hogan 1985; Moneyhon 1994). White families entered the Upcountry after 1820 (Blevins 2002; Bolton 1998).⁷ Some had been landowners in neighboring states, but most were poor, landless, and descendants of land-poor parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents who had moved ever-southwestward across upcountry terrains of other states (Blevins 2002; Bolton 1994; Hanson and Moneyhon, 1989; McNeilly 2000). Much like the land-poor generations that had preceded them, they faced limited options: taking low-paid tenancies in settled states, traveling back-and-forth across states in nomadic family life, or re-locating to upcountry borderlands of Georgia, Tennessee, Alabama, and later Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Texas where they could cheaply purchase or squat on land (Bolton 1994; Brown 2013;

Johnson 2013). Settlement on Upcountry Arkansas Ozark and Ouachita mountain ranges limited land quality, overland and waterway travel, and potential marketization. However, most settlers as “hill folk” were accustomed to relatively isolated life where they could live off the land (Larson 2010; McDonald and McWhiney, 1980; McNeilly 2000; Moneyhon 1994). They rarely settled with bonded labor, other than in the eastern and western commercialized corners near river transportation (Blevins 2002).⁸

Lowland Whites who settled the Delta subregion had moved, in westward direction, from the commercial-oriented lowlands of adjacent southern states, intending to produce cotton for international markets (Beckert 2016; Holley 1993). Settling the Delta, however, required deforestation and land development under conditions where rivers flooded with enough force to wash away soils, crops, homes, roads, natural and man-made landmarks, and even whole towns. Large planters, holding twenty or more bondsmen, and small planters with nineteen or fewer bondsmen, used slave labor to clear land, plant and tend crops, and support home life (Deyle 2005; Johnson 2013; McNeilly 2000). By 1850, the Plantation subregion supported large-scale cotton production (McNeilly 2000). The lowland Coastal Plain riverbeds were rich enough for plantations, but most land was pine-forested with sandy soils that barely supported farming (McNeilly 2000; Poe 2011). Most White small-holders or yeoman settled here, to farm and forage, because they could not afford to purchase or feared settlement on the rich but “sickly” malarial Delta lands (McMillan 1990; Poe 2011). Most did not own slaves but accepted the institution and aspired to ownership while poorer Whites survived as tenants and squatters (McNeilly 2000; Poe 2011).

Black settlement also followed intergenerational, southwestward movement (Johnson 2013; Hanson and Moneyhon, 1989). Between 1820 and 1860 up to one million bondsmen were forcibly relocated from older southern states to the lower South (Johnson 2013). Between 1850 and 1860 the Black population of Arkansas grew by over 200%, more than twice the White growth rate (Holley 1993; McNeilly 2000). While federal policies legitimated keeping bondsmen as property in states where slavery existed, states determined the terms of settlement within their borders. The Arkansas legislature in 1838 viewed free, non-dependent Black status as threatening (Gordon 1993; Patterson 1982; for Missouri see Aron 2006).⁹ Lawmakers outlawed in-migration of free Blacks and Mulattos after March 1, 1843 except as bonded servants, punishable by fine, incarceration, and deportation (Gordon 1993). After January 1860, free Blacks and Mulattos were denied residency in the state; those remaining faced arrest and forced hiring-out for twelve months to self-fund deportation or sale into slavery (Cathey 1944). Thus, at the start of the Civil War, only 144 free Blacks remained in Arkansas (Gordon 1993). Under old racial state rules, social identity and the right to exist within state borders was defined by slave versus free, underpinned by attribution of race.

DATA AND METHODS

We include qualitative materials in the form of interviews conducted with former slaves in the 1930s from the Work Progress Administration (later renamed Work Projects Administration), and cite this source as WPA in the text (see Appendix A for interviewee list). We also draw from oral histories of elderly Black women and men born in Arkansas using audio recordings of interviews conducted in the mid-1990s. They are contained in the Behind the Veil (BTV) archives (see Appendix B for interviewee list), part of the John Hope Franklin Collection of African and African-American Documentation, as a Special Collection at Duke University’s Rubenstein Library.

The full holdings include 1,265 oral histories of African Americans, born under Jim Crow in states across the South (Chafe et al., 2001). Two of the authors listened to and transcribed each taped account, reconciling differences between their transcriptions and the Special Collection transcription, if available. We used BTW reports about mothers/parents because most interviewees were born after 1910. They were asked to identify parents and kin but were not asked personal questions about their own or parents' marital or kin relations. In addition, we used published memoirs and diaries of White women to illustrate patterns related to settlement, family life, and work.

We analyzed the qualitative accounts using primarily a deductive approach. We sampled specific WPA accounts purposively based on which accounts were from women and included information about the 1880-1910 time frame. We analyzed WPA accounts using MaxQDA (versions 10, 11, and 12). We developed codes based on questions that emerged from reviewing the literature, trends found while analyzing the quantitative data analysis, as well as from themes which emerged inductively while reading the transcribed accounts. Behind the Veil and other accounts were coded by hand using a code book developed from the WPA analysis.

We use 1880 and 1910 Integrated Public Use Microdata Series (IPUMS) Census microdata (Ruggles et al. 2010) to form cross-sectional samples, respectively, of women ages 18-34 (n=14,416), and ages 45-64 (n=1,192). The women were born just prior to or around the time of the Civil War and were either Arkansas-born or migrants to the state.¹⁰ We use IPUMS 1880 and 1910 person weights, respectively, in descriptive tables and figures. Although the 1910 sample does not necessarily capture the same women sampled in 1880, the two-period cross-sectional design allows us to explore women's economic activities, resources, and mobility over the long arc of settlement, and to differentiate life stage circumstances of settlers and natives. We link 1910 IPUMS micro-data to Haines and ICPSR (1910) Decennial Census data and to Plantation Census data (Department of Commerce, 1916). The latter source identifies southern counties with extensive land improvement in plantations, as reconstructed by economic historians (Brannen 1924; Elman et al., 2015, 2019; Mandle 1992; Virts 1991).

The 1880 dependent variable, *economic activity*, is constructed from the IPUMS (1880) Labforce variable. The 1910 dependent variable, *farm ownership*, is a household-level indicator of reaching the top of the agricultural ladder. It is constructed from IPUMS (1910) variables Farm household and Ownership of residence. We examine this outcome in a sample of women living in self-headed or kin-headed farm households in 1910 (this captures most women). Both outcomes are dichotomous and estimated by logistic regression.

Key micro-level independent variables in both 1880 and 1910 models include *Arkansas-born/settler* status (settler=1) constructed from the IPUMS (1880, 1910) Place of Birth variables; and *Black* (=1 if Black or Mulatto) constructed from IPUMS (1880, 1910) detailed Race variables. Micro-level control variables include women's *age* and *literacy* (reading and writing=1) constructed, respectively, from IPUMS (1880, 1910) Age and Literacy variables. The 1880 economic activity model adjusts for self-reported *chronic disease* constructed from the IPUMS 1880 Sickness variable.¹¹ Dichotomous controls for household and family structure in 1880 and 1910 models are: *lives with spouse only*; *single parent*; *lives with others including extended kin and non-kin*; with living with spouse and child(ren) or nuclear family form as reference. The series is constructed using IPUMS (1880, 1910) Marst, Relate, and Nchild variables. Household *farm* (=1) versus non-farm is constructed from the IPUMS (1880) Farm Household variable.

At the county-level, 1880 productive modes are operationalized as *Plantation* subregion (=1) and *Upcountry* subregion (=1), with Coastal Plains subregion as the reference. The designation of Upcountry counties in 1880 and in 1910 is based on Blevins listing (2002, p.5). *Plantation* subregion (1880 analyses) is based on McNeilly’s (2000, p.126) designation of Arkansas counties with extensive and growing plantation production just prior to the Civil War. The *Plantation* productive mode in 1910 (Figure 2 map, 1910 analyses) is operationalized based on Census data (Department of Commerce, 1916); this Census was published in 1916 but data were collected at the time of the Thirteenth (1910) Decennial Census. The *Plantation* reference category (1910 analyses) includes both Upcountry/Coastal Plains subregions, combined due to small micro-level sample sizes by race. County-level controls in 1910 regressions include *county proportion of improved farm land* and *urban center* (county population center greater than 2,500 persons) from Haines and ICPSR (2010).

