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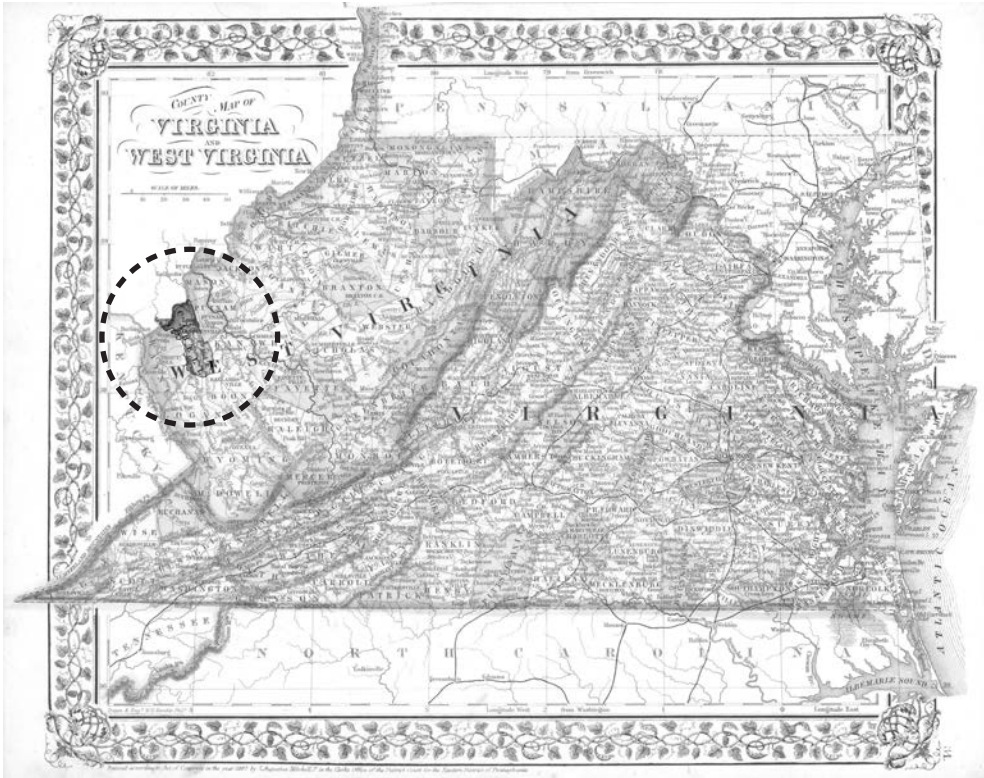
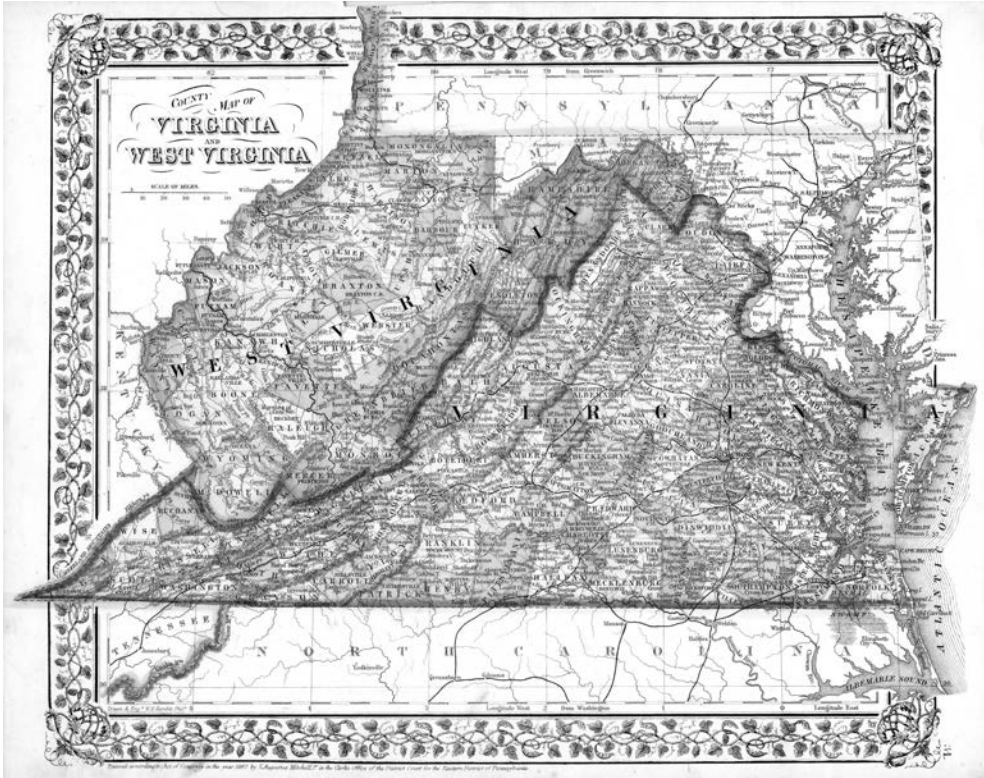
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The African American Experience in Antebellum Cabell County, Virginia/ West Virginia, 1810-1865

Cicero M. Fain III

Located on the Ohio River in western Virginia, adjacent to southeastern Ohio and eastern Kentucky, antebellum Cabell County lay at the fulcrum of east and west, north and south, freedom and slavery. Possessed of a bountiful countryside—replete with wildlife, timber, pristine streams and creeks, and rich river-bottom soil along the navigable Ohio and Guyandotte rivers—it held great potential for settlers who sought to put down roots. Drawn by its promising location and cheap, arable land, migrants settled in the county in increasing numbers in the early 1800s, and many settlers took their slaves with them. Yet like most counties on Virginia's western border, antebellum Cabell County was, in historian Ira Berlin's words, a "society with slaves" rather than a "slave society." In contrast to the rice and cotton-growing regions of the Deep South where the institution of slavery shaped the political economy and "the master-slave relationship provided the model for all social relations," slavery never became central to the economy or social structure of Cabell County. Unlike Kanawha County, Virginia, to the northeast (and from which it was formed in 1809), Cabell County lacked industrial slavery. Unlike Jefferson County in the lower Shenandoah Valley, it lacked the numbers to support plantation slavery. Distant from plantation society and the rigid social and cultural norms imposed by the planter elite of eastern Virginia, Cabell County reveals the significance of slavery even within a "society with slaves" like central Appalachia, the impact of western expansion on slavery, and the hardening of racial attitudes in the Ohio Valley. Equally important, the county's antebellum history helps illuminate the ways in which African Americans living in this border region exercised agency in order to better their condition.¹

By 1810, almost three thousand people resided in Cabell County, including 221 slaves and twenty-five Indians, or as one local historian notes, "about 1 ½ persons to the square mile." In the county's early years, it had only two villages of note. Guyandotte, formed in 1810 at the confluence of the Guyandotte and Ohio rivers, featured a number of businesses and a small but growing port.



