

NBER WORKING PAPER SERIES

THE COMPLEXION GAP: THE ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF COLOR AMONG FREE
AFRICAN AMERICANS IN THE RURAL ANTEBELLUM SOUTH

Howard Bodenhorn

Working Paper 8957

<http://www.nber.org/papers/w8957>

NATIONAL BUREAU OF ECONOMIC RESEARCH
1050 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02138
May 2002

I thank Tim Conley, Stanley Engerman, Farley Grubb, James Irwin, Whittington Johnson, Kyle Kauffman, Sumner LaCroix, Robert Margo, Michelle McLennan, Carolyn Moehling, Anthony O'Brien, and Joel Williamson for comments on an earlier draft. Financial assistance from the Robert King Mellon Foundation, the John M. Olin Foundation, the Economic History Association, and Lafayette College is gratefully acknowledged. The views expressed herein are those of the author and not necessarily those of the National Bureau of Economic Research.

© 2002 by Howard Bodenhorn. All rights reserved. Short sections of text, not to exceed two paragraphs, may be quoted without explicit permission provided that full credit, including © notice, is given to the source.

The Complexion Gap: The Economic Consequences of Color among
Free African Americans in the Rural Antebellum South
Howard Bodenhorn
NBER Working Paper No. 8957
May 2002
JEL No. N3, J7, Q1

ABSTRACT

Historians of U.S. race relations typically portray southern whites as reluctant to recognize or act favorably upon complexion-based differences within the African American community. Historians contend that mixed-race African Americans (mulattoes) received few advantages as a result of their partly white heritage. This paper shows that there was a distinct complexion gap in late antebellum America. Mulatto men were more likely than black men to own farms or operate them as tenants, whereas black men were more likely to find employment as farm laborers throughout their lives. Quantile regressions also reveal a complexion gap in wealth accumulation. Mulattoes acquired more property than blacks, particularly at the upper end of the wealth distribution. Thus, an analysis of data included in the 1860 census implies a complex social hierarchy based on subtle gradations in skin color. At the upper end of the wealth distribution, light-complected mulattoes demonstrated a greater propensity to socioeconomic advancement than dark-complected blacks.

Howard Bodenhorn
Department of Economics
Lafayette College
Easton, PA 18042-1776
and NBER
bodenhoh@lafayette.edu

Whether by design or happenstance, it was costly to be black even in the black community. (Johnson 1996, p.78)

Introduction

Historians of nineteenth-century race relations emphasize the primacy of complexion not only in interactions between whites and African Americans but between African Americans of different colors as well. Americans of both races demonstrated clear preferences for light skins, and African American leaders were disproportionately drawn from the light-skinned segment of the population. This phenomenon is well documented for antebellum U.S. cities, Britain's Caribbean colonies, and large parts of Central and South America. Charleston's mulatto elite, for example, aligned themselves politically and socially with the city's white leaders, and the organization that best symbolized Charleston's mixed-race elite, the appropriately named Brown Fellowship Society, admitted only fair-skinned mulattoes. A regular event on New Orleans' social calendar was the so-called quadroon ball where wealthy white men courted eligible, light-skinned African American women and paid for the privilege of taking a mulatto mistress (Williamson 1984, p. 23).

Subtle complexion distinctions did not fall strictly within the purview of New Orleans and Charleston sophisticates. Bogger (1997, p. 104) found that Norfolk, Virginia's African Americans were deeply color conscious, especially when choosing a marriage partner. Horton (1993) documented mulatto advantages in Cincinnati, Buffalo, and Boston. Hershberg and Williams (1981) uncovered a similar effect in nineteenth-century Philadelphia. Litwack (1961, p. 182) concluded that light skin might not guarantee African American success, but it opened some doors normally closed

to blacks. Johnson (1996, pp. 16-17) found that in Savannah "color was a greater obstacle to social interaction among people of African origin than either culture or legal status."

Even though they argue that the early nineteenth century urban African American community operated within the context of an intricate socioeconomic hierarchy based on subtle gradations in skin complexion, historians argue the same sorts of complexion-based differences failed to appear in the rural Upper South (e.g., Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina) during the antebellum era. Mencke (1979, pp. 18-19) wrote that whites in the Upper South were not inclined to distinguish mulattoes from blacks. The entire class of free African Americans was "viewed as a social sore, a dark, threatening force potentially fomenting rebellion among the slave population." Davis (1991, pp. 26, 31, 33-34), too, argued that Upper South whites drew no effective color distinctions, certainly none significant enough to provide light-skinned mulattoes with any sort of social or economic advantage. Horowitz (1973, p. 515) drew the traditional interpretation in starkest relief. He argued that in Britain's Caribbean colonies, the mulatto group grew ever more esteemed, elevated to a distinct intermediate class, even while Upper South mulattoes were being pushed down into a mass of "blackness" -- a downward push that began in the colonial period and continued throughout the subsequent two centuries.

Utilizing information collected from the 1860 manuscript census records of twenty-six rural southern counties, this article builds on other recent studies which show that the traditional interpretation is debatable.² Evidence from the population and agricultural censuses show that

² Komlos (1992) and Bodenhorn (1999a, 1999c) find that light-skinned African Americans were taller than blacks. For those unfamiliar with the methodology and basic findings of historical anthropometry, good introductions are Steckel and Floud (1997) and Komlos and Cuff (1998).

mixed-race men moved from farm laborers to tenancy earlier and in greater proportions than black men. Similarly, a greater proportion of mulatto men ultimately owned their own farm than did black men. It is not surprising then that mulatto heads of households accumulated significantly more personal property than black-headed households. Using quantile regression methods, this article reports a marked complexion gap in the upper half of the African-American wealth distribution of the antebellum Upper South. Thus, color was as important a determinant of race relations in the rural Upper South as it was in the urban Lower South. Historians failed to recognize this complexion gap because an outspoken, socially visible, and politically active mulatto elite never emerged in rural areas, but the emergence of a visible mulatto elite and the primacy of color were not synonymous in southern society.

Miscegenation and Mulattoes in the Upper South, 1620-1860

Africans first arrived in the Virginia colony in 1619 or 1620 and almost immediately began forming intimate relationships with whites. Guild (1969, p.21) found that the first reference to an African American in Virginia's legislative record appeared in 1630 and represented the opening salvo in a long battle against miscegenation. The colonial council ordered Hugh Davis to be soundly whipped for lying with a black woman, an act he was forced to publicly acknowledge on the Sabbath. A decade later, Robert Sweet was forced to do penance in church for getting a black woman with child. The woman was whipped.

Concerns with miscegenation ultimately provoked a significant colonial departure from English legal tradition. Tradition held that a child's status followed the father's. In miscegenation cases identification of the father was often problematic, thus it was simpler to inherit the mother's

status to the child. In 1662 Virginia law made the mulatto child of a slave woman a slave (Guild 1969, pp. 23-24). Until 1691 the mulatto child of a white woman was free, but an assembly act of that year imposed a penalty of five years' forced servitude on the white mother and thirty years of servitude on the mulatto child (Guild 1969, pp. 24-25; Davis 1991, p. 33).

Although they labeled it servitude, most colonials treated it as de facto slavery. Many masters kept their mulatto servants in lifetime bondage, others released them only when forced by the courts to do so. Ann Redman's case is instructive. Ann, a mulatto woman and daughter of an English woman, was ordered "freed from slavery and discharged from the service of Thomas Lloyd" of Richmond County, Virginia who had previously refused to release her (Johnston 1970, p. 178, emphasis added).³ Courts were forced to intercede in many instances because masters sometimes sold these servants to others, representing them as bona fide slaves. The practice became serious enough that in 1765 the legislature levied punishments for failing to release mulatto children on their thirty-first birthday or selling them to others without notifying the buyer of their true status (Guild 1969, p. 58). While it has been true in all epochs, the dictum that children should choose their parents carefully applied with particular force in colonial Virginia.

Interracial affairs, once discovered, carried a stigma in the U.S. not seen in other slave societies. In the British West Indies and Portuguese South America, gender imbalances among whites led to widespread miscegenation. It was likely that European planters in the West Indies and elsewhere were initially as squeamish about racial mixing as their North American counterparts, but demographic forces quickly overcame reservations. Horowitz (1973) and Degler (1971) argue that by the mid-eighteenth century, miscegenation between white planters and black slaves was

³Johnston (1970) reports several other similar cases.

widespread, mulatto progeny commonplace, and manumission the rule.

The same was not true in North America. Despite more balanced gender ratios, whites and blacks carried on illicit affairs that resulted in mulatto children. To many contemporary southerners, miscegenation was reprehensible, but manumitting the progeny was a singularly dangerous, antisocial act. Degler (1971, pp. 194-195) argues that most whites believed it better that half-white offspring live a lifetime in bondage than have free society populated with mixed-race African Americans. Virginia law discouraged manumission, first by requiring planters to post bonds guaranteeing that the manumitted slave would not become a charge on the county's poor relief rolls, then in 1806, by requiring manumitted slaves to emigrate within twelve months of manumission or face sale back into slavery (Guild 1969, p. 72). Few masters would free a slave only to see her sold into the service of another, perhaps someone less kind.