1880: POST-WAR OPPORTUNITY, SETTLEMENT, AND THE EARLY LIFE COURSE

After the Civil War, and the collapse of old racial state laws, settlers—Black, White, and a small number of Asians—streamed into Arkansas (Du Bois 1998[1935]; Hanson and Moneyhon, 1989; Matkin-Rawn 2014; Watkins 1979; Woodson 2002[1918]).¹² By 1880, however, young Black and White women generally lived in different subregions under different productive modes. Figure 3 uses 1880 IPUMS data to examine women’s residence by nativity (Arkansas-born or settler) and by subregion. As shown in Column A of Figure 3, just under half (44%) of IPUMS sample young women in 1880 were born in the state while slightly more than half (56%) were settlers, born outside of the state.¹³ Slightly more than half of Black women (52.8%) and White women (57.1%) were settlers, born outside the state (Column B). As shown in Column C, over three-fourths of White women in 1880, whether Arkansas-born (81.9%) or settlers (76%), lived in the Upcountry and Coastal Plains subregions that

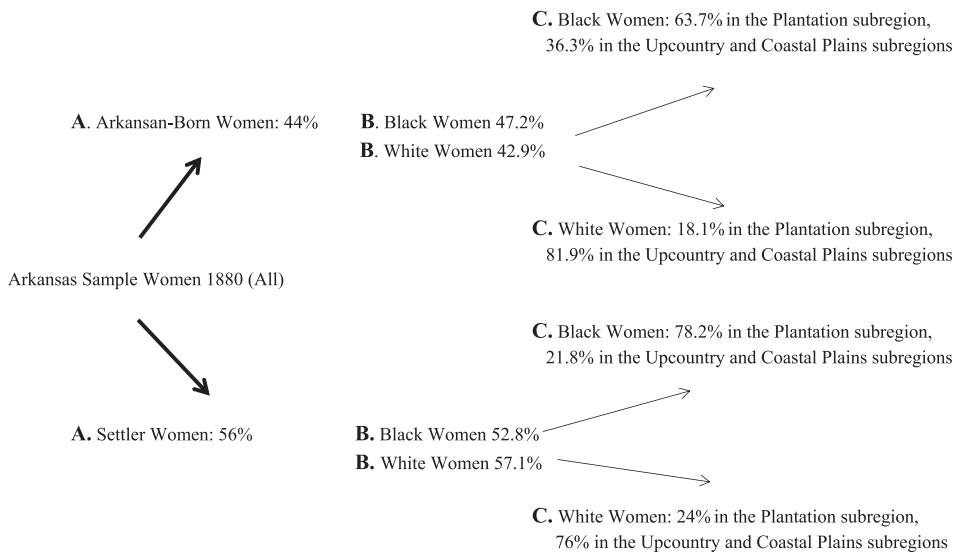


Fig. 3. Arkansas Women Ages 18-34, by Migration Status, Race, and Subregion of Residence, 1880 IPUMS

were less oriented to commercial production and the market economy. In contrast, most Black women in 1880, whether Arkansas-born (63.7%) or settlers (78.2%), lived where perhaps the richest of national lands were becoming available for use, under expanding plantation development.

Investigating the settlement pattern further, Table 1 provides descriptive statistics of Arkansas-born and settling women by subregion. The first two columns on the left pertain to Upcountry women, the two middle columns pertain to women in counties with concentrated plantation development, and the two right columns pertain to Coastal Plains women. Black women comprised only 2.8% of the Upcountry and 18.6% of the Coastal Plains female populations (Columns 1 and 5, bottom row). More than Upcountry or Coastal Plains White women, they were born in Arkansas and were not settlers (67.4% vs. 45.4%, and 58.9% vs. 44.1%, respectively, top row). The pattern reflects the relatively small prewar Upcountry and Coastal Plain populations of coerced labor and the large postwar Black population flows by 1880 into the Plantation subregion. This section explores women's settlement in, and early life course conditions associated with, different subregional productive modes, underpinned by forces of social control.

Settlement under Subsistence

Upcountry White women, prewar and postwar, had limited exposure to—or interest in—sociocultural and economic change, including commercialization of farming (Larson 2010; Sellers 1991). Their households were largely self-sufficient, perhaps also providing local services or cultivating small amounts of tobacco or hemp to augment cash flow (Blevins 2002). For example, White Upcountry-born Mary Hamilton sold the animals and tools that her family needed for commercial cotton farming on their Mississippi Delta tenant farm to return to tenancy in Upcountry Randolph County. She wrote:

We could have [the farm] ... as long as we wanted it if we would pay the taxes and keep up repairs... It...had a fine orchard, nice dwelling house, and barn.... We shipped the things we needed most, enough to keep house with, then sold the rest, cows, calves, horses, corn, and farm tools (Davis 1992, p. 215).

Further facilitating self-sufficiency were forests that provided timber for housing and fuel, and community pasturage norms that allowed families to send marked cattle and hogs into the wild to forage and fatten prior to slaughter. Mary Hamilton noted advantages of open pasturage:

It didn't cost half as much to live [Upcountry] as in the Delta. We could get all the cows we wanted to milk, just for feeding them; all we were asked to do was to mark the calves with the owner's mark when we turned them out (Davis 1992, p. 220).

By 1880, newly freed Upcountry Black women had begun “the practical work” of building new lives and new households (Glymph 2008, p. 168). Some had spent time in refugee camps where they were subject to sickness and starvation (Downs 2012). Interviewed at age eighty-six, Mittie Freeman (WPA 1936-38), described relocation at the end of the Civil War:

They packed us in their ... big covered army wagons, and tuck us to Little Rock. Did you ever know where the old penitentiary was? Well, right there is where the Yanks had a great big barracks. All chilluns and growd womens was put there.¹⁴

Table 1. Arkansas Women Ages 18-34: Descriptive Statistics by Subregion and Race, 1880 IPUMS

	Upcountry Subregion		Plantation Subregion		Coastal Plains Subregion	
	<i>Black Women</i>	<i>White Women</i>	<i>Black Women</i>	<i>White Women</i>	<i>Black Women</i>	<i>White Women</i>
<i>Women's Background</i>						
% Born in: Arkansas	67.4	45.4	42.1	36.1	58.9	44.1
New South States ¹	23.0	27.6	37.9	39.9	27.2	34.9
Old South States ²	5.8	7.4	18.7	10.5	12.6	12.6
Midwest States ³	3.8	18.6	1.2	9.1	1.2	7.2
All other States /Foreign born	<1	<1	<1	4.3	<1	<1
Mean age (S.D.)	24.8 (4.5)	24.9 (4.8)	24.7 (4.4)	25.0 (4.8)	24.4 (4.4)	24.8 (4.7)
% Literate (Reads and Writes)	33.9	72.6	21.9	86.3	24.2	77.4
% Chronic Condition	2.7	1.1	1	1.1	1.1	1.1
% Married Spouse Present	58.1	70.0	68.4	70.1	67.7	71
% Married Spouse Absent	5.4	1.3	4.2	1.5	2.8	<1
% Widowed/Divorced	9.8	4.0	9.2	6.2	8.7	4.3
% Never Married	26.7	24.7	18.2	22.2	21	23.9
% Married Women Active	7.6	<1	28.2	1.0	14.4	<1
% Non-Married Women Active	44.3	9.5	67.5	20.3	64.6	12.3
If Active: % Farm Laborer	6.5	<1	24.5	1.8	19.7	1.3
% Farmer	<1	<1	1.4	<1	<1	<1
% Laborer (not specified)	<1	<1	6	<1	3.4	<1
% Domestic Worker	10.7	1.7	5.7	2.5	5.2	1.6
% Other Services	3.3	<1	2.3	<1	1.3	<1
% Report Occupation of Housewife	63.5	74.3	44.7	65.9	58.2	73.3

Continued

Table 1. (continued)

	Upcountry Subregion		Plantation Subregion		Coastal Plains Subregion	
	<i>Black Women</i>	<i>White Women</i>	<i>Black Women</i>	<i>White Women</i>	<i>Black Women</i>	<i>White Women</i>
<i>Household-Level Influences</i>						
% Rural Farm Household	45.6	75.3	46.8	61.4	57.3	77.9
% Rural Non-Farm Household	54.4	23.2	45.9	27.2	38.5	20
% Non-Rural Household	0	1.5	7.4	11.5	4.2	2.1
% Live with Spouse only	10.9	12.2	18.3	15.4	12.7	12.5
% Live with Spouse and child(ren)	52.7	59.1	54.4	56.2	57.8	59.4
% Single Parent	10.2	3.5	8.8	3.9	11.4	3.7
% No Spouse or Children	26.3	25.1	18.6	24.5	18.2	24.4
If married: % Spouse farmer	46.4	75.9	47.2	60.8	56.5	79.7
% Spouse Farm Laborer	19.5	7.7	23.6	4.7	21.3	3.8
% Spouse Laborer (not specified)	17.9	2.3	14.1	4.2	11.5	2.3
% Spouse in Services	2.6	3.0	<1	4.6	2.1	3.1
% Spouse in Trades	1.7	2.4	1.1	10.3	1.2	3.1
% Spouse Artisan	<1	4.6	2.3	7.1	1.2	4.9
% Spouse Occupation Missing	2.5	2.2	4.3	5.9	1.3	1.6
Mean Family Size	4.8 (2.61)	5.1 (2.3)	4.5 (2.6)	4.5 (2.3)	5.1 (2.6)	5.0 (2.2)
Race: Weighted Subregion Percent	2.8	97.2	54.2	45.8	18.6	81.4
Subregion N (Unweighted)	186	3246	4137	1963	1501	3383

¹Mississippi, Tennessee, Alabama, Kentucky, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Texas²Delaware, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Maryland, N. Carolina, S. Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia³Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, Wisconsin, Iowa, Kansas, Montana, Missouri, Nebraska, N. Dakota, S. Dakota

Some had remained with former owners in isolated Upcountry realms of White household economies. Remaining in the household or on the land of former owners for paid labor might have been the only viable option for older former slaves. Mahalia Shores (WPA 1936-38) recalled her master's announcement of freedom:

You can stay and I will pay you or you can go. I pay no more doctor bills. I don't feed you no more nor give you no more clothes. Some moved and some hired to him. Some went to his father-in-law's place and some to his brothers' place and around.¹⁵

The path to relative autonomy in very rural portions of the South—marked by cultures of personalism and localism—often required freedmen to maintain loyalty and White patronage “based on a personal equation” (Schultz 2005, p. 51). Millie Evans, age eighty-seven when interviewed in 1936, noted that her family “reached (Arkansas) safe but when we got here we foun' freedom here too. Ol' mistress begged us to stay wid her an we stayed till she died” (WPA 1936-38).¹⁶ Other types of resource exchanges with Whites also reflected paternalistic rewards for service (Schultz 2005). Adeline Blakeley remembered:

My uncle George was coachman and drove my master's family in great splendor in a fine barouche to church. After the war, when he went to his own place, Mr. Parks gave him the old carriage and bought a new one for the family (WPA 1936-38).¹⁷

Millie Evans and Adeline Blakely express views about freedom and ultimately going to one's “own place,” describing social relations of relative autonomy or interdependence, if not independence, in the context of Upcountry isolation. Some freedwomen, however, claimed and sustained Upcountry autonomy by forming or joining communities. The all-Black Driftwood community, founded in 1875 in Lawrence County, maintained a post office, two groceries, a cotton gin, sawmill, sorghum mill, and a combined school (Gordon 1995). Black newcomers to Arkansas from neighboring Tennessee and South Carolina founded another community, Menifee, in the Ozark foothills of Conway County in 1878. A Menifee settler recalled the challenge of building in the Ozarks:

Tenable land now was ravine and lakes. These old people came in here and ditched them and drained them out. The old men died after felling trees, building houses, and working in the swamps. Pappy died the second year we were out here. So many people couldn't get acclimated out here and a lot of them died (Matkin-Rawn 2013, p. 50).

Once settled, the community thrived and maintained a sense of pride, as described in an 1896 publication, *Freeman*. “Menifee is inhabited by colored people. They own most all the business houses here...there are a great many wealthy families here” (Gatewood 1974, p. 320).

IPUMS data also suggest that Black women in the 1880 Upcountry (Table 1 Column 1) had status advantage, compared to Black women in Plantation (Column 3) and Coastal Plain (Column 5) subregions. They were more likely to be literate (33.9% vs. 21.9%, 24.2% respectively). Laura Jackson Edwards of Yell County, born in Mississippi and brought to Arkansas by her White mistress months after her mother's death, recalls attending the free school at the Jackson home and studying the “Blue Back[ed]

Speller” (University of Arkansas Library). In contrast, Upcountry White women were least likely among White women in Arkansas to be literate: only about 72.6% could read and write, compared to 86.3% of Plantation and 77.4% of other lowland White women. A century of intergenerational upcountry migration westward, in response to land commodification booms in the “Old South” states that boosted land prices out-of-reach (Bolton 1998; Johnson 2013),¹⁸ had limited Upcountry White women’s accumulation of human capital resources such as literacy (Bolton 1994; Brown 2013).

Upcountry Black women were less likely to be married (spouse present) than Black women in lowland subregions (58.1% vs. 68.4%, 67.7%). This may be due to very limited Black settlement (sparse marriage markets), economic alternatives to marriage, or isolation (limiting travel). However, if married, they were less likely to engage in paid labor than Black women in other subregions (7.6% vs. 28.2%, 14.4%). Their husbands less likely worked as farm laborers (19.5% vs. 23.6, 21.3%) and more likely worked in higher-status trades and services. Also signaling relative advantage is their reporting an occupation of “housewife” more often than Black women elsewhere (63.5% vs. 44.7%, 58.2%).

If working, Upcountry Black women were nearly twice as likely to report a domestic versus a farm occupation compared to Black women in other subregions (10.7% vs. 5.7%, 5.2%). This suggests economic ties to, if not dependency on, White communities for domestic work. For example, Laura Jackson Edwards cooked and kept house for local families, and in later life, cooked for the first hotels in the community. Mahalia Shores, married at age twenty, described her domestic work for White families: “I have cooked three Sunday dinners on Saturday and Sunday together. I would make three dollars when I done that...(and) I washed and ironed” (WPA 1936-38).¹⁹ Domestic work often entailed hire for *tasks* and was a hallmark of changing Black women’s labor relations: freedwomen who tasked or set limits on White employers’ work demands strategically created time for their own domestic production (Glymph 2008). They gained relative control over the terms of their employment.

Upcountry White women were almost universally married, at young ages. They did not commonly participate in economic activity outside the home, perhaps due to lack of local enterprise, sociocultural disinterest in market activity, stigma of women’s paid work in this era, or relative economic advantage. Fewer than 1% of married and fewer than 10% of unmarried White women were economically active compared to 7.6% and 44.3%, respectively, of Upcountry Black women. Lack of economic activity, exacerbated by mountain isolation, left White women a narrow range of life course roles, most family-oriented. Thus, Upcountry White women, “in an era that lacked modern conveniences...carried out onerous chores” or else hired, if available, Black women to do the work as domestic servants (Whayne et al., 2002, p. 255). White women’s marriages also reflected utility more than companionship (Allured 1988). When Mary Hamilton was a teen and about to be left on her own as her mother and brother lay dying from pneumonia in 1886, she reluctantly agreed to marry thirty-year-old Frank Hamilton:

Twice in one day I promised to marry Frank Hamilton, and he had never asked me. There was no word of love on either side. Everything and everybody was trying to crowd me into a marriage I didn’t want (Davis 1992, p. 6).

Settlement Under Lowland Commercialism

Prior to the Civil War, White women and families settling the Plantation and mixed commercial Coastal Plains lowlands generally did so to prosper. However, they faced

precarity, regardless of family wealth: the most privileged of women, settling on the best Delta lands, tended to do so at the expense of their health (McMillan 1990). Coastal Plains White women settling on poorer quality land, practicing subsistence and foraging, could experience poverty and hunger as well as sickness (Poe 2011). Black bondswomen—as children, mothers, and grandmothers—traveled many paths to lowland Arkansas. Some, Arkansas-born near the time of the Civil War, had never left. Judy Parker from Coastal Plains Little River reported at age seventy-seven that she was six months old when her family's owner, who sat out the war in Arkansas, decided to return to Florida.

He asked the rest of us if they wanted to go back too. But my folks made up their minds they didn't...After my mother died I was with my grandmother. She washed and cooked for Herb Jean's family. I stayed on with her, helped out until I got married. I was about fifteen when that time come (WPA 1936-38).²⁰

Women might have initially been transported to Texas and beyond—a strategy planters used to resist the emancipation of slaves—and then settled in Arkansas after the war. Clara Walker, interviewed at age 111 in Garland County, explained:

Finally ol' miss refuged a lot of us to California. What is it to refugee? Well, you see, suppose you was afraid dat somebody goin' to take your property an' you run 'em away off somewhere (WPA 1936-38).²¹

Postwar, Clara Walker found her mother with twelve children in Arkansas and stayed to help her farm since she “could plow as good as a man in dem days.” After her mother died, she moved to Hot Springs where she did laundry for hotels.

After the Civil War, rising cotton prices produced a decades-long panic among state elites in frontier Arkansas to replace bonded farm labor: emancipation of slaves not only threatened cotton productivity but the southern planter class (Steedman 2008) and the very “well-being of European industry” (Beckert 2016, p. 55). Slaves had worked cotton fields, organized as gangs but freedmen refused such working conditions (Du Bois 1998[1935]; Jaynes 1986). Most Arkansas plantations had remained in the hands of planters or kin after the war (Moneyhon 1994, 2014), and the old planters, along with new planters including Outsider entrepreneurial Delta developers, sought to maintain prewar cotton productivity. But as Robert Preston Brooks (1914) noted:

The problem confronting the planter in 1865 was to preserve the maximum degree of control over the laborers consonant with their changed condition... maintaining in most of its essentials the plantation organization (p. 18).