*County Map of Virginia and West Virginia, by S. Augustus Mitchell Jr., 1867,
and same map with Cabell County, West Virginia, highlighted.*

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By the early 1830s, the town hosted many river travelers and benefitted from the construction of a road that connected it to the James River and Kanawha Turnpike at Barboursville, the county seat. Formed in 1813 and situated south of Guyandotte along the Guyandotte River, Barboursville was surrounded by large expanses of fertile land and plentiful timber. Farming and manufacturing formed the economic foundation of the village in its formative years. Increasing settlement in and near Guyandotte and Barboursville in the eastern part of the county close to the turnpike sparked economic growth throughout the early 1800s.²

The county's early white residents recognized the value of young slaves. In 1811, Samuel Witcher sued his father Daniel Witcher Sr. for possession of "negro man Harris, girl Patsy, girl Phebey, boy David, and girl Charlotte." In June 1813, William Dingess arrived in Cabell County accompanied by three enslaved boys, Steven, Simon, and Abram. In May 1814, John Chapman settled in the county with his slaves, seventeen-year-old Jo and fifteen-year-old Frank. In November 1814, an unidentified individual brought Barbary, a five-year-old "malotte" (mulatto) from North Carolina. By 1815, the county's eighty-nine slaveholders owned 219 slaves, an average of two and a half slaves per household. Through the mid-1800s, the low population density, geographic isolation, and preponderance of small farms worked by yeoman farmers facilitated more personal relationships between masters and slaves than on the larger plantations of eastern Virginia.³

However, masters' familiarity with their slaves did not necessarily lead to more instances of manumission in Cabell County. In 1806, the state of Virginia required manumitted blacks to leave the state within twelve months or face re-enslavement. The law effectively acted as a deterrent to manumission throughout the state, and none occurred in Cabell County between 1809 and 1817. When manumission did take place, local masters rarely freed more than one or two slaves at a time, and those freed were often older slaves. The first manumission in the county occurred in 1817 when the court recognized the "extraordinary services" of "Pealias Margaret, a woman of color," and ordered her "emancipated, liberated, and free[d] from all kinds of compulsory and involuntary servitude as a slave." The court also granted her "liberty to live and reside within this county," a concession made possible by an 1816 act of the Virginia Assembly that enabled a slave emancipated after 1806 to apply to remain in the state if he or she demonstrated "extraordinary merit."⁴

Table 1.1⁵

Antebellum Cabell County Population

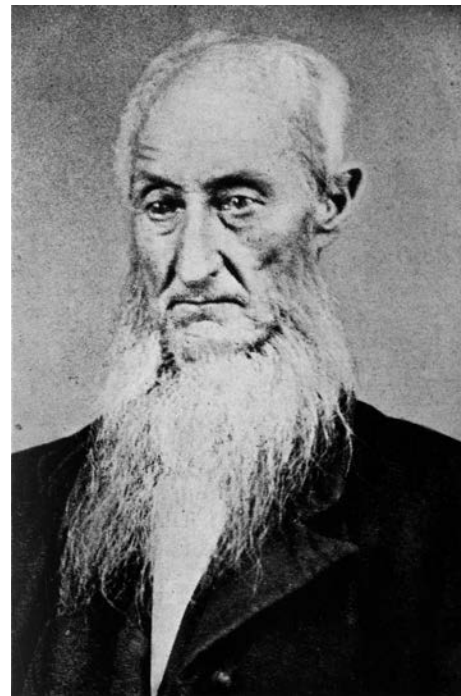
	1810	1820	1830	1840	1850	1860
Slave	221	392	561	567	389	305
Free Black	1	9	60	64a	29	24
White	2717	4388	5263	7532	5881	7691
Total	2963	4789	5884	8163	6299	8020

a) Includes forty-one slaves manumitted by Sampson Sanders.

Table 1.2
Antebellum African American Population: Cabell County, Virginia.

	1810		1820		1830		1840		1850		1860	
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Slave	221	206	186	289	272	273	294	190	198	136	169	
Free	1	2	7	2	3	33	23	15	14	9	15	
Total	222	208	193	291	275	306	317	205	212	145	184	

But acts of manumission also came subject to conditions. All former slaves who wanted to remain in Virginia were required to apply to their county court for permission to stay. If successful in their petition, they had to carry their manumission papers with them at all times and renew their request to stay each year. In 1823, the state toughened its restrictions against free blacks by mandating that they could be jailed or “hired out” for non-payment of debts, destitution, and other reasons. Some slaveholders imposed additional hardships on manumitted people. The October 1821 will of Esther Russell granted freedom to Samuel, “a Negro man,” and bequeathed him fifteen acres of land on Four Pole Creek during his life. Russell also gave Samuel “the grey horse and red cow with a white spot in her forehead, this to enable said Samuel to raise his small children until they can become serviceable to mine.” In short, Russell freed Samuel but kept his children bound in the shackles of slavery, with serious consequences for his family. In June 1822, Samuel petitioned the county court to remain in Cabell County, but the court denied his petition after deeming “his testimony as to extraordinary acts of merit” “insufficient.” Despite state restrictions, manumissions occurred in Cabell County in subsequent years. In 1824, William McComas freed Leslie, a man of color. Burwell Spurlock twice freed slave women, manumitting Jane in 1831 and Lucy five years later. In contrast to its 1823 decision ordering the emancipated “Negro” Samuel to leave the state, the Cabell County court in 1836 approved the petition of former slaves Jack and Lewis to remain in the county. What combination of moral, political, or financial reasons prompted slaveholders to free their human property cannot be determined. However, the black people they manumitted left the county within the stipulated year unless they received permission from the county court to remain.⁶



Rev. Burwell Spurlock (1790-1879). George Selden Wallace, *Cabell County Annals and Families* (Richmond: Garrett and Massie, 1935).
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In part, former slaves sought to remain in the county or in close proximity to it because adjacent states restricted or forbid the settlement of free blacks. Neighboring Kentucky was a slave state and had its own restrictions. The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 had prohibited slavery north of the Ohio River, but the antebellum state constitutions of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois contained “black laws” that included provisos against the immigration of free blacks. Moreover, many whites in southern Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, especially former residents of the South, harbored racial animosity toward African Americans and worried about economic competition from free blacks and runaway slaves who settled north of the Ohio River. In 1830, white residents in Portsmouth, Ohio, a key station on the Underground Railroad located forty-five miles upriver from Cabell County, forced approximately eighty blacks to leave the town. Though county and state officials did not enforce state black laws uniformly, white citizens invoked them when they felt threatened, harassing and employing violence to remove free blacks.⁷

Whether enslaved or free, black labor played a significant role in Cabell County’s prosperity. Moreover, slaves recognized the value of their labor and used this knowledge to advance their interests and welfare, as the Wilson family history reveals. Born into slavery in 1827 in the eastern part of Virginia, George Wilson was sold to Fredrick Beuhring of Cabell County at the age of eight. At some point, Wilson married slave Dorcas Franklin, a native of the western part of the state, and their union produced twelve children of whom eight, five boys and three girls, were enslaved. Prior to the Civil War, Beuhring agreed to manumit Wilson in exchange for six hundred dollars, consisting of three hundred dollars cash and Wilson’s note promising to pay the remainder. Wilson raised the money in part by working as a mason on the construction of the Guyandotte Bridge, completed in 1852. Listed as a free-man in the 1860 census, Wilson relocated to Lawrence County, Ohio, following the Emancipation Proclamation and after he had paid his entire debt to Beuhring.⁸

The most notable case of manumission in Cabell County occurred in 1849 when wealthy slaveholder Sampson Sanders freed fifty-one slaves, nearly one fourth of the 218 slaves manumitted that year in Virginia. Remarkably, Sanders’s will gave his former slaves fifteen thousand dollars, and encouraged them to take materials they needed from his estate. In all, Sanders spent more than forty-five thousand dollars freeing his slaves. Before their journey to their new home in Cass County, Michigan, Sanders “selected lawyers to go with the group to protect them in their travels, making sure everyone purchased good property, and ensuring they were fairly treated in all the legal dealings.” The party, including seven infants under two years of age and two eighty-year-old grandparents, traveled down the Guyandotte and Ohio rivers on a flotilla of rafts carrying their personal belongings, essential equipment and supplies, and assorted livestock. After reaching Cincinnati, they connected by train to Elkhorn, Indiana, where they

transferred to wagons for the fifteen-mile journey to Calvin Township, Cass County. The journey took three full days. Upon their arrival into the “comparative wilderness of Cass County,” where the free black population totaled around three hundred forty, each family received a tract of eighteen acres of land and a log cabin. The aggregate amount of land totaled nearly seven hundred connected acres.⁹

