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The Ports of Secession: The Economics of Florida Ports in the Secession Crisis

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The Economics of Florida Ports in the Secession Crisis

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Fig. 1. Florida's chief export cities in 1860. Map by author.

Introduction

From the moment of its admission to the Union in 1845, Florida's economy was structured around its numerous ports and the ability to ship resources to centers of production and commerce. The population of Florida reflected this reality. Most Floridians were part-timers, snowbirds who came south not for the enjoyable weather so much as the economic opportunities created by climate and peninsular geography. During the peak season of December to April in the 1840s and 1850s, the Gulf Coast's population swelled with the arrival of Northerners and foreigners seeking profit in Apalachicola, primarily in the cash crop industry of cotton. Down the coast in Tampa, the cattle industry was growing as local ranchers found markets in the Caribbean Sea. The ability to connect cotton and cattle with buyers was facilitated by Florida's approximately 1,800 miles of coastline and an expanding shipping industry.

Throughout its initial fifteen years of statehood, shipping defined the state's economy. During the winter months, non-southerners by birth far outnumbered the permanent or lifelong residents of the Florida Gulf-Coast.[1] Though it was the southernmost state in the Union, it would have been a stretch to consider Florida truly a part of the South, either in demographics or culture. In the decades preceding the American Civil War, the state's centers of population were exclusively port cities inhabited by a regionally, nationally, and racially diverse lot.[2] A lack of cohesive state identity made Florida less of an actor and more of an object in the conflict that was to come.

On the tenth of January, 1861, Florida became the third state to secede from the Union. The decision was no doubt strongly motivated by Florida's slaveholding interests – a move to reject the narrow election of the nation's first Republican

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[1] Lynn Willoughby, *Fair to Middlin': The Antebellum Cotton Trade of the Apalachicola/Chatahoochee River Valley* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1993), 12.

[2] Wilma Louise Handley, "The Labourers are all slaves: Slavery and Hiring-Out in an Antebellum Gulf Coast Community" (M.A. Thesis, University of West Florida, 1999), 54.

President, a party founded on an anti-slavery platform. On the eve of secession, Florida's slave owners were wealthy in chattel property. The state was by far the least populous in the South, totaling only 140,424 souls, yet 44 percent of these Floridians were in bondage.[3] Protecting slavery gave those in a position of power and influence in Florida a cultural and economic motivation for secession. Ironically, the actions taken to protect the institution only hastened its demise, tearing apart in four years of bloody conflict what had been entrenched in southern culture over the preceding three centuries. The exploitation of slave labor had created enormous wealth. The 1860 census calculated the cash value of farms in the state to be $16,435,727[4]. Southern plantation owners and politicians had little incentive to tinker with the structure of their work force.

While the Deep South sought to protect its slave culture, Florida elected to join the Confederacy because of the economic considerations unique to the geography of a peninsular state. Economic considerations were important both in Florida's decision to secede and in the Union and Confederacy's desire to possess Florida. The state's importance to the United States and the emerging Confederacy as secession became apparent was determined, in large part, by its port cities. For the South, Florida's abundance of coastline made protection of slavery a subordinate consideration to tariff reform. With Florida's loyalties up for grabs, the Union and

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[3] U.S. Census Bureau, Census Material from 1840 to 1890, Historical Census Browser, University of Virginia, http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/collections/stats/histcensus/index.html.

[4] U.S. Census Office, *Agriculture of the United States in 1860: Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eight Census* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1864).

Confederacy both placed high value on Florida's allegiance because of the cotton and cattle trades. These concerns, therefore, drove the underlying motivations of the principal actors in Florida's secession.

Florida's ports provided a potential gateway for foreign goods into the North American continent. The importation of those goods, however, came at a cost. Southern critics of the 1861 Morrill Tariff Act pointed to the disparate effect high protective tariffs had on the economic growth of the southern agricultural states as opposed to the northern industrial states. The ability to be free from high protective tariffs was an inducement to Florida business leaders to support the secession movement. Because shipping was the dominant industry in a largely unsettled, underdeveloped state, the stakes were high in determining Florida's allegiance. The Federal government's main interest in Florida ports as they related to import tariffs was not the protection of a continued stream of income, but rather the protection of points of entry to domestic markets. The ability to circumvent approved ports would shift traffic to seceded ports and greatly diminish the amount of federal revenue collected.

The cotton trade served as the stimulus for exponential economic growth of the United States throughout the nineteenth century. Together with the development of internal transportation, cotton was the catalyst for an increased standard of living and internal tax revenue. The delivery of American cotton to foreign ports was necessary in order to purchase foreign goods and to fund the expanding federal government. The unpredictability of future cotton output and market share made Florida's ports a valued asset to the Federal government and the

Rebel forces. While Florida's ports could not match the output of its larger competitors, the ability to divert cotton traffic to Apalachicola, Pensacola, Fernandina, and the like was an interest worth protecting.

The United States government and the emerging Confederate States of America recognized the enormous potential of Florida for providing the beef necessary to field vast armies. While Florida's total cattle holdings were small in comparison to several other states of the south, its per capita cattle holdings ranked near the top, meaning local demand was small enough to export huge quantities of cattle without negatively impacting the state's civilian population. Florida's geographical location to the east of the Mississippi River made its cattle holdings more important to the Confederate war effort as Union victories cut off western supplies. Lastly, Florida's ports created the opportunity to move cattle out of state more efficiently to deliver to troops elsewhere. This possibility was recognized and utilized by both sides, with the Union expending considerable effort to keep Florida cattle out of the north Florida, Alabama, and Louisiana ports.

Chapter 1

High Tariffs in a State of Ports

Alexander Hamilton articulated what became the essence of early American economic policy in his 1791 *Report on Manufactures.* The report stated a preference for moderate import duties, allowing encouragement of domestic industry but not necessarily protection. Hamilton had long recognized the dangers of an unbalanced tariff, warning "exorbitant duties on imported articles...tend to render other classes of the community tributary in an improper degree to the manufacturing classes to whom they give a premature monopoly of the market."[1] In an effort to pay down the new nation's revolutionary war debt, Hamilton sought to maximize government revenue and promote efficiency in domestic industry through what he deemed to be reasonable tariff rates.[2] Thomas Jefferson argued that these policies would generate geographic favoritism and disadvantage the agrarian South. This sectional dispute appeared again on a recurring basis throughout the antebellum nineteenth century, to be settled along with the even more contentious issue of slavery with four years of bloodshed.

Trade and tariffs played a significant role in the North/South fracture of the Civil War, and, for Florida, the desire to be free of federal import duties was important in the state's secession decision. Florida's manufacturing industry was non-existent in 1860. Its economy was emerging in agriculture, cattle ranching, and most importantly, shipping. The federal government valued the continued inclusion

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[1] Roy P. Fairfield, ed., *The Federalist Papers* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1981), 93.
[2] Douglas A. Irwin, "The Aftermath of the Report on Manufactures," *The Journal of Economic History* 64:3 (September 2004): 800.

of Florida in the Union in part due to the tariff revenue implications of a successful secession. The loss of Florida to a free and independent Confederate States of America would have resulted in a decline in tax revenue collected not only in the South, but in the North as well. The protection of U.S. import revenue was contingent upon the preservation of the entire coastline of the United States, including the long peninsular coast of Florida.

The issue of tariffs had been a source of strain on relations between the North and South from the inception of the United States. Well before independence, climate and soil conditions prevented the population centers of the northeast from serving as the breadbasket of the continent. While plantations grew in the fertile south, New England industry developed around commerce and the high seas, producing generations of fishermen, longshoremen, and a strong merchant class. As passed by Congress in the nascent days of the republic, import duties served to protect the shipping industries of the North, but did little to incubate manufacturing firms developing in the new nation. The War of 1812 provided a system shock to the economy of the northeastern states. Manufacturing firms had arisen during the conflict as trade with Europe had been arrested by the British blockade.[3] With the peace came commerce, and therefore competition from large, skilled French and

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[3] F.W. Taussig, *The Tariff History of the United States, Part I*, 5th ed. (New York: G.P. Putnam & Sons, 1910), Online edition prepared by William Harshbarger. The Ludwig von Mises Institute, © 2003, http://mises.org/etexts/taussig.pdf, 10.

British manufacturers, flooding the market with less expensive imported goods and forcing inexperienced but promising American manufacturers out of business.[4]

Because of the struggling incipient American industry's inability to compete with foreign firms, Congress passed a series of protective tariffs designed to incubate domestic manufacturing by protecting it from outside competition. By definition, these protective tariffs were not for purposes of revenue alone. As the scope and magnitude of the government was exponentially smaller than the modern enormous machine, much less revenue was needed to support the government; therefore taxation was confined to primarily import duties and alcohol. These import duties were the bane of traders' and merchants' existence. Driving up costs for importers that were then passed on to wholesalers and merchants, the trade tariffs resulted in higher than market costs for imported goods to consumers in the United States.

Import tariffs were the largest single source of revenue every year of the nation's existence from 1789-1860, with the sole exception of 1836.[5] The sale of public lands briefly overtook customs duties as the chief source of government revenue in the mid-1830s, but aside from that anomaly, approximately 90 percent of federal revenue emanated from tariffs between 1820 and 1860.[6] The coastal states, by definition, experienced a more direct impact from these tariffs. The ports of New

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[4] Paul Calore, *The Causes of the Civil War: The Political, Cultural, Economic, and Territorial Disputes Between North and South* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Co. Publishers, 2008), 32.
[5] Robert A. McGuire & T. Norman Van Cott, "The Confederate Constitution, Tariffs, and the Laffer Relationship," *Economic Inquiry* 40:3 (July 2002): 429.
[6] Mark Thornton, and Robert Ekelund, Jr. *Tariffs, Blockades, and Inflation: The Economics of the Civil War* (Wilmington, DE: SR Books, 2004), 13.

York, Boston, Charleston, New Orleans, Mobile, and Apalachicola contributed significantly more to federal coffers than the average U.S. city because of the volume of commerce received at their ports. Indirectly, interior states contributed to these taxes as well, paying higher prices on goods to eventually cover the tax liability of importers.

An effective lobby by American industry produced legislation to increase tariffs on imported goods. These duties drove up the final retail prices of foreign goods, thereby lowering the demand. This effect of revenue tariffs created a market distorting motivation to tax for other purposes. If imported goods are made more expensive, the demand for local and domestic products will increase and those industries will be, in essence, "protected." A protective tariff, then, is one imposed beyond what is necessary to generate maximum revenue and serves a secondary purpose of giving national industry a leg-up over foreign competition. Domestic manufacturers can then raise prices without an increase in costs, allowing for more employment and greater profits at the expense of the consumer.[7] Henry Clay believed a sensible protective tariff would unify the interests of the nation, creating a market in northeastern textile firms for southern cotton.[8] But the manufacture of finished goods was primarily a northern endeavor, and the industrial region of New England experienced the benefit of protective legislation.

The added cost through the tariff of imported goods increased the demand in the North for domestically produced manufactures, which fostered the growth of

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[7] Ibid., 14.

[8] Marc Egnal, *Clash of Extremes: The Economic Origins of the Civil War* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2009), 33.

northern industries. The cotton South, a cash-poor society, was connected to European manufacturing through its cotton factors, who sold the crop in exchange for goods unavailable in the local economy.[9] The South, as a consumer of manufactured goods, was forced to pay higher prices (typically in the currency of cotton) for goods received from the proceeds of cotton shipments. Simply put, it took more cotton to buy European goods as a result of the tariff, reducing the amount of wealth flowing into southern ports. Having little industrial production of their own, southern ports exported primarily agricultural products and were dependent on northern and European production of manufactured goods.[10] In addition, southern coastal cities' leaders feared protective tariffs imposed by the United States would result in retaliatory tariffs on cotton being shipped from the South, lowering the demand for their chief export.[11] Therefore, protective tariffs benefitted the North while reducing the potential wealth of the South, as these economically disparate regions unequally shared the tax burden.

Congressional attempts to protect burgeoning American industry through the application of protective tariffs widened the economic gap separating the North and the South. The Tariff of 1828, known in the South as the Tariff of Abominations, raised import duties significantly for protective purposes. To southern states, these rates were an outrage, one not adequately ameliorated by a reduction in the Tariff of

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[9] John Boles, *The South Through Time: A History of an American Region* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1995), 190.
[10] Thornton and Ekelund, Jr., *Tariffs, Blockades, and Inflation*, 16.
[11] John L. Conger "South Carolina and the Early Tariffs," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 5:4 (March 1919): 424.

1832.[12] South Carolina responded to the tariff by declaring it null and void, threatening the perpetuity of the Union if states could decide which federal laws they chose to obey. The Compromise Tariff of 1833 weakly stitched together a fragile nation split along sectional lines.[13] Congress reduced the high protective tariffs of 1832 by the compromise over the course of the next ten years. By 1842, northern industry was again clamoring with support for an increase in protective tariffs.[14] Luckily for the North, this coincided with the ascension of the Whig Party to the presidency in the form of William Henry Harrison (very briefly) and John Tyler to support the so-called Black Tariff, raising import duties to their 1832 levels.

Southern states lacked the congressional representation to effectively legislate for their ports. The sectional votes simply did not exist in the South to strike back until the makeup of the House of Representatives was altered. Representative Joshua R. Giddings of Ohio warned of the pending entry of Texas to the Union, pleading with his fellow congressmen, "Are the liberty loving democrats of Pennsylvania ready to give up the tariff to strike off all protection...in order to purchase a slave market for their neighbors?"[15] Giddings's warnings that the surrender of the balance of political power to the South would surrender the tariff went unheeded[16], as the admission of Texas in 1846 was instrumental in passing the

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[12] Taussig, *The Tariff History of the United States, Part I*, 14.
[13] Taussig, *The Tariff History of the United States, Part I*, 32; Thornton and Ekelund, Jr., *Tariffs, Blockades, and Inflation*, 22.
[14] Taussig, *The Tariff History of the United States, Part I*, 69.
[15] Norman A. Graebner, *Politics and the Crisis of 1860* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1961), 10.
[16] Calore, *The Causes of the Civil War*, 125.

legislation that would reverse the tariffs. The addition of a slave state strengthened congressional representation in opposition to protective tariff increases.

Southern tariff reformers welcomed the election of James K. Polk, who signed into law the Walker Tariff, effectively reversing the high rates of the earlier Black Tariff.[17] The see-saw of tariff rates was far from over. The Panic of 1857, following massive tariff reductions of that same year, gave protectionists fuel for their arguments that high import duties were necessary to preserve American jobs and, by extension, promote aggregate demand for goods and services.[18] The emerging Republican Party supported U.S. industry and a high protective tariff. With gains in Congress in 1858 and the pivotal Presidential election fast approaching, the writing was on the wall for the return of higher import duties.

By 1860, pending tariff legislation left the state of Florida with an incentive to secede. Though tariffs were not as high as pre-1857 levels, the duties were nonetheless cumbersome to shippers, wholesalers, retailers, and consumers alike. With the election of Abraham Lincoln in November, Florida businessmen feared a return to high protective tariffs. These tariffs had growing importance to Floridians, as commercial hubs of activity had developed along Florida's Gulf Coast. The cotton of Alabama, Mississippi, and western Georgia was reliant on Gulf Coast port cities to find national and international markets. Business leaders in North Florida attempted to divert a share of cotton traffic their direction to capitalize on this trade. Apalachicola grew larger earlier, but was surpassed by Pensacola's deep

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17 Taussig, *The Tariff History of the United States, Part I*, 71.
18 Thomas Pitkin, "Western Republicans and the Tariff in 1860," *The Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 27:3 (December 1940): 401.

harbor and better access to banking capital.[19] As Florida's agricultural output increased with additional white settlers and slave laborers in the decades following its statehood, so did the importance of its coastal cities in delivering these goods to points north and west.

Population of Florida (Free and Enslaved)[20]

1840	54,447
1850	87,445
1860	140,424
1870	187,748
1880	269,493
1890	391,422

Florida and other southern states with port cities grew in population and demand for imported goods. This represented a potentially enormous source of revenue for the federal government. In the midst of the secession crisis, Congress debated authorizing of the Morrill Tariff Act, which would effectively raise duties at all ports loyal to the U.S. government. It garnered the support of President-Elect Lincoln, who vowed he would sign the legislation if sent to his desk.[21] This was no surprise to the South, as the very convention in Chicago that nominated Abraham Lincoln as the Republican presidential candidate had also endorsed a platform calling for a program of protective tariffs and internal improvements.[22] In fact, the *Chicago Journal* in 1858 had argued that protectionist policies would promote commercial development in the United States thanks to the efforts of "Tariff men,

[19] Willoughby, *Fair to Midlin'*, 83.
[20] U.S. Census Bureau, Census Material from 1840 to 1890, Historical Census Browser.
[21] Harold Holzer, *Lincoln, President-Elect* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2008), 328.
[22] John E. Johns, *Florida During the Civil War* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1963), 8.

like Abraham Lincoln." Just a month prior to Lincoln's election, he acknowledged his well-known history of standing with the Whig party in favor of "ample protection to American industry" in the form of a tariff.[23]

Thus, the South's opposition to Lincoln's ascension to the presidency was not only an over-reaction to his anti-slavery platform, but also in response to his new party's position on protective tariffs. Lincoln had clearly stated his intention before and upon taking office to not "interfere with the institution of slavery where it exists."[24] Though he viewed slavery to be wrong,[25] Lincoln's acknowledged threat to southern interest came in his support of the tariff. Ominously, he stated in his inaugural address that invasion or the use of force would be relied upon in order to "collect the duties and imposts."[26] Senator Benjamin Wade of Ohio declared protectionism to be one of the three basic tenets of Republicanism, along with opposition to the extension of slavery and the support of free homesteads.[27] The South could not be sure what actions Republicans would take towards eventual emancipation. The Republican platform on tariffs, however, left little to the imagination.

