

**Race, Space, and Politics:
Using GIS to Explore the Social Logic of Politics in Urban and Rural Settings
in Nineteenth Century America**

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This paper, and the larger project on which it rests, marries the new interest in the “social logic of politics” with the capacities of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) technologies and brings new theory and new methodology to bear on four case studies from a treasure trove of never-before-explored individual level political information from nineteenth century America.

**Rediscovering the Social Logic of Politics: New Insights into Understanding Political
Behavior**

Relevant to this project is a theoretical and methodological approach to contemporary politics that has emerged from the study of voter decision-making in the US and England. This literature emphasizes the influence of network and neighborhood on individuals, a theme in commentary on American politics and society ever since DeTocqueville first noted the threats resident in the extremities of that duality: rampant and self-regarding individualism on the one hand and a communal tyranny over individuals on the other. DeTocqueville emphasized the political significance of neighborhoods and his concern for the consequences of each citizen being so deeply embedded in a local community:

each part of the land [has] its own political life so that there should be an infinite number of occasions for the citizens to act together and so that every day they should feel that they depended on one another. . . . [W]hen the people who live there have to look after the particular affairs of a district, the same people are always meeting, and they are forced, in a manner to know and adapt themselves to one another.¹

¹ A. DeTocqueville, *Democracy in America*, J. P. Mayer (ed.), G. Lawrence (trans) (New York: Anchor, 1969): 511.

The threat of heedless individualism was more than matched, DeTocqueville observed, and perhaps hoped, by the suasive power that accompanied this social imbeddedness:

[w]henver conditions are equal, public opinion brings immense weight to bear on every individual....There is no need for the majority to compel him; it convinces him. Therefore, however powers within a democracy are organized and weighted, it will always be very difficult for a man to believe what the mass rejects and to process what it condemns. This circumstance is wonderfully favorable to the stability of beliefs.²

Here then are the balancing forces between unrestrained and anarchic individualism on the one hand and mass conformism and the annihilation of individualism on the other.

This insight was resurrected a century later in the scholarship arising from intensive community studies, including those pioneering works focused on Elmira, New York and Erie County, Pennsylvania. These heavily sociological approaches were not without their critics among political scientists who, led by V. O. Key, conjured up community studies as a threat which would, “take politics out of the study of electoral behavior” and impose a new social determinism on the voting decision³. When in the 1950s and 60s, the focus of electoral behavior shifted from community case studies to representative national samples as developed in the University of Michigan studies of the American voter, the earlier interest in the influence of a voter’s immediate context on behavior was “swept aside.” Explanatory models shifted from an interest in the external suasive influences on individuals in communities to the internal attitudinal worlds of independent individuals uninfluenced by their immediate contextual circumstances.

² A. DeTocqueville, *Democracy in America*, J. P. Mayer (ed.), G. Lawrence (trans) (New York: Anchor, 1969): 643.

³ V.O. Key and F. Munger, “Social Determinism and Electoral Decision: The Case of Indiana,” in E. Burdick and A. Brodbeck (eds.), *American Electoral Behavior* (Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press):281.

Today many political scientists have returned to the earlier theme, once again citing DeTocqueville's observations on the political significance of context as part of a "general wisdom" shared by classical thinkers and the founders of the modern discipline alike.⁴ "[S]patial sensibilities," Javier Auyero reminds us, "have been around since social sciences' inception."⁵ Given the acceptance of these principles, "[w]hat is surprising," Zuckerman remarks, "is how they alternately disappear and recur" in the research agenda of the academy.⁶

Contemporary political scientists with an interest in contextual effects reject Key's charges of being apolitical, arguing that, "[t]he social logic of politics does not stand in contradiction with the claims about reasoning voters or citizens. It implies no social determinism."⁷ The way forward will be found, Zuckerman says, in explanations which "include the characteristics of both individuals and their social contexts and that link these two levels of analysis."⁸ Robert Huckfeldt agrees: "[c]itizenship takes on meaning through processes of communication, persuasion, and conflict that occur among interdependent citizens." These "interdependent individuals arrive at choices and decisions as interactive participants in a socially imbedded process that depends on networks of communication among and between individuals within particular settings."⁹ This is not so far from the wise counsel of Sam Hays who, having done so much to urge the unity of social and political history, so long ago sought to adjudicate the

⁴ A. S. Zuckerman, "Preface," in A. S. Zuckerman (ed.), *The Social Logic of Politics: Personal Networks as Contexts for Political Behavior* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2005).

⁵ J. Auyero, "Spaces and Places as Sites and Objects in Politics," in R. J. Dalton and H.-D. Klingemann (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Political Behavior* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007): 568.

⁶ A. S. Zuckerman, "Preface," in A. S. Zuckerman (ed.), *The Social Logic of Politics: Personal Networks as Contexts for Political Behavior* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2005): xv.