The censuses between 1820 and 1850 show the center of U.S. population moving west over time across present-day West Virginia, “a slow wagon of popular political weight moving west . . . into the Ohio Valley.” As a result, Ohio and the Old Northwest represented the center of the U.S. population by 1860. Western Virginia shared in this growth and recent studies refute the myth of a subsistent and “culturally and geographically isolated” Appalachia. By the mid-nineteenth century, both Guyandotte and Barboursville were vibrant villages, with the population of Guyandotte reaching one thousand in 1850. Towns like Guyandotte and Barboursville linked the less developed rural backcountry of preindustrial western Virginia to regional and national markets. The two towns exemplified what historical sociologist Wilma Dunaway describes as “periphery” and “semi-periphery,” the first and second of three interdependent tiers of regional development. They served as regional entrepôts and conduits within an expanding web of national commerce, prefiguring the post-Civil War development of the region’s industrial economy. During the early 1850s, dams and locks built on the Guyandotte River allowed navigation southward into the Guyandotte Valley, boosting commerce to and from the town. Guyandotte served as a transshipment point for timber, animal pelts, agricultural products, and slaves, and its future looked bright. The *Guyandotte Herald* predicted continued growth for the town, arguing that “once the Guyandotte [River] is fairly opened, the increase of business will be beyond conception.” By the early 1850s, the town served as the termination point of a stage line from Staunton that carried “a great many travelers . . . eastward or westward,” as well as “the landing place of a great number of hands in transporting salt down the Kanawha and Ohio Rivers on their return to the Kanawha Salt Works.”¹⁰

Barboursville was a bustling manufacturing center containing a number of business establishments that produced fan mills, furniture, hats, wagons, buggies, and harnesses. The town had a tannery, cooper, tailors, blacksmiths, shoemakers,



Frederick G. L. Beuhring (1792-1859).
From George Selden Wallace, *Cabell County Annals and Families* (Richmond: Garrett and Massie, 1935).
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and several livery stables. A large mill cut oak planks up to thirty-six feet in length for steamboat bottoms and forwarded them to Jeffersonville, Indiana, on barges built in Barboursville. Along with timber and grain, hogs played a vital role in the regional economy, with local butchering and packing plants shipping their products to markets in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia. Cabell County's expanding economy attracted a growing number of businessmen, lawyers, politicians, and visitors to the region. Many newcomers arrived via stagecoaches that loaded and unloaded on Main Street and they stayed in the hotels that dotted the street.¹¹



Suspension bridge at Guyandotte, West Virginia. From George Selden Wallace, *Cabell County Annals and Families* (Richmond: Garrett and Massie, 1935).

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Steamboats employing black labor plied the rivers of the region and deposited visitors and freight at Barboursville and Guyandotte. In early 1855, the double-decker steamboat *R. H. Lindsey* docked at Barboursville where “black porters assisted the ladies off the deck and onto the Barboursville landing, as eager boys stood by to carry their luggage to one of the fine hotels.” Steamboats offered African American laborers autonomy they could not find on land. Sometime in the late 1820s or early 1830s, thirteen-year-old fugitive slave Joseph Jones obtained work as a “deck sweep” on a steamboat passing Point Pleasant, Virginia, on its way to Cincinnati. By the end of Jones’s three-year term, during which he visited the small black communities in Ohio towns such as Gallipolis, Point Pleasant, Ripley, and Burlington, he had learned to read and write. He also “advanced far enough

in arithmetic to take care of his accounts[;] that is, he had mastered the four fundamentals and that was considered a good education in that day.” How far the racial and social dynamics of the steamboat extended to the small ports that dotted the Ohio Valley is unclear. Still, the greater social fluidity and openness associated with commercial port towns, appears to have enabled African Americans to carve out autonomous spaces unavailable in a more closed slave society.¹²

Such independence was possible in part because slavery never flourished in the region. As one scholar notes, “in the decades between 1840 and 1860, the demand for slave labor in the Gulf States caused the bulk of slaves” to be sold there. Cabell County dentist and slaveholder William F. Dusenberry recorded the decline of slavery in his diary, written between 1855 and 1871. In 1856, for example, he noted both the sale of a “nigger woman” for “only \$382” and that “George Kilgore today set free the nigger woman he paid \$1600 for last fall.” Overall, the county’s slave population, assisted by sale, manumission, and flight, decreased by 180 (31 percent) between 1840 and 1850. In 1850, only 395 African Americans and six free blacks (five males and one female) resided in Cabell County, comprising just 6.1 percent of the total population of 5,910. That same year, neighboring Wayne County had four thousand five hundred inhabitants and 189 slaves.¹³

Despite the fall in the county’s black population, Dusenberry’s diary provides evidence of black peoples’ self-advocacy, community, and spirituality. In 1850, Dusenberry attended a service by “Uncle Tom,” a slave and noted local Baptist preacher. An 1855 entry describes “a nigger meeting in the School House this morning,” at which “Nigger Tom preached Morris’ nigger woman’s funeral.” That same year, Judy, “hired for one year for \$40,” traveled frequently to “meetings, quilting, to help, [and] to church.” An 1856 entry notes that “Tom” delivered a funeral sermon for a boy accidentally drowned a month earlier to a slave gathering of twenty. Local church records reveal that some enslaved people could read and write and that they sought opportunities for religious observation. As one county authority reports, “Sometimes the slave owners took slaves to preaching as both attended the same service. Other times the slaves borrowed a buggy and drove themselves to the religious meetings.”¹⁴

In short, the county’s enslaved people attempted to carve out autonomous spaces. They gathered together, observed their own cultural and religious practices, and traveled unsupervised. Their actions suggest that they recognized the most constructive ways to engage the system and complicates Wilma Dunaway’s characterization of slavery within the Mountain South as harsher than the institution in the Deep South. Nonetheless, enslaved people’s desire to assert their independence and humanity could lead to violence. According to William Dusenberry, in 1856 his wife and cousin “attempted to lick their nigger [and] she licked them.” The family found the altercation so mortifying they sold the

slave woman in Kentucky two days later. Yet despite the dangers of self-assertion, slaves' mobility, cultural activities, communication, and willingness to engage in physical altercations suggests, as historian John Blassingame has noted, that "however oppressive or dehumanizing" slavery was, "the struggle for survival was not severe enough to crush all of the slave's creative instincts."¹⁵

Enslaved people also participated in more surreptitious forms of agency. By the mid-1800s, Cabell County's citizens and residents could not avoid the growing debate over slavery and its place within the state's political economy. The county became a crossroads and a flashpoint, located on the axis of the North and South, slavery and freedom. While the county's diverse population—black and white, slaves and slaveholders, free and enslaved African Americans, abolitionists and proslavery whites—shared an uneasy dance that reflected the troubled state of the nation, local blacks found ways to exploit the situation. As early as 1827, local residents reported escaped slaves, some assisted by white opponents of slavery. Twenty years later, residents still worried about the issue. William Dusenberry mentioned two separate incidents of attempted runaways in his diary. In the first, he described the Ohio capture and Kentucky jailing of "Charley Morris's Nigger who ran off last Sunday," then noted the capture and return of "Isaac, Abraham, Leonard, and Levi," four additional fugitive slaves belonging to Morris. Dusenberry's second diary entry describes a group of slaves who "intended to meet with a lot of other niggers about three miles below Guyandotte and there cross the Ohio." Cabell County's largest slaveholder, Capt. William A. Jenkins, also had problems with runaway slaves. In 1827, local slave catcher James Shelton sued Jenkins for failing to pay him for the return of one slave, and in 1848 another slave catching dispute compelled Jenkins to appear again before the county court. Fugitive slaves, often pursued by slave hunters, traversed the rolling hills, creek beds, and trails of western Virginia, crossed the Ohio River, and sought assistance from free blacks and abolitionists in Ohio. African Americans William Chavis and James Dicher, for example, helped transport runaways escaping from Greenup County, Kentucky, and Cabell County, Virginia. The large number of runaways belies the claim of one early local historian that there existed "no crisis in the affairs of the people" of antebellum Cabell County.¹⁶

These escapes, moreover, occurred prior to the arrival in Cabell County of a group of abolitionists led by Massachusetts Congressman Eli Thayer. In 1857, after visiting Ashland and Catlettsburg, Kentucky, and Guyandotte, Thayer started an abolitionist community at Ceredo, Virginia, a few miles south of Barboursville and Guyandotte. Ceredo residents helped fugitive slaves across the river to nearby Quaker Bottom (later Proctorville), Ohio, where some found sanctuary and eventual safe passage on the Underground Railroad to Canada. Regional newspapers, reflecting the growing national controversy over slavery, voiced conflicting attitudes toward Thayer's settlement. In May 1857, Ashland, Kentucky's *American Union* extended "a brother's hand and brother's welcome" to the northern migrants. A



Albert Gallatin Jenkins, Brigadier General, C.S.A. (1830-1864). From George Selden Wallace, *Cabell County Annals and Families* (Richmond: Garrett and Massie, 1935).