A rush of orders from the South ensued following the bill's March 2, 1861 signing (this pre-dated the Union blockade by six weeks), and northern manufacturers and shippers worked overtime to fill the demand before the new

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[23] Roy P. Basler, ed., *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1953), IV:125.
[24] Ibid., IV:263.
[25] Ibid., VII:281.
[26] Ibid., VII:266.
[27] Pitkin, "Western Republicans and the Tariff in 1860," 404.

rates took effect on the first of April.[28] Southern importers sought to stock up on northern goods, believing commercial prices would increase as northern importers faced higher duties.[29] Fear set in – the fear of financial downturn as significant as that the nation had experienced four years prior. The *Boston Post* estimated some $60 million a year in merchandise was being sold and shipped from northern ports to southern ports by 1860.[30] The financial incentive for compromise was massive among American businesses. Trade and investment between the regions acted as a powerful social adhesive that resisted solutions rooted in armed conflict. Southern merchants had a financial interest in cutting the ties that imposed high import duties, but the same business concerns could realize no benefit from armed conflict and the inevitable embargo. While a peaceful secession would have benefited southern merchants by lowering prices, war simply shut down commerce with the North.

As the reality of secession sunk in, New York business went into sleep mode.[31] The merchant class of New York, Boston, and Philadelphia lamented the loss of southern trade as state after state declared its departure from the Union. The Morrill Tariff took effect a month after being signed into law, and higher import duties became the northern coastal cities' new reality. So for eighteen days, import duties were double in the North as compared to the South, as a "War of Tariffs" influenced orders for goods on the North American continent. Then, on April 19,

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[28] Kenneth Stampp, *And The War Came: The North and the Secession Crisis, 1860-1861* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1970), 232.
[29] Ibid., 231.
[30] Emory Q. Hawk, *Economic History of the South* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1934), 392.
[31] Stampp, *And The War Came*, 231.

President Abraham Lincoln issued the order to blockade the rebellious southern states, and legal trade between ports within the United States and ports within the Confederate States ceased, though blockade runners managed to get their share of goods in and out of southern ports and the coastline.[32]

International respect for the blockade was paramount to its success. Representative Benjamin Stanton of Ohio, seeking a peaceful resolution to the loss of revenue previously collected in the now rebellious states, proposed a repeal of the laws that authorized southern ports as points of entry. This would essentially inform foreign business that goods could only be received at loyalist ports to the North. If the Gulf ports were no longer officially accepting foreign shipments, the federal government was relieved of the responsibility to collect revenue there.[33] For this plan to resolve the revenue portion of the crisis, foreign trading partners would have to demonstrate a respect for United States's power that had not been earned as yet. Such a weak response would have proved ruinous to the Union, as French and British firms could seek trading opportunities with a new nation, one that offered much lower import tariffs for foreign goods.

Florida, with its near eighteen hundred miles of coastline, offered established and developing port cities for European trading partners to establish new centers of commerce. In the absence of an effective blockade of southern ports, the foreign powers announced that they would do just that. Lord Lyons, the British minister to America, notified the U.S. government that, in accordance with the Treaty of Paris, Great Britain would not recognize a blockade unless it was thorough and effectual.

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[32] See Chapter Three for details on blockade running.
[33] Stampp, *And The War Came,* 119.

Otherwise, the British would feel compelled by competition with her neighbors to disregard the blockade and carry on their commerce with southern ports.[34]

As plans for enforcing revenue collection laws were discussed in Washington D.C., the escalated import duties signed into law by the outgoing president began to take effect. The Morrill Tariff Act of 1861 is a bewildering piece of legislation. It was a protective tariff, largely in response to the Panic of 1857, designed by northern protectionists to drive up the price of imported goods to promote consumption of domestic manufacturing. Though the Act only raised tariff rates moderately[35], it was ill -timed. At the very moment when moderate southern politicians were looking for a reason to remain loyal, an increase in import duties added fuel to the mouth of the fire-breathers. The tariff gave seceded states no financial incentive to return. Rather, it provided a disincentive. It was motivated by economic interests – not for preservation of the Union, but rather for protection of northern business. Northern manufacturers and traders by and large preferred in descending order: a perpetual and expanding union, a peaceful secession in which the South would remain the North's largest trading partner, or war. The exception was those businessmen who would benefit from prolonged conflict, the war-profiteers who stood to gain from military contracts for munitions and supplies. But for the most part, option one would be desirable for business, option two acceptable, and option three a disaster.

The Morrill Tariff, approved by the House of Representatives while southern representatives remained in the legislative body, provided cover for those

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[34]*The* (Tampa) *Florida Peninsular*, March 23, 1861, 2:2.
[35] Egnal, *Clash of Extremes,* 248.

secessionists unwilling to publicly base their entire argument on preservation of the institution of slavery. The bill was passed in the Senate on strictly sectional lines as all northern senators voted in favor, and all remaining southern senators opposed. As a precursor to the war itself and the issue of slavery, the South demonstrated an uncanny ability to bring about through their own actions that which they feared the most. Blaming the conflict on tariff concerns, however, diminishes the powerful impact of slavery on the national discourse. It is quite possible that "secession did not take place because the Morrill Tariff had gone through Congress, but, at most, the Morrill Tariff went through Congress because secession had taken place."[36] The only chance to defeat the act was in the body of Congress where southern states had equal representation, the Senate. Having abandoned that chance, the act was financially overwhelming to southern coastal business and was conveniently cited as justification for the cause.

The governor of Florida, Madison Starke Perry, laid out the state's case for secession in an address before the Florida House of Representatives on February 2, 1861. Citing the "long suffering (endured) under the forms of legislation, and under the shield of the Union," Perry compared the state's exodus to the Jews escaping bondage in Egypt.[37] He complained of the federal government's intent to collect revenue from Florida ports by means of force, claiming a clear violation of the

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[36] Karl Marx, October 25, 1861, in *Marx/Engels Collected Works, Vol. 19* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964) as found in http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1861/us-civil-war/index.htm (accessed December 8, 2009).

[37] *Journal of the Proceedings of the Senate of the General Assembly of the State of Florida at the Tenth Session, Begun and Held at the Capitol, in the City of Tallahassee, Monday, November 26, 1860* (Tallahassee: Florida Sentinel Office by Hart & Barefoot, 1860), 250.

state's sovereignty.[38] Perry made little mention of slavery. Other than referring to the opposition as the "non-slaveholding states," his rhetoric was focused on the protection of Florida's sovereignty and the financial oppression of the North.

To make secession less about slavery and more about financial oppression would appeal to the European powers that could potentially sway the war in the South's favor. Slavery was distasteful to Great Britain and France, having effectively disappeared decades prior and brought to an official end in those nations in 1833 and 1848, respectively. If the argument for secession could be shifted from slavery to the financial benefits of trading more freely and directly with the South, a case could be made for Europe to once again become involved in conflict on the American continent. As southern appellants of foreign assistance such as T. Butler King were quick to point out, peaceful secession would give European powers a trading partner on the Gulf at lower tariffs, which would in turn result in more trade.

T. Butler King of Georgia believed that such a secession was warranted in response to the Morrill Tariff. Southern opponents of the tariff pointed to the self-feeding nature of protection and lobbying.[39] In an 1861 letter to the British Parliament appealing for assistance, for example, King argued that as northern industry grew, its power to lobby for protectionist policy did as well. This fueled further growth, which in turn fueled the ability to push for even more protective tariffs. King's central point was that

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[38] Ibid.

[39] T. Butler King to Hon. Lord John Russell, 1861, p. 7, found in Item #2778, Reel 91, in *Confederate Imprints*, ed. Marjorie Crandall (New Haven: Research Publication, Inc, 1974).

> the truly astonishing development of manufacturing industry has grown up in the Northern States since the peace of 1815 under the influence of the protective system, which, by imposing high duties on foreign goods, operated as a bounty on all domestic fabrics, and gave to Northern manufacturers control of the Southern market at an average profit of twenty-five percent on the sale of their manufactured goods.[40]

King gave lip service to the compromise tariffs of 1833 and 1846, which both served to mollify southern resistance, though he failed to acknowledge the tradeoffs involved in exposing U.S. manufacturing to cheaper foreign goods.[41]

Elected to represent Georgia in the U.S. House of Representatives in 1838, King later served under President Taylor as his agent in California and a duty collector at the Port of San Francisco. His work experience was evident in the lengthy appeal he filed with the British Parliament and the French Republic for assistance, citing a bevy of statistics on imports, exports, and revenue at northern and southern ports. King charted the growth in nominal value of the cotton and sugar crops in the decade preceding secession. He claimed a 53 percent increase in the total value of agricultural products produced in the South from 1850 to 1859. During the same timeframe, he cited a $300 million increase in northern goods shipped South, along with a $111 million increase in European goods shipped South via New York at a 20 percent profit or greater. His point was to demonstrate the exploitation of the South by arguing "that the shipping interest of the northern States has been built up on the agricultural products of the southern States."[42] If the southern ports were freed from excessive tariffs on imports, British and French manufacturers would be able to better compete with American industry for

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[40] Ibid.
[41] King to Russell, 3-8.
[42] Ibid., 9-12.

American consumers. Northern newspapers predicted the trade relationships that would bring about economic ruin, assured that should the south succeed, "she will immediately form commercial alliances with European countries who will readily acquiesce in any arrangement which will help English manufacturing at the expense of New England."[43]

King delivered his letter to the foreign ministers of Great Britain and France, hoping to entice foreign intervention on behalf of the Confederacy. His argument of mutual economic benefit was insufficient to overpower British objection to the Confederacy's steadfast devotion to slavery or France's cautious analysis of the costs and benefits of intervention. Great Britain was able to largely replace the American cotton crop lost with the blockade of southern ports by turning to Egyptian cotton, but King pointed to the opportunity cost of not capitalizing on millions of consumers in America's South by aiding in the rebellion.[44]

Likewise, attempts to appeal to European powers with moral outrage over the tariff question produced no significant result. Representative John Reagan of Texas decried in early 1861 that the Union was "not content with the vast millions of "tribute" (paid) annually under the operation of our revenue law...and by making (the North) our manufacturers, our merchants, our shippers."[45] The words "tribute" and "bounties" were highly inflammatory in the nineteenth-century western world. As Barbary pirates off the coast of North Africa harassed American, British, and

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[43] *Boston Herald*, November 12, 1860.
[44] King to Russell, 7, 8.
[45] Speech of Representative John Reagan of Texas, January 15, 1861, *Congressional Globe*, in *The Causes of the Civil War*, ed. Kenneth Stampp, (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1974), 66.

French shipping concerns in the Mediterranean for much of the previous century, the practice of paying "tribute" or "bounties" to hostile forces as a form of protection payment became commonplace.[46] The European powers bided their time, eventually sending observers and limited financial aid, but never offering their full weight of support.

The repudiation of the Union tariff through secession was not meant to suggest that the new nation would impose no duty on foreign imports. Though the Finance Committee at Florida's secession convention recommended the sale of treasury notes as the "least objectionable of all the methods that have been suggested" for raising revenue, port cities were too valuable to ignore as a source of tax collection.[47] The southern Confederacy had enacted their own tariff to take effect on all goods bought after March 1, 1861. The promise of "Free Trade with all the world," appearing in releases from the Associated Press, was never seriously endorsed.[48] The secessionist leadership knew the importance of their ports to raise the necessary revenue to maintain even a decentralized confederation of states. Without possession of western territories, the Confederacy could not rely on the sale of public lands to supplement their operating budget to the extent that the United States could. Regardless, this source of revenue did not amount to much in comparison to customs duties, which had represented the lion's share of federal

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[46] Richard Zacks, *The Pirate Coast: Thomas Jefferson, the First Marines, and the Secret Mission of 1805* (New York: Hyperion, 2005), 100, 109.
[47] *Journal of the Proceeding of the Convention of the People of Florida, Begun and Held at the Capitol in the City of Tallahassee on Thursday, January 3, A.D. 1861* (Tallahassee: Office of the Floridian and Journal, Dyke & Carlisle, 1861), 92.
[48] McGuire & Van Cott, "The Confederate Constitution, Tariffs, and the Laffer Relationship," 427.

revenue in the years preceding secession. From 1856 through 1860, the United States collected $299,228,268 in total revenue. Of this, $272,294,765 was in the form of customs duties, the rest from the sale of public lands and miscellaneous items.[49]

Before hostilities began, the Confederate Secretary of the Treasury expected to raise in excess of $25 million from import duties in 1861 alone.[50] The ability to levy taxes was written into the Confederate Constitution. The framers deliberately made sure that revenue tariffs were allowed, and protective tariffs were not. As suggested by historical economists Robert McGuire and Norman Van Cott,, delegates to the Confederate Constitutional Convention sought to maximize revenue collection without unduly restricting trade opportunities. This reflected an understanding of taxation principles that had not yet been clearly articulated as the Laffer Curve (circa 1974), that increasing taxes beyond a certain point work to decrease revenue:

[49] Bureau of Statistics, U.S. Department of Treasury. *Imports and Exports of the United States, 1835-1898; And Receipts and Expenditures of the United States Government, 1856-1898* (Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office, 1898), 13.
[50] McGuire & Van Cott,"The Confederate Constitution, Tariffs, and the Laffer Relationship,"429.

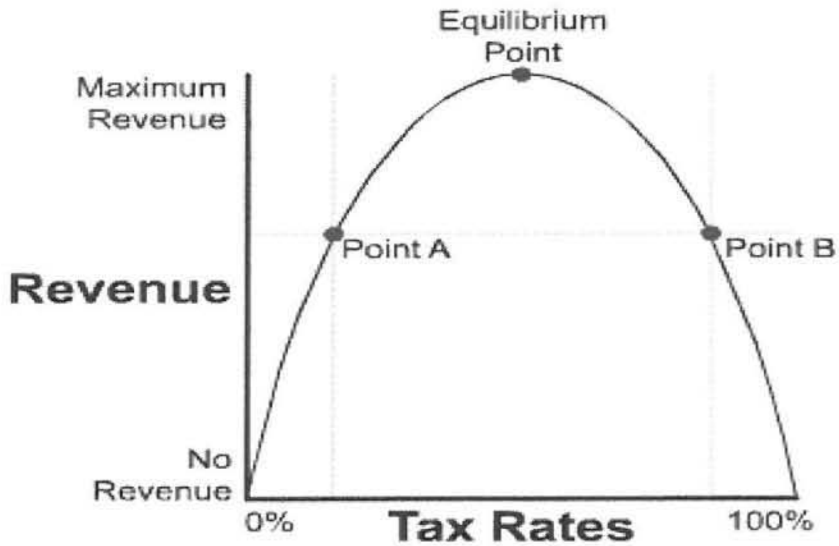

Fig. 1.1. The Laffer Curve, demonstrating the relationship between tax rates and potential revenue.

If Points A and B generated the same amount of tax revenue, the Confederate government constitutionally preferred tariff rates at Point A. As consumers of imported goods and not producers of domestic alternatives to those goods, there was no incentive for the Confederate government to tax beyond the maximum revenue rate. As import tariff rates increase, government revenue increases, and prices on imported goods increase. This occurs up to a certain point, when demand is adversely affected by increasing prices to the extent that government revenue actually starts to drop. The only benefit of increasing tariffs beyond the equilibrium point is the protection of domestic industry. Tariffs above the equilibrium rate are protective in nature as they do not maximize revenue but have the effect of raising prices of foreign goods. Florida secessionists sought to operate near point A of the Laffer curve, drastically reducing tariffs to lower retail prices and benefit the state commercial shipping industry. As demonstrated by the Morrill Tariff, the northern

Republican goal was to operate closer to Point B of the Laffer Curve, which yielded greater protection of domestic industry at the expense of government revenue. The outbreak of hostilities required the Confederate government to pursue higher revenues at the expense of free trade policy, pushing towards equilibrium but not beyond it. McGuire and Van Cott argue that the Confederate Constitution expressly forbade protective tariffs.