State elites wrote ads and distributed pamphlets to encourage general in-migration while planters sent out labor agents to comb the South and promise freedmen and poor Whites better tenancy terms and higher wages than offered in the low-wage Upper South states (Mandle 1992; Nash 1989; Wright 1986). The Republican politicians in power, aware of the great unmet labor demand, demurred in quickly implementing the racial codes that were being adopted in other southern states, with the exception of quick passage of an enticement law forbidding employers' competitive hiring (Roback 1984). Lawmakers also awarded citizens' rights to Black males (Moneyhon 1994; Rosen 2009), banished Ku Klux Klan activities by 1869 (Du Bois 1998[1935]; Moneyhon 2014) and enrolled 19,280 Black children in new, albeit segregated, public schools by 1870 (Moneyhon 2014). Arkansas Freedman's Bureau agents, after national

passage of the Southern Homestead Act of 1866, were among the most proactive in identifying and settling freedmen on higher quality federal lands (Lanza 1999). In addition, Freedman's Bureau agents across much of the South were well-networked and referred freedmen to places, including in Arkansas, with high demand and remuneration for rural labor (Jaynes 1986). Thus, citizens' rights with the promise of political participation, comparatively limited racial code policies, better wage and tenancy terms, and the potential for owning fertile, if still "wild and sickly" land, encouraged Black migration to Arkansas, especially to the promising, rich soils of the Plantation lowlands (Jones 2015; Matkin-Rawn 2013, 2014; Nash 1989). Cleo Jeffers (BTV 1995) born in 1912, said that:

[People] came to Arkansas like the gold rush, my parents came to Arkansas because they were told they could make a better living. [My father was a] railroad man before he married my mother... couldn't afford children...Left Mississippi by night. Dad in a boxcar and mother on train.²²

The Arkansas frontier also provided refuge, even if only symbolically, to settlers determined to escape oppressive conditions in surrounding states. Dora Strong Dennis (BTV 1995), born in 1900, was sixteen when she and her mother relocated to Arkansas. She reported:

[Mother's Mississippi boss] would wait right good until the crops get finished, the labor, you know, and then he would more or less run you off the place. But he didn't run Mama off the place... well, after she picked out her crops, she thought she could move, you know...but he went and nailed up all of her things in the house.²³

Dora Strong Dennis's mother was able to access legal help, gather her belongings and family together, and move. Not everyone could do this. Rather, escaping bad or dangerous circumstances often required circumspection, perhaps moving in stages. Faced with an oppressive Louisiana landlord, Delores Twillie Wood's (BTV 1995) grandmother:

had a big old trunk and she put all her stuff in it and she came out here like she going to visit her son, but then when you go back the trunk is empty. So you go back and get some more stuff and she moved all of us on that...I mean a lot of them came over like that and a lot of them came over just like they visiting.²⁴

Similar to Upcountry Black settlers, many formed or joined all-Black residential communities as farm owners and as long-term tenants. Oliver Williams (BTV 1995), born in 1926 and descendent of a founder, described Dark Corner, a community in Woodruff County:

[The] people up here, they come in and they cleaned this land up, they bought it. We had people from Georgia, people from Alabama, people from Mississippi and Tennessee and Kentucky...They all just kind of immigrated in here you might say all just about the same time. Her people's all from Georgia. Mine's from Mississippi. And just on and on. It was just alright.²⁵

Women and Work

Young Black women in plantation districts were the most economically active women in the state (Table 1). Table 2 more closely examines women's economic activity by

Table 2. Logistic Regression: Economic Activity of Arkansas Women, 1880 IPUMS

	Economic Activity	
<i>Women's Background</i>	<i>Odds Ratio</i>	<i>CI</i>
Settler (vs. Arkansas born)	1.36**	1.09-1.69
Black (vs. White)	10.35***	8.02-13.35
Literate (Reads and Writes)	.67***	.59-.77
Chronic Condition	.43**	.25-.75
Age	.99	.98-1.004
<i>Household and Subregional Influences</i>		
Married no Children	1.54***	1.31-1.80
Single Parent	11.33***	9.40-13.66
Lives with others (parents, kin, nonkin) v. Married with Children	7.67***	6.65-8.85
Farm Household	.38***	.34-.42
Upcountry Subregion	.70**	.54-.91
Plantation Subregion v. Coastal Plains	1.40*	1.08-1.81
Black*Settler	.72*	.56-.93
Black*Upcountry Subregion	.61*	.37-.98
Black*Plantation Subregion	1.17	.88-1.56
Model Chi Square /df /N	4410.99 / 14 / 14,416	
Max-Scaled R ²	.439	

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Note: Upcountry counties as in Blevins (2002, p. 5). Plantation counties as in McNeilly (2000, p. 126)

using logistic regression. We model a woman's *Economic Activity* as a function of her settler vs. Arkansas-born status; race; early life course socioeconomic dis/advantage represented by literacy; health or ability to work; age; current life stage family/household structure (e.g., marital status and presence of children); whether her household is a farm vs. nonfarm; and her household's subregional location. The 1880 IPUMS does not report household ownership of farms. We present findings as odds ratios (exponentiated coefficients), but highlight Figure 4 which summarizes the equation findings as the probability of being economically active, by race, settler status, and subregion of residence, calculated at the sample means of other variables.

Figure 4 shows that White Arkansas-born (G1) and White settler (G3) women had relatively low probabilities of economic activity, although White women in both groups more likely worked if residing in the Plantation subregion (Coastal Plains is the reference category). Black Arkansas-born (G2) and Black settler (G4) women had relatively high probabilities of economic activity, again especially in the Plantation subregion. In addition, chronic illness and literacy reduced all women's odds of working by 57% and 33%, respectively (Table 2) while age was not associated with economic activity.²⁶ Married women without children, single women with children, and women in households of others had increased odds of working, relative to married women with children (nuclear family form as reference) (Table 2). In sum, women with greater economic need or fewer household kin worked if healthy enough to do so. Plantation subregion residence raised (for all women) and Upcountry residence lowered (especially for Black women) the odds of work, relative to Coastal Plains residence.

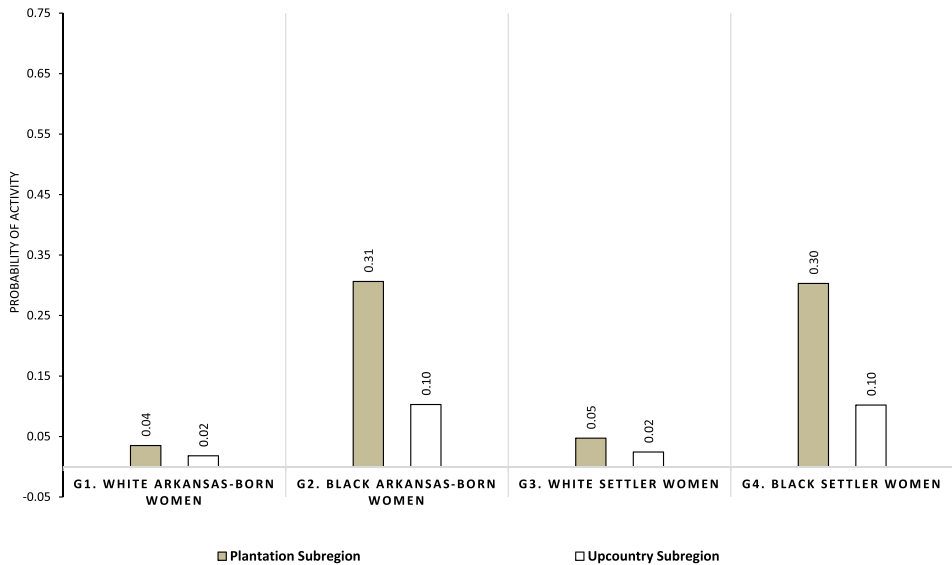


FIG. 4. Probability of Women's Economic Activity by Race, Subregion and Settler Status, 1880 IPUMS

Consistent with our analytic model, women's young adult work roles, partly determined by family roles (Figure 1, Box 3a), was correlated with race (Box 2) and institutional forces associated with productive mode (Box 1). We initially asked: How did postwar settlers fare? We do not yet know. For, young working or non-working women in a given subregion, Black or White, might or might not have attained relative autonomy by later life. Upward mobility to farm ownership on the agricultural ladder was age-graded: it took time to inherit, buy, or claim homesteaded land (Alston and Kauffman 1997, 1998; Lanza 1999; Spillman 1919). We next explore older women's placement on the agricultural ladder around 1910, in the context of new racial state and related institutional forces.

(RE)INSTITUTIONALIZING THE RACIAL STATE: STRUCTURED INEQUALITY AND LATER LIFE

Paradoxically, the transformation of "wild and sickly" Arkansas into rich farm acreage after 1880—the very "pull factor" that spurred mass settlement—reduced the availability of high-quality, low-cost acreage for small-holder purchase by 1910. Migration and high fertility rates boosted competition for farm land, leading to rising land cost; subdividing old plantations, for sales or tenancies, reduced farm size. Shrinking farm size in Arkansas, as elsewhere in the South, then limited household productivity, whether for home-use or markets (Blevins 2002; Fite 1984; Jones 2010; Moneyhon 1994). Farmers in the commercial eastern portion of the Upcountry and in the Coastal Plains subregion increasingly sought to get ahead by growing more cotton, a sure market winner, while reducing the crops grown for home-use.²⁷ The strategy might pay off by boosting immediate cash flows—allowing tenants to buy tools, animals, and eventually land—but several years of bad weather, insects, and/or low cotton prices could severely reduce household self-sufficiency and living standards and increase debt (Fite 1984; Ransom and Sutch, 2001). Yet this strategy, undertaken to move up the agricultural ladder toward land ownership and wealth, was popular: judged by a cotton

to corn ratio of 25:1 or lower, the number of Arkansas counties that lost farm self-sufficiency rose from eight in 1860 to twenty-six in 1880, and continued to rise thereafter (Hansen and Moneyhon, 1989; Moneyhon 1994).