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Eli Thayer (1819-1899), carte de visite.

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month later, however, Charleston's *Kanawha Valley Star* pronounced that the goals of Thayer and his associates were "diametrically opposed to the cherished institutions" of Virginia. In August, Cabell County slaveholder and future Confederate general Albert Gallatin Jenkins (son of William Jenkins), visited Ceredo. Like Thayer, Jenkins had recently won a congressional seat, but as a Democrat. Republican Thayer greeted Jenkins politely but the slaveholder remained "a surly, sour and malevolent spectator." The next day, Thayer recalled, two African Americans posing as runaway slaves en route to Canada, sought assistance from the "Neighbors." Suspecting that Jenkins had sent the two men to entrap Ceredo residents and provoke local white hostility, Thayer advised the men "to return home," adding that "an attempted escape would bring hardships upon their own people." Publicly, Thayer stressed that he liked "engine power better than Negro power" and minimized Ceredo's antislavery mission. But slaveholders like Jenkins had reason to worry. Thayer sought a free labor colony in Virginia because he believed it would prove detrimental to the continuance of slavery.¹⁷

The open and covert resistance of enslaved people kept the controversy over slavery stirring. In 1857, four runaway slaves (perhaps the same four Dunesberry noted in his diary) were returned to Charles Morris after their capture in Lawrence County, Ohio. Fearing further slave escapes, Morris moved his slaves to Wytheville, Virginia, when the Civil War erupted. Fugitive Asbury Parker had more success than Morris's unfortunate slaves. In 1857, he fled to Ohio, crossing

the river near Guyandotte to escape from his Greenup (now Boyd) County, Kentucky, owner James Rowe. Conductors on the “railroad” advised Parker “to act like a free man” during his journey to Canada, where he joined former slaves from Cabell County. In 1875, a local newspaper reported the return to Cabell County of “a couple of old people,” aged eighty-five and ninety, “formerly slaves belonging to the Holderby estate” who had escaped with their family in 1858. “They say,” the paper added, that “they stole a skiff . . . and floated down to Burlington, O[hio], where they got a wagon and went into the country.”¹⁸

In 1860, Virginia’s slave population totaled 498,887, but only 12,771 lived in the forty-eight counties that would become the state of West Virginia. Just 329 African Americans, representing 4.1 percent of the total county population of 8,020, resided in Cabell County. Fully 305 of the county’s African Americans were enslaved by the county’s eight-four slaveholders, an average of 3.1 slaves per household (see Table 1.3). Guyandotte had the largest number of slaveholders (twenty seven) and slaves (101), for an average of 3.7 slaves per household. With seventeen slaves, Guyandotte resident Susan Holderby was the largest slaveholder in the district. Cabell Court House district contained the second largest totals, with twenty-two slaveholders and eighty-eight slaves, an average of four slaves per household. The district contained the county’s second and third largest slaveholders, William Williams who owned fourteen slaves and John Morris who owned twelve. Of the seven remaining county districts, only Mud Bridge had a comparable number of slaveholders and slaves per household as Guyandotte and Cabell Court House.¹⁹ The county’s slaves recognized these conditions and developed strategies to exploit them.

Table 1.3²⁰**1860 Cabell County Slave Population**

Age	Black Female		Mulatto Female		Black Male		Mulatto Male	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
0-9	32	26.6	19	38.8	26	27.4	16	39
10-19	27	22.5	17	34.7	27	28.4	11	26.8
20-29	18	15	8	16.3	19	20	6	14.6
30-39	17	14.2	2	4.1	9	9.5	3	7.3
40-49	18	15	2	4.1	8	8.4	0	0
50-59	5	4.2	1	2	3	3.1	4	9.8
60+	3	2.5	0	0	3	3.1	1	2.4
Total	120	100	49	100	95	99.9	41	99.9

Following a longstanding trend, black female slaves outnumbered black male slaves in Cabell County, an imbalance that still existed after emancipation and when black migrants began arriving in the early 1870s. Slaveholders favored female slaves in part because they (along with male slaves younger than twelve) were not taxed. Four other factors help explain the gender imbalance among

Cabell County's enslaved population. Female slaves cost less than enslaved men, slave children inherited the status of their mothers, and enslaved men were more able and thus more likely run away. In addition, in a society of slaves where slave ownership was more a status symbol than an economic necessity, many slaveholders employed enslaved women who worked as domestics. In 1860, Cabell County's enslaved population was also quite young, with 30 percent (ninety three) of the county's slaves nine or younger. Slaves under the age of twenty constituted 57 percent of the county's total (ninety-five females and eighty males). Most striking, those under thirty represented 74 percent of the county's enslaved population, with 121 females and 105 males (226 total) in this category. Cabell County's black population was also growing lighter in skin color. In 1860, black slaves outnumbered mulattoes 215 to ninety (70.5 percent to 29.5 percent), but the county's mulatto population was growing faster. Of the 136 males, ninety five (70 percent) were black and forty one (30 percent) mulatto. Of the 169 females, 120 (71 percent) were black and forty nine (29 percent) mulatto. Reflecting broader trends, the county's mulatto population was concentrated among the young as increasing numbers of mulatto parents produced greater numbers of mulatto children.²¹

Examining the Greenbottom plantation, at "4,444 acres, the largest . . . plantation in Cabell, Wayne and Mason counties in 1850 and 1860," provides further insight into the nature of black life in antebellum and immediate postbellum Cabell County. Located in the upper northwestern corner of the county adjacent to the Ohio River, Greenbottom was owned and operated by the influential Jenkins family, most notably businessman William Jenkins and his son Albert Jenkins. In 1850, the Jenkins family owned fifty-eight slaves, twenty-three males and thirty-five females, with 88 percent of the slave population aged thirty-five or younger (including 91 percent of the males and 83 percent of the females). Fully 65 percent of the male slaves and 54 percent of the female slaves were fifteen or younger, ensuring that a significant number of the Jenkins's slave population entered their prime labor and reproductive periods in the 1850s. The 1850 slave schedule identifies only one mulatto among the Jenkins's slaves.²²

In 1850, Capt. Jenkins valued the plantation at eighty thousand dollars, with fifteen hundred acres out of 2,395 improved. Upon his death in 1859, his three sons (William, Thomas, and Albert) took over. By 1860, they had expanded the total improved acreage to seventeen hundred acres and enjoyed substantial wealth, with Greenbottom's aggregate land value totaling 195,000 dollars (sixty-five thousand dollars each). The second most valuable estate in the county, owned by John Morris, was valued at 105,000 dollars, followed by Peter Buffington's two farms valued at fifty thousand dollars. In 1860, the Jenkins brothers possessed the county's most valuable assortment of farm implements and equipment and produced its most valuable crop yields. The Jenkins brothers' slaves produced the highest yield of wheat (two thousand two hundred bushels) and Indian corn



Slave quarters, built about 1830, Cabell County, western Virginia. From George Selden Wallace, *Cabell County Annals and Families* (Richmond: Garrett and Massie, 1935).