⁷ A. S. Zuckerman, "Returning to the Social Logic of Political Behavior," in A. S. Zuckerman (ed.), *The Social Logic of Politics: Personal Networks as Contexts for Political Behavior* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2005):19.

⁸ A. S. Zuckerman, "Preface," in A. S. Zuckerman (ed.), *The Social Logic of Politics: Personal Networks as Contexts for Political Behavior* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2005): xix.

⁹ R. Huckfeldt, "Information, Persuasion, and Political Communication Networks," in R. J. Dalton and H.-D. Klingemann (eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Political Behavior* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007):100.

increasingly hostile exchanges between proponents of the two schools. Hays reminded both sides that, “[t]he study of politics cannot stray too far from the study of society.”¹⁰

GIS and Individual Level Information: New Opportunities to Unite Social and Political History

Geographical Information Systems (GIS) methodologies are beginning to appreciably influence the study of the nineteenth century. That trend is reflected in this session in the use of GIS to illuminate both social and political history and speaks to the wider opportunity – sought since the 1960s – to reunite the study of social and political history. The keys to progress on that generational ambition are to be found, as is the case in many instances of paradigmatic change, in parallel advances in technology and in data.

The technological advance empowering and enhancing these possibilities for a newly integrated socio-political history arises from the many methodologies associated with GIS. These methodologies have become accepted tools in historical research over the last decade and their capacities continue to expand; there are at this conference. GIS has been characterized as a unique type of database, “in that a location is stored for each item of data...GIS can then present instantly on the screen a map showing the distribution of any variable or combination of variables ...[which] becomes an analytic tool...with answers displayed instantly.” Any data set can potentially be integrated with any other data set that “enables complex representations of a study area to be built up from multiple, apparently incompatible sources.”¹¹ GIS brings to a computer screen instantly and virtually without costs (neglecting for a magical moment the high

¹⁰ S. P. Hays, “Society and Politics: Politics and Society,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 15 (3, 1985): 499.

¹¹ D. DeBats and I. Gregory, “Introduction to Historical GIS and the Study of Urban History,” *Social Science History* 35 (Winter, 2011): 455-6.

costs associated with creating the GIS database), “a display of information once visible only in paper form, drawn slowly and expensively, first by cartographers and then by vector plotters.” In the process, GIS reveals, as Anne Knowles noted, “dimensions of historical reality and change that no other mode of analysis can reveal.”¹² Exactly this type of breakthrough emerges from the combination of individual level social and political information with the capacity of GIS software to visualize the spatial distribution of social variables central to political outcomes.

Social and political history relate most readily to one another when data for both are at the individual level. The impact of the individual level social information preserved in the US census records, combined with the computer revolution a generation ago, provided the creative spark for a new social history. This was particularly attractive in its time because that new social history was also a history from the bottom up, giving rise to new insights into groups and sectors—women, blacks, and immigrants, among many others -- outside the then focus of most historians. This engendered a predictable new professionalism in the naming of new fields of historical inquiry, often with accompanying journals. The founding dates of these journals attest to the excitement and the ferment of the times: *Urban History* (1974), *Family History* (1976), and *Social History* (1976).

Much of the new urban history of a generation ago focused on larger cities, creating difficulties in terms of scale and coordination and complicating the aspiration to link the new social history more firmly with its political counterpart. Some part of the difficulty arose because nineteenth century urban policy issues seemed often not to address very directly those groups that were the focus of the new social history. Much more important was the absence of individual level

¹² A. K. Knowles, “Introduction,” *Social Science History*, 24 (Fall, 2000): 453.

political information to match the individual level social information from census records and city directories on which the enterprise rested. Political information at the individual level seemed out of the question: we simply could not find out how individuals in the past thought and acted politically. The result was a substantial disconnect between the vast range of individual information on the social side of the ledger and the aggregate level political information, seldom available below the ward or precinct level, on the political side.

Social history worked with individual level data; political history worked with aggregate data; the inferential problems of moving between individual and aggregate data, despite efforts at solutions both elaborate and elegant, were not overcome. Moreover, those formidable statistical barriers ran afoul of the heuristic and even ideological drive of the new social history: many recoiled from what they saw as a behavioralism anathema to the insurgent nature of much of the new social history. The energy of a social history rich in detail of the lives of individuals in their full social contexts was lost when the political agenda, always at an aggregate level, entered the scene. Politics almost inevitably seemed remote from the lives of those ordinary people.

In some fields within the new social history, and particularly in urban history, the result was a sense of subsequent decline and loss of centrality. The prevailing sense of disappointment associated with the limited outcomes emerging from the heavily funded Philadelphia project perhaps captures this general sense of malaise.¹³

¹³ Eric Monkkonen, *America Becomes Urban: The Development of U.S. Cities and Towns, 1780-1980* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988): 27-30.