Not unexpectedly, legislative attempts to thwart miscegenation failed. According to the 1860 census, the Upper South was home to more than 61,000 free mulattoes (36 percent of the free African-American population) and 102,000 mulatto slaves (11 percent of slaves). But it seems likely that the 1860 census underreported mulattoes relative to blacks. Registers of free African Americans taken from sixteen Maryland counties imply that more than 44 percent were free mulattoes (Komlos 1992, p. 303). Similarly, Bodenhorn (1999a) reports that registers from twenty-three Virginia counties described about 63 percent of free-born African Americans as mulatto. Census enumerators were asked to distinguish between mulattoes and blacks and they apparently tended to identify only the fairest complected African Americans as mulatto.⁴

⁴ This reporting bias may strengthen the results reported below if census marshals, in fact, identified only the lightest African-American as mulattoes. To the extent that complexion preferences operated, they should have been strongest for the lightest complected.

A thorny political and moral issue revolved around how to define this mixed-race population. Some historians argue that the so-called "one drop rule" (a single drop of black blood made one black) that became the standard under Jim Crow had antebellum, perhaps even colonial, roots (Davis 1991, pp. 31-34; Degler 1971, pp. 241-243; Mencke 1979, pp. ix-x). Davis (1991, pp. 33-34) argued that the one drop rule became the accepted social standard by the early eighteenth century, but he recognized that the mulattoes' legal status remained in flux throughout most of the eighteenth century. Degler (1971, pp. 241-243) cites southern case law from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to support his contention that blacks and mulattoes were, as far as southern law and southern society was concerned, one and the same.

Degler's seems an extreme interpretation given that in 1785 Virginia legally defined a person as black if he or she had one black grandparent (Guild 1969, p. 29). For many southerners, this dividing line between white and black was still too generous. Williamson (1984, p. 13) contends that a one-quarter delineation created a distinct class of people "who were significantly black, visibly black, and known to be black, but by the law of the land and the rulings of the court had the privileges of whites." Most whites preferred sharper distinctions. Historians insist that Upper South whites may have been forced to recognize the distinction *de jure*, but refused to do so *de facto*. Instead, Upper South race relations aimed to make all African Americans black even while Lower South whites elevated mulattoes to a distinct intermediate class (Horowitz 1973, p. 515).

Horowitz (1973) and Mencke (1979) argue that differences in the attitudes toward mulattoes of Upper and Lower South whites arose out of regional differences in mulatto ancestry. As previously noted, West Indian and Lower South mulattoes tended to be the offspring of wealthy white men and black women, either slave or free. Thus, mulattoes were the progeny of the elite,

were recognized as such and provided with many of the advantages that followed from having a wealthy parent. Nearly all were manumitted, most were educated, many even inherited from their father's estates. Upper South mulattoes, on the other hand, were more likely to be the offspring of poor whites and even poorer slaves. Mixed-race people of the Upper South, then, were overwhelmingly poor and carried a mark of poverty throughout their lives.

For many historians, portraying Upper South white society as decidedly monochromatic follows from the incongruence of mulattoes and slavery that made many Upper South whites uncomfortable. Nevertheless, some slaves were at least partially white. Although the censuses are imperfect sources, the 1850 census identified about 10 percent of Virginia's slave population as mulatto. By 1860 about 15 percent were so identified. In other Upper South and border states, the proportions were higher yet; close to 20 percent in Kentucky and Missouri (Mencke 1979, p. 21). No amount of moral maneuvering and no legalism could hide the fact that some slaves were part white, but if law or society recognized these people as white (of any degree), the premise that only blacks were slaves would have been violated. To ease their consciences, it was imperative to view those with even the smallest trace of black heritage as black. To do otherwise would have been to enslave whites as well as blacks. Defining all African Americans as black maintained the fiction that blacks were slaves and slaves were black.

Upper South whites, then, are portrayed as unremitting in their efforts to disavow the mulattoes' white heritage and historians are nearly as unremitting in their efforts to portray Upper South whites in this way. In summarizing his thesis, Degler (1971, p. 102) states that there "are two qualities in the United States racial pattern: white and black. A person is one or the other; there is no intermediate position." The evidence presented below belies this interpretation. Both the African

American and white communities drew more sophisticated color distinctions. Both groups recognized subtle gradations rather than sharp lines. Contemporary whites, in fact, commonly described African Americans as black, brown, copper, olive, nutmeg, ginger, chestnut, and yellow, among others. Of course, observing differences and acting on them were different things, but the evidence suggests that the white and the African American communities both saw and acted on complexion differences. Finding that both communities recognized gradations should not come as a surprise. Few things are either-or, black-white; most demonstrate subtle gradations. Upper South society's response to mulattoes (the personification of color gradation) was more complex than previously believed.

Assessing the 1860 Census as a Data Source

Data on the occupations and personal wealth of free blacks and mulattoes living in the antebellum South were taken from a sample of twenty-six rural southern counties included in the 1860 manuscript census.⁵ Because most free African Americans lived in the Upper South, the sample is heavily weighted with counties from that region, including eight from Maryland, nine from Virginia, five from North Carolina, two from Kentucky, and one each from Tennessee and Louisiana. Summary statistics reported in Table 1 outline the information collected on about 7,000 African-American households, divided into four groups: households headed by mulatto men; households headed by mulatto women; households headed by black men; and households headed by black women. It is a large cross-section of free African-American households and should therefore be representative of their experience in the antebellum Upper South.

⁵ For an explanation of the sampling procedure see Bodenhorn (1999b).

Recent research, however, has questioned just how representative samples drawn from the census manuscripts may be. Three types of shortcomings are fairly well documented for the manuscript censuses -- underenumeration, misreporting, and missing data -- and each has distinct implications for sample reliability. If enumeration errors were random, statistical inferences would be relatively unaffected. The extant research, however, suggests that enumeration problems were sometimes extensive and generally nonrandom. Estimates of underenumeration range from about 9 percent to 23 percent, depending on geographic region and the group under consideration (Adams and Kasakoff 1991; Steckel 1991, p. 588). The poor, the unskilled, the young, the mobile, residents of large cities and the frontier, and minorities were all more likely to be overlooked by census enumerators than middling class, educated, skilled workers who had resided in the same small community for several years.

Knowing that poor, unskilled, minorities were more likely to be underenumerated than others raises several potential red flags for a sample of free African Americans drawn from the 1860 manuscript census because all fell into at least one category. Free African Americans were less skilled, on average, than whites; they are believed to have been less wealthy; and they were unquestionably in the minority. At the same time, free African Americans tended to belong to more accurately enumerated groups; state- and county-level legislation rendered them relatively immobile, and they tended to reside in long-established, stable, small rural communities. Thus, determining the extent to which southern free African Americans were underenumerated requires comparisons to alternative sources of information.

Fortunately for the historian, white concerns with the activities and movements of free blacks meant that a great deal of information was gathered about them. In addition to the registration

requirement (Maryland, Virginia, and some North Carolina communities required this), Virginia required court clerks to compile an annual census of free African Americans residing within their jurisdiction, identifying each individual by name, age, and occupation. Most of these lists are lost, but the 1860 list for Fauquier County, Virginia is extant, rendering comparison to the census easy.

The 1860 census manuscript for Fauquier County enumerated 121 African American household heads. Only 49 of those householders were identified in the clerk's list. The clerk's list did not separately identify household heads so it does not allow us to determine the extent to which the census underenumerated heads of households, but this (small) piece of evidence induces some confidence in the census's coverage.

A second independent source of information on free African Americans is the state tax lists. Virginia imposed special head taxes on free African American men. In addition to property taxes, a legislative act of 1852 imposed a \$1.00 head tax on every black man between 21 and 55 years (Virginia 1852, pp. 4-5). In 1859 an additional \$0.80 head tax was imposed on the same group (Virginia 1859/60, p. 59).⁶ Given the discriminatory taxes payable by free African Americans, it would be reasonable to assume, as Blocker (1996, p. 25) has, that county tax collectors, being entrusted with a fiduciary responsibility, "had a stronger interest than census enumerators in identifying all property holdings," making the tax lists more complete and accurate than the census enumerations.

The results of matching the 1860 Virginia personal property tax lists (in which the head taxes

⁶ The \$0.80 head tax was potentially quite onerous. It implied that a 21 year old African-American owning no taxable property whatsoever was forced to pay a tax equivalent to that paid by William R. Fleming, a white man living in Goochland County, who was taxed 80 cents on 3 hogs (worth \$10), 7 head of cattle (\$85), 1 clock (\$5), and other household furnishings (\$150). Virginia (1860).

were also recorded) with the 1860 census population manuscripts for five Virginia counties belie Blocker's expectation. Census marshals enumerated 576 households headed by male African Americans, 481 of which reported personal property holdings.⁷ The five county tax assessors recorded only 317 (55 percent) of households enumerated in the census. This suggests that census under-enumerations were modest and random so that statistics derived from the census should be unbiased to the extent that the reported information is indeed accurate.

But another oft-noted problem with manuscript censuses is the extent to which and the direction in which they misreported socioeconomic variables, such as age, wealth, and occupation. Steckel (1991) found evidence (direct and indirect) of age-heaping, especially at ages ending in 0, 2, and 5. There are few alternative sources to which to compare ages, but the Fauquier County clerk reported ages in his annual enumeration of 1860. The census marshal's and the county clerk's reported ages are in general agreement, although the census did report a greater proportion of ages ending in 5, which should not bias age-dependent calculations, but simply reduce their precision so long as approximately equal proportions of ages were rounded up as rounded down.

Although the 1860 federal manuscript census has come under attack as a reliable statistical source, it emerges here as in Blocker (1996, pp. 33-34), despite known and unknown enumeration problems, as a "more complete and accurate tabulation" than most alternatives, such as property tax lists. The comparison sources in this instance (Virginia state tax lists and county clerk's enumerations) have their own shortcomings, and the census stands out as a superior source. It is as Donald Parkerson (1991, pp. 514-15) noted a matter of perspective. Is the census glass partly empty,

⁷ The five counties are Accomack, Campbell, Fauquier, Goochland, and Stafford. Not all county personal property tax lists are available because the Library of Virginia's microfilming project is not yet complete. Female-headed households are excluded because the state taxed only males and male-headed households.

or is it nearly full? He concluded that it is remarkable just how full the census glass actually is.