> The Congress shall have power-
>
> To lay and collect taxes, duties, imposts, and excises, for revenue necessary to pay the debts, provide for the common defense, and carry on the Government of the Confederate States; but no bounties shall be granted from the treasury; nor shall any duties or taxes on importations from foreign nations be laid to promote or foster any branch of industry[51]

Whereas the U.S. Constitution contains no such explicit denunciation of protective tariffs, the Confederate Constitution specifically proscribes such policy. As such, the Confederate Constitution limited tariffs to the lower end of the Laffer Curve. Secessionist leaders in Florida did the same, placing a provision in the new state constitution prohibiting taxes greater "than may be required for the necessary expenses of government."[52]

McGuire and Van Cott 's conclusion, that the constitutional language suggests "the tariff issue may in fact have been even more important in the...tensions that led to the Civil War than many economists and historians currently believe,"[53] gave added significance to the busy ports of Florida's Gulf Coast in determining the state's

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[51] C.S.A. Constitution, art. 1, sec. 8, cl. 1.
[52] Florida Consitution of 1861, art. 8, sec. 2.
[53] McGuire & Van Cott, "The Confederate Constitution, Tariffs, and the Laffer Relationship," 437.

allegiance. In fact, the very first substantive ordinance passed by the Tallahassee Convention in January 1861 was a declaration of intent to not pay further import tariffs to the United States government. Ordinance No. 2 stated clearly "that no duties shall be collected upon imports from the states forming the late Federal Union."[54] Florida put its priorities up front, stating implicitly that the state's secession was rooted in the tariff issue. The United States government had been willing to sacrifice some government revenue at southern ports to achieve protectionist goals for northern industry as maximum revenue collection would have occurred at lower rates. Florida had no vested interest in such a sacrifice.

Florida's secession contributed to federal deficit spending in both ways imaginable: a need for increased federal spending to protect and defend the remaining garrisons on the state and blockade the eighteen hundred miles of coastline, coupled with a loss of federal tax revenue at high-traffic ports like Pensacola and Apalachicola. The loss of Florida ports proved a drain on a federal government already stretched beyond its limited framework. As the secession winter progressed and more states left the Union, federal collection of revenues dropped off. Customs revenue collected nationwide by the federal government dropped from $53,187,511 in 1860 to $39,582,125 in 1861.[55] In an attempt, to maintain a flow of tax revenue from Florida's ports despite the state's secession, the southern abolitionist and soon-to-be Minister to Russia Cassius Clay suggested in February 1861 to merely continue enforcing the law by stationing revenue

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[54] *Journal of the Proceedings of the Convention of the People of Florida*, 110.
[55] Bureau of Statistics, *Imports and Exports of the United States, 1835-1898*, 13.

collectors off the coast of southern ports.[56] However, Florida's secession ordinances expressly forbade these payments to be made. If the federal government wanted to collect their duties, they would have to do so by force.

The federal government could not allow secession of the state of Florida because losing that amount of coastline would make the southern border impossible to control. Though the Florida ports provided the nation with a nominal amount of tax revenue, the ports provided a point of entry for federally taxed foreign goods. At the ports, tariff collection was feasible and smuggling was possible, but difficult. Having the Pacific Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico provide the southern border to the United States made it easier to monitor and regulate commerce. Secession would create a more difficult to recognize southern land border for approximately two thousand miles, allowing for easy flow of tax-free goods into the North. The loss of Atlantic and Gulf coast southern ports moved the border inland, making it harder to patrol and undermining northern ports and tariff collection. The loss of Florida's eighteen hundred miles of coastline represented just over half of the coastline lost to the United States with the secession of the southern states. The *London Times* reported European merchants speaking openly about the possibilities to expand sales into northern U.S. markets because of the potential inability to enforce tariffs on goods trickling across this political boundary.[57] This presented a clear threat to northern industry and the collection of tariffs in northern ports. If European shippers knew they could deliver a product to all southern, western, and eventually

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[56] Cassius Clay to John A. Andrew, February 18, 1861, John A. Andrew Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society in *And The War Came,* Stampp, , 40.
[57] Stampp, *And the War Came,* 233.

northeasterrn American consumers at greatly reduced tariff rates, there would be little incentive to maintain their shipping levels to Boston and New York, thus stripping the federal government of its main source of revenue.[58]

The loss of control over commerce within the nation and with Europe on the American continent posed an unacceptable financial risk to New England industry. The regional sovereignty gained through secession allowed Gulf Coast ports to charge protective tariffs on northern goods and to charge export taxes on cotton shipped to northern manufacturers. Because textile operators in the North were reliant on the southern climate and soil, the potential taxes could not be avoided by regional self-sufficiency. The North could not simply grow their own staple crops. The *Boston Herald* predicted in November 1860 the ramifications of successful secession:

> Should the South succeed in carrying out her designs, she will immediately form commercial alliances with European countries who will readily acquiesce in any arrangement which will help English manufacturing at the expense of New England. The first move the South would make would be to impose a heavy tax upon the manufacturers of the North, and an export tax upon the cotton used by Northern manufacturers. In this way she would seek to cripple the North. The carrying trade, which is now done by American vessels, would be transferred to British ships, which would be a heavy blow aimed at our commerce. It will also seriously affect our shoe trade and the manufacture of ready-made clothing, while it would derange the monetary affairs of the country.[59]

Clearly, the northern newspapers feared retaliatory tariffs on raw materials. This would give Florida ports the ability to place export tariffs on cotton shipped from Apalachicola bound for textile mills in New York. If the Confederacy were successful

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[58] Bray Hammond, *Sovereignty and an Empty Purse: Banks and Politics in the Civil War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), 48.
[59] *Boston Herald*, November 12, 1860.

in establishing a separate sovereign nation, control of intra-continental commerce would shift from one unified power to two divided interests. Northern industry would be threatened if Confederate export tariffs on raw materials drove up the price of American textiles in comparison to imported goods more so than the protective tariffs could compensate for. The Union could not allow this to happen.

Duty collection records for Florida ports prior to the Civil War are unavailable. But, ten years after the cessation of hostilities, approximately three hundred thousand dollars in duties were collected in the Florida Customs districts.[60] This figure was staggering to the small, backwoods state of Florida in 1875, representing 12 percent of the entire value of goods produced in the state in 1860 ($2,447,969) before the devastation wrought by war.[61] By a quarter of a century after the war, over a million dollars annually was collected from these ports.[62]

The ports of Apalachicola, Pensacola, and Tampa dominated the state's Gulf Coast shipping in volume throughout the decades preceding the Civil War. Apalachicola's two lighthouses served as a beacon for commercial ships to ply their wares in the cosmopolitan frontier city. In addition to the seasonal population of the Gulf port, customers could be found inland along the longest and largest river system in the Southeast, conveniently opening onto Apalachicola Bay. The Chattahooche/Apalachicola/Chipola/Flint river system penetrated deep into the

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[60] Charles H. Evans, comp., *Imports and Exports. Part I. Imports from 1867 to 1893 inclusive, a compilation of foreign commodities imported and entered for consumption in the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1894), 964.
[61] U.S. Census Bureau, Census Material from 1840 to 1890, Historical Census Browser.
[62] Evans, *Imports and Exports. Part I*, 964.

cotton rich regions of Georgia and Alabama. Despite the inviting conditions, Apalachicola returned disappointing levels of revenue to federal coffers during its golden age of shipping in the 1840s as exporting cotton took precedence over importing goods of value.[63] This was surprising given the nature of the shipping industry. For oceanic commerce to be profitable, ships must be able to deliver product on both legs of a journey. An empty ship at sea for months returning home dilutes whatever profit was made on the initial trek. In 1842-43, Apalachicola loaded up over $3 million dollars worth of cotton but only unloaded $44,771 in imports from those ships.[64] The ships could not travel empty. They required ballast to sail properly and were loaded with cheap potatoes, salt, and hay when inbound for Apalachicola.[65]

As the Gulf Coast grew in population after Florida achieved statehood in 1845, the quantity and value of imported goods increased at a similar rate. The population of Florida more than doubled from 1870 to 1890, and this can be seen in the growing amount of dutiable goods imported to Florida during that time period.

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63 Willoughby, *Fair to Middlin'*, 43.
64 Ibid.
65 Ibid., 47.

TABLE OF RECEIPTS AND EXPENSES—BY STATES—Continued.

No. 10.—FLORIDA.

[Customs districts, Apalachicola, Fernandina, Key West, Pensacola, St. Augustine, St. Johns, St. Marks, and Tampa.]

Fiscal year ended June 30—	Value of imported merchandise.		Average ad valorem rate of duty.	Amount of duty received.		Expense for collecting the revenue from customs.	Percentage of expense to duty received.
	Free of duty.	Dutiable.		Regular.	Additional and discriminating.		
			Per ct.				
1874....	$20,367.78	$539,648.98	43·33	$233,852.57	$50.50	$79,989.17	34·20
1875....	16,045.02	767,653.52	39·07	299,921.62	55.89	77,057.22	25·69
1876....	15,316.97	522,889.48	47·69	249,391.16	25,29	65,861.37	26·41
1877....	13,985.92	568,233.20	45·73	259,841.66	52.59	50,171.20	19·31
1878....	23,544.25	614,551.18	40·91	251,426.32	210.08	61,006.40	24·26
1879....	35,618.85	553,462.42	41·84	231,555.52	165.23	64,652.91	27·92
1880....	5,820.28	428,424.42	47·83	204,926.02	355.08	56,569.87	28·09
1881....	20,834.75	485,956.31	53·62	266,547.73	585.00	61,551.87	23·62
1882....	429,906.19	522,411.93	65·30	341,157.33	497.46	31,072.93	9·11
1883....	24,793.52	526,013.32	56·21	295,647.84	848.24	74,529.32	25·21
1884....	113,154.05	545,886.93	61·20	334,108.69	137.46	54,229.62	16·23
1885....	118,110.03	622,155.55	73·31	456,147.14	269.49	56,490.08	12·38
1886....	150,287.63	659,367.14	77·38	510,194.18	205.05	71,306,43	13·99
1887....	97,995.92	975,203.83	75·68	738,004.49	5.00	69,541.83	9·42
1888....	97,274.51	1,147,140.28	71·82	823,513.09	346.77	75,211.14	9·13
1889....	75,629.97	1,385,603.40	70·86	981,831.72	313.43	84,350.04	8·59
1890....	117,120.23	1,546,666.70	69·54	1,075,597.57	904.12	107,878.71	10·03
1891....	219,480.53	1,869,702.44	65·25	1,220,001.64	52.07	115,531.99	9·47
1892....	102,339.27	1,282,568.94	87·03	1,116,278.26	....	119,030.33	10·66
1893....	141,873.56	1,385,676.90	86·62	1,200,288.96	....	82,072.38	6·84

Fig. 1.2. "Table of Receipts and Expenses, Florida, 1874-1893," in *Imports and Exports. Part I*, comp. Evans, 964.

Relatively speaking, these numbers were significant in comparison to other southern states. In 1874, Florida's $233,852 in collected duty compared nicely to Texas' $313,700. A year later, Florida collected $299,921, surpassing Texas in duties collected by $87,642. No other former Confederate state, aside from Louisiana, collected as much federal tax revenue through the importation of goods during this time period. Florida's nearest competitors in port duties in the South in 1875 were South Carolina with $114,262 and Georgia at $61,119.[66]

As a source of revenue at this point in history, however, Florida was only significant to the Union's treasury in comparison to other southern and smaller states. Collections in Florida in 1874 ran about 10 percent of Louisiana's ($2,259,665), about 3 percent of California's ($7,713,108), and only .2 percent of New York's ($111,652,125).[67]

IMPORT DUTIES. 973

TABLE OF RECEIPTS AND EXPENSES—BY STATES—Continued.

No. 28.—NEW YORK.

[Customs districts, Albany, Buffalo Creek, Cape Vincent, Champlain, Dunkirk, Genesee, New York, Niagara, Oswegatchie, Oswego, and Sag Harbor.]

Fiscal year ended June 30—	Value of imported merchandise.		Average ad valorem rate of duty.	Amount of duty received.		Expense for collecting the revenue from customs.	Percentage of expense to duty received.
	Free of duty.	Dutiable.		Regular.	Additional and discriminating.		
			Per ct.				
1874	$118, 276, 157. 71	$287, 068, 865. 62	38 ·89	$111, 652, 125. 73	$230, 130. 87	$2, 752, 850. 48	2 ·47
1875	108, 879, 544. 19	267, 022, 243. 13	40 ·80	108, 935, 862. 05	185, 391. 86	2, 923, 470. 24	2 ·68
1876	95, 312. 542. 42	226, 916, 488. 64	44 ·89	101, 875, 740. 48	110, 624. 64	2, 776, 030. 80	2 ·72
1877	118, 268, 345. 88	212, 203, 567. 88	42 ·79	90, 805, 258. 12	131, 403. 00	2, 811, 269. 54	3 ·09
1878	109, 208, 097. 93	214. 289, 639. 99	42 ·53	91, 156, 632. 05	121, 840. 30	2, 574, 620. 62	2 ·82
1879	103, 200, 754. 38	215, 954, 066. 04	44 ·63	96, 386, 437. 10	165, 008. 09	2, 317, 308. 52	2 ·40
1880	138, 060, 468. 11	300, 069, 676. 27	43 ·71	131, 180, 323. 37	211, 825. 69	2, 617, 987. 51	1 ·99
1881	130, 494, 721. 83	320, 166, 561. 54	43 ·44	139, 064, 085. 51	174, 141. 18	2, 929, 963. 92	2 ·11
1882	140, 404, 591. 64	358, 680, 623. 77	42 ·48	152, 355, 624. 53	426, 420. 89	2, 786, 244. 90	1 ·83
1883	136, 448, 936. 56	348, 152, 731. 19	42 ·25	147, 014, 827. 78	749, 029. 51	2, 942, 129. 90	2
1884	142, 761, 318. 58	322, 937, 130. 72	41 ·32	133, 424, 138. 16	169, 152. 59	3, 068, 054. 27	2 ·30
1885	124, 509, 580. 10	275. 912, 151. 24	45 ·44	125, 392. 507. 59	257, 289. 90	3, 085, 744. 71	2 ·46
1886	137, 312, 608. 35	292, 932, 769. 97	45 ·18	132. 346. 473. 35	569, 261. 34	2, 923, 718. 51	2 ·21
1887	155, 044, 860. 00	313, 839, 373. 48	46 ·66	146, 432. 123. 74	865, 643. 48	3, 198, 765. 98	2 ·18
1888	163, 778, 186. 90	321, 915, 660. 21	44 ·91	144. 568. 535. 24	884, 668. 79	3, 102, 087. 50	2 ·15
1889	165, 702, 488. 00	326, 630, 670. 32	45 ·09	147. 281, 392. 41	640, 976. 25	3, 124, 699. 81	2 ·12
1890	177, 310, 877. 71	345, 874, 061. 75	44 ·70	154, 615, 832. 93	394, 437. 71	3, 069, 453. 94	1 ·98
1891	249, 558, 609. 18	314, 716, 201. 42	47 ·06	148, 211, 563. 65	387. 843. 59	3, 085, 897. 20	2 ·08
1892 .	301, 770, 543. 09	243, 358, 569. 16	49 ·42	120, 276, 418. 84	283, 042. 68	2, 806, 790. 48	2 ·33
1893	272, 691, 415. 51	276, 308, 492. 56	49 ·67	137, 239, 634. 71	260, 272. 55	2, 931. 747. 00	2 ·13

Fig. 1.3. "Table of Receipts and Expenses, New York, 1874-1893," in *Imports and Exports. Part I*, comp. Evans, 973.

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[66] S. Doc. No. 259, 53rd Cong., 2nd Sess. (1898).

[67] Ibid.

Florida's import tax revenue was much greater than or competitive with all but the largest commerce states (California, Louisiana, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Maryland).[68] Combining all southern port revenue together and returning it to regular treasury collections, the effect of reunification can be seen immediately following the conclusion of the war. Total customs duties collected more than doubled the year after the war, climbing from $84,928,260 to $179,046,631[69] due to resumption of civilized commerce and the return of Southern ports to federal tax rolls. Though Florida tax revenue would be important to the federal government in the postwar years, it was dwarfed by the massive port collections at New York City to the point of insignificance. Florida's importance to the Union was not in the amount of revenue generated by its ports, but rather in the control of those ports as points of entry to commerce on the continent. Florida's position in the global network of commerce came as an exporter of goods, providing the wares that were shipped to Europe on the western leg of voyages that brought manufactured goods into American ports. Without the exportation of cotton from Florida ports, transatlantic shipping would not have been nearly as profitable or commonplace, thus reducing the total amount of import duties collected at all U.S. ports.

Florida's decision to secede was motivated in part by a desire to expand import operations without paying the accompanying higher tariffs. If secession were successful, Florida's lower tariffs would encourage European exporters to make use of the state's vast coastline, especially as the population grew. Florida's

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[68] S. Doc. No. 259, 53rd Cong., 2nd Sess. (1898).
[69] Bureau of Statistics, *Imports and Exports of the United States, 1835-1898*, 13.

ports, however, were vital to protection of import duties to the United States. Though they were all but insignificant in terms of the dollar value of import tariffs collected, the state was prized by the Union and the emerging Confederacy for its potential to receive goods at any number of port cities and utilize the growing transportation network to finish delivery. With Florida's secession, the South gained an abundance of port cities from which they could potentially import goods. The North lost control of over half of the eventual Confederacy's coastline with Florida's secession, which threatened their very ability to continue to effectively regulate the entry of foreign goods onto the continent and tax for both revenue and protectionist purposes. For this reason, the United States government could not acquiesce and allow the secession of Florida.