Individual level political information survives for Lancaster and surrounding Garrard County as legacies of the state's history as a *viva voce* state. Kentucky required citizens to declare orally their choice for each office at each election until 1892. This had long been the form of voting in England, Canada, Australia and much of Europe; it was practiced extensively in the United States, especially in the 18th and early 19th centuries.¹⁴ While it gradually fell from favor, about 15 percent of the votes in the 1860 presidential election were cast orally.¹⁵

Kentucky, like Virginia, had required oral voting since its founding; and as a slave state loyal to the Union, Kentucky was not subject to Reconstruction. One of the conditions of Radical Reconstruction was that secessionist states disallow oral voting in favor of the only known alternative, the ticket system, even though this provided no greater protection for the newly enfranchised freedmen and the change was, therefore, little discussed.¹⁶ The provisions of Radical Reconstruction in terminating Virginia's long and unchallenged record of *viva voce* voting, while it did nothing for the new black voters, has prevented us from understanding their political engagement as we would wish.

¹⁴ See H. Buchstein, "Public Voting and Political Modernization: Different Views from the Nineteenth Century," paper delivered at the "Private and Public Debate and Voting Workshop," Paris, June 3-4, 2010; H. Buchstein, *Öffentliche und geheime Stimmabgabe: Eine Wahlrechtshistorische und Ideengeschichtliche Studie* (Baden-Baden, 2000); H. Buchstein, "Democracy's Secret: Carl Schmitt and the German Critique of Secret Voting," *Redescriptions*, 6 (2002): 107-25. Prussia (p. 110) required *viva voce* voting for state elections until 1918.

¹⁵ D. A. DeBats, "Who Votes? Who Voted? The 2008 American Elections: Contexts for Judging Participation and Partisanship," *Australasian Journal of American Studies*, 27 (July, 2008): 16-26; P.F. Bourke and D. A. DeBats, *Washington County: Politics and Community in Antebellum America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995).

¹⁶ P. F. Bourke and D. A. DeBats, "Charles Sumner, The London Ballot Society and the Senate Debate of March, 1867," *Perspectives in American History*, 1 (New Series) (1984): 343-57; P.F. Bourke and D. A. DeBats, "Identifiable Voting in Nineteenth Century America: Toward a Comparison of Britain and the United States before the Secret Ballot," *Perspectives in American History*, 11 (1977-1978): 259-88.

For theorists of modernity, the step which Kentucky took in enfranchising the former slaves – a step toward the “universality of access” to the ballot – unaccompanied by any steps toward the “privatization of electoral preferences,” was surprising.¹⁷ It was apparently less so to those immersed in the reality of nineteenth century American politics, including the newly enfranchised freedmen who, it should be noted, made no known demand for secrecy in voting. Kentucky continuation of *viva voce* voting, gradually restricted to local offices, until the adoption of the Australian secret ballot in 1892, made it the only American state to switch directly from oral to secret voting.¹⁸

There were only two modes of voting in America before the adoption of the secret ballot at the end of the nineteenth century: the party prepared ticket system and the *viva voce* system. Elections under the two systems were fundamentally similar: conducted in the open air, with crowds gathered to enjoy the spectacle, election officials seated on a raised platform, and voters ascending the steps to those officials, who would acknowledge them as legally qualified electors.

In states using the ticket system, political parties printed their own ballots and distributed them to likely voters who gathered at the polls on election day. The party tickets listed the party’s candidates for each office being contested. These tickets were brightly colored and distinctively marked. This was done in part to check that the voter did not have a counterfeit ticket deceptively handed out by a splinter movement within the party or even by the opposition. But of course it was also done, in a broader sense, to allow observers to know each and every voter’s

¹⁷ S. Rokkan, “Mass Suffrage, Secret Voting, and Political Participation,” *Archives Europe ennes de Sociologie*, 2 (1961): 132-52.

¹⁸ P.F. Bourke and D. A. DeBats, “Identifiable Voting in Nineteenth Century America: Toward a Comparison of Britain and the United States before the Secret Ballot,” *Perspectives in American History*, 11 (1977-1978): 259-88.

political choices. Situated on the election platform, just past the officials who checked on the eligibility of each voter, was an urn or ballot box into which the voter deposited the distinctively marked and colored party ticket. Parties often hired local residents to loiter near the voting platform to record the name of the voters and “the color of their ticket.” Sometimes election officials covertly recorded in code the partisan vote of each voter as revealed by the color of the ticket deposited.

The knowledge of each individual’s vote conveyed visually in the ticket system was conveyed aurally in the *viva voce* system: where the content of the vote was not heard, it was seen in the colors and design of party tickets.

