Dear Bill,

Some final thoughts as I prepare to wrap up your manuscript and send it back to you with my comments. One point is small and specific, the other broad, general, and crucial to your argument.

On pp. 138-39 you claim that 800,000 slaves were shipped from Africa to Cuba, but give no source. Did Curtin or Eltis say this? DuBois? Who? I hope you’re not taking this figure from the research of someone you’ve ridiculed. I did a quick online check. The folks behind *Traces of the Trade*, the book and documentary about the De Wolfs of Rhode Island, say over 600,000 went to Cuba. CubaHeritage.org says 1.3 million went from Africa to Cuba. Wikipedia says a million plus. Curtin, *Atlantic Slave Trade* (1969), 44, 46, says 700,600 or 702,000. These estimates, and that’s all they are, like yours for 800,000, vary widely. It’s quite a stretch from 600,000 to 1.3 million. How do you explain that? As more research is done over the generations, should we not be getting closer to the truth, narrowing the range of the accepted estimates? And has that been happening?

Second: at no point I think do you ever mention, much less discuss and use to buttress your main argument about the illegal slave trade, what specialists on American slavery call the *immiseration debate*, from the Marxists, to make miserable, to impoverish, the working class, Latin root.

The debate is about the ying and the yang of slavery, and often involves a comparison of American slavery with, for example, Brazilian slavery, as was done by Carl Degler. He admitted that labor was harsher and more degrading in Brazil, and mortality rates higher than in the U.S., and even higher in Cuba as you say; but that in Brazil slaves often had sexual partners, many had children, some had family life, and all in theory had the benefit of Christianity. In the U.S., as we know, the slave population grew by natural increase, and they too, had sexual partners (obviously), less demanding labor, and a somewhat milder climate, especially in the Upper South. Degler says that psychologically American slavery was more oppressive. How would he know? How does one measure that? Elkins argued for a concentration camp model, a Jewish inmate mentality, identifying with the SS guards, or Ol’ Massa. The dispute between DuBois, Starks, and you, and perhaps a few other brave and lonely souls; and Curtin, Eltis & Co., is over how much the natural increase was, how fast, how quickly, and did it exceed the physical and biological limits of human reproductivity? What about poor diet, extreme work demands, disease, harsh discipline, etc.? How important or unimportant were those factors?

Looking at some census figures just a moment ago I see about a million blacks in the U.S. in 1800; by 1860 there are about 4.4 million, including over 400,000 free blacks. Am I to believe that the black population, including almost half a million free blacks, quadrupled in just 60 years? Is that possible biologically? I’d check with demographers, population experts, clinicians, and find out, excluding all other factors, can a human population of one million more than quadruple in just 60 years? Either it can, or it’s impossible. If you can line up several experts in various fields who all say the same thing, then there has to be another explanation, and you think it’s the illegal trade.

It could get tricky. The experts may disagree on the potential limits of human reproductivity. At some point you’ll have to calculate for the myriad factors that would bear on greater or lesser population increase. As I suggest in my comments, the growth rate of the largely white population in the North was also phenomenal, but there was also huge European immigration, and that has to be accounted for. If white women could breed at the same, or higher rates, than slave women, well, that would show that it is possible, excluding other factors. I’ve read that the life expectancy for an Irish day laborer living in a basement hovel, or some sort of shanty or tenement, in Boston or New York, with brutal winters, not enough fuel, inadequate food and clothing, etc., may well have been less than that of a slave on a well-run plantation. But the PC crowd doesn’t want to hear that.
That's your question. Combatants in the immiseration debate argue over the relative and absolute harshness of American slavery compared with that in various parts of Latin America. Only in the U.S. did the population grow, supposedly entirely by natural increase. Well, maybe, but by a factor of over four times in 60 years, just 3 generations? The harder slavery was, the slower the rate of population growth should be; the more lenient it was, the higher the rate of increase.

My students in my slavery, Old South, and Civil War courses had a hard time with this one. They'd been taught all their life that slavery was horrible, and here I was saying that only in the U.S. did the slave population grow, as I then thought, by natural increase, or entirely by natural increase, the implication being that our slavery was somehow easier, softer, milder, than slavery on a sugar plantation in the tropics. Like most people, they wanted to have their cake and eat it. They wanted an American holocaust of slavery, but could not deny the huge increase in the slave population, but emotionally could not accept that it would imply an easier form of servitude. A milder kind of slavery in a climate not as hot as the tropics, while still pretty damned hot in the Deep South, seems to me to be the only explanation other than a large, illegal trade.

I think you say that DuBois argued for 1,000 to 15,000 annual imports annually between 1808 and the war, or roughly that period. Would that amount, averaged out, explain the population increase, or at least part of it?

You and DuBois disagree with the establishment of his time, and ours, and posit a significant addition to the population by an illegal slave trade post 1808. If you can show that roughly half of the one million blacks in 1800, the females, could not possibly have generated enough daughters to then produce a third generation of girls large enough to result in 4.4 million blacks by 1860, what then? How does anyone explain it? The answer seems obvious to me: a large, ongoing, illegal slave trade, much or most of it probably from Cuba to Florida and other Gulf Coast states.

Michael B. Chesson
19 April 2017

Dear Bill,

I’ve read manuscripts for HarperCollins, Viking/Penguin, Routledge/Taylor & Francis, Longman Publishers, and many different university presses and scholarly journals. Your draft of 337 pages, plus a very slightly revised, and much more recent version of the introduction that you sent me later, is in by far the worst shape of any manuscript I’ve ever read, rather like the condition of the priority mail wrapper in which it arrived, courtesy of the USPS. I note that the complete manuscript is dated 7/16/13. Have you touched it or looked at it in the past nearly three years? I’d guess not. It is in such a wretched form that I scarcely know where to start. See detailed comments below. So let me begin with a few big questions.

Your title is unwieldy, too long, attempts to tell the reader too much at the outset, and is also obscure, as many won’t know, or don’t care, what historians mean when they talk about American exceptionalism.

Do you hope to submit it to a real publisher, and have it appear in print between two covers, in cloth or paper or both? Or do you merely plan to have it posted on your website, in which case none of my criticisms and comments below will really matter, and I’ve been wasting my time, despite the promised reader’s fee? Or perhaps you aim for something in between a real book, and a personal website blog, an eBook of some kind?

What’s the question that you are examining, and what is it you are trying to prove, to demonstrate? I had long thought that your concern was with the illegal, largely secret, and also unrecognized, if not actually concealed and covered up, importation of African slaves to the U.S. in 1808 and thereafter, down to the outbreak of the Civil War. Instead, you devote much space to the history of Africa and African slavery, and the Trans-Atlantic slave trade, particularly the statistical claims of various authorities in the field, e.g., Eltis et al. You also write at length on the beginnings of the Industrial Revolution in Western Europe, and a wide range of other topics, with little if any relevance to your ostensible subject.

Are you trying to persuade and convince your readers, or merely inflame and irritate them? Your gratuitous attacks and repeated insults to James McPherson and other worthies are both unnecessary, and also pointless, if not counterproductive. They are certainly tiresome.

Who is your audience? Who are you writing for? The legendary “intelligent general reader,” if such creatures still exist, may need some basic background on the Industrial Revolution, African history, etc. But readers with more specialized interests will not, and won’t want to read your opinions about subjects, some of which they may be expert, and others that they don’t care about at all.

You provide no consistent documentation. You have parenthetical citations in the text, usually just an author’s last name and a title, occasionally an actual page number, but much of the text is one unsupported assertion after another. Some chapters have a bibliography at the end, others do not. It’s time-consuming to try and find where you’ve gotten some of your quotations and data, and most readers won’t even bother. A publisher won’t consider the manuscript, for this and other reasons.

In the last few chapters, whether numbered in Roman or Arabic numerals, there is so much material repeated, and even twice repeated, that it’s impossible to tell what length the manuscript would be if all of the duplicate material was omitted. Journal editors will reject a manuscript of dozens of pages, or over a hundred. Book publishers don’t often accept pamphlet length manuscripts of not far over one hundred pages. There’s a risk that you’ll fall through the cracks.

Introduction

7 There’s a description of the content from your block quotation in Johanssen’s biography of Douglas (1973), 704-05. This account by Douglas is well known to me because you’ve talked about it almost as long as I’ve known you, and it’s one of your “three credible sources” for a significant illegal slave trade into the antebellum South. There are several problems with it as primary source evidence. Douglas said he saw recent African imports in Vicksburg and
Memphis. But as far as I can tell, he never said how he knew they were recent arrivals. Did he talk to them, try to have a conversation, however brief? Did they not speak or understand English? He doesn’t even say that. He just calls them “recently imported miserable beings.” No doubt they were miserable, but they could have been from anywhere in the South, and not necessarily from Cuba or Africa. Douglas was hardly an experienced slave holder, despite his inherited Mississippi plantation. He did not live in the south, and grow up with and among slaves in his family and household. He certainly was not a slave trader, someone who could judge skin tone and probable African region of origin, etc.

If scholars have dismissed Douglas’s statement it’s at least partly because it’s an anecdote, with no supporting evidence, no independent corroboration, and no way that it can be checked for accuracy.

8 You refer to a crucial week in Douglas’s correspondence and late political career, but it’s not clear to me what dates you’re referring to, sometime in mid-August 1859, focusing on a high-level meeting of pols at Douglas’s D.C. mansion, a location soon retracted by the reporter who claimed to have been there? Or was told by someone who was there?

You write on p. 8 “The New York Tribune report about Douglas’s meeting is the only record of his activities during that week in August 1859. While no correspondence or other records are extant (for the early part of that month) until the 20th…”

In Johannsen’s edition of Douglas’s letters (1961), there are a number from August: 2 August to John L. Peyton; 11 Aug. to Ninian Edwards; 16 Aug. to the editors of the San Francisco National; 31 Aug. to William Dunbar; and 31 Aug. to James Lander. All of these letters were dated from D.C., which seems to answer the question, at least to some extent, of Douglas’s whereabouts that month. In his biography of Douglas Johannsen writes that “Douglas did not return to Illinois for the summer of 1859, but remained in Washington with his family.” 706 He did this partly because his wife Adele was pregnant again, and partly because being in D.C. was politically advantageous for several reasons. See the discussion pp. 706-07, but you address this on p. 28 and elsewhere.

Johannsen reproduced the long letter to the editors of the National, pp. 453-66. Was this letter the same one that appeared in Harper’s, or did Douglas write a different and separate essay for the magazine?

13 Omit “in” line 8 re Douglas’s death and the Pacific railroad.

15 You speak of abolitionists in the antebellum era as different from those of the early republic, but few of those men were ever called abolitionists, either by their contemporaries or by modern historians of the nineteenth century U.S. Your assertion will confuse general readers and irritate specialists like me. Define your terms, explain what you mean. Say what you mean, and mean what you say. Often you don’t do the reader that simple courtesy.