As Upcountry and Coastal Plains subsistence-marketization lines blurred between 1880 and 1910, lowland Delta deforestation and plantation production accelerated (Brannon 1924; Brooks 1906; Mandle 1992; Virts 1991; Whyne 1992; Woodruff 2003). Plantations as defined in 1910 consisted of five or more tenant farms, contracted out by one owner, on one continuous tract of land (Elman et al., 2015; U.S. Census Bureau 1916). Landowners, perhaps with managers or overseers, used contracts to rigidly control tenant family labor and the crops grown (Brannen 1924; Mandle 1992; Mann 1989; Woofter 1969[1936]). Black tenant farmers on rising, modern “business” plantations were mostly sharecroppers as early as 1880 (Hansen and Moneyhon, 1989; Moneyhon 1997; Woodman 1995) although sharecropping was not formally recognized as an occupational status by the Census Bureau until 1920. Sharecropping resembled wage work more than true tenancy (Alston and Kauffman, 1998; Jaynes 1986; Woodman 1979); sharecroppers lacked the autonomy to make on-the-job decisions and were not remunerated for the skills, tools, or animals that they brought to tenancy contracts (Alston and Kauffman, 1997, 1998; Brannen 1924; Brooks 1914; Woodman 1995). Sharecroppers hoped to move up the agricultural ladder, as did other Arkansas farmers. But, due to lack of remuneration, forced dependency on landowners and other aspects of the sharecropping system (illustrated below), most could not do so (Du Bois 1912; Mandle 1992; Steedman 2008; Woodman 1995).

Institutional Mobility Constraints

Yet, many Black Arkansas farmers did reach the top of the agricultural ladder. As early as the 1870s, one in twenty Black Arkansan head of households owned land, double or triple the rate of other Deep South States.²⁸ This section examines women’s placement on the agricultural ladder in a process of agrarian stratification, differentially constrained by productive mode. The 1910 IPUMS only reports women’s placement on two broad rungs of the ladder: living in a tenant farm household (collapsing all forms of tenancy including sharecropping) and living in an owned farm household, the top rung of the ladder (Table 3, bottom two rows). An examination of statuses by race and productive mode of Plantation (left two columns) versus combined subsistence-oriented Upcountry/Coastal Plains subregions (right two columns), finds that White women in Plantation (Column 2) versus other counties (Column 4) were less likely to reach the top of the ladder (34.7% vs. 53%). A similar pattern existed for Black women (Columns 1 and 3, 17.2% vs. 40.2%).

Ownership/non-ownership in 1910 partly reflected subregional productive mode. Upcountry cotton marketization faded by the 1890s as cotton prices fell, but less-commercial, less-indebted farm families retained farm ownership by returning to subsistence or selling timber, hemp, or free-roaming livestock (Allured 1988; Moneyhon 1997). On the Coastal Plains, mixed subsistence/commercial cultivation continued, now by Black as well as White small-holders and tenants, who increasingly produced cotton for markets. The small-holder and more-resourced tenant families who retained a “safety-first” way of life had more financial control over what they produced, how they produced it, and gains, if any. They could pay off debt or invest in tools, animals, or land (Schweninger 1997). In contrast, Plantation subregion farmers, primarily sharecroppers after 1880, signed contracts that often limited or precluded their *choice* of growing for market or home-use (Brannen 1924; Woofter (1969[1936]). Landowners owned the season’s crop and paid a sharecropper’s wage

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics by Subregion and Race, 1910 IPUMS

<i>Women's Background</i>	Plantation Subregion		Other Subregions	
	<i>Black Women</i>	<i>White Women</i>	<i>Black Women</i>	<i>White Women</i>
% Born in Arkansas	25.2	25.2	51.1	35.9
Mean Age (S.D.) 1910	52.3	52.2	51.8	53.1
% Literate (Reads and Writes)	28.1	87.4	31.5	80.2
% Married Spouse Present	61.4	69.5	63.4	67.8
% Married Spouse Absent	2.6	<1	2.9	1.8
% Remarried	25.0	10.2	23.8	11.9
% Widowed/Divorced	33.1	24.6	31.7	27.0
% Never Married	0.3	4.8	2.0	2.7
% Women Active	56.4	10.8	48.8	14.8
% Married Women Active	50.9	6.0	33.7	5.3
% Non-Married Women Active	66.3	21.6	78.5	36.5
If Active: % Farm Laborer	7.9	<1	2.4	<1
% Farmer	32.4	4.8	21.7	9.5
% Domestic Worker	14.1	1.8	20.7	2.9
% Trades, Artisans	<1	<1	<1	1.1
% Other Services	<1	3	2.6	<1
% Report Not Occupied	44.2	89.2	51.2	85.2
# Children Ever Born (mean)	6.85	5.75	7.57	6.38
% No Children Ever Born	4.4	4.2	2.9	4.0
# Children Surviving (mean)	3.50	3.78	4.42	4.41
% No Children Surviving	18.2	10.7	16.4	12.2
# Child Deaths	3.34	1.97	3.15	1.97
Family Size	4.20	4.53	4.92	4.54
<i>Household-Level Influences</i>				
% Owned Farm Household	17.2	34.7	40.2	53.0
% Tenant Farm Household	51.0	13.8	21.7	15.0
N (Unweighted) / % in Subregion	297/72.4%	169/21.2%	106/27.6%	620/78.8%

of housing, perhaps a small food allowance, as a share of production, settled at harvest (Jaynes 1986; Woodman 1979). Owners of rich soils rarely sold their land to Black farmers (Schultz 2005; Schweninger 1997). Sharecroppers rarely had the cash to purchase tools, animals, or land after settlement and struggled to even sustain living standards to the next season (Dirks and Duran, 2001; Jones 2010).

Ownership and non-ownership also reflected institutional realignment. Newly passed racial state laws were designed to promote social control, including for servicing the labor productivity of large-scale agriculture (Moneyhon 1994; Wacquant 2002; Woodman 1979). For, by the 1890s, the same Arkansan “leaders of the Old South... [who] took the state into Reconstruction, the New South, and beyond” (Moneyhon 1994, p.189) reversed their relatively benign 1870s and 1880s course. Although these

new laws, or “rules of the game” (Alston and Ferrie, 1999, p. 3; James 1988, p. 194) and their timing varied across the South (James 1988; Roback 1980; Werum 1999), they shared goals of imposing *landlord supremacy*, *disenfranchisement*, and *segregation* (Alston and Ferrie, 1999; James 1988; Mandle 1992; Moneyhon 2014). New crop lien laws provided landlords with the first slice of sharecroppers’ shares to repay credit, raising sharecroppers’ risk of debt (James 1988; Roback 1984; Whyne 1992; Woodman 1995). Vagrancy laws passed around 1900 limited Black farmers’ off-plantation travels to search for jobs or better tenancy terms (Naidu 2010; Woodruff 2003). In addition, the new racial states blocked federal power and shifted state power downward, closer to planter control, toward local government and county executives (James 1988; Werum 1999). Planters produced, with county magistrates and judges—in the context of vagrancy arrests and inability to pay fines—a new form of coerced Black labor: prisoners consigned to work in prisons, factories, on chain gangs, and on local elites’ plantations (Blackmon 2008; Wacquant 2002).

Table 3 illustrates that the Plantation subregion sharecropping system, compared to subsistence/commercializing modes in other subregions, had by 1910 multiplied (statistically moderated) unequal life chances for Black women’s upward mobility. In the Plantation subregion, White women were twice as likely as Black women to live in owned farm households (Table 3, 34.7% vs. 17.2%) whereas the percent difference was about 13% in the other subregions (53% vs. 40%). Also, 51% of Black women versus 13.8% of White women lived in tenant farm households in the Plantation subregion, a nearly four-fold difference, while 21.7% of Black women versus 15% of White women, a much narrower difference, lived in tenant farm households in the other subregions. There was also an economic activity race gap across modes: in the Plantation subregion 56.4% of Black women versus 10.8% of White women were economically active, a more than five-fold difference, whereas in other counties, 48.8% of Black versus 14.8% of White women were economically active, a three-fold difference. Intra-racial disparities existed across subregions: for example, married Black women in Plantation versus the other subregions were more likely to work (50.9% vs. 33.7%).

We take a closer look at the correlates of farm ownership, the top rung of the agricultural ladder, by using logistic regression to model older women’s odds of *Residing in an owned farm household* (Table 4). Our analytic sample is a subsample of 1910 IPUMS women who lived in kin-based farm households (they or kin were household heads). In Model 1, women’s odds of living in an owned farm household is a function of their settler vs. Arkansas-born status, race, literacy, age, and current life stage family/household structure. Black women had 78% reduced odds of ownership compared to White women. Settlers vs. Arkansas-born women, and women raising children without spouses (married couples with children being the reference) also had lower odds of farm ownership. Black and White women who had reached the top rung were more likely native to the state and literate. Settlers might have had fewer accumulated resources, different household/family economy strategies, lacked White paternal sponsorship for land purchase (Schultz 2005) and/or lost properties once owned (Jones 2010). Women’s literacy in 1910 reflected early life course disadvantage (access to school) under old racial state policies prohibiting Black literacy.

