

**IN THE MIDST OF LIBERATION:
A COMPARISON OF A RUSSIAN ESTATE AND A SOUTHERN PLANTATION
AT THE MOMENT OF EMANCIPATION**

by

Sally Ann Stocksdale

A dissertation submitted to the
Faculty of the University of Delaware in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History

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Sally Ann Stocksdale

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For Aurora

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES	ix
LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS	x
LIST OF MAPS	xi
GLOSSARY	xvi
ABSTRACT	xviii
Chapter	
1. THE CONCEPTION	1
Introduction	1
The Nature of Emancipation in Russia and in the United States	16
Liberation Set in Motion	24
2. THE MEANING OF FREEDOM IN THE IMMEDIATE POST-EMANCIPATION PERIOD: CONDITIONS, EXPECTATIONS, AND RESISTANCE	36
Conditions, Expectations, and Resistance in Russia, and Simbirsk Province	39
Conditions, Expectations, and Resistance in the American South, and Mississippi	51
Yazikovo Selo and Palmyra Plantation: common problems, differences, and unique characteristics	68
Conclusion	75
3. REGULATING FREEDOM IN THE MIDST OF LIBERATION ...	89
A Brief Overview of the Russian and American Contractual Arrangements	95
The Statutory Charter at Yazikovo Selo	98
The Rules and Regulations at Palmyra Plantation	119
Rules and Regulations	129
Conclusion	138

4.	BACKGROUND: CONTEXTUAL REALITIES	142
	Background.....	150
	Yazikovo Selo.....	150
	Palmyra Plantation.....	159
	Contextual Realities: Economic outlook, Culture, and <i>Mentalites</i>	165
5.	FREE PEOPLE, LABOR ADJUSTMENTS, AND MANAGEMENT AT THE DEMESNES IN THE POST-EMANCIPATION PERIOD	188
	The Free People, Labor Adjustments, and Demesne Management at Yazikovo Selo in the Post-Emancipation Period.....	188
	Factory and Financial Management.....	188
	The Agricultural Sector.....	195
	No Redemption Agreement	198
	The Free People, Labor Adjustments, and Demesne Management at Palmyra Plantation in the Post-Emancipation Period	204
	Adjustments and Adaptations in the Cotton Economy	207
	Squad Labor	211
	The 1870s and Beyond.....	221
	Conclusion: The Meaning of Freedom	227
6.	THE MEANING OF FREEDOM IN THE FREED PEOPLE'S DAILY LIFE: EDUCATION, FESTIVITIES, AND SUSTENANCE.....	240
	Education and the Freed People.....	240
	Festivities, Daily Lives, and Sources of Sustenance.....	266
	Conclusion: The Meaning of Freedom	282
	CONCLUSION.....	284
	EPILOGUE	290
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	294
	Appendix	
A.	FEODOR STEPANOVICH STEPANOV.....	321

B.	LETTERS OF COPYRIGHT PERMISSION.....	323
	Copyright Letter from William D. Hermann.....	323
	Copyright Letter from George C. Bolm.....	323

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1 Summary of Statutory Charter	109
Table 4.1 Produce at Davis Bend.....	234
Table 4.2 Personal Tax Rolls	236
Table 4.3 Cotton Prices in U.S. dollars.....	237
Table 4.4 Produce at Palmyra Plantation.....	238
Table 4.5 Bales of Cotton (year end) at Palmyra Plantation over time	239

LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

- Photograph 6:1 Liberated Slaves at Hurricane Plantation cottage,
Davis Bend, July 4, 1863268
- Photograph 6:2 Emancipation Anniversary of the Liberated Serfs at Undory Estate,
Simbirsk Province, March 3, 1862269
- Photograph 6:3 Wedding party and celebration at a plantation on Davis Bend ..274

LIST OF MAPS

Map 1 Russia in 1914	xii
Map 2 Simbirsk Province.....	xiii
Map 3 States and Territories of the United States of America April 9 1865 to May 5 1866	xiv
Map 4 Davis Bend 1818-1861 and Davis Island 1980	xv

Map 1

Russia in 1914

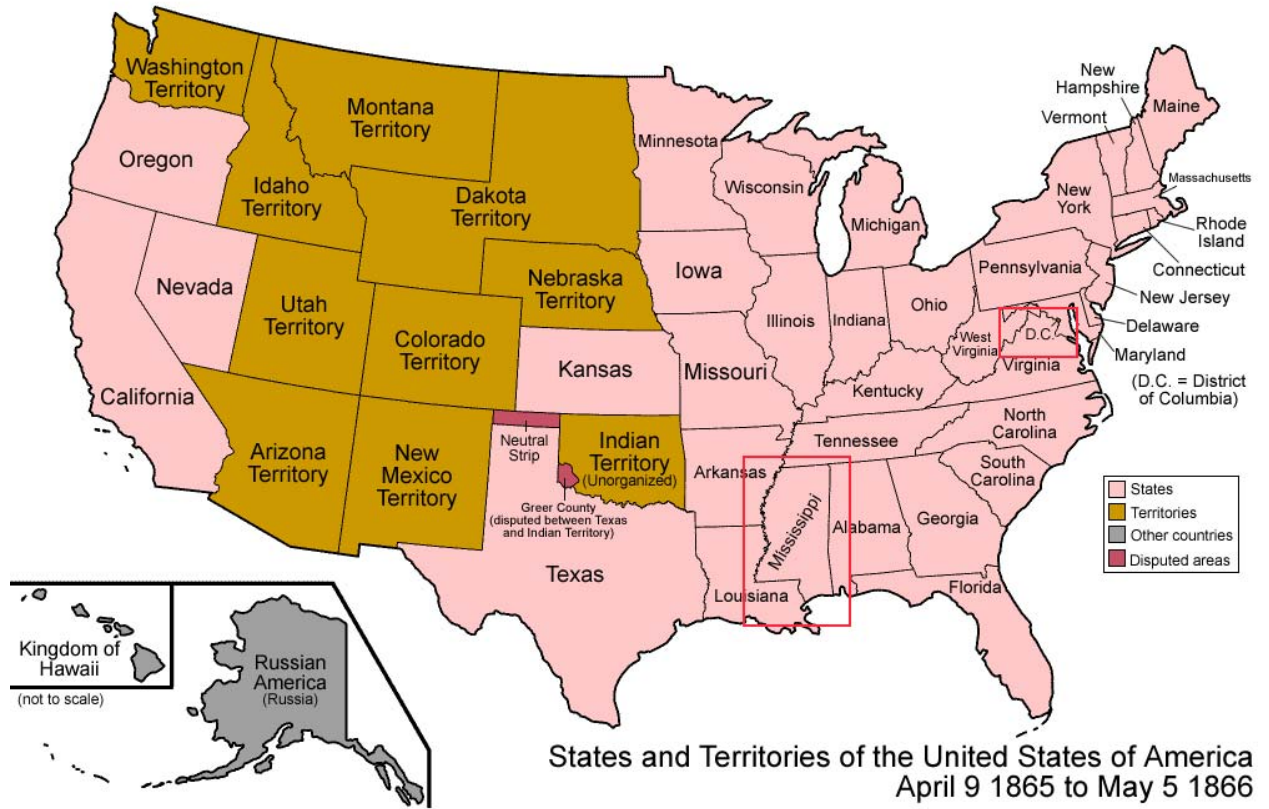


OlegZima
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Map 2

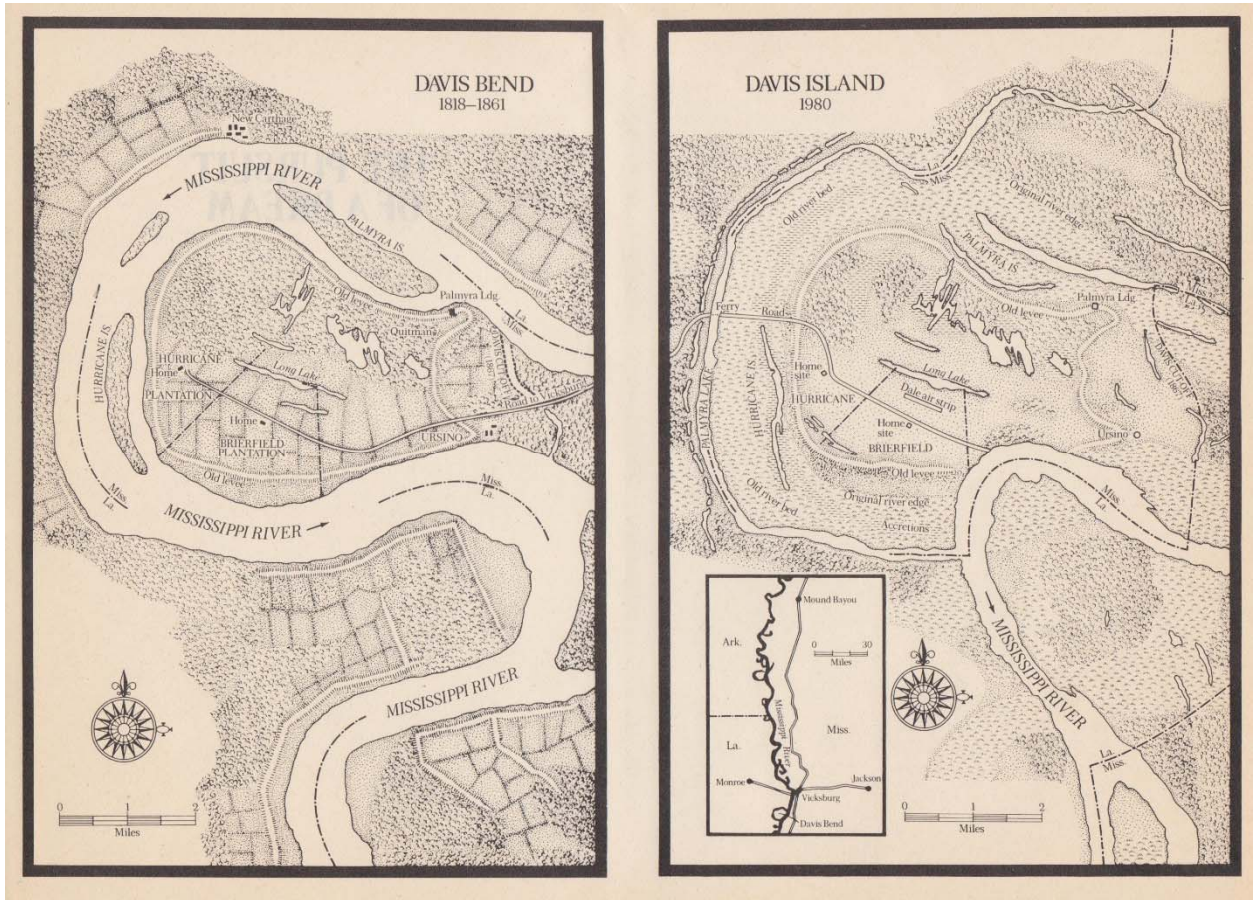


Map 3



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Map 4



Janet Sharp Hermann *The Pursuit of a Dream* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1983), pp. ii-iii.

GLOSSARY

Russian terms

<i>Barshchina</i>	(<i>corvee</i>) unpaid labor obligations owed by a peasant to his lord
<i>Desiatina</i>	2.7 acres
<i>Nadel</i>	land allotment
<i>Obrok</i>	(<i>quitrent</i>) payment of obligations owed by a peasant to his lord in the form of money or in kind
<i>Obshchestvo</i>	village commune or society
<i>Selo</i>	Russian village that has a church
<i>Usadby</i>	Garden plots
<i>Volnenie</i>	Peasant disturbance, resistance, and/or uprising

English terms

Beggars' allotment	(<i>bednyatsky nadel'</i>) if the freed serf could not afford to pay for the allotted land, he could opt to receive a quarter of the maximum earmark for the region free.
Peace Arbitrator/ Peace Mediator	(<i>Mirovoi Posrednik</i>) an intermediary created by the emancipation legislation, whose job in particular was to see that the negotiations for land settlements between former serfs and their former masters proceeded smoothly
Redemption Agreement	(<i>Vykupnii dogovor</i> or <i>sdelka</i>) essentially, the mortgage transaction agreement whereby the peasants would make annual payments until the land allotted to them was paid for
Regulations	(<i>Polozheniia</i>) The approximately 400 plus page manual which accompanied the Russian <i>Manifesto</i> emancipating the serfs
Soul	male serf/peasant

Statutory Charter	<i>(Ustavnaya Gramota)</i> official document which established the amount of land which would be allotted to the peasants
Temporarily Obligated	<i>(Vremenno obyazan)</i> the status which freed serfs held until they entered into a Redemption Agreement with their former landlord

ABSTRACT

Utilizing a variety of primary and secondary source material, this dissertation is a comparative study of how the story of freedom unfolded at two demesnes, a Russian estate, Yazikovo Selo, on the Volga River, and a Southern plantation, Palmyra, on the Mississippi River, from the moment of the emancipation of the serfs in 1861 through to the end of the Reform period in 1881 and the liberation of the slaves in the American South through to the end of Reconstruction in 1877. By combining the sweep and context of the emancipation era with a comparative study of two local regions, I examine how freedom proceeded in each region, and how the various groups involved responded to it. Rather than looking at both emancipation and the evolution of freedom in Russia and the American South as isolated, self contained stories, my approach re-conceptualizes each country's experience into an integrated, global history with parts that exhibit both similarities and diversity. At the same time, this study falls into the micro history paradigm, which appreciates the personal story for its unique qualities as well as its potential for contributing nuance and promoting a better understanding of established narratives. Categories of analysis in this study include the role and nature of resistance, the impact of rumors and hearsay, the conditional nature of emancipation, the shape that labor took at each demesne, and how freedom impacted the freed people's daily lives. Notwithstanding the drag of culture and the inertia of tradition and history, emancipation was revolutionary. Notwithstanding their lack of social capital, the freed people had agency.

Chapter 1

THE CONCEPTION

Introduction

It was a remarkable moment in world history when the abolition of Russian serfdom and American slavery occurred. After years of preparation, and triggered by Russia's defeat in the Crimean War, Tsar Alexander II emancipated roughly twenty-two million serfs in March 1861, ending the centuries-old institution. In the cauldron of the American Civil War, President Lincoln issued the *Emancipation Proclamation* in January 1863, a weapon of war freeing only those slaves ". . . beyond Union authority," totaling about three million African Americans. Ratified by the states in December 1865, the Thirteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution legalized the *de facto* liberation which the *Proclamation* had set in motion.

In this study, I examine how the experience of liberation played out at a demesne in each country from the moment of emancipation through to the end of the Reform period in Russia in 1881 and the end of Reconstruction in the United States in 1877. The "moment" should be seen as this relatively brief yet significant period in history, and one which was the first of many phases of the freed peoples' experience of freedom. Indeed, the emancipation moment was, to borrow a phrase put forward by Peter Kolchin, the first of many freedoms.¹

I seek to combine the sweep and context of the emancipation era with a comparative study of two local regions. This approach affords detail, specificity, and complexity, and

¹ I refer here to the title and subject of Peter Kolchin's book *First Freedom: The Responses of Alabama's Blacks to Emancipation and Reconstruction* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1972).

sheds light on the colorful diversity of the individual participants. It also brings to the fore a number of characteristics that distinguish how emancipation proceeded in each region, and how the various groups involved responded to freedom. As such, this study demonstrates that the meaning of freedom was not fixed, but subject to variegated and fluid contextual circumstances. It also suggests a re-conceptualization of both emancipation and the evolution of freedom in both Russia and the American South, from one which approaches each as an isolated, self-contained story, in and of itself, to one which presents an integrated, global history with parts that exhibit both similarities and diversity.

The focus of the Russian portion of my work is the estate Yazikovo Selo. Located approximately 500 miles east of Moscow in Simbirsk Province, Yazikovo Selo's lifeline, like all estates in the area, was its proximity to the Volga River. The Yazikov family was famous, rich, and, via marriage and custom, inextricably linked to a web of other prominent noble families in Simbirsk. One of many Yazikov properties, Yazikovo Selo was typical of large estates in the province. It comprised a mansion, a church, many outbuildings, and about 800 enserfed peasants. Its primary agricultural products included rye, oats, barley, and wheat. Significant to the post-emancipation story here was the presence on the estate of a wool factory built in 1851 in anticipation of government requisitions for the army, which the Crimean War (1853-1856) confirmed. The patriarch of the estate at the time of emancipation, Vasili Yazikov, was a typical provincial nobleman in that service was the salient of his life. He served in the military during his formative years and, after he inherited the estate at his father's death in 1851, he participated in a variety of civil service and philanthropic endeavors.

The Southern counterpart in my study is Palmyra Plantation, one of a number of properties owned during the antebellum period by the fire-eater (a radical pro-slavery Southerner) and secessionist General John Quitman, and in the postbellum period by his descendents, primarily his son in law, a northern transplant, William Storrow Lovell. Via marriage, business, and politics, the Quitmans were related to a collection of elite planters in the region, often labeled “Natchez nabobs.”² Unlike his Russian counterpart, Lovell was neither born into a master class family, nor was he raised with the idea that he would one day take over the management of a demesne. However, like Vasili Yazikov, Lovell was a career military man in his formative years. Following his marriage to Antonia (Tonie) Quitman in June 1858, Lovell resigned his commission in May 1859 and retired to become a planter. His management of the plantation was put on hold in 1861, when he re-entered the military, this time on behalf of the Confederacy. It was only with the Civil War’s conclusion and his submission of an amnesty oath of allegiance that Lovell returned to his wife’s family cradle. On the eve of the war the plantation had registered 311 slaves.³

² D. Clayton James, *Antebellum Natchez* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1968), p. 136. The term originated from the European who made his fortune in the Orient, especially India. There is also evidence that its source is found in an Indian term, nawab, for great wealth and power, or a great governor or leader. Regarding Natchez, a Nabob was a member of a close-knit, pseudo-aristocratic group that amounted to about forty families in the area, related by an intricate web of both marriages and business ventures. In general, Nabobs were generally of Whiggish principles, definitely pro-union, and federalists. Obviously, as a secessionist, John Quitman was an exception to this prototype. In his early years, because he held rather elitist views, he was certainly not a Democrat. Although he fought for the Union in the Mexican American War, he soon became a Southern nationalist and filibusterer – one who promoted the acquisition of Cuba.

³ Robert E. May, *John A. Quitman: Old South Crusader* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1985), pp.130-140.

To the extent that it contributes to an understanding of the situation at both Yazikovo Selo and Palmyra, there are places in this study where comparative comments are made with respect to each demesne's neighbors. For example, comparing and contrasting the situation at Yazikovo Selo with other demesnes in both its immediate neighborhood and the province in general, especially with Vasili Yazikov's brother's estate, Undory, is important for understanding its typicalities and exceptionalisms. Alternatively, Palmyra was one of four plantations located on a pear shaped peninsula, Davis Bend, which jutted out into the Mississippi River just south of Vicksburg. Davis Bend was named after its most notorious residents, brothers Joseph and Jefferson Davis – the latter being the President of the Confederacy during the Civil War. Because of its notoriety and relative geographic isolation, Union armies secured the Bend early in the war and, expropriating the plantations there, earmarked it as a "Home Colony." The idea was that it would be populated by former slaves who would build their community and be direct beneficiaries of their toil. Although it was founded on idealist principles, the Home Colony was also a powerful political symbol in a public relations campaign: the Union founded a community of freed people on confiscated property of the Confederacy's President. It was also implemented as part of a strategic policy to line the banks of the Mississippi River with communities loyal to the Union.

It is significant that Palmyra Plantation was incorporated into the Davis Bend utopian experiment in social engineering. Information about what happened at Palmyra after emancipation can be gleaned from sources relating to the Davis plantations. Also, because it was one of a handful of settlements for former slaves that was spearheaded and overseen by Union officials, the freed people's experience at Palmyra during the war was

not typical with respect to most plantations in the South at that time. Yet, because the Davis Bend Home Colony was closely managed by Union overseers, ironically, it shared a number of characteristics with Yazikovo Selo, whose experience was fairly typical of what transpired on most Russian estates in the post-emancipation period. The most significant of these shared characteristics was an authoritarian management of freedom. The motivations behind this approach in each example included the maintenance of social control and the protection of the demesnes' economic integrity. Herein lay a paradox of emancipation: on the one hand, it was about ending coerced labor. On the other, it did not solve the "problem" of the demand for cheap labor on the demesne. Therefore, "management" of the freed people in each context focused on their labor. As a result, the form of labor after emancipation was crucial to the meaning of freedom in each context. Conversely, the emancipated peoples' expectations of freedom were often expressed in the context of labor. All this is important to understand when considering the crucial question, "What happened to labor on the demesne after emancipation?" In various ways the chapters which follow answer this question.

Although Yazikovo Selo and Palmyra Plantation were located on the largest river arteries in their respective countries, owned and managed by elite families, maintained by unfree labor prior to emancipation, and were roughly self sufficient, there were qualitative differences between the two. First, Yazikovo Selo is best characterized as both the Yazikov family nest and the home of generations of peasants. Indeed, like the vast majority of Russian estates, the land on which Yazikovo Selo was built was part of a grant awarded to an ancestor in the 17th century as part of the imperial strategy to expand Muscovy's control. Originally from New York, John Quitman acquired Palmyra

Plantation from his wife's relations in the 1840s. Organized around cotton production, its "community" was comprised of the main house and numerous out buildings, including a gin and press, as well as a store. The slave quarters included approximately thirty-five detached, white washed houses, arranged in uniform rows.⁴ Thus, taking into consideration each demesne's "personality" is important to an understanding why things played out as they did at each demesne after emancipation. In particular, Chapters 4 and 5 address this.

Another qualitative difference between the two demesnes in this study is that, while Vasili Yazikov would sell the estate outright to a local merchant in 1881, thus irrevocably cutting off the Yazikov family's ties to its noble nest, the Quitman/Lovells would go to great lengths to preserve Palmyra over the years following the Civil War. When the plantation house went up in flames in 1894, Lovell's daughter-in-law would demonstrate the family's attachment to the demesne when she wrote ". . .The dear old house! To think of it no longer in existence. To me it was consecrated by the happiness of my life there. . . .It is a real sorrow to think the dear old place is no more."⁵ It is also worth noting that when Vasili sold the estate to the merchant in 1881, a powerful source of continuity lay in the fact that most of the peasants still lived there. Indeed, to this day, most of the village's inhabitants are descendents of the estate's serfs. And while Davis Bend, Mississippi survived the Civil War, today it is a remote wilderness, devoid of any trace of its plantations and communities.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 139.

⁵ Caroline Couper Lovell to Tonie Quitman Lovell, February 11, 1894, Box 1, Folder 11, Lovell Family Papers, University of the South, Sewanee.

Still another difference between Yazikovo Selo and Palmyra Plantation is that, unlike the latter, the former did not experience the tumult of war, occupation, confiscation, and recovery. Indeed, that Palmyra Plantation was kept intact relative to most plantations in the South during the war, made it exceptional. Furthermore, it was during the crucial interim period of Union occupation that influenced how things played out once the Quitman/Lovell family recovered the plantation after the war. And although the Quitman/Lovell family recovered the plantation, William Storrow Lovell, unlike Vasili Yazikov, had not been the lord of the manor prior to emancipation. In other words, there was a strong element of continuity between the pre- and post-emancipation periods at Yazikovo Selo in terms of both ownership and stewardship. This notwithstanding, although he was an outsider, William Storrow Lovell found sources of continuity and legitimacy on the plantation as the husband of a member of the Quitman family. To the extent that it also helps answer the question as to why things played out as they did at each demesne after emancipation, the management style and effectiveness of both Vasili and Storrow are important points of comparison in this study.

Another difference has to do with the issue of race. Although today we recognize that it is a construct, during the 19th century race was fully accepted as both a scientific fact and a category of social distinction. However, whereas in Russia the freed serfs were the same race as their former masters – over the centuries Russians had enserfed their fellow Russians – in the Southern United States, the enslaved people were primarily those with African ancestry.⁶ All this notwithstanding, the *distinctions* between the noble, elite,

⁶ It is worth noting that, like American slavery, serfdom was a crucial component of Russia's economy. But, notwithstanding the fact that in the antebellum period in the United States the expansion of slavery was a major debate, serfdom emerged as part of a

landowner and his former serfs in Russia, and those between the former owner and the former slaves in the American South shared a number of similarities: down through the ages both sets of subaltern groups were targeted for their labor in regions where there was an abundance of land and a shortage of hands. The people of both subaltern groups were viewed by the elites in their respective regions as intrinsically “lazy,” “childlike,” requiring supervision, and potentially violent. Often both sets of people were viewed as “outsiders” by the elites *within* the country in which they lived. While the American slaves were distinct because of their darker skin color, it was routine for Russians to refer to the peasants as “dark people;” and some believed they literally had “black bones.” Russian philosopher Vissarion Belinski called the serfs “our white Negroes.” And although literal differences in “race” were absent with respect to the nobleman and the serf, the differences between social station (and/or corporation, and/or class, and/or estate) in Russia functioned much in the way that race did in 19th century America. When *de jure* emancipation ended these distinctions in both Russia and America, the lag of culture remained. Stereotypes and socially prescribed roles were entrenched and persisted. Furthermore, some characteristics of legislation pertaining to emancipation in each country reinforced and/or constructed new distinctions. Thus, the differences between each subaltern group’s status in each country were of degree but not kind.⁷

state policy in that populations were relocated and fixed to Russia’s geographic outer regions which the country had recently claimed.

⁷ For a discussion of this see Peter Kolchin, *Unfree Labor: American Slavery and Russian Serfdom* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1987), pp. 170-173, and 184-191. See also David Hecht, “Russian Intelligentsia and American Slavery” *Phylon* (1940-1956) 9:3 (3rd Qtr., 1948), pp. 265-269; and Cathy A. Frierson, *Peasant Icons: Representations of Rural People in Late Nineteenth- Century Russia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), *passim*.

Taking all this into consideration helps as I consider continuity and change in many places in this study.

There were also differences with respect to demography. In general, the roughly twenty-two million enserfed peasants in 1860 comprised roughly thirty percent of Russia's population, which was approximately seventy-four million. Conversely, in 1860 the United States contained roughly four million people of color and around twenty-three million white inhabitants in the North and approximately five million in the South. Therefore, the freed people there constituted a much smaller minority. This notwithstanding, in some Southern States, the black-white ratio was almost equal, and in some counties blacks were a majority. Indeed, the 1860 census showed that Mississippi had 343,899 whites and 436,631 blacks. Out of the 63,015 households in Mississippi, 30,943, or 49.1%, owned slaves. Of that percentage, only 8 households owned 300-499.⁸ To be sure, far more people in Russia were enserfed than those who were enslaved in the United States. But, relative to population numbers, the percentage of Russians who owned serfs was smaller than the percentage of Americans who owned slaves. While the Yazikovs were not part of the most elite echelon of the Russian nobility, neither were they in the lowest tier, which is often referred to as poverty stricken. When compared with the broad spectrum across Russia, the Yazikovs can be more accurately categorized as of the middling echelon in terms of wealth and prestige. Still, as members of the nobility, they were in the top 1.6% of the Russian population. And to be sure, they were one of the most elite noble families in Simbirsk Province. They owned many properties

⁸ For these statistics see Joseph C.G. Kennedy, ed., *Population of the United States in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns of the Eighth Census, Under the direction of the Secretary of the Interior* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1864.)

there as well as elsewhere in Russia, and, if Yazikovo Selo's population of approximately 800 people is an indication, it would be a fair estimation that they owned roughly 10,000 serfs. Conversely, the Quitman Lovell family was one of the wealthiest in the American South, with 300 slaves at Palmyra in 1860 and scores at the other three plantations, Belen, Live Oaks, and Springfield. In short, both the Quitman/Lovells and Yazikovs were among the most privileged in their respective regions.⁹

After emancipation, the numbers of freed people at Yazikovo Selo generally remained constant in relation to both the pre-emancipation and post-emancipation periods. During the Civil War, but *before de jure* emancipation, the numbers at Palmyra Plantation swelled because Union policy relocated hundreds, if not thousands, of refugee slaves there. Then after 1865, and after the Quitman/Lovell family recovered the property, the population count there stabilized to one which resembled the antebellum numbers.¹⁰ However, the post-emancipation numbers of freed people at Palmyra also reflected a substantial element of fluidity in that Lovell regularly hired seasonal workers from labor factors in New Orleans. This fact also represents a significant difference between the two demesnes in this study. Understanding these demographic characteristics helps an understanding of each demesne's "personality."

Although some of my findings in this study fall into line with some established interpretations, others do not. First, with respect to the Russian noble landowners, the general interpretation is that, because they could no longer count on their serf labor after

⁹ For a helpful explanation of master/slave, nobleman/serf ratios see Kolchin, *Unfree Labor*, pp. 51-57.

¹⁰ See Chapter 5 for the numbers after the family's recovery of Palmyra.

emancipation, their fate was one of steady decline.¹¹ This story was epitomized by the drama played out in Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*, in which a noblewoman, incapable of changing with the times and making decisions, sells her estate to a merchant who has the orchard chopped down in order to make way for the development of summer villas which he will rent for a profit. To the extent that Vasili Yazikov sold the estate in 1881 to a merchant who developed it for a profit, it appears that the *Cherry Orchard* narrative could fit. However, the trail of evidence suggests a far more nuanced picture.

Second, with respect to the Russian peasants after emancipation, both Western and Soviet historiography has generally agreed that the “terms” of freedom were so crushing that, arguably, the revolutions of 1905 and 1917 were direct outcomes.¹² In terms of economic progress and productivity, an evaluation of the situation at Yazikovo Selo can

¹¹ Russian history is full of accounts of the “declension of the nobility after emancipation” thesis. This is not to suggest that it is universally true. For an example of a recent debate see Seymour Becker, *Nobility and Privilege in Late Imperial Russia* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1986) and Roberta T. Manning, *The Crisis of the Old Order in Russia: Gentry and Government* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982). While overall landholdings may well have contracted after emancipation, Becker argues that this did not translate to the nobles’ declension. For a solid overview, see Theodore Taranovski, “Nobility in the Russian Empire: Some Problems of Definition and Interpretation” *Slavic Review* 47:2 (Summer, 1988), pp. 314-318.

¹² The historiography on the emancipation legislation’s adverse effects on the Russian freed serfs is vast. Soviet historiography especially promoted this thesis. Among others, Steven Hoch has argued that the peasants were not terribly adversely impacted. See his “Did Russia’s Emancipated Serfs Really Pay Too Much for Too Little Land? Statistical Anomalies and Long-Tailed Distributions” in *Slavic Review* 63:2 (Summer, 2004), pp. 247-274. Steven Nafziger has explained that by 1877 about 80% of former serfs had entered into Redemption Agreements. But this was uneven. For example, while in the far western provinces almost all estates had Agreements, in the central provinces, where Simbirsk Province was located, only about 55% had them. See Nafziger’s paper “Russian Serfdom and Emancipation: New Empirical Evidence.” <http://economics.yale.edu/sites/default/files/nafziger-121210.pdf> accessed and cited with the author’s permission, September 17, 2013.

be tricky, since 1) defining “progress” itself can be problematic, and 2) specific numbers for its agricultural output are nonexistent. This notwithstanding, both direct and circumstantial evidence suggest that, indeed, things did not go well at Yazikovo Selo after emancipation. Throughout this study, and in particular in Chapters 4 and 5, I explain why. In part, this was due to what I argue Yazikovo Selo’s inhabitants’ resistance to the adverse terms of the emancipation legislation as expressed in their labor performance, or lack thereof. On the one hand, their labor performance on the demesne can be described as exhibiting ambivalence. On the other, it can be interpreted as an illustration of, to borrow an expression of Steven Hahn’s, strategic passive retreat.¹³

Third, although it is true that in many ways William Storrow Lovell was typical of the “new master” prototype, and that Palmyra Plantation generally fared well in the post-emancipation cotton economy, this is not to suggest that there were no problems and recovery was even and certain.¹⁴ A close analysis of his plantation journals are replete with descriptions of constant struggles.

Finally, the traditional narrative with respect to the freed people in America is that, for a host of reasons, especially the fact that they did not receive land as a part of their

¹³ This is one of the main theses put forward in Hahn’s book *The Political Worlds of Slavery and Freedom* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009).

¹⁴ Janet Sharp Hermann, *Pursuit of a Dream* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1981), p. 173. See also Lawrence N. Powell, *New Masters: Northern Planters during the Civil War and Reconstruction* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1980), Chapters 1, 5, and 7; and James L. Roark, *Masters Without Slaves: Southern Planters in the Civil War and Reconstruction* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton and Company, 1977). While Hermann holds that the new post-emancipation planters adopted a “time is money” approach, Powell rejects this. See Hermann, *Ibid.*, p. 173 and Powell, *Ibid.*, p. 126.

liberation, they did not fare well in emancipation's aftermath.¹⁵ Indeed, the general consensus seems to be that, notwithstanding the marked break with the past that abolition represented, slavery was replaced with another form of servitude as exemplified by the institution of sharecropping. As the following chapters will show, an analysis of what played out at Palmyra Plantation demonstrates a far more nuanced conclusion, and why.

These and other findings demonstrate that an understanding of both the emancipation process and its outcomes in each region is enhanced by the comparative method: comparison brings into sharper focus the distinguishing characteristics of emancipation in each country. It also shows both similarities and dissimilarities between different places with respect to what freedom meant to the freed people and why. It also confirms the universal nature of the drive for freedom.

I have found a number of valuable resources. With respect to Yazikovo Selo, Vasili Yazikov's management performance, and the freed people there, I have a number of crucial pieces of information, including official records, as well as first- and second-hand, and circumstantial accounts. No personal or autobiographical records of both the former master and the freed people there exist for a number of reasons. The notorious 1864 fire in Simbirsk, the capital of Simbirsk Province, destroyed much of the library there which housed archival sources. Also, many historical records were lost because of subsequent

¹⁵ See Eric Foner *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988); *A Short History of Reconstruction, 1863-1877* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1990), especially pages 254-260; and *Nothing But Freedom: Emancipation and its Legacy* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1983); and Amy Dru Stanley *From Bondage to Contract: Wage Labor, Marriage, and the Market in the Age of Slave Emancipation* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

political and social upheaval which Russia experienced in the 20th century. Furthermore, as Chapter 4 will explain, even official, government accounts with respect to the state of affairs on most Russian estates in the 19th century do not exist. However, a number of sources documenting the accounts of Yazikov relatives, friends, and associates do. With respect to Palmyra Plantation, Lovell left detailed records in his plantation logs. Also, there are numerous letters by various members of the family, as well as official and government records. With respect to the freed peoples at both Yazikovo Selo and Palmyra Plantation, firsthand accounts are practically nonexistent given that, by and large, they were illiterate and/or did not have the opportunity to leave sustained, written records of their experiences. When they did leave accounts, they were most often recorded by elites who interpreted their subjects' accounts through their own prisms. Therefore, the approach I use to gauge the freed people's consciousness, as well as their responses to emancipation and interpretations of freedom, is to look at what they *did* and *did not do*. Thematic topics in my dissertation which illustrate this include expressions of assertion and resistance; their efforts to secure what they considered a "real" freedom rather than a nominal one (especially exemplified by their experiences with statutory and redemption agreements, and labor regulations and contracts); and their labor performance (or more correctly the degree to which they worked, and in what fashion). These themes are discussed in Chapters Two, Three, and Five respectively. (Chapter Four lays the groundwork for Chapter Five.) In Chapter Six, I conclude this study with an evaluation of the meaning of freedom in the context of education and other sources of sustenance.

This study examines the meaning of freedom at various strategic moments in a nascent stage of freedom. It also considers when and why expressions of freedom seemed to

make their strongest appearances. In also utilizes several thematic categories of analysis, such as immobility vs. mobility, and the implications which this dichotomy had on labor contracts and labor performance. While the Russian *Manifesto* attached the freed serfs to the land, it also preserved the integrity of their homes on the demesne. Therefore, while they did not have the option of voting with their feet, and leaving the demesne in search of a new home and/or work, or whatever, the freed serfs did have the security of tenure, and could not be “evicted.”¹⁶ On the contrary, although the freed peoples in America had great hopes of receiving land as part of the terms of freedom, they were neither awarded land nor attached to it. In a sense, at freedom’s door they were homeless. However, notwithstanding the cultural characteristics of the free labor theory, the element of mobility gave the freed peoples a powerful tool with which to leverage when it came to negotiating labor contracts in the post-emancipation period, when demand for their labor was great.

Another thematic category is wage labor. For example, in the Russian case the terms of emancipation were rigid and perpetual. Only with a Redemption Law passed in 1881 is a shift in the labor performance at Yazikovo Selo discerned.¹⁷ The Law mandated

¹⁶ As it will be explained below, the Russian emancipation legislation replaced the nobleman with the commune’s elders in terms of the village’s authority. Technically the peasants could “leave” the village, but only with the elders’ permission. Especially before 1881 the elders were hesitant to approve outmigration since they had to guard against losing the most productive members of the village, which would diminish their ability to pay taxes and meet redemption obligations. See Jeffrey Burds, *Peasant Dreams and Market Politics: Labor Migration and the Russian Village, 1861-1905* (Pittsburg, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1998), Parts I and II.

¹⁷ Although there was a wide variety of financial arrangements between peasants and noble landlords, among those historians who do discuss the Redemption Law of 1881, Allan K. Wildman makes it clear that the law mandated wage labor with the goal of making *barshchina* (*corvee*) obligations obsolete. See his “The Defining Moment: Land

wage labor, and the merchant who purchased the estate in 1881 began paying wages to the laborers there. Although it is not a part of this study, evidence shows that by 1900, Yazikovo Selo's production yields were one of the highest in the province.¹⁸ Conversely, the American emancipation legislation made possible a more pliable and evolutionary approach to contract and wage labor. Lovell frequently paid hired hands in wages. The incentive of wage labor appears to have been a crucial variable in both outcomes.

Finally, one note of caution has to do with the nature of emancipation in Russia compared with the United States. The facts on the ground in each country pose some organizational problems. State policies with respect to emancipation and the reactions to them in each context do not follow identical trajectories. Therefore, a brief discussion about the nature of emancipation in each country will be instructive.

The Nature of Emancipation in Russia and in the United States

In the Russian case, following the conclusion of the Crimean War in 1856, Tsar Alexander II set the country on a deliberative course of reforms, the centerpiece of which was emancipation. Liberation came to the serfs from the top down. It was pre-emptive and carefully managed by the Russian bureaucracy. The *Emancipation Manifesto*, issued in March 1861, was accompanied by a complicated, 400 page manual of sorts, the

Charters and the Post-Emancipation Agrarian Settlement in Russia, 1861-1863" *The Carl Beck Papers in Russian & East European Studies* No. 1205 (1996), pp. 7-9.

¹⁸ See "Ekonomika i Torgovlya" by Vyacheslav N. Yegorov, ed., *Simbirskii-Ulyanovskii Krai v Istorii Rossii* (Ulyanovsk, Russia: Korporatsia Tekhnologii Prodvizhenia, 2007), pp. 222-287; and N.S. Rakov, "Yazikovskiy Park" in *Ulyanovskaiia-Simbirskaiia Entsiklopedia*, t. II, N-Ya, V.N.Yegorov, ed., (Ulyanovsk, Russia: Simbirskaya Kniga, 2004), p. 473.

Regulations (Polozheniia). Anticipating peasant dissatisfaction with the terms of freedom, the Tsar dispersed hundreds of army units across the country on the eve of the *Manifesto*'s release to maintain social order and enforce its stipulations. The appearance of military units across the Russian land certainly signaled to the peasants that change was in the offing, and rumors were rampant. A Department of Peasant Affairs was established to aid former serfs' transition to freedom and to address their grievances. In an effort to preserve the supply of labor on the estate and prevent the mobility of a landless class, the Tsar's legislation attached the peasants to the land. Furthermore, although the Russian emancipation legislation effectively broke the traditional source of authority over the serfs (the nobleman), it replaced it directly with the village "commune" (*obshchina*, i.e. village community, or literally village society), which was directly supervised by the village elders; and indirectly with a host of other government officials.

The crucial legal tool for implementing emancipation was a contract of sorts, known as the Statutory Charter (*Ustavnaya Gramota*). Within one year of the emancipation date, it was supposed to be drafted on every estate across Russia. By March 1863, the Russian authorities expected that all Charters would be completed. Ideally, both the former master and former male serfs *in toto* (in the form of a few representatives) were to agree to it with their signatures. But it could also be imposed on the peasants without their agreement. This Charter defined the land allotments which the former serf owner was required to earmark for his/her former serfs. The *Regulations* prescribed that the allotted land fall within a range between a maximum and a minimum amount. This prescribed range varied from province to province, based on such calculations as the quality and productivity of soil. A crucial player in the negotiation of the Charter

contract was the Peace Mediator (a.k.a. Peace Arbitrator), an official who was supposed to mediate differences and moderate negotiations between the noble land owners and their former serfs. No Charter was official without the Mediator's approval.¹⁹

But the *Manifesto* also mandated that the nobleman be compensated for the land expropriated by the state on behalf of the freed people. The peasants were to pay their former master for the land they were allotted. Since they did not have the money to pay for it, the government was scheduled to advance most of the price of the land, about 80%, directly to each nobleman in the form of bonds. The government's reimbursement to noble landlords for the land they earmarked to their former serfs could become messy. For example, noblemen who were indebted to the government for whatever reason would have their reimbursement made net of a deduction for any amounts owed. The peasants were to reimburse the government with 6% interest in installments spread out over 49 years. They were also responsible for paying the remaining 20% to the noble landlord directly. Ideally, once the peasants had fully paid for the land, or they had entered into a Redemption Agreement which scheduled payments thereafter, they were "redeemed" and therefore free. But until they entered into the payment schedule, the peasants were classified as "temporarily obligated." As temporarily obligated peasants, they had a number of commitments to their former masters, which the Statutory Charters defined. Generally speaking, these obligations were a combination of *barshchina* (*corvee*), *obrok* (*quitrent*), and payments in silver rubles for individual garden plots. The village commune – not each individual male peasant – was responsible for the obligations.

¹⁹ See Roxanne Easley, *The Emancipation of the Serfs in Russia: Peace Arbitrators and the Development of Civil Society* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2008), pp. 104-118.

Although I have simplified the requirements itemized in both the *Manifesto* and the *Regulations*, it is clear, they were authoritative, formulaic, and complicated. It is also clear that the Charters initiated an intermediate stage of a protracted emancipation process. The Tsar's authorities were correct when they anticipated that the peasants would object to the conditional terms of freedom. Therefore, towards the end of 1861, the Tsar issued an edict that the noble landlords were to proceed with implementing their Charters even if the peasants did not sign them! Thus the "contractual" element of the Charter was a sham.²⁰

While emancipation in Russia was a prolonged affair with numerous conditions, in America it was swift in that it was enshrined in a forty-three word Amendment to the Constitution in December 1865. Furthermore, unlike the Russian former masters, former

²⁰ Literature on the emancipation of the serfs is vast. For a brief overview see Peter Kolchin, "Some Thoughts on Emancipation in Comparative Perspective: Russia and the United States South," *Slavery and Abolition* (11), (December, 1990), pp. 351-368; "Some Controversial Questions Concerning Nineteenth-Century Emancipation from Slavery and Serfdom" in M.L. Bush, ed., *Serfdom and Slavery: Studies in Legal Bondage* (1996), pp. 42-67; and "After Serfdom: Russian Emancipation in Comparative Perspective" in *The Terms of Labor: Slavery, Serfdom, and Free Labor* Stanley Engerman, ed., (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1999), pp. 87-115. For greater detail see Daniel Field, *The End of Serfdom: Nobility and Bureaucracy in Russia, 1855-1861* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976); Bruce Lincoln, *The Great Reforms: Autocracy, Bureaucracy, and the Politics of Change in Imperial Russia* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1990); Terrence Emmons, *Emancipation of the Russian Serfs* (Geneva, IL: Holt McDougal, 1970); Ben Eklof, and Stephen Frank, eds., *The World of the Russian Peasants: Post-Emancipation Culture and Society* (Boston, MA: Unwin Hyman, 1990); David Moon, *Abolition of Serfdom in Russia, 1762-1907* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2002); Ben Eklof, et.al., *Russia's Great Reforms, 1855-1881* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994); Peter A. Zaionchkovsky, *The Abolition of Serfdom in Russia*, Edited and Translated by Susan Wobst (Gulf Breeze, Florida: Academic International Press, 1978); and *Provedenie v zhizn' krest'ianskoi reformy 1861* (Moscow, USSR: 1958); and L. G. Zakharova, *Autocracy and the Abolition of Serfdom in Russia, 1856-1861* trans. and ed. by Gary M. Hamburg (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1987).

slave owners were neither commanded to earmark land for their former slaves, nor were they compensated for their “loss” in “property,” as slaves had been categorized. All this notwithstanding, emancipation did appear to be prolonged insofar as it made its first appearance *de facto*, when news of the war’s commencement reached the slaves. Rumors of liberation were rampant. While the war officially began as a conflict between those Southern states which seceded and the federal government, it set in motion a protracted emancipation process. With many white men leaving their plantations and homesteads to go and fight for the Confederacy, the traditional sources of authority over the slaves were compromised. Also, and especially as Union troops were rumored to be within close proximity, many slaves left the plantations, seeking refuge in the armies’ wakes. This, in turn, forced both the armies and the federal government to develop policies to deal with them. It is an irony of history that in Russia emancipation was an outcome of that country’s defeat in the Crimean War, and yet in the United States, emancipation was contingent on Union victory.²¹

Also, while it was during the extraordinary context of modern war that the emancipation process was managed from the top down, there was tension between this approach and the more traditional form of governing in the American federalist system. This was true after the war’s conclusion when the return to normality was contingent on

²¹ Similarly, historical literature on the emancipation of the slaves is immense. For a brief discussion see Peter Kolchin, *Ibid.* For greater detail refer to Foner, *Reconstruction*; Ira Berlin, et. al., *Slaves no More: Three Essays on Emancipation and the Civil War* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Leon Litwack, *Been in in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1979); Steven Hahn, *The Political Worlds of Slavery and Freedom* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009); and James Oakes, *Freedom National: The Destruction of Slavery in the United States, 1861-1865* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2013).

reconciling centralized and federated governance. What played out was a series of competing and/or contradicting laws, rules, and regulations at the military, state, and federal levels with respect to the freed people. For example, the *Preliminary Emancipation Proclamation* of September 22, 1862 declared freedom to slaves in all states of the Confederacy that did not return to the Union by the new year. The final *Emancipation Proclamation* issued on January 1, 1863 named ten states to which emancipation applied. Unlike the Tsar's *Manifesto*, it made no mention of former owners' or freed peoples' responsibilities, other than to enjoin that the freed people "abstain from all violence, unless in necessary self-defence. . . ." Neither did it guarantee land to the freed people, nor were there any redemption payments. There were no conditional freedoms and no temporary statuses or obligations. Although the *Proclamation* implored the freed peoples to "labor faithfully for reasonable wages," it did not delve into the issue of labor contracts and requirements. Indeed, it encoded the purpose of liberation as a "necessary war measure for suppressing said rebellion." Similar to the Tsar, who, "By the Grace of God" was "Called by Divine Providence" to bequeath to the serfs "full rights of free rural inhabitants," President Lincoln invoked the powers vested in him by the Constitution and "the gracious favor of Almighty God," declaring "the military. . . will recognize and maintain the freedom" of the former slaves.

The Reconstruction Amendments followed. The Thirteenth, which constitutionally encoded the prohibition of slavery, was ratified on December 6, 1865. The Fourteenth, which, among other things, both defined those born on American soil as U.S. citizens and applied the Bill of Rights to the States, was ratified on July 9, 1868. The Fifteenth, which gave African American men the franchise, was ratified on February 3, 1870. When

Mississippi passed the so called “black codes” in late 1865, imposing many forms of social and labor controls, Congress replied with a Civil Rights Act in the spring of 1866.²²

Thus, although the post-emancipation era in Russia was marked by a period of reforms, Russians never had the task of “reconciling” interventionist and laissez-faire approaches to governing, as well as dealing with the variety of often competing pieces of legislation. Furthermore, whereas in Russia the terms of freedom were prescribed in advance of the event, in the American case they were mostly worked out afterwards. The emancipation of American slaves was far less micro managed by the central government than what happened in Russia. But it did have bureaucratic arms of government as well as private voluntary organizations to help with the emancipation process. In addition to the War and Treasury Departments, the Freedmen’s Bureau was created in March 1865 to assist the freed peoples with food, housing, education, political rights, and labor contracts. In many ways the Bureau was similar to the Russian Department of Peasant Affairs. A comparison of these is an important one for future study. And although the Russian Peace Mediator was not an employee of the Department, there were a number of parallels between this official and representatives of both the Freedmen’s Bureau and the United States Army, such as Superintendents and Assistant and Subassistant Commissioners for the former and Provost Marshals for the latter. The roles of the Peace Mediators and Provost Marshals in the emancipation process is another important topic for future study: although the former was not a rank member of the military as was the

²² Although President Johnson vetoed it, Congress was able to garner enough votes to override another veto.

latter, both had sweeping authority during the emancipation era, and both served as intermediaries between the freed people and former masters.

One component that was shared by both countries' emancipation legislation has to do with gender. While emancipation freed *all* those who had been enserfed or enslaved, whether voting rights, contractual obligations, or land allotments, various legislative examples cited above explicitly pertained to the freed *men*. Implicit in this were the notions that men were the heads of their households, the breadwinners, and the recipients of citizenship. Although abolition ended their unfree status, women were not included in many rights or privileges which each society assumed went hand in hand with freedom. This notwithstanding, women were citizens with rights. For example, in Russia they could petition courts, and in the United States, they were covered by the Civil Rights Act and the 14th Amendment.

Furthermore, as husbands, both Vasili Yazikov and William Storrow Lovell benefitted from the legal and financial tools which they had at their disposal as a result of their gender. In addition, they both benefitted from their marriages. For example, Vasili Yazikov would "sell" his city mansion to his wife in 1864, most likely to avoid mortgage payments on it as well as make it possible for *her* to then re-mortgage it. And William Storrow Lovell acquired Palmyra Plantation via his marriage. Like his Russian counterpart, Lovell and his wife collaborated on a number of financial maneuvers intended to save money or stave off debts.

Clearly, the emancipation of Yazikovo Selo's serfs and Palmyra Plantation's slaves occurred in the midst of contexts which generally featured similar components and issues, but which varied in degree and sequence. Some of these included modern war,

the presence of armies sent in to enforce liberation and order, the role of state edicts, shifting sources of authority, social beliefs and pre-conceptions about the subaltern groups, and economies which depended on the freed peoples' labor. How and under what circumstances did freedom make its first appearance to the serfs at Yazikovo Selo and the slaves at Palmyra Plantation? The contrast could not have been greater.

Liberation Set in Motion

The election of Abraham Lincoln as President on November 6, 1860 set the stage for the emancipation of the slaves at Palmyra Plantation. It represented the final straw in what many white Southerners perceived as central power impingement on their rights of self determination and threat to the institution of slavery. One by one most Southern states seceded from the Union. Mississippi's Secession Ordinance was issued on January 9, 1861. On February 10 Jefferson Davis, whose plantation Brierfield was adjacent to Palmyra on Davis Bend, learned that he had been elected provisional President of the Confederacy. The next day he left for the Confederacy's original capital, Montgomery, Alabama. Three months later, the bombardment at Fort Sumter signaled the war's commencement.

Taking the Mississippi River was a crucial part of the Union's multi-pronged offensive strategy to retrieve the rebellious states. Securing the river would both divide the South and deprive it of its primary channel for the transportation of soldiers, supplies, and cotton. As early as the summer of 1862 Admiral Farragut made his way up the river from New Orleans, which had fallen to the Union in April. At a number of points along the banks of the river, including Davis Bend peninsula, fugitive slaves, braving alligators,

snakes, and the unknown, hid among the cypresses, cottonwoods, and willows, and watched and waited for one of “Massa Linkum’s” boats to pass so they could signal for it to stop. A passenger on a Union side wheel steamer, the *Maria Denning*, noted that, keeping pace with the boat, they would run along the shore and wave frantically trying to convey “their eagerness to be taken aboard.” Amid the fear that it was a trap, the boat did not stop. On another occasion, however, the *Maria Denning* did accept refugees. “When they were awake,” recalled this same passenger, their solemn demeanor was occasionally punctuated with audible expressions of “relief and joy.”²³

It is in this context that the Quitman/Lovell family put its principles on the line. Remaining loyal to kin and section was one and the same. The Quitman daughters, including Tonie, who was married to William Storrow Lovell, and Louisa, who was married to Tonie’s husband’s brother, Joseph Lovell, celebrated the creation of the Confederacy. While Tonie fell into a “fighting pitch,” Louisa condemned Northern abolitionists as “wretched fanatics,” whom she “most thoroughly hated.”²⁴ If relocating from the North and immersing themselves in the social, economic, and cultural milieu did not evidence the ease with which the Lovell brothers made the transition from their northern roots to being Southern nationalists, then certainly their actions after the war’s commencement did. Along with another brother, Mansfield, the Quitman sisters’ brother, Henry, and other extended family members, they actively participated in a

²³ James T. Currie, *Enclave: Vicksburg and Her Plantations, 1863-1870* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 1980), p. xx.

²⁴ Robert E. May, “Southern Elite Women, Sectional Extremism and the Male Political Sphere: The Case of John A. Quitman’s Wife and Female Descendants, 1847-1931” *Journal of Mississippi History* 50 (November, 1988), pp. 251-285.

variety of military efforts on the South's behalf during the war.²⁵ Of significance, the Lovell brothers were in charge of defending New Orleans. When the city fell to Union forces on April 25, 1862, owing to their northern roots, public opinion scapegoated them: "Yes, a Massachusetts man. . . was in command. . . when. . . the city surrendered without firing a gun. And this is one of the Northern generals who came over to our side *after* [*sic*] the battle of Manassas."²⁶ From here, Storrow became an Inspector General under Lt. General Pemberton, who was in charge of defending Vicksburg. After Vicksburg's surrender, he went east and ran blockade runners from Wilmington, N.C. to both Bermuda and Halifax. It was in this capacity that he was in London, England negotiating supplies when the war ended. Thus, unlike his Russian counterpart, who, as a loyal subject of the Tsar, did not resist emancipation, Lovell did so by participating in the war. Also crucial to this comparison is an understanding that, while the Quitman/Lovell properties were devoid of any adult white male presence for the war's duration and emancipation's unfolding, Vasili Yazikov was not only not removed from his demesne,

²⁵ After Sumter, Joseph Lovell left Palmyra Plantation for the Virginia front. In September 1861 Storrow organized the Quitman Light Artillery in Natchez, and then secured a major's commission in the 1st Georgia Battalion of the Provisional Army of the Confederacy. Stationed at Pensacola harbor, Storrow patrolled the coastline for enemy troops and blockade cruisers. This was completely in line with Storrow's career path. For example, in 1850 he sailed as the second officer on the brig *Advance* in the first Grinnell Expedition to determine the fate of Sir John Franklin. This became a notorious story of epic proportions since the ship was frozen in the ice for 260 days and drifted over 1,100 miles. In 1853 he sailed again for the Arctic as the master of the search for Dr. Kane. He received medals of honor from Queen Victoria for this. See Rowland, Dunbar, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mississippi History: Comprising Sketches of Counties, Towns, Events, Institutions and Persons Volume, II* (Madison, WI: Selwyn A. Brant, 1907), pp. 133-4; and Ezra J. Warner, *Generals in Gray: Lives of the Confederate Commanders* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1959), pp. 77 and 194.

²⁶ John B. Jones, *A Rebel War Clerk's Diary, Vol. I* (Philadelphia, PA: J.B. Lippincott & Co., 1866), Entry for June 25, 1862, pp. 135-136.

but he had an integral part in the entire process, per the directives of the Russian *Manifesto*.²⁷

When news of the Confederate routing of Union troops at the First Manassas reached them, the Quitman daughters' optimism was reinforced by the apparent joy expressed by their slaves. Clearly, Louisa believed that slavery would endure when she wrote to Joe:

When I went out to the pantry and kitchen the servants all beset me with enquiries after "Master" and the good creatures. . .all [sent their best regards to Master] They have *all* behaved extremely well. . . .They are. . .very sympathizing with us all. They often speak to me about the war and there was rejoicing. . .at the news of our recent glorious victory in Virginia.²⁸

But optimism soon faded. By September 1861 there were fears that a slave insurrection was imminent. Then, Louisa wrote Joseph that slave "carelessness" had caused a fire at Palmyra which "destroyed the gin, all its appurtenances, all bagging, all unginning cotton, and 300 pressed bales," and that "quite a few of the blacks had 'run off.'"²⁹ Since the slaves were "pillaging stores and running off unafraid of repercussions," the overseer had "taken to drink." Next, due to the naval blockade, as early as Christmas 1861, the Quitman women experienced great difficulty coming up with money to purchase gifts, especially for their slaves who met them with the "ever

²⁷ Indeed, by sitting on Simbirsk District's Commission for the Preparation of Emancipation of 1857, Vasili Yazikov assisted the process. That he was the Director of Simbirsk District's Department of Peasant Affairs also demonstrates this.

²⁸ May, "Southern Elite Women," p. 265.

²⁹ May, *John. A. Quitman*, p. 354.

recurring greeting[s] of Christmas gif' miss!"³⁰ By January 1862 they were experiencing shortages of the "most basic items."

It was at this point that the Quitman women relocated to their city mansion, Monmouth, in Natchez. Although its permanent occupation would coincide with the siege of Vicksburg in the early summer of 1863, in May of 1862 Natchez' mayor quietly surrendered to Farragut's forces. Because there was a large pro-Union contingent in Natchez, the city was largely left alone by Northern forces. However, because of their father's notoriety as a fire eater and proponent of secession, Monmouth was repeatedly targeted. Tonie's sister Rose documented Union "depredations." They "confiscated all of the horses and farm animals," and reduced the property to a "wilderness" by repeatedly "raiding the kitchen, the vegetable gardens, and the fruit orchards," as well as chopping down the oak forest for firewood.³¹ Any revenue from any of their plantation holdings was completely halted. Meanwhile, with inflation setting in, the Quitman women had no choice but to pawn items in order to purchase the most basic necessities. Furthermore, one by one, the servants began to leave. In complete despair, Louisa would write to Joseph "I have never. . .been [so] alarmed before," adding that ". . .It is. . .dangerous to be so left alone as *we* are."³²

As Farragut's fleet proceeded north, he sent out raiding parties. One of these moved in on Davis Bend in June 1862 and burned to the ground Hurricane, the plantation owned

³⁰ May, "Southern Elite Women," p. 266.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 270; and Annie Rosalie Quitman Diary, August 8, 1863, Quitman Family Papers (UNC).

³² May, *Ibid.*, pp. 266 and 268.

by the elder brother of the Confederacy's President. As Hurricane went up in flames, Palmyra Plantation's overseer burned 413 bales of cotton rather than allow their seizure by Union troops. By the end of the summer Palmyra was visited by Confederate troops who, for the same reason, destroyed cotton seed that could have produced 60 bales.³³

Over the next several months it was relatively quiet on the Bend. In early spring Admiral David Porter took an interest in the freed people there, writing that “. . .they prefer freedom,” and he believed them to be “fully capable of supporting themselves” as they were “Naturally astute at making money; and when they are not it is an exception to the rule.” He also believed their character was related to that of their masters. Where they had not been treated like “. . .brutes and kept in ignorance, they had profited.” Yet, Porter attributed their leaving to “the natural disposition of the Negro. . .to run away, and be idle.” Although he did not explain why, he noted that “Those. . .at Davis Bend” offered “a strong contrast” to “many on the river.”³⁴

In May 1863 Farragut's fleet approached Palmyra and another punishing attack ensued. Although the *New York Herald* reported that “everything of value” on the peninsula had either been destroyed or carried away, Palmyra's main house had been spared.³⁵

³³ May, *John A. Quitman*, pp. 352-353.

³⁴ Thavolia Glymph, “The Second Middle Passage: The Transition from Slavery to Freedom at Davis Bend, Mississippi,” Ph.D. Dissertation, Purdue University, 1994, pp. 66-70.

³⁵ James Wilford Garner, *Reconstruction in Mississippi* (New York, NY: The MacMillan Company, 1901), p. 252.

While liberation would be declared in the *Emancipation Proclamation* on January 1, 1863, the armies were clearly the harbingers of freedom well before that. But the *meaning* of freedom remained to be seen. For it was inextricably linked to and contingent on the war's progress. It was also linked to how the freed people interpreted it. This, too, was susceptible to the vagaries of the war context. Freedom came in bits and pieces and was potentially both pliable and elastic. For the slaves on the Bend the war presented at once an opportunity for and a constraint upon their freedom. With respect to the former, they seized the moment to flag Union representatives and, indeed, leave the plantation. With respect to the latter, their freedom was perhaps best illustrated by Union policies associated with the occupation of plantations and supervision of the refugees, or contraband, as the former slaves came to be known. As will be explained in Chapter 3, when Union forces occupied the plantations at Davis Bend, including Palmyra, they implemented an experiment in freedom well before the Thirteenth Amendment was ratified. Freedom for the former slaves during the Home Colony period was closely supervised. This continued through to the end of the war in April 1865. That same month the Freedmen's Bureau was established by Congress. In the summer of 1865 the Quitman/Lovell family began the process of recovering Palmyra Plantation. It is instructive to remember that, up to this point, all that had played out at Palmyra was *prior* to the Thirteenth Amendment's ratification. In the midst of the tumult of the Civil War freedom made its first appearance there.

Meanwhile, liberation had also commenced in Simbirsk Province in the spring of 1861. Although the sound of battles and guns did not confirm to the serfs at Yazikovo Selo that emancipation was imminent, armies certainly were tools of both the

implementation and the enforcement of liberation, as well as social control. Indeed, the Tsar had preemptively ordered the military's readiness to quell any disturbances or rebellions should they develop after the *Manifesto's* release. As early as 1856, following the Crimean War, soldiers were relocated to provincial barracks throughout Russia. One General and two infantry units were sent to Simbirsk. This was the first time since the Pugachev Rebellion nearly one hundred years before that military units were sent to the Province.³⁶ Then, in 1858 Alexander II reminded the provincial governors of the *Manifesto's* imminence, and that the armies were at their disposal for the purpose of maintaining order. In addition, government directives set in motion countless organizational committees to study and plan how emancipation could unfold in the midst of the characteristics and particularities of each province.³⁷

In the same way that the timing of Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation was issued for strategic and symbolic reasons on January 1, 1863, so too was the Tsar's *Emancipation Manifesto*. Because the foremost concern of Russian authorities was peasant unrest, the *Manifesto* was issued on the eve of Holy Lent, February 19, 1861.(O.S.)³⁸ In the Russian Orthodox Tradition, *Forgiveness Sunday* represented the most solemn, introspective, and abstemious of religious holidays. Presumably this was

³⁶ N.A. Krylov, "Nakanun'e Velikikh Reform" *Istoricheskii Vestnik* #9 (Sentyabr, 1903), pp. 286-821 and 787.

³⁷ S.B. Okun' and K.V. Sivkov, eds., *Krestyanskoe dvizhenie v Rossii v 1857-1861 gg.: Sbornik dokumentov, t. II* (Moscow, USSR: Sotsial'no-ikonomiceskoi literaturi, 1963), pp. 24-25.

³⁸ Until the Bolshevik takeover in 1917, Russia was on the Julian Calendar, which was, in the 19th century, twelve days behind the Gregorian Calendar. In the 20th century, it was thirteen days behind. Hence the O.S. (old style) N.S. (new style) abbreviations.

the time of year that the serfs would be the most subdued, forgiving, and, literally, sober. Furthermore, it coincided with a pause in the work calendar. This temporal cushion was important for an adjustment period prior to the intense sowing season's commencement in the spring, when the integrity of labor was crucial. Across the Russian land in churches, town and village squares, and markets the *Manifesto* was read to the public by literate priests and Marshals of the Nobility.³⁹

Although there does not appear to be any record of the Manifesto's reading on Emancipation Day at Yazikovo Selo, a number of inferences are possible. First, given that Vasili Yazikov had been a sitting member of Simbirsk District's Commission for the Preparation of Emancipation in 1857, as well as the fact that he was the Marshal of the Nobility for the district in which Yazikovo Selo was located, it is highly probable that he himself might have read the *Manifesto* on his estate. Indeed, on April 17, 1863 Vasili received a Distinguished Medal for the Successful Implementation of the Tsar's Decree

³⁹ Sostavil K.E.T. *Spravochnaya kniga dlya uездnykh predvoditeley dvorianstva* (Sankt Peterburg, Russia: tipografiia S. Volpianskago, 1887). In Russia the institution of the Marshal of the Nobility was two-tiered: Each province had one, a peer elected Head of the noble corporation, The Noble Society, which was governed by the Provincial Assembly of the Nobility. But each district within each province also had an elected Marshal of the Nobility, who, in turn, answered to the Provincial Marshal. Each District Marshal performed countless formal and informal functions. See G.M. Hamburg, "Portrait of an Elite: Russian Marshals of the Nobility, 1861-1917" *Slavic Review* 40:4 (Winter, 1981), pp. 585-602. See also I.S. Romashin, "Krest'ianskaya Reforma v Simbirskoy Guberniya" *Uchenye Zapiski*, t. xxi (Ulyanovsk, USSR: Ulyanovskiy Gosudarstvennyi Pedinstitut (UGPI), 1969), p. 15 which states that the *Polozheniia* was issued on March 5, 1861 (O.S.) in churches. Larissa Yershova has also indicated that all manifestos in Simbirsk Province were read in estate churches. Interview with historian Larissa Yershova, Director Literaturnogo Muzei Dom Yazikovikh filial Ulyanovskogo Oblastnogo Kraevedcheskogo Muzeya, Ulyanovsk, Russia, May 31, 2010.

of Emancipation.⁴⁰ It is also equally plausible, however, that it was read to Yazikovo Selo's inhabitants by the village priest since the demesne was a parish.

There are a number of descriptions of the *Manifesto's* reading throughout Simbirsk Province that are instructive. Gendarme Officer A.A. Essen wrote to the Tsar

Your imperial highness gave me a command to go to Simbirsk Province and assist with the implementation of the Manifesto Regulations. Upon my arrival I gave the Manifesto and the Regulations to the provincial governor to give to church leaders. Four thousand copies were printed and on March 9 they were distributed to bureaucrats in district capitals and churches across the province, for literate village priests to read to the people. Forty people from the police headquarters were also sent out to keep order as the Manifesto was being read. I am happy to report that the Manifesto was read and complete calm and order are in place, and your good will was accepted with gratitude. I had a chance to see this for myself at the market on March 10. . . .

Officer Essen added that he had observed in the time since the "Manifesto's reading, the people, far from celebrating and going to the liquor stores, began to pray and reserved special prayers for your majesty's health and well being." Essen then commented that it was impossible to define the exact impact of freedom on the peasants because they had not yet been introduced to the "complete rights and obligations" because the *Regulations* had not yet been explained to them. And he warned that "the Manifesto was smooth on paper," but "whoever wrote it forgot about the ravine and it's through it that you have to walk."⁴¹ How prescient Essen was, for, just as the Quitmen women's optimism faded as reality set in, so too would the peasants' apparent uniform obedience be short lived.

⁴⁰ GAUO f. 88, op. 5, d. 92, l. 15.

⁴¹ Report from Gendarme Officer A.A. Essen to Alexander II, 18 March 1861 in Leonid Mikhailovich Ivanov, *Krest'ianskoe Dvizhenie v Rossii v 1861-1869 gg.: sbornik dokumentov*. (Moscow, USSR: Mysl', 1964), pp. 213-214.

Indeed, as events would show, the peasants' reception was about to take a sharp turn for the worse.

Another person, who was a manager on an estate owned by one of Vasili Yazikov's close relatives, and would soon become a Peace Mediator, documented the excitement associated with emancipation. N.A. Krylov observed that on "March 9, during the spring fair in Simbirsk, the true news of the real freedom arrived." People gathered at the "church square on the venets [promenade on the bluff overlooking the Volga]" and heard the news. Indeed, a rumor floated among the crowd that one of the "merchants from the town of Spas brought to the Simbirsk market a copy of the Manifesto and wouldn't sell it for even 1,000 rubles! He was smart." And Krylov added that rumors had it that the merchant ". . . kept it and put the sheet on an icon in his home and showed it to the chief of police!"⁴²

Still another wrote "On Saturday, March 11, during the first week of the Great Feast, in Usolie, there took place a holy prayer in which the local clergy, in the presence of a local sheriff, read the Manifesto from February 19."⁴³

Finally, one reporter described the *Manifesto's* reception in the following way:

Instead of noisy explosions of joy by listening to the Manifesto of liberation the people graciously crossed themselves and bowed low, and put candles to local icons and prayed for the Tsar. This event took place in villages and cities, according to the request of

⁴² N.A. Krylov, "Vospominaniia Mirovogo Posrednika pervogo priziva o vvedenii v deistvie Polozheniya 19-go Fevralia 1861 goda" *Russkaiia Starina* 74:6 (April, 1892), p. 83.

⁴³ N.V. Guryev, *Kraevedcheskiy sbornik vypusk no. III* (Ulyanovsk, USSR: Obshchestvo izucheniia Ulyanovskogo Kraya, 1928), p. 30. (Usolie was the sprawling estate of the famed Orlov-Davidovy noble family. Today the mansion still stands overlooking the Volga River.)

some people [Indeed] they drank far less than [they normally do] as a result of the declaration.⁴⁴

What a striking contrast between the two contexts in which freedom made its first appearance. While the American setting was one of tumult and war, the Russian setting was a context which evidenced carefully planned order. In the American case, freedom became both a weapon of war *and* something to be seized and acted on by the slaves. In the Russian context the peasants appear to have met freedom with sobriety. While freedom was not “read” to the slaves anywhere in the American setting, in the Russian case specific people and places were selected to deliver and mark emancipation symbolically. That village priests read the *Manifesto* in church settings was a matter of pragmatism: they were literate *and* they possessed both moral authority and imperial legitimacy. Conversely, *any* Union representative appears to have been perceived as a potential liberator. In both contexts, it was elites who documented the events that set freedom in motion and the freed people’s responses to it. Notwithstanding the peaceful and religious nature of the date of Russian emancipation, like that of its American counterpart, armies were both the harbingers and enforcers of emancipation. And both the Tsar and President Lincoln invoked God’s authority and blessings in the *Manifesto* and *Proclamation*. It is also clear that the traditional sources of authority in each context had been weakened. The implications of this for the meaning of freedom remained to be seen, however, as the next chapter will show.

⁴⁴ “Otmena Krepostnogo Prava” *Doklady Ministerstva vnutrennikh del o posledstviakh krestyanskoi reformy, M-L* (Leningrad, USSR: Izdatel’stvo akademii nauk USSR, 1950), p. 7.

Chapter 2

THE MEANING OF FREEDOM IN THE IMMEDIATE POST-EMANCIPATION PERIOD: CONDITIONS, EXPECTATIONS, AND RESISTANCE

Following what had been a peaceful reception of the Tsar's *Emancipation Manifesto* in February 1861, Russia experienced a wave of peasant disturbances on the eve of the sowing season that spring. For it was then that reality set in with respect to the Tsar's terms of liberation. Rumors about the meaning of freedom were rampant among the peasants, and they quickly came to question the *Manifesto's* legitimacy. Simbirsk Province was not exempt from the turmoil. In reference to one disturbance, Simbirsk's Governor reported in May to the Minister of Internal Affairs in St. Petersburg that "When [the peasants] were called to the estate office by the manager for plowing instructions they showed their disobedience and responded to an order to be compliant by yelling 'not one of us will go to the barshchina and we'll not listen to the local sheriff, the manager, the elders, the boss, or anyone even if you cut off our heads.'" And they continued, "Now we are free and we don't have to work anymore." The Governor noted that "Most of all they constantly repeated the first words of the *Manifesto* 'By God's Mercy,' arguing that their freedom came from God."¹ Such rhetoric evidenced a powerful argument, locating the source and dispenser of freedom in God.

¹ I.S. Romashin, *Ocherki ekonomiki Simbirskoy Gubernii 17-19 vv.* (Ulyanovsk, USSR: Ulyanovskiy oblastnoy institut usovershenstvovaniya uchitelei, 1961), p. 36; and S.B. Okun' and K.V. Sivkov, eds., *Krestyanskoe dvizhenie v Rossii v 1857-1861 gg.: sbornik dokumentov, t. II* (Moscow, USSR: Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoi literaturi, 1963), p. 471, 10 May 1861 Report #178 Simbirsk Governor Izvekov to M. of Internal Affairs P.A. Valuev.

The American South also witnessed a wave of excitement following the climactic conclusion to what was, arguably, the most tumultuous episode in its history. While the Confederacy's surrender in the spring of 1865 made freedom tangible, Congress' ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment in early December made it a fact. Just as the freed serfs asserted *their* interpretation of freedom in the immediate post-emancipation period – but on the eve of the crucial sowing season – so too did the freed slaves challenge its meaning in the temporal gap between liberation and the commencement of the next planting season's work. As in Russia, the situation in the American South was one where emancipation was juxtaposed with both the economic realities on the ground and conflicting expectations about the meaning of freedom. The state of Mississippi was not exempt from the turmoil. One Freedmen's Bureau officer reported in November 1865 that the freed people there had little interest in hiring themselves out for the next year since they fully expected by Christmas to be given land. He continued, “. . .in this way, they are going to begin to farm on their own account.”²

In this chapter I examine what played out at Yazikovo Selo and Palmyra Plantation in relation to the contextual circumstances of the first few months after liberation in Russia and the American South. This analysis balances that which happened at each demesne with the circumstances in the province of Simbirsk and the state of Mississippi, as well as the larger situational realities in Russia and the American South.

The immediate post-emancipation period was the temporal moment immediately following emancipation, but on the eve of the planting season – a crucial interval between

² Leon F. Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1980), p. 400.

the *status quo ante* and *status quo futurus*. Since the economies of both Russia and the American South were agrarian, both the *form* and the *performance* of labor on the demesne were crucial. Under new circumstances, however, it remained to be seen what that *form* and *performance* would look like. Indeed, the nature of labor was crucial to the meaning of freedom for all involved, including the authorities, the former masters, and, especially, the freed peoples. This temporal interval provided the moment of opportunity for the freed people in each context to debate the meaning of freedom.

Herein lay one paradox of emancipation: on the one hand, it was about ending unfree labor. On the other, it neither solved the “problem” of the demand for cheap labor on the demesne, nor changed the elites’ attitudes towards the freed people and beliefs about their station in society. While emancipation broke the relationship between the master and the bonded, the inertia of culture remained. Elitist and/or patriarchal attitudes towards the subaltern groups persisted. However, the emancipated seized the moment of opportunity as emancipation either broke or weakened traditional sources of authority over them. Therefore, I will discuss a number of examples which illustrate how freedom was perceived by the various parties involved, and how it was contested. I will also shed light on the phenomenon of rumor, and the role it played in competing narratives. Discursive tactics and, indeed, the threat of force also made their appearances. Notwithstanding the revolutionary break with past that emancipation represented, the outcomes in each situation reveal much about the inertia of socio-cultural attitudes and the political-economic systems in which each demesne was located. What happened at Yazikovo Selo and Palmyra Plantation speaks to their distant and recent historical characteristics. After an introductory comment on the general conditions in each country, I will comparatively

examine the situational realities in Simbirsk Province and the state of Mississippi. This chapter will show that, notwithstanding the fact of liberation, contestation of freedom's parameters was made possible *because* of emancipation.

Conditions, Expectations, and Resistance in Russia, and Simbirsk Province

As explained in Chapter One, in the Russian case, the terms of liberation were built into the law and elaborated in detail in the 400 page *Regulations*. A blueprint for the nature of labor in the post-emancipation period was mapped out. Now, in the immediate post-emancipation period, the former serfs objected to their “temporarily obligated status,” under which, for two years, or until they entered into the Redemption Agreement, they were not entirely free. Equally galling was the fact that they were required to compensate their former master for the land which the *Manifesto* mandated that the landowner earmark for them, the payment schedule of which would be mapped out in the Redemption Agreement.

In the spring of 1861, Russia witnessed peasants' defiant outbursts. For it was during the planting time that the reality of the terms of emancipation set in. In particular, it was their temporarily obligated status that hit home: they still owed their landlord three days of *barshchina* per week to plough and sow the fields. Incredulous, Russian peasants typically rejected the idea that their little Father, the Tsar, would have been so cruel as not to “really” free them. They suspected that the noble landlords had either changed the terms of the *Manifesto*, or exploited their illiteracy and lied about it, or had stolen their freedom, or a combination of any of these. Cries of “we have been robbed” and “the real freedom is hiding from us” were common. As if it were something tangible, and

reminiscent of a scavenger hunt, calls to literally “look for the freedom” were typical.³ Displaying profound suspicion, they came to label emancipation as a “false freedom.” Many peasants also used gendered language, describing this freedom as “Baba volya” (literally, old woman freedom), which, according to the socially prescribed role afforded to women in Russian society, relegated it to an inferior station. Instead, they demanded the “real freedom,” or “Muzhchina volya” (male freedom).⁴

In addition, many peasants interpreted that the two-year period referred to in the *Manifesto* was retroactive, and that freedom actually originated in 1858 with the last *Reviziia*, or Census.⁵ They reached this incorrect conclusion because of a section of the *Manifesto* that discussed how much land to allocate to each male peasant, instructing the master to refer to the most recent *Reviziia* count. Confusing this with the “two-year” interim period after emancipation, they came to believe they had been tricked, and that their freedom had really begun in 1858.

³ See N.A. Krylov, “Vospominaniia Mirovago Posrednika pervago priziva o vvedenii v deistvie Polozhenii 19-go Febralia 1861 goda” *Russkaia Starina* 74:6 (April, 1892), pp. 81-102, and 615-641. Specifically, some said they would embark on a journey across Russia if they had to, and even go to the capital, St. Petersburg, to find the freedom. One set of peasants argued that the real freedom was hiding behind some papers in the estate office. See pp. 88-89.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 81-101, especially pp. 90-100.

⁵ In Imperial Russia the Revision Lists (or *Reviski skazki*) was the method of counting the population for the purposes of taxation and the draft (therefore sometimes referred to as a fiscal census). From 1720-1858 there were 10 *Revizii*. They were not intended to enumerate the entire population of Russia, but only those “subject to taxation.” Thus the nobility, titled citizens, civil servants, and soldiers, totaling 18 privileged categories were not included. Not surprisingly, anyone who had to pay taxes and was eligible for conscription avoided being registered at all costs. The *Revizii* were notoriously incorrect. See “Russian Revision Lists: A History” by Boris Feldblyum in *AVOTAYNU* 14:3 (Fall, 1998), pp. 59-61 for a brief explanation. See also Daniel Field, *Rebels in the Name of the Tsar* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1976), pp. 42-3.

Plus, the requirement that they had to pay for the land did not sit well with them since they believed that it was rightfully theirs because they had tended it for generations. “Why monetary obligations?” and “The land was created by God for everyone” were typical comments expressed by peasants and recorded by various officials.⁶ One military official’s report was sobering:

There is trouble everywhere here in Simbirsk [Province]. . . . On many, many estates the peasants refuse to do the three days barshchina and are insubordinate to the mastersand. . . consider themselves to be completely free. . .and they stopped accepting any power of the landowners over them. Governor Izvekov [has] warned that uprisings [are]. . .“VERY CONTAGIOUS.”⁷

There was only one disturbance in the post-emancipation period that was notorious. The provincial town of Bezdna was located just north of Yazikovo Selo’s neighborhood, in Kazan Province. The uprising there originated with one villager’s esoteric interpretation of the *Regulations*, the language of which was described by the manager on another Yazikov estate as “. . . so difficult that even the literate overseers couldn’t understand it nor could they even explain it,” and even if they tried every individual would come up with “his own separate interpretation” as to its meaning.⁸ A semi- literate

⁶ Easley, “Opening Public Space,” p. 718; V. N. Ginev, *Narodnicheskoe dvizhenie v srednem Povolzh’e: 70-e godi xix veka* (Moscow, USSR: Nauka, 1966), p. 19.

⁷ Okun’ and Sivkov, *Krestyanskoe dvizhenie v Rossii*, pp. 469-473, 12 April 1861 Report #176 from Gorskii to Dolgorukov.

⁸ Krylov, “Vospominaniia,” pp.91, and 96. Throughout this account Krylov, Murasa Estate’s Manager, details the cornucopia of anecdotes that vividly portray the variety of interpretations, nuance, rumors, confusion, and literal incredulity as to the meaning of the Statues. The noble family there, the Yermolevs, were Vasili Yazikov’s maternal aunt and uncle. Murasa was just a short distance north of Yazikovo Selo. For the best source in English, see Field, *Rebels*.

Old Believer,⁹ Anton Petrov insisted that the true freedom meant that the peasants were no longer obligated to their former masters; that they were entitled to all the land on the estate because they had worked it for generations; and that the noblemen had not only distorted the real freedom but had stolen it. For Petrov, the evidence was a page in the text that was a sample form provided to serve as a working template for every landowner to use as he/she earmarked land for their former serfs. (If nothing else, this evidences the formulaic and uniform nature of the emancipation process in bureaucratic Russia.) For example, the form contained the following: “household servants 00 % amount, peasants 00 % amount, land 00 % amount,” and so on. The landlord would fill in the number of *desiatini* he was setting aside for his former serfs in the space provided where the zeros were. Petrov incorrectly read the percentage graphics as they appeared on the page as the cross of St. Anna¹⁰, and therefore as a secret sign from both God and the Tsar. The religious symbolism should not be underestimated. For Petrov and his followers, the interpretation was one of esoteric, divine intercession. He asserted that the peasants owed their former landlords neither their labor nor financial compensation for the land; that the nobles were lying to them about the labor obligations; and that army officers were imposters. Maintaining that he alone had received the authentic charter from the

⁹ An Old Believer was someone who opposed the 17th century Russian Orthodox Church Reforms. Mainstream Russian culture perceived them as being extremely conservative, defiant, non-conformist, and opposed to change. Throughout Russian history they were repressed to varying degrees. For a succinct description see Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire, 1552-1917* (Boston: Harvard University Press, 1998), p. 214.

¹⁰ The Order of St. Anna was established by Tsar Paul I in 1797 in memory of his grandmother, Anna, daughter of Peter the Great. Russians came to view St. Anna as an intercessor between humanity and God. See Linda Edmondson *Gender in Russian History and Culture (Studies in Russian and East European Society)* (New York, NY: Palgrave and Macmillan, 2001), p. 3.

Tsar, Petrov prophesied emancipation's bloody atonement and called for the peasants to congregate at Bezdna to "spill" their blood for freedom.¹¹

Petrov's findings were transmitted via rumor, and Bezdna became a lightning rod throughout the middle Volga River region. The rebellion's contagiousness was potent. Petrov attracted approximately 10,000 peasants from the neighboring villages, districts, and provinces, including Simbirsk, and confrontations between them and the authorities rippled out from the village. Bezdna's location held historic significance since this area was also the epicenter of both the Razin and Pugachev rebellions.¹² On April 12 army units arrived and thousands of peasants swore to defend Petrov. Acting preemptively in order to stave off a rebellion of epic proportions, the army snuffed out the commotion at Bezdna. After six volleys and approximately 90 peasants killed and casualties estimated at 350, Petrov was arrested, tried, and shot on April 19, 1861. Countless peasants were reportedly flogged and sent to Siberia in the aftermath. At once Petrov became a martyr and a symbol of the peasants' subjugation.

Soviet and western historians have frequently noted that given the size of Russia and the number of people liberated by the *Manifesto*, it is remarkable that there was relative

¹¹ E. A. Morokhovets, ed., *Krestyianskoe dvizhenie v 1861 godu posle otmeny krepostnogo prava* (Moscow-Leningrad, USSR: Isd-vo Akademii nauk, 1949), pp. 62-66, and 71; and Krylov, "Vospominaniia," pp. 81-102, and 615-641.

¹² In 1670 Cossack Stenka Razin led a peasant uprising consisting of 7,000 men against the Tsar, with the goal being to establish a Cossack republic along the Volga. He also promised freedom to the oppressed. Razin was halted in Simbirsk, and the tsar's troops brutally suppressed the insurrection. One hundred years later, in 1774, the largest peasant rebellion in Russian history occurred. Led by Cossack Emelyan Pugachev, the leader promised a Cossack republic and freedom from the nobility. It, too, was brutally suppressed and Pugachev was executed.

calm and only one large-scale rebellion to speak of, at Bezdna.¹³ This notwithstanding, to say that there was relative calm after February 1861 is not entirely accurate. The authorities were not incorrect to fear disturbances and uprisings. Russians made a qualitative distinction between a rebellion and what they called a disturbance (*volnenie*).¹⁴ A rebellion connoted something along the lines of the Razin or Pugachev uprisings, which included thousands or even hundreds of thousands of people, typically spanning a vast region, and producing significant casualties. Although it connoted a local uprising or confrontation, a disturbance was not something to either ignore or underestimate. To be sure, it involved an element of confrontation between the serfs and landlords and/or authorities. It could also include casualties. And, some kind of corporal punishment was applied when all other persuasive measures failed. In fact, there was a specific set of protocols, indeed ritual, that the authorities followed with respect to a disturbance. The estate manager would simultaneously order, reason, and plead with the peasants to disperse and go back to their usual routine. If that did not produce compliance, then the noble landlord, or his steward or agent, stepped in. If his pleas were

¹³ For a sampling see Sergei G. Pushkarev, "The Russian Peasants' Reaction to the Emancipation of 1861" *The Russian Review* 27:2 (April, 1968), pp. 199-214, who describes the disturbances as strikes; Terence Emmons, "The Peasant and the Emancipation," in Wayne S. Vucinich, ed., *The Peasant in Nineteenth-Century Russia* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1968), pp. 41-71; W. Bruce Lincoln, *The Great Reforms: Autocracy, Bureaucracy, and the Politics of Change in Imperial Russia* (Dakalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1990), p. 164; and Daniel Field, "The Year of Jubilee" in Ben Eklof, et.al., eds., *Russia's Great Reforms, 1855-1881* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994), p. 45. P.A. Zaionchkovsky described the disturbances as minimal. See his *Provedenie v zhizn' krest'ianskoi reformy 1861* (Moscow, USSR: Izd-vo sotsialno-ekonomicheskoi lituraturi, 1958), p. 131.

¹⁴ For a concise explanation of the Russian *volnenie* see Peter Kolchin, *Unfree Labor: American Slavery and Russian Serfdom* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), pp. 257-264.

ignored, the District Marshal of the Nobility was summoned.¹⁵ Then the sheriff was brought in. If these appeals were ignored, then perhaps the Provincial Marshal of Nobility and/or Governor arrived, accompanied by several soldiers. Only in the end, after repeated warnings and as a last resort, was an army unit called to the estate. And even then, warnings, pleas, and reminders of the Tsar's law and the like were applied. If and when it came to this, a ringleader could be arrested, and likely whipped with a knout, for the purpose of setting an example to the others. Only if the peasants rushed the army and/or the disturbance threatened to mutate into a full blown rebellion did the army fire on the crowd. Thus, down through the ages Russia experienced countless disturbances, but only a few notorious rebellions.

Disturbances were neither bloodless nor mild. If the disturbance became contagious, the soldiers on the ground in each province could have a difficult time containing the situation without major force, and perhaps even with it. Once that line had been crossed, however, it was tricky since the Tsar could very well be blamed for the violence.

Although Tsarist Russia was an autocracy, in a country where the peasants were the majority, there was a fine line between maintaining order and triggering a full blown mass uprising. The goal was prevention rather than suppression. Also, even if a disturbance required a response, the logistical difficulties of, say, two army units covering an entire province meant that a military presence was intended more as a show of force than something that could be summoned at a moment's notice. As for the

¹⁵ The elected (by his noble peers) head of the nobility of a district or province who exercised an array of public functions. Vasili P. Yazikov was the Marshal of Nobility for Simbirsk District. For a succinct overview see G.M. Hamburg, "Portrait of an Elite: Russian Marshals of the Nobility, 1861-1917" *Slavic Review* 40:4 (Winter, 1981), pp. 585-602.

peasants, if they did not force concessions as a result of the ruckus, they nevertheless considered it a victory if troops had been summoned to the estate.¹⁶

Historians have also attributed the prevailing calm in the immediate post-emancipation period to the fact that it occurred before the sowing season in late spring. Initial reports from February, portraying peacefulness, orderliness, and optimism, therefore, were premature. Also, even if reports coincided with disturbances, by the time these reached St. Petersburg it could have been late summer. The lag time between the disturbance and its documentation, and knowledge and documentation of it in St. Petersburg, could have affected the final numbers on which historians have drawn.¹⁷

The statistics for uprisings in the post-emancipation period can be misleading.¹⁸ Many disturbances escaped the attention of higher authorities. Perhaps the army was not called in, or could not be summoned, or was requested but not available, or simply could not reach the estate in time. This was often the case, since this period coincided with the spring thaw, and muddy roads were notorious for their impassibility. Indeed, many Russian estates could only be accessed via waterways or cross country, thus making it virtually impossible for an army unit to respond in a timely fashion. Also, what was often described as one rebellion or disturbance could in fact have been a cluster of

¹⁶ Okun' and Sivkov, *Krestyanskoe dvizhenie v Rossii*, p. 285.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25.

¹⁸ While Okun' and Sivkov state that the numbers of uprisings tallied were those *only* where military units were called in, others show other findings. For example, one source identified roughly 900 disturbances in all of Russia for the year 1861 where the military was used. Another listed approximately 500. See Okun' and Sivkov, *Ibid.*, p. 15; Leonid Mikhailovich Ivanov, *Krestyanskoe dvizhenie v Rossii v 1861-1869 gg.: sbornik dokumentov* (Moscow, USSR: Mysl', 1964), p. 18; and A. M. Anfimov, "Krestyanskoe dvizhenie v Rossii vo vtoroi polovine XIX v." *Voprosy istorii*, 1973, no. 5, pp. 15-19.

many.¹⁹ In addition, notwithstanding the peasants' suspicions of the authorities, one gendarme officer openly declared in a report in April 1861 that calling in the military could actually make things worse since "there is a real fear that there is such a profound sense of unity between the peasants and soldiers that. . .you should keep the military away."²⁰ Thus, although it was the exception in Russian history that the military was used to suppress disturbances, 1861 was an exceptional year.

Of the official tally of disturbances in Russia in 1861, Okun' and Sivkov listed only six for Simbirsk Province where the military had to be summoned, and one of those was at Yazikovo Selo, discussed below. On one Pashkov's estate in Kur'mish District the Sheriff punished the ring leader with a severe beating in the presence of the whole village.²¹ On Argamakov's estate in Burinsk District, the peasants showed insubordination even after persuasions. An army battalion was brought in. Both the District Marshal of the Nobility and sheriff explained to them that they would be punished according to the law if they would not comply with their obligations. The peasants replied with "yells and screams." When the army attempted to assault the ringleaders, the peasants surrounded them, employing a kind of "all for one and one for all" (*krugovaya poruka*) defense, and so the Marshal decided to let them go. The peasants responded with "hoorah, we won! This is what it means to act together!" Clearly, the peasants' weapons were rhetorical. But they were also literal in that they

¹⁹ Okun' and Sivkov, *op.cit.*, p. 11.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 173. The typical instrument used was a birch tree branch or rod. A severe beating could involve hundreds of lashings.

leveraged with their labor. The authorities understood this. With incredulity, Governor Izvekov added that the peasants “feel so free that they refused to do work.” He also noted that he personally went to no fewer than fifteen estates in the neighborhood and reminded the peasants of their labor obligations.²²

To expand on the example which opened this chapter, Izvekov reported to the Russian Minister of Internal Affairs that in Krotkovo Selo, in Sengilei District, the peasants announced to their landlord “if we’re free, how is it that we have to do the barshchina?” This is when the Governor explained that, only after the authorities’ pleas fell on deaf ears, were two army units brought in, and only when they surrounded the peasants did the latter hand over the ringleader, one Trukhlov, who was quickly arrested. He was then brutally lashed, and sent to hard labor in Siberia. Only then did the peasants “understand their mistake of disobedience, and show their readiness to go to work.”²³

Peter and Praskovia Bestuzhev’s²⁴ estate, Repevka, in Sizran District, had more than 2,000 souls. Izvekov noted that when he and the sheriff responded to the landlord’s summons, they were met with “wild yelling.” Bestuzhev requested military assistance and two companies of the army reserve were brought in. The ringleader of the Repevka disturbance was a soldier on leave, one Dokukin. “I decided that leaving him with the

²² Morokhovets, *Krest’ianskoe dvizhenie v 1861*, p.215, 29 April 1861 Report #143 Col. Essen to Alexander II; and Okun’ and Sivkov, *Krestyanskoe dvizhenie v Rossii*, pp. 470-1, Report #177 Col. Gursky to Chief of Gendarme Dolgoruky.

²³ Romashin, *Ocherki*, pp. 36; and Okun’ and Sivkov, *Krestyanskoe dvizhenie v Rossii*, p. 471, 10 May 1861 Report #178 Simbirsk Governor Izvekov to M. of Internal Affairs P.A. Valuev.

²⁴ Praskovia Bestuzheva, nee Praskovia Mikhailovna Yazikova was Vasili Yazikov’s paternal aunt, and not to be confused with Vasili’s wife, Praskovia Ivanovna Yazikova.

peasants was like poison. . . .” Izvekov noted. He concluded his report with the following analysis:

On the one hand the peasants themselves don’t understand the law and want all their rights and privileges that are reserved for them in the future NOW. On the other hand, all use it for their own selfish interests. Some landowners have reorganized their households according to the new laws which make the life of their former serfs easier while others try to work them to their full capacity as in the days of serfdom as they know they have an interim period to squeeze out of them all that they can, thus triggering mistrust and agitation.²⁵

Izvekov’s analysis was tinged with both paternalism and prescience. The notion that the peasants could not understand the meaning of freedom was explicit. He portrayed them as impatient and self-centered. But Izvekov also understood the complicated and nuanced situation on the ground as the reality of emancipation played out. Not surprisingly, like most peasants, the landowners also acted in their own self interest as best they could with what tools they had.

A summary of the disturbance at an estate Bolshoe Stanichnoe is telling. Owned by Vasili’s uncle and adjacent to Yazikovo Selo, it evidences deliberate labor disobedience, strategic passivity, the comprehension of a break from the past, and the belief in the right to land. A Staff Officer with the Army, Gorsky, observed that, apropos of the estate manager’s orders to use four plows, the peasants deliberately began using “six. . . . [W]itnessing this break of routine [the manager] ordered them to go back to the usual way,” and tried to reason with them. The peasants responded with ‘now is not the past time! [and] we’ll not work like that anymore. . . .we’re free people and we have the right to share all of the master’s land between us, leaving nothing to the master’s use.’” With

²⁵ Okun’ and Sivkov, *op. cit.*, p. 471.

defiance, they added that no sheriff, or boss, or manager had “power over us anymore.”²⁶ Staff Officer Gorsky explained in his report that the cause of this disobedience was found in a “Kantonist”²⁷ released from the army, one Grigoriev. He was literate and read the *Manifesto* to the peasants and “put into their minds the idea that they are completely free, and they only have to work for their former owner one day a week.” When the Karsun District Marshal of the Nobility explained to them that they were not interpreting the *Manifesto* correctly, the peasants still refused. As in the Bezdna case, the peasants invoked the “Good Tsar” trope. “Grigoriev read to them that the Tsar’s will was for them to be free” noted Gorsky. He added that what the peasants really want is “to get rid of all the managers on all the estates.” As with the ringleader at Bezdna, Grigoriev was defined by the authorities as an outsider, a trouble maker, whose punishment and/or removal would remedy the situation. The Marshal decided to arrest Grigoriev, but the peasants yelled that they would “not give him up,” and even if he were arrested, “they’ll follow Grigoriev to wherever they take him.” All this notwithstanding, Grigoriev was arrested and punished.

Before looking at what played out at Yazikovo Selo, an examination of the situational realities in both the American South in general and Mississippi in particular will show striking similarities and dissimilarities.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 473-475, 13 May 1861 Report #179 from Gendarme Gorsky to Chief of Corps Prince Dolgorukov.

²⁷ In nineteenth century Imperial Russia, a Kantonist was typically a Jewish conscript, impressed into military service.

Conditions, Expectations, and Resistance in the American South, and Mississippi

The year 1865 was a tumultuous year: in April, Lee surrendered to Grant at Appomatox. One week later, the President was assassinated and his successor, Andrew Johnson, embarked on his own plan for the union's Reconstruction. Across the southern land, many whites experienced an emotional shift, from a siege mentality to a kind of collective post-traumatic stress disorder. For the freed people, however, although their plight seemed to be uncertain, this period held the promise of "Jubilee."²⁸ Indeed, there was much confusion and uncertainty with respect to how the formerly seceded states would be rehabilitated; what the civil and legal status of the white civilian population of those states would be; how the vast tracts of land confiscated by Union forces during the war would be handled; and what freedom would look like for the liberated.

Unlike the Russian emancipation legislation, the Thirteenth Amendment contained no such stipulations with respect to land earmarks, labor obligations, and monetary compensation. This notwithstanding, there were powerful cultural characteristics and traditions that explain both the authorities' and the former masters' expectations for "good and faithful labor" performances from the former slaves.²⁹ In need of labor, the

²⁸ As Leon Litwack has explained, on the one hand, the freed people had every reason to feel celebratory. On the other hand, the "Day of Jubilee" was a myth. It was possible that crowds of African Americans could be ecstatically happy. But it was equally possible, if not more likely, that many blacks, if not most, were fearful about what the meaning of freedom would be. They certainly had been traumatized by the social upheaval which the war wrought. See Litwack, *Been in the Storm*, pp. 212-220.

²⁹ With respect to the freed people, the phrase "good and faithful labor" was a mainstay in the collective conversation of the day. It was used by various officials, especially those of the Freedmen's Bureau, to describe what free labor meant: it connoted putting in a good, honest, and decent day's work for pay, an arrangement that was enshrined in the labor contract. In the thousands of wage contracts signed between planters and freedmen, the most "common stipulation demanded by planters was the worker's promise to provide

planters were anxious to proceed with contracting for the 1866 season, thereby securing some certainty in these uncertain times. In many ways the Freedmen's Bureau was crucial to the form of labor that would soon take shape. In June 1865, indicating that it would not "pamper the freedmen," it mandated that the "Negroes must work."³⁰ It also mapped out detailed regulations. For example, those who would not contract could be impressed into labor without compensation. The Bureau suggested wage schedules. In all cases, food, clothing, houses, and medical attention should be provided by the planter. A payment of money or share of the crop was stipulated as a just compensation. And ". . . all contracts for labor made with freedmen, free negroes, and mulattoes, for a period longer than one month, shall be in writing, . . . and if the laborer shall quit the service of the employer, without good cause, he shall forfeit his wages for that year."

Similar to the Russian Peace Arbitrator,³¹ Provost Marshals would "approve" each contract. Although Southern planters perceived Bureau representatives as sympathetic to the former slaves, Vernon Lane Wharton has documented that in many cases, they were equally, if not more accommodating of Southern white planters.³² Thus, as an institution

'good and faithful labor.'" See Ronald L. F. Davis, *Good and Faithful Labor: From Slavery to Sharecropping the Natchez District, 1860-1890* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1982), p. 9.

³⁰ For a concise discussion of this see Ronald L. F. Davis, "The U.S. Army and the Origins of Sharecropping in the Natchez District – A Case Study" *Journal of Negro History* 62:1 (January, 1977), pp. 60-80; and William C. Harris, *Presidential Reconstruction in Mississippi*, (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1967) p. 95.

³¹ A comparison between the Russian Peace Arbitrator and the Bureau Provost Marshal will be discussed in the next chapter.

³² Vernon Lane Wharton, *The Negro in Mississippi: 1865-1890* (New York, NY: Harper Row, 1965), pp. 59, and 74-77; and Harris, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

which was designed for the purpose of assisting the freed people's transition to freedom, ironically, the Bureau was instrumental in establishing paternalistic and regulatory precedents for the management of labor.

As in Russia, the American freed people's struggles for land, self-autonomy, and self-determination over their own labor were inextricably linked to what freedom meant to them. And like the authorities and former masters in their own country, the American freed people also drew on deeply entrenched cultural characteristics and traditions: since one hallmark of freedom in America was the ownership of land, they had great expectations. For example, many former slaves believed that as a *de facto* component of liberation they would receive land that had been confiscated. This was no idle rumor. As noted by Major G. D. Reynolds of the 6th United States Artillery and Bureau officer for the Natchez District, "This was no slight error, no trifling idea, but a fixed and earnest conviction. . .among the negroes of this State."³³ Similar to the Russian freed people who believed that land went hand in hand with freedom, and who objected to paying for that which they considered rightfully theirs, the American freed people anticipated a land gift, not only because they believed that they had "earned" it as a result of their former condition, but also because land and its cultivation were both a way of life and considered a cornerstone of freedom in America. As Peter Kolchin has explained, the control of land was crucial to self autonomy, and to independence from authority.³⁴

³³ Clifton Ganus, Jr., "The Freedmen's Bureau in Mississippi," Ph.D. Dissertation, Tulane University, 1953, p. 184.

³⁴ Peter Kolchin, "Re-evaluating the Antebellum Slave Community: A Comparative Perspective," *Journal of American History*, Vol. 70, (1983), pp. 579-601.

Expectations of land began with the “forty acres and a mule” rumor. This legend had its origins in a number of sources, some of which included the Confiscation Acts of August 1861 and July 1862, and the Home Colony settlements, especially Davis Bend, in which acreage and supplies, including mules, were allotted to the freed people.³⁵ Union officials’ comments also contributed to the rumors: Union soldiers spread the idea as they made their way across the South during the war.³⁶ Samuel Thomas, the Freedmen’s Bureau Assistant Commissioner for Mississippi, held that “the Freedmen will never be thoroughly emancipated till they are allowed to own lands. . . .”³⁷ On January 16, 1865, the War Department’s Field Order 15 earmarked for the freedmen confiscated lands along the South Carolina coast.³⁸ The Freedmen’s Bureau Act of March 1865, and in particular the notorious Circular 13 issued in July, authorized that confiscated land be set aside. Also fuelling the trope was the fact that the Confederate Congress and other

³⁵ For a thorough discussion of this see Dan T. Carter, “The Anatomy of Fear: The Christmas Day Insurrection Scare of 1865” *The Journal of Southern History* 42:3 (August, 1976), pp. 345-364; Steven Hahn, “‘Extravagant Expectations’ of Freedom: Rumour, Political Struggle, and the Christmas Insurrection Scare of 1865 in the American South” *Past and Present* 157 (November, 1997), pp. 122-158; Walter L. Fleming, “Forty Acres and a Mule” *The North American Review* 182:294 (May, 1906), pp. 721-737; LaWanda Cox, “The Promise of Land for the Freedmen,” *Mississippi Valley Historical Review* 45 (1958), pp. 413-440; and Wharton, *op. cit.*, See Chapter 3.

³⁶ Oscar Zeichner, “The Transition from Slave to Free Agricultural Labor in the Southern States” *Agricultural History* 13:1 (Jan., 1939), pp. 22-32, p. 23. See also Gates, “Federal Land Policy in the South,” pp. 303-330.

³⁷ Samuel Thomas to O.O. Howard, October 12, 1865 in *Yankee Stepfather: General O.O. Howard and the Freedmen* by William S. McFeely (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1968), p. 70.

³⁸ Claude F. Oubre, *Forty Acres and a Mule: The Freedmen’s Bureau and Black Land Ownership* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1978), pp. 1-89.

Southern sources frequently warned that failing to prevail in the war would result in the redistribution of confiscated land to the former slaves.

Towards the end of 1865 it became increasingly clear to the freed people that they would not receive land. Still, they had hope. First, as was the tradition in the days of slavery during Christmas time, they anticipated they would receive a gift, this time in the form of land. The Christmas season also played a role in the freed people's expectations of land distribution. The coincidence of the Thirteenth Amendment's ratification with the sacred holiday only reinforced the freed people's anticipation and expectations. As Robert May has explained, Christmas had played a significant role in the master/slave relationship in the antebellum period. Insofar as normal routines were interrupted with feasting and presents, it provided a psychological payoff for both master and slave: it was a way for the master to allow bondsmen to "let off steam." It was also a time when discipline and authority were relaxed. Indeed, the holiday period allowed for a pause in the work calendar. This temporal cushion represented an adjustment period prior to the intense sowing season that would commence in the late winter/early spring, when the integrity of labor was crucial. And, it was also a way for the masters to assert power and confirm their benevolent paternalism to themselves as well as to the bondsmen. But there was a downside to the ritual, especially to the slave owner: the slackening of authority meant that idleness and frolicking could easily degenerate into rebellion, so they feared. Therefore, both vigilance and rumors frequently accompanied the Christmas season's traditions in the old South. Typically, a choreographed ritual played out: according to the socially prescribed rules, "white and slave residents of the mansion house were expected to shout 'Christmas Gif' [*sic*] upon first sighting each other on Christmas

morning. The one who got the words out first was to receive a present from the other.” But make no mistake, “masters rarely. . .wanted or tried to win their Christmas Gif *competition with slaves.*”³⁹

The second way in which the freed people’s hope persisted was that they realized that they had a powerful chip with which to bargain in the form of their labor. For if they were free, why should they “have to bind themselves to work for whites?” The freedmen held out, at most, for a “gift” of land at Christmas and, at least, to leverage for more favorable labor terms, such as contracting for a monthly commitment rather than a yearly one. Indeed, refusing to sign a contract was the freed people’s principal bargaining weapon.⁴⁰ In addition to articulating the equation of freedom with both mobility and liberation from the master’s authority, an editor of the *New Orleans Tribune* indicated in December of 1865, the long term labor contract is

intended by the employer to renew a servitude or Bondage. . . . It is clear. . .that the laborer must not alienate his freedom, for any term of months. The only means for him to escape the injustice and exactions of a bad master, is to remain free to leave the plantation and go elsewhere. This is the only way to teach the employers how they have to treat their employees.⁴¹

³⁹ Robert E. May, “‘Christmas Gif,’ Empty Chairs, and Confederate Defeat” *North and South: the Magazine of Civil War Conflict* 8:7 (January, 2006), pp. 54-60. In terms of the work load, the similarities are striking between what May describes as the spoken and unspoken practices and symbolism associated with the Christmas season with respect to American slavery and those with the Holy Lent season in Russia (as described in Chapter One). One significant contrast between the two was the sobriety associated with the Russian Lent Season and the intemperance with the Christmas season. The purposes of the solemnity around the Russian religious holiday and the relaxation of authority during the American one had to do with the maintenance of order on the demesne.

⁴⁰ Harris, *Presidential Reconstruction*, pp. 94, and 98; and Litwack, *Been in the Storm*, p. 435.

⁴¹ “Short Contracts” *New Orleans Tribune*, December 12, 1865. This newspaper was the first daily published by African Americans in the South.

This threat to the 1866 planting season worried planters and authorities alike. That Southern whites were fully aware of the Christmas traditions as well as the freed people's expectations of land, rumors circulated that an insurrection around the holiday would materialize.⁴² The Jackson *Mississippian* asserted that the reasons for white apprehensions "arise from the insolence, threats and general bearing of the negroes toward the whites."⁴³ That nearly 18,000 African American men who had been enslaved in Mississippi fought for the Union during the war was proof enough to fearful whites that their former "people" could and would use force as a means to secure that which they thought rightfully theirs.⁴⁴ Assuring the President that Mississippi was prepared to ratify the Thirteenth Amendment, Acting Governor William Sharkey was instrumental in forming the first militia in Mississippi as early as August 1865, explaining to Johnson that the "presence of negro troops was inflammatory to the people," The President ultimately backed Sharkey.⁴⁵

In fact, the long history of whites' fears of a slave insurrection combined with the South's defeat and emancipation provided fertile ground for paranoia. The most notorious recent example in Mississippi took place in April 1861, immediately after the

⁴² Dan Carter tallied about 200 references to a Christmas insurrection. See Carter, "Anatomy of Fear," p. 348.

⁴³ Harris, *Presidential Reconstruction*, pp. 88-103; Clifton L. Ganus, Jr., "The Freedmen's Bureau in Mississippi," Ph.D. Dissertation, Tulane University, 1953, p. 134; and Ronald L. F. Davis, "The U.S. Army and the Origins of Sharecropping," pp. 76-77.

⁴⁴ Thavolia Glymph, "The Second Middle Passage: The Transition from Slavery to Freedom at Davis Bend, Mississippi," Ph.D. Dissertation, Purdue University, 1994, p. 71.

⁴⁵ Eric L. McKittrick, *Andrew Johnson and Reconstruction* (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press, 1960), pp. 163-166, 193-195, and 200-201. Mississippi ratified the Thirteenth Amendment on February 7, 2013.

war began, in Natchez, where, in former genteel days, the Quitman family resided during the off season months. The plot reputedly consisted of the slaves planning to kill the white men and rape their wives and daughters after Union armies arrived in the South. There were also rumors that the white women who were spared would be taken as brides. Once the insurrection was over, the victors would march to meet President Lincoln. Also crucial to the story was the purported involvement of villainous white men, who either instigated or abetted it. Indeed, Louisa Quitman Lovell wrote to her husband Joseph in September that

We have been kept in a great state of excitement for the last week with stories of insurrections etc. . . .It is indeed unsafe and dangerous to be so left alone as we are-. . . .They say, that a miserable, sneaking abolitionist has been at the bottom of this whole affair. I hope that he will be caught and burned alive for no torture is too good for the. . . wretch. . . .It is indeed a tumultuous time – no one is safe. . . .⁴⁶

Several prominent local planters, including Lemuel P. Connor and one “Mr. Lovell,” formed an informal, extralegal vigilance committee to investigate the situation. In early autumn the committee arrested, interrogated, and tortured scores with the lash. By November 1861 at least several dozen were executed. Thus, while the rumored insurrection never materialized, the “plot” had a very real and violent conclusion.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Louisa Quitman Lovell to Captain Joseph Lovell, Monmouth, September 21, 1861, Quitman Family Papers, UNC.

⁴⁷ For a full account of this see Winthrop D. Jordan, *Tumult and Silence at Second Creek: An Inquiry into a Civil War Slave Conspiracy* (Baton Rouge, La.: Louisiana State University Press, 1993); and Justin Behrend, “Rebellious Talk and Conspiratorial Plots: The Making of a Slave Insurrection in Civil War Natchez” *The Journal of Southern History* 77:1 (February, 2011), pp. 17-52.

In the more distant past, another notorious slave insurrectionary scare in Mississippi occurred in 1835, when the quintessential tropes were in full display: in the context of the immediate period following the notorious Nat Turner rebellion and a ramped up Abolitionist Movement, rumors spread among the white population that poor, deviant white men – consisting of northern abolitionists, peddlers, “steam doctors,” gamblers, and even members of the John Murrell⁴⁸ gang – conspired with slaves to rebel on July 4. The plot reputedly consisted of the slaves planning to kill white men, and the white women who were spared would be taken as brides. They would proceed to march to New Orleans, where a greater insurrection would be triggered, thus ending slavery across the South. An informal, extralegal vigilance committee was formed, including Patrick Sharkey, the brother of William. After torturing many with the lash, the committee set free some “conspirators,” while others were hanged to preemptively quell the insurrection. But this did not put an end to the rumors. Indeed, alarm and hysteria grew, with many expecting the contagion to spread and culminate during the Christmas season. Mississippians turned on Mississippians, and terror reached a fever pitch. As one reporter observed, “The Mississippians are ruining their own State. By their own high-handed and violent measures, they are giving a magnitude and terror to the contemplated insurrection which it otherwise could never have attained.”⁴⁹ Within months the panic dissipated, but not until twelve whites and numerous blacks had been hanged.

⁴⁸ John A. Murrell was a notorious bandit who operated with a gang in the first half of the nineteenth century along the Mississippi River basin, and who abducted slaves and sold them to other slave owners.

⁴⁹ Edwin A. Miles, “The Mississippi Slave Insurrection Scare of 1835” *The Journal of Negro History* 42:1 (Jan., 1957), pp. 48-60, p. 54. See also Christopher Morris, “An Event in Community Organization: The Mississippi Slave Insurrection Scare” *Journal of*

Now, in both the aftermath of the South's defeat and the midst of liberation, many southern whites jumped to the conclusion of insurrection from any cue, real or imagined, which they perceived as evidence: from "changes" in the freed people's demeanor, to an "odd" glance, to their whispers in an assembly, to their "ignorance of orders," or to their use of muskets for hunting. The inertia of culture was great. Also, the freed people's new found mobility caused much concern since whites, unaccustomed to this important outcome of emancipation, perceived it as posing a great potential for insurrection. Equally powerful as evidence was the fact that many former slaves, as part of the Union army, were now armed. The rumors also contained the "instigator" component. As was the case in previous scares, those targeted were poor whites.⁵⁰ An uprising of blacks in Jamaica in late autumn also stoked the fears of an insurrection in the American South. Although emancipation had occurred on that island nation in the 1830s, that thirteen whites were killed in the uprising (over taxation) struck a nerve in the South.⁵¹ Union armies themselves had a part in the narrative: on the one hand they were perceived as outsiders, invaders, occupiers, and enablers of the freed people by those Southern whites who were sympathetic to the Confederate cause. On the other hand, their imminent departure meant that Southern whites had to take it upon themselves to enforce order, maintain social control, and anchor the sources of labor on the demesnes.

Social History 22 (1988), pp. 93-111. Lydia Plath is working on a monograph, *One Summer in Mississippi*, which addresses the ideal type of southern masculinity in the context of the insurrectionary scare.

⁵⁰ Ganus, "Freedmen's Bureau in Mississippi," p. 188.

⁵¹ Carter, "Anatomy of Fear," p. 357.

It is because of the anticipated departure of Union armies, the fears of insurrection, the need to secure labor on the demesne, and the widespread belief that the freed people required supervision, that a variety of grass roots, *ad hoc*, informal, vigilante posses made their appearance. But legal efforts also emerged. In addition to forming a militia in the late summer of 1865, the state of Mississippi enacted the notorious Black Codes in November and December of that year. As Michael Wayne has explained, the Codes “were an elaborate and extensive attempt to control labor, reimpose the paternalistic arrangement of the plantation, and reaffirm the inferior position of the black in southern society.”⁵² While the Codes allowed blacks to acquire and own property, marry, make contracts, sue and be sued, and testify in court cases involving persons of their own color, they restricted blacks’ freedom of movement, the rights to rent or purchase real estate, and work in skilled, urban jobs. Significantly, they authorized the state to enforce labor agreements and plantation discipline, punish those who refused to contract, and prevent whites from competing among themselves for black workers. Moreover, all blacks were required to provide written evidence every January of employment for the following year, or otherwise be charged as vagrants. Those who would leave their jobs before the contract expired would forfeit wages already earned. Any person offering work to a laborer already under contract could be imprisoned or fined \$500. Above all, vagrants who were defined as “idle, disorderly, and those who ‘mis-spend what they earn’ . . . could be punished by fines or involuntary plantation labor.” Other criminal offenses included

⁵² Michael S. Wayne, *The Reshaping of Plantation Society: The Natchez District, 1860-80* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1990), p. 47.

“‘insulting’ gestures or language, ‘malicious mischief,’ and preaching the Gospel without a license.”⁵³

As William C. Harris has explained, one reason for the emergence of the Codes had to do with a much broader question about the place of blacks, both former slave *and* those who had not been enslaved, in “Mississippi society, legally, socially, and economically.”⁵⁴ For example, the governor of Mississippi announced in late November 1865, that “The Negro is free, whether we like it or not; we must realize that fact now and forever.” And he added with both paternalism and racism, “To be free, however, does not make him a citizen, or entitle him to political or social equality with the white race.”⁵⁵ It is an interesting side note that precedent for these laws was found in the “codes” that governed the institution of slavery during the antebellum period.⁵⁶

Unlike the Russian codification which defined the features of freedom and which was crafted *before* the emancipation date, the legislation in Mississippi emerged *after* the South’s defeat, when emancipation was certain, but *before* the Thirteenth Amendment was ratified. It is true that the Mississippi Codes had a racial component; and they applied not only to the newly liberated, but those blacks who had been free in the days of slavery. In this regard, the Codes were different from the Russian emancipation legislation. But it is also true that both the Russian emancipation legislation and variety

⁵³ Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America’s Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York, NY: Harper & Row Publishers, 1988), pp. 199-200.

⁵⁴ Harris, *Presidential Reconstruction*, p. 121, and see Chapters 7 and 8.

⁵⁵ Wharton, *The Negro in Mississippi.*, p. 84.

⁵⁶ See James T. Currie, “From Slavery to Freedom in Mississippi’s Legal System” *The Journal of Negro History* 65:2 (Spring, 1980), pp. 112-125.

of codification in America applied exclusively to the freed peoples, as well as defined both the parameters and meaning of freedom. And both sets of legislation were designed to control the subaltern groups for the purposes of social order and the maintenance of the integrity of labor on the demesne.

Not surprisingly, various Union officials and entities objected to the Black Codes, with many taking steps to nullify them. On November 30 General Howard instructed that no attention should be paid to the Codes that forbade the freedmen's ownership of land. On January 30, 1866 General Thomas J. Wood, who succeeded Colonel Samuel Thomas as the Bureau's Assistant Commissioner for Mississippi, ordered that any legislation which did not apply equally to whites should be null and void. In addition, and in part to augment the Thirteenth Amendment, Congress passed a Civil Rights Act in April 1866. It also renewed the charter for the Freedmen's Bureau. President Johnson's vetoes of both bills were overridden by Congress. Thus, the state-federal tension during the immediate post-emancipation period was accompanied by the Presidential-Congressional political power struggle in Washington, D.C. But like the latter's struggle, which culminated with impeachment proceedings in 1868, the center-periphery struggle between the federal and state entities also culminated with the shift from "Presidential Reconstruction" to "Congressional Reconstruction." In 1867 Congress divided the former Confederate States (except Tennessee) into five military districts, the goal of which was to enforce a uniformly peaceful, orderly reconstruction of the Union. Among a number of idealistic notions, Congressional Reconstruction envisioned a uniform

national identity.⁵⁷ But Congressional Reconstruction both antagonized and emboldened many southern whites, in whose minds the South's defeat in the war was still fresh, and who both objected to the concept of equality with blacks and were fixated on the integrity of labor on the demesne. The emancipation process in the Russian context was never subjected to such a variety of political power struggles.

Considering the contextual circumstances, both the freed people's expectations of land and the whites' fears of insurrection are not surprising. In this regard there were great similarities with what played out in Russia. Indeed, some Union officials also perceived the potential for rebellion. One of the Subassistant Commissioners of the Freedman's Bureau for Mississippi, Lewis H. Gest, came to believe there was some truth to the rumors, reporting that

I found the Freedmen in the eastern portion of Noxubee, Co., Miss. holding [a] meeting of an insurrectionary character basing their reasons for so doing upon the plea that they did not believe they would receive justice at the hands of their late masters. I found them collecting arms and ammunition which I at once took possession of.

Another Bureau representative reported hearing the freed people discussing plans for a "grand . . . fight." Still another Bureau agent noted "the illusion. . . [of] a general division

⁵⁷ Hence, the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments were products of the period. See Eric Foner, "The Reconstruction Amendments: Official Documents as Social History" *History Now: The Journal of the Gilder Lehrman Institute* <https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/reconstruction/essays/reconstruction-amendments-official-documents-social-history> accessed October 21, 2015.

of property. . .[was] very natural for their simple minds.”⁵⁸ Newspapers in both the North and the South predicted insurrection, citing Christmas as the targeted date.⁵⁹

However, many Union officials were supportive of freed people’s aspirations. And Colonel Samuel Thomas thoroughly rejected the idea of any insurrection, writing to General Howard that neither was there a “. . . sign of trouble anywhere in the South,” nor was there any legion of “black insurrectionists.” General Peter J. Osterhaus agreed, stating that there was “no trace of this great conspiracy.” Added to the mix was the idea among some naysayers that the rumors of an insurrection were part of a plot on the part of Southern whites to discredit emancipation. Still, as Dan Carter has documented, many Union officials who rejected the idea of an insurrection in the Fall of 1865 had, by Christmas, succumbed to the paranoia.⁶⁰ Clearly, the situation was fluid, and wrought with anxiety and apprehension.

Like their Russian counterparts who sought to disabuse the peasants of unrealistic expectations, Union officials launched a campaign to quell rumors of land distribution. Furthermore, many Union officials, who, like many Southern whites, were concerned about the integrity of labor on the cotton plantations, sought to remind the freed people of their responsibilities of being free. On November 11, General Howard issued a circular,

⁵⁸ William Leon Woods, “Travail of Freedom: Mississippi Blacks, 1862-1870,” Ph.D. Dissertation, Princeton University, 1979, pp. 125-126; and Hahn, “‘Extravagant Expectations,’” p. 138.

⁵⁹ For example, the *Cincinnati Daily Enquirer* headlined a story “A Negro Conspiracy Discovered in Mississippi;” and the *New Orleans True Delta* cited “reliable” sources that blacks would revolt on the “night before Christmas.” See Stephen Nissenbaum, *The Battle for Christmas: A Cultural History of America’s Most Cherished Holiday* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1997), p. 295.

⁶⁰ Carter, “Anatomy of Fear,” pp. 362-363.

stating that the rumors were “wrong. There [will] be no division of lands, that nothing is going to happen at Christmas, that. . .[you] must go to work. . .[and] make contracts for next year and. . .insurrection will lead to nothing but. . . [your] destruction.” When he visited Mississippi, Howard advised the freed people that planters would not hire people who were “impudent, lazy, and fail to follow orders. . . .Indolence is not freedom.”⁶¹ Col. Thomas wrote to his superior that his officers continued to disabuse the freedmen of such “false ideas” about land. Even on the last day of 1865 Thomas “ordered his subordinates” to instill “in the minds of the freedmen respect for the law and their obligations” to contract. He reported that he explained to the freedmen that “The State cannot and ought not to let any man lie about idle, without property, doing mischief;” that freedom did not mean “freedom from toil;” and that emancipation did not free them from their “class responsibilities.”⁶² He repeatedly stressed the “sacredness” of the labor contract.⁶³ Another Bureau representative discussed the situation in the following way:

⁶¹ Harris, *op. cit.*, p. 96; and Carter, *Ibid.*, p. 360. Also, for example, the governor of Florida told the freed peoples “The President will not give you one foot of land, nor a mule, nor a hog, nor a cow, nor even a knife or fork or spoon.” And referring to a Freedman’s Bureau official in Georgia who told them essentially the same thing, a freedman commented “Dat’s no yank; dat just some reb day dressed in blue clothes and brought him here to lie to us.” See Litwack, *Been in the Storm*, p. 404. William Harris has explained that the closest the Federal Government came to redistributing land to the freed people was in June 1866, when, as part of the Southern Homestead Act, it opened over three million acres of public lands in Mississippi to them. Few freedmen claimed these public lands because in order to do so, one needed a white benefactor, like John F. H. Claiborne, who aided almost two hundred blacks, many of whom were his former slaves. See Harris, *Presidential Reconstruction*, pp. 92-93.

⁶² Harris, *Presidential Reconstruction*, pp. 93 & 100; Glymph, “Second Middle Passage,” pp. 163-164; Colonel Samuel Thomas to General O.O. Howard, October 12, 1865, Records of the Commissioner, Box 9, RG 105; Col. Samuel Thomas, Report December 1865, BRFAL, Mississippi, RG 105; and Colonel Samuel Thomas to Colonel John Eaton, Vicksburg, Mississippi, June 14, 1864, in Rev. Joseph Warren, D.D. *Extracts*

Winter is coming. . .go back to your former masters, work, be obedient, and show that you are worthy of freedom. You expect the Government to divide your late master's lands out to you, and about the first of January you will get buggies and carriages, but you are mistaken. You will not get a cent. It all belongs to the former owners, and you will not get anything unless you work for it.

And another in Mississippi wrote of the freed people with exasperation, "Their idea of freedom is that they are under no control; can work when they please, and go where they wish. . . .It is my desire to apply the Punishments used in the Army of the United States, for offences of the Negroes, and to make them do their duty."⁶⁴ If these rumors had some truth to them, it would not be incorrect to see the similarity with the American freed people's Russian counterpart, who equated freedom with individual sovereignty.

The similarities with the Russian context are striking. The Tsar was compelled to address rumors about the "real freedom" in the months after the *Manifesto's* release. Circulars from the Ministry of Interior on May 2 and June 9, 1862 commanded Provincial Governors and other officials to travel throughout their constituencies to speed up the Charter process. Moreover, Alexander II delivered a public relations speech of sorts on three separate occasions. First, on August 15, 1861, and then on September 9 and 25, 1862, he explained "The rumors have come to me that you are expecting two years from

of Reports from Superintendents of the Freedmen, 2nd Series June 1864 (Vicksburg, Mississippi: Freedmen Press Print, 1864), p. 32.

⁶³ See *Meridian Clarion*, July 19, 1865; Circular No. 2, "To the Colored People of Mississippi," January 2, 1866, Vicksburg, Mississippi, B.R.F. & A.L., Senate Executive Documents, p. 36; and Order of Colonel Samuel Thomas, December 31, 1865, Vicksburg, Mississippi, Senate Executive Documents, p. 35.

⁶⁴ For first quote see Nissenbaum, *op. cit.*, p. 296; and Foner, *Reconstruction*, p. 375, for the second quote.

now some new *volia* [freedom]. There is no new freedom.” “Not any other freedom will be given to you [the freed serfs] besides that which has already been given.” And he commanded them to comply with the local governments; and “. . . hurry to make a deal with your landowners.”⁶⁵ Clearly, the subaltern groups were treated similarly by the authorities in Russia and the United States. Both sets of elites delineated freedom’s parameters to the freed peoples, as well as their obligations. In true paternalistic fashion, in each country freedom had been both granted from above and defined by the elites.

In both the American South in general and the state of Mississippi in particular, the preceding pages have made clear that, like the situation in Russia, there was much commotion, confusion, and competing narratives over the meaning of freedom in the immediate post-emancipation moment. A variety of rumors with respect to both freedom’s promises and parameters, as well as possible peasant disturbances and former slaves’ insurrections were rampant. What happened at Yazikovo Selo and Palmyra Plantation speaks to their unique characteristics in each context.

Yazikovo Selo and Palmyra Plantation: common problems, differences, and unique characteristics

In the preceding pages, I have explained that across Russia, including Simbirsk Province there was much commotion about the meaning of freedom following the emancipation edict, but on the eve of the sowing season. However, it was a relatively rare thing where the army was called to an estate. Like those few examples cited above, this happened at Yazikovo Selo. A report from Army Colonel Essen to Alexander II

⁶⁵ L.M. Ivanov, ed., *Krestyanskoe Dvizhenie v Rossii v 1861-1869 gg: sbornik dokumentov* (Moscow, USSR: Mysl’, 1964), pp. 10, and 163.

reported that at the estate of Vasili Yazikov, a disturbance was addressed by the district police and Provincial Marshal of the Nobility, with no results. “So I decided myself to come to the place itself to investigate. The peasants of this village, selo Yazikovo, didn’t respond to any persuasions” and “remained steadfast, standing like granite.” So Governor Izvekov accompanied Essen to Yazikovo Selo, with troops comprising a company from the 4th Reserve. “On May 18 we arrived and called a meeting.” They also brought in representatives from the neighboring villages. “I tried to reason with the peasants,” but to no avail, wrote Essen. Therefore, “I punished the main ringleaders which restored order and peace. The peasants now understand their guilt and show their complete submission.”⁶⁶ In addition, he warned that what all the disturbances in the region seemed to share was the “idea that they have been cheated by the landlord. . . .”⁶⁷

Yazikovo Selo’s inhabitants’ defiance had deep roots. During the Pugachev uprising in 1774, the army had to be called in after the peasants burned down the estate. Vasili’s great- great-grandfather was trapped in the mansion as it went up in flames. Vasili’s father, Petr, wrote an account of the event and noted that the uprising was put down by the army with such force that “to this day the peasants on the estate cannot recall it without shuddering.”⁶⁸ If this is the case, it is all the more remarkable that the peasants of Yazikovo Selo stood “like granite” in the spring of 1861.

⁶⁶ Morokhovets, *Krestyanskoe dvizhenie v 1861*, p. 219 Report #145, 20 May 1861 from Col. Essen to Alexander II.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 214-215 Report #142, 19 April 1861 Col. Essen to Alexander II.

⁶⁸ Aleksandr Rassidin, “Yazikovo” *Ulyanovskaya-Simbirskaya Entsiklopediya*, t. II, N-Ya (Ulyanovsk, Russia: Simbirskaya Kniga, 2004), p. 472.

By the fall of 1861 Vasili Yazikov's uncle, Alexander, summarized the situation in the following way:

Here, there is really a bad situation with the peasants. Everywhere there are uprisings. . . ., [for example] at Bestuzhevs' Repevka, Davydov's Maze, Gagarin's Zaborovke, Kindiakov's Golovine, and at brother Vasili's Yazikovo and [Kakhanov's] Linevke. . . . [but] all were handled and resolved by using the rod. . . .⁶⁹

By Autumn 1865, so, too, was Palmyra Plantation experiencing tumult and uncertainty, but of a different kind. Emancipation was made certain as a result of the South's defeat. Therefore, after having experienced a roughly two-year period of Union occupation which insulated the plantation from the ravages of war, Palmyra found itself in yet another period of flux as Northern authorities began their departure and the Quitman/Lovells proceeded to recover their property. This was far different from just the prior year, when the freed people at Davis Bend had experienced elements of stability and order relative to the rest of the war torn South. In fact, the Home Colony experiment was such a "grand success" that

No people had a better opportunity for making money than [the freed people there.] They paid no rent and no tax on their cotton. Free hospitals cared for their sick and their paupers were fed by the

⁶⁹ Zhores Trofimov, *Zhil i umer dzhentl'menom poetom: dokumental'nye ocherki o D.P. Oznobishinye* (Ulyanovsk, Russia: Pechatnyi dvor, 2005), p. 86. It was not only the use of corporal punishment that quelled such disturbances. For the army's cooperation was also contingent on what was known as *obzhorno komandoi* (обжорно командой). That is, the feeding and quartering of troops for a given time period. This was an old tradition, an informal agreement between the landlord and soldiers whereby, if the former had to call on the latter to come to his estate to quell an uprising, he was obliged to pay them in the form of bountiful feasts and lodgings for a period of time. According to his uncle, Vasili Yazikov had been compelled to quarter the troops at Yazikovo Selo over the summer of 1861.

government. They were protected and encouraged and were given every opportunity to develop their capabilities.⁷⁰

All this changed when, in June 1865, Johnson ordered that all property, amounting to approximately 80,000 acres of farm land in Mississippi alone, be returned to its former owners after they submitted loyalty oaths and received presidential pardons.⁷¹ Various members of the Quitman/Lovell family wasted no time. Moving quickly to recover Palmyra Plantation and other properties, they submitted their loyalty oaths between July 24 and August 28.⁷² Shortly after receiving amnesty, the Quitman Lovell family

⁷⁰ Thomas to Montgomery, et.al., August 3, 1865, B.R.F. & A.L., RG 105, XIV, pp. 200-204. See also Ganus, "Freedmen's Bureau in Mississippi," p. 134; James T. Currie, *Enclave: Vicksburg and Her Plantations, 1863-1870* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 1980), Chapter 4; Foner *Reconstruction*, p. 376; Glymph, "Second Middle Passage," p. 94; and Hermann, *Pursuit*, pp. 59-60, 85, and 104-105.

⁷¹ See Wharton, *The Negro in Mississippi*, pp. 58-59. A Southerner, Johnson's views with respect to property were typical of those in Northern Society at the time: that law defined property, that property was an indivisible possession, and that the "sacred right" of property had been corrupted by Union policy during the war which confiscated and destroyed that property. See Dylan C. Penningroth, *The Claims of Kinfolk: African American Property and Community in the Nineteenth-Century South* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003), pp. 132-133.

⁷² Application of William Storrow Lovell, et.al. (Miss.) in Case Files of Applications from Former Confederates for Presidential Pardons, 1865, U.S. Department of War, Records of the Adjutant General's Office, 1780s-1917, Record Group 94, National Archives, Washington, D.C. The Quitman/Lovell oaths are an instructive lesson in and of themselves: President Johnson required that each application for amnesty include an explanation of the extent to which the petitioner aided the Confederacy, and if so, that great remorse should be expressed. The President also required the petitioner pledge allegiance to the United States Constitution, which included expressing a pledge to obey all laws regarding emancipation. The Lovell brothers downplayed their participation in the war on the Confederacy's behalf and the Quitman daughters (of whom two, Tonie and Louisa, were married to the Lovell brothers, William Storrow and Joseph respectively) stated that they had nothing to do with the late rebellion whatsoever. Instead, the brothers stressed that they were from the North, while the Quitman daughters cited their father, General Quitman, presumably to draw attention to their pre-war status. None expressed remorse.

petitioned the Freedmen's Bureau for the return of their confiscated property on Davis Bend.⁷³

As they prepared their loyalty oaths in July 1865, the Lovell brothers began what would become a protracted effort to rehabilitate Palmyra and the other Quitman properties. In the Freedmen's Bureau Records, the only labor contract I found relating to both the Quitman/Lovell family and Palmyra Plantation for the entire period under review was one dated July 12, 1865. The contract was with four individuals, Lewis, Britt, Vini, and Ranson, ages forty-five, twenty-eight, twenty-five, and five respectively. (The five-year old was hired as a "maintenance boy.") In the 1860 Slave List for Palmyra, a "Lewis," and a "Vini," both age eighteen, are cited. Because of the age disparity, it is improbable that this could be the same Lewis. But it is possible that the Vini cited in each record is the same individual. The monthly wage agreed to was \$5.00, with room and board included. This seems paltry given that the Bureau recommended in March 1865 \$10.00 per month, and could report in June of 1866, that on the Davis plantations, some laborers earned up to \$15.00 per month. However, that a year had transpired between the two wage rates is important. It suggests that the freed people had become more adept at negotiating, and that the planters had realized they needed to offer more to retain laborers.

In addition, and discussed in detail in Chapter Five, Lovell began making preparations to diversify the plantation's economy in the early post-emancipation years, focusing on

⁷³ William Storrow Lovell to Major General O.O. Howard, 23 October 1865. By way of comparison, the Quitman-Lovells' neighbors, Joseph and Jefferson Davis, indicated in late 1865 that they would "never ask for a pardon." They considered the confiscation of their property illegal; and its return was not contingent upon *them*, but the Freedmen's Bureau. Thomas to Howard, 22 December 1865, B.R.F. & A.L., M826-1 and M826-6.

hay hauling, cattle, and corn crops, which are not labor intensive.⁷⁴ These are signposts of deliberate planning for the future of production on the plantation. Lovell's efforts also suggest that he made the decision to acclimate to the new realities in the postbellum, post-emancipation era. Finally, these developments suggest that, unlike other areas in both Mississippi and the greater American South, Lovell was able to move quickly on the question of labor *because* the situation on the Bend during the war had been relatively stable and the labor force was relatively intact. However, as the next chapter will make clear, notwithstanding Union officials' optimistic reports, not all had been rosy at the Bend during its occupation. The realities on the ground during the Home Colony period also point to the opposite. There was much suffering and destitution there, and work was compulsory. The next chapter will also demonstrate that, like Lovell, Vasili Yazikov also wasted no time, as he moved quickly to implement the Statutory Charter which the Russian *Manifesto* required.

Illustrating the fluidity of this period, as Lovell was recovering the property and preparing contracts in the summer of 1865, the Freedmen's Bureau was still trying to break down the plantations on the Bend and give land to the former slaves for three more years. One Bureau representative explained the way of life for the freed people on the Bend in the following way: "The Freedmen have built houses, and expended money on the land, with the expectation that the Government would sustain their claim to it in

⁷⁴ Labor Contracts of Freedmen, July, 1865, Roll 44, M826, BRFAL, National Archives, Washington, D.C.; "Palmyra Negroes 1860," Lovell Family Records, Box 3, Folder 31, University of the South Sewanee; and Eldridge to Reston, June 12, 1866, B.R.F. & A.L., RG 105, XIV, Letters received, Assistant Adjutant General's office. See also "Plantation Regulations, General Order No. 23," *Black Republican*, May 20, 1865.

preference to that of the rebel owners.”⁷⁵ And on October 14, 1865, Thomas reported that “. . .the people are organized into a laboring community in which each family is provided with a small piece of ground. The head of the family has his house on his own land, and regulates his own domestic affairs, apart from others. At the beginning of the year he received a lease for the land and a permit to hold necessary stock.”⁷⁶ Here it is not implausible to imagine that such moves reinforced the idea among the freed people that land allotments would be a *de facto* component of emancipation.

Simultaneous to this, Union officials were setting in motion policies which contradicted such optimism. In October Major General O.O. Howard, the Freedmen’s Bureau Commissioner, issued Order #117, which closed the Post Office on the Bend. On December 19, Thomas issued Property Order #43, which transferred the ownership of Palmyra Plantation from the Home Colony to the Quitman/Lovell family. In early January 1866, Thomas again praised what had transpired on the Bend, noting that in all of 1865, the colony produced a profit of \$159,200. The people there had “raised their own crops, made their own sales, and put the money in their own pockets. . . .”⁷⁷

But rumors and expectations were still not put to rest. Expressing that there was no inconsistency between the fact that the liberated worked *and* desired a “land gift,” Lovell’s neighbor and former Davis slave, Ben Montgomery, who, incredibly, acquired

⁷⁵ Thomas to Howard, September 19, 1865, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, Davis Bend, 1865-1866, Record Group 105, Box 14 (Mississippi), NA, pp. 328-332.

⁷⁶ Assistant Commissioner Thomas to General O.O. Howard, October 14, 1865, B.R.F. & A.L., RG 105, XIV, Letters received, Assistant Adjutant General’s office.

⁷⁷ Assistant Commissioner Thomas to General O.O. Howard, January 10, 1866, B.R.F. & A.L., RG 105, XIV, Letters received, Assistant Adjutant General’s office.

his former master's plantation for a number of years after the war, explained in early January 1866 that Thomas had been there "a few days ago and in his speech to an assembly at Palmyra informed them. . ." that work would go on. Nevertheless, this former slave continued, "It is still rumored that this land will be retained by the Government," presumably for redistribution.⁷⁸ Indeed, American freedmen would cling to the hope for land distribution as part of a holiday gift for years.⁷⁹ That Thomas lectured the freed people at Palmyra Plantation in January 1866 is curious since the Quitman/Lovell family had recovered the property well before that. On February 27, 1866 the military post on the Bend was shut down.

Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed how things played out in Russia and the American South during the period of time between liberation and the commencement of the sowing period. In the Russian case, the *Manifesto* was the *de jure* catalyst of liberation in early 1861. In the American case, in the Spring of 1865 the South's defeat in the war was the *de facto* signal of it. In order to understand what happened at Yazikovo Selo and Palmyra Plantation I discussed and compared the general conditions and trends in each country, as well as those in Simbirsk Province and Mississippi in particular. Many

⁷⁸ Montgomery to Davis, January 8, 1866, Joseph Davis Papers, 1-8, MDAH.

⁷⁹ Wharton, *The Negro in Mississippi*, p. 59. For example, Alvan Gillem, Assistant Commissioner of the Bureau in Mississippi, reported in December of 1867 that "There seems to be wide spread belief [among the freedmen] . . .that the land in this state is to be divided among them, and. . .the freedmen refus[e]. . .to contract for the next year. . . ." amid those expectations. Quoted in Wayne, *Reshaping of Plantation Society*, pp. 122-123.

dynamics were in play. I examined both the authorities' and the freed peoples' expectations with respect to freedom's meaning. This included the freed people's obligations, whether *de jure* (in the Russian case) or *de facto* (in the American one), as well as their reactions to them. Categories of analysis included labor, the freed people's aspirational hopes for land, and the dichotomy between the authorities' hopes for both social order and labor on the demesne on the one hand, and the freed people's desires for self autonomy and the freedom to resist on the other. Above all, it is clear that freedom had many meanings.

Under these new circumstances, the situations were fluid and raw. Rumors of many kinds flourished. On the one hand, the authorities in each country expected order, obedience, and compliance with labor obligations. They were especially fearful of uprisings, disruptions, and insurrections. On the other hand, the freed peoples in each country anticipated freedom from both authority and obligations. They also anticipated land gifts, without strings attached. Dan Carter has explained that a rumor is an "elaborate psychodrama – which temporarily resolves the tensions of a perilously unstable society." Rumors also alleviate stress, foster *camaraderie*, and empower both the strong and the weak. Their impact is anything but trivial. James Scott has added that rumor thrives most "in situations in which events of vital importance to peoples' interests are occurring. . . ." And Steven Hahn has observed that it is a form of "grassroots political struggle." These explanations help us understand the fears, as well as the

weapons of both the powerful and the weak. They also help us understand the ways in which those things that were important to various groups were framed and expressed.⁸⁰

In both Russia and the American South, officials attempted to ensure a smooth transition from the liberation date to the sowing season. In both countries, the authorities' hopes for a smooth transition were either dashed, or at least called into question by the freed peoples, as they contested the meaning of freedom and used various tactics. This involved either explicitly or implicitly objecting to obligations which were placed on them by the authorities. But the forms of objection varied. In the Russian example, the most glaring of these was the uprising in Bezdna. Others took the form of disturbances, such as the one at Yazikovo Selo. Here the peasants challenged the authority of their former master and threatened to withhold their labor. They also objected to the conditional nature of land earmarks. Like other estates where corporal punishment was used, the authorities singled out a scapegoat at Yazikovo Selo and punished him. Normality appeared to settle in as the peasants stood down. What the authorities interpreted as acquiescence when the peasants "stood down," might be more accurately viewed as what Steven Hahn has labeled "strategic retreat."⁸¹ As the next chapter will show, these days were not the old days, and normality was chimerical.

⁸⁰ See Carter, "Anatomy," p. 351; Jason Phillips, "The Grape Vine Telegraph: Rumors and Confederate Persistence" *Journal of Southern History* 72 (2006), pp. 753-788; James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 144; and Hahn, "'Extravagant Expectations,'" p. 122-158. See also cited in Chapter One, p. 11.

⁸¹ See Steven Hahn, *The Political Worlds of Slavery and Freedom* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009).

Peasant disturbances in the immediate post-emancipation period constituted real resistance. They demonstrated categorical continuity with the past. That is, the difference between a Pugachev rebellion and the confrontation at Bezdna or the disturbance at Yazikovo Selo was a matter of degree but not type. The specter of rebellion was indelibly imprinted on the cultural memory of all involved. In this regard the disturbances held great symbolic weight.

The disturbances also demonstrated continuity with past confrontations in that they exhibited a specific ritualized choreography or routine in that they were collective efforts and the confrontations occurred in the public sphere on the estate. An “us and them” dichotomy ran in two directions: while the peasants viewed their former masters as well as the authorities as liars, thieves, and impostors, the latter viewed the former as ignorant, disobedient, and incapable of understanding both the terms of emancipation and the meaning of freedom. A number of sequentially repeated warnings, pleas, and visits were made by officials to the various villages. The authorities invoked the Tsar’s law to delegitimize the peasants’ behavior and interpretation of the terms of emancipation. If necessary, and only after repeated warnings, corporal punishment was used. Of course corporal punishment had great cultural and symbolic weight in Imperial Russia. Flogging was an institutional method of inflicting pain whose function was to punish, elicit information, and serve as a deterrent. Notwithstanding the fact of emancipation, that flogging continued to be used thereafter both indicated and reinforced the peasants’ inferior social status. Indeed, the landlord’s right to use corporal punishment was

incorporated into the emancipation *Regulations*.⁸² When corporal punishment was used, it was most often applied in public to someone who was perceived by the officials and/or the peasants as a “ringleader” or “abetter,” as well as an outsider; someone who was “different” from the general peasant population and who was considered a bad influence. The authorities transferred blame onto a scapegoat to expunge the individual whom they perceived as the source of the problem. In this regard, scapegoating served the social function of a sacrificial rite, which led to reconciliation or reunification, but was by no means permanent.

Conversely, by appropriating the “good Tsar” myth and accusing the authorities and their former owners of twisting the meaning of the *Manifesto*, the peasants delegitimized them. This line of reasoning and the disturbances and rebellions that it produced has often been labeled as “naïve monarchism.” Daniel Field argued that the peasants cynically manipulated the good tsar myth, claiming to be rebelling *for* him rather than *against* him.⁸³ The peasants, too, scapegoated the authorities, in essence “othering” them. While there does not seem to be any evidence that they threatened the authorities’ safety, the peasants vowed they were prepared to spill blood and to sacrifice themselves in the name of freedom, as Bezdna illustrated. Moreover, like the authorities, whose fears of a massive uprising on the scale of a Pugachev rebellion ran deep, the peasants had atavistic fears and mistrust of their superiors’ intentions. Long ago Donald

⁸² See Abby Schrader, *Languages of the Lash: Corporal Punishment and Identity in Imperial Russia* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois Press, 2003), pp. 121, 152, and 186; and Irina Reyfman “The Emergence of the Duel in Russia: Corporal Punishment and the Honor Code” in *The Russian Review* 54 (January, 1995), pp. 26-43. The penal reform of 1863 curtailed corporal punishment but it did not abolish the lash.

⁸³ Field, *Rebels*, pp. 42-43.

MacKenzie Wallace explained that, when the tsar “liberated” the nobility from compulsory service in 1762, rumors swirled among the peasants that their liberation would soon follow. Hence the ease with which a Pugachev could persuade thousands of peasants in the middle Volga region that he, the “real” tsar, had come to bestow freedom on them.⁸⁴

Both the authorities and the peasants understood the historical precedent and the potential lethality of the freed people’s most extreme weapon: rebellion. Therefore, in general, peasants across the Russian land may well have resisted the obligations placed on them by the authorities, but they did not engage in massive rebellion. All involved had an interest in not crossing the line. For in Russia, both history and *Bezдна* demonstrated it would not end well for the peasants. Despite their numbers the peasants were disadvantaged when it came to the state’s strong arm, the army. But their social capital was also a disadvantage. Instead, they resisted the terms of freedom, which obliged them to work for their former masters and pay for land earmarked for them by threatening to withhold their labor.

David Moon has pointed out that Russian peasants had neither a psychological need nor respect for legislation, nor did they even have a “misunderstanding” of it in order to feel that their beliefs and actions were “legitimate.” Rather, they took advantage of said legislation and especially conflict between local authorities and officials in the capital, including the Tsar himself. Indeed, they were quite adept at reading the political climate and behaved as if the world were as they *wished it to be*. Yet, the peasants were also

⁸⁴ Sir Donald MacKenzie Wallace, *Russia, Vol. II* (London, UK: Cassell, Petter, and Galpin, 1877), p. 247.

pragmatic in that they creatively misunderstood (or feigned a misunderstanding of) the law when it was in their interest to do so. But Hugh Hudson has argued that by invoking both the *Manifesto* and the *Reviziia*, the peasants sought to prove the illegality of their former masters' hold over them as well as the legality of their own actions. They may not have known the laws' details, but they appropriated the spirit of the law in order to assert their interests. Whatever the reasoning may be, what is certain is that the peasants were completely sure of the economic justice that they sought: to own their labor and land, and be free from their former masters' control.⁸⁵

Notwithstanding these salients, the disturbances demonstrated discontinuity with the past in a number of ways. *De jure* emancipation represented a marked break, and it was this moment that provided the opportunity for resistance, which the peasants seized on. The disturbances erupted after emancipation but on the eve of the crucial sowing season, when their former masters needed their labor, that crucial space of time between the *status quo ante* and *status quo futurus*. This was the period between the *de jure* emancipation and how the peasants would live based on its parameters. Here was a crucial moment when traditional constraints were loosened. Here the meaning of freedom was contested. The crux of the matter had to do with the authorities' expectations about what the freed peoples' obligations were. However, as "free people," the former serfs contested those obligations. They understood the disconnect between an

⁸⁵ Hugh D. Hudson, "'Even if you Cut off our Heads': Russian Peasant Legal Consciousness in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century" *Canadian-American Slavic Studies* 35:1 (Spring, 2001), pp. 1-17, p. 5; and David Moon, *Russian Peasants and Tsarist Legislation on the Eve of Reform: The Interaction of the Peasantry and Official Russia, 1825-1855* (London, UK: MacMillan Press, 1992), pp. 60-61. See also Geoffrey Hosking, *Russia: People and Empire, 1552-1917* (Boston, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), pp. 220-222.

authentic freedom and one that had “obligations.” They also asserted that their definition of freedom included land, without conditions.

A similar set of circumstances took place in the American South and the state of Mississippi during the immediate post-emancipation period. But there were also a number of dissimilarities. Notwithstanding the fact that freedom’s parameters remained to be defined, like their Russian counterpart the former slaves had great expectations of land gifts or allotments. But unlike the Russian scenario, where the government promised land allotments, the freed people had no legality to cling to.

Against this backdrop rumors flourished among many whites that an insurrection was in the offing. The commotion over a Christmas insurrection can be explained in a number of ways. First, like the middle Volga River region, the Mississippi River Delta had a history of violence and insurrectionary scares, as well as efforts to repress both real and imagined rebellions. Second, to the extent that it played out during a tumultuous time, it was consistent with those rumors of insurrection in the antebellum period. In this regard, these days were like the old days. The inertia of culture was great. Third, while the North’s victory in the war provided fertile ground for the freed people’s optimism with respect to a land gift, it also fuelled Southern whites’ deep-seated fears of insurrection. Dissimilar to the tropes associated with insurrectionary scares prior to emancipation, it would appear that, at least in Mississippi, no informal, vigilance committees were formed to suppress the purported insurrection in its incubation stage. However, that no official source has cited such a thing does not mean that white “vigilance” was absent. Alternatively, perhaps the absence of vigilante justice had far more to do with the fact that Union presence was still very real.

All this said, the rumored Christmas insurrection came and went without incident. No whites were killed; no white women were taken as brides; and no land was seized. Nor was land allotted by government authorities to the freed people as part of a Christmas gift. Instead, a variety of *de jure* laws, such as Mississippi's Black Codes and the Freedmen's Bureau's regulations, were put in place to control the freed people, secure their labor, and, implicitly if not explicitly, quell any insurrectionary efforts.

Like their Russian counterpart, the American freed people could not stage a massive, successful disturbance for a number of reasons. They understood that an insurrection, real or perceived, could be suppressed violently by the South's whites. (That they seized the moment to enlist when Union armies invaded the South demonstrates they were absolutely prepared to fight for freedom.) Also, notwithstanding the fact that they represented roughly half of Mississippi's population, like their Russian counterpart they lacked the social capital to mount any meaningful challenges to the powers that be. Further, the freed people's interests competed with the government's overarching preoccupation with the union's reconstruction in this post war period: they could not seize the land. They could not challenge the return of plantations to their former owners. They could not count on the authorities in the nation's capital to defend their interests. They did not have access to credit to purchase land. And even if they did, Mississippi's whites took steps to deny their access to land ownership, as evidenced by the Black Codes. Above all, survival's necessities meant that they were disadvantaged with respect to how much they could leverage with their labor in the bargaining process.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ See Roger L. Ransom and Richard Sutch, *One Kind of Freedom: The Economic Consequences of Emancipation* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1977), pp. 81, and 86.

Further, as the Russian case illustrated, where the authorities, including the tsar himself, warned the freed people that there was no more to be offered with freedom's package, the American authorities also launched a public relations campaign of sorts, warning the former slaves that the parameters of freedom did not include a land gift. These realities forced the American freed people to get on with their lives and make do with what they had, all the while continuing to hope for the day that they would be rewarded with land. This is where the movement to bargain with their labor and contract for a pre-arranged term made its appearance. On the one hand, their mobility gave them an advantage with respect to bargaining. On the other, it disadvantaged them in that they lacked the community cohesiveness that might be required to stage a united front, as the Russian examples illustrated. Furthermore, their mobility was undercut greatly by planters' hopes to secure labor, as an editorial in the *New Orleans Tribune* indicated,

Agents of the Freedmen's Bureau might have been designated as planters' agents. They took more trouble to procure hands for the owners of large plantations than to protect the freed people and defend their rights. We still recollect Gen. Banks' order on "small-pox passes," by which, under the absurd plea of preventing the spreading of small-pox, the colored people were placed under the law of exception as far as their movements were concerned. They were not allowed to change plantations, they could not leave a place and hunt for work – which is the natural right of all free laborers – unless they first obtained a pass from their former employer, who, of course, refused. . . .⁸⁷

Articulated here was the meaning of freedom to the liberated in the immediate post-emancipation period: the ability to move about freely; the ability to negotiate the terms of and engage in the labor of one's choice; and the ability to be free from oversight by elites – including Union officials. As far as the editor was concerned, these were

⁸⁷ "The Failure of Reconstruction (Suffrage of Freed Blacks)" *New Orleans Tribune*, November 22, 1867.

undercut by anyone or entity which placed restrictions on those beliefs. Like the Russian freed serfs, the American freed people fully understood that a marked break with the past had occurred. And as is evident, the editor fully subscribed to the mainstream tenets of labor in America: to own, determine, and negotiate with one's labor. Therefore, unlike their Russian counterpart, who challenged the elites' expectations of their economic obligations according to their traditionally socio-cultural prescribed roles and their status as defined by the emancipation legislation, they appear to have been *simpatico* with those prevailing economic and socio-cultural beliefs about work in American society. In this moment, out of both necessity and the internalization of mainstream American economic values, they appear to have equated the restrictive terms of the contract with their former condition, rather than the *type* of labor.

Tangential to all this was the presence of armies in each context. In the Russian case, the tsar deployed military units across the country in order to preemptively quell unrest in the weeks after emancipation's announcement. As Allen Wildman has explained, military expeditions in the Russian countryside had both literal and symbolic parts to play in that they were used to quell real uprisings and disturbances as well as put the population on notice. ". . . much fanfare and rolling of drums" attracted the attention of villagers, and "set in motion rumors" that warned those ahead to submit. Crowds of spectators would witness brutal beatings, the running of gauntlets, quarterings, and the like, and soldiers "demanded vodka, plundered personal possessions, and took liberties with women." ". . . these were ritualized occasions when the symbolic acts were understood by both" the authorities and peasants, and which set precedents. In the end, the simpering and contrite peasants yielded, feigning ignorance or misunderstanding,

which were all “subterfuge” that repressed groups often display.⁸⁸ That there were so few estates in Simbirsk Province where the army made its appearance is significant. That Yazikovo Selo was one of these is exceptional.

Conversely, across the Southern land, the Confederacy’s defeat was on full display with the continued presence of Union armies. However, because it had been occupied for a number of years meant that the Bend’s experience was exceptional relative to the rest of the American South. For several years it experienced a military occupation. Yet, life on the Bend was far more tranquil relative to both its immediate surrounding area and the greater south in general. The transitional year of 1865, which witnessed the army’s recession from the Bend and the Quitman/Lovells’ return, appeared to be equally tranquil relative to the expectations of land gifts and rumors of former slaves rising up elsewhere. The Union army’s presence also played a role in enforcing the federal authorities’ definition of freedom.

Another interesting parallel is the fear which many authorities in each country had of collaboration, real or imagined, between the freed people and the military. That is, because many Russian officials understood the potential for alliances between rank and file soldiers (who were drawn from the peasant/serf population) and the freed people, they feared collaboration. Similarly, white, Confederate, southerners were deeply suspicious of Union soldiers’ allegiances with the American freed people.

Just as freedom’s rollout was not seamless at Yazikovo Selo, nor was it at Palmyra Plantation. The former slaves there experienced freedom in degrees. After enduring the

⁸⁸ Allan K. Wildman, “The Defining Moment: Land Charters and the Post-Emancipation Agrarian Settlement in Russia, 1861-1863” *The Carl Beck Papers in Russian & East European Studies* No. 1205 (1996), pp. 25-26.

war, occupation, and the exceptional Home Colony period, the incremental nature of freedom continued after the war's conclusion, when the union's reconstruction commenced and Palmyra's former owners proceeded to recover the property. The Quitman/Lovell family wasted no time. William Storrow Lovell contracted with a number of former slaves well before the Thirteenth Amendment's ratification, and also well before the planting season's prep period. It is significant that Lovell proceeded to make arrangements for labor on the demesne as he and the family were preparing their allegiance oaths.

That Palmyra's former slaves continued hope for a land gift as they complied with the preparation of a work schedule suggests that the two were not mutually exclusive. Conversely, it appears that, unlike their counterparts at Palmyra Plantation, but like many other emancipated peasants in Russia, the former serfs at Yazikovo Selo could not, or did not want to reconcile freedom's obligations prescribed to them with *their* expectations of it. That they could not be evicted from the demesne may well have made all the difference with respect to the "expectations of freedom vs. compliance with those of the authorities" dichotomy.

What played out at Yazikovo Selo and Palmyra Plantation in particular informs us of the following: With respect to the former, the peasants' rebelliousness had deep roots. Also, because he was the District Marshal of the Nobility, Vasili Yazikov was in a crucial position of power to summon an army unit. That the demesne was located on the main road connected to the province's capital, a unit could be dispatched there with relative ease. The standoff ended, but only after the purported ringleader was punished. With respect to Palmyra, Davis Bend was in a remote, geographically isolated location where,