Fig. 2.1. Principal sites for cotton exportation in Florida, circa 1860. Map by author.

Chapter 2

Florida in the Court of King Cotton

Florida's ports were important not only for the protection of import duties, but also as a potential exporter of the country's most significant commodity. In the antebellum South, cotton was king in terms of volume and dollar value of exported goods, representing more wealth than all other American exports combined.[1] Cotton's importance was huge already, and on the upswing as the southern states pondered secession.[2] Florida, as an actor and an object in the secession crisis, was in a position to take advantage of the growing cotton industry because of its abundant coastline near the heart of cotton country.

Back in the early nineteenth century, the transatlantic triangular trade that had brought slaves to the Americas, raw materials to Europe, and rum to Africa dramatically shifted and expanded. Two factors contributed to this: the invention of the cotton gin in 1793, which exponentially decreased the labor costs associated with bringing cotton to market, and legislation intended to halt the slave trade in 1818.[3] As a result, Africa was removed from the triangle and the volume of commerce between North America and Europe expanded. A new triangle was formed, linking southern agricultural ports with centers of commerce in New York and the industrial cities of the Old World. Florida's ports, as exporters of cotton, became a part of that triangle in the decades preceding the Civil War, indirectly trading their cotton for salt, manufactured goods, and European immigrants paying passage on return voyages to America.[4] Being part of the triangle meant the ports were essential to the conflicting interests in the secession crisis that was to follow.

The ability to ship cotton from Florida's ports influenced the state's decision to secede, made the state a valuable addition to the emerging Confederacy, and left

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[1] Douglass C. North, *The Economic Growth of the United States: 1790-1860* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1966), 68.
[2] Bureau of Statistics, *Imports and Exports of the United States, 1835-1898*, 11.
[3] Willoughby, *Fair to Middlin'*, 1.
[4] Ibid, 47.

the United States in a vulnerable position for continued global commerce after losing the state. Florida's growing reliance on cotton shipments tied its interests to an industry run on slave labor. Secession to protect the institution of slavery made sense for a state banking on the growth of cotton exportation. If Florida could enter into free and open commerce directly with Europe, its potential for profit would expand. For the Deep South, Florida's ports presented options for moving the cash crop of cotton to foreign markets and importing European goods directly to the South. But from the perspective of the United States, the preservation of potential points of exit for cotton through Florida ports was vital to the protection of the nation's continued economic growth, as this trade funded the wealth of goods pouring into the nation. Because of its ports' potential, both as an importer of goods and an exporter of cotton, Florida was a prize.

Florida's location connected the optimal land for growing cotton and the open sea required to carry the crop to market. Ideal conditions for growing cotton were located one to two hundred miles inland, perfect for growing but not for shipping.[5] Cotton could be grown in northeast Florida, but conditions to produce maximum yield were ideal just to the northwest in Alabama and Mississippi where a particular combination of rainfall patterns, soil conditions, and temperature coalesced.[6] The cotton-rich states needed Florida and other coastal states as conduits to distant markets. Without access to these markets, cotton wealth was non-existent. Cotton production at the levels seen after 1795 was, by definition, for

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[5] Gavin Wright, *The Political Economy of the Cotton South* (New York: W.W. Norton, & Co., 1978), 14.
[6] Ibid.

cash crop purposes. The only reason to produce cotton in high volume was to get it out and to market. Profit-minded inland planters sought the optimal ports from which to ship their product based on proximity and accessibility via rail or river. Florida provided these planters with a viable option for the shipment of cotton.

Because of the ease of access, geographic location alone would suggest the most ideal points of exit for cotton to be shipped from the continent to be New Orleans, Mobile, Apalachicola, Charleston, and Savannah. New Orleans had the advantage of a shipping infrastructure that pre-dated the explosion of cotton production and the creation of the United States. Neighboring Mobile was in close proximity to the heart of cotton production and linked to the production fields through the Alabama and Tombigbee rivers.[7] Apalachicola offered a port connected to the largest and longest river system in the southeastern United States, one that ran directly through the richest cotton fields in America.[8] The ports of Charleston and Savannah were very much to the east of the Cotton Belt, but were on the Atlantic side of Florida, creating easier shipping routes to England and New York or Boston that would bypass the navigational dangers of the Florida coast and Caribbean islands.[9] The port cities of Galveston and Pensacola added to the already crowded field of choices, each with their own advantages and disadvantages, demonstrating the competitive nature of the antebellum cotton shipping business. Because of the proximity of Florida's northern ports to areas of concentrated cotton

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[7] Willoughby, *Fair to Middlin'*, 121; Wright, *The Political Economy of the Cotton South*, 14.

[8] Florida Bureau of Land and Water Management, *The Apalachicola River and Bay System: A Florida Resource* (Tallahassee: F.B.L.W.M., 1977), 1.

[9] Willoughby, *Fair to Middlin'*, 124; Wright, *The Political Economy of the Cotton South*, 16.

production, the state offered options to planters seeking to transport their product to northern and European manufacturers.

Thus, the cotton industry had a variety of choices when it came to exporting its product. In the event any southern ports were lost to the nation, business interests would shift exportation to those ports where they could escape regulation or enemy interference. If no shipping were allowed out of American ports, cotton planters would seek the nearest non-American ports to send their product to market. A precedent had already been set to utilize Florida ports for the exportation of American cotton in the years before Florida had been annexed by the United States. As early as 1805, Fernandina exported 77,000 pounds of cotton. When President Jefferson imposed the poorly constructed Embargo Act of 1807, an isolationist policy to eliminate all foreign trade, American cotton planters and British shipping interests utilized Fernandina as a port of exit to evade the harsh restrictions.[10] The eventual secession of Florida, therefore, presented to seceding cotton states an option for transporting their products to market, doubling the Confederacy's accessible coastline.

Florida's port city of Apalachicola was the young state's chief site of cotton exportation in the antebellum years.[11] Apalachicola's prominence as a center of commerce was on the rise, as cotton exports flowed from the port city to England and France and modest shipments of consumer goods were received in return from

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[10] Paul E. Hoffman, *Florida's Frontiers* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 255.
[11] Christopher E. Horrell, "Plying the Waters of Time: Maritime Archaeology and History on the Florida Gulf Coast" (PhD diss., Florida State University, 2005), 54.

Europe.[12] Apalachicola's prospects for a profitable future were strong enough that in 1843, its leaders sought a loan secured by potential future earnings from the U.S. House of Representatives to expand port operations and make harbor improvements.[13] As the third largest exporter of cotton in the nation during the 1840s, the port city on Florida's panhandle held great promise for future growth.[14]

Apalachicola served as a nexus between South and North, and between America and Europe, connecting the agricultural regions of the nation's southern frontier to the port of New York, the textile mills of New England, and the European financing and retail markets.[15] Cotton exports peaked in Apalachicola during the 1840s, reaching a value of $3,068,500 during the 1842-1843 season.[16] Entrepreneurs saw the potential profit in exporting cotton from Florida and invested heavily in establishing competition for Apalachicola. The Lake Wimico & St. Joseph's Canal and Railroad Company's establishment of Port St. Joe, only twenty miles to the northwest, threatened Apalachicola's dominance as Florida's chief cotton exporter.[17] St. Joe's deep harbor and railroad connection offered a more efficient and consistent operation than steamboat transportation of cotton to the Gulf Coast. But a yellow fever outbreak in the early 1840s left St. Joe abandoned and

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[12] Willoughby, *Fair to Middlin'*, 40, 43.
[13] H.R. Doc. No. 279, 17th Congress, 3d Sess., (February 23, 1843).
[14] Willoughby, *Fair to Middlin'*, 11.
[15] Ibid., 6-7.
[16] Ibid., 43.
[17] Horrell, "Plying the Waters of Time", 54.

Apalachicola the primary cotton port in the state of Florida.[18] This allowed Apalachicola to prosper and concentrate on the expanding cotton trade.[19]

The exportation of cotton was the driving force in the United States' economic growth during the first half of the nineteenth century. The rapid growth of manufacturing that defined mid-nineteenth century America was funded in large part by proceeds from the sale of cotton to British and French markets. As Albert Bolles wrote in 1879, cotton was "as characteristic a product of [the United States] as spices are of the Indies, or tea of China, but vastly more precious."[20] From 1815 to 1860, cotton accounted for over half of the value of U.S. exports.[21] U.S. exports grew steadily during this period, especially in the period between 1844 and 1860 when annual exports increased from $105,745,832 to $333,576,057.[22] That year, cotton exports valued at $191,806,555 accounted for 57 percent of all exports.[23] The cotton trade set the trend for U.S. exports as a whole.

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[18] Ibid.
[19] Willoughby, *Fair to Middlin'*, 42.
[20] Albert Bolles, *The Industrial History of the United States from the Earliest Settlements to the Present Time: Being a Complete Survey of American Industries* (Norwich, Connecticut: The Henry Bill Publishing Company, 1879), 46.
[21] North, *The Economic Growth of the United States*, 68.
[22] Bureau of Statistics, *Imports and Exports of the United States, 1835-1898*, 11.
[23] Stuart Bruchey, ed., *Cotton and the Growth of the American Economy, 1790-1860* (Atlanta: Harcourt, Brace, and World, 1967), Table K.

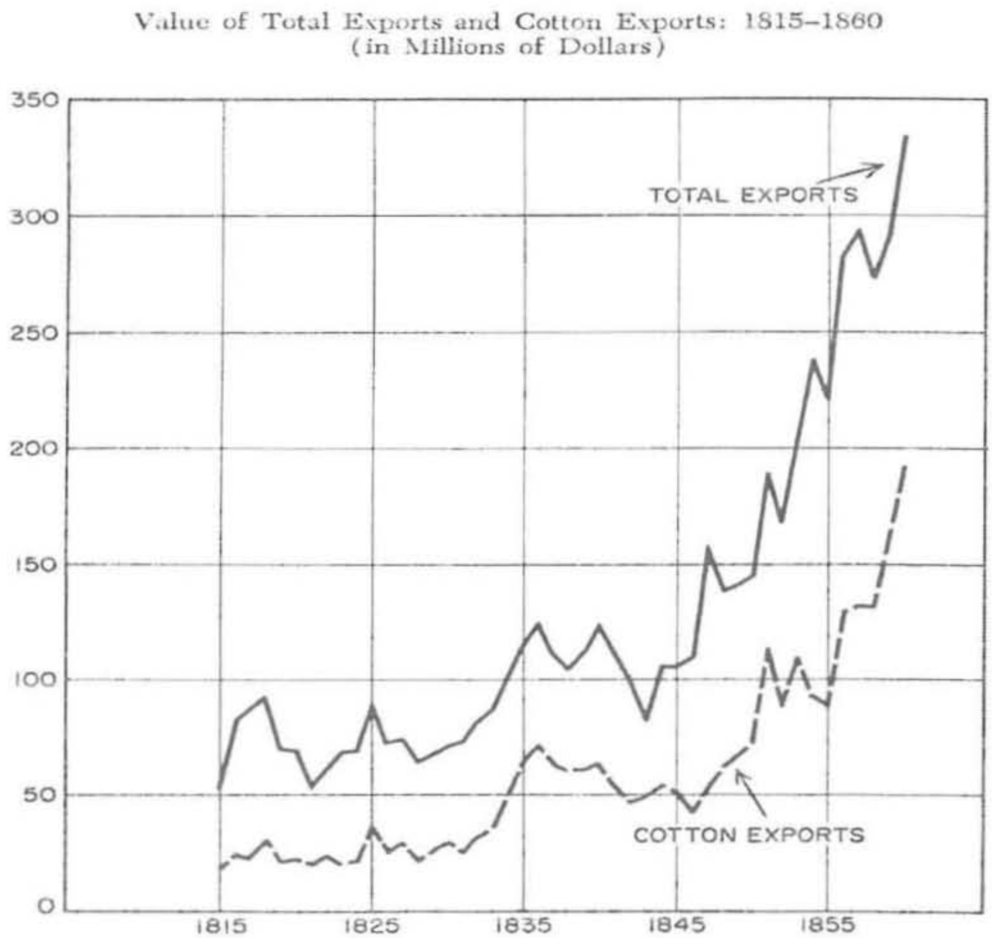

Fig. 2.2. North, *The Economic Growth of the United States, 1790-1860*, 76.

Cotton exports were valued by the North not only for the profits to be made financing, insuring, and shipping southern cotton, but also because they created a demand for cargo vessels heading east to England and France. Profitable shipments to the Old World meant reduced shipping costs and therefore greater imports back to the United States. These imports, however, were directed at northern ports where actual demand existed. The lower aggregate demand for foreign imports in southern ports as compared to northern cities was a result of smaller populations, lower per capita income, and less developed transportation infrastructure.

Therefore, a triangular trade existed in which southern cotton purchased European goods bound for northern markets. Ships returning from cotton runs to England filled their cargo holds with manufactured goods that could not be made as cheaply and efficiently in the United States and with European immigrants seeking opportunities in the United States.[24] Thus, cotton shipments from southern ports were inextricably linked to the importation of European goods to the United States.

As a result of the cotton trade, wealth poured into the young nation, enriching planters, shippers, insurers, financiers, speculators, merchants, cotton factors, and dock workers alike. As just one example, virtually everyone in and around Apalachicola throughout the 1840s and 1850s made their living directly from cotton.[25] Commerce distributed this wealth, as those associated with the cotton industry saw their purchasing power increase and were able to fund the development of other industries through their purchase of goods and services. Nationally, the value of U.S. imports highly correlated with the value of cotton exports, as cotton profits were turned around to purchase imported European goods and to fund the development of industry in the northeastern United States. A comparison of Figures 2.2 and 2.3 shows the similar trends in import and cotton export values from 1815 to 1860. The wealth created by cotton was exchanged in Europe for valuable goods, raising the average standard of living in the United States.

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[24] H. Owens, "Apalachicola before 1861" (PhD diss., Florida State University, 1966), 224-225.
[25] Willoughby, *Fair to Middlin'*, 30.

Fig. 2.3. North, *The Economic Growth of the United States, 1790-1860*, 79.

Therefore, on a national scale, northern commerce was dependent on the southern cotton trade. The northern shipping and shipbuilding industries grew because of the ability to ship a product grown exclusively in the South. Likewise, in a symbiotic relationship, the growing cotton industry was dependent on northern shipping and capital investments. Cotton was the primary cash crop of the southern states. The volume of cotton increased from 870,415 bales in 1830 to 4.5 million bales in 1859, while the North's shipping tonnage matched like a balance sheet during the same period: 872,578 tons increasing to 4.48 million.[26] T. Butler King's 1861 letter to Parliament requesting British recognition and assistance framed the Confederate argument of the persistent exploitation of cotton producing states for

[26] King to Russell, 12.

northern gain. According to King, the cotton flowing out of southern ports created the wealth of the North, while it should have been the cotton states that were profiting:

> When we consider that... the Northern States were almost destitute of agricultural products for exportation...we can readily perceive the causes which have produced the great accumulation of wealth in the Northern section of the Union. It has been shown that through the instrumentality of that system the Northern states have secured to themselves great profits on all branches of their industry, and the entire monopoly of Southern commerce, both foreign and domestic.[27]

The mayor of Apalachicola expressed similar concerns over the necessity of northern involvement in the cotton trade when he petitioned the Florida House of Representatives in 1860 for public investment in harbor improvements.[28] Citing Apalachicola's $3.2 million in cotton exports over the preceding twenty months and its meager thirty-three thousand dollars in foreign imports over that same time period, Mayor Samuel Benezet questioned the logic of routing cotton exports through New York and depending on northern ports as the centers of commerce:

> Why not save all those Northern expenses and build up Southern cities instead of Northern? We have shipped over three millions and a quarter to Europe, a large portion of it will be worked up and shipped to the North and the people of Florida will go there and buy it. Why not ship it back to Apalachicola and buy it there instead of at New York? This can be done and we have the capital at Apalachicola to do it...[29]

Throughout the 1850s, more than half of the cotton exports from Apalachicola were routed through the northern ports of New York, Boston, and Providence and less

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[27] Ibid., 13.
[28] *Journal of the Proceedings of the House of Representatives of the General Assembly of the State of Florida at its Tenth Session, Begun and Held at the Capitol, in the City of Tallahassee, on Monday, November 26, 1860* (Tallahassee: Office of the Floridian and Journal, Dyke & Carlisle, 1860), 14-17.
[29] Ibid., 16.

than half were sent directly to European markets.[30] But the status quo benefited northern financing and shipping interests in a symbiotic relationship with southern cotton producers, giving the North an interest in preserving its role in the cotton trade.