In an election held under *viva voce* law, each voter, once past the election official assessing eligibility, called out his choice for each office or an election official read out that set of decisions. Election clerks dutifully recorded all of that information, office by office, in the poll books. The only meaningful difference between elections under the ticket system and those conducted *viva voce* was, in the oral system, the legally-required production of poll books, as official records of every voter and his vote. Where they survive today, those books give to contemporary historians the same knowledge of the political choices of individuals that was known to all those who gathered as spectators to watch the electoral politics of nineteenth century America. The fundamental similarities of the two systems of voting – that all voting, whether by ticket or by voice, was public and knowable – increases the significance of studies arising from the *viva voce* world where all of that once-public information is preserved.

to visualize and analyze African-American neighborhoods in two mid nineteenth century urban settings, both white dominated, but analytically distinctive. The black neighborhoods of ante-bellum Alexandria, Virginia and post-bellum Lancaster, Kentucky shared important similarities that would help sustain black political engagement. The survival of poll books, which preserve in written form the vote cast *viva voce* or by voice in Kentucky post Civil War elections, creates new opportunities to understand the way the suffrage was used by the state's newly freed slaves. Only in Kentucky, a slave state loyal to the Union, and hence unaffected by the dictates of Reconstruction, did former slaves vote under *viva voce* electoral law. The alternative ticket system provided no greater secrecy for the voter, black or white, but terminated the official recording of each individual's vote. In the small market town of Lancaster, we can watch as the newly enfranchised black voters and their white neighbors (and often former owners) came to the polls in the highly controversial election of 1876 to declare their support for Rutherford Hayes (Republican) or Samuel Tilden (Democrat) for president and William O. Bradley (Republican) or Milton J. Durham (Democrat) for member of the United States Congress from Kentucky's 8th District. The dynamics of black neighborhoods, formed before the Civil War in Alexandria and afterwards in Lancaster, would be critical to the outcome of "The First Enfranchisement."

Alexandria, Virginia (1860) and Lancaster, Kentucky (1880)

Alexandria, Virginia, a thriving southern commercial city in 1860 with a population of 12,293, was one of the largest urban centers in the South and the 74th largest city in the nation. Resting on the banks of the Potomac and within sight of Washington, it was a city built on slavery, housing the largest companies involved in the nation's slave trade. Its prosperity also rested significantly on transshipping Appalachian coal, brought to the city wharves by canal, and the shipment of agricultural produce from the Shenandoah Valley. Significantly, Alexandria also had a very large free black population which constituted just over half (54 percent) of the city's 2580 African-Americans.

Lancaster, Kentucky was much a much smaller place: a rural market town that had grown rapidly, especially its black population, since the War. In 1860, Lancaster had a total population of only 721 people which included 232 slaves, making up 32 percent of the total population. With a tiny free black population of just 30, the black presence in Lancaster before the Civil War was much more defined by slavery than was the case in Alexandria. By 1880 Lancaster was home to a much larger African-American population that now constituted a majority (52 percent) of the town's 1234 residents. In the midst of a rich agricultural hinterland, Lancaster's well-being still depended on servicing and marketing locally produced grains and cereals. But the town was transformed, with expanded boundaries to incorporate a once enslaved population that was now a majority.

The Alexandria project has been underway for some time while the Lancaster project, part of a larger inquiry into newly enfranchised blacks in Kentucky, has just begun. Both studies are built upon a universe of individual level information, including, in Lancaster, individual political

information for the black, as well as the white, electorate. Both towns have been geo-referenced and their inhabitants identified from census records, city directories, tax rolls, poll books, and a variety of other social inventories. These individual records have been carefully and laboriously linked and the precise places of residence determined for 78 percent of Alexandria's inhabitants in 1860 and, so far, 63 percent of Lancaster's residents in 1880. All information on individuals within a household has been aggregated to that level and associated with GIS reference points, allowing all variables to be spatially displayed.

The common objective is to understand the dynamics within the African-American communities in moments of considerable crisis: in Alexandria as the Civil War approached and in Lancaster as black enfranchisement altered the fundamental dynamics of Southern politics. The insights gained by examining in these two case studies the way race and space played out may help illuminate broader nineteenth century American themes.

It is now safe to say that the central premise of the perceived disconnect – that individual level political information was unavailable -- was not universally true. We are now discovering that we can find out an enormous amount about the political lives of a great many individuals. This information comes in many forms. I have pioneered one aspect of this process with my work on the American and Canadian poll books from states and provinces operating under *viva voce* election law. A decade ago Kurt Schlichting, Peter Tuckel and Richard Maisel used individual level voter registration records for over 390,000 people in the cities of Bridgeport, Connecticut and Baltimore, Maryland, as recorded in Official Voter files, to study the relationship between

registration rates of black voters in tightly segregated areas of the cities.¹⁹ Margo Anderson has recently called our attention to opportunities inherent in petitions, signed by thousands of ordinary men and women on a whole range of issues, duly collected, sent to Washington and preserved in departmental archives. Other historians are discovering a new range of policy issues that were directly associated with the well-being of residents whose lives are revealed through the new social history. Gergely Baics is studying the transition of food provisioning in New York City from a tightly regulated market system run by the city government to a free market system and the consequent change to food availability in the ethnic communities in the emerging metropolis.²⁰