Model 2 adds Plantation subregion (Upcountry/Coastal Plains as reference), also adjusting for county urbanization and county proportion of improved land, where the latter indicates local land competition and value. Women with higher odds of reaching the top rung lived in the non-Plantation subregions and in counties with less improved (hence, less valuable, and less costly) land. Settler status in this model becomes non-significant; perhaps resources and paternalistic ties mattered less adjusting for productive mode. The final model adds interactions of race*settler status and

Table 4. Logistic Regressions: Lives in Owned Farm Household, Arkansas Farm Household Women, 1910 IPUMS

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	<i>OR</i>	<i>CI</i>	<i>OR</i>	<i>CI</i>	<i>OR</i>	<i>CI</i>
<i>Women's Background</i>						
Black (vs. White)	.22***	.15-.32	.35***	.22-.54	.54	.26-1.12
Settler (vs. Arkansas born)	.69*	.49-.99	.88	.61-1.28	.84	.53-1.32
Literate (Reads and Writes)	2.02***	1.38-2.95	2.18***	1.47-3.22	2.14***	1.44-3.17
Age	1.03	.99-1.06	1.02	.99-1.06	1.02	.99-1.06
<i>Household- Level Influences</i>						
Married no children	1.03	.65-1.62	1.17	.73-1.88	1.18	.72-1.92
Single parent	.59*	.39-.91	.62*	.40-.96	.62*	.40-.96
Living with others v. Married with children	.95	.39-2.34	1.08	.42-2.76	1.14	.44-2.96
<i>Productive Mode and Development</i>						
Plantation Subregion	-		.54**	.34-.85	.89	.50-1.59
County Proportion Land Improved	-		.20**	.08-.52	.23**	.09-.60
Urbanizing County	-		1.01	.71-1.43	.98	.68-1.39
Black*Settler	-		-		1.36	.62-2.97
Black*Plantation Subregion	-		-		.27***	.12-.64
Model Chi Square /df	158.94 /7		192.48/10		201.57/12	
Max-Scaled R ²	.26		.30		.32	
N	762		762		762	

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

race*Plantation subregion residence, finding a joint effect of race and subregion. This finding differs from our analytic model which expected race and institutional factors to independently contribute to economic mobility. Rather, Black women's households in the Plantation subregion were least likely to reach/retain the top rung of the agricultural ladder.

Life on the Ladder

Unfortunately, the 1910 IPUMS only distinguishes owner vs. tenant (all types) farm household status. Census data are also limited for exploring how and why some women faced mobility barriers. Therefore, we turn to women's oral descriptions of work, living standards, and social mobility on different rungs of the agricultural ladder. Black landowners could accumulate extensive landholdings and contract with tenant and sharecropping families as well as wage laborers to work their land. Ella Clemons (BTV 1995), born in 1907 in Delta Monroe County, had parents that came from Savannah to Arkansas:

At that time they had seven kids but they come to Arkansas and that's where my daddy started progressing, he bought three farms...Back in that day he worked them but he had hired hands, they sharecropped for my daddy.²⁹

Women who became landowners, even if on a small scale, expressed a sense of achievement as well as residential autonomy. Lizzie Barnett (WPA 1936-38), a former slave who settled in Coastal Plains Faulkner County in 1867, stated:

I bought this piece of land to build my shanty from Mr. Jim Harkrider for \$25.00. I worked hard for white folks and saved my money and had this little two-room house built...It is about to fall down on me, but it will last as long as I live.³⁰

Ann May (WPA 1936-38) of Upcountry Jackson County, sold as a child with her mother, implies that both White patronage and her family's decision-making led to farm ownership:

We all lived with the white folks. My mother took care of all of them. They was always as good as they could be to us and after the war we stayed on...our white folks told my father to homestead a place near...and he did. We lived there until after father died. We paid taxes and lived just like the white folks.³¹

Women who did not own farms also found paths toward residential autonomy. Former slave Molly Brown (WPA 1936-38), estimated age between ninety and 100 when interviewed, described buying her house in Delta Monroe County—the house she still lived in:

Way me and my husband paid for the house, he farmed for Jim Black and Mr. Gunn. I cooked for Jim Woodfin. Then I run a roomin' house till four years ago.³²

Cash tenancy, a step down from ownership, was also desirable: tenants owned tools, livestock, and like farm owners, had considerable autonomy. Mattie Chandler (BTV 1995), born into a cash tenant family in Delta Monroe county, recalled:

My dad was a big cotton farmer, and he was a renter, he worked a lot of land....³³

Tenant (share) families owned the potential harvest and would pay a share of it to landlords at the season's end. Having fewer assets and less economic security than cash tenants, share tenants often depended on landlords, who acted as local bankers, to extend credit to purchase farm and household necessities (Schultz 2005). Nanny Jackson (b. 1854), a White tenant who had moved to Delta Desha county from Tennessee, was distraught when Frank Nady, a planter, turned down her husband's request to borrow money to buy seeds and equipment. She wrote, "Mr. Nady can't help us this year and I don't know who we will get" (Bolsterli 1982, p. 97).

Women's work and family roles reflected both placement on the agricultural ladder and agrarian mode. Upcountry women in tenancy faced work burdens but had some discretion in arranging activities because they were less often bound by rigid contracts. Mary Hamilton, a White tenant, described her routine in summer:

I would go to bed, set the alarm for four o'clock, get up, get breakfast, milk, get my churn ready and be in the field almost as soon as the men were... After my morning work of milking, churning, cleaning house, getting dinner and supper at one time, and cutting a dress for someone, I would help the children in the field all afternoon (Davis 1992, pp. 173, 207).

Sharecropping in the Plantation subregion was more akin to wage work than true tenancy (Alston and Kaufmann, 1998) and a status near the bottom of the ladder. Women in sharecropping households were subject to unpredictability in daily work schedules. They were often pulled to work on other sharecroppers' lands, often in teams. Dora Strong Dennis (BTV 1995) recalled:

It was Mama and my sisters. She would chop cotton for somebody, take them and go and chop cotton in somebody else's field so they could come fly in her field. That's the way the boss man had it arranged.

Plantation sharecropping also limited women's discretion in the timing and sequencing of family and work activities, compared to true tenancy or negotiated task work with employers (Glymph 2008). Sharecropping contracts, between White landowners and male heads of sharecropping families, ensured the field labor of women and children (Mann 1989). In sharecropping, like slavery, women worked alongside men in the field, and took care of the domestic work of home and family (Frankel 1999). Field work after Emancipation meant less autonomy in how women, now in individualized farm households, carried out the (unpaid) "production for use" work for their family (Mann 1989, p. 797). For example, women sharecroppers had limited control over child care. Le Ester Jones (BTV 1995) from Delta Lee County recalled:

If all the children was old enough to be in the field, the baby was carried to the field, put under a shade tree in a box and, had to check on the babies, you know, every time they chop awhile, then they check on the baby.³⁴

Living standards also reflected both placement on the agricultural ladder and agrarian mode. Mattie Chandler, born into a Delta cash tenant family, had high living standards when a child:

[My dad had] a big family and raised a lot of stock, cows and hogs and everything.... And we just had plenty of food...chickens, ducks, geese, guineas, turkeys we had, and things that he killed.

Upcountry and Coastal Plains tenant families could also hunt and forage, perhaps without growing crops, and get meat, butter, and milk from free-roaming livestock (McDonald and McWhiney, 1980; Moneyhon 1997; Poe 2011). In contrast, sharecropping contracts could forbid raising of food or livestock. Over 90% of 1910 plantation households across the South bought food on credit throughout the year, at high prices and interest rates, from plantation stores run by employers or merchants (Brannen 1924). Sharecroppers then needed to settle store credit accounts at harvest. Thelma Nash (BTV 1995) described:

Well, [plantation manager] called it settlement, but what really would happen when you go there...he would give you what he wanted you to have... So it always kept you down. You didn't have anything to get up off of... if you had six or seven children and you cleared \$30. Now what did you have? ...And you started right back taking up groceries, you know, for your family because you had to...and try to make it until next year.³⁵

Annie Floyd (BTV 1995) recalled:

The bossman owned the community and owned you...one great big store, if you had money you had to spend it there... If one owed money [to the commissary] one could not move unless repaid, unless slipping off.³⁶

Classical frontier and settler colonial studies assume stable settler (White) independence on borderlands once hegemonic White control is achieved. But White rural mobility in Arkansas fell by 1910, much as elsewhere in the South, due to falling cotton prices, rising production costs, and other related problems (Fite 1980; Jones 2010; McDonald and McWhiney, 1980; Moneyhon 1994, 1997). Arkansas White farm ownership fell from over 80% to about 37% of farms between 1865 and 1930 (Moneyhon 1997). Moreover, by 1910, White indebted small-holders not only fell into tenancy, but increasingly into sharecropping (Moneyhon 1997). Plantation sharecropping exposed White women to a plantation-style labor system where they were subject to systemic poverty, contractual control of work/family roles, and status dependency (Mann 1989; Steedman 2008). Cleaster Mitchell (BTV 1995), having grown up in a Black sharecropping community, noted:

Now, white could move to our community, but we could not move to their community. But I know we had several white families to move in our community, but they were in the same shape we was—extremely poor. At that time, if you was extremely poor, regardless to what color you was, if you was really, really poor, then you was treated like you was poor.³⁷

Black farm families sustained community and family networks to provide material and social supports whenever possible, sharing food and caregiving for children and the sick, despite differences in relative position on the rungs of the agricultural ladder (Chafe et al., 2001; Jones 2010). White farmers' support networks were conditional, often contingent on the acceptance of others in the White community (Schultz 2005). Upcountry tenant Mary Hamilton noted:

When you move to the hill country of Arkansas, if you make a good impression on the first family you meet and make friends with them, you are looked on as a friend and neighbor by the whole community (Davis 1992, p. 220).