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(seven thousand bushels), and the second highest yield of potatoes (three hundred bushels) and butter (thirteen hundred pounds). The slaves also produced two hundred dollars worth of fruit and one hundred bushels of oats, tended the largest number of cattle (four hundred twenty five, compared with the next largest at one hundred fifty), the largest number of swine (three hundred, compared with the next largest at two hundred), the largest number of horses (forty-six, compared with sixteen on the next largest plantation), and the second largest number of milk cows (thirty four) and oxen (nineteen). Slaves on the plantation tended the county's most valuable livestock herd worth more than twelve thousand dollars (the next largest plantation had six thousand dollars worth of livestock). In 1850 and 1860, Greenbottom slaves did not make homemade manufactured goods such as the wine, maple syrup, beeswax, honey, molasses, and wood that neighboring farms produced. Nor did they raise tobacco, beans and peas, flax, grass seed, hay, produce, or buckwheat as on other plantations in the county. Slave labor on the Jenkins plantation revolved around the myriad tasks associated with field work, tending livestock, and raising horses.²³

In 1850, Cabell County's free blacks faced renewed threats. That year, a Virginia law "required an owner to provide for any freed slave for the rest of the slave's natural life," a potentially expensive proposition. The law also stipulated that "any former slave who remained in the state could be returned to servitude for failure to pay taxes, failing to show an acceptable means of support, forgetting to present

himself before the county justices each year, or simply by someone claiming that he was an escaped slave.” Between 1850 and 1860, the county court invariably allowed free blacks who registered to stay, but an 1861 court ruling reaffirmed that free blacks had to petition the court annually to remain in the county.²⁴

By 1860 only a few free blacks lived in the county. As the household head of a family of eight, including her six daughters and her sixty-five-year-old mother Delphia, thirty-eight-year-old Mary Haley was unique. Born a slave in 1822, she felt the impact of her enslaved status early in her life. At the age of six, Haley, her mother, and her five siblings—Nelson, Westly, Louisa, Randle, and America—were loaned out by her owner, Jacob Hite, to William Hite and Benjamin Brown. The following summer, Hite loaned the family out again, this time to Absolom and James Holderby. Haley remained a slave into adulthood, and by 1853, the year of the birth of her sister Georgiana, William Jenkins owned Haley and her mother. Despite the importance of slave labor on the Jenkins plantation, the family acquired their freedom within the decade. In 1860, Mary, now living in Guyandotte, was one of only twenty-four free people residing within the county, one of only two women who headed a household (along with twenty-year-old laundress Nancy Anderson), one of only three black heads of household (along with Isham Sanders and Lewis Fullerton), and head of the largest all-black household and family in the county. Moreover, her forty dollars of personal property made her the wealthiest free woman, and tied with Isham Sanders as the third wealthiest free person in the county (behind farmers Stephen Witcher and Lewis Fullerton).²⁵

While the county’s enslaved mulatto population comprised 29.5 percent of the slave population, the county’s free mulatto population comprised 42 percent (ten of twenty four) of the total free black population. Most lived in the county’s more populated districts. Five resided in Guyandotte Post Office, two each lived in Barboursville and Guyandotte townships, and one lived in Cabell Court House. All six free blacks residing in white households were mulatto. The 1860 census also reveals that more free black females lived in Cabell County than free black males, but the gender imbalance exceeded that within the slave population. While female slaves comprised 55.4 percent of the general slave population in 1860, free black females, assisted by the eight women in the Haley family, comprised 62.5 percent (fifteen of twenty four) of the county’s free black population. These fifteen resided in seven households, just over two per household, though removing the Haley women from the calculation results in an average of slightly more than one black female per household. The county’s free black population was also disproportionately older, with 59 percent aged thirty and above.²⁶

During the Civil War, the divided allegiances of the county’s populace made it a microcosm of the fractious sectional schism that produced the United States’ thirty-fifth state. In contrast to the voters of eastern Virginia,

Cabell County's citizens opted to remain within the Union. However, voters in the town of Guyandotte supported secession. Families within the county divided, often pitting brother against brother, and cousin against cousin. Historian Joe Geiger Jr., though recognizing the tentative nature of his totals, identifies fifty-five county residents who enlisted in the Union army, along with hundreds more who enlisted in the county but lived elsewhere, and 315 Confederate soldiers who either enlisted or resided in Cabell County. In July 1861, fighting erupted at Barboursville on Fortification Hill. Later that year, Union forces retaliated against a Confederate raid by nearly burning Guyandotte to the ground, "purportedly to prevent Confederates from returning for supplies." Union forces "completely gutted" Guyandotte's business district, burned the Buffington Mill and the Forest Hotel, torched the homes of "the town's most prominent secessionists," and even set ablaze the Baptist Church. Most county residents did not see slavery as the central issue of the war. Nonetheless, Confederate supporters feared the threat they believed the North posed to their way of life (including slavery), while pro-Union residents wished to free themselves from the social, economic, and political dominance of slaveholders in eastern Virginia.²⁷

Slaves in Cabell County, like those throughout the Ohio Valley, took advantage of the fluid state of affairs during the Civil War. Historian Forrest Talbott notes that the state's black population declined over 13 percent during the 1860s, while the white population grew 25 percent. In his study of fugitive slaves in Kentucky, historian J. Blaine Hudson concludes that "more fugitives crossed the Ohio River near Owensboro in four months in late 1861 than had done so in the previous fifty years." Historian Joe Trotter, discussing the flight of Ohio Valley blacks during the war, adds:

In rising numbers, fugitive slaves and free blacks left the Confederate states and moved into Union territory. Under the impact of wartime migration, Louisville's black population dramatically increased from 6,800 to nearly 15,000, Cincinnati's rose from 3,730 to 5,900, Pittsburgh's from less than 2,000 to 3,200, Evansville's from no more than 100 to 1,400.

Wartime migration also impacted the smaller towns dotting the region. Former slave John L. Jones recalled meeting "thousands of refugees" accompanying Union Gen. Joseph A. Lightburn's force down the Kanawha Valley in 1862. The slaves, Jones added, were "fleeing to a place of safety," and when "they landed at the wharf at Gallipolis [Ohio]" they "laughed, cried and shouted for hours. I have never seen people so happy as they were, some of them would get down and kiss the ground."²⁸

Slaves who fled the region “to make their war-born freedom secure in a free state” explain the drop in the county’s African American population from 329 in 1860 to 123 a decade later. Black flight also complicates local whites’ historical memory that they treated the county’s enslaved population with benevolence and paternalism. “With few exceptions,” one local white resident remembered, “the masters were faithful and kindly protectors of their wards; and for the most part the slaves looked upon their owners as their truest friends and only refuge both during and after slavery days.” But other whites, including Andy Gwinn of Lower Creek, Cabell County, lamented the loss of several of his slaves who fled during the war. Indeed, slaves in West Virginia were not freed by Abraham Lincoln’s 1863 Emancipation Proclamation (which freed slaves only in states currently in rebellion), but instead by an act passed by the state legislature in February 1865. Thus, slaves in West Virginia did not gain their freedom until near the end of the Civil War, two years after Lincoln’s Proclamation. For slaves who wanted to “seize the moment,” the legislature’s delay encouraged flight from the county. And though white residents sharply divided over the status of slavery and the question of immediate or gradual emancipation in the 1863 state constitution, they agreed to an exclusion policy that banned slave importation and free black migration into the state. Ultimately, Lincoln’s prerequisite for statehood—the passage of the Thirteenth Amendment—forced the hand of state legislators. Free blacks also left the county. By March 1863, most of the county’s free black residents, including the Wilson and Haley families, had resettled across the Ohio River in Union Township, Lawrence County.²⁹