While historians speak to the general case when they say that “there are no individual-level voting data,” we now know there are a growing number of important exceptions to that generality.²¹ There are grounds for believing that there is a great deal more individual level political information waiting to be discovered -- in registration books, primary election records, and simple voter lists – and connected to the social lives of those individuals. These new opportunities created by the use of individual level political information will lead to new insights into citizen activism and political engagement in critical periods in American history. The fact that *all* votes prior to the adoption of the secret ballot at the end of the nineteenth century were knowable and no vote was secret means that the insights generated in case studies arising from

¹⁹ K. Schlichting, P. Tuckel, R. Maisel, “Racial Segregation and Voter Turnout in Urban America,” *American Politics Quarterly*, 26 (1998, 2): 218-36.

²⁰ G. Baics, “Mapping Household Provisioning, New York City, 1790-1860,” European Social Science History Conference, Ghent, April 13-16, 2010.

²¹ R. Hogan, “Resisting Redemption: The Republican Vote in Georgia in 1876,” *Social Science History*, 35 (Summer, 2011):153.

comprehensive individual level information may have a general applicability to all pre-secret ballot politics.

Of course the slaves and free blacks of Alexandria in 1860 could not vote. But the African-Americans of Lancaster in 1876 could. And the social history of the free black population of Alexandria turns out to have an important connectivity to the circumstances in which those Lancaster blacks came finally to exercise their power of the suffrage.

Cities and Towns in Nineteenth Century America

The small city and town are the ideal venues for a new approach to urban history, searching here in particular for individual level political information, linking that information with the widely available individual level social data available from the many surviving social inventories of the time, and applying the new methodologies of spatial and network analysis to link as never before social and political history. Revolutions in industrialization, transportation and markets made the small city and town the dynamic national story during the mid to late nineteenth century because they were, in a land of “mushroom cities,” the urban form that was growing the fastest. For all the attractions of the large city to scholars, statistically it is in the small city and the town where the American experience was most consistently played out.

As Table 1 shows, only in 1880 did the US have -- for the first time -- a city with a population of one million. By contrast the number of small cities expanded rapidly across the period as did the number of towns of between 1000 and 2500 people. When towns were first counted in the 1890 census, there were 1603 with a total population of 2,509,000. Moreover, a town or small city, say

with a population up to 25,000, can be explored at the individual level with spatial and network methodologies by a single scholar with a single funding source, eliminating instantly several of the limits that would still be attached to studies of a large city. In methodological terms, small cities and towns also present the opportunity to study commercialism and industrialism without the contaminating influence of urbanism.

Table 1
Urban Populations in the United States, 1860-1880

City Population	Urban Places, 1860		Urban Places, 1870		Urban Places, 1880	
	Number	% Urban Population	Number	% Urban Population	Number	% Urban Population
1,000,000 +	0	0	0	0	1	9
500,000-1,000,000	2	22	2	16	3	14
250,000 - 500,000	1	4	5	15	4	9
100,000 – 250,000	6	16	7	11	12	13
50,000 – 100,000	7	7	11	8	15	7
25,000 – 50,000	19	11	27	9	42	10
10,000 – 25,000	58	14	116	17	146	15
5,000 – 10,000	136	16	186	13	249	12
2,500 – 5,000	163	10	309	11	467	11

And yet there remains a “historiographical silence” concerning the study of towns and smaller cities.²² James Connolly notes that American urban history has privileged the large city at the expense of the small, obscuring “the distinctive experiences associated with smaller less central places.”²³ “This relative neglect of small and midsize cities constitutes a significant gap in our understanding of the urban experience.”²⁴ Diane Shaw recommends a “vernacular urbanism” in the form of the study of the small town as an antidote to, “the metropolitan bias of urban history.”²⁵ A new small cities initiative, properly constituted in comparative terms, could unite

²² D. Shaw, “Small Towns and Nineteenth-Century Urbanization,” *Journal of Urban History*, 28 (2, 2002): 220.
²³ J. Connolly, “Decentering Urban History: Peripheral Cities in the Modern World,” *Journal of Urban History*, 35 (1, 35): 3.
²⁴ J. Connolly, “Decentering Urban History: Peripheral Cities in the Modern World,” *Journal of Urban History*, 35 (1, 35): 6.
²⁵ D. Shaw, “Small Towns and Nineteenth-Century Urbanization,” *Journal of Urban History*, 28 (2, 2002): 230.

scholars in a search for a common agenda and the “broad-based generalizations” that urban historians have long sought.²⁶ A conscious effort to develop a “decentered urban history” based on small cities and towns will yield, these critics say, “a richer more complex understanding of modern urban history.”²⁷

The Free African-American Population of Alexandria, 1860

Free African-Americans could not vote in 1860, but they would in another decade with the passage of the 15th Amendment. The analysis of Alexandria’s free black population demonstrates the development of the neighborhoods in the pre-suffrage era that would create the political base for an enfranchised black population. This work is based on the use of GIS-based Kernel density maps to show the spatial distribution of populations with a smoothing parameter to identify a core containing approximately 60 percent of the groups being analyzed.²⁸ The notion of a core population does not imply exclusivity: cores can be defined to include any desired concentration of a population. A 60 percent core may or may not contain residents with characteristics quite different from those which define the core. Examination of the overlap of cores with contrasting characteristics may help indicate the extent of spatial separation of groups with those characteristics.