The Complexion Gap and the Agricultural Ladder

Agricultural historians have long relied on the metaphor of the agricultural ladder, likening socioeconomic advance in an agricultural community to movement to ever higher rungs on a ladder (Bogue 1963; Winters 1978, 1987). The simplest version of the ladder thesis, like that presented in Atack (1989) posits three steps: agricultural laborers occupy the lowest rung of the ladder, tenants occupy the intermediate rung, and owner-operators occupy the highest rung. Other versions posit longer ladders with more rungs. Laborers may be hired by the day, the season, or the year. Similarly, tenants may be sharecroppers, share tenants, or cash renters; part-owners might own only a fraction of the land they farm and rent the remainder; and owners can be mortgaged or hold their real property in fee simple. Regardless of the number of rungs or the distance between them, the essential thesis is that socioeconomic advance occurs through successive upward movement from landless laborer to outright owner.

Outright ownership was clearly the preferred state of affairs for most rural folk, but many worked as farm laborers and farm tenancy occurred throughout the antebellum South (Reid 1976). Tenancy provided access to farm land to those unable to purchase their own (Winters 1987, p. 37). Simultaneously, it produced income for owners unwilling or unable to farm their own land, and this may have opened the niche exploited by Upper South African Americans. Contemporary reports in such disparate outlets as the Baltimore American (9 June 1859) and the Virginia House (Journal 1847/48, p. 20) remarked that, in the absence the region's free African Americans, large tracts of the region's arable land would have gone untilled. Moreover, migrants might rent for a year or two to

determine if the land and the neighborhood suited their needs. Tenancy, too, may have served an educational or apprenticeship-type function even while young men acquired the wherewithal to buy their own farms.

Because antebellum censuses did not explicitly report on land tenure, inferences about it are based on subjective interpretations of imperfect and inexplicit data.⁸ The long-held view is that tenancy was rare in the antebellum South, but Winters (1987) argues that it was common.⁹ Based on a study of eight counties in Tennessee, which Winters contends provide a representative cross-section of the noncotton South, he finds that tenancy rates in 1850 and 1860 ranged from a low of 3.9 percent to a high of 29.2 percent. In a similar study of sixteen Georgia counties in 1860, Bode and Ginter (1986, pp. 180-81) found tenancy rates ranging between 3.4 and 42.6 percent. Although tenancy rates varied dramatically, Winters (1987, p. 40) as well as Bode and Ginter concluded that farm renting and tenancy were an "integral part of the agricultural structure" of the antebellum South. Whites were moving up the agricultural ladder. The question is: Were African Americans able to do so as well?

Before that question can be answered satisfactorily, several issues of interpretation need to be resolved. The fundamental problem facing researchers using antebellum censuses is how to treat people identified as farmers in the population manuscripts and not enumerated in the agricultural

⁸ Even with explicit enumeration of land tenure in postbellum censuses, agricultural and economic historians still debate the exact meaning of the terms employed by census enumerators. Alston and Kauffman (1998) and Irwin and O'Brien (1998, 1999) offer recent reinterpretations based on alternative definitions of seemingly straight-forward terms. A close reading of the literature reveals that interpreting the manuscript censuses is as much art as science.

⁹ Gray (1933), Ransom and Sutch (1977), and Owsley (1949) offer versions of the traditional interpretation.

censuses. (The opposite case of appearing in the agricultural census and not in the population census occurs very infrequently.) Nearly as many methods have been devised for dealing with these so-called "farmers without farms" as there have been researchers using the censuses. Allan Bogue (1963), for instance, labeled individuals described as farmers in the population census without a corresponding entry in the agricultural census as hopeful farm laborers. Bode and Ginter (1986) argue that some of these men were surely tenants. Attack (1989, p.9) is uncomfortable with Bogue's treatment of landless farmers as laborers, but remains reluctant to classify them as tenants. He therefore excludes them from his analysis. Bogue's method produces a lower bound estimate of tenancy and an upper bound estimate of farm laborers. Attack's estimates produce lower bounds for both tenancy and laboring. Bode and Ginter's methods produce intermediate estimates.

Instead of adopting a previously used classification scheme a priori, it seemed more reasonable to let the data provide some insight on how best to treat variously identified individuals, particularly since any classification will be used to describe a previously ignored population of free African Americans. Table 2 provides sample averages for different groups arrayed according to occupational descriptions given in both the population and agricultural censuses of 1860. In nearly every county, enumerators separately identified "laborers" and "farm laborers." Given that the sample is drawn from predominantly rural, agricultural counties, it seems likely that most laborers (row 1a) were farm laborers (1b), but the fact that the same enumerators labeled them differently seems curious. Nevertheless, the group of laborers and the group of farm laborers appear to be very similar. Although laborers were about 2 years older and had acquired about \$20 more real property, the percentage of blacks exceeds 80 percent in both groups, both had 4.8 household members, and both had acquired about \$67 in personal property. Because of their similarities, the two groups are

combined in row 1. Doing so creates an upper bound estimate of farm laborers, which also results in lower bound proportional estimates of tenants and farmers.

Row 2 in Table 2 reports information on tenants, which are defined as individuals identified as farmers in the population census and who appeared in the agricultural census without real property in the population or agricultural censuses. This is similar to Bogue's definition. Similarly, farmers (row 4) are those identified as farmers in the population census and who appeared with real property values in both the population and agricultural censuses. It is the individuals reported in row 3, or "farmers without farms," that are vexing. These men were identified as farmers and reported positive real estate holdings in the population census, but could not be matched to the agricultural census. Comparing their characteristics with those of tenants and farmers suggest that farmers without farms formed an intermediate class, most likely engaged in agriculture under some form of tenancy. They tended to be lighter complected than laborers and farmers, but darker than tenants. They were about 4 years younger than farmers and about 1.5 years older than tenants. They lived in smaller households than either tenants or farmers, but larger households than laborers. They held about the same dollar value of personal property as tenants, but much less than farmers. Finally, those reporting real estate holdings reported about \$200 more than tenants, but about \$300 less than farmers. Thus, these farmers without farms held substantial wealth, both real and personal, so excluding them from the analysis seems likely to misrepresent farm tenure in the antebellum South, so they are included as a separate category.¹⁰

How and to what extent did blacks and mulattoes move up the agricultural ladder in the

¹⁰ Houdek and Heller (1986) argue that even the most liberal definition of tenants based on manuscript census labels probably underestimates the extent of tenancy in 1860.

antebellum South? If the complexion gap operated in the rural Upper South, mulattoes should have climbed the agricultural ladder faster than blacks and reached higher rungs more often. If white land owners believed mulattoes more capable and thus more likely to succeed as independent or semi-independent farm operators, white landowners should have been more likely to enter into a tenant relationship with light-skinned African Americans. If whites behaved in this manner, mulattoes would achieve tenant status earlier and to a greater extent than blacks. Similarly, if ownership required mortgage credit, biases among white lenders would have led them to lend more willingly to mulattoes than blacks, implying that mulatto ownership would occur earlier and in larger proportions among mulattoes than blacks.

Table 3 provides unconditional estimates of rates of farm laboring, tenancy, farmers without farms, and ownership per thousand population for each complexion and quinquennial cohort.¹¹ These estimates reflect a notable complexion gap. At nearly every cohort after age 24, laboring rates for mulatto men are well below those of black men, often by as much as 250 per 1000 at age. Equally notable is the much more rapid movement up the ladder from laborer to tenant among mulattoes than blacks. Tenancy rates among mulattoes increased from about 78 per thousand (or 215 per thousand if we accept that farmers without farms were tenants of some sort) among mulatto men age 20-24 to 148 per thousand (or 333) at age 30-34, after which tenancy rates changed little. Black men were much less likely to rise even to tenant status. Tenancy rates among 20-24 year-olds were only 18 per thousand (or 98) at 20-24 years and rose only to 35 per thousand (or 111) at 30-34 years, at which time tenancy rates also generally stabilized.

¹¹ It should be noted that these statistics do not account for state of residence, age, or time since manumission. Estimates of wealth accumulation, provided below, account for the two former effects. The latter is not known and cannot be determined.

Ownership rates also demonstrate a marked complexion gap. Mulatto men were more likely to own their own farms than black men at nearly every age. Neither blacks nor mulattoes in their twenties were likely to own a farm with ownership rates well below 100 per thousand for both groups. Mulatto men, however, were more likely to acquire their own farm in their thirties and forties. Ownership rates among mulatto men in the 35-39, 40-44, and 45-49 cohorts were twice or more those of black men as were those of mulatto men in their late fifties and late sixties. (The smaller gap for the 50-54 and 60-64 cohorts are likely the result of relatively small numbers of mulatto men in those cohorts.)

Clearly, both blacks and mulattoes were capable of climbing the agricultural ladder. Most began at the unquestioned bottom of the agricultural ladder, as farm laborers, and many remained there throughout their lives. But many made modest strides up the ladder. For mulattoes, tenancy rates increased 140 percent between the 20-24 and the 45-49 cohorts. For blacks, tenancy rates increased 207 percent. It was in achieving land ownership, however, that mulattoes showed a definitive advantage. Ownership rates increased 640 percent for mulattoes between the 20-24 and 45-49 cohort; for blacks, ownership rates increased a more modest but nonetheless notable 410 percent.