16 Where did you find this character Holloway and why did you choose to rely on him as an authority on slave insurrections? I had never heard of him, but found a number of titles by him on Amazon. I found no reader’s reviews, and the book on insurrections is, I think, too recent to have been reviewed in most scholarly journals. Holloway is a slender reed on which to base this part of your argument. He seems to be following Herbert Aptheker, who claimed about 200 slave insurrections from the mid-17th century to the Civil War, so about one a year, what I call the annual insurrection thesis. Total crap, bogus, an attempt to support the theory of black courage and resistance, akin to the legend of the Underground Railroad. Aptheker’s definition of a slave insurrection was one violent act by at least one slave, usually male, against an owner, overseer, or other white person. That’s not a definition accepted by most scholars of American slavery. Violence yes; resistance, albeit brief; yes, but an insurrection or a mammoth conspiracy? Hardly.

17-18 ff. Your argument about poor whites having many reasons to fight for the CSA is asserted but not proven, or not stated well enough. There were reasons not to fight, to try and stay out of it, or even to fight against the Confederacy. Slavery and race were at the root of it, in the sense that a lot of poor whites, while perhaps not aspiring to
own slaves themselves, might have imagined or hoped for a better life for their children. But what they did not want was a biracial society, four million free blacks roaming around in their part of the world. That was an unimaginable horror, a catastrophe that they could not conceive of, and certainly could not accept. To prevent it they were willing to fight and die.

Here you refer to Johnson’s *Dark Dreams* and actually give a date of publication for confirmation, but no page number. No one will take the time to do what any serious author would have done and cite chapter and verse. Very sloppy. Often you refer to an author by first name only but don’t even give a title, much less a page number, and sometime it’s unclear if you’re referring to a book, an article, or some other form.

You, or Johnson, or both of you want to have it both ways. So poor whites, white males in general, would not he asserts be willing to fight and risk it all for slaves worth only $5 each, so system depended on keeping prices high. But if prices were high, and they generally were, with some dips, but trend over a generation probably toward higher and higher prices, especially in cotton belt, then they were out of reach for common farmers, as made clear in the next block quote. The logic of this point defeats itself.

Johnson calls the Old South “a society in which privilege was defined by slaveholding more than race.” That’s debatable. If you’re white, you’re right; if you’re brown, stick around; if you’re black, stay back. Various historians, the Genovese, and others long before them, called the South a Herrenvolk society, a mudsill culture. If you were white, no matter how poor, in theory you could vote, hold office, own a house and land, etc. And what about the plight of black slave-owners, who could be found from Delaware to Texas, from Florida to Kentucky and Missouri? They were in every slave state though in relatively small numbers most places. They had enough wealth to purchase a few slaves, and a few of them owned dozens, even hundreds; but that did not make them white, and their status was precarious. They lost it all with the war, emancipation, and postwar white society increasingly lumped them with ignorant field hands.

The point about the number of slave owning men in Confederate armies, vs. the much larger number who came from and grew up in slave-owning families, has been made and argued by many, McPherson and others. Slavery was pervasive, and even if you were sixteen or seventeen and old enough to fight, you might well not own a single slave yourself, but your father, uncle, older brother might own dozens or hundreds. Slavery was pervasive. As Tannenbaum wrote, it touched everything and everyone. You cite Glaathar and he is a very able scholar and he supports on pp. 18-19 this part of your argument.

You must check the literature on Owsley’s figures for non-slaveholders and the ante-bellum yeomanry. Have his statistics been challenged, revised, or outdated by modern quantifiers?

19 Question of slaves bought on credit versus cash. Tadman argues with abundant evidence that for professional traders the sales and purchases were mostly for cash, but he’s focusing on dealers rather than individual owners. There is a difference.

20 You give as a source “Hammond, 1897” on the cotton industry. There are far more recent and probably better sources on this subject, e.g., Stephen Yafa, *Big Cotton* (2005). Your reliance on sources a generation or half a century old, or even older as here, is a serious weakness. The books you grew up with, read as an undergraduate, grad student, or professor, to the extent you read U.S. history at all, may be the ones you remember fondly, still think of, and now still tend to rely on, but it’s a weakness. General readers may be impressed by the antiquity of your sources (why not cite the Old Testament?) but specialists tend to dismiss this kind of work. You sneer at the specialists, who have concealed the illegal trade, and Lincoln’s sexual orientation, so are you writing for them? If not, who’s your audience? What are you trying to do with this manuscript? No reader will bother checking all your partially identified sources, not even an online editor.
I never knew you were a connoisseur of high end cars. When you try to explain the price of a prime field hand in modern terms you compare it to “a top-notch Porsche.” Do you mean the top of the line for a particular model, or the most expensive model from the maker? What about SUVs which Porsche now makes, or do you mean just roadsters, or possibly coupes as well?

22 The term *bozales*, sometimes italicized, but not always, is never defined or explained. You’re showing off your superior knowledge. Orwell said write in English not jargon. Used most often in Brazil, elsewhere in Latin America, but I’ve rarely found it in antebellum Southern sources or modern monographs on U.S. slavery, or illegal imports, your ostensible subject. And you haven’t yet proven that illegal imports flooded the market, at any time.

22 You speculate on the slave trade between Virginia and Tennessee, yet unlike Tadman whom you criticize, offer no sources or evidence for your argument here, other than the physical proximity of the two states, hypothesizing an easy trade down the Tennessee River to Chattanooga and the cotton fields to the west. This river was riskier to navigate than either the Mississippi or the Ohio. The river forms at Knoxville by the joining of two tributaries. It was quite a distance overland on primitive roads and trails from southwestern Virginia. Tadman claims most slaves went overland in coffles not by river or the coastal trade, and he has actual primary source evidence.

23 Here you assert a significant black market in illegal slaves, but asserting is not arguing your case, much less proving it with evidence.

On the seceding states see Dew’s *Apostles of Disunion*. You’ve disparaged Charles B. Dew as a plodder, a bore, etc., but he has published a bit more on the antebellum South than you have.

You claim that Jeff Davis was what Manifest Destiny scholars call an “All Mexico” man, but for what period? Do you have any evidence for this claim? William C. Davis (no relation), *Jefferson Davis* (1991), has Davis rebuking ardent expansionists in 1846, but in 1854 urging the seizure of Cuba, and more of Mexico; then during the negotiations over the Gadsden Purchase calling for taking northern Mexico. I’ve checked monographs on Manifest Destiny by Thomas Hietala, Reginald Horsman, Sidney Lens, Frederick Merk, Herbert Levi Osgood, and Albert Weinberg, and Jefferson Davis is not even mentioned in most, much less as a prominent expansionist, and certainly not an All Mexico extremist.

24 Semicolon needed in first sentence, line 2.

You say that “Native Southerner” did not appear in the Tribune again, but it was easy to change bylines. The same reporter might use several, depending upon the paper, state, or region.

25 You’re mostly correct about the impact of the Compromise of 1850 on D.C. slavery, but the slave trade just moved across the Potomac to Alexandria, or north across the District line to suburban Maryland. No big deal. Slave auctions were still allowed, but not public ones outside; you had to conduct business in a residence.

You claim slaves were emancipated in D.C. “almost a year before Lincoln’s Proclamation.” Do you mean the Preliminary one, after Sharpsburg, or the final one, which took effect 1 January 1863? The slaves were freed in D.C. on 16 April 1862. Recheck your timetable.

25 D.C. was segregated years before 1920, after Wilson’s stroke and his wife and underlings were running the government. Soon after his 1913 inauguration he announced the new segregation policy and his cabinet officials, mostly Southern, implemented it quickly.

28 Sentence structure problem 4th line.

29 Planned northern terminus for a transcontinental railroad at the head of Lake Superior? Why and where exactly? This is unnecessarily obscure. Do you mean Duluth? You can’t be serious, and Douglas certainly wasn’t, even though he bought land there. Chicago was where he wanted the railroad’s eastern terminus.
You mention his sons' suit about burned plantation cotton but have not yet talked about Douglas's Mississippi plantation. This will confuse readers. Your penchant for citing antiquarian sources shows once again, George Fort Milton's 1934 book as your source. Editors and potential publishers take it for granted that authors will be up on current scholarship, and Milton's work from 73 years ago hardly qualifies.

30 You identify W. B. Gaulden as the largest slave-owner in Georgia, but he wasn't even the largest in Liberty County, with 113 slaves. John B. Barnard had 132; Charlton Hines, 130; William Jones, 116; Mrs. Roswell King (or King Roswell?) had 120; Jacob Walburg, 255; and _______ Malthous, 300. Very sloppy research. The devil is in the details. Brilliant thinkers and careful plodders are quite different animals, the tortoise and the hare all over again.

31 Sentence structure, 5th line; on for about?

You claim Douglas made his way in life in "Southern Illinois social circles" but his real base for much of his career was in Chicago. The state capital became Springfield when Lincoln and his cronies outmaneuvered backers of other frontier towns. Springfield was not and is not in southern Illinois. And yes, Douglas was a white supremacist and surrounded himself with such men. Like Lincoln, he used "nigger" on a regular basis.

31-32 There are better and more recent sources on Douglas's late antebellum political views, but here you cite Milton's 1934 work again.

33-34 Once again the story you love to tell of Douglas seeing slaves fresh off the boat from wherever in Vicksburg and Memphis. Whatever. What evidence did Douglas have, and what documentation do you present, that any of them were recent arrivals? Douglas may have sincerely believed that they were, but why? Do you really expect me, or other skeptical readers, not to mention your legion of enemies and critics simply to accept this account because Douglas said it, and because you vouch for it?

DuBois quotes Douglas in my copy of The Suppression of the African Slave Trade (1896; reissued, 1965; LSU paper ed., 1969), pp. 181-82, and it's his only use, or mention of Douglas, as far as I can tell from checking the index. It was just one bit of the massive collection of material that DuBois assembled and relied upon, but you make it the central part of your case.

34 You quote from the correspondence between your long ago assistant Meserve and one Graham A. Peck, described as "a Douglas expert" and an associate professor at St. Xavier University. Peck got his Ph.D. from Northwestern in 2001. The AHA department guide for 2014-15, the last I bothered to purchase, lists him as an assistant professor of history at St. Xavier University of Chicago. Was poor Peck demoted for getting involved with you and Meserve?

37 Why did Douglas make his claim about illegally imported slaves? What agenda did his statement serve? What was his goal? And why was it so obvious to him that the poor people in Vicksburg and Memphis were newly arrived Africans? Or did he just see what he wanted to see, and believe what he wanted to believe? First line you refer to "Douglas's anecdotes," but so far you, DuBois, Milton, et al have only given a single such story. If Douglas had other tales about smuggled slaves, by all means cite them, with your sources. If not, move on to something more rewarding. You do cite one of Johannsen's books on Douglas from 1989, and he's a much better source than Milton. Most readers today will have no idea who George Fort Milton was, or that he was once an important author.

39 You say the author ("Southerner" I guess) "was forced to retract where the meeting took place," having claimed it was at the D.C. home of Douglas. But who forced him, and how? The editor of the Tribune where the article appeared? Was that the only paper that he could work for? Sounds like he was without other means of income if he had to depend on a single publisher.

Yes, Douglas was an Anglophobe, but many of his constituents were Irish Catholics, recent immigrants, and they hated the Brits, so Douglas did as well. His hatred was not sincere or principled or out of some deep conviction,
like that of the Adamses, Andy Jackson, and John Randolph of Roanoke. It does show that at this early date the Irish were already leaning to the Democrats, and for good reason. The Federalists, and their Whig, Know-Nothings, and Republican descendants all hated foreigners, especially Catholics, and the Irish most of all. The great exception to that rule was the cunning Lincoln, who avoided taking a stand or embracing the Know-Nothings, and while not getting many Irish votes at least did not go out of his way to antagonize them. And Abe did get a lot of German votes, because they saw that he was not a nativist bigot.

