**Appendix 4**

**The Richer Colonial South: More Evidence**

This appendix adds two kinds of exhibits. The first amplifies the main text’s point that the income advantage of the colonial South took the form of a different occupational mix, rather than a pay advantage for given occupations. The second adds two new data displays for the Upper South.

**Accounting for income gaps between regions**

The text of the article says that the striking income gaps in favor of the South in 1774 were not due to income differences for given occupations. Rather they were due to differences in property per household and occupational mix, the latter due to differences that related to the capital cost of getting established in the rural south. Appendix Table A4.1 below quantifies this point, accounting for the differences in average incomes for the households of the South versus the four Middle Colonies (NY, NJ, PA, and DE). The inter-regional gap to be “explained” in accounting terms was wide: $705 per free Southern household versus $340 per free household the Middle Colonies, or $461 versus $329, respectively, if slave households were included.

Comparing the populations of free households alone, as in the upper panel of Table A4.1 confirms that hypothetically giving the Middle Colonies the pay rates of the South would raise free incomes only by 13 percent (from $340 to $385), far short of the 107 percent gaps we observe. The rest (the implicit 87%) would be explained by the remaining differences in occupational mix. If instead the Middle Colonists had kept their incomes for each occupation but had adopted the Southern occupational mix, Middle Colonies’ average free incomes would have jumped to $578, a gain of 70 percent, crediting pay differences with only 30 percent of the observed gap. (The 13 percent and the 70 percent do not add to 100 percent, because they come from different hypothetical experiments.)

A similar result obtains from projecting the changes in free occupations or pay onto the whole population of households, including slaves. As shown in the lower half of Appendix Table A4.1, the importance of occupational mix looks more extreme. Letting the South keep its occupational income rates, but converting Southern planters into Middle Colony craftsmen and the like, would yield a hypothetical income average that is even lower than in the actual Middle Colonies, because these transformed free Southerners would still be keeping their slaves.

**Further evidence on the Upper South**

As noted in the text of the article, our estimates of the income structure for the South are based on an occupational structure that adjusts Alice Hanson Jones’s structure only by using data from three rural North Carolina counties 1779-1782. This raises the possibility that we have under-represented the upper South (MD plus VA, including the future DC and WV), or roughly the Chesapeake. We therefore need to add what we can about this region. As it turns out, doing so does not overturn the point that poor whites were a much smaller share of the colonial Southern free population than they were to become in the antebellum nineteenth century.

Scholars have offered abundant evidence of inequality in the rural colonial Chesapeake. This might seem to contradict our article’s emphasis on the lack of poverty among white households. We find little contradiction, however, because their “poverty” threshold appears to have been higher in that literature than in the literature on poverty in Philadelphia, New York City, Boston and the Northern countryside. For example, the title of Gregory Stiverson’s *Poverty in a Land of Plenty: Tenancy in Eighteenth-Century Maryland* (1977) reveals a half-empty, half-full glass. As the title implies, his poverty population consisted of tenant farm operators rather than hired hands or the unemployed. One symptom of their poverty was “the inability of tenants to acquire extrafamilial laborers” (p. 138). While that might bespeak poverty among tenant farmers, it could also reflect a scarcity of free or indentured white labor for hire. Indeed, of the completely landless tenants, 26 percent paid enough to own at least one slave (pp. 146-147). Their poverty appears to have been less deep than that of the paupers in Philadelphia or Boston. Similarly, in Allan Kulikoff’s (1986, Chapter 4) careful treatment of inequality in the colonial Chesapeake the featured bottom group consisted of tenant farm operators with modest, but positive, wealth.

Loudoun County Virginia 1787. We can set boundaries on the poverty share among free whites in the colonial Upper South by drawing on a special tax return for Loudoun County Virginia in 1787 (Schreiner-Yantis and Love 1987, pp. 23-69). In that year, the number of free households might have been 2,718 if we use our consistent demographic estimate of the household population – 2,702 free white males 21 and older, plus one-tenth of the free nonwhite population = 16 -- and assume that the county grew as fast between 1787 and 1790 as all Virginia grew between 1780 and 1790. It turns out that the number of households listed in the assessments, 2,879, roughly matches the total number of free households, as was the case in those three North Carolina counties used in our estimates. Note that this near-equality is unlike the greater shares of un-assessed persons in the urban North and rural Massachusetts.

Of those listed in the tax assessments, what share could have been poor enough to avoid being taxed, or “tithed” in the source records? We begin with the easiest part of the evidence: fully 82.1 percent of free household heads were deemed taxable, and were tithed. Most of the remaining 18 percent of free household heads resident in the county probably also had significant assets. To judge how many of them did, and how many were truly too poor to have assessable assets, we have to wade a bit into the details of the 1787 Loudoun County return. Aside from that 82 percent clearly taxed, here are the other groups to consider:

*Group 1:* Female heads of free households, or 3.8 percent of all free household heads. The law excused them from the tax, and most of them were explicitly listed as “not tithable”. Yet virtually all (96 %) of those explicitly listed as “not tithable” were listed as having slaves and/or livestock, and thus probably not poor.

*Group 2*: Tenant household heads not having the same surname as the property owner listed just above them. These were the remaining 14.3 percent of the estimated number of free households. No property detail is listed for them. This 14.3 percent is our main suspect as a group of households of whom some could have been truly poor.