Alexandria, a highly compressed commercial city, was remarkable for the absence of neighborhoods – except for free blacks. Forty-four percent of the land in the city limits was

²⁶ L. F. Schnore and P. R. Knights, “Residence and Social Structure: Boston in the Ante-Bellum Period,” in S. Thernstrom and R. Sennett (eds.), *Nineteenth Century Cities: Essays in the New Urban History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969): 256.

²⁷ J. Connolly, “Decentering Urban History: Peripheral Cities in the Modern World,” *Journal of Urban History*, 35 (1, 35): 13.

²⁸ D.A. DeBats and M. Lethbridge, “GIS and the City: Nineteenth Century Residential Patterns,” *Historical Geography*, 33 (2005):8-9.

unoccupied, held overwhelmingly by commission merchants and the widows of commission merchants.²⁹ GIS reveals a city with almost no spatial differentiation—even by race, the city’s prime organizing feature.³⁰

Figure 1 shows the cores containing 60 percent of the white and black populations of the city. The overlap is nearly complete, a result reflecting the distribution of slaves through the white population and is typical of the city’s general pattern of high overlap between divergent groups, including voters. However, census information allows us to identify the race of all heads of household and tax information allows us to identify black landholders. The result, Figure 2, begins to define more accurately the distribution of the free black and the white populations in the city. Most importantly this map identifies Alexandria’s only neighborhood in the ante-bellum period -- the large free black area containing the two areas known, then as now, as “The Dip” (also called “The Bottoms”) and “Hayti.”

This area is even more concisely defined when (Figure 3) we place all the inhabitants of black headed households in those households and compare the core of that population with the core of the white population of the city. Whereas the overlap of the cores shown in Figure 1 amounts to 56 percent of the two cores, the overlap of the cores shown in Figure 3 amounts to only 12.6 percent of the two cores. This is a much more realistic representation of the segregation of the races in ante-bellum Alexandria.

²⁹ See D.A. DeBats, “Political Consequences of Spatial Organization: Contrasting Patterns in Two Nineteenth-Century Small Cities,” *Social Science History*, 35 (Winter, 2011): 514-21.

³⁰ D.A. DeBats, “A Tale of Two Cities: Using Tax Records to Develop GIS Files for Mapping and Understanding Nineteenth-Century U.S. Cities,” *Historical Methods*, 41 (Winter, 2008): esp. 30-35 and D.A. DeBats, “Political Consequences of Spatial Organization: Contrasting Patterns in Two Nineteenth-Century Small Cities,” *Social Science History*, 35 (Winter, 2011): 523-32.

Figure 4 reveals two other important truths about Alexandria's original black neighborhood, in existence long before the end of slavery. First is the presence in the neighborhood of the city's two traditionally black churches – the Roberts Memorial (Methodist) Chapel and the Alfred Street Baptist Church -- both neatly located, as it turns out, in the core of the free black population of 1860. The less savory and undoubtedly conscious co-determinant of the black neighborhood is its low elevation – and high risk of flooding from the Potomac River. While the public history makes a good deal about the whites who rented and sold land to free blacks, these accounts tend not to mention the distinctive risks to health and well-being associated with that land.³¹ The unspoken but widely recognized significance of elevation is particularly evident in Figure 5 which shows the highest area of the city and the clustering of all the white Protestant churches in the city around that high land. Elevation, as GIS helps us realize, was an important defining feature of Alexandria's social patterning.

In economic terms, Alexandria's free black neighborhood was dominated by the white economy. There were only four black-owned businesses in all of ante-bellum Alexandria: two oyster dealers, a blacksmith and a small brickyard. The only two black businesses in the free black core of the city were Beckley's oyster shop and Douglas' blacksmith shop and both were on the very edge of that core. As Figure 6 shows, retailing to the black population was dominated by white business: there were over twenty white businesses in the black core, mostly selling groceries and provisions. There was no black-owned grocery store in Alexandria in 1860.

³¹ By contrast, the vernacular place-name for the area -- "The Dip" or "The Bottoms" -- indicates the centrality of this geographical feature for the inhabitants of the neighborhood.