40 You finally get around to discussing Douglas’s Mississippi plantation. In what way did he oversee or manage this plantation, since he was an absentee landlord, and other than a few visits of short duration, was rarely even in the state?

41 Here you return to the New York Tribune article claiming to be by an insider who knew Washington and was present at the high level political meeting in Douglas’s D.C. home, but now it becomes clear his account was second hand, and that he had an informant who was supposedly there. This should all be made clear to the reader when you first mention this remarkably convoluted story.

43 Bill, here you really do stray off the historical plantation, claiming that hoary old chestnut, family tradition, as a reliable source, in this case made even stronger because “it comes from a very literate Southern planter.” Thus you fall into the same dubious category as pious white Northerners who to this day believe that their house, or their grandfather’s house, was a station on the Underground Railroad, etc. This kind of story belongs in your memoirs, but not in a scholarly article, but then perhaps you mean this manuscript to be something other than scholarship. Polemic? 

44 First sentence, second para is garbled.

45 Yes, you hope, but because you’re honest to a fault, admit that you cannot prove, that your distinguished ancestor bought or did not buy any of the slaves you claim were illegal. And the sentence construction will confuse readers, because it’s not clear what you’re hoping. That William A. Perry did, or that he did not buy, smuggled slaves?

46 The TVA probably generated the power in the region in the late 1930s, but the poles were put up and the wires strung by another alphabet agency, the REA (Rural Electrification Administration, 1935).

There’s more personal family history here that belongs in your memoirs, about Professor Falls, various Percys, rednecks and Bourbons, etc.

45 Last para, last few lines and on to p. 46, the nub of your thesis, that the rapid increase of the slave population could not have occurred by natural increase, and you state your argument clearly: even if the slaves had been well treated, fed, housed, clothed, and worked moderate hours under ideal conditions.

46 There was no need for forced breeding since the slaves were just doing what came naturally, at least the males were. Whether it was consensual, and how often, we’ll never know. I do know that there is a documented case from colonial Boston of forced slave breeding.

You are correct, that most humanists and scholars in the liberal arts are innumerate, and you claim you’re good at numbers, and have a better or at least different kind of aptitude, but you could strengthen your argument by talking not just about the almost four million slaves in 1860, but the quarter-million free blacks in the Old South (mentioned only once by you, I think), and also the quarter-million free blacks in the northern states. So your most often mentioned statistic should be not four million Africans, but 4.5 million. The number of Africans in all of colonial North America, or the British part of it, was negligible until the 1660s, and then grew rapidly and as you say, at a rate never seen before or since in a slave society, which the antebellum South was, as distinct from a society with slaves, like colonial New England, New York, New Jersey, etc.
Rhetorical question, you ask “How many illegal immigrants do I have today?” Meaning you, personally? I guess it would depend upon the size of your basement apartment, right?

Additional Comments on So-called Revised Introduction

I say revised because it’s virtually the same as the old one, and a waste of my toner cartridge to print it out, read a bit of it, and then realize it was the same stuff.

1 McPherson is certainly the best known and most popular of what the stupid, uninformed American public think of as a Civil War historian, but he’s hardly the preeminent scholar of the war, academic or otherwise. Even before his heart attack several years ago he admitted in some forum, a statement of his that was widely repeated on various websites and Civil War, that he hadn’t done any original, primary source research in years. He just recycles his old stuff. So his text on the war became The Battle Cry of Freedom, dumbed down for students and general readers. There’s no need to blurb him, and you both criticize him and praise him at the same time, so it’s hard to tell what you really think of Jim-boy. You use too many adjectives, here and throughout your prose. It’s characteristic of us Southerners. I’m constantly pruning them from my own prose.

2 Having now read the entire manuscript from 7/16/13 I have some doubts about your claim to possess an aptitude for math and numbers. As I point out above, you never take into account the quarter-million free blacks in the North in 1860, which would bolster your argument, and only once, I think, in your various chapters mention the other quarter-million free blacks in the South.

Your block quotation from DuBois 1892 seems plausible to me, a thousand to 15,000 illegals annually, more in some years no doubt, fewer in others, depending on a variety of factors, including the vigilance of the R.N. off the West African coast, supplemented later on by our Navy; our Navy off our own coastline, though I’m dubious about their impact; cotton prices, etc.

4 As more and more data is added to the slave trade website this fragile edifice will collapse of its own weight, as you suggest somewhere in the text of your manuscript.

Yancey knew what he was talking about, but in the actual quote you give he named only 3 areas as sources for slaves, hardly all of them. No need to exaggerate, or claim too much for your sources.

4-5 Check the debates of the Virginia secession convention, and also Dew’s Apostles of Disunion, to see if there’s actual evidence for your assertion here. If you can’t find evidence to support, drop it.

7 On the childhood of DuBois: I think he painted a deliberate, overly rosy image of his childhood. Read the autobiographical portions of The Souls of Black Folk for what his early years and memories of them were like in Great Barrington, MA. I doubt that he actually was accepted in that community. He wasn’t white, but he was one of a relative handful of blacks in the little town, therefore less threatening, especially as a cute little black boy.

I’d check his vast correspondence, published and in manuscript, to see whether he had any real contact with first generation Africans freed by Emancipation and their descendants. Perhaps he had a bit when he went off to Fisk University, but for most of his adult life he traveled in elite black, and to some extent white circles, as one of the most able of the talented tenth. I think most of those freed by Emancipation and their descendants were and remained lower class peasants in dem cotton fields down South.

Roman Numeral II on Douglas. Not clear from your block quote who’s speaking, Douglas or DuBois, the former I think. So perhaps Sen. Douglas believed 15,000 illegals in 1859, which conveniently is the upper
limit of the later estimate by DuBois. But did Douglas prove his assertion? Hardly. Other than damaging, perhaps killing, his presidential campaign in 1860, it had little impact.

10 The original term, “doe faced,” was applied to northern politicians who looked like Bambi, a deer caught in the headlights, when confronted by a Southern opponent, who might present the possibility of physical violence or political damage. Our distinguished colleague Tom McMullin, always referred to as a scared rabbit by you, is a good example of a doe or doughface.

11 Another citation of an antiquarian source, Hodder from 1925. You really do need to do a thorough cleanup of your manuscript, because the sources you grew up with, read for Professor Fells, at Princeton, Cornell, wherever, are probably not the best authorities on almost any subject, at least in U.S. history. Perhaps Gibbon or Herodotus or Thucydides is the best source on ancient or medieval history, but an ignorant American like me wouldn’t know.

12 citation for Johannsen, a good, solid scholar of Douglas and the ante-bellum North.

  On the bloodletting by Kansas border ruffians aka “Bleeding Kansas,” it never amounted to much, but was tirelessly exploited by scumbag pols on both sides, all sides, to further than own political fortunes. More Americans died annually in steamboat explosions than in all the violence in Kansas in the decade 1850-60. More were killed in railroad accidents each year. Kansas was a typical American frontier. Folks killing each other, white, black, red, Mexican, African, Native American, Irish and German immigrants, abolitionist fanatics, etc.

13 Ray from 1909. Yes, I do remember Ray, but Ray who? Turns out it was some old codger named P. O. Ray. A check of Widener catalog shows he was the author of various government textbooks, an introduction to political parties and practical politics, and that he gave a talk for the Chicago Historical Society in 1916 about the convention that nominated Abe for president. Title you cite was his doctoral dissertation at Cornell. Is that where you found it Bill, roaming the stacks, or did Meserve, Pedro, Elvon, or some other assistant dig poor Perley Ray up for you? And why would you cite a work more than a century old on much of anything? If the author was distinguished, or had even been widely known once upon a time in a galaxy far, far away, well perhaps. But Perley Ray? Please, Bill, no, no, no.

At this point I gave up reading your “revised” introduction, realizing it was the same old thing, just a newer copy. Then I came upon another section from your long promised memoir, p. 44. Why at this late date do you still defend the rich, ignorant, self-righteous pricks at that bastion of Yankee privilege, Middlesex? I don’t get it. And what a lot of crap! Did you even bother to skim the first or last chapter of Gara? But I quote: “I went from the heart of Dixie in Memphis, Tennessee to Middlesex School in Concord, Massachusetts, the stronghold of Yankeehood, proud station on the Underground Railroad, home of Thoreau, Emerson, and the Alcotts . . . .” Blah, blah, blah. All crap Bill. Please, do tell me, how many slaves passed each year through Concord, and on their way where, to the Green Mountain State? Canada?

Giving up again I find on p. 47 section IV: Professor Larry Gara, a mere tag on to your original intro. Gara and you are a lot alike. He wrote a brave piece of scholarship, but how much of an impact has it ever had? And it had more in the 1960s when I first read it than in the PC culture of today. Few non-historians have ever heard the author’s name, and few in the academy want to know what he said, or what he found.

Chapter I, Cotton and Other Commodities from the Antebellum South
p. 52 ff. A mass of material on the Industrial Revolution, Whitney’s gin, etc., skimmed all this to find anything directly related to your subject, illegal slave importations, 1808-1862.

78 line 6, omit “with which”

78-80 A huge run-on paragraph, which reminds me of one of Virginia Governor J. Lindsay Almond’s addresses.

81 “Many Africans shipped to Cuba were smuggled into the U.S.” Where’s your evidence, if you have any? Maybe they were brought by aliens?

81-83 An even longer run-on para, which includes a sizable block quotation.

What evidence do you have that slave shipped to Cuba were re-exported to U.S.? Put the evidence where you make such assertions.

84 Aha! Something new and valuable. If you’re being accurate Bill, Curtin & Co. seem to have ignored cotton, or seriously diminished its importance. How could they? I can’t answer that, and you don’t either, at least in a way that I can understand. Perhaps one would have to be a mind reader.

85 It’s a widely accepted premise among not just historians of the slave trade, but U.S. historians generally, who have subscribed to it, that just a tiny fraction of the total trade from Africa ever went to North America. Most went to Brazil, and elsewhere in South and Central America. Of course, your focus is, or should be, on the illegal trade, to the U.S., after 1808, and that factor, or its possible existence or significance, has simply been ignored. Here you finally get to what you should have been writing about, analyzing, discussing, and presenting to your reader all along.

87 You assert that slaves who died in the cane fields were replaced by illegals brought upriver from New Orleans, or overland from Galveston. Assert all you want Bill, but back it up with copious, primary source, evidence, as much as you can find. I know, you’d run the risk of being called a squirrel scholar by the ghost of Gore Vidal. So hire an intelligent, conscientious, hard-working plodder, pay him or her well, to find what you need for you.

89 I’ve made my comment here earlier, in your intro, and I cannot understand why you don’t get it, never even mention it. Raise the stakes! Set the bar even higher! Challenge Curtin, Eltis, & Co. to explain how a population of a few tens of thousands of Africans in the mid-to-late 17th century British colonies of North America grew to 4.5 million blacks, including a half million free blacks, by 1860. They will just ignore you, as they did Du Bois and a few other brave but lonely pioneers, but perhaps some readers outside the cabal will catch on. That is, if you can somehow publicize it, and I’m not sure that you can, or will.

Chapter II: Slaves in the Antebellum South

93 “Curtin, that bean-counter”? Why all the gratuitous insults to Curtin? You’re a bean counter yourself, or claim to be, unlike most of your historical colleagues whom you deride as analysts of words rather than mathematical facts. Why go out of your way to attack, and insult, Curtin, McPherson, et al.? Do you have any ideas how many acolytes each of them has? Even if their mentor-master has passed to his reward, they are keepers of the flame, still worship at the same altar, and will attack you like the enraged sycophants they are. You’ll catch more flies with honey than vinegar, as my country grandmother used to say. Work to
persuade and convince your readers rather than attack academic icons they may never have heard about, and probably don't care about. What will attract some PC, black lives matter, limousine liberals from the leafy suburbs is a scholar arguing that an enormous illegal trade in smuggled slaves was carried on for decades before the Civil War.

Check John Hope Franklin's documentation of a large illegal slave trade. Based on any of his own research, or did he merely copy from DuBois. Zinn in turn copied from Franklin. Neither did much original research in primary sources.

94 Most will not recognize the Gore Vidal quip, and certainly straight males outside of academia will not.

94 You go after Curtin, Eltis, and back to U. B. Phillips, who rejected DuBois. Phillips in 1918 gave his belief, and you must refute it, both with your own brilliant analysis but with evidence, hard numbers and other kinds of documentation, which you then have to explain in a way simple enough for readers to grasp. Good luck!

It was not just the surplus slaves from Ole Virginny that supplied the cotton fields of the Deep South, but the relative handful, still significant, from Maryland, a tiny number from Delaware; and far greater numbers from South Carolina and Georgia. Tadman and other historians of the slave trade have enormous evidence on the sheer size of that interstate trade, which does not necessarily explain the huge increase in the total black population, nor does it prevent you from making an alternative case.

You refer to over 4.4 million blacks in 1860, a figure that you need to explain, because it obviously includes almost half a million free blacks, north and south, as I've said repeatedly.

96 I think you meant to write that “Southerners only deigned to *indict* the traffic” vice “indicate”.

97 I'd make more of Noel Deerr's estimated of a million slaves smuggled into the U.S., mostly from Cuba. You give him but a sentence, followed by Nevins, and on this subject he was hardly authoritative, or knew much if anything at all. You move on to Lewis C. Gray, still a respected scholar, then to Stampp and the moderns.

98 More recent historians of U.S. slavery have claimed that slave women in the first half or so of the 19th century reproduced at almost the same staggering rate as white women in the U.S. Well, this claim should be tested, and for someone like you, it should be elementary. I guess you'd have to deduct the vast number of European immigrants pouring into the country, most of them arriving at northern ports of entry, and most settling above the Mason-Dixon line, not wanting to compete with slave labor, and not liking the Southern climate or cuisine. And from the frequent race riots in northern cities, it's clear they didn't want to live with free blacks either.

Another claim by specialists like Todd Savitt, who focuses on slave health, diet and cuisine, labor demands, caloric intake, fats and proteins, etc., is that slave women began to menstruate on average two years before white females. If true, this factoid would weaken your thesis, because a slave mother might produce one or two more children in her child-bearing years than a white woman. Yet I cannot believe that a higher rate of infant mortality, and a lower rate of survival to adulthood and another cycle of reproduction, would not have had an overall negative impact on black population growth by natural increase.
You should compute the reproduction rates of antebellum white women, north and south; and the growth rate of the white population in both sections, minus the massive foreign immigration, mostly to the free states.

100 If Tadman and other recent students of the domestic slave trade are right, then Fogel & Engerman’s question is answered by their first explanation, eastern owners in the Upper South and Chesapeake, and further down the seaboard, selling to traders who took them to western and southwestern markets to be sold.

Recent works on the domestic slave trade by Tadman, Johnson, and others have superseded *Time on the Cross*. Yes, it is ridiculous to argue that 84% went to the cotton belt with ol’ massa and his white family.

Garbled prose second line from bottom: “If I are to believe . . . .” Say what? Is this Ebonics? Black English?

101 good, clear summary.

Last sentence of the complete para near bottom of page is repetitive, appears in your introduction.

103 You overstate the importance of the Natchez Trace, which was a significant route for barely more than a generation, longer than the Pony Express, but quickly supplanted by steamboat navigation on southern rivers, and better overland routes elsewhere. See William C. Davis, *A Way Through the Wilderness* (1995).

105 Long block quotation, ending with a reference to Genovese, who correctly said that most resistance by slaves was not organized insurrection, but still very important for the masters and the slavers. Yet in your intro you cite the world famous Holloway, whose acclaim must eclipse even that of Gene Genovese, and who found 78 or 84 or however many insurrections he came up with while on drugs.

You cite Morgan, 2007, but no first name or book title, and no bibliography at the end of this chapter. Very sloppy, slipshod, and few readers or editors will bother to check or try to identify whoever it is that you mean.

Why identify Joe G. Taylor, a fine scholar, as black? Do you similarly identify the race, and perhaps the orientation, ethnicity, birthplace, physical handicaps of other authors?

106 Historians of all races? Re the trend to explain the 1860 census; how many are Asian? Any Native Americans? Who the hell cares about the race of historians?

Steven Deyle is at the University of Houston not “Houston University.” Do you have a page number for your quote from Deyle, or the quote from Tadman? Or is the reader supposed to find that? Or just accept your word as an eminent genius?

107 “the Golden Ratio in antebellum slave demographics”: I love it, nice turn of phrase.

Once again you discuss 4 million slaves by 1860 but not the additional half-million free blacks, most of whom were former slaves, or the descendants of slaves. Very few free blacks emigrated to the U.S. before 1860, or indeed anytime in the 19th century. Why would they? What would have been the attraction?
Two excellent points top of page. Sugar was never meant to grow in the continental U.S., and the technology and scientific agricultural knowledge available meant that many sugar planters were ruined by a single crop failure, a terrible year for weather.

Chesapeake para. “slave trading and migration farther south, vice “further” as you’re speaking of physical distance.

The Kanawha Canal was certainly important, but railroads were surpassing it in central Virginia by the 1850s; the C & O Canal served both Maryland and Virginia, as well as D.C.; and the Dismal Swamp Canal was mostly of local importance between Norfolk and Portsmouth, and eastern North Carolina. Railroads became far more important in the 1830s and ‘40s than earlier, and the 1850s was the great rail decade in the Old South.

Virginians and geographers speak of the Valley of Virginia, not the “Virginia Valley.” The Valley actually consists of a number of separate, distinct valleys, like the Shenandoah, and others.

Avery Craven was a great scholar and a fine man, but there are authoritative, and much more recent works that you should cite instead.

In general, historians refer to salt works vice salt mines, and they were mostly found in the southwest of the Old Dominion and the Kanawha Valley in what is now West-by-god-Virginia, not the northwest.

Daniel Crofts is an excellent scholar and one of the good guys.

I very much doubt that slave migrations from Kentucky to the Cotton Kingdom dwarfed those from the Chesapeake. Do you have any evidence, or is this just one of your pet theories? Even in 1860 Virginia still had 472,494 slaves, most of any state; Kentucky had 225,483. Tadman’s table 2.1, p. 12 gives net outmigration for slave states, by decades from the 1790s to the 1850s. Virginia had substantial outmigration of slaves in each of those decades, ranging from -22,767 in the 1790s to a peak of -118,474 in the 1830s, but still -88,918 in the 1840s and -82,573 in the 1850s.

Virginia’s numbers dwarf Kentucky’s, in every decade. Not until the 1820s did Kentucky record a net outmigration of slaves, and for that decade it was only a trilling -916, just a tiny net loss, so it wasn’t sending a significant number of slaves anywhere. Then in the 1830s it was -19,907, -19,266 in the 1840s; and -31,215 in the 1850s. Unless you have some facts, some numbers to rebut Tadman, you should drop this particular assertion.
You date yourself by the use of "tramps" and "tramp steamers" here, on p. 125, and twice I think in chapter II. It was not a term used in the ante-bellum era, but was used when you were a young buck. "After the Civil War ... such slow cargo vessels had been called freighters since 1836; by the 1880s a freighter that wandered from port to port as cargo dictated was called an ocean tramp or, if it used steam, a tramp steamer, both terms being shortened to tramp by the late 1880s." Stuart Berg Flexner, *Listening to America* (1982), 163.

Yes, enormous numbers of whites left Virginia and Maryland, 1820-40, and the slave-owners in many if not most cases probably took their slaves with them, unless they were debtors or bankrupts fleeing the law, or had lost everything and were starting over. But you don't say how many whites in this outmigration were in fact slave owners, so your point is not very strong.

111 Stampp for "Staamp"

What do you mean by writing that "Tadman finds these traders reprehensible, perhaps more so since they should have been upstanding moral models for their communities." Why? What do you mean? Would you say that about the Robber Barons, or a high tech billionaire or used car dealer today?

112 Achilles heel vice "Heel"

Good point last two sentences of bottom paragraph: "If domestic smuggling was as open as Tadman asserts then (vice than) why is it so inconceivable that slaves from Cuba were also smuggled in?" This aspect of the internal domestic trade as you describe is very strong, and one of the best arguments for other kinds of illegality, such as imports from Cuba.

113 You need a page citation, and a title, for the statement from McPherson, and this paragraph is not even relevant to your topic, which is most definitely not Abe's sexual orientation.

You again slip into Ebonics: "Are I now to understand that not a single slave...."

You call McPherson "a Lincoln expert." Why? What major books has he written on Lincoln? Not one. His bio of Abe is 100 pages, barely more than a pamphlet; *Lincoln and the Second American Revolution* is 150 pages, again, a minor effort. His work on *Lincoln as Commander in Chief* is 350 pages, but one such work does not make anyone an expert on a subject, not even Jim-boy.

You mention Captain Gordon, but give almost no background on him, and cite only the author's last name and year of publication for his fine book on the event.

114 You continue attacking McPherson, not that he or anyone else will notice or care. Why waste your time? Stick to your subject. You say "he should be even more ashamed of his take on Lincoln, about whom he is supposed to know a great deal." Because he rejected Tripp's thesis, and wouldn't deign to read or even blurb his book? That created an opening for one of your protégés Bill, for which I am eternally grateful.

Correct possessive singular of Ernest Starks is Starks's. Did they not teach you anything at Middlesex, Princeton, etc.? And why identify him as African-American? Repeated after the block quote as "Stark's" which is clearly wrong.
He makes the point in the block quotation that you should be making from the start, 4.5 million blacks, slave and free by 1860. If it was physically and biologically impossible for slave women to reproduce at a rate leading to 4 million by 1860, 4.5 million would be even more of a stretch. So why not use at least one bit of basic evidence that helps your case? I don’t get it.

You call his estimate brave but indefensible. Why the latter? Because his estimate doesn’t agree with yours? He did get some nice plaudits that are quoted on the Amazon website for the book. Apparently you agree with Adam Rothman, at Georgetown, in his critical review in the Journal of Southern History, which you erroneously cite as being in the January 2011 issue. It actually appeared in the May 2009 number of the JSH (75.2, 2009, 438-39); and there is no January issue for this quarterly.

It’s just one example of the lack of care in putting this manuscript together. I don’t know who wrote it, possibly one or more of your so-called assistants, working one would presume under your direction. Whoever’s responsible for mistakes like this one is either incompetent, stupid, or on drugs; maybe all three. Have all your assistants over the years come from the fields of ancient, European, or some other history? Have you ever had an assistant with a smattering of background in U.S. history? Yes, I know you scorn Americanists, at UMB and elsewhere, as impossibly ignorant, lacking foreign languages, and just altogether inferior to folks like you, Foss, etc. But if you’re going to venture into a field that you scorn you should at least be somewhat more careful.

Rothman would no doubt make the same criticism of your estimate of illegal estimates, though at a quarter million or so it is significantly lower than Starks’s.

But here’s a way to test your thesis, at least in part, and also for a critic or a supporter of your argument to test it. One historian, forget who, but a scholar of U.S. slavery wrote, that white women in the U.S. before the war were reproducing even faster than black women, but not by much. That’s either true, or it’s not. So if white women were, then black women could have as well, though it does reduce by an incredible amount the rigors of American slavery. It would mean the mortality rate for both adults, infants, and probably the entire population, was much lower than we would have thought. But if it’s not true for white women, then it supports your argument. With all the negative factors of slavery, it’s highly unlikely that the slave population could have reproduced at such a prodigious rate entirely by natural increase.

Perhaps you’ll be pleased to learn that negative reviews of his book did not destroy Starks’s career. The AHA department guide for 2014-15 lists him as a full professor in the history department at Texas A & M.

116  “the British Royal Navy” is redundant; just write the Royal Navy. Most people will know the legendary force that you mean, the world’s greatest and finest until the U.S. Navy.

“a mate in the crow’s nest could only avail about 15 miles of visibility”: write in modern English; readers will have to guess that you mean what the poor jack tar could see from his perch. This definition of avail is not in Webster’s Third International; and the entry in Fowler’s Modern English Usage leads me to think your usage is archaic, obsolete, or just wrong.

The U.S. Navy never completely blockaded the Confederacy, with its huge coastline, many rivers, creeks, inlets, islands, bays, swamps, etc. Even in 1864 20% of blockade runners were getting through. It was the capture or shutting down of the last ports of entry, Mobile and Wilmington, that killed the Southern cause, not the offshore blockade. In 1861 Secretary of the Navy Gideon Welles had only two combatants
ready for combat duty from a paper fleet of sixty; most were laid up for repairs, in mothballs, or spread around the globe. It took some two years to get home for the war.

Current usage for sixty decades is 1850s, not “1850’s”.

Garbled sentence fifth line from bottom “British fleets off the Americas South”

117 Sian Rees’s book vice “Rees”; see Strunk & White on possessive singular. And you’ve botched the title, which is Sweet Water and Bitter, giving only the subtitle. Readers trying to find your sources will have their work cut out for them. Most won’t bother, or lack my dedication and stubbornness.

Is the emphasis in block quote yours or that of Eltis? And who was it that challenged him, Rees?

118-19 Your discussion of Eltis: seems to me that simple proximity makes Cuba by far the most likely source of illegal slave importations.

Eltis, “like Curtin before him, refused to notice the elephant in the room: British demand for cotton from Dixie.” I think both were well aware of the demands of the European cotton industry, Great Britain’s most of all. The reason that they can’t see the elephant is much like the overwhelming majority of historians and biographers who can’t see Lincoln’s sexuality, even after Tripp. They just don’t get it, and never will, and will die in ignorance. It’s a generational thing, and also a lack of critical intelligence. Think how long it took you, Bill, to convince me even of the possibility of what you, Shively, and eventually Tripp assisted by Gannett had long been saying.

119 One of your most perplexing pages. I think Eltis may well have been unaware of the widely known defects of the 1870 census, but I did not learn about it until grad school with Donald. Eltis is primarily one of your tribe Bill, a European not an American historian. As bad as the 1870 census was, you also at some point disparage the 1850 census, and somewhere else call it wonderful.

You say of the census takers “many . . . were illiterate Southern blacks.” How then did they fill out the census forms? How many blacks in 1870 even knew when they were born, much less where? How many were literate, unlike the census takers?

You quote Olmsted, one smart cookie, but he had many of the defects of his tribe from the Nutmeg State, and an undeniable Yankee bias against all things Southern. You generally disparage the damyankies, but here you accept the word of one of them about a census directed by a superintendent from the South, J.D.B DeBow, who was in charge of the 1850 Census.

121 You accuse Old Buck of whitewashing the illegal slave traffic. You’re right on the mark, he was hardly one to rock anyone’s boat.

Omit the sentences about blacks in the Union army, especially “an untold number fighting for the Confederacy.” It’s an exceedingly controversial subject, and the advocates of thousands, tens of thousands of blacks, fighting for Massa Jeff and Marse Robert rely on exceedingly dubious sources and shaky extrapolations, plus a handful of anecdotes that can’t be verified or lack documentation. You just don’t know this minefield well enough to venture an opinion; safer to let it alone, and it’s a distraction from your subject, just like Lincoln’s sexuality.
I doubt that many postwar blacks had, or were given, any of the knowledge you speculate about in the para at bottom of the page. In the past generation or more there's been a huge debate about literacy rates in the slave community, and that has carried over into the freedom era. What percent of blacks in the former Confederacy were literate by 1870? Depends upon what authority you consult.

You comment knowingly about what names blacks chose for themselves after the war, but cite no sources, and go as far as to suggest that the practices they adopted “tended to eradicate vestiges of African heritage.” Is this what Melville J. Herskovits found?

122 It's not clear what the source of the long, double-spaced block quote, is. “Davis, n.d.” What the hell? “The appointment of illiterates as enumerators”: if that was done, how did they produce a single page of census returns? Or perhaps you mean that they could write, but not read? Or what?

Is the claimed undercount of Southern blacks supported by the statistics of the 1880 census? That would be fairly easy to check, and calculate.

123 Here you switch back to challenge the reliability of the censuses in both 1850 and 1860. Are you arguing that illiterate black census takers were used before the war? Really? But your source has no comment on 1870 census because it appeared in 1870, apparently.

123-24 Here you dive into the WPA slave narratives, with just a cursory note at end of your excerpts indicating that the interviews were done in four states. Those from Virginia are considered the best, and not just because slaves from the Old Dominion were the best, but because unlike the other states, the interviews of these elderly black folks were done by young black social workers from Hampton Institute. What they had to say was more candid, stark, revealing, bitter than material from the other states. Imagine the scenario. It’s the bitter end years of the Depression, though at the time no one knew when it would end, or that war was coming. You’re in lousy quarters somewhere, with not enough to eat or wear, not enough heat. Knock at the door. A young white stranger says he or she would like to ask you questions about what slavery was like. Yeah, you white bastard, I se gwine to tell you all 'bout it. So not only were they quite old, foggy memories, some perhaps senile, but the evidence and analysis of scholars like the one who did Weevils in the Wheat based on interviews with ex-Virginia slaves suggests most people painted a rosy view of life in the peculiar institution, whereas folks in the Old Dominion were more honest and direct about the brutality and the degradation.

Your lack of grounding in the literature on various aspects of slavery betrays you time and again. You just haven't read the basic secondary sources, and when you use primary sources you often are unaware of the best analysis of them that has already been done. Blassingame did a huge book of slave narratives and there are many other sources on and about the WPA interviews, and related material.

125 Another fusillade against the academic establishment. Why waste your time, or the reader’s? What does it have to do with the illegal slave trade? Stick to your subject, which has enough challenges of its own, without you attacking the world.

Your use of barracoon is inappropriate in the context of U.S. slavery, better confined to the West African coast, and possibly Brazil, Cuba, other parts of Latin America. U.B. Phillips, Stampp, Genovese, Gutman, Litwack, Kolchin, none of the major authorities on American slavery use the term.
You hypothesize far too much on the basis of far too little documentation, without bothering to cite any sources at all. How can you presume to challenge the massive database of Eltis based on nothing but your own brilliant analysis?

More material for your memoirs but irrelevant here. No one, at least no one living, cares about who you knew or did not know at Princeton, or anywhere else. No one cares where you prepped or that you went to a public school. You seem to be saying that you were an undergrad at Princeton. The U/Mass-Boston catalogs for years listed you as having a B.A. from Tennessee, with graduate degrees from Cornell and Princeton. Maybe that was just a cover for your activities with the OSS and the CIA.

"What I cannot know is the exact percentage of the extraordinary growth in the overall Census count of slaves that must be assigned to imports and what to natural increase."!!! An honest and extraordinary admission. If you don’t know, how can you criticize those who do claim to know? The difference between you and Curtin, Eltis & Co., is that you recognize you’re dealing with what your classmate? Donald Rumsfeld would call an unknown unknown. You don’t know how much you don’t know, almost like talking about God. Those you criticize think that they do know, and have amassed reams of statistics and multiple books arguing their case.

You should note, or admit, that white population growth after 1810 got an enormous boost from European immigration to the U.S., especially in the 1830s through the 1850s. No matter how large the illegal slave trade, all the blacks brought in were here in violation of the law. Hence the cover-up, because it all had to be kept somewhat concealed. Modern historians you argue are just continuing that cover-up, for reasons that you ascribe to patriotism, or mendacity, or scholarly incompetence, or all three.

Last para a very strong part of your argument; you’re also considering your question from the back end so to speak. What happened to black population growth after 1860? Well, slavery died in 1865; and there were very few illegal imports once the war began. There was as you say a drastic decline in black population growth. The living standards and conditions for most free blacks, especially in the conquered and occupied South, were not good. On the other hand they were not being worked to death, and in American slavery, few ever were, unlike those in Cuba, Brazil, or certain other parts of Latin America. You should mention this far sooner, in your introduction.

Your statistical tables have no source. No reader can tell where you got these figures, or perhaps they are your own computations, but where is the raw data from? We aren’t told. As you point out in your intro, most historians are innumerate, but so are most people. Donald said that when historians are confronted with a statistical table in a book, their eyes glaze over and they skip it. So will most other readers. Your tables may serve as a kind of window dressing but serve no real purpose.

Paragraph meaning unclear, statistical or demographic jargon, which you should explain.

The 1890 census was destroyed in a fire. So where did you get the figures in the last three columns of this table?

Here you praise “that wonderful census of 1850” but earlier damned it, the one in 1860, and of course the 1870 census.

Spelling error. devastated vice devastated
Avoid due to for cause and effect; see Strunk & White.

Slaves “were imported or annexed”? Meaning what?

138-39 You state that nearly 800,000 slaves were shipped from Africa to Cuba, and that number is, has been, and can be documented, though again you have no footnote or any kind of source citation. In the same sentence you assert “many if not most of them were re-exported to Dixie.” That’s a basic part of your argument, but can it be documented as well, or are you merely claiming that was true?

Your last sentence makes a good point, perhaps a very strong point, but you need far more details about Cuba. I think you’re right, that Cuba simply could not have absorbed as many slaves as Brazil, so the surplus must have gone somewhere, probably to the U.S. You can make a far better case than you do. What you do here, and throughout the manuscript is argue by assertion, making extraordinary claims that almost everyone else is wrong, except you, and Ernest Starks, who goes too far in his estimates and claims.

Unlike some other chapters, there are no sources listed at the end of chapter II.

Chapter III Re-Exportation: The Illegal Slave Trade from Cuba to the U.S., 1808-1862

Here’s the heart of the book, at least it should be. Much of what comes before should be cut, or drastically shortened. It’s intro, a prologue, but you take a giant running start that goes on for well over a hundred pages.

Middle para “In fact, slavery is one of the hallmarks, albeit negative, of ancient civilizations everywhere, and West Africa is no exception.” Not needed; something everyone already knows, and the few who don’t are in the Freedom Caucus or Jeff Sessions’s Justice Department. Maybe for PC morons, faculty, students, and administrative scum at UMB you would need to say it. So it depends on who your audience is? Who are you writing this for? What you’re really saying is slavery was bad, and like you, I know and believe that it was a negative feature of the cultures in which it appeared. And there were many such cultures, some of them so advanced, and so superior to others, that they still inspire us, ancient Greece, Rome, etc.

140 strike “due to” 4th line middle para, not a synonym for because of.

South of the Sahel!? How many readers will know this word? You’re showing off your massive vocabulary like Wm F. Buckley, your immense erudition. Write Sahara, that’s really what you mean.

141 How many think that Carthage was in West Africa? An odd placement, it was on the Med, and given its location on that coast, North Africa more accurate and more familiar. UN definition includes Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Sudan, Tunisia, and Western Sahara. Britannica definition more restrictive, just Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya. A writer in the Guardian explored why many don’t think of North Africa as part of Africa. Rabat is not on Med. Would you say it was in West Africa? A stretch, though it has more claim than ancient Carthage. Northern coast of modern Tunisia, Italy just to the north. West Africa?

“With the Arab conquest I am much better informed.” 3d line from bottom of long para. Who wrote this? A semi-literate assistant? A black acquaintance at UMB? No need to tell readers that you’re much
better informed on Africa, or North African history starting with the Arab conquests. You write “I am” a number of times. It’s a real head scratcher.

Bottom of p. 142 Still, there’s far too much material on Africa. Focus instead on your ostensible subject, as indicated by the chapter title. You’re showing off, telling readers far more than they need or want to know about Africa, and possibly more than you actually know. How much published scholarship do you have on Africa?

143 You should write a book on African slavery, and put all this material in that other book. Sentence structure problem near bottom of first para. I’m skeptical how much good Holy Mother Church actually did for the Indians, while in theory insisting on their basic humanity as you claim. How many actually survived the Spanish onslaught? Are you basing your argument on their conversion, that they all went to heaven, and in that way were better off under Spanish rule?

What do you mean by the people of the book in the context in which you use it? Jews, Christians, Muslims, or all three? How many general readers will understand the term?

145 “A handful of free blacks in the U.S. owned slaves themselves, but very few did where cotton was king.” Yet several of the biggest concentrations of free black slave-owners were in New Orleans, Charleston, Savannah, and Mobile, none of which would have existed in this period as we know them without cotton. And why say free blacks? Slaves could not be other people as slaves, and under the slave code of most states were not entitled to any property at all of any kind. Yes, they were just a handful in a sea of four million slaves, but had importance far beyond their absolute numbers. Have you read Larry Koger’s book on the subject? Probably not. I doubt you’re ever heard of him.

146 You explain why whites ignored the law after 1808 about smuggled slaves, impossible to ignore you say, unless you didn’t visit the South, had never been there, read anything about the region or slavery, which describes much of the population in the free states, natives as well as immigrants. Their ignorance of the South was vast—and still is. Even if you lived in the South, there were many reasons to mind your own business, and if you saw something odd or heard slaves speaking a glibberish, other than Gullah, that you could not understand, you kept quiet. As you’ve said, there were few abolitionists there and almost none after 1831.

Oh my God, here come the bozales, yet again. How you do love this word. In my reading of dozens of books on U.S. slavery, some of which I’ve reviewed, I’ve seen bush Negro and other terms, but rarely if ever bozales, unless the book was about Latin America.

You assert the tired truism of academia, that “race” is just a social construct, not a biological or genetic reality. Makes no difference, none at all. How do people act, what do they think? Skin color is all, they see it, and the reaction of most whites, and certainly the damyankees, Irish and others, is prejudice.

147 You continue your tiresome tangent, trying to explain something that few of your readers need or will want to know.

Mid-page “Southern trading states”? In the U.S.? Confusing, better to write West African trading states.

Split infinitive first line last para
"the continuation of the slave trade to the Americas, and specifically to the U.S." Boring! Not your subject, which supposedly is the illegal slave trade from 1808 on, down to the Civil War, from whatever source, but mainly Cuba. You try to tell the reader everything you need to know about everything. Polymaths may be impressive, but are usually boring. Better to wear your learning lightly.

If the traders had known what happened to the black cargoes they were shipping across the ocean they would not have cared. Do you believe that humans are basically good? That they have, and act on, a deep sense of morality, a highly developed ethical awareness?


Everything down to "B. Sugar Slavery" though I don't remember a sub-heading A, can be omitted, and you lose nothing. Readers attracted to the idea of an illegal slave trade won't give a damn about the history of West Africa, or slavery there, nor do they need to know it.

Nice quote from Manuel Franginals; explain who he was, what he wrote, why he's important.

Sentence structure/punctuation, line 4. Readers won't know Cato the Elder from the younger, or care.

Those Arawaks were soon killed off despite the best intentions of Holy Mother Church.

You go on and on, much like Smuts, or Woody Smith, about the demand for sugar in western Europe. Do you have any sources for all this, or is it just extracted from your own vast knowledge?

Lots of details about Cuba, when you should be describing the illegal trade in slaves from the island to the U.S.

Lock up the women and children! Here come the Bozale, singular apparently this time, or maybe it's the plural, capitalized here, elsewhere lower case, and should probably be in italics, because it's not an English, much less an American word.

Finally, blessed relief, you return to your subject, with comparative slave prices in New Orleans and Havana. Thank you Jesus!

You make a plausible point about supply and demand, but where's your evidence, or are numbers, statistics, intended to be your self-evident proof? Since most readers are innumerate, it has to be explained in simple English, and after 160 pages I'm still waiting for evidence that a quarter-million slaves were shipped from Cuba to the U.S., 1808-62. Is 250,000 not the total number that DuBois claimed? What exactly have you contributed to this subject beyond your inspiration DuBois, and also Starks?

"their Royal British Navy": omit one of the adjectives; avoid tautology.
A good point supporting your argument about your central topic, though without any sources.

164 More good material about Key West, Jack Warner, Pardon C. Greene, etc. Like so much of what you claim, it’s plausible, even probable, many readers will want to believe it, but do you have any hard evidence? It’s like proving the existence of a vast network of stations, main lines, branch lines, brave conductors, on an underground railroad from slavery to freedom, all of it illegal, in blatant violation of numerous U.S. laws, and many, many state laws. It was an illegal conspiracy, few records were kept, and even fewer have survived. A huge target for someone like Larry Gara. Your subject is much the same, all illegal, so what documentation is there?

165 Do you have any evidence, any sources for the Caribbean freebooters? Perhaps you could cite the popular but mindless Hollywood movies with Johnny Depp, Pirates of the Caribbean? Are you a recognized expert, an authority, on pirates? Were any gay?

166 Unlike your first hundred pages or so, here you run on, and on, page after page, with no sources at all, not even an author’s last name, and date of publication in parentheses. It would take a lot of work just to insert sources notes in this mass of material.

167 A source for J. Q. Adams’s thoughts about emancipation in Cuba causing chaos on Southern plantations?

Who or what are you quoting here? The language of the Monroe Doctrine? Was it written by Adams using the first person singular?

Did his parents give Captain General Vives a first name? or did he just crawl out from under a rock? If he was Spanish I’d expect several names, the more flourishes the better. And why cite Wikipedia if the entry rests on a dubious series of American biographies?

168 bottom of page; lots and lots of details, but no sources at all.

169 You claim that Nicholas Trist “was never demoted or punished” but his recall was a demotion, he was fired.

171 Details about legal domestic, especially coastal trade, no doubt true, but evidence lacking. Do you have any sources for any of this? Are you the Pope Bill? Do you expect readers to accept the many accusations, claims, outraged statements in this manuscript of 300+ pages on faith alone?

172 top of page, sentence structure

Starks, 136; finally, a lonely source appears.

173 top line, lowercase who

First full para, the paramount job of the U.S. Navy, its first and ultimate mission, is defending the U.S. It is not and never has been a charitable organization, a kind of seagoing Red Cross or UNICEF. I have read other authors who claim that its record off the West African coast improved over time, or that there were peaks as well as dips in enforcement. Don’t have my sources handy. You’re the author. I’d make sure that the preponderance of evidence supports your claims. And replace what in brackets?
Your source (Foner, 212, 221)? Title of a book? An article? Do you mean Eric or Phillip? Both have written a number of books and other publications, though the latter was a notorious plagiarist.

Reference to The Untold Tide? A title of some sort? Author?

Emancipation best explained the reduction of slave numbers in Cuba? When and why? In the 1860s and 1870s? All before 1886 presumably. Say more.

Reduction in RN West African Squadron: was it because the illegal slave trade was now so small it no longer needed, or could justify the expense, of monitoring it? Or because of a change in government at Whitehall?

Curtin had a critic? Oh my god! Who it be? To use your patois, I am amazed.

sentence fragment, bottom of page.

Much of your argument here rests on reasoning from gross macro evidence, the U.S. Census, whose accuracy you challenge elsewhere.

Very good, a complete source citation, with author’s first and last name, which should surely have come the first time you referenced him. And here you give a title, a subtitle, date of publication, and a page number. Amazing.

Here’s the mysterious Foner again, last line, reverting to your usual opaque sources.

Good argument and reasoning in bottom para, logical, and probably the only way to explain what happened. You should also focus on, or highlight, how those you criticize have explained it, and why they’re wrong.

Sentence structure last line.

in turn for “intern” 3d line

“Because that trade was technically illegal, many of the cargoes ... weren’t documented at all”. So how do you prove the size or significance of the trade? It was illegal, so carried out covertly; much like the numbers on the Underground Railroad, which was never large, and really significant only 1850-1861, with the passage of a much stronger Fugitive Slave Act, part of the Compromise of 1850.

“slaves costed a lot more in New Orleans ...” middle of second para

Fernandina, near, but not actually on the border between Florida and Georgia, just south of the Georgia line; the port near Zephaniah Kingsley’s main plantation on the St. John’s, downriver from Jacksonville near the ocean. Check his slave-trading activities in two books by Daniel L. Schaefer, Zephaniah Kingsley, Jr. and the Atlantic World: Slave Trader, Plantation Owner, Emancipator (2013), and Anna Madiguine Jai Kingsley: Africa Princess, Florida Slave, Plantation Slaveowner (2003); and also Balancing Evils Judiciously: The Proslavery Writings of Zephaniah Kingsley, ed. Daniel W. Stowell (2000). Jane and I visited his estate some years ago. The two books have a lot of evidence that documents your claims.
Stafford, 131? Author’s full name? A book, an article? Who the hell knows, there’s no list of sources at the end of this chapter.

If the RN captured only 65 slavers from 1821-1838 it works out to about three a year, hardly evidence of a big illegal trade. We just don’t know how big it was, and 30 ships in the area seems like a lot. Do you mean that thirty different ships were stationed in the West Indies during this period, a few each year; or that 30 were on station simultaneously?

“The numbers in the Transatlantic Slave Trade Database don’t allow for eyewitness observations of the illegal slave trade in action.” Well of course not, so how do you prove your thesis?

Even estimates of the slave traffic prepared by the British Foreign Officers in Cuba between 1808 and 1865 are disregarded or erroneously revised by historians such as Curtin and Eltis.” How do you prove that? In a way you do the opposite. You reject or disparage any statistics that don’t support your thesis.

Brazil, Cuba, and Puerto Rico held on to slavery for decades longer than other countries in the western hemisphere, other than the U.S.; and the last two were close to our southern border. I’d add any evidence that you have on Puerto Rico to that on Cuba.

Interesting material, and some evidence for your thesis. There have been several recent books and PBS documentaries about the slave-trading De Wolfs of Rhode Island, good Episcopalians, with at least one bishop in the dynasty. Thomas, Cuba, 71, 84 n. 55, says that one of the original members of the clan was Jewish. See Thomas Norman DeWolf, Inheriting the Trade: A Northern Family confronts Its Legacy as the Largest Slave-Trading Dynasty in U.S. History (2008); Cynthia Mestad Johnson, James DeWolf and the Rhode Island Slave Trade (2014), and James DeWolf: Slaving Practices, Business Enterprises, and Politics, 1784-1816 (2010).

Very good analysis and narrative.

Source for your claim that fifty people in South owned more than 500 slaves in 1860?

Lack of firewood to boil sugar in kettles; if Cuba, like Haiti, had been virtually denuded of its forests, where did they get wood to fuel the sugar industry?

Hard to follow your analysis: yes, reexporting slaves to the U.S. was no longer profitable in 1865 and after, with emancipation; and surplus slaves in Cuba lost their market value. So how do you explain the apparently peak exports of Cuba sugar in 1867, when slave imports from Africa were stopped?

The question of the increase in numbers of the Cuban slave population, if any at all, is a microcosm of the much larger U.S. question at the heart of your thesis. Good as far as you can go, but I question your evidentiary base, and whether there’s enough to warrant your claims.

“an observable differential between slave fertility and mortality on American plantations is altogether skewed by the presence of illegally imported slaves from Cuba, the number of which if ascertained judiciously could expose American and Cuban slave mortality rates for what they actually were.”
Yes, if there were significant numbers of Cuban slaves on U.S. plantations, especially over a period of several decades or more, it would skew fertility and mortality rates, but you have not, and probably cannot, find out the actual numbers. There’s the rub. You confronted by several unknown unknowns.

So did mechanization by 1860 reduce the need for slave labor in the Cuban sugar industry, or the southern one, or both?

Your focus here on supply and demand is good, a major point in your thesis, if you can find and present adequate documentation to support your analysis.

A possible logical flaw in your reasoning here: are you assuming that all the slaves traders had customers for were re-exported to U.S.; and that you can subtract that number from the total to find number of those needed for work in Cuba? That’s what you seem to be saying.

Clipper ships were also built in Boston, including the *Flying Cloud*, one of the most famous, and perhaps elsewhere in New England, not just in Baltimore.

The U.S. Navy had only a few dozen ships, stationed all over the globe, in 1861, and just two were available for immediate wartime service.

Good historiographical narrative with some context on the literature. You say bottom of 203 that Curtin’s finds are now outdated; who else agrees with this besides you? Just because most reject, or do not even discuss the findings of DuBois does not mean they are scoundrels. He worked with what he had at the time, but notably lacked computers, and some new data that’s been found and studied in the generations since his death.

Your central point: given “the epidemic nature of disease and early death in U.S. slave populations between 1807 and 1863 it is blatantly self-evident that far more slaves were illegally imported to the U.S. than scholars like Curtin are willing to admit.”

What’s the standing of Jack Eblen, based on reviews of his work? Is he an historian, a demographer, or what?

omit “is” in 3d sentence of long para on Morgan and Tadman, and Eltis.

“Eltis’s” skewed findings for Eltis’ correct possessive singular

The claimed promise of 40 acres and a mule, well known to millions, is completely bogus, Bill. Only you, Ed Berkowitz, and the NAACP’s Dr. Benjamin Hooks still believe in it; and maybe Al Sharpton. Sherman’s field order applied only to a small part of Georgia along the Savannah River, and the coast; and it was soon countermanded or revoked, ultimately by U.S. Courts.

Where’s the evidence that millions knew where they’d been born, in or outside the U.S? How would anyone prove or answer that question?

On this point you should examine the Freedmen’s Bureau papers, which are on microfilm, and available at Harvard and other repositories.
Perhaps the first instance of repetitive material, which becomes increasingly common in last 100 pages of manuscript. You’ve already covered Francis A. Walker and census of 1870 earlier.

Why would the Republicans controlling the government, ruling Washington and the occupied South, do anything that would have reduced the census count of blacks, and thus their congressional representation? Narrative or reasoning is very confused.

207 Does the 1880 census for the same Southern states support your conclusion? Postwar there were no more slave importations and minimal immigration to the states of the former Confederacy from anywhere else.

208 More repetitive material on Eltis etc. I remember reading this in an earlier chapter.

209 An answer to the question I asked dozens of pages earlier, re improved productivity in Cuban sugar industry, allowing a smaller slave labor force to produce more product.

In his speech at Gettysburg Lincoln was quoting the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution.

Chapter 4: Enforcement A: The British Enforcers

210-16 A series of anecdotes, random stories, quotes, sources, narrative thread lost.

216 Confused middle para, the Brits had no imperial ambitions in West Africa when? The 1820s or 1830s? And paying a subsidy to a local ruler to induce him to abolish the slave trade would have been imperialism?

218 first mention of “equipment” on a slaver you should explain what was meant, Canning gave a definition, enlighten your readers. Chains and shackles and what else?

Last few words of block quote do you mean resorted to for “reported to”?

219-237 A mass of undigested material, some of it interesting, mildly amusing, active slave trade various parts of West African coast, parliamentary debates, give and take among various British officials and MPs, but it’s all been told better in many, many books by established authorities on the various topics touched upon, and it’s not your subject, the illegal slave trade to the U.S. Focus on the sources of slaves, where they came from, locations where most were reexported from into the southern states, and evidence about the size of the trade, how it was carried on, by whom, how concealed, and why it’s been suppressed for so long.

Summarize all the other material in a concise way, telling only the essentials for readers who don’t know, and enough detail to remind other readers of what they already know, and perhaps have long known.

241 omit the in “the British naval circles.” Line 6, end of para

A lot of interesting material about the captured crews of slave ships and what happened to them, situation on West African coast and various parts of Caribbean, etc., much of it not part of your subject.

249 parliamentary debates, diplomatic relations between Spain and Great Britain, on and on.
PLAGIARISM Here’s an undeniable case, a sentence copied word for word from Hugh Thomas, *The Slave Trade* (1997), which is not in quotes. Since your occasional notes do not follow any style known to man or beast, neither the Chicago Manual, nor Turabian, or MLA, etc., apparently what follows “ST, Chapter 36 (6. Howard, [33, 6], 302.) can be deciphered as follows: ST stands for *Slave Trade*, and the borrowed sentence is indeed from chapter 36 of Thomas’s massive, 900 page work. The remainder is copied directly from Thomas’s end note, which appears on p. 860. You do cite Thomas earlier, one or more times, referring to him at least once in a dismissive way as “erratic” or “uneven” or some such. He’s also written a massive history of Cuba, and many other books, yet apparently is not up to your high standards.

Couple points: presumably “the great Bancroft” that Thomas and you refer to is Frederic Bancroft, author of *Slave Trading in the Old South*, and not the more prominent and better known Jacksonian Democratic politician-historian George Bancroft. Sure enough, F. Bancroft does refer to the *Clothilde*, but only once, 359-60, n. 49. Here’s the mystery: Bancroft says that in July 1860 not 1859 she brought 103 Africans not 116 into Mobile Bay, where they were transshipped and taken 50 miles up the Alabama River to be landed. Bancroft then speculates that it’s unlikely the slaves were from Africa, but probably were brought from Cuba, or taken from some slaver in nearby waters “which were the sources of most if not all the small cargoes supposed to have been occasionally smuggled into States on the Gulf. The main facts about the “Clothilde” were quickly made known to the Department of Justice; but, presumably on account of the presidential campaign then raging, prosecution was delayed, and secession soon intervened.”

Nothing in Bancroft’s account about South Carolina or the supposed landing by the *Clothilde* of 116 slaves on the Palmetto State’s coast in July 1859. So was Bancroft hoaxing? Or Thomas? Or you? Did this mystery ship make two voyages on the eve of the Civil War, the first to South Carolina, and the second the next year to Alabama? Inquiring minds want to know, and I expect a full report by return post!

So what does the great Du Bois say about this strange vessel? If the index in my edition of the Suppression of the African Slave Trade is accurate, the *Clothilde* is not mentioned even once.

Perusing Thomas’s massive study, it seems to me that most if not all of the material in this manuscript can be found in book six of his work, the last 200+ pages entitled “The Illegal Era.” It calls into question the need for your study, especially all of the material that does not focus directly on the illegal trade into the U.S.

This instance of plagiarism also suggests how the present manuscript was “written,” or in some cases as above copied. Jeremy Meserve, or one of your other research assistants (whose numbers are legend) skimmed many, many books, or just the indexes to same, looking for key words, topics, titles, etc., as instructed by you. In this case Meserve or whoever wasted no time coming up with original language, but simply copied Thomas verbatim. Hey mon, no problem! So this is not scholarly historical narrative. Much of it is simply bits and pieces from various sources slapped together in a jumbled, random, haphazard fashion.

257 I comment top of page that most of this slave traffic apparently went to Cuba, or Brazil. I think you should focus on the former, probably the chief source of illegal shipments to the U.S., but how large they were, how significant, and over what period you have not been able to demonstrate, much less prove, with hard documentation.

There are a lot of citations to ST in these pages; curious, for someone whose work you deride.
Nice quote about Spain; the black legend indeed.

United States for “United States” 3d line from bottom of big middle para. I’d look for other sources besides Henry Adams on the extent of anti-slavery sentiment in Great Britain, or just England, during the Civil War. You could start with Owsley’s *King Cotton Diplomacy*.

British bureaucrat on advisability of seizing Lagos, the deadly climate not to be a factor in the decision. Easy for him to say from his nice office in London.

Casualty rates among crews of slave trips, Thomas says perhaps 17%, though it improved in the last few decades; but here you cite Elitis, of all people.

Still citing ST and relying on Thomas apparently. Take a look at *Sons of Providence: The Brown Brothers, the Slave Trade, and the American Revolution* (2006), by Charles Rappleye.

St. Mary’s, Georgia, is still a very nice port. You can catch a ferry to Cumberland Island. Jane and I have been twice. Close to Zephaniah Kingsley’s plantations on the St. John’s that I mentioned earlier.

Charleston merchants and South Carolina planters could have refused to buy African slaves; the legislature could have closed the port to slave ships. There’s more than enough hypocrisy and sin to go around. What a sad and tawdry tale, not to mention a bloody one.

Nice, pithy quote from J. Q. Adams, ever the Anglophobe, who apparently thought allowing the RN to search U.S. vessels, as had been done in the War of 1812, and for a century before the American Revolution when our seamen were routinely impressed, was or would be a greater sin than the slave trade.

Chief Justice John Marshall referred to Joseph Story when writing to his children as “Uncle Joe,” regarding him as a bosom friend.

Another case of plagiarism, and there may be far more instances of this than I have time to check. Here to avoid the charge, the quote within a quote needs to be indicated. Your lazy research (or ignorant) assistant (one of the classic excuses of plagiarists, it’s the fault of my assistant), needed to put the entire passage in quotes, then Chew’s actual statement in single quotes, so a quote within a quote. Pretty standard stuff Bill.

Next quote, again from Thomas, quoting Perry, plagiarism again, same reason. By relying so much or entirely on one or more assistants, you’ve created a dubious document. Yet another assistant, while revising this manuscript for publication, or simply to prune all the irrelevant and duplicate material may go astray, thinking that you’ve actually written much of the text, when in fact it’s lifted from language by Hugh Thomas and other respected scholars. Impossible to tell, since the use of quotation marks is so sloppy.

Next para on Sir George Collier is a repeat of an earlier paragraph. This mistake may be by a different assistant, churning through your notes, not aware that you or a previous assistant has already used this quote.
still relying on Thomas, who's apparently quoting from some author named Miller re attempted lynching of Garrison in Boston, half his garments ripped off with a rope around his neck. Not fully identified in Thomas's note 14.

Para on Captain Flowery is sourced from an article in American Heritage magazine by J. C. Furnas. You can't expect to be taken seriously as a scholar in this field, or most others, by relying on articles in history magazines for a popular audience that lack both notes and a bibliography.

This section of the text consists apparently of nothing but sloppy extracts from Hugh Thomas's big volume on the slave trade. What value does all this have? What contribution to knowledge could you possibly expect to make, especially since Thomas was widely and favorably reviewed, and appeared 20 years ago?

The naval officer Henry Augustus Wise was of the same family as the Virginia governor and Confederate general Henry Alexander Wise.

The account of the Amistad case is not only directly plagiarized from Thomas, and without having any quotations that could be used as an excuse by you or your assistant(s). It's just bald-faced plagiarism, copied word for word, and also unusually garbled, and not by Thomas, but check Owens and Du Bois. There are a number of factual errors in this summary description.

It's unclear how anything about the Amistad is related to the illegal trade from Cuba into the U.S., since these slaves were being carried from one Cuban port to another.

A lot of disconnected stories, accounts, episodes, quotes, plagiarized passages, all historical narrative lost.

The diplomat and politician Henry Wise is apt to be confused by readers with the earlier naval officer with the same name; two different men, though related. There's a good account in the diplomat's memoirs of the illegal slave trade that he observed while in Brazil, and the home ports of most of the slavers he saw.

repetitive material here, several instances, joint cruisng para from p. 253

Whoever was typing this ran out of steam, got confused, was on drugs, who knows? Lots and lots of material is repeated in last 100 pages or so of this manuscript.

Cuba the only legal mart for the slave trade? What about Puerto Rico and Brazil; or was slavery still legal there, but not the trade in imports?

Ship names should be italicized throughout, and there are dozens if not hundreds in 300+ pages. Do you expect the publisher to do this kind of scut work?

Run on paras are increasingly frequent, this one, continued from previous page, covers all of 274.

Again, lots of repetitive material; last three sentences about the Clotilde, discussed in detail earlier.
First para about Gordon, but not connected at all with previous long para, or the one that follows. Page after page of random anecdotes, stories, accounts, etc. This is not historical narrative; there’s no analysis; hard to know what to make of all this.

Previous section began as Enforcement A. The British Enforcers This section is C. The Spanish Accessories and Collaborators Where’s section B? Where are we? And you repeated this section heading on p. 307.

Chronology unclear; a radical deputy had been in London in 1808 when something or other (the slave trade?) was abolished; this passage about what year or period?

Four or five lines in Spanish, English translation needed for those readers who are not multilingual. Nor do readers need or want to know where you found a particular document; that information belongs in a proper footnote or endnote. And book titles, like ship names, are italicized.

Two more repetitive paragraphs, one of them about equipment finally being defined, but readers never told what the definition was. Do you know?

Mid-page you switch from the past to the present tense and back again to the past.

Another passage lifted from Thomas, this one even sloppier than most, because the last sentence is Thomas commenting; it’s not part of the quote, and none of it in Thomas is in italics. Why has it been put in italics here? You don’t italicize what should be, and italicize what should not be. A curious kind of logic.

Bottom of page: Why follow some sort of rough chronological order? Hell, it’s ok to skip around, and drive your readers to strong drink. I can just imagine this manuscript in any editorial office. You go from an 1818 conference to a bishop denouncing abolitionist philosophers in 1808.

Here’s Canning saying the great legal mart of the slave trade is Brazil; a few pages earlier, the only mart was Cuba. Both statements could be true, depending upon the year you mean, but because there is no chronological narrative, impossible to follow thread of events.

Lots of repetitive paragraphs, too many to list each one.

One of the best characters of all, the obi of Osai of Aboh, what a guy!

two more repetitive paragraphs

“I are” used again in italicized quote middle paragraph. I found it in Thomas, 730, top of page, and his quote reads “are quite as good as we are.” So now I know that neither Thomas, nor this source, wrote in Ebonics, but whoever did this manuscript apparently did.

My comment: Bill, this chapter is an unholy mess—a good chunk of it is repeated material. So it’s impossible to tell how long your manuscript actually is. If you subtract all the repeated lines, quotes, and paragraphs, it will be significantly shorter.

Chapter 5: Profiteering A. The British Enforcers
Meaning of this title? Do you mean greater than normal profits? Didn’t most make a profit, unless they suffered unusual losses or had some sort of calamity?

Third para, which island are you referring to? Cuba? In 3 paras at start of this chapter you’ve jumped from Portuguese Guinea to the Congo to an island that would appear to be Cuba from the 3d sentence.

297 I’ve read all 3 of the paras on this page before; just more repetitive material.
298 At least 2 of the paras on this page are repetitive.
299 First para has appeared before.
300 run-on para
301 So why did the slave trade continue if it didn’t pay? Sometimes you explain things clearly; e.g., it’s a simple supply and demand question. If the demand for slaves is there, someone, somehow, will manage to provide some. Here you don’t explain the quotation. Had the business become so risky that traders could not afford to buy insurance policies, and took their chances without any insurance? Or what?

302 The phrase “a Southern man with Northern principles” was widely used in the antebellum era of various pliable politicians of several parties, especially men on the rise like Buchanan and others who were dependent for national electoral success on Southern voters, e.g., Zachary Taylor, Franklin Pierce, and Buchanan. A bigger problem here is that this para, 2d on page, is repeated verbatim on p. 304.

The quality of the manuscript has gotten significantly worse in the last 50-60 pages. Whoever was doing the text ran out of energy I guess.

303 2 more repetitive paras
304 Damariscotta is still a very nice little town with excellent restaurants.

The repetitive para with Wise’s comment on Buck. I have to assume this manuscript has never been edited, proofread, vetted in any way.

305 another entire page of repetitive paras; e.g., the one with George Francis Train, mentioned before and commented on by me.

307 C. The Spanish Accessories and Collaborators

Here you skip once again from Section A to C; where’s B? Still being written?

308 bottom para with details about the costs of a voyage first appears on p. 301, yet more repetition.
309 repetitive para on Spanish queen regent and her great wealth

“a funeral that cost 10,000 pesos” vice which cost; restrictive and non-restrictive clauses; Strunk & White.
The 2 middle paras are repetitive.

D. "Everyone Else" Here's another section filled with random factoids. The para about the Elmina slave trade appeared earlier.

First para is repetitive; it appeared on p. 299. I lack the time to find the page number for each and every repetitive paragraph; one of your assistants will have to do a comprehensive word search to locate each one. Just type in Captain Duval in most word processing programs, and the search engine will find all the instances in which that name appears.

2 more repet paras

Chapter 6: Smugglers In the first 200 or so pages, chapters tended to be too long, dozens of pages, longer than many publishers will want, who're looking for a manuscript with chapters of more or less the same length, bite size chunks to make the text more accessible for readers. Now your chapters tend to be on the skimpy side, quite short. Chapter 5 began on p. 296, so it's only about 20 pages, and when printed would be 10-12.

A. The British Enforcers

3rd para about John Kearney has appeared at least once, before, perhaps twice; it's on p. 298, and perhaps elsewhere.

Last para is repetitive

Both paras on this page repetitive; easy for me to spot when manuscript is fresh in my mind; having just read the same passage minutes before, when I see it again it jumps out.

Both paras here are repetitive, and like so many, a bit long. Facing solid blocks of text with few if any paragraph indentations is a turn off for most readers.

Middle para is repet

First and third paras are repet; the first one also appears on p. 260, more than 60 pages earlier.

So who is "the most serious student of statistics of the trade"? This para is yet another case of plagiarism, and nothing is in quotes except the bracketed two words. Checking Thomas's text, for note 34, found on p. 851 I find "C, 232 ff." What does that mean? And since Thomas didn't bother to explain, why don't you identify the person he called the most serious student of the statistics? Does "C" refer to Curtin? Well, reading his Appendix 3 on statistics, he has some reservations about Curtin's estimates, and makes suggestions for revisions up or down, 861-62.

Last para p 326 is repet.

Here's the pretty port of Damariscotta that first appears on 304, fondly remembered by me.
first full para here on Henry Wise repet; just type in "Wise" to find all the places in text where name appears.

ditto for Washington Irving, first para is repet.

You seem to imply earlier, or flat out state, that all the clippers were built in Baltimore, and I noted a correction. Here you cite Morison who presumably knew what he was talking about and is quoted as saying they were built all along our northeastern coast, from Maine to Baltimore.

Para on the Wanderer is repet; appeared before.

2d para repet; here again Canning defines "equipment" and once again you don't bother to tell the reader what his definition was, what was meant by the word.

Last para also repet.

D. "Everyone Else" usually your chapter titles are bold-faced and section titles are underlined; here the section title is in bold and also underlined; no consistency in format or usage, very sloppy, but the least of the problems with this manuscript.

middle para is repet.

On Nozolini, a fascinating character, but this paragraph has appeared at least twice before.

Next para also repet.

both paras this page repet.

Here endeth the manuscript and my ordeal. I think everyone connected with this project, you, various research assistants, typists, whoever, just ran out of energy, or maybe they all ran away like fugitive slaves. There is no proper ending, no formal conclusion, no finis. The narrative just trails off into nothingness, though with a particularly gruesome account.

In fairness to your assistants I don't know what their work routine was, or what they were given to work with, or how they were told to proceed, take notes, write rough drafts, etc. What's clear is that the manuscript is not publishable in its present form. Whether it ever will be, depends on how much time, energy, and money you're prepared to spend. You'll have to hire a competent editor, someone proficient with software for word-processing, who can first go through the text and eliminate all the repetitive passages. Only then will you know the length of this work; and whether it's more likely to make a slim book, or a rather long article. Then you'll have to identify likely publishers for either a book, or an article. Unless of course you just intend to post it on your website.

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Michael B. Chesson

15 April 2017