While the evidence provided in the 1860 census is suggestive of life-cycle effects, it is not definitive. Artificially constructed cohorts, like those used here, provide a rough proxy for the actual life-cycle experiences that will be better understood only through longitudinal studies. Over the course of the nineteenth century several things changed that may have had differential cohort effects. A brief post-Revolutionary manumission wave was gradually replaced with anti-manumission attitudes and laws designed to check the practice. Such changes surely changed the nature of

manumission and freedom, changes that are not captured in this analysis. Additionally, each constructed cohort was at a different point in its life-cycle as it passed through the agricultural depression of the late 1830s and early 1840s. Passing through this period at different ages may have had differential cohort effects. Younger cohorts that came of age in the post-depression era may have found it easier to acquire property than those unfortunate enough to have passed through their mid-thirties to mid-forties (the ages at which most cohorts began buying their first farms) during the depression. Only further research, particularly true longitudinal studies, will answer these questions. One potential data source are the state tax records, which provide annual assessments on real and personal property

A meaningful comparison with whites' ascent up the ladder in the antebellum Upper South awaits further research, but the available evidence suggests that mulattoes, despite their advantages, lagged behind whites. While Atack's (1989) and Winter's (1987) estimates are not directly comparable because they do not report on laborers and exclude farmers without farms, their results imply that blacks and mulattoes were more likely than whites to remain tenants. If Atack's methods and classifications are used instead of those discussed above, mulatto ownership rates fall well short of northern men.¹² Atack estimates ownership rates for the 20-24 cohort of northern whites at a remarkable 691 per thousand; Upper South mulattoes achieved ownership rates of only 286 per thousand. Still, Upper South mulattoes age 45-49 realized an ownership rate of 593 per thousand at 45-49 years compared to 868 per thousand for northern whites. Certainly, southern mulattoes, no

¹² Atack (1989), table 2, ignores laborers and farmers without farms and creates three categories: tenants, part-owners, and owners. Part owners are cases where farm value in the agricultural census exceeded real estate holdings enumerated in the population manuscript. Atack's belief is that these men farmed their own property and leased or tenanted additional acreage.

matter how privileged relative to blacks, labored under the burden of dark skin in a society structured on racism, but given the burdens they faced it is remarkable that nearly 60 percent of all mulatto farm operators owned their own farms. Historians, it seems, have been too quick to deny free African Americans an agency they clearly retained.

The Complexion Gap and Wealth Accumulation

Because mulattoes were more likely than blacks to rise from farm laborers to tenants and, ultimately, to farm ownership, mulattoes also accumulated more personal property. It was not enough to acquire some real estate, either through tenancy or outright ownership. Although farm-making costs were relatively low in the long-settled Upper South, regular farm operations required farm implements, tools, animals, feed and seed inventories, and household items. For farmers, climbing the ladder was usually associated with the acquisition and accumulation of personal property as either a production or consumption complement for real property. For nonfarm rural Americans upward occupational mobility implied similar accumulations. Fortunately, the 1860 manuscript census provides data to investigate the rate and nature of personal property accumulation by the Upper South's free African Americans.

In addition to the age and occupation data previously discussed, the other critical variables reported in the 1860 manuscript censuses were real estate and personal wealth entries. Economic historians frequently use this data, but concerns are often raised about their accuracy. Moreover, many census marshals returned complete information on some households but failed to enter any value in either wealth column for others. The exact meaning of this missing data has eluded researchers. Does a missing value imply zero wealth? Does it imply very low wealth, so low that

it was not worth the marshal's effort to estimate it? Does it imply that households concealed or obscured wealth from an authority figure who may have reported them to the tax collector? Or, does it imply neglect or oversight on the marshal's part? It was probably a combination of all these reasons, but the first is the most common assumption, one that may bias the results.

Sometimes, the missing observations are simply excluded from statistical analyses. But doing so is likely to impart an upward bias to wealth estimates if low-wealth households were more likely to have an unrecorded value than middling or wealthy households. Others assume that missing observations effectively imply zero wealth holding. This assumption imposes a downward bias if unrecorded wealth values were low but nonzero. Even though Steckel (1994) found a 40 percent nonresponse typical, it seems unlikely that 40 percent of American households owned nothing. Instructions given the census marshals, however, may have induced them value and enumerate only property liable to state or local taxation rather than all property.¹³ In this case \$0 may have been an accurate valuation, and the marshals may have chosen to leave blanks rather than report zeros.¹⁴

Complementary evidence suggests that households with unrecorded wealth were low-wealth

¹³ Marshals were instructed to estimate the value of property as assessed for taxation after adding "the proper amount to the assessment, so that the return should represent as well the true intrinsic value" since assessed values were often below market values. U.S. Census Office (1862, p. 79). It is possible, however, that census estimates include more than taxable property. At another place, marshals were instructed to estimate and record the value of all personal property, which was "to include the value of all property, possessions, or wealth of each individual which is not embraced in the column previous [real estate], consist of what it may; the value of bonds, mortgages, notes, slaves, live stock, plate and jewels, or furniture; in the fine the value of whatever constitutes the personal wealth of individuals" (Conley and Galenson 1994, p. 149). Even this alternative instruction closely accords with the list of taxable property in Virginia, so Virginia marshals may have estimated only taxable property rather than all personalty.

¹⁴ One enumerator in Virginia recorded 4 zeros in the personal wealth column in addition to leaving many others blank.

households that, in fact, owned little taxable property. As a check on the census enumerators' practices, male heads of households listed in the 1860 census in five Virginia counties were linked to that state's 1860 personal property tax lists. Although both lists ostensibly reported the same thing (the value of personal property), it was unlikely that both sources would return the same value for a given household. Virginia (1852) taxed only selected personal property, including slaves over 12 years, farm animals (the first \$100 worth was exempt), carriages, watches and clocks, pianos and harps, gold and silver plate and jewelry, household and kitchen furniture, and financial assets. For those householders reporting personal property wealth in both sources, census estimates were consistently higher than taxable valuations, suggesting that census marshals included estimates of at least some property not subject to taxation.

The more interesting cases, however, are those households with no wealth estimates recorded in the census that nevertheless appear in the personal property tax lists. Of 227 such cases, 183 had no taxable personal property. Eight were assessed on \$10 or less. Twenty-five householders were assessed on values between \$11 and \$25; eight others on less than \$50 in taxable personalty. Although this implies that unrecorded observations in the census represent low values, it does not necessarily imply zero personal wealth. It must also be kept in mind that a zero personal property assessment did not imply zero personal property ownership. In Virginia, clothing, live stock worth less than \$100, and an uncountably finite number of other goods were not subject to state tax. Moreover, census enumerators (and tax assessors, for that matter) may not have estimated modest holdings. Thus unreported personalty data should not be taken to imply \$0 in actual property ownership, though it is likely that census enumerators censored at the low end of the wealth distribution. That is, they failed to report small or, perhaps, hard to value holdings.

Although plausible explanations can be constructed for the missing data, the issue at hand is that missing data makes statistical inference problematic, especially when familiar least-squares or maximum likelihood methods are used. Recent research by Conley and Galenson (1994; 1998) offers a reasonable estimation alternative to ordinary least squares (OLS), namely quantile or least absolute deviation (LAD) methods. Because such a large percentage of households (regardless of nativity and residence) appear in the census without personal property estimates, the use of OLS or maximum likelihood methods create several problems. First, regardless of sample size, the estimated coefficients will be biased and inconsistent. Second, most wealth studies employ semi-logarithmic regression specifications, which require imputation of some positive value for zero and unrecorded wealth values to make the logarithmic transformations possible and, as Conley and Galenson (1994, p. 155; 1998, p. 474) demonstrate, regression coefficient estimates differ depending on the exact imputation.

A third shortcoming of OLS or ML estimation, even if it produced unbiased and consistent estimates, is that the conditional mean of the wealth distribution may not be the most useful or informative statistic. Wealth and income studies are instructive when they inform about wealth at several different quartiles, deciles, or centiles. It is common, in fact, for studies like those of Buchinsky (1994), Katz (1998), and Goldin and Katz (1999) to highlight the gap between the highest and lowest deciles or quartiles. LAD or quantile regression can simultaneously deal with missing or censored data and allow for direct computation of different centiles, deciles, or quartiles depending on the researchers' needs and the quality of the underlying data.

Intuitively, the purpose of either LAD or OLS regression is the same, namely to describe the

central tendency of the data.¹⁵ OLS estimates the mean of the dependent variable, conditional on the values of the independent variables. LAD techniques, on the other hand, estimate the median (or any other centile) given the values of the independent variables. Median (0.5 quantile) regression estimates a hyperplane through the data that minimizes a weighted sum of the absolute residuals rather than one that minimizes the sum of the squared residuals. More formally, if we define $e_i = y_i - \sum_j \beta_j x_{ij}$. The familiar OLS solution is to minimize $\sum e_i' e_i$ with respect to the β 's. LAD estimation, on the other hand, minimizes $\sum_i |e_i| w_i$, where $w_i = 2q$ if $e_i > 0$ or $2(1-q)$ if $e_i \leq 0$. The STATA “qreg” command calculates the weights appropriate to the specified percentile (or quantile) and solves the minimization problem using a linear programming algorithm.