Between 1860 and 1870 the black population of the region also declined because of lingering Confederate sentiment and limited economic opportunities. Some 20 percent of southern West Virginia’s black residents moved out of the state after emancipation. The black population of Kanawha County, home of Charleston, decreased by 5.4 percent, while it fell 18 percent in Monroe, 22 percent in Jefferson, and 36 percent in Greenbrier. In 1860, each of these counties had a black population that exceeded 10 percent. Black out-migration was accompanied by white in-migration to the region. By 1860, the Virginia counties that became West Virginia contained the largest percentage of whites among the southern slave states, while the black population totaled only 5.9 percent of the general population. Cabell County followed this trend; in 1860 it had the largest percentage of whites in its history, a percentage larger than in the rest of the counties that became West Virginia. Many white migrants who settled in the county were, like the northern-born Unionist William Dusenberry, unreformed racists. The “whitening” of the state and county complicated blacks’ quest for suffrage during the West Virginia’s formative years and contributed to the hardening of race relations during the Jim Crow era.³⁰

Table 1.4³¹**1860 Slave Population for Select Virginia Counties**

	Total Population	Slave	% of Slaves	Regional Location
Jefferson	14535	3960	27.2	Ridge and Valley
Kanawha	16150	2184	13.5	Appalachian Plateau
Berkeley	12525	1650	13.2	Ridge and Valley
Greenbrier	12211	1525	12.5	Appalachian Plateau
Monroe	10757	1114	10.4	Cumberland Plateau
Putnam	6301	580	9.2	Ohio Valley
Fayette	5997	271	4.5	Appalachian Plateau
Mason	9173	376	4.1	Ohio Valley
Cabell	8020	305	3.8	Ohio Valley
Wayne	6747	143	2.1	Ohio Valley
McDowell	1535	0	0	Cumberland Plateau

Table 1.5³²**Racial percentages for Southern Appalachians, 1790-1860**

Appalachian Counties of:	% White			% African-American			% Cherokee		
	1790	1820	1860	1790	1820	1860	1790	1820	1860
Alabama	B	83.8	77.6	B	9.8	22.0	95.0	6.4	0.4
Georgia	B	84.5	82.7	B	8.3	16.8	92.0	7.2	0.5
Kentucky	88.3	86.4	91.5	11.7	13.6	8.5	B	B	---
Maryland	89.3	80.6	87.6	10.7	19.4	12.4	B	B	---
North Carolina	78.1	79.1	84.8	8.1	14.1	13.8	14.8	6.8	1.4
South Carolina	91.3	76.6	78.0	8.7	23.4	22.0	B	B	---
Tennessee	84.1	88.9	87.5	7.9	9.9	12.2	8.0	1.2	0.3
Virginia	81.5	69.7	71.6	18.5	30.3	28.4	B	B	--
West Virginia	90.5	87.8	93.8	9.5	12.2	6.2	B	B	B
Region	85.0	79.0	84.0	10.6	19.3	15.7	4.4	1.7	0.3
Cabell County	B	91.6	95.9	---	8.4	4.1	B	1.0	---

Nonetheless, a few blacks remained with their former masters or their kin after emancipation. For most slaves, severing established routines, cultural practices, and social links, and contemplation of the real or imagined consequences of migration, required remarkable psychological strength. Moreover, former slaves' range of options differed markedly, and many concluded that it

was most reasonable to stay put. For example, Mary Lacy decided to remain near her former masters, the Jenkins family, despite the fact that William Jenkins's 1859 will instructed that she and her son George be sold to the highest bidder among his three sons. In 1870, the thirty-five-year-old "nanny" and her fifteen-year-old son and farm laborer, along with former slaves Christine (age twelve) and John P. (age three), moved into the household of James B. Bowlin, a white man, where she served as caretaker of the deceased Albert Jenkins's children. African American Anderson Rose, a thirty-five-year-old farm laborer, also joined the household. Later, Mary served as "nanny" for Thomas Jefferson Jenkins, son of William Jenkins, until his death in 1873. Only after Thomas Jenkins's passing did George and Mary, who stated that "she had seen too much death," leave the Jenkins family and settle elsewhere in the county. Like tens of thousands of southern freedpeople, Mary Lacy's social terrain lay among the interwoven contours of labor, family, community, and region. Thus, her decision to stay with her former masters was entirely rational. Most important, when she believed it was time to move on, she possessed the independence to do so.³³

The African American experience in antebellum Cabell County embodied and reflected the paradoxes, contradictions, and challenges of life within a "society with slaves" located on the borders of the South. The Cabell County story reveals the complexity, resiliency, and strength of enslaved and free black people who sought to exploit what opportunities existed to improve their welfare. Their responses to the Civil War, and to the divisions and violence within the county, reveal their agency and ingenuity. The war transformed Cabell County, confronting the county's African American population, former slaves and free blacks alike, and slaveholders with weighty choices. While many emancipated African Americans left the county to seek their future elsewhere, others opted to remain. Their decisions helped define the nature of culture, space, autonomy, and work in southern West Virginia's embryonic urban-industrial economy in the Jim Crow era.

1 Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge, Ma.: Harvard University Press, 1984), 8. When carved out of Kanawha County in 1809, Cabell County encompassed 1,750 square miles and included all of Lincoln and Wayne counties, a large part of Logan, Boone, and Putnam counties, and a small portion of Wyoming County. In 1824, Logan County was carved out Cabell, followed by Wayne County in 1842, Boone County in 1847, Putnam County in 1848, and Lincoln County in 1867, by which year Cabell County consisted of five districts and 282 square miles.

2 Oscar T. Atkins, *Cabell County, Virginia (now West Virginia) Families 1820* (Williamson, W.V.: Oscar T. Atkins, 1995), introduction. During the War of 1812 the British destroyed the first county census, taken in 1810, along with those of seventeen other Virginia counties. The 1820 census thus serves as the county's first extant federal population enumeration. Joe Geiger Jr., "The Tragic Fate of Guyandotte," *West Virginia History* 54 (1995), 29; Geiger, *Civil War in Cabell County, West Virginia: 1861-1865* (Charleston, W.V.: Pictorial Histories, 1991), 2-3.

