“The *Slaughter-House* Dissents and the Reconstruction of American Liberalism”

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Supplemental Material—Appendix A

Contemporaneous sources (Gazetteers) contained information about the three parishes covered by the exclusive franchise at issue in the *Slaughter-House Cases* (1873). For each of the three parishes (Orleans, Jefferson, and Saint Bernard), Gazetteers provided data on square mileage; population; surface; farm and manufacturing production; and agricultural staples. Supplementary information from the Gazetteers provides fuller support for my claim that the dissenters’ description of the exclusive grant as restricting slaughtering to one facility across “nearly twelve hundred square miles” (1873, 112) was a gross distortion.

I was unable to locate a source that exactly matched the combined “1154 square miles” listed in the dissents (1873, 85), but coming close was the *Statistical Gazetteer of the United States* (Fisher 1858), which listed Jefferson Parish at 376 square miles (Fisher 1858, 333; Cf. 384 in Field’s dissent (1873, 85); Orleans Parish at 153 square miles (1858, 635; Cf. 150 in the dissent, Id.); and Saint Bernard Parish at 562 square miles (1858, 745; Cf. 620 in the dissent, Id.), for a total of 1091 square miles. *Fanning’s Illustrated Gazetteer of the United States* (1854, 173) listed Jefferson Parish at 720 square miles; Orleans Parish at 160 square miles (Id., 277); and Saint Bernard at 150 square miles (Id., 318), which suggests that the boundary between Jefferson and Saint Bernard was redrawn in the 1850s. The *Centennial Gazetteer of the United States* (Steinwehr 1873, 445) put Jefferson Parish at 300 square miles, which was roughly similar to the figure in the 1858 *Statistical Gazetteer*.

The Gazetteers provided a clear picture of population distribution and inhabitable surface in the three parishes. The *Centennial Gazetteer*, using data from the 1870 Census, listed the total population for the three parishes at 212,738 with almost all of it (191,418) in Orleans Parish (Steinwehr 1873, 665, 679, 783). Within Orleans Parish, population was concentrated in its lower half. Lake Pontchartrain covered the upper half of Orleans Parish, leaving about 75 square miles for the population, from which must be subtracted the “swamps” that lay between the city of New Orleans and Lake Pontchartrain (Steinwehr 1873, 679). Figures on manufacturing and dwellings indicate the built-up character of the inhabitable portion of the parish: “Farms 51; manuf. 521; dwell. 15,621” (Fisher 1858, 635).

Descriptions of the surface indicate that Saint Bernard Parish and Jefferson Parish, which totaled about 1,000 square miles, were overwhelmingly “swampy” (Fisher 1858, 745). Saint Bernard Parish fanned out below New Orleans, into the Gulf of Mexico, with its upper northwest boundary abutting Orleans Parish. In 1858, it had a very small population of 3,802—1406 white; 2323 enslaved; 73 “free colored” (Fisher, 1858, 745). “In those portions where it is not too wet for cultivation, and the tillage is attended to, it is very fertile” (Id.). The “chief products” were “sugar, rice, cotton, and Indian corn.” Its figures: “Farms 34; manuf. 0; dwell. 283” (Id.).

Jefferson Parish contained “vast tracts of undeveloped land” (Steinwehr 1873, 783). The surface was “low, with much of it covered with swamps” (Fisher 1858, 333). In areas that could be farmed, “Sugar is the great staple” (Id.). At 376 square miles, it had a population of 25,091 (18,021 white; 6,196 enslaved; 874 “free colored”) (Id). The northern portion of Jefferson Parish abutted New Orleans and included the area across from New Orleans, below the Mississippi River—the area designated in the 1869 law for the new slaughtering facility. Its comparative figures: “Farms 81; manuf. 54; dwell. 3825” (Id.).

Notable are the sugar plantations in Jefferson and Saint Bernard Parishes, the existence of which can be deduced from population and crop data in the Gazetteers. The significance of these plantations lies in the “self-contained character of the slave plantation” (Wright 2006, 68), with little need for local processing and services that would have included butchering. In other words, the autarky of sugar plantations (the few purchases would have included shoes and tinware) meant there was no history of butchering establishments in plantations areas to be impacted by the 1869 law.

References

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