The theory of LAD actually predates OLS, and recent research has shown that LAD has several advantages under certain conditions.¹⁶ Brown (1985, p. 418) notes that median-based procedures are more resistant to a breakdown of basic assumptions than are mean-based procedures, making LAD particularly attractive in the presence of large outliers. A related advantage of LAD's robustness properties, is that LAD procedures can be used to deal with missing observations, where missing data is replaced by arbitrary values that can be varied to yield bounds on significance levels. A third, a particularly useful feature, is that the procedure is easily generalized to estimate quantiles other than the median. If we want to estimate the 85th percentile, an appropriate set of weights are devised so that 85 percent of the residuals are negative. Thus, LAD estimates are robust to outliers

¹⁵ This and subsequent paragraphs describe quantile regression in an intuitive manner. Those interested in the details and the mathematical derivations should see Koenker and Bassett (1978), Buchinsky (1994), Brown (1985), Emerson and Hoaglin (1983), STATA (1995), and Koenker and Hallock (2001).

¹⁶ Koenker and Bassett (1978) discuss Laplace's LAD derivation dating to 1818.

(which we have), missing observations (which we also have), and can generate estimates of wealth at different points in the distribution. In particular, it can estimate the coefficients of a regression so long as that line lies completely above or below the censoring point. OLS regression cannot, so its results depend on the exact censoring point (see Conley and Galenson 1994; 1998 for a more complete description of this problem).

Despite its potential advantages, LAD estimation should not necessarily be viewed as the single best solution to the data problems inherent in the use of census information. LAD estimates require significant computing power and multiple regression procedures awaited the implementation of computer-powered linear programming algorithms developed in the 1970s. A second disadvantage is that LAD estimation procedures can, except under very stringent conditions, generate nonunique solutions.¹⁷ A third disadvantage of the procedure actually follows from one its advantages: although LAD procedures place little weight on large residuals (outliers), it weights very small residuals heavily (Emerson and Hoaglin 1983, pp. 189-90). Finally, it must be remembered that quantile regression does not really solve the censoring problem, except by focusing on points in the wealth distribution above the censoring point. This may or may not be interesting (it is in the present case), but it still does not allow us to discuss the effect of a given variable on the entirety of the wealth distribution because the entire distribution is not accurately or wholly observed. In short, though LAD methods are less sensitive than OLS methods to missing or censored data, the missing data problem is still not completely resolved.

Before estimating LAD regressions, it was necessary to assign values to the missing personal

¹⁷ The STATA `qreg` procedure warns the user when alternative solutions exist at a given iteration. In the present case, the warning was returned in only a few instances, mostly in the estimation of quantiles near the censoring point.

property data cells. The available data was used to predict a likely censoring point.¹⁸ Table 4 reports the frequency distribution of personal wealth for black and mulatto households. It is readily seen that a majority of southern free African Americans owned less than \$500 in personal wealth, and many had accumulated less than \$100. Ultimately, about 38 percent of householders returned no personal wealth information whatsoever.

Although the exact censoring point cannot be determined unambiguously, the data provide some very good clues. Marshals in Dorchester County, Maryland and Fauquier and Warren, Virginia were particularly vigilant, recording wealth estimates for 94.5 percent of enumerated households. Comparisons of the frequency distributions of these three counties with the remaining 23 reveal that most censoring occurred at the low end of the distribution. In Dorchester, Fauquier, and Warren counties, 2.8 percent of households held \$5 or less in personalty compared to only 0.5 percent in the other 23 counties. Censoring was even more pronounced at slightly higher wealth levels. In the three counties, 21.3 percent of households returned \$6-\$10 in wealth; 25.1 percent returned \$11-\$25, compared to 2.7 and 11.9 percent in the other 23 counties. The likelihood of enumerator censoring increased at the low end of the wealth distribution, particularly for holdings of less than \$10. Based on this low-end censoring, quantile regressions were estimated assuming the censoring point was \$2, \$5, or \$10.¹⁹

¹⁸ Conley and Galenson (1998) used the lowest reported value. In this case, two enumerators actually returned a value of \$0 for a handful of households, even while they provided several dozen missing observations. Thus it seems unlikely that \$0 was the actual censoring point.

¹⁹ The regression parameters were estimated by substituting the censoring point for the missing data points. Conley and Galenson used a slightly different method, but Conley (private correspondence 7 July 1999 and 17 August 1999) believed that my method is appropriate so long as the estimated centile did not fall below the censoring point for any observation. Because only centiles in the upper half of the distribution are estimated, this is unlikely to have occurred. As

LAD regressions included several variables likely to influence the pattern of personal property accumulation. Age and its square were included as independent variables because extensive research by labor historians has shown that wealth accumulation over a lifetime is largely consistent with the well-known life-cycle hypothesis, which typically manifests itself as an inverted U-shaped age-wealth profile. Because rural Upper South African Americans are commonly portrayed as children of poverty, they probably received few and modest intergenerational transfers so that twenty-year-olds should have few assets. Moreover, restrictions on educating African Americans meant limited human capital accumulation except for apprenticeships in a few semi-skilled and skilled occupations, and relegated most to a lifetime of backbreaking labor and an inability to amass great personal wealth. Still, we expect that pattern to hold. Even poor people accumulate as they age, though clearly not as rapidly as wealthier individuals.

If a complexion gap operated in the rural Upper South, more mulattoes than blacks should have been better able to rise above the ranks of manual laborer. And, in fact, mulattoes were less likely than blacks to report their occupation as laborers (see Table 1). Mulattoes and blacks were about equally likely to obtain work as seamen. Mulattoes were more likely to acquire skills and report a skilled occupation, or a mercantile or professional employment. Moreover, as the previous section made clear, mulattoes were more likely to become farm tenants and farm owners. Thus occupations are divided into ten broad categories and included as independent regressors. To capture

expected, the STATA qreg algorithm returned parameter estimates for lower quantiles when the lower censoring points were used. At very low quantiles (i.e., 0.4 and below), however, the procedure returned parameter estimates but no significance levels, implying that the quantile fell below the censoring point. Parameter estimates at the upper quantiles were little affected by altering the censoring point. The \$5 and \$10 censoring points were chosen based on evidence in Table 4. The \$2 censoring point was used because several marshals each reported a handful of \$2 estimates.

any effects of the complexion gap beyond its direct influence on an individual's ability to acquire human capital or follow an occupation a separate dummy variable (BLACK) was included to capture the effect. It is expected that the coefficient will be negative and both statistically significant and economically meaningful.

A family size variable equal to the number of people residing in the household was also included in the regression. It is not clear a priori how household or family size might affect wealth accumulation. On one hand, larger households may have been capable of putting more people to work, improving the family's ability to accumulate. On the other hand, households may have had larger numbers of unproductive members, namely the very young or the elderly, which may have inhibited wealth accumulation.²⁰

Finally, dummy variables for state of residence were included to capture any state-specific effects on an individual's ability to accumulate property. Most southern states passed laws attempting to limit the geographic mobility of African Americans. Others passed laws barring African Americans from certain occupations. Both sorts of laws certainly restricted African-American advance if jobs and incomes demonstrated noted geographic or sectoral shifts. The dummy variables should capture the impact of different laws and customs as well as differential enforcements of similar laws (such as nonimmigration laws).

Based on the availability of data and the likelihood of low-end censoring, quantile regressions

²⁰ Two additional variables often included in such regressions -- literacy and mobility -- were not included. First, very few free African Americans were recorded as literate. It may have been that very few were literate, or it may have been that census marshals, knowing that it was against the law to educate free blacks, simply did not bother to ask them if they were literate. Mobility was excluded because state laws prohibited interstate migration (laws which may not have been fully obeyed) and because most census marshals recorded state of birth, not county, so that intrastate migration (that most likely among free African Americans) is unknown.

were estimated for \$2, \$5, and \$10 censoring points (because of their similarities at upper quantiles, only the \$2 censoring point regressions are reported). Regressions were estimated in semi-log form (the dependent variable is the natural log of personal wealth). Parameter estimates for selected quantiles as well as OLS estimates for comparative purposes, are reported in Table 5. Most of the estimates accord with prior expectations.

For both men and women, the age-wealth profile exhibited the usual pattern of increasing at a decreasing rate up to age 55 or 60 and then turning down after age 60 at some quantiles. As expected, farm owners of both genders held significantly more wealth than unskilled laborers. A 40 year old mulatto male farmer at the 75th quantile, for example, owned \$260 more than an mulatto male laborer; a 40 year old mulatto female farmer at the same quantile owned \$220 more than a mulatto female laborer, holding all else constant. Not surprisingly, among males, watermen, skilled artisans, and merchants/professionals amassed significantly more property than unskilled laborers.

The female occupation coefficients reveal some surprising effects. Domestic servants and washerwomen, for instance, are often believed to have been unskilled workers who eked out a bare subsistence at the margins of southern society. Regression estimates largely refute that belief. At most estimated quantiles, domestic servants, washerwomen, and seamstresses accumulated significantly more property than simple laborers. Though domestic service and washing were hardly skilled occupations, engaging in them implied a greater ability to accumulate property than having no particular occupation. African American women working in service occupations (principally, nurses, midwives, and boarding house operators) also accumulated significantly more than unskilled women.

The regressions also reveal some important regional effects in wealth accumulation. African-

American men living in Louisiana and Tennessee acquired significantly more personal property than men living in Maryland. Men living in Virginia and North Carolina, on the other hand, amassed significantly less property at nearly every quantile than Maryland men. Household sizes were also significant determinants of wealth accumulation. The positive coefficients suggest that larger households had more individuals bringing income into the household.