It is unclear if poor White plantation sharecroppers could marshal significant “safety net” support from more-advantaged Whites. Poor Whites sharing the same labor status as poor Blacks shared a status of dependence and inferiority, despite race (Steedman 2008). As Jaynes (1986) noted, “In the South, white laborers had few friends outside their class” (p. 253). Community support might occur across race-related lines, especially among the poor (Schultz 2005), but as segregation spread, “a racial caste system pervaded the southern countryside” (Jones 1992, p. 337). Moreover, the sharing of food, one of the strongest safety nets in the Black community, was the most severe rule violation under rural segregationist etiquette (Schultz 2005). Lucinda Baltimore’s (BTV 1995) parents owned land and had more than adequate provisions. She discovered as a child that racial norms for Whites outweighed hunger:

The white family was proud and would not ask for food, would not beg. The woman and kids [visited my mother] and she was eating and offered to feed the children...telling the white mother that she felt bad eating in front of the kids. The mother allowed her to give food to the children but refused food for herself.³⁸

Yet Whites faced, in general, fewer headwinds to mobility in the new racial state. Poor as they were, White sharecroppers more likely exited the sharecropping system, moving into higher forms of tenancy or, if tenants, “aging” into land ownership via inheritance or purchase (Alston and Kauffman, 1998). Black elder sharecropping women, recalling lifetimes of effort to exit their status, understood that their lack of mobility on the agricultural ladder was at least partly due to their embeddedness in a system designed to foster dependency. Molly Hardy Scott (WPA 1936-38), interviewed at age ninety in Prairie County, looked back on life as a sharecropper:

I never owned nothing...If we did have a good crop we never could get ahead. We couldn’t get ahead nuff not to have to be furnished the next year. We did work, but we never could get ahead.³⁹

For some, sharecropping life was not significantly different from slavery, as Cora Gillam (WPA 1936-38), interviewed at age eighty-six in Little Rock, described:

I know what they told us every time when crops would be put by. They said ‘Why didn’t you work harder? Look. When the seed is paid for, and all your food and everything, what food you had just squares the account.’ Then they take all the cotton we raise, all the hogs, corn, everything. We was just about where we was in slave days.⁴⁰

The sharecropping system may have entrapped White women for a while but they were not as bound by new racial state laws and norms of social control, constructing race, should they exit. Cleaster Mitchell’s mother took a young White sharecropping woman under her wing:

...teaching her how to cook and stuff just like she did my sisters, and maybe the little children wouldn’t have survived if my mother didn’t help her, because if they was sick, my mother would doctor on them. They was down there with us about two years. But the catch was, if they pull up a little bit, they have to get out from down there. They can’t stay because then they won’t be recognized, you see. They got to get to where they can sort of be recognized.

CONCLUSION

Our examination of Trans-Mississippi settlement finds patterns considerably different from those depicted in classical Turnerian and settler colonial frameworks (Glenn 2015; Perry 2001). In Turnerian fashion, opportunistic waves of Black and White settlers “came to Arkansas like the gold rush” after the Civil War (see Jeffers, BTV 1995) but the opposite of a Turnerian melting pot emerged: White settlers codified social relations as racial division and social exclusion. As settler colonial studies suggest, an initial burst of settlement growth was fueled by the expulsion of indigenous peoples and the importation of coerced ethnic (non-White) labor. Yet, Arkansas would remain a frontier state at the Civil War’s end. Moreover, the assumption of both frameworks, that settler institution-building commences in unoccupied White-institutional space, is problematic in Arkansas: initial establishment of land, forced labor and financial systems, even formal statehood, fully *preceded* and *collapsed* prior to mass settlement. Old institutional legacies lingered under the renewed settlement, beyond the collapse of the old racial state, as harbingers, if not seeds, of later institutions and policies (Feagin and Elias, 2014; James 1988; Ruef and Fletcher, 2003; Wacquant 2002).

A somewhat clearer portrait of Arkansas settlement emerges under a theoretic lens of the racial state (James 1988). Mass settlement was bracketed by two state institutional forms that awarded rights and resources according to race: slavery and Jim Crow statism. Each emerged as formal totalizing institutions with implications—varying depending on attribution of race—for women’s lives. Under each system, racial social control initiated by agricultural elites proceeded legally, over different and fluid levels of government, in stages. It was in the interregnum, in the post-Civil War period between the old and new racial states—while under strong Federal and Outsider investor countervailing controls, while in the throes of labor hunger—that opportunistic mass settlement occurred in Arkansas. These settlers were responding to strong pull factors of land and wage to fulfill goals of household self-sufficiency, freedom on the land, and/or capitalist mobility. A less rigid post-Civil War racial caste system up to the 1890s contributed to the ensemble of pull factors drawing Black migrants to Arkansas and especially to the rich land of the Delta (Lancaster 2014; Makin-Rawn 2013). Arkansas merits close study, if only as an outlying Trans-Mississippi West Frontier state. But if fragmented racial state sovereignty historically produced significant policy and settlement differences across time, other southern states need analysis in this light (James 1988; James and Redding, 2005; Werum 1999).

Our study highlights topographic as well as institutional features of the productive modes that trisected Arkansas, showing that subregions differentially shaped settlement patterns and life course conditions. Before and after the Civil War, White women who lacked resources, or had economic orientations favoring limited marketization risk or resistance to commercialism, mostly settled in Upcountry and Coastal Plains subregions where they lived more cheaply, practicing subsistence or mixed commercial farming. Even if tenancy limited their upward mobility, they retained relative household economic autonomy. The small proportion of Upcountry Black women also appear to have had relative advantage in 1880 although their proportions grew still smaller by 1910 as Upcountry towns adopted “sundown” codes, often accompanied by community violence, to restrict Black presence and/or residence (Lancaster 2014; Loewen 2005).

Prewar, Black women were forced laborers in the Plantation subregion and pockets of other subregions. In the immediate postwar period, Black women mostly settled in the Plantation subregion where rapid deforestation, development of high-quality soils, and steerage by Freedman’s Bureau agents to land and employment promised

household autonomy and land ownership. The Black migration to the state, at least initially, provided rewards: the Black share of farm ownership rose from the Civil War's end to 1910, even as the White share fell over the same period (McDonald and McWhiney, 1980; Moneyhon 1994; Schultz 2005; Schweninger 1997). Over time, however, subregional development—as shaped by racial state rules—produced divergent paths of land mobility. By 1910, forces associated with plantation production under the sharecropping system multiplied Black women's odds of *not rising* to the top of the agricultural ladder. As productive modes similarly bisected and trisected other post-Reconstruction southern states, they also need analysis in this light (Harris 2001; McKenzie 1994).

African American women and kin primarily settled in Plantation districts where, by 1910, they had lower odds of owning farms. Their movement up the ladder was increasingly limited by labor laws and debt peonage (Naidu 2010). Most often, Black women in sharecropping families worked in the fields, earning less than the men. Black women not working in the fields were designated as “dependents” and listed with children on contracts (Frankel 1999). Thus, the economic system of sharecropping, supported by the new racial state, reinforced patriarchal family structure with separation of external/paid work and internal/unpaid work into gendered realms (Mann 1989). Women's work in slavery, now in sharecropping, was masculinized whereas men's work was not systematically feminized in either system. In this way, race and gender hierarchies structured the lives of freedwomen and all women as they forged their versions of freedom, interdependence, and independence in post-slavery Arkansas.

Among our study's shortcomings is that predictors and outcomes in equations are simultaneously measured in cross-sectional IPUMS data although we take care to interpret findings as associational, not causal. We likely *underestimate* women's economic activity because Census enumerators and households under-reported women's work in this era. Also important is that the most disadvantaged women are missing from IPUMS data and from oral records due to selective mortality. Regardless, our study demonstrates social differentiation in women's life course due to race—with regard to economic activity and mobility—as Arkansas transitioned from frontier to mass settlement status, under modern planter dominance. It also provides insight about conditions that triggered the wave of movement out of the state, by both Blacks and Whites, which commenced after 1910. Partly because planter control delayed industrial development until the 1940s (Moneyhon 1994), Arkansas women after 1910 (especially children of settling women) increasingly sought life opportunities outside of the state. But, heavy in the mix of “push” factors driving Black women's exodus out of the state, indeed, out of the South altogether, was rising repression of the new racial state (Wilkerson 2010).