Meanwhile Alexandria's efforts to create an industrial base producing for export did not succeed. Major failures included the Pioneer Flour Mill on the wharves, the Mt. Vernon Cotton Mill, and the Orange and Alexandria Railroad Manufacturing Company. All that was left by 1860 was a modicum of small manufacturing establishments producing for the local market. Some of the most obnoxious of these were (Figure 7) located in the free black neighborhood.

Figure 8 brings together the many elements that defined the free black neighborhood of Alexandria: a small area which contained sixty percent of the city's total free black population, the two historic black churches, 68 percent of black tradesmen, and two of the four black-owned businesses in the city.

The African-American Population of Lancaster, 1880

As Figure 9 shows, by 1880, the black and white populations of Lancaster, once intermingled by slavery, had largely retreated to racial enclaves with the cores of households headed by blacks and whites occupying quite different areas of the town. The prime white area was resolutely centered on the town square; this core contained most of the town's mercantile elite though the wealthiest residents resided on the outskirts of town. A reflection of that tendency was a secondary white area east of the town center, along the Richmond to Lancaster Pike, which was occupied by several well-to-do white professionals and office holders, including William Landram and his son, the federal "revenue collectors" for the area.

The two black cores – areas which had only recently been incorporated into the city -- hardly touched the white cores. Figure 10 shows us that not a single white person lived in the black core

areas. There were 81 blacks living in the white core areas of town (Figure 11) but 70 percent were living in white households and employed as cooks or “servants.” There were 35 black landholders in the town and only three (Figure 12) were in the white cores of the town; almost all black landowners were in the two black core areas or on the fringes of those cores (Figure 13). All the evidence suggests that Lancaster had become a very segregated small town in a very short space of time.

The two black areas of Lancaster reflected about the same degree of black autonomy as the free black area of antebellum Alexandria. The town’s “colored school” was located in the black area northeast of the town center as was the Colored Methodist Episcopal Church (Figure 14). The minister, the Reverend Silas Crawford, lived just a few doors from the church.

The black core in the southwestern quadrant was smaller in terms of population, was defined more by black commercial activity, and was less institutionalized. The Colored Baptist Church was nearby, but it had no permanent minister. Most (8 of 14) of the town’s black tradesmen and shop-keepers operated from shop-fronts there, including both of the town’s black grocers. The only black businesses distant from the black cores were two barbers – Joseph Huffman who traded on the town’s central square and Zale Campbell who was located nearby (Figure 15). The southwest black core was a distinctive black small business area.

The Black Voters of Lancaster and

These are the very features that contemporary political scientists, interested in the “social logic of politics,” identify as the factors likely to stimulate, and protect, a political neighborhood.³²

³² See R. Huckfeldt, “Political Participation and the Neighborhood Social Context,” *American Political Science Review*, 23 (1979): 579-92; R. Huckfeldt, E. Plutzer, and J. Sprague, “Alternative Contexts of Political Behavior:

Ironically the process of segregating the black population, concentrating the black population, its institutions, and business, created the very basis for black political strength. This is exactly the pattern we would expect to see emerge in Alexandria's black core, where the sense of place and identity stretched back decades, rather than, as in Lancaster, just a few years. And the exercise of this power is what we can watch in the 1876 presidential election.

What Can We Learn from the Lancaster Poll Books for the Presidential Election of 1876?

The Lancaster poll books for the presidential election of 1876 have been selected for analysis because they are among the few poll books for a presidential election known to have survived for post Civil War America. Kentucky was solidly Democratic in the contest, voting 61 percent for Samuel Tilden and casting 12 electoral college votes for the winner of a highly controversial election that would decide the fate of the South and of the region's black voters. The eventual compromise would see Hayes elected and the end of Union military occupation in the South, effectively sealing the fate of the "First Enfranchisement."

But on election day in 1876 this was far from known. Garrard County again tipped Republican with 52 percent of its voters calling out their support for Hayes for President and William O. Bradley for Congress, against the incumbent, Milton J. Durham.³³ The little town of Lancaster was more enthusiastically Republican, splitting 56 percent to 44 percent.³⁴

Churches, Neighborhoods, and Individuals," *Journal of Politics*, 55 (1993): 365-8; R. Huckfeldt and J. Sprague, *Citizens, Politics, and Social Communication: Information and Influence in an Election Campaign* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); A. S. Zuckerman (ed.), *The Social Logic of Politics: Personal Networks as Contexts for Political Behavior* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2005).

³³ G. Glen Clift, "Kentucky Votes, 1792-1894," Typescript (Frankfort, Kentucky Historical Society).

³⁴ The vote in Lancaster for President and Congress was almost identical; the only difference was due to Benjamin Collier, who voted for Tilden for President but did not provide a preference in the Congressional contest.