The regressions also reveal that blacks acquired significantly less personal wealth than mulattoes.²¹ Table 6 reports the predicted wealth holdings by complexion and gender at selected quantiles, assuming they were 40 years old and operated a farm, either as owner or tenant. The complexion gap was large indeed at the upper end of the distribution. At the 95th quantile, black men had about 83 percent of the personal property of mulatto men. The complexion gap was similar down to the 85th quantile. At the 75th quantile and below, black men had about 92 percent of mulatto wealth. At the median, black wealth increased to about 93 percent of mulatto wealth, which is consistent with the gap at the conditional mean shown in the OLS and robust regression results. Both OLS and robust regression estimates place black wealth at about 95 percent of mulatto wealth. The advantage of quantile regression thus becomes clear. At the conditional median and conditional mean, wealth was similarly distributed. At the upper end of the wealth distribution, on

²¹ Historians familiar with postbellum censuses have sometimes argued that census enumerators were more likely to label wealthier African Americans as mulattoes regardless of their actual complexion or heritage. If true, this would produce spurious results when regressing complexion on wealth. To check for this possibility, probit regressions were estimated with complexion as the dependent variable. Independent regressors included all those used in Table 5 plus the natural logarithm of personal wealth. For male-headed households, the estimated wealth coefficient was small and insignificant at usual levels [p value of 0.29]. For female-headed households, the coefficient was also small and insignificant [p value of 0.19]. It seem unlikely that the regression results are spurious. I thank Anthony O'Brien for reminding me of this concern among historians of the postbellum South.

the other hand, mulatto men had significantly more property than black men. The table also reports the unconditional mean as well as three quantiles, showing the advantages of quantile regression.

Among female-headed households the complexion gap takes a form somewhat different than that found among male-headed households. At the 95th quantile, black households had 80 percent of the wealth of a mulatto, female-headed household. At the 85th quantile, black wealth fell to 65 percent of mulatto wealth; at the 75th, black household wealth rose to about 70 percent of mulatto wealth. At the 60th quantile, it rose to about 88 percent. At the conditional mean of the wealth distribution (OLS and robust regression estimates), the complexion gap also demonstrates an especially marked gender gap. Whereas the complexion gap nearly disappeared among men at the mean, it remained at about 20 percent among women.

Despite mulatto women's ability to accumulate more personal wealth than black women, mulatto women lagged behind mulatto men, even black men. Table 6 shows the gender gap in wealth accumulation. At every quantile, male-headed households had more personal wealth than female-headed households. At the 95th quantile, for example, households headed by mulatto women had 65 percent of the personal wealth owned by mulatto men. At the 60th quantile, female-headed households had about half as much personal wealth as male households. OLS estimates show that the 50 percent gap persists among black women; mulatto women had about 60 percent as much as mulatto men.

Thus, the empirical analysis of data included in the 1860 population manuscript census implies a complex social hierarchy based on gradations in skin color. At the upper end of the wealth distribution, light-skinned mulattoes of both genders demonstrated a greater ability to accumulate property than dark complected blacks. Moreover, the complexion gap reinforced a gender gap.

Mulatto women, though clearly more able to acquire more property than black women, still lagged well behind black men at most points in the wealth distribution. In fact, the gender gap was wider around the mean and the median of the distribution than at the upper tail. In the antebellum rural South both the complexion gap and the gender gap were evident, and black women householders resided at the lowest rung on economic ladder.

Concluding Remarks

Using data reported in the 1860 federal census, empirical analysis reveals an unmistakable complexion gap in the antebellum rural Upper South. The analysis, nevertheless, provides lower bound estimates of the gap due to the possible underreporting of mulattoes as blacks. More accurate data would strengthen the empirical analysis and likely result in an even wider gap. Generations of historians have documented this gap in urban centers in the Lower South, but doubted its presence in the rural Upper South. The evidence presented above overturns this long-held interpretation. Rural mulattoes were more likely to become farm tenants and farm owners than blacks who, disproportionately, remained on the lowest rung of the agricultural ladder. Rural mulattoes also accumulated more personal property than blacks at every point in the upper half of the wealth distribution. Limited evidence on the lower half of the distribution suggests that the poverty was more colorblind than affluence, but that does not alter the reality that mulattoes were more likely than blacks to climb out of poverty.²² Historians may have doubted or overlooked this complexion gap in the rural South because these men and women were not politically active, nor did they form

²² Estimates of wealth holding among men at the 40th quantile suggest no statistical difference between blacks and mulattoes.

the same types of social clubs found in Charleston, Savannah, and New Orleans. Racism ran deep in rural America, and the best strategy in rural areas may have been to quietly exploit available opportunities without drawing too much attention to one's self.

It is also heartening that complexion gap found here is in general agreement with evidence of a more general mulatto advantage. Margo and Steckel (1992) found that light-skinned ex-slaves recruited into the U.S. Army during the Civil War were significantly taller than dark-skinned recruits. They attribute this effect to a combination of heterosis and preferential treatment accorded light-skinned slaves. Komlos (1992) and Bodenhorn (1999a; 1999c) found a similar pattern among the Upper South's free African Americans. While the exact connections between the economic and the "biological" standard of living are not yet fully understood, nor culturally or temporally invariant, there is a general correspondence between wealth (or income or socioeconomic status) and height in many historical and modern societies. The findings of this paper accord with the anthropometric results. Not only were light-skinned mulattoes taller than blacks, they were wealthier.

Evidence about how blacks and mulattoes fared relative to contemporary whites residing in the South awaits additional research, but comparisons to whites living in the northern cities suggests that southern mulattoes fared reasonably well by contemporary standards. Conley and Galenson (1998, p. 482) estimated that, at the 90th quantile, a skilled 40 year-old, American-born man living in Boston accumulated \$1,562 in personal wealth, about twice that of a rural, southern, mulatto farmer. That same mulatto farmer, however, had accumulated about \$130 more than a skilled 40 year-old, white American-born man residing in Indianapolis. At the 75th quantile, a hypothetical mulatto farmer owned about the same amount of personalty as a skilled, white, American-born male living in New York City and Chicago. Clearly, comparisons of southern African Americans and

northern whites are not the most informative sorts of comparisons, but they do imply that the mulatto advantage in the antebellum South was substantial indeed.

This article nearly begs more questions than it answers. In the face of much qualitative evidence, historians have accepted the existence of a complexion gap within the African American communities of the urban Lower South. It is now time to determine, with some precision, the quantitative extent of that gap. Only by doing so will we fully comprehend whether the gap found here reflected cultural, social and economic attitudes throughout the South or whether it was unique to the rural Upper South. Ultimately, understanding the mulattoes' actual place in southern society will depend on determining the life-cycle pattern of real and personal property accumulation among rural and urban southern whites. Comparisons to northern whites, while informative, do not illuminate the complex social hierarchy that arose in the antebellum South. Comprehending the complexities of race in southern society requires much additional inquiry. This article represents the early steps on a long-term research endeavor.

References

Adams, John W. and Kasakoff, Alice Bee (1991). "Estimates of Census Underenumeration Based on Genealogies." Social Science History 15, 527-543.

Alston, Lee J. and Kauffman, Kyle D. (1998). "Up, Down, and Off the Agricultural Ladder: New Evidence and Implications of Agricultural Mobility for Blacks in the Postbellum South." Agricultural History 72, 263-279.

Atack, Jeremy (1989). "The Agricultural Ladder Revisited: A New Look at an Old Question with Some Data for 1860." Agricultural History 63, 1-25.

Baltimore American, 9 June 1859.

Blocker, Jack S. (1996). "Bias in Wealth and Income Records: An Ohio Case Study." Historical Methods 29, 25-36.

- Bode, Frederick A. and Ginter, Donald E. (1986) . Farm Tenancy and the Census in Antebellum Georgia. Athens: University of Georgia Press.
- Bodenhorn, Howard (1999a). "The Mulatto Advantage: The Biological Consequences of Complexion in Rural Antebellum Virginia." Lafayette College, unpublished working paper.
- Bodenhorn, Howard (1999b). "The Economic Status of Free Blacks in the Antebellum South: Technical Paper #1: Rural County Sample Selection." Lafayette College, unpublished working paper.
- Bodenhorn, Howard (1999c). "A Troublesome Caste: Height and Nutrition of Antebellum Virginia's Rural Free Blacks." Journal of Economic History 59, 972-996.
- Bogger, Tommy (1997). Free Blacks in Norfolk, Virginia, 1790-1860: The Darker Side of Freedom. Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press.
- Bogue, Allan G. (1963). From Prairie to Corn Belt: Farming on the Illinois and Iowa Prairies in the Nineteenth Century. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Brown, B.M. (1985). "Median Estimates and Sign Tests." In Samuel Kotz and Norman L. Johnson (Eds.) Encyclopedia of Statistical Sciences, Vol. 5. New York: John Wiley & Sons. Pp. 417-420.
- Buchinsky, Moshe (1994). "Changes in the U.S. Wage Structure, 1963-1987: Application of Quantile Regression." Econometrica 62, 405-458.
- Conley, Timothy G. and Galenson, David W. (1994). "Quantile Regression Analysis of Censored Wealth Data." Historical Methods 27, 149-165.
- Conley, Timothy G. and Galenson, David W. (1998). "Nativity and Wealth in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Cities." Journal of Economic History 58, 468-493.
- Davis, F. James (1991). Who Is Black?: One Nation's Definition. University Park.: The Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Degler, Carl (1971). Neither Black nor White: Slavery and Race Relations in Brazil and the United States. New York: Macmillan Company.
- Emerson, John D. and Hoaglin, David C. (1983). "Analysis of Two-Way Tables of Medians." In David C. Hoaglin, Frederick Mosteller, and John W. Tukey (Eds.) Understanding Robust and Exploratory Data Analysis. New York: John Wiley & Sons. Pp. 166-210.
- Goldin, Claudia and Katz, Lawrence (1999). "The Returns to Skill in the United States across the Twentieth Century." NBER working paper No. 7126.