Beyond those we judge from the archival record to have been local household, here are two other groups that one might wish to consider as possibly local and poor, even though we have not considered them local households:

*Group 3:* white male household heads 21 and older who were explicitly listed as “not tithable”. These amounted to 2.1 percent of our count of free households. Yet for two reasons they may not have been poor locals. First, many were excused from the tax either because they were residents of other counties owning property in Loudoun County, and thus not local household heads. Others were excused because they held a special profession, such as “clergyman, constable, governor, or professor.” Such sub-groups were presumably not poor. Second, again, as noted for female household heads, virtually all of these were listed as having slaves and/or livestock.

*Group 4:* Persons of the same family name listed right under the assessed person, with no asset detail for these family members. We consider these not to be household heads, and thus do not consider them as separate households to be labeled poor or not.

From the Loudoun tax return, we conclude that only a small share could have been poor. It would have consisted of some unknown part of Group 2’s 14.3 percent of all households. Even if all these were poor, the poverty share would be lower among free Loudoun County whites than among residents of Northern colonies.

The Richmond census of 1782. Another glimpse into the chances of being free and poor in the colonial South comes from that special census of the rural town of Richmond Virginia in 1782, as mentioned in the article’s text. In that year of its becoming the new state capital, the town had a population of only 972, of which 409 were slaves. Fortunately, the census included occupations and information on ownership of land, slaves, and other assets, helping us decide which households could have been poor.

 Appendix Table A4.2 shows that the maximum share of free household heads that could have been poor was 21.3 percent, or just 9.8 percent among white males. Not all of the 21.3 percent would have been poor, and the true poverty share in Richmond would probably not have exceed that in the eight towns of rural Chester County, Pennsylvania in 1799-1802, as shown in the lower panel of Table A4.2. Of the nearly half of Chester County household heads without a recorded occupation, 41 percent, or 19.4 percent of the total households, were what Lucy Simler called “freemen and inmates”, whom she considered “landless wage earners.” Though we don't know what share of these 19.4 percent were poor or had zero wealth, either in Richmond or in Chester County, the poverty share among free residents of small towns would not have been higher in the upper south than in the Middle Colonies. And given the near absence of poor free whites in the Lower South, versus the widespread poverty in New England, the additional evidence supports the view that poverty was less prevalent in the South than in the North, as of 1774.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Table A4.1. Accounting for the higher colonial Southern incomes in 1774** |
|  | Result:  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | In 1774, unlike 1860 and later, the South had a very different mix of free men's  |
|  | occupations, with a much higher propertied share and fewer unskilled. |  |
|  | Differences in occupation-specific incomes explain very little of the South's |
|  | high average incomes.  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  | Average $ incomes from |  |  |
| *Free households* | Own labor | Property | All sources |  |  |
| “Actual” Middle Colonies | 231 | 109 | 340 |  |  |
| “Actual” South | 449 | 256 | 705 |  |  |
| Synthetic free South, using the  |  |  |  |  |
|  | free Middle Colonists' -- |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | mix of occupations | 288 | 97 | 385 |  |  |
|  | mix of average incomes | 321 | 257 | 578 |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| *All households, including slaves and servants* |  |  |  |
| “Actual” Middle Colonies | 226 | 103 | 329 |  |  |
| “Actual” South | 312 | 149 | 461 |  |  |
| Synthetic South, using the  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | free Middle Colonists' -- |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | mix of occupations | 218 | 56 | 275 |  |  |
|  | mix of average incomes | 237 | 150 | 387 |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Notes:  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Calculations based on the file “American Incomes 1774” at http://gpih.ucdavis.edu |
| “Mix of occupations” combines the Middle Colonies' counts of free household heads |
|  | with the South's occupation-specific average incomes. |  |  |
| “Mix of average incomes” combines Middle Colonies' occupation-specific average |
|  | incomes with the South's counts of the occupations of free household heads.  |
| No synthetic changes were made in the numbers of the retained earnings |  |
|  | of slaves and servants. |  |  |  |  |  |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Table A4.2.**  | **Household Heads, Richmond Virginia in 1782** |
|  |  |  |  |
| (A.) By sex and race |  | Heads that could |  |
|  |  | have been low- |  |
|  | All household | status and/or |  |
|  | heads | zero wealth | Percentages |
|  |  |  |  |
| White males | 122 | 12 | 9.8 |
| White females | 14 | 13 | 92.9 |
| Free mulatto males | 3 | 3 | 100.0 |
| Free mulatto females | 2 | 2 | 100.0 |
| Sum | 141 | 30 | 21.3 |
|  |  |  |  |
| (B.) occupational shares | Richmond | Chester Co., PA |
|  | (percentages) | Virginia, 1782 | 1799-1802 |
| Group 1 = Official & professional | 12.1 | 1.0 |
| Group 2 = Merchant & shopkeepers | 31.9 | 4.3 |
| Group 3 = Manufacturing and mining | 20.6 | 15.9 |
| Group 4 = Construction trades | 8.5 | 4.6 |
| Group 5 = Agric, forestry, fisheries | 0.7 | 19.9 |
| Group 6 = Laborers & menial | 5.7 | 5.5 |
| Group 7 = Males, no stated occ’n | 12.1 | 47.3 |
| Group 8 = Women with no occ'n | 8.5 | 1.5 |
|  |  | 100.0 | 100.0 |

Source: U.S Census Office … Virginia (1976), pp. 111-119.