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NOTES

1. Turner's conceptualization is anathema to some historians, viewed to "[trivialize] the West...as stage settings for the repeated sequential performances of the frontier play" (Steiner 1995, p. 483).
2. Under Census definition, a frontier's population density is between two and six people per square mile. Arkansas population density was 1.9 persons per square mile in 1840—nearly half a decade *after* statehood—and only 4 persons per square mile by 1850. Arkansas briefly exited frontier status at 8.3 persons per square mile in 1860 (Bolton 1998) but one quarter to one half of residents died or fled the state during the Civil War (Moneyhon 1994).
3. Martha Ann Dixon (age 81) interviewed by Irene Robertson in DeValls Bluff, Arkansas.
4. Most racial state theories root racial inequality in political institutions and processes but propose different mechanisms. Winant (2000) and Omi and Winant (2015) present a U.S. history where intergroup political conflict shifts long-run racial formations (social meanings of race) from despotic toward democratic: from slavery to Jim Crowism to post-Civil Rights race relations. Wacquant (2000) presents a sequence of U.S. "peculiar racial institutions," where transformations—from slavery, to a Jim Crow terroristic regime, to mid-to-late 20th century ghettoization under carceral rules—are political tools for labor extraction and caste oppression. Feagin and Elias (2014) focus on political action, institutions and also White elites who, aided and abetted by lower status Whites, produce and sustain racial inequality.
5. We generalize due to space constraints; plantation bondsmen raising rice and non-cotton commodities had some discretion in time-use and production for subsistence. Poor Whites might not have been able to procure land or may not have desired to do so.
6. We do not imply that White political cleavage did not exist. Non-slaveholding Upcountry and Coastal Plains Whites wanted only Whites to count for apportioning legislative seats while lowland planters wanted Whites and male slaves counted. The 1836 State Constitution solution was to count slaves as three-fifths of a person, as in the U.S. Constitution (Goss 2011). White economic conflict was also assuaged by legislative creation in 1836 of two State banks, one for lowland and one for upcountry planters (Worley 1950).
7. The Upcountry Osage had signed away land rights in 1808 (Blevins 2002). Jefferson relocated Choctow, Cherokee and other tribes to the fertile northwestern Upcountry corner but White encroachment soon ensued and conflict was resolved by Indian removal to lands further west. The southern state Quapaw, reduced to a tribal population of 500 due to disease, was relocated to Louisiana (1826) (Blevins 2002).
8. The Northwest Upcountry resembles Midwestern prairies; commercial households grew wheat, corn, tobacco, and fruit (Blevins 2002). Northeast Upcountry commercial households adopted plantation-style cotton farming to the 1890s, for markets in Memphis, New Orleans and St. Louis (Blevins 2002).
9. Old racial state planters were threatened by manumission and free Blacks as they felt free status advertised a potential, competing incentive system and set a "bad" example (Patterson 1982).
10. The 1910 older age sample is small because the proportion of older individuals in the population is small (the 1910 U.S. population was young). Also, the 1880 IPUMS samples 1 in 10 while the 1910 IPUMS samples 1 in 70 households.
11. Sickness question 1, 1880 IPUMS: yes to category 0201-0208, 0501-0709, 0901-0904, 0906-1011, 1301-2600 or any positive response to questions 2-6 is coded as a chronic condition.
12. Arkansas state boosters sought Chinese migrants to work as plantation labor; the few who arrived, soon left (Watkins 1979). Asian numbers are too small to capture with IPUMS data.
13. IPUMS data report state of birth and state of enumeration; one cannot know if Arkansan-born women in the state in 1880 or 1910 had exited and returned. Hanson and Moneyhon (1989) estimate that 20% of Whites entering Arkansas before 1870, 25% entering 1870-1880 were post-war returnees, and 50% of Blacks entering Arkansas before 1870 were returnees while most entering 1870-1880 were likely new to Arkansas.

14. Mittie Freeman (age 86) interviewed by Beulah Sherwood Hag at 320 Elm St., North Little Rock, Arkansas.
15. Mahalia Shores (age 77) interviewed by Irene Robertson in Marianna, Arkansas.
16. Millie Evans (age 87) interviewed by Carol Graham in El Dorado, Arkansas.
17. Adeline Blakely (age 89) interviewed by Zillah Cross Peel in Fayetteville, Arkansas.
18. Perhaps a third to a half of poor southern Whites were landless in 1860; at issue is whether they sought upward mobility, as did yeoman, or whether some were persistently transient and rootless (Bolton 1994; Brown 2013; McDonald and McWhiney, 1980). Our data cannot distinguish such differences.
19. Mahalia Shores (age 77) interviewed by Irene Robertson in Marianna, Arkansas.
20. Judy Parker (age 77) interviewed by Mary D. Hudgins in Hot Springs, Arkansas.
21. Clara Walker (age 111) interviewed by Mary D. Hudgins in Garland County, Arkansas.
22. Cleo Jeffers [b. 1912] interviewed by Mausiki Stacey Scales in Brinkley, Arkansas, July 11, 1995.
23. Dora Strong Dennis [b. 1900] interviewed by Paul Ortiz in Fargo, Arkansas, July 19, 1995.
24. Delores Twillie Wood [b. 1925] interviewed by Mausiki Stacey Scales in Forrest City, Arkansas, July 19, 1995.
25. Oliver Raymond Williams [b. 1926] interviewed by Doris D. Dixon in Cotton Plant, Arkansas, July 25, 1995.
26. Age is also not significant in a model using age in polynomial form. Interactions of race and other individual-level variables do not significantly improve model fit.
27. A growing transportation industry (steamship, rail) provided employment by the 1880s but also provided access to markets, triggering farm households—including those practicing “safety first”—to further shift toward growing for export (Moneyhon 1994).
28. See Schweninger (1997), p.164, Table10.
29. Ella Clemons [b. 1907] interviewed by Doris D. Dixon in Cotton Plant, Arkansas, July 13, 1995.
30. Lizzie Barnett (age 100) interviewed by Rosa B. Ingram in Conway, Arkansas.
31. Ann May (age 82) interviewed by Sallie C. Miller in Clarksville, Arkansas.
32. Molly Brown (age 90+) interviewed by Irene Robertson in Brinkley, Arkansas.
33. Mattie Chandler [b. 1910] interviewed by Doris D. Dixon at home [no street address] Arkansas, July 18, 1995.
34. Le Ester Jones [b. 1930] interviewed by Paul Ortiz in Brinkley, Arkansas, July 12, 1995.
35. Thelma Nash [b. unknown] interviewed by Mausiki Stacey Scales in Forrest City, Arkansas, July 19, 1995.
36. Annie Floyd [b. 1925] interviewed by Paul Ortiz in Brinkley, Arkansas, July 12, 1995.
37. Cleaster Mitchell [b. 1922] interviewed by Paul Ortiz in Brinkley, Arkansas, July 16, 1995.
38. Lucinda Baltimore [b. 1906]. interviewed by Doris D. Dixon at home [place redacted] in Arkansas, July 10, 1995.
39. Molly Hardy Scott (age 90) interviewed by Irene Robertson in DeValls Bluff, Arkansas.
40. Cora Gillam (age 86) interviewed by Beulah Sherwood Hagg in Little Rock, Arkansas.

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APPENDIX A

Interviews from Work Progress Administration (1936-38).

Interviewed by Irene Robertson.

- Molly Brown (age 90+), in Brinkley, Arkansas.
- Martha Ann Dixon (age 81), in DeValls Bluff, Arkansas.
- Mahalia Shores (age 77), in Marianna, Arkansas.
- Molly Hardy Scott (age 90), in DeValls Bluff, Arkansas.

Interviewed by Mary D. Hudgins.

- Judy Parker (age 77), in Hot Springs, Arkansas.
- Clara Walker (age 111), in Garland County, Arkansas.

Interviewed by Beulah Sherwood Hag.

- Mittie Freeman (age 86), in 320 Elm St., North Little Rock, Arkansas.

Interviewed by Carol Graham.

- Millie Evans (age 87), in El Dorado, Arkansas.

Interviewed by Sallie C. Miller.

- Ann May (age 82), in Clarksville, Arkansas.

Interviewed by Rosa B. Ingram.

- Lizzie Barnett (age 100), in Conway, Arkansas.

Interviewed by Zillah Cross Peel.

- Adeline Blakely (age 89) in Fayetteville, Arkansas.

Interviewed by Beulah Sherwood Hagg.

- Cora Gillam (age 86), in Little Rock, Arkansas

Interviewed by Sarah R. Scott.

- Laura Jackson Edwards in Yell County, Arkansas.

APPENDIX B

Interviews from *Behind the Veil: Documenting African-American Life in the Jim Crow South* (1995).

Interviewed by Doris D. Dixon.

Baltimore, Lucinda [b. 1906] Home [place redacted] Arkansas, July 10, 1995.

Chandler, Mattie [b. 1910] Home [no street address] Arkansas, July 18, 1995.

Clemons, Ella [b. 1907] Cotton Plant, Arkansas, July 13, 1995.

Williams, Oliver Raymond [b. 1926] Cotton Plant, Arkansas, July 25, 1995.

Interviewed by Paul Ortiz.

Dennis, Dora Strong [b. 1900] Fargo, Arkansas, July 19, 1995.

Floyd, Annie [b. 1925] Brinkley, Arkansas, July 12, 1995.

Jones, Julice and Le Ester [b. 1925 and b. 1930] Brinkley, Arkansas, July 12, 1995.

Mitchell, Cleaster [b. 1922] Brinkley, Arkansas, July 12, 1995.

Interviewed by Mausiki Stacey Scales.

Jeffers, Cleo [b. 1912] Brinkley, Arkansas, July 11, 1995.

Nash, Thelma Woods. [b. unknown] Forrest City, Arkansas, July 12, 1995.

Woods, Delores Twillie [b. 1925] Forrest City, Arkansas, July 12, 1995.