Gray, Lewis C. (1933) History of Agriculture in the Southern United States to 1860, 2 vols. Washington, D.C.:Carnegie Institution.

Guild, Jane Purcell (1969). Black Laws of Virginia. New York: Negro Universities Press.

Hershberg, Theodore and Williams, Henry (1981). "Mulattoes and Blacks: Intra-group Color Differences and Social Stratification in Nineteenth-Century Philadelphia." In Theodore Hershberg (Ed.) Philadelphia: Work, Space, Family and Group Experience in the 19th Century. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press. Pp. 392-434.

Horowitz, Donald L. (1973) "Color Differentiation in the American Systems of Slavery." Journal of Interdisciplinary History 3, 509-541.

Horton, James Oliver (1993). "Shades of Color: The Mulatto in Three Antebellum Northern Communities." In James O. Horton (Ed.) Free People of Color: Inside the African American Community. Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press. Pp. 124-144.

Houdek, John T. and Heller, Charles F., Jr. (1986) "Searching for Nineteenth-Century Farm Tenants: An Evaluation of Methods." Historical Methods 19, 55-61.

Irwin, James R. and O'Brien, Anthony P. (1998). "Where Have all the Sharecroppers Gone?: Black Occupations in Postbellum Mississippi." Agricultural History 72, 280-297.

Irwin, James R. and O'Brien, Anthony P. (1999). "Economic Progress in the Postbellum South?: Implications for the Growth in Incomes of African Americans in the Mississippi Delta, 1880-1910." Central Michigan University, unpublished working paper.

Johnson, Whittington B. (1996). Black Savannah, 1788-1864. Fayetteville: The University of Arkansas Press.

Johnston, James Hugo (1970). Race Relations in Virginia & Miscegenation in the South, 1776-1860. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.

Katz, Lawrence (1998). "Commentary: The Distribution of Income in Industrialized Countries." In Income Inequality: Issues and Policy Options, 34-48. Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City Symposium.

Koenker, Roger and Bassett, Gilbert, Jr. (1978). "Regression Quantiles." Econometrica 46, 33-50.

Koenker, Roger and Hallock, Kevin F. (2001). "Quantile Regression." Journal of Economic Perspectives 15, 143-156.

Komlos, John (1992). "Toward an Anthropometric History of African-Americans: The Case of the Free Blacks in Antebellum Maryland." In Claudia Goldin and Hugh Rockoff (Eds.) Strategic

Factors in Nineteenth Century American Economic History: A Volume to Honor Robert W. Fogel, 297-329. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press. Pp. 297-329.

Komlos, John and Cuff, Timothy (1998). Classics in Anthropometric History. St. Katharinen, Germany: Scripta Mercaturae Verlag.

Litwack, Leon F. (1961) North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790-1860. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Margo, Robert A. and Steckel, Richard H. (1992). "The Nutrition and Health of Slaves and Antebellum Southern Whites." In Robert W. Fogel and Stanley L. Engerman (Eds.) Without Consent or Contract: The Rise and Fall of American Slavery, Technical Papers, Volume II. New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company. Pp. 508-521.

Mencke, John G. (1979). Mulattoes and Race Mixture: American Attitudes and Images, 1865-1918. UMI Research Press.

Parkerson, Donald H. (1991) "Comments on the Underenumeration of the U.S. Census, 1850-1880." Social Science History 15, 509-515.

Owsley, Frank L. (1949). Plain Folk of the Old South. Baton Rouge: University of Louisiana Press.

Ransom, Roger L. and Sutch, Richard (1997). One Kind of Freedom: The Economic Consequences of Emancipation. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Reid, Joseph D. (1976). "Antebellum Southern Rental Contracts." Explorations in Economic History 13, 69-83.

Sharpless, John B. and Shortridge, Ray M. (1975). "Biased Underenumeration in Census Manuscripts: Methodological Implications." Journal of Urban History 1, 409-439.

STATA Corporation (1995). Reference Manual, 3 vols. College Station, TX: Stata Press.

Steckel, Richard H. (1991). "The Quality of Census Data for Historical Inquiry: A Research Agenda." Social Science History 15, 579-599.

Steckel, Richard H. (1994). "Census Manuscript Schedules Matched with Property Tax Lists: A Source of Information on Long-Term Trends in Wealth Inequality." Historical Methods 27, 71-85.

Steckel, Richard H. and Roderick Floud (Eds.) (1997). Health and Welfare during Industrialization. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.

U.S. Census Office. (1862). Preliminary Report on the Eighth Census. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office.

Virginia (1852). Acts of Assembly.

Virginia (1859/60). Acts of Assembly.

Virginia (1947/48). House Journal.

Virginia (1860). Personal Property Tax Books. Accomack, Campbell, Fauquier, Goochland, and Stafford Counties. Richmond: Library of Virginia microfilming project.

Williamson, Joel (1984). New People: Miscegenation and Mulattoes in the United States. New York: New York University Press.

Winters, Donald L. (1978). Farmers without Farms: Agricultural Tenancy in Nineteenth-Century Iowa. Ames: Iowa State University Press.

Winters, Donald L. (1987). "The Agricultural Ladder in Southern Agriculture: Tennessee, 1850-1870." Agricultural History 61, 36-52.

Table 1 Characteristics of Free African American Sample
Means (Standard Deviations)

	Black Men	Black Women	Mulatto Men	Mulatto Women
Age	43.03	43.31	40.52	41.34
(yrs)	(12.99)	(13.14)	(13.11)	(13.05)
Property	93.55	36.02	142.34	92.65
(\$)	(299.69)	(188.24)	(521.75)	(409.77)
Household	5.02	4.20	5.25	4.20
	(2.59)	(2.32)	(2.78)	(2.39)
Laborer	0.66	0.37	0.48	0.22
%	(0.47)	(0.48)	(0.50)	(0.41)
Farmer	0.16	0.02	0.24	0.09
	(0.37)	(0.14)	(0.43)	(0.28)
Watermen	0.02	--	0.02	--
	(0.16)		(0.14)	
Skilled		0.05	--	0.14
	(0.22)		(0.35)	--
Merchant	0.00	--	0.01	--
	(0.06)		(0.10)	
Domestic	--	0.06	--	0.06
		(0.23)		(0.23)
Seamstress	--	0.01	--	0.05
		(0.11)		(0.23)
Washer	--	0.15	--	0.15
		(0.36)		(0.36)
Service	--	0.02	--	0.03
		(0.14)		(0.18)
Spinster	--	0.00	--	0.05
		(0.07)		(0.21)
Maryland	0.74	0.56	0.29	0.17
	(0.44)	(0.50)	(0.46)	(0.37)
Virginia	0.18	0.33	0.16	0.29
	(0.39)	(0.47)	(0.36)	(0.45)
N.C.	0.06	0.08	0.49	0.46
	(0.24)	(0.28)	(0.50)	(0.50)
Tennessee	0.00	0.00	0.01	0.02
	(0.00)	(0.04)	(0.12)	(0.12)
Kentucky	0.01	0.02	0.02	0.03
	(0.11)	(0.13)	(0.13)	(0.17)
Louisiana	0.00	0.00	0.03	0.05
	(0.04)	(0.06)	(0.16)	(0.21)
N	3,859	1,493	1,259	529

Notes: Laborers include day labor, farm labor, ditchers, fencers, railroad hands, waiters, and miners. Farmers include farmers, planters, plantresses, and tenants. Watermen include sailors, seamen, oystermen, mariners, boatmen, and fishermen. Skilled includes carpenters, blacksmiths, sawyers, butchers, brickmasons, stonemasons, coopers, barbers, wagoners, shoemakers, ropemakers, painters, turners, wheelwrights, cigar makers, millers, turpentine distillers, engineers, and a fiddler. Merchants include merchants, traders, drummers, restaurant owners, marketmen, and preachers. Domestics include domestics, housekeepers, servants, and cooks. Seamstresses include seamstresses, dress makers, and weavers. Washers include washerwomen and laundresses. Services include cakesellers, nurses, midwives, fortune tellers, boarding house operators, and prostitutes.

Source: 26 county rural southern census sample. See Bodenhorn (1996b) for a description of sample and sampling method.

Table 2 Characteristics of Free African Americans by Occupation

	Percent Black (%)	Age (yrs)	No.in House (#)	Real Estate (\$)	Personal Estate (\$)	Average Farm Value
1a. Labor	0.85	42.9	4.8	207.63	67.64	--
1b. Farm Labor	0.81	40.8	4.8	185.03	66.35	--
1. All Labor	0.84	42.2	4.8	205.48	67.35	--
2. Tenants	0.52	43.1	6.6	550.67	216.89	1,707.57
3. Farmers without Farms	0.67	44.6	5.7	756.21	238.13	--
4. Farmers	0.71	48.5	6.6	1,089.11	575.15	1,216.79

Notes: Row 1 averages are averages of Rows 1a and 1b combined. Farmers without farms are those farmers listed in the population manuscripts as a farmer with reported real estate values, but not appearing in the agricultural census manuscripts. Average farm value column is value of farm recorded in agricultural census. Averages for real and personal property are averages only for those reporting a value. The statistical issues surrounding missing or censored data are discussed below. Sources: 1860 federal census population and agriculture manuscripts. For sampling method see Bodenhorn (1999b).