This interdependent economic arrangement increased the amount of cotton that could be sold on the open market. Of those planters who grew cotton in north Florida, the overwhelming majority relied on commission factor merchants operating out of the state's ports and often routing the product through New York.[31] The long periods of time between harvesting the crop and delivery to manufacturers necessitated an investment of capital to keep the planters well supplied.[32] In the cash-poor South, that investment had to come from northern capitalists. Without northern investment, the South would have been unable to expand cotton production to the high levels seen before the war. Because of the South's reliance on northern shipping and cotton merchant factors, who marketed the product to manufacturers foreign and domestic, northern capitalists were able to siphon away a share of the wealth being grown on plantations in the South.[33]

Though the trade was dependent on a combination of slave labor, southern land, and northern financing and shipping[34], outspoken secessionists of the cotton south, like Mayor Benezet, believed the northern investors and shipping concerns

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[30] Willoughby, *Fair to Middlin'*, 40-41.
[31] Julia Floyd Smith, *Slavery and Plantation Growth in Antebellum Florida* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1973), 158.
[32] Ibid., 159.
[33] Ibid., 158.
[34] Harold D. Woodman, *King Cotton and His Retainers: Financing and Marketing the Cotton Crop of the South, 1800-1925* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1990), 169.

were disproportionately benefiting at the expense of the South. Likewise, Senator Robert Toombs of Georgia attributed this discrepancy to the monopoly granted to U.S. shipping concerns that "received higher freights than they could get in open competition with the carriers of the world."[35] Toombs believed that southern dependence on northern shipping distributed too much of the cotton wealth out of the states in which it was produced.[36] This sense of injury contributed to southern calls for secession, as the leaders of the cotton states believed failure to separate from the union would bring about financial ruin.[37]

Both the North and the South sought to derive maximum benefit possible from the international cotton trade. Because cotton exports paid for 60 percent of domestic imports in 1860[38], they were the indirect source of the majority of government tariff revenue. The $333 million in exports that year were offset by $353 million in imports.[39] From these imports, the federal government raised $53,187,511 in revenue in 1860. This accounted for 95 percent of all revenue collected.[40] The expanding federal government used this revenue and then some, spending $63 million from mid-1859 to mid-1860 on the War Department, the Navy Department, Indians, Pensions, Interest on Public Debt, and other civil and miscellaneous items.[41] As federal spending skyrocketed during the Civil War, postwar tariff revenue became all the more important in order to pay down national

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[35] "The Rebellion Record, Supplement," in *The Causes of the Civil War* ed. Stampp, 63.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Stampp, *And the War Came*, 136.
[38] Bruchey, ed., *Cotton and the Growth of the American Economy*, 2.
[39] Bureau of Statistics, *Imports and Exports of the United States, 1835-1898*, 11.
[40] Ibid., 13.
[41] Ibid., 14.

debt and maintain the expanded role of the government. Without cotton profits to fund the imports, the United States government's primary source of income would disappear.

The loss of cotton exports presented a potential fiscal nightmare for the United States government, reducing tax revenue at a time of increasing government expenditures to quell the rebellion. The loss of one tax resulted in the imposition of others. President Lincoln and Congress authorized the nation's first income tax and a tax on land and other property in August 1861 to offset the imbalance of revenue and spending created by the war. The prevailing policy out of Washington D.C., however, was to treat the war as an extraordinary experience and to operate at an unprecedented deficit in the short run. No serious attempt to generate sufficient tax revenue to fight the war was considered.[42] A manageable deficit of seven million dollars in 1860 climbed to $963 million in the last year of the war.[43] Cotton, which served as a global currency and directly purchased foreign goods, was vital to the nation's long-term goals of paying down this massive debt and balancing future budgets. Without cotton, imports would suffer. Without imports, the federal deficit would climb.

Florida's significance to the cotton industry and thus to this larger concern of fiscal policy was not as a producer, as the state's 1859-1860 production of 65,153 bales was miniscule in comparison to the heavyweights of cotton production. That

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[42] Bray Hammond, *Sovereignty and an Empty Purse: Banks & Politics in the Civil War* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), 264.
[43] Bureau of Statistics, "Imports and Exports of the United States, 1835-1898," 3.

same period, Mississippi turned out 1,202,507 bales and Alabama 989,955.[44] Though Florida's cotton production was on the rise, as the figures from 1860 indicated a 45 percent increase over the previous decade, this was comparable to the increases Georgia experienced in the same time period.[45] Increases by cotton powerhouses like Alabama (77 percent), Louisiana (337 percent), and Arkansas (464 percent) put Florida's gains in context.[46] While cotton production was on the rise throughout the South, the substantial growth occurred in the Cotton Belt to Florida's north.[47] The real contribution Florida could make to the growing industry was to connect the South to textile manufacturers through ports of commerce. As the map below illustrates, Florida's real contribution to the cotton trade was in its proximity to the Cotton Belt and its extensive coastline.

[44] Gilbert File & Jim Reese, eds., *An Economic History of the United States* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1959), 158.
[45] *New York Times*, July 6, 1883.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Wright, *The Political Economy of the Cotton South*, 14.

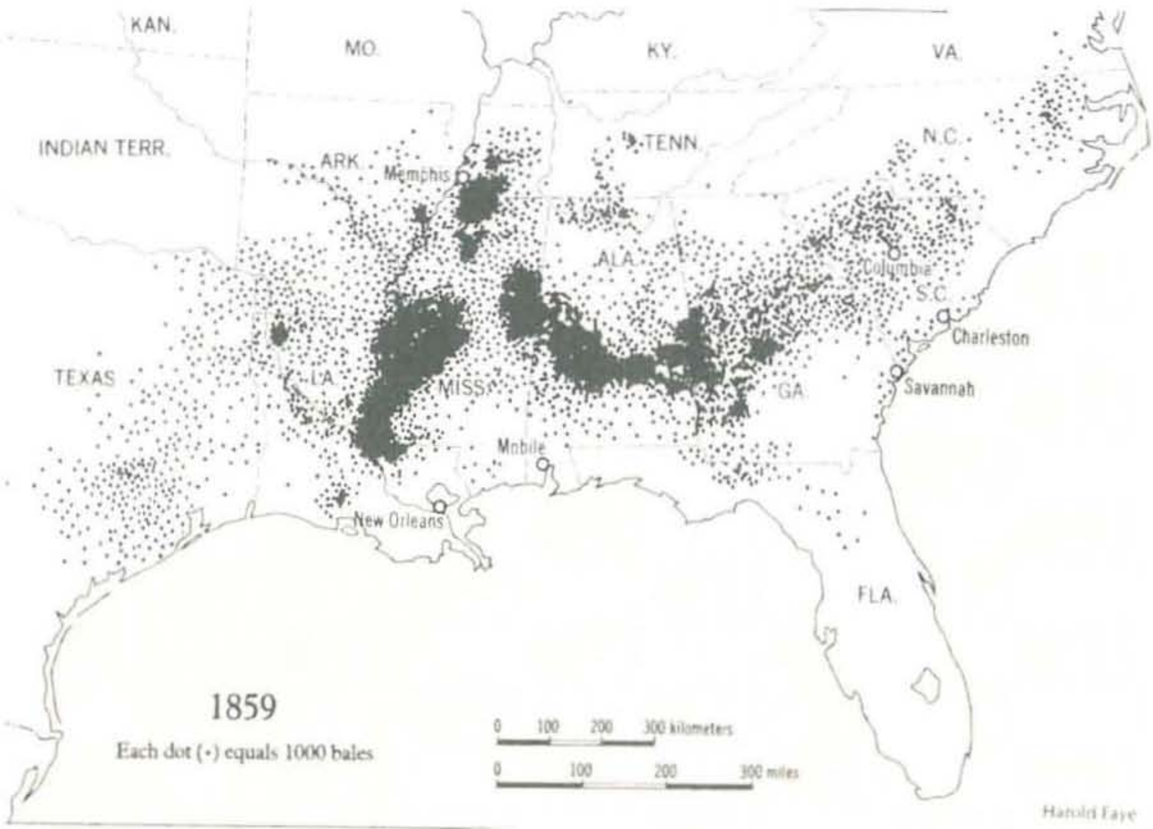

Fig. 2.4. Density of Cotton Production in the southern United States, 1859, United States Department of Agriculture, *Atlas of Agriculture*, Part V, December 15, 1915 in *The Political Economy of the Cotton South*, Wright, 16.

Resenting the amount of profit northern business interests were gleaning from the cotton crop, southern planters met in Tallahassee in 1851 to discuss a cooperative that would build warehouses in southern centers of commerce and take over the marketing of cotton to foreign and domestic buyers.[48] The "Florida Plan," as it was called, was to set a minimum price for cotton that planters would be guaranteed by the association if they could not sell for that price on the open market. But the South lacked the necessary capital to support such a plan.[49] Though

[48] Woodman, *King Cotton and His Retainers*, 147.
[49] Ibid.

it was abandoned, the Florida Plan strengthened southern resolve and fostered a sense of unity.[50] This dissension formed the basis of economic arguments a decade later that augmented southern cries for secession and foreign assistance.

Florida's future as a cotton exporter was dependent on investment in the state's rail infrastructure. Throughout the mid-1850s, the development of southern railroads and growth of competing ports like Mobile and Savannah reduced Apalachicola's cotton exports. The total value of cotton exported from Apalachicola dropped from $139 million in 1853 to $67 million in 1858.[51] As the railroad industry in the South grew, cotton was less reliant on the south's river systems for transport. Whereas port cities such as New Orleans, Mobile, and Apalachicola had once been assured by their connecting river systems a place in the cotton trade, the iron horse changed the parameters of the game. Railroads created the opportunity for cotton to be routed to new ports, creating a sense of uncertainty in the cotton trade.

In an attempt to lure cotton to their particular markets, Florida cotton planters, along with local business interests, built rail lines to Pensacola as had previously been attempted at Port St. Joe.[52] The Macon & Columbus and Central of Georgia Railroads diverted cotton traffic away from Apalachicola to Savannah, while construction of the Alabama & Florida Railroad threatened to redirect some of Mobile's cotton receipts to Pensacola.[53] Port cities with dedicated rail lines won out

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[50] Robert A. Taylor, *Rebel Storehouse* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1995), 6.
[51] Willoughby, *Fair to Middlin',* 130.
[52] Hoffman, *Florida's Frontiers*, 301.
[53] Woodman, *King Cotton and His Retainers*, 88.

over those with river connections, as seasonal changes and water levels interfered with year long shipments to ports fed by rivers. Various Florida ports became the victims and beneficiaries of railroad development as the laying of tracks both circumvented and connected previously relied upon river connections.

In 1855, a boom of railroad construction in the Sunshine State gave the Deep South more options for exporting its cotton and receiving imports. The Tallahassee & St. Marks Road was reconstructed and re-equipped through a combination of public and private investment.[54] The Florida, Atlantic, & Gulf Central Company laid track from Lake City to Jacksonville as the Florida Railroad drew up contracts for a line connecting the gulf coast to Fernandina on the Atlantic.[55] The Cedar Key to Fernandina railroad cut across the state so that ships did not have to navigate around the southern tip of Florida and the Keys, the most dangerous portion of the trip, when traveling between New Orleans and northeastern harbors. Prospects for the state's ports were exceedingly optimistic in the 1850s. As historian Rowland Rerick wrote a half century later:

> It was expected that Fernandina would become the great Atlantic city of the South for the export of cotton; Tampa Bay the important Gulf depot on the line from New York to San Francisco by way of the Honduras Railroad, and Pensacola the most favorable city for the import of goods for retail merchants of the middle South.[56]

Florida was poised to take its position of prominence as a center of commerce.

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[54] Rowland H. Rerick & Francis P. Fleming, eds., *Memoirs of Florida*, Vol. 1 (Atlanta: The Southern Historical Association, 1902), 226.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Ibid.

Fig. 2.5. Railroads Constructed by 1860. The Cedar Key to Fernandina line is visible cutting across the state near Jacksonville. The small St. Marks to Tallahassee line also appears.
http://faculty.umf.maine.edu/~walters/web%20103/outline%2014%20umf%20103_06.htm (accessed December 6, 2009).

As Florida's shipping and transportation industry grew, the South was strengthened by the dominant role cotton played in geopolitics. In 1855, David King's influential work *Cotton is King: or Slavery in the Light of Political Economy* extolled the importance of cotton to not only the national economy, but the global economy as well. Perhaps more important than the arguments presented in the book, the title phrase "Cotton is King" and its derivative "King Cotton" both had staying power to influence the policies of southern states and the pride and unity of the southern culture. The phrases were "soon on every Southern tongue and...became gospel by repetition."[57] The cotton trade emboldened Southerners to take drastic steps towards protecting the institution of slavery that they might otherwise have lacked the capital and confidence to take.

As the "impending crisis" loomed, a rapidly expanding cotton crop amplified the bargaining power of the Deep South. From 1855 to 1860, cotton exports increased in value by 118 percent, going from $88,143,844 to $191,806,555.[58] The 1859 season turned out an incredible crop, topping 4,500,000 bales of cotton, easily more than double the crop of 1850.[59] The cotton industry's exponential growth gave the cotton states a greater incentive to control the marketing and shipping of their own product.

Florida, though not an enormous cotton producer, was in a position to take advantage of expanding production. By 1860, the sheer volume of the cotton trade

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[57] David L. Cohn, *The Life and Times of King Cotton* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press Publishers, 1956), 121.
[58] Bruchey, ed., *Cotton and the Growth of the American Economy,* Table K.
[59] Lewis Cecil Gray, *History of Agriculture in the Southern United States to 1860*, Vol. 2 (Gloucester, MA: Carnegie Institute of Washington, 1958), 1026.

had pushed Apalachicola's cotton receipts above 130,000 bales, back to its levels of 1850-1851.[60] Apalachicola's percentage of the cotton market had decreased, but the development of rail lines throughout the Deep South allowed for previously underutilized lands to be devoted to cotton production so that all significant southern ports saw an increase of cotton exports in the two years preceding the Civil War, including Apalachicola.[61] Florida port cities stood to profit from this enormous growth.

The actual distribution of cotton shipments in 1860 indicated that Florida ports, however, were not nearly as prominent as competing shipping centers. Despite attempts by merchants and entrepreneurs in north Florida to establish the infrastructure to facilitate massive cotton exportation, Florida ports continued to lag behind their neighbors to the west and east. Florida's cotton shipping totals in 1860 amounted to just 9 percent of the amount of cotton shipped out of New Orleans during that same year.

Number of Cotton Bales Handled, less transshipments between the ports
Year Ending 31 August 1860[62]

Apalachicola, St. Marks, and other Florida ports	192,724
Galveston, Texas	252,424
Charleston, South Carolina	509,308
Savannah, Georgia	531,219
Mobile, Alabama	843,012
New Orleans, Louisiana	2,139,425

[60] Willoughby, *Fair to Middlin'*, 14.
[61] Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, *A History of Transportation in the Eastern Cotton Belt to 1860* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1908), 20.
[62] Lewis Cecil Gray, *History of Agriculture in the Southern United States to 1860*, 696.

Throughout the antebellum period, the cotton trade shifted dramatically from port to port, seeking the path of "least resistance."[63] From the period covering 1855 through 1860, New Orleans experienced a 94 percent increase in its total exports. During the same period, Savannah's imports increased by 128 percent and Mobile 171 percent.[64] Cotton was the dominant export for each of these ports. The export figures were increasing at all cotton ports due to increased cultivation, but some faster than others, as bales were routed over rail lines as fast as southern engineers could lay track. In the years before the war, shipping options were plentiful and growing.

The dynamic nature of cotton exportation seen in the shifting hubs of commerce meant that control of Florida's ports were as important to the nation's prosperity as New Orleans, Mobile, Savannah, Charleston, and Galveston. The federal government could not allow the existence of foreign ports in such proximity to the Cotton Belt for fear of losing control of the cotton trade. If Florida were allowed to peaceably secede, cotton shipments would pour out of the state and be exchanged for federally untaxed import goods.

The United States government needed control of the southern ports but lacked the ability to enforce that control at the moment of secession. Three months after Florida seceded from the Union, the federal government declared a blockade on all southern ports. The inability of the United States to effectively enforce this blockade during the first year of the war gave the Confederacy options as to how to proceed regarding their cotton trade. Shipments from the cotton ports to New York

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[63] Willoughby, *Fair to Middlin'*, 7.
[64] Bruchey, ed., *Cotton and the Growth of the American Economy*, Table M.

bound for Europe ceased abruptly, as was appropriate for belligerent parties. Direct shipments to England and France before the blockade could be enforced, however, presented opportunities for either much needed revenue or diplomatic coercion, but not both.