The racial composition of the vote was critical, and in this respect Lancaster is emblematic of the situation in the entire post Civil War South. In Lancaster as in so many other towns and counties, the aggregate result was split, but (Table 2) the blacks and whites were nearly unanimous in opposition to one another..³⁵ The white Republican voters were critical and supplied the party's

**Table 2:
Lancaster Vote in 1876 Presidential Election, by Race**

	Hayes (Republican)	Tilden (Democrat)	Total
Black	33	1	34
White	7	32	39
Total	40	33	73

margin of victory in Lancaster. This was a rather exceptional group which included a lawyer, a rather wealthy federal revenue agent, a teacher, an express agent, and a harness maker; they created a very different profile from the black Republicans.

Using the tax list of 1875 for the residents in the entire Lancaster precinct (including the town) suggests that the turnout rate by race was almost identical – 50 percent for blacks (128 of 258 adult males) and 52 percent for whites (288 of 550 adult males).³⁶ These rates were in all probability reflected in the town of Lancaster.³⁷

³⁵ The only Lancaster black voter for Tilden and the Democrats was Perry Dunlap who resided in a black core, although on its outer edge.

³⁶ This figure will decline further as we identify individual adult males listed as present in town in both the 1870 and 1880 censuses but who do not appear on the tax list. See D. A. DeBats, “Who Votes? Who Voted? The 2008 American Elections: Contexts for Judging Participation and Partisanship, *Australasian Journal of American Studies*, 27 (July, 2008): 16-36. Self-knowledge of age was problematic for all nineteenth century Americans; among Lancaster blacks listed in the 1880 census, 24 percent nominated their age on a decade interval (20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80) as against an expectation of less than four percent of births having been on a decade interval.

³⁷ Preliminary results based on the 1880 census plus individuals who voted in 1876 but are not on the 1880 census suggest a black turnout rate of 41 percent (21 voters of 51 adult males) and a white rate of only 33 percent (22 voters of 66 adult males).

Those blacks in the town of Lancaster who voted were overwhelmingly heads of households (29 of 34 or 85 percent). On the other hand, only two of the twelve eligible blacks who lived in white households voted. Living in the black cores was, as predicted, also important: those cores contained 63 percent of Lancaster's black population but 85 percent of black voters (Figure 16). Black heads of household were 32 percent more likely to vote if they were in the core than if they were not.³⁸ Black landowners in the core were nearly three times as likely (50 percent to 17 percent) to vote as black landowners whose land was outside the core.³⁹ Neighborhood mattered.

These black voters were not wealthy: 81 percent were laborers and only 32 percent were landowners. The primary features of black voters were that they were disproportionately heads of households and residents in the black cores of Lancaster. Figure 17 brings together the defining features of these cores – black tradesmen, black-owned business, black landowners, the black school and the two black churches. It was here that black politics was sustained.

Indeed, if there was a worrying portent in the 1876 profile of black voters and non-voters, it was that so few of the relatively well-off voted, especially, as we have seen with landowners, if they lived outside the core areas. This was even more characteristic of black small businessmen and tradesmen who by and large abstained from voting. There were four black carpenters in Lancaster; none vote. There were two black house-painters; neither voted. There were two black plasterers and neither voted. There were two black mail carriers and neither of them voted either.

³⁸ There were 79 black headed households in Lancaster town whose head was age-eligible to vote; we have determined a place of residence for 60.

³⁹ Nine of 18 black male landowners inside the core areas voted (50 percent) while only two of 12 black male landowners outside the core voted (17 percent).

Most black voters were heads of households, were laborers, and lived in one of the black cores. The key addition to this group was Silas Crawford, minister of the black Methodist Episcopal Church, perhaps providing an insight into the circumstances helping to sustain the unique leadership role of black religious figures.

While Lancaster was a Republican town, it was so only by virtue of a vulnerable coalition of well off white Republicans and a black Republican base shorn of involvement by black small businessmen and tradesmen. Moreover, while blacks constituted a majority of the town's population (639 to 650), they did not constitute a majority of the town's potential voters because the black population was disproportionately young and female.⁴⁰ White males outnumbered black males 300 to 278 and the average age of the white male population was 25 while the average age of black males was 18. The result was a white dominated electorate.

Republican hopes in Lancaster, and perhaps much more widely in the post Civil War South, would rest upon the ability of white Republicans to define a network outside of their

⁴⁰ The gender differential was reflected in a higher proportion of black female headed households with an average age of 40 while the white female heads of household were an average age of 45. The table summarizes the differences in male and female headed households in the free black population of Alexandria in 1860 and the black population of Lancaster in 1880. The black population of Lancaster resided in male headed households to a greater degree than had the free blacks of Alexandria, but there remained a greater proportion of black as compared to white female headed households.

Heads of Household by Sex, by Percent

	Lancaster, 1880		Alexandria Free Black, 1860s	
	White	Black	White	Free Black
Male	90	73	84	63
Female	10	27	16	37
Total Number	122	120	2680	400

neighborhood and the capacity of black Republicans to extend the suasive power of their community.