Table 3 Farm Laborer, Tenancy, and Ownership Rates among Free African Americans by Cohort in 1860
(per thousand farm workers\operators at age and complexion)
Mulattoes (M) and Blacks (B)

Age Cohort	Farm Laborers		Tenants		Farmers without Farms		Farmers	
	(M)	(B)	(M)	(B)	(M)	(B)	(M)	(B)
20-24	745	876	78	18	137	80	39	27
25-29	587	853	144	20	192	85	77	41
30-34	568	822	148	35	185	76	99	67
35-39	618	784	99	39	137	102	145	75
40-44	545	808	152	37	131	82	172	73
45-49	447	686	105	60	197	143	250	111
50-54	446	730	189	36	257	92	108	142
55-59	383	692	149	46	255	138	213	123
60-64	604	694	75	41	189	104	132	162
65-69	455	735	91	20	136	102	318	143
70-74	364	671	91	12	273	134	273	183
75-79	364	750	91	23	182	68	364	159

Notes: For definitions see Table 2 and text.

Sources: See Table 2.

Table 4: Frequency Distribution of Personal Wealth by County
Free African Americans in 1860

County	Personal Wealth (\$)								NA
	5	10	25	50	100	500	1000	1000+	
Anne Arundel, Md	1	0	6	100	164	89	7	4	437
Caroline, Md	0	0	2	23	30	92	8	2	283
Dorchester, Md	23	208	236	99	74	150	38	6	50
Frederick, Md	1	11	66	75	53	46	4	0	275
Harford, Md	2	4	125	129	80	72	4	1	89
Kent, Md	0	0	51	123	76	63	11	1	182
Prince Geo, Md	0	0	1	4	8	17	1	2	139
Talbot, Md	0	0	13	48	40	57	1	3	291
Accomack, Va	3	47	167	74	31	31	1	1	169
Campbell, Va	0	15	42	62	18	45	4	4	32
Fauquier, Va	1	6	14	36	30	21	6	1	6
Goochland, Va	0	0	5	12	15	11	0	2	72
Northampton, Va	2	9	22	46	15	13	2	0	59
Northumberland, Va	0	0	0	1	3	11	0	0	21
Southampton, Va	7	34	54	25	11	4	2	2	191
Stafford, Va	0	1	7	14	6	4	1	1	21
Warren, Va	6	8	12	4	5	3	0	0	1
Craven, NC	1	2	48	48	34	32	2	2	145
Edgecomb, NC	0	0	0	3	6	13	1	1	48
Halifax, NC	10	40	110	93	66	82	5	0	122
Robeson, NC	2	8	28	36	29	45	1	8	80
Bath, Ky	0	0	0	0	4	6	0	0	15
Franklin, Ky	0	3	7	6	14	17	3	1	43
Claiborne, Tn	0	0	1	4	11	9	3	0	2
Baton Rouge E, La	0	0	0	4	5	29	6	8	21
Totals	59	396	1,017	1,069	828	962	111	50	2,794

Source: See Table 1.

Table 5 Quantile and OLS Regression Estimates, Selected Quantiles
 Dependent Variable=natural logarithm of personal wealth,
 Householders age 20-75
 \$2 censoring point

	Quantile					OLS
	.95	.85	.75	.60	.50	
	<u>Men</u>					
Age	0.05* (2.33)	0.07* (5.66)	0.06* (5.14)	0.06* (4.96)	0.04* (3.02)	0.06* (4.80)
Age ²	-0.00* (-1.70)	-0.00* (-4.64)	-0.00* (-4.24)	-0.00* (-4.01)	-0.00* (-2.22)	-0.00* (-3.77)
House	0.07* (4.88)	0.67* (7.24)	0.88* (9.64)	0.09* (9.55)	0.09* (8.17)	0.07* (7.85)
Laborer	-0.15 (-1.25)	-0.00 (-0.03)	0.24* (3.02)	1.80* (20.57)	1.84* (19.22)	0.51* (6.37)
Farmer	1.45* (9.42)	1.58* (16.68)	1.93* (20.37)	3.74* (36.81)	4.01* (36.11)	2.71* (29.01)
Waterman	0.75* (2.85)	0.29* (1.74)	0.54* (3.29)	2.25* (12.47)	2.49* (12.58)	1.27* (7.61)
Skilled	1.58* (5.61)	1.03* (9.12)	1.06* (10.33)	1.21* (22.65)	2.83* (22.20)	3.02* (13.84)
Merchant	2.21* (4.73)	2.31* (7.11)	1.79* (5.70)	3.34* (9.57)	3.38* (8.76)	2.11* (6.41)
Black	-0.19* (-1.78)	-0.15* (-2.30)	-0.09 (-1.31)	-0.09 (-1.27)	-0.06 (-0.85)	-0.05 (-0.84)
Virginia	-0.38* (-3.84)	-0.48* (-7.63)	-0.42* (-4.15)	-0.21* (-2.96)	-0.04 (-0.46)	-0.53 (-0.82)
N Carolina	-0.26* (-2.05)	-0.41* (-5.17)	-0.32* (-4.15)	-0.28* (-3.37)	-0.23* (-2.48)	-0.11 (-1.47)
Tennessee	1.14* (6.56)	1.31* (3.74)	1.20* (3.16)	1.36* (3.23)	1.55* (3.37)	1.99* (5.02)
Kentucky	0.51* (1.78)	0.13 (0.69)	0.14 (0.70)	-0.14 (-0.63)	-0.25 (-1.07)	-0.11 (-0.54)
Louisiana	1.08* (3.30)	0.36 (1.37)	0.77* (2.99)	1.16* (3.96)	1.31* (4.03)	1.10* (4.00)
Constant	3.78* (8.84)	2.63* (10.13)	1.91* (7.24)	-0.39 (-1.39)	-0.45 (-1.49)	0.28 (1.08)

Table 5 (continued)

	Quantile				OLS
	.95	.85	.75	.60	
	<u>Women</u>				
Age	0.02 (0.96)	0.04* (2.33)	0.07* (3.83)	0.03* (1.67)	0.05* (2.95)
Age ²	-0.00 (-0.43)	-0.00* (-1.91)	-0.00* (-3.35)	-0.00 (-1.33)	-0.00* (-2.31)
House	0.07* (3.26)	0.08* (5.25)	0.02 (1.06)	0.00 (0.24)	0.02 (1.18)
Laborer	-0.17 (-1.37)	0.03 (0.39)	0.09 (1.06)	1.75* (20.05)	0.50* (6.07)
Farmer	1.82* (6.39)	1.92* (10.20)	2.00* (10.17)	3.73* (18.69)	2.49* (13.16)
Domestic	1.00* (4.35)	0.64* (4.20)	0.82* (5.03)	2.20* (13.32)	0.74* (4.73)
Seamstress	0.45 (1.34)	0.23 (1.07)	0.65* (2.84)	2.22* (9.10)	0.90* (3.85)
Washer	0.32* (1.99)	0.44* (4.43)	0.71* (6.63)	2.24* (20.58)	0.88* (8.50)
Service	1.53* (4.37)	1.60* (7.32)	1.85* (7.69)	3.28* (13.66)	2.12* (9.13)
Spinster	0.13 (0.34)	0.33 (1.26)	0.64* (2.20)	2.50* (8.60)	1.29* (4.60)
Black	-0.22* (-1.65)	-0.43* (-5.00)	-0.36* (-3.85)	-0.11 (-1.16)	-0.22* (-2.50)
Virginia	-0.15 (-1.31)	-0.28* (-3.63)	-0.06 (-0.68)	0.25* (2.93)	0.19* (2.33)
N Carolina	-0.14 (-0.82)	-0.29* (-2.58)	-0.40* (-3.36)	-0.15 (-1.29)	-0.28* (-2.50)
Tennessee	0.36* (1.65)	0.55 (1.36)	0.75 (1.60)	1.22* (2.44)	1.15* (2.37)
Kentucky	0.44 (1.20)	0.80* (3.65)	0.21 (0.85)	-0.15 (-0.61)	-0.01 (-0.06)
Louisiana	3.80* (10.16)	2.37* (8.81)	2.24* (7.69)	3.67* (12.12)	1.86* (6.48)
Constant	3.42* (6.06)	2.84* (8.15)	1.81* (4.88)	0.22 (0.58)	0.51 (1.42)

Notes: t-statistics in parentheses. STATA cannot estimate 0.5 quantile for women because regression lines falls below censoring point. Excluded variables are Maryland residence and unknown occupation. Household size evaluated at the mean. N=5,117 for men; 1,730 censored.

N=2,022 for women; 976 censored. *=significant at 10% or higher.

Table 6 Predicted Personal Wealth of 40 Year-Old Black and Mulatto Farmers at Selected Quantiles

Quantile	Mulatto Men	Black Men	Mulatto Women	Black Women
0.95	\$856	\$708	\$555	\$443
0.85	526	452	457	297
0.75	320	293	259	181
0.60	218	200	105	94
0.50	184	172	--	--
OLS	121	115	78	62
Robust Regression	142	136	90	73
<u>Unconditional Means and Quantiles</u>				
Mean	203	145	164	67
Median	75	50	50	25
0.75	200	150	100	50
0.90	650	500	650	200

Notes: Calculated from regression coefficients reported in Table 5. Farmers defined to include farmers, planters, plantresses, and tenants. Assumes 40 year-old Maryland resident, and farmer. All other variables except constant and black set equal to zero. Household size evaluated at mean. Robust regression weights OLS residuals to correct for outliers. See STATA Reference Manual for description of robust regression (rreg) procedures.

Sources: See Tables 1 and 5.