The Confederacy could have utilized the time it took the United States to build an adequate naval force in order to sell as much cotton as possible to fund the growing conflict. Instead, the South opted for what became known as King Cotton Diplomacy. During the early years of the war, the South pressured England to recognize the sovereignty of the Confederacy and perhaps to even intervene in the war on their behalf. The theory held that a self-imposed embargo on the cotton trade with England would have such disastrous effects on the British economy that the superpower would have no choice but to recognize southern independence and pay top dollar to continue clothing their people.[65] Though preventing cotton from leaving through the weak blockade engendered more European support for the southern cause, the South missed out on a opportunity to generate much needed revenue to prosecute the war.[66]

Florida had its share of proponents in favor of a coercive cotton policy. James B. Owens, a delegate to the secession convention in Florida, argued "the cotton states alone, without the firing of a single gun, could by one years masterly enactivity (sic), lock the wheels of every important interest throughout the civilized world." Owens went on to suggest that cutting off the cotton supply would bend the

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[65] Hamilton Cochran, *Blockade Runners of the Confederacy* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1958), 28.
[66] Woodman, *King Cotton and His Retainers*, 207, 208.

world's commercial and manufacturing powers to the will of the South.[67] Governor John Milton was an ardent supporter of King Cotton diplomacy, taking "legal, extra-legal, or actually illegal" actions to halt the unapproved traffic of cotton through the federal blockade after taking office in October, 1861. Milton maintained this policy until Confederate Attorney-General Judah P. Benjamin disallowed further interference with an already federally restricted trade.[68] The Confederate leadership had decided that the revenue of cotton sales took precedence over the attempt to coerce European involvement.

Realizing the amount of revenue being sacrificed by ceasing all cotton exports, the Confederate congress lifted the embargo on cotton trade so that blockade-runners could use Florida ports to smuggle cotton out of the Deep South. More effective blockades were in place around the Savannah/Charleston and Pensacola/Apalachicola regions, so the Confederates made use of a small inter-coastal waterway at Mosquito Inlet to head down the east coast to Titusville, where cotton could be loaded onto blockade runners heading to Caribbean markets.[69] With the lack of improved transportation in Florida during the war, running cotton out of the peninsula was difficult, but not impossible. The extensive rail system in Georgia was put to use, along with wagons and river steamers and the Florida

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[67] James B. Owens, "The Right, Causes and Necessity for Secession: Argument of the Hon. James B. Owens, delegate to the State Convention of Florida on the secession resolutions of Florida," State Convention of Florida on the Secession Resolutions of Florida, 1861, p. 29 in *Confederate Imprints, 1861-1865*, ed. Crandall.
[68] Frank L. Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy: Foreign Relations of the Confederate States of America* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1931), 19, 36-37.
[69] Taylor, *Rebel Storehouse*, 32-33.

Railroad line, to get at least some cotton to port during the war.[70] As the war progressed, the Confederate government employed agents in negotiating sales for cotton to foreign buyers through blockaded ocean ports.[71] Cotton faded as a bargaining chip and instead became once again a commodity for acquiring other goods.

In an effort to resupply and acquire more wealth, planters employed blockade-runners to deliver the cotton to market, not always meeting with success. Rear Admiral Bailey reported to the U.S. Secretary of the Navy in October 1863 of the destruction of Confederate profiteer James McKay's steamer the *Scottish Chief* and the sloop *Kate Bale* in the Hillsborough River as the vessels were loading with cotton and about to set sail. The Admiral took some pride in believing he had sent a clear message to the Rebels concerning the future of Rebel cotton shipments.[72] McKay also reported a similar incident that year, noting that about a hundred enemy troops "went up to where a steamer lay loaded with cotton named after our friend A.B. Noyse and set her afire and destroyed her 'ere we were aware."[73] No fewer than eighty-six ships carrying cotton were captured or destroyed by the blockading squadron throughout the conflict.[74] But as late as January 1864, the U.S. minister to France informed Secretary of State Seward that cotton was being run through the

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[70] Ibid.
[71] Woodman, *King Cotton and His Retainers*, 217.
[72] Frank Moore, ed., *The Rebellion Record: A Diary of American Events with Documents, Narratives, Illustrative Incidents, Poetry, Etc.*, Vol. 7 (New York: D. Van Norstrand Publishing, 1864), 566.
[73] James McKay to Pleasant White, October, 18, 1863, White Letterbook, July 15, 1863 – April 12, 1864, Pleasant White Papers, Florida Historical Society, Cocoa, FL.
[74] Taylor, *Rebel Storehouse*, 38-39.

blockade surrounding Florida with little interference.[75] Blockade-runners like McKay used these shipments to bring back highly demanded foodstuffs that commanded a high price along Florida's coast.

As the war concluded, cotton growers made use of the internal improvements to resume more regular shipment of cotton from Florida ports. *The New York Times* reported that as early as July 1865, trains were arriving in Jacksonville loaded with cotton, sugar, syrup, and other products of the country, to be shipped to market.[76] Florida's ports, unencumbered by a federal blockade, expanded shipping operations after the war. By the turn of the century, New Orleans experienced a significant decrease in cotton receipts due in part to the redirection of a considerable amount of traffic to Pensacola.[77] According to a report issued by the Treasury Department in 1900, "improvements in transportation methods have resulted in great variations in the receipts of cotton at various ports." The greatest change in cotton exporting since the war was the growing receipts at cities relying on rail connections over those cities directly connected to the Cotton Belt by river.[78] Pensacola's importance to the cotton trade was not visible at the moment of secession, but its potential was realized in the post-Reconstruction era.[79]

The ability to export cotton influenced Florida's decision for secession and made the state more important to the Union and the Confederacy. Severing the ties

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[75] Owsley, *King Cotton Diplomacy*, 275.
[76] *New York Times,* August 3, 1865.
[77] Bureau of Statistics, U.S. Department of the Treasury, *Cotton Trade of the United States and the World's Cotton Supply & Trade* (Washington, D.C.:Government Printing Office, 1900), 2591.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Ibid.

of northern shipping and financing best protected the economic interests of Florida's port cities in the eyes of delegates to the state's secession convention. The 1,800 miles of coastline that seceded from the United States along with the rest of the state presented the Confederacy with growing options for centers of commerce. Florida's ports played a minor, though not insignificant role in cotton trade during the secession crisis. The potential for growth in the cotton industry and the shipping industry made Florida a valued asset to the rest of the Confederacy. The very existence of Florida port cities separate and apart from the Union, connected to the Cotton Belt by train and river, posed a risk to federal tax revenues and the flow of income from England and France into the United States. Because of the potential to ship cotton directly from these ports and receive European goods in return, Florida held a position of economic importance to all parties concerned disproportionate to its small population.

Fig. 3.1. Regions important to Florida's cattle trade circa 1860, including cattle-rich counties and port cities for potential export and import. Map by author.

Chapter 3

Shipping Florida Beef

As secession turned to war, Florida's potential as a cotton exporter was overshadowed by its ability to supply beef cattle to soldiers in the field. While control of the cotton trade was a long-term priority to both the United States and the Confederate States as independent nations, control of the cattle trade was of more vital concern to the immediate war effort. If an army truly marches on its stomach, then Florida was a valuable asset to either side as a supplier of beef.

Moving Florida animals, however, was not an easy task. Cyrus Parkhurst Condit's 1855 novel, *A Trip to Florida for Health and Sport,* depicted the arduous task of loading Florida scrub cattle aboard schooners for shipment to the West Indies, Charleston, and Savannah. Cattlemen drove their steers into a holding pen before roping and hoisting them over the bow of the ship and down into the cargo hold. The cows resisted mightily, unwilling to trade terra firma for an unfamiliar experience without a fight. In the end, however, the cattle resigned to the will of their captors and stood on the ship "with their heads over the sides and plenty of fresh air," bound for distant ports, both foreign and domestic.[1] It is an account rooted in reality, as Florida's geographical distance from population centers and its abundance of coastline lent itself to increasing cattle shipments in place of cattle drives throughout the antebellum era. As the nation plotted a course towards Civil War, the coupling of Florida's ports with its per capita cattle holdings made the state a valuable commodity to Union and Confederate forces alike.

The emerging Confederacy needed Florida's ports to ship cattle in the event the federal government responded with military force to the secession of southern states. The ability to supply troops by sea through Florida's ports as opposed to transporting cattle over land held the promise of expedited movement of resources.

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[1] Maurice O'Sullivan & Wenxian Zhang, eds., *A Trip to Florida for Health and Sport: The Lost 1855 Novel of Cyrus Parkhurst Condit* (Cocoa: Florida Historical Society Press, 2009), 55-58.

The Port of Tampa could potentially serve as a funnel, pulling in the mid-state cattle and redirecting them to the ports of Apalachicola, Pensacola, Mobile, and New Orleans where they could then be directed upriver or along rail lines to Confederate troops. The uncertainty of war made it impossible for southern interests to fully predict the value of Florida ports as the state's leaders opted to join the Confederacy, for federal response could only be predicted, not known. But the state's large cattle holdings, relatively small population and internal demand for beef, and immense coastline made Florida all the more attractive to the Confederate cause.

At the time of secession, cattle had been in Florida for three and a half centuries. In 1521, Juan Ponce de Leon introduced the first small herd to Florida. He was unable to tend to them for long, having been run off and mortally wounded by the natives near Charlotte Harbor. Over the next fifty years, cattle trickled into the peninsula in small numbers, brought by Spanish conquistadors like Hernando de Soto, Don Diego Maldonado, and Tristan de Luna. Runaway cattle that escaped inland from these explorers as they trekked along the coast were the ancestors of the state's successful cattle industry, much like the oranges discarded by Spanish sailors gave rise to Florida's citrus industry.[2]

In the early seventeenth century, as settlements and missions became more established, the Spanish made organized attempts at cattle ranching in Florida. Existing herds were still small, but adapted to the Florida landscape through generations of selection. Ranchers imported prime breeding stock of cattle,

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[2] George H. Dacy, *Four Centuries of Florida Ranching* (St. Louis: Britt Printing Co., 1940), 19.

primarily via Cuba, and these bulls mated with cows whose ancestors had arrived a century prior. Open range cattle grazing, as was the Spanish custom and the norm in colonial America, wreaked havoc on European relations with Native Americans, as herds tore through crop fields and devastated food supplies. Territorial governor Don Joseph de Zunega issued land grants to encourage settlement of the peninsula in the latter half of the seventeenth century. Spanish colonists cleared and burned huge tracts of land, which were utilized as pasture.[3] In the late 1700s, the pasture land extended to the Pensacola area, known as "the Old Spanish Cowpen."[4]

The growth of Florida cattle occurred with setbacks and surges, subject to the conflicts of competing interest groups vying for control. At alternating times, European powers, Native Americans, and the United States vied for control of the peninsula, including the cattle, through armed conflict. A series of brutal and expensive wars waged against the Seminoles by the Americans in the first half of the nineteenth century left the peninsula with its cattle largely intact, while its native population had been driven out or killed. The territory had changed hands many times over. Power shifted from Seminole to Spanish to British to Spanish to American. Florida's scrub cattle roamed the land and grew in number, oblivious to the nationality of their herders.

As Florida became a territory in 1821 and a state in 1845, American business interests moved in and sought to capitalize on the peninsula's natural resources.

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[3] John E. Rouse, *The Criollo: Spanish Cattle in America* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1977), 76.
[4] Terry G. Jordan, *North American Cattle -Ranching Frontiers: Origins, Diffusion, and Differentiation* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1993), 107.

U.S. Commissioner of Agriculture Isaac Newton wrote of Florida that "the whole interior...can support a population of one hundred to the square mile with one half the labor required to live in the eastern and middle states."[5] With approximately one person per square mile statewide in 1845, the entrepreneurs in Florida had barely begun to exploit the region's environment for profit. Captain William B. Hooker was the dominant cattle baron of Florida in terms of herd size throughout the 1850s. At the beginning of the decade, he owned more than 2,500 head. He nearly quadrupled this count by decade's end. Settling in the Hillsborough County region after leaving his birthplace in Georgia, Hooker realized the business potential of transporting cattle by ship. In 1854, he began shipping out of Hooker's Point at Tampa Bay to Key West and the West Indies, supplying Florida scrub cattle to the small number of federal troops stationed at Florida's southern tip and their families and Caribbean island markets, which paid in Spanish gold.[6] The captain acquired more grazing land to the south and east of his Hillsborough operations, expanding his herds in the process. Getting out of the cattle game as the national political climate worsened in 1860, Hooker sold his holdings to what would become the most significant partnership of Florida cattlemen during the Civil War, that of Jacob Summerlin and Tampa's James McKay.[7]

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[5] Isaac Newton, *Report of the Commissioner of Agriculture for the Year 1862* (Washington D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1863).
[6] Joe Akerman, *Florida Cowman, A History of Florida Cattle Raising* (Kissimmee: Florida Cattleman's Association, 1976), 44-45.
[7] Canter Brown, Jr., "Tampa's James McKay and the Frustration of Confederate Cattle-Supply Operations in South Florida," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 70:4 (April 1992): 412.

Summerlin parlayed his meager inheritance of a few calves into a vast herd by careful management and acquisition of free-roaming Spanish scrub cattle. Spreading word ahead to cowmen that they would be sweeping the area, McKay and Summerlin bought up cattle at low costs to be sold primarily in the Caribbean market at a comfortable profit. McKay, who had been shipping cattle to the Bahamas since 1854[8], partnered with Summerlin to begin a lucrative cattle trade with Cuba in 1858. A series of nineteenth century revolutions on the island had depleted its cattle holdings, and Florida's close proximity and abundant herds provided an ample supply.

McKay and Summerlin sought to connect Cuba's high demand for cattle with Florida's abundant supply. In August 1860, *The Florida Peninsular* weekly announced that McKay had recently purchased a steamer, which he christened *The Salvor* that was "particularly adapted for the transportation of cattle."[9] That year, the two men exported 4,016 head of cattle to the island south of Florida via steamship.[10] These shipments embarked out of primarily Tampa, but after a severe drought killed a large segment of the herd, prime grazing land and exportation shifted to Fort Myers and Punta Rassa about seventy-five miles to the south to afford better grazing land near the port of debarkation. McKay constructed an eight-hundred-foot loading dock and wharf near present-day Punta Gorda for the purpose of shipping cattle to Cuba. The cattle trade to Cuba took on increasing

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[8] Joe A. Akerman & J. Mark Akerman, *Jacob Summerlin: King of the Crackers* (Cocoa: Florida Historical Society, 2004), 44.
[9] *The* (Ocala) *Florida Peninsular*, August 4, 1860, 2:2.
[10] Brown, "Tampa's James McKay and the Frustration of Confederate Cattle-Supply Operations in South Florida," 414.

significance for McKay and the Hillsborough economy when McKay's sawmill went up in flames in early 1860, taking with it five thousand to six thousand dollars worth of materials and numerous jobs.[11]

The fire at the mill came in a year of political and economic upheaval for Florida, and the nation as a whole. As secession became more of a possibility, beef purchasers in Cuba became concerned about the supply of Florida beef being cut off. By pushing so many cattle into Cuba during 1860, Mckay may have been attempting to cash out while he still could; uncertainty in the beef supply chain drove up prices for cattle in Cuba and gave Florida cowmen and incentive to sell fast. Ranchers in Manatee County, south of Tampa, attempted to capitalize on the market as well, as they drove steers to the Manatee River for transport to Key West and the Bahamas.[12] Meanwhile, cowmen to the north in Payne's Prairie drove herds forty miles to Baldwin to be loaded on the nearly completed Florida Railroad line so that they could be shipped out of Fernandina to the ports of Savannah and Charleston.[13]

By the middle of the century, therefore, Florida had deep reserves of cattle and accessible ports to ship beef and other commodities to strategic locations. This was particularly important as the nation neared war, and armies on both sides would need feeding. Cattle dealers themselves had only recently realized the enormous potential of connecting northern urban demand for fresh beef with Florida's ample supply. In August 1859, the schooner *G. Hoffman* shipped 135 head

[11] Canter Brown, *Tampa in Civil War and Reconstruction* (Tampa Bay: The University of Tampa Press, 2000), 17.
[12] John Solomon Otto, "Florida's Cattle Ranching Frontier: Manatee and Brevard Counties (1860)," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 64:1(July 1985): 55.
[13] Lars Andersen, *Paynes Prairie: A History of the Great Savannah* (Sarasota, FL: Pineapple Press, Inc, 2001), 104.

of cattle from St. Augustine to New York. Northern shipping attempted to expand to hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of cattle with the use of steamships on a three-day journey depositing "upwards of 200 cows to the shores of the Chesapeake or the banks of the Delaware River."[14] Hopes for this trading network dissolved along with the Union, but the ability to transport live cattle out of the state to other markets was well demonstrated.

Cattle were more numerous in several other states, but contingency planning placed a high value on Florida's scrub cattle herds because of their durability, proximity to water transport, and a local supply that far outstripped demand. The criollo cattle of Florida were tough and adaptable to changes in their surroundings.[15] Rich mineral deposits in the grazing land helped to prevent salt sickness and skeletal deficiencies.[16] While less durable herds dissipated in the South, the descendants of Spanish cattle in Florida flourished as they were crossed with other European breeds to become even better suited to Florida's ranges and climate.[17] And Florida's cattle were tough, "immune to endemic stock diseases and able to subsist on coarse native forage, scrubs required no veterinary care and no supplementary fodder."[18] Therefore, Florida's scrub cattle had a ruggedness that was beneficial in attempts at transport.