- 3 Carrie Eldridge, *Cabell County (W) Virginia Minute Book 1, 1809-1815: An Abstract of the Combined "First" Minute and Law Order Books of Cabell County, VA/WV* (Athens, Ga.: Iberian, c. 1990s); Eldridge, *Cabell County (W) Virginia, Abstracts of Deed Book 1, 1808-1814* (Athens, Ga.: Iberian, 1996), 30, 40, 41.
- 4 Luther P. Jackson, "Manumission in Certain Virginia Cities," *Journal of Negro History* 15 (July 1930), 287-90. Jackson argues that the 1806 act demarcated the end of "the liberality and high idealism of the Revolutionary period" in Virginia. The state legislature acted in response to Toussaint L'Overture's revolution in Haiti and Gabriel Prosser's 1800 insurrection in Richmond, in addition to the development of the cotton gin. Virginia law also required slaveholders to provide for their former slaves to prevent them from becoming a burden to the community. See also Jane Purcell Guild, ed., *Black Laws of Virginia: A Summary of the Legislative Acts of Virginia Concerning Negroes from Earliest Times to the Present* (Richmond, Va.: Whittet and Shepperson, 1936), 72. On Margaret, see R. S. Douthat, comp., "Extracts from the Records of the County Court of Cabell County, West Virginia, from January 2, 1809 to July 6, 1863," Minute Book no. 2, p. 20, Cabell County Court House, Huntington, W.V. (hereafter CCCH).
- 5 Sources for Tables 1.1 and 1.2: United States Census Office, *Aggregate Amount of Each Description of Persons within the United States of America . . . in the Year 1810* (Washington, 1811); United States Census Office, *Fourth Census of United States . . . (1820)* (Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1821) (hereafter *Fourth Census of the United States*, 1820); J. D. B. Debow, *Statistical View of the United States . . . Being a Compendium of the Seventh Census . . . (1850)* (Washington: Beverly Tucker, 1854) (hereafter *Seventh Census of the United States*, 1850); J. C. G. Kennedy, *Population of the United States in 1860: Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census* (Virginia Slave Schedule for Cabell County) (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1864) (hereafter *Eighth Census of the United States*, 1860); Netti Schreiner-Yantis, *1815 Tax List of Cabell County, Virginia* (Springfield, Va.: n.p., 1971).
- 6 Guild, *Black Laws of Virginia*, 101. On Samuel, see Ancella Radford Bickley, "Black People and the Huntington Experience," in *Honoring Our Past: Proceedings of the First Two Conferences of West Virginia's Black History*, Joe W. Trotter Jr. and Bickley, eds. (Charleston, W.V.: Alliance for the Collection, Preservation, and Dissemination of West Virginia's Black History, 1991), 124-25; Carrie Eldridge, *Cabell County's Empire for Freedom: The Manumission of Sampson Sanders' Slaves* (Huntington, W.V.: John Deaver Drinko Academy for American Political Institution and Civic Culture, Marshall University, 1999), xi, 37. For Jane, see Douthat, "Extracts from the Records of the County Court of Cabell County," Minute Book no. 4, p. 121, CCCH.
- 7 "Runaway Slaves," *Ohio History Central: An On-Line Encyclopedia of Ohio History*, www.ohiohistorycentral.org/entry.php?rec=626 (accessed June 1, 2011); Joe W. Trotter Jr., *River Jordan: African American Urban Life in the Ohio Valley* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1998), 25. See also Stephen Middleton, *The Black Laws: Race and the Legal Process in Early Ohio* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2005). For Indiana, see Emma Lou Thornbrough, *The Negro in Indiana before 1900: A Study of a Minority* (1957; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993).
- 8 R. C. Hall, "George Wilson Story, Part One," "George Wilson Story, Part Two," and "George Wilson Story, Part Three," *Ironton Tribune*, July 28, Aug. 7, 1838, reprinted (2004), at www.lawrencecountyohio.com/black/stories/wilson1.htm; www.lawrencecountyohio.com/black/stories/wilson2.htm; and www.lawrencecountyohio.com/black/stories/wilson3.htm (accessed Jan. 24, 2007). The suspension bridge over the Guyandotte River built by the Guyandotte Bridge Company allowed travel west from the town of Guyandotte; see "1852-Guyandotte Bridge," www.bridgemeister.com/bridge.php?bid=40 (accessed Feb. 22, 2010).
- 9 Eldridge, *Cabell County's Empire for Freedom*, xiii, xiv, 51-55; George K. Hesslink, *Black Neighbors: Negroes in a Northern Rural Community* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1968), 44. Hesslink notes that with the arrival of the Sanders group, "the number of Negroes in the county rose to 389 with 158 of these clustered in Calvin Township. Thus, by 1850, 25.3 percent of the population of that township was Negro."
- 10 D. Shanet Clark, "Seceding from Secession: Geographic Factors in the Political History of Frontier Virginia and West Virginia, 1798-1863" (Apr. 2005), http://educationforum.ipbhost.com/index.php?showtopic=6377 (accessed Jan. 10, 2009); Robert D. Mitchell, *Appalachian Frontiers: Settlement, Society, and Development in the Preindustrial Era* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1991); Wilma A. Dunaway, *The First American Frontier: Transition to Capitalism in Southern Appalachia, 1700-1860* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 5-6 (quote), 17-19; Kenneth W. Noe, "Appalachia before Mr. Peabody: Some Recent Literature on the Southern Mountain Region," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 110, No. 1 (2002), 5-34; and Geiger, "Tragic Fate of Guyandotte," 29. Douthat, "Extracts from the Records of the County Court of Cabell County," Minute Book no. 6, p. 167, CCCH; *Seventh Census of the United States*, 1850.
- 11 Geiger, *Civil War in Cabell County*, 2-3; Ronald L. Lewis, *Transforming the Appalachian Countryside: Railroads, Deforestation, and Social Change in West Virginia, 1880-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 7, 39.

- 12 Frances B. Gunter, *Barboursville* (Barboursville, W.V.: F. B. Gunter, 1986), 21; J. W. Miller, *History of Barboursville Community (Cabell County, W. Va.)* (Morgantown, W.V.: Agricultural Extension Division, 1925); John L. Jones, *History of the Jones Family*, Nancy E. Aiken and Michel S. Perdreau, eds. (Bowie, Md.: Heritage Books, 2001), 3-27. For accounts of black river workers elsewhere, see Thomas C. Buchanan, *Black Life on the Mississippi: Slaves, Free Blacks, and the Western Steamboat World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); and Victoria L. Harrison, "Man in the Middle: Conway Barbour and the Free Black Experience in Antebellum Louisville," *Ohio Valley History* 10 (Winter 2010), 25-45.
- 13 Alruthus A. Taylor, "Making West Virginia a Free State," *Journal of Negro History* 6 (Apr. 1921), 132; Carrie Eldridge, *Looking at the Personal Diaries of William F. Dusenberry of Bloomingdale, Virginia, 1855, 1856, 1862, 1869, 1870, 1871* (Chesapeake, Oh.: C. Eldridge, 1992), 46, 52; Stephen Lewis, *An Overview of the History of Wayne County, West Virginia* (s.l.: n.p., c. 1990s), 18. The slave population of Cabell County declined from 567 in 1840, to 389 in 1850, to 305 in 1860; see Francis Amasa Walker, *The Statistics of the Population of the United States: Embracing the Tables of Race, Nationality, Sex, Selected Ages, and Occupations . . . Compiled from the Original Returns of the Ninth Census (June 1, 1870)* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1872) (hereafter *Ninth Census of the United States, 1870*).
- 14 Eldridge, *Diaries of William F. Dusenberry*, 1, 5, 7, 12, 14, 23, 26, 27, 42, 43; Eldridge, *Cabell County's Empire for Freedom*, 43. Eldridge observes that several of Cabell County's early churches had a balcony for slaves. Karen N. Cartwright Nance, *The Significance of the Jenkins Plantation* (Barboursville, W.V.: K. N. C. Nance, 1998), 9, notes that Jeannette Jenkins, wife of wealthy businessman and slaveholder Capt. William A. Jenkins, read to her slaves from the Bible.
- 15 Wilma Dunaway, *Slavery in the American Mountain South* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Eldridge, *Diaries of William F. Dusenberry*, 16, 17.; John W. Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 105.
- 16 Eldridge, *Diaries of William F. Dusenberry*, 16, 17, 61; Eldridge, *Cabell County's Empire for Freedom*, 43; Douthat, "Extracts from the Records of the County Court," Minute Book no. 6, p. 184, CCCH; Nance, *Significance of the Jenkins Plantation*, 7. For information on Chavis and Dicher (whose name often appears as Ditcher), see Corliss Miller, "The Underground Railroad," mss. (1996), and Darleen Innis, "Poke Patch Station," mss. (1998), in Gallia County Historical Society, Gallipolis, Oh.; C. Robert Leith, "Follow the Furnaces," mss. (2005), Special Collections, Briggs Lawrence County Public Library, Ironton, Oh.; "Fugitive Slave Case," *Ironton Register*, Dec. 13, 1860; and "James Ditcher: An Underground Railroad Conductor Interviewed," *Ironton Register*, Oct. 31, 1878. George Seldon Wallace, *Cabell County Annals and Families* (1935; Baltimore: Clearfield Co., 1997), 22 (quote).
- 17 C. Belmont Keeney, "Abolitionism," *The West Virginia Encyclopedia*, Ken Sullivan, ed. (Charleston: West Virginia Humanities Council, 2006), 1; Otis K. Rice, "Eli Thayer and the Friendly Invasion of Virginia," *Journal of Southern History* 37 (Nov. 1971), 585-86; "Eli Thayer Founder of Ceredo, W.Va.," 9-10, mss., n.d., Ceredo County Historical Society, Ceredo, W.V. See also Geiger, "Tragic Fate of Guyandotte," 28-41.
- 18 Wilbur Siebert, *The Mysteries of Ohio's Underground Railroads* (Columbus, Oh.: Long's College Book Co., 1951), 56; "Carry Me Back," *Huntington Advertiser*, Mar. 4, 1875; Wallace, *Cabell County Annals*, 43; Nance, *Significance of the Jenkins Plantation*, 7; Bickley, "Black People," 130.
- 19 Taylor, "Making West Virginia a Free State," 145. In contrast, 2,184 slaves resided in Kanawha County in 1860, down from 3,140 a decade earlier when the county's salt industry flourished and the enslaved population reached its historical peak. See John Edmund Stealey III, "Slavery and the Western Virginia Salt Industry," *Journal of Negro History* 59 (Apr. 1974), 105-31. Mud Bridge district held the county's third largest number of slaveholders (nine) and slaves (twenty-nine), an average of 3.2 slaves per household. An average of two slaves per household lived in the district of Thorndyke, location of the county's fourth largest population of slaveholders (eight) and slaves (sixteen). The remaining districts possessed only a smattering of owners and slaves. Green Bottom and Falls Mills each possessed two slaveholders, with six and two slaves respectively. Only one slaveholder resided in each of the districts of Hamlin, Ten Mile, and Paw Paw Bottom. Both Phillip Powell and William McComas held three slaves, while Archibald Reynolds owned five. See *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860*.
- 20 *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860*, roll 1387, Virginia Slave Schedules, vol. 1 (Cabell County).
- 21 *Seventh Census of the United States, 1850; Eighth Census of the United States, 1860*, roll 1387, Virginia Slave Schedule, vol. 1 (Cabell County); *Ninth Census of the United States, 1870*; Nance, *Significance of the Jenkins Plantation*, 7. In 1850, 198 females and 190 males resided in Cabell County. Although the total slave population dropped by 1860, the numerical disparity between females and males grew (169 females to 136 males, or 55.4 to 44.6 percent).

- 22 Eldridge, *Cabell County's Empire for Freedom*, xiii; Nance, *Significance of the Jenkins Plantation*, 6-7.
- 23 Nance, *Significance of the Jenkins Plantation*, 8-9; Crandall A. Shifflett, *Patronage and Poverty in the Tobacco South: Louisa County, Virginia, 1860-1900* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1982), 24-26.
- 24 Eldridge, *Cabell County's Empire for Freedom*, xiii, xiv, 44; Guild, *Black Laws of Virginia*, 118. On Dec. 6, 1858, Edmund and Lilla (no last name in record) along with Samuel Wallace, went before the court to have their status as free persons of color affirmed. The court granted Isham Sanders, formerly Samuel Sanders's slave, the same privilege a year later. See Douthat, "Extracts from the Records of the County Court," Minute book no. 5, p. 149, and Minute book no. 6, pp. 151, 192 (CCCH).
- 25 Carrie Eldridge, *Deed Book IV, 1824-1831, Cabell County, Virginia/West Virginia* (Chesapeake, Oh.: C. Eldridge, 1990), 37, 41; KYOWVA Genealogical Society, *Cabell Co. (W) Va. Annotated Births, 1853-1859* (Huntington, W.V.: KYOWVA Genealogical Society, 1993), 1; *Eighth Census of the United States*, 1860.
- 26 *Eighth Census of the United States*, 1860. Possible reasons for the older free black population include the years needed to acquire sufficient capital to purchase one's freedom, and the fact that longer service engendered greater intimacy between slaves and masters, enabling slaves to acquire sufficient interpersonal capital to gain manumission.
- 27 Geiger, *Civil War in Cabell County*, 417-34; Geiger, "Tragic Fate of Guyandotte," 36. See also Wallace, *Cabell County Annals*, 43; James Casto, *Huntington: An Illustrated History* (Northridge, Ca.: Windsor Publications, 1985), 21; Otis K. Rice, *West Virginia: A History* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1985), 124-32. For a contrary account of the war, see F. L. Burdette, *History of Ona and Surrounding Country* (Morgantown, W. V.: Agricultural Extension Division, 1925), www.wvculture.org/history/counties/cabell.html (accessed March 9, 2004). For a brief overview of the creation of West Virginia, see Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), 38-39.
- 28 Forrest Talbott, "Some Legislative and Legal Aspects of the Negro Question in West Virginia During the Civil War and Reconstruction, Part 1," *West Virginia History* 24 (Oct. 1962), 9; J. Blaine Hudson, *Fugitive Slaves and the Underground Railroad in the Kentucky Borderland* (Jefferson, N.C.: MacFarland, 2002), 51; Trotter, *River Jordan*, 56; Jones, *History of the Jones Family*, 115.
- 29 Mrs. Walter Mitchell, *History of Cabell Creek Community (Cabell County, W. Va.)* (Morgantown, W.V.: Agricultural Extension Division, 1925), www.wvculture.org/history/counties/cabell.html (accessed March 7, 2004); Talbott, "Some Legislative and Legal Aspects of the Negro Question," 9, 15; Fanny Cooper, *History of Lower Creek Community (Cabell County, W. Va.)* (Morgantown, W.V.: Agricultural Extension Division, 1925), 1; Bickley, "Black People," 132; John C. Insoe, *Race, War and Remembrance in the Appalachian South* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2008), 30; Richard O. Curry, *A House Divided: A Study of Statehood Politics and the Copperhead Movement in West Virginia* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1964), 91-92; Ohio Auditor of State, "Special Enumeration of Negroes, 1863" (Lawrence County), State Archives Series 2261 (mf.), Ohio Historical Society, Columbus.
- 30 Talbott, "Some Legislative and Legal Aspects of the Negro Question," 8-9; Stephen D. Engle, "Mountaineer Reconstruction: Blacks in the Political Reconstruction of West Virginia," *Journal of Negro History* 78 (Summer 1993), 140, 145; Randy Lawrence and Ken Sullivan, "Black Migration to Southern West Virginia, 1870-1930," *Goldenseal* 23 (Winter 1997), 52; *Ninth Census of the United States*, 1870; Thomas E. Posey, *The Negro Citizen of West Virginia* (Institute, W.V.: The Press of West Virginia State College, 1934), 5. Posey reports that in 1860 the black population totaled 21,144, consisting of 18,371 slave and 2,773 free, while the white population totaled 355,526. The only exception was Mercer County, where the black population increased slightly from 391 to 394 between 1860 and 1870.
- 31 *Eighth Census of the United States*, 1860.
- 32 United States Census Office, *Return of the Whole Number of Persons within the Several Districts of the United States . . . (1790)* (Philadelphia: Childs and Swaine, 1791); *Fourth Census of United States*, 1820; *Eighth Census of the United States*, 1860; Russell Thornton, C. Matthew Snipp, and Nancy Breen, *Cherokees: A Population History* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990), 43, 49-50. State percentages: Wilma A. Dunaway, "Slavery and Emancipation in the Mountain South: Sources, Evidence and Methods," Table 1, Virginia Tech Library, On-Line Archives, http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/vtpubs/mountain_slavery/where.htm (accessed June 3, 2011).
- 33 Nance, *Significance of the Jenkins Plantation*, 10; Eldridge, *Cabell County's Empire for Freedom*, 46. Eldridge writes: "Many of the slaves had been born and raised in Cabell County; leaving their home would have been very difficult. Everything familiar, from their favorite berry patch or fishing hole to the church down the lane, was being left behind for something called freedom. Apprehension for the unknown future had to concern all the adults."