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[14] Robert A. Taylor, *Rebel Storehouse*, 11.
[15] Akerman, *Florida Cowman*, 15.
[16] Dacy, *Four Centuries of Florida Ranching*, 27.
[17] Akerman, *Florida Cowman*, 13.
[18] Otto, "Florida's Cattle Ranching Frontier," 55.

Though spread throughout the state, the largest herds were concentrated in Hillsborough and Manatee counties, in close proximity to the port of Tampa.[19] This facilitated an easier transfer of cattle to distant ports as very little land needed to be traversed before shipping. These herds grazed in the ideal ranching lands surrounding Tampa Bay. Hillsborough County boasted per capita cattle holdings that rivaled the holdings of the most cattle rich ranches in the Deep South.[20] The 1860 Census put Hillsborough's total cattle holdings at 37,820.[21] Its neighboring county to the south, Manatee, claimed 31,930 head of cattle.[22] The state comptroller estimated two years later that the total number of cattle in the state had risen to 658,609 head.[23] In a state where cattle could never be very far from the coast, the added bonus of lush grazing land and large herds in close proximity to Tampa Bay enhanced Florida as an asset to the emerging Confederacy.

Florida had more cattle than its 140,000 people needed. When it came to butchering the animals, the distribution of southern population influenced what was served at suppertime. In an era reliant on natural preservatives, pork proved an easier meat to smoke or salt; it made more sense for geographically isolated families to feed on smaller livestock. Pork was, therefore, much more a mainstay of the

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[19] Sheila Lee Tagliarini, "Tampa, a Southern Cowtown, 1858-1878" (M.A. Thesis, University of South Florida, 1996), 26.
[20] Robert A. Taylor, "Rebel Beef: Florida Cattle and the Confederacy, 1861-1865" (M.A. Thesis, University of South Florida, 1985), 8.
[21] U.S. Census Office, *Agriculture of the United States in 1860,* 18.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Akerman, *Florida Cowman*, 83. Either earlier counts were overly conservative, or the comptroller's figures were inflated. An increase of this magnitude is questionable, as cattle was driven out of state by land and shipped to Cuba and Gulf ports for Confederate consumption. Regardless of the actual number, the state's rich stock had clearly multiplied.

southern antebellum diet than beef, but war planners recognized the value of cattle to feed fighting forces.[24] One cow could feed many, and therefore made more sense to feed to armies than families, who needed to be concerned about wasting a large animal that could not be well preserved after slaughter. A lack of internal demand in a sparsely populated state had checked the growth of Florida's cattle industry. Even so, in 1860 there were nearly three head of cattle for every person, free or enslaved, in the state of Florida.[25] The sparsely populated state of Florida simply did not need the quantity of cattle held in 1860 because its human inhabitants were so few and far between. In fact, the vast majority of Florida contained fewer than six people per square mile.[26]

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[24] Taylor, "Rebel Beef," 1-4.

[25] U.S. Census Bureau, *Agriculture of the United States in 1860,* 18; U.S. Census Bureau, Census Material from 1840 to 1890, Historical Census Browser.

[26] Dixon Ryan Fox, *Harper's Atlas of American History* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1920), 56.

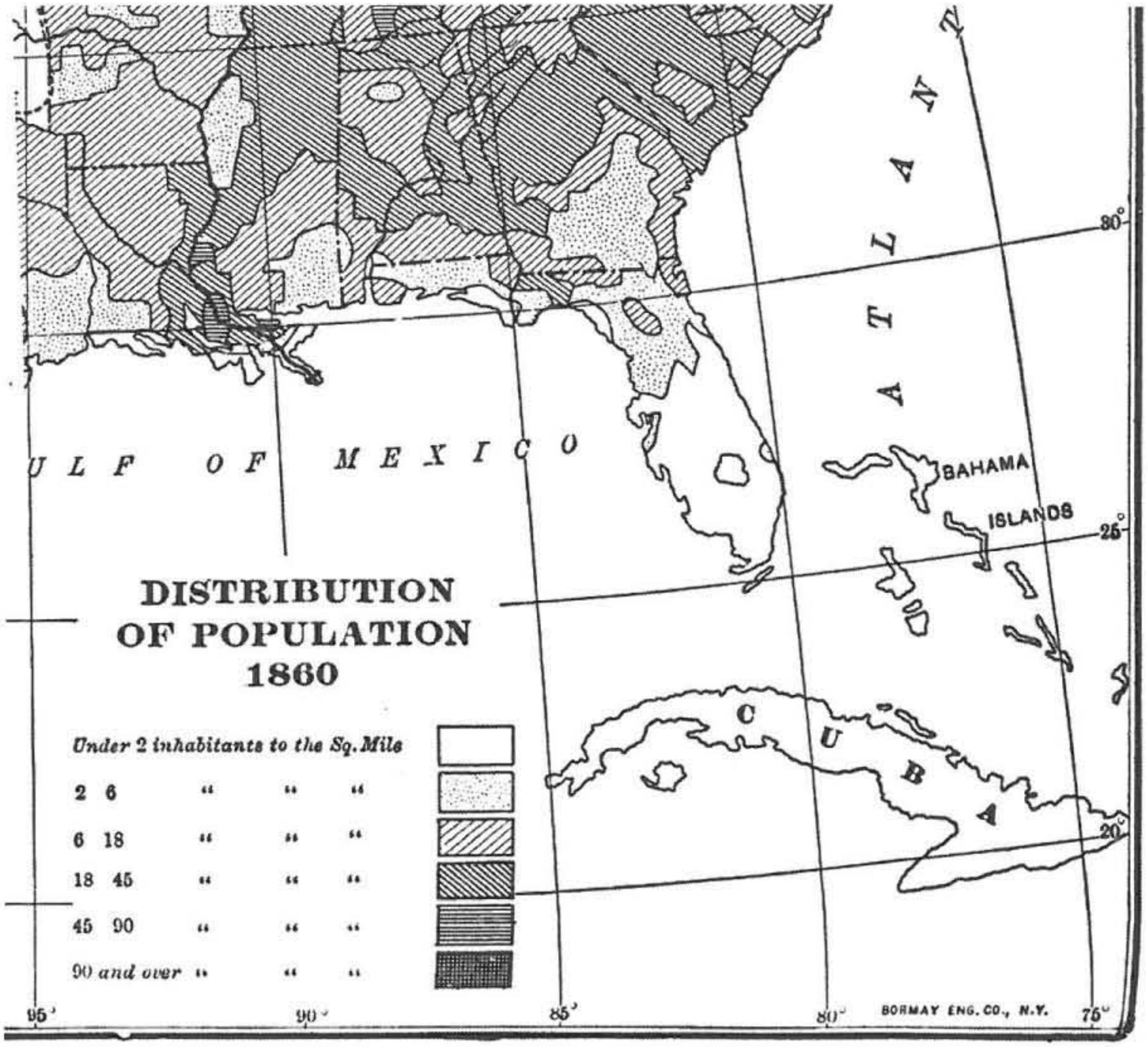

Fig. 3.2. Distribution of Population in 1860 showing population density of Florida and neighboring areas. Dixon Ryan Fox, *Harper's Atlas of American History* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1920), 56.

As the possibility of secession by the slave-holding states became a reality, the logistical support Florida could offer that cause became even more apparent. At 388,060 head, Florida's cattle stock in 1860 was not as large as most of the rest of the Confederacy. Only South Carolina boasted fewer beef cattle.[27] On a per capita basis, however, Florida was rich in livestock, ranking second among all its

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[27] U.S. Census Bureau, *Agriculture of the United States in 1860,* 18-38.

Confederate allies to only Texas, whose herds had less access than Florida's to the Gulf of Mexico for easier transport than over land.[28] Florida's lush grazing land also gave it even greater potential than the vast arid sections of Texas as a source of nutrition for the region.[29] As a result, Florida had a surplus of cattle to sell.

	1860 Population	1860 Cattle/Human Ratio
United States	31,443,321	.8 to 1
South Carolina	703,708	.7 to 1
Georgia	967,286	1.0 to 1
Florida	140,424	2.8 to 1
Texas	604,215	5.8 to 1:[30]
Brevard County, Florida	246	31 to 1[31]

Florida's cattle surplus was a significant source of wealth and income for the state.[32] Nearly 70 percent of the value of Tampa's exports in 1859 were from shipping cattle.[33] With the election of President Lincoln in November 1860, McKay accelerated his shipments to Cuba, purchasing nearly ten thousand head from William Hooker, and spending virtually all of the next seven months making runs to and from Cuba out of Punta Gorda.[34] In the midst of the secession crisis, McKay was able to strike a deal with the Union garrison at Fort Jefferson and the Dry Tortugas,

[28] George E. Buker, *Blockaders, Refugees & Contrabands: The Civil War on Florida's Gulf Coast, 1861-1865* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1993), 144.
[29] Taylor, *Rebel Storehouse*, 9,12.
[30] U.S. Census Bureau, *Agriculture of the United States in 1860,* 18; U.S. Census Bureau, Census Material from 1840 to 1890, Historical Census Browser.
[31] Otto, "Florida's Cattle Ranching Frontier," 59.
[32] *The Florida Peninsular,* July 28, 1860.
[33] Tagliarini, "Tampa, A Southern Cowtown," 30.
[34] Brown, "Tampa's James McKay and the Frustration of Confederate Cattle-Supply Operations in South Florida," 414-16.

supplying their beef and receiving a guarantee that federal forces would not interfere with his cattle shipping concerns to Cuba.[35] The relationships McKay fostered during the secession crisis with high-ranking Union officers served him well in the years to come.

Confederate demand for beef combined with Florida's growing cattle industry to provide for a mutually beneficial business venture. The estimates of Florida's comptroller regarding the size of Florida cattle herds encouraged Colonel Lucius Northrop of the Confederate Commissary Bureau to tap in to the deep reservoir of Florida beef. The fastest way to deliver beef to from the cattle rich Hillsborough region to Confederate troops in action was not on the hoof or via an underdeveloped railway system, but rather by a straight line across the Gulf of Mexico and re-entering the continent at Apalachicola, Mobile, and New Orleans.

Unfortunately for the Confederate war effort, one week to the day after the commencement of hostilities at Fort Sumter, President Lincoln issued an executive order creating a naval blockade of the states in rebellion. Lincoln acknowledged in his order the effects the blockade would have on local economies, stating that even "with a view... to the lives and property of quiet and orderly citizens pursuing their lawful occupations," the act was necessary to ensure enforcement of revenue law and secure the safety of the high seas.[36]

This blockade at first could only exist on paper. Even after the Union blockade of Florida's Gulf Coast officially went into effect, McKay had months before the U.S. Navy was able to have in position ships to effectively implement such an

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[35] Ibid.

[36] Basler, ed., *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, IV:338.

order. The U.S. Navy at the outset of the war consisted of a mere forty-two duty-ready ships, with thirty vessels away on foreign assignment. Of the remaining twelve, only four were in port (therefore reachable by mid-nineteenth century communication immediately) and could be dispatched immediately to blockade the vast southern coastline. Despite its initial shortcomings, the blockade was serious and vital; by the end of the first year of the war, 188 vessels had been added to the federal fleet.[37] However, fewer than twenty ships maintained the East Gulf Blockade of thirteen hundred miles of shoreline.[38]

Colonel Northrop sought to deliver meat to Confederate soldiers east of the Appalachian Mountains, instructing his man in Europe to contract for blockade-runners to deliver beef and bacon to eastern armies.[39] McKay and Summerlin were the logical choice for such an operation. Though McKay, an entrepreneur and successful merchant, had declared his Unionist convictions prior to the war, he was an adaptable businessman capable of shifting his customer base without ideological qualms.[40] Fearing seizure of his property due to his continued dealings with Union forces at Key West, McKay transferred ownership of his cattle herd to his friend and partner, Summerlin, the largest cattle owner in the state of Florida.[41] The Confederate Commissary, in turn, granted Summerlin a two-year contract to supply 2,400 steers per month to the army at a rate of eight to ten dollars per head.

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[37] Buker, *Blockaders, Refugees & Contrabands,* 1.
[38] David J. Coles, "Unpretending Service: The James L. Davis, the Tahoma, and the East Gulf Blockading Squadron," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 71:1 (July 1992): 41.
[39] Buker, *Blockaders, Refugees & Contrabands,* 146.
[40] Brown, *Tampa in the Civil War and Reconstruction* (Tampa Bay: The University of Tampa Press, 2000), 27-28.
[41] Ibid., 30-31.

While Florida cattle became increasingly important to the Confederate war effort, the federal blockade made it nearly impossible to utilize the state's Gulf ports to deliver beef to the mouth of the Mississippi River. The United States' government took decisive action to prevent the flow of cattle by sea from central and western Florida to Confederate troops in the Deep South. Apalachicola and St. Marks were the only developed ports along Florida's Gulf Coast to be aggressively blockaded by Union naval forces.[42] These ports, along with Mobile and New Orleans, would have made ideal points of entry for cattle from central Florida via Tampa Bay. The well-blockaded Apalachicola opened at the mouth of the largest river system in the South and New Orleans at the mouth of the Mississippi. From these ports, Florida cattle could have been siphoned out of Tampa, across the Gulf of Mexico, up the Apalachicola/Chipola/Chattahoochee River system or the Mississippi River.

Florida ports were particularly important for cattle transport because of the lack of investment in interstate railroads that plagued the South. During the war, Florida's rail system was still largely undeveloped, existing on a small scale to connect ports within the state.[43] Construction of an intra-state system linking Cedar Key on the Gulf coast to Fernandina on the Atlantic was completed by the onset of hostilities, but this merely presented the opportunity of moving cattle from one blockaded port to another without ever leaving the state. Meanwhile, the only competing rail line out of Tampa had stalled due to state subsidy disputes.[44] To

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[42] Buker, *Blockaders, Refugess, & Contraband*, 37.
[43] See Chapter 2, 17.
[44] Brown, *Tampa in the Civil War in Reconstruction*, 7.

make matters worse for the Confederates, Union forces seized Cedar Key early in 1862, cutting off any access to the railroad's terminus. Regardless, the sparsely populated Florida had no rail connections to population centers outside the state. Major C. McClenaghan of South Carolina visited Tampa in 1863 to investigate the difficulties in transporting cattle out of state over land. He urged the completion of a rail line connecting the Pensacola and Georgian Railroad at Live Oak and the Savannah, Albany and Gulf Railroad at Lawton, Georgia.[45] Major Joseph Locke, commissary agent for the C.S.A. in Georgia described the difficulties faced in getting the cattle out of Florida.

> The Cattle are scattered at this time of year and are more difficult to collect than in the spring. The rains have been unusually heavy recently and the country so much under water in the Cattle region that it is difficult to get them out....These difficulties and delays are quite intolerable.[46]

Making the journey overland by traditional cattle drive proved a difficult task for a whole host of reasons. For one, the terrain to be covered was largely unsettled, undeveloped, and fraught with hazards. Bears, panthers, jaguars, mosquitoes, and especially wolves preyed on cattle herds traversing their territory.[47] No cattle could be driven through the swamplands of south Florida. Even in central Florida, where the majority of herds grazed, high waters delayed cattle drives for months on end. In addition, good grazing regions were well spread out; a lack of forage after the winter frosts further delayed the driving of cattle through the north of the

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[45] David J. Coles, "Cattle Wars: The Civil War in South Florida, 1864-1865," Florida Cattle Frontier Symposium, Florida Cattleman's Association, Kissimmee, FL, 1995, 66.
[46] P.W. White to J. L. Locke, September 8, 1863, Pleasant White Letterbook, Pleasant Woodson White Papers, Florida Historical Society Library, Tampa, FL.
[47] Akerman, *Florida Cowmen*, 87.

peninsula.[48] Florida's weather patterns posed a danger to cattle remaining in state; Summerlin lost several hundred head to drowning and flying debris brought on by a hurricane that struck the Tampa area in 1852.[49]

Human interference posed an even graver concern, as state leaders feared that the Seminoles living in poverty and hunger could be swayed by Union representatives to take up arms against Confederate Commissary agents and attack the cattle drives.[50] These cattle raids had already become a common practice for Union forces stationed at federally held forts stretching all along the Gulf Coast of Florida. The U.S. Second Florida Cavalry and the Second United States Colored Troops, with regiments positioned at Fort Myers, Cedar Key, St. Vincent Island, and St. Andrew Bay, were instrumental in disrupting and discouraging cattle drives out of the Hillsborough and Manatee County regions.[51] Major Edmund Weeks ordered Captains Henry Crane and James D. Green with their companies to Cedar Key for the express purpose of harassing cattle drives and recruiting Floridians into Union ranks.[52] The loyalties of Floridians exhibited the fluidity of a border state as deserters and refugees actively and passively assisted the federal government. Unruly bands of disenchanted former Confederate soldiers made it a regular practice to steal or kill cattle from the herds held by the Confederate Commissary.

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48 Ibid., 90.
49 Akerman & Akerman, *Jacob Summerlin: King of the Crackers*, 30.
50 Taylor, "Rebel Beef," 62-63.
51 Buker, *Blockaders, Refugees & Contrabands*, 148, 153.
52 Ibid., 156.

Many of these cattle were then sold directly to the Union Army at various coastal cities.[53]

In addition to the frustrations imposed by hostile man and beast, experienced cowmen capable of delivering the herd to strategic locations to the north were in short supply. As the Confederate Commissary Department sought to drive cattle northward, they discovered that the most able-bodied men had volunteered in the first call to arms and were unavailable to assist. Later conscription had robbed the sparsely populated state of its adult male population and not properly accounted for the needs of those left behind or the management of the state's valuable resources. Though cattlemen were able to receive an exemption from active military duty, enlistment numbers rose at the same time new cattle brands declined in Hillsborough County.[54] The cattle were present; the ability and manpower to manage and drive the herds was absent.

In early 1862, Union naval forces seized the town of Apalachicola to cut off receipts of cattle shipments from the Tampa area. The East Coast Blockading Squadron put a clamp on northern Gulf ports of entry, but wisely created a porous blockade near Tampa Bay. Cattle could get out of the western gulf coast of Florida, but not into the panhandle or northern gulf coast ports of the Confederacy. William Dayton, U.S. minister to France, reported that according to his sources, huge segments of the west coast of Florida were left entirely unguarded. A.B. Noyes, a tax collector at St. Marks, reported that Tampa was without any blockading vessels at

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[53] Akerman, *Florida Cowman,* 90.
[54] Taylor, *Rebel Storehouse*, 94.

all, and that the port of Cedar Key to the north was left entirely unmolested.[55] Imposing a strict embargo on all ports was likely to turn some local sentiment against the Union. Instead, the federal government was able to generate sympathy by allowing the outflow of cattle and the return of foodstuffs to small communities along the southern Gulf coast. It was only when shipments threatened to strengthen Confederate strongholds that enforcement was stepped up.

The outflow of cattle to Cuba greatly enriched the ranchers and shippers involved in the trade. Caribbean trade of cattle was preferred by ranchers because the Union and Confederate forces in Florida insisted on paying for cattle with their respective nations' currency. Cuban buyers, on the other hand, were willing to pay in gold doubloons. McKay and Summerlin, doubting the true value of the notes they were paid in due to the uncertainty of the war's outcome, shifted the focus of their enterprise almost exclusively to Cuba, going so far as to hide cattle from the Confederate Commissary so as to sell at a later date in exchange for gold.[56] Demand for beef was high in Cuba, and the blockade made the supply even scarcer, elevating the price of an eight-dollar Florida steer to two ounces of Spanish gold; benefiting the shippers who were able to run the blockade. McKay continued shipping his cattle to Cuba despite the blockade, though at reduced numbers. During this time, Summerlin's herds were able to grow at an annual rate of five to eight thousand calves.[57] The blockade suited the cattlemen just fine, as they received top dollar for those cattle that got to market while the remaining herds were able to multiply. As

[55] Frank Lawrence Owsley, *King Cotton: Foreign Relations of the Confederate States of America*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1931), 275, 276.
[56] Brown, *Tampa in Civil War and Reconstruction*, 48.
[57] Akerman & Akerman, *Jacob Summerlin: King of the Crackers*, 51.

a result of Florida's ports and close proximity to Cuba, blockade-runners were able to inject much needed wealth into the war-torn state's economy.

During the war, the people of Florida needed the blockade-runners to deliver supplies. Through 1861, McKay had shipped over six thousand cattle to Cuba, using the proceeds to purchase flour, bacon, sugar, salt, and tobacco for the return voyage to Florida shores, which were sold for a combination of banknotes, Confederate and Union scrip, and Spanish coins. Profitable shipping required the transportation of goods on both legs of the journey, and McKay did just that. Evading Union blockaders outward bound with cattle was the easy part; the Union forces had an incentive to allow cattle into the Gulf of Mexico as long as the ships were prevented from docking and unloading at northern gulf ports. The blockade was more concerned with McKay's return trips from Cuba and other Caribbean islands. McKay's expert piloting allowed him to hug the southern peninsula as he made his way to the Caloosahatchee River, evading Union revenue cutters that were unwilling to navigate the treacherous shallow waters so close to the shore.[58] The map below illustrates the barrier islands and intercoastal waterways that confronted blockaders and runners.

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[58] Dacy, *Four Centuries of Florida Ranching*, 52-55.

Fig. 3.3. South Florida's treacherous coast, including Keys, barrier islands, and intercoastal waterways. Augustus Mitchell, *Mitchell's New General Atlas* (Philadelphia, PA: S. Augustus Mitchell, 1860), 59.

The dangers of shipwreck or capture and subsequent hanging were outweighed by the potential payoff. Though cattle were cheap in Florida, they could be traded in Cuba for precious commodities: wheat flour that would fetch $125 a barrel, sugar forty dollars, and salt twenty-five dollars a sack.[59] With such a high profit motive, blockade running was carried out almost exclusively by private contractors who catered to a combination of civilian demand and Confederate

[59] Ibid., 56.

military needs.[60] As such, the Cuban cattle trade allowed merchants like McKay to diversify their commodities to appeal to both markets. While much of this trade was harmless to the Union war effort, the goods sent out of state could also be used to purchase war materiel for Confederate troops.

McKay's return trips held the potential for more harm to the Union war effort than his exportation of cattle. The exodus of cattle from the state reduced potential Confederate beef supplies because of the more restrictive northern Gulf Coast blockade. Union forces were more concerned about inbound shipments from the Caribbean. Realizing where the real money was, McKay apparently switched to dealing arms. His vessel, the *Salvor,* ran aground and was captured in late 1861 carrying an impressive assortment of rifles, revolvers, large cannons, and ammunition purchased in Cuba.[61] He was not alone. The steamer *Florida* effectively ran the blockade in 1862, carrying a cargo of twenty-five hundred rifles and sixty thousand pounds of gunpowder into Saint Andrews Bay.[62] Florida's immense coastline presented the Confederates with an opportunity to smuggle arms that Union forces would have great difficulty restricting.

By 1863, the war had endured far longer than either side anticipated, and beef supplies from other states were exhausted or fell under Union control. With the Confederate surrender at Vicksburg in the summer, trans-Mississippi beef shipments to Confederate forces shut down and all future beef supplies would have to come from the East. The greatest remaining concentration of cattle accessible to

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[60] Thornton and Ekelund, Jr., *Tariffs, Blockades, and Inflation,* 29.
[61] John E. Johns, *Florida During the Civil War* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1963), 38.
[62] Taylor, *Rebel Storehouse*, 36.

the Confederate forces by the end of 1863 was in Florida's interior.[63] Florida beef became logistically more important in feeding the Confederate soldiers in the lower south, rescuing the Army of the Tennessee from starvation in the later years of the war.[64] Commander Woodhul of the U.S. Navy recognized the rising importance of Florida beef, stating succinctly

> The cattle of Georgia, Alabama, North Carolina, and South Carolina have been consumed. Texas and the rich grazing country to the westward of the Mississippi being cut off, the whole dependence of the Confederate government to feed their army now rests on [Florida].[65]

McKay and Summerlin's dealings with the Confederacy never really paid out. Most of the 25,000 cattle delivered to the C.S.A. were paid for in Confederate currency or war bonds. By mid-1863, excessive counterfeiting and dismal war prospects had devalued these notes. McKay took to hiding some of his herd east of the Kissimmee River, away from the Confederate commissary officers, until such time as the war had ended and he could resume unmolested trade with Cuba again.[66] Two years later, with the defeat and surrender of the Confederate government, all of Summerlin's accumulated notes were worthless. Effectively, Summerlin had contributed approximately 25,000 head of cattle to the Confederate war effort.[67] All told, Summerlin's contract with the Confederate Commissary

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[63] Coles, "Cattle Wars: The Civil War in South Florida," 66.
[64] Taylor, "Rebel Beef," 3.
[65] Merlin Coulter, *The Confederate States of America* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1950), 398-399.
[66] Brown, *Tampa in Civil War and Reconstruction*, 65-66.
[67] Akerman, *Florida Cowmen*, 86-87; Buker, *Blockaders, Refugees & Contrabands*, 146.

department should have netted him over $200,000, but he did not receive a dime.[68] Through utilization of notes backed by a doomed nation, the C.S.A. was able to exploit Summerlin's cattle holdings for the war effort to prolong its very survival.

As the tide of the war turned, Union forces exploited the cattle holdings of the state. Florida's cattle had even less loyalty than the disenchanted Confederate troops conscripted in the same state. They filled the stomachs of any marching army, blue or gray. The ability to move cattle in Florida became a zero-sum game, where losses for one belligerent party were gains for the other. Union regiments stationed in Florida were encouraged to supplement their regular rations with the abundance of livestock and vegetation offered by the land, reducing the supplies of the Confederacy and making the logistics of war all the more difficult.

Following key victories in early July 1863 at Gettysburg and Vicksburg, the Union armies were on the offensive and began to turn to Florida for beef and other livestock, further weakening Confederate supplies.[69] Union occupation of Florida coastal cities allowed for periodic raids upon the peninsula's interior, the theft of cattle already in Confederate possession, and quick retreat into fortified port cities. Federal cattle raids not only hurt the Confederacy, they helped maintain the Union's presence in the state.[70] Federal troops could be more easily sustained in Florida if they were not reliant on the supply chain to reach them for basic necessities. By purchasing cattle from local sources before it was bought up by Confederates with devalued currency, Union troops were able to extend their occupation, deny cattle to

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[68] Akerman & Akerman, *Jacob Summerlin: King of the Crackers*, 51.
[69] Ibid., 57.
[70] Taylor, *Rebel Storehouse*, 134-136.

Confederate troops, and foster relationships with Floridians that aided in the traffic of supplies and intelligence.

By 1864, federal occupation of inland fortifications allowed for the removal of cattle from Florida to feed northern forces. A *New York Times* piece pointed to the importance of Florida beef as supplies in Tennessee, Virginia, South Carolina, and Georgia ran dry. The columnist boasted of the longstanding knowledge that Florida could serve as a storehouse for cattle and swine to supply armies, noting that "(t)he prairies afford excellent pasture; cattle require little care from their owners and no housing in the Winter; and, in most parts of the state, hogs fatten without any other support than that which they derive from the roots and mast of the forest."[71] Union General D.P. Woodbury, Commander of Key West and the Tortugas, set a goal of gathering cattle from the sizeable herds of the Caloosahatchee river valley and transporting them North via shipping vessels. To accomplish this goal, General Woodbury reoccupied Fort Myers on the southern Gulf coast, staging raids on local cattle ranchers and disrupting the flow of beef north. Woodbury liberally estimated that as many as two thousand cattle per week were finding their way to Confederate armies from the Fort Myers area before his interdiction.[72] The reoccupation of Fort Myers allowed the Union to reverse the flow of cattle to their own usage. Florida Rangers stationed in Fort Myers siphoned as many as 4,500 head of cattle out of the state through a long wharf they constructed for that very purpose.[73]

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[71] *New York Times*, February 28, 1864.
[72] John Solomon Otto, "Southern Extremities: The Significance of Fort Myers in the Civil War," *Florida Historical Quarterly* 72 (October 1993): 141.
[73] Taylor, "Rebel Beef," 77.

The Union's soft blockade and willingness to trade with locals won more popular support than the Confederates' demand for absolute commercial loyalty.[74] While many smaller ranchers lost their cattle to Confederate impressment, Union forces made it a rule to not seize beef belonging to Union loyalists. Even up the coast, where the blockade was stronger, Floridians were able to engage in commerce with the enemy. General Braxton Bragg, C.S.A., imposed economic sanctions on citizens of Walton County, cutting them off from Pensacola after learning that locals were supplying the East Gulf Blockading Squadron with fresh beef and vegetables. Later, when Confederate forces had abandoned Pensacola, the relationships built by Union forces with local cattlemen allowed for trade to resume. A steamer captured by the Union Navy was used to shuttle cattle from Santa Rosa and Walton Counties to nearby Union garrisons.[75] Not surprisingly, the local Floridians showed more loyalty to the forces that encouraged more commerce.

In the spirit of forgiveness endorsed by President Lincoln, Summerlin successfully received a pardon for his actions supplying Confederate armies with beef. He cited in his petition that threat of having his herds impressed into Confederate duty with or without compensation and therefore chose to accept pay to support his family.[76] Summerlin was then able to reinstate the profitable cattle trade with Cuba years after the war, supplying the Spanish Army with beef

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[74] Taylor, *Rebel Storehouse*, 135.
[75] Ibid., 138.
[76] "Petition of Jacob Summerlin," September 12, 1865, Roll 15, M-1003, Case Files of Applications of Former Confederates for Presidential Pardons, 1865-67, RG 94, National Archives Records Administration".

throughout the 1870s.[77] In 1872, over fifteen thousand cattle were shipped to Cuba from U.S. Gulf ports, primarily out of Florida.[78] Captain Francis Hendry, who was still cutting his teeth as a cattleman during the Civil War, gave an even less conservative estimate of Florida cattle shipments after the war, citing eighteen thousand head of cattle being shipped out of Punta Rassa that same year.[79]

Florida's cattlemen, businessmen first and southerners second, were merely concerned to find buyers for their livestock – they did not care with whom they traded, so long as they profited. If the cowmen could not reach Confederate armies with their product, they were all too happy to find a welcoming foreign market in Havana, or in the occupying armies of the North. Newspapers appealed to the patriotism of Florida cowmen, asking them to stop selling beef to the enemy or to neutral third parties, encouraging Florida cattlemen to sell only to Commissary agents of the C.S.A.[80] Gold, however, was more powerful than appeals to Confederate loyalty, and certainly more powerful than Confederate scrip.

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[77] Dacy, *Four Centuries of Florida Ranching,* 59.
[78] 42d Cong., 2d sess., 1872 H.R. Doc. No. 1482, Serial 1482.
[79] F.A. Hendry, "Cattle Raising in South Florida," *The Semi-Tropical* 3 (1877): 214-215.
[80] Taylor, *Rebel Storehouse,* 95.

Conclusion

The root of large-scale human conflict is the protection of economic interests. While the South sought to maintain its institution of slave labor and escape the imposition of even higher import tariffs, the North faced the loss of federal property, armaments, forts, infrastructure and military investments, land, potential tax revenue, and control of its trading points of entry. The economic motivations for the South to secede clashed with the interests of the North in preserving the trade relationships that existed. In choosing the path that led to conflict over peace, decision-makers leaned towards what they believed would be most profitable on the margins.[1]

In his magnum opus of secession era politics, David M. Potter explained:

> Men are motivated by interests rather than ideals, ...they contend for power rather than principles, and...moral arguments are usually mere rationalizations or secondary "projections," used by contending interest groups to convince themselves or the public that they have right on their side.[2]

The protection of economic interests as *rights* can be just or unjust depending on their nature. Contemporary thinkers of the war era and modern historians correctly view the *right* to "wring their bread from the sweat of other men's faces"[3] as wrong, yet some other financial motivations may not be as clear-cut. The basics of commerce and business interaction rang true in Antebellum America; regional economies linked together, creating a national interdependence and participating in

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[1] Jack Hirshleifer, *The Dark Side of the Force: Economic Foundations of Conflict Theory,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 13.
[2] David M. Potter, *The Impending Crisis: 1848-1861* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976), 35.
[3] Basler, ed., *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln*, VIII:333.

global commerce. The southern economy benefitted from a growing and vibrant northern economy, and vice versa. Yet, some regional interests ran contrary to each other and created a climate of mutual hostility. Leaders of the secession movement viewed separation as the preferred method of protecting and furthering a way of life. Secession, however, could not be allowed in a perpetual Union, and war came.

The representatives to Florida's secession convention elected to join their brethren in South Carolina and Mississippi in attempting to exit the Union not only for the protection of slavery, but also for the economic considerations unique to a coastal state. The federal government and the emerging Confederacy saw, in Florida, opportunities for their own economic prosperity. The peninsula was valued for its strategic position separating the Gulf of Mexico from the Atlantic seaboard, but also as a source of cattle and a potential point of debarkation for cotton. With its abundant ports and growing economy, the state of Florida epitomized the secessionist argument against protectionist trade policy.

The financial viability of a southern Confederacy was contingent upon the successful separation of Gulf states from the Union. A Florida unencumbered by commercial regulation emanating from Washington, D.C., would have one set of concerns regarding its ports of entry; a Florida in the violent throes of prolonged civil war would have quite another. If the state were to secede, the response of the federal government would determine which set of concerns were the more pressing. Historical knowledge makes it easy to look back at the secession winter as the inevitable precursor to war. But the participants in history knew not the eventual consequences of their actions and saw in Florida's ports only the interests they could attempt to protect. The economic interests generated by Florida's Gulf ports provided a strong incentive for the state to secede, for the emerging Confederacy to support that secession, and for the United States government to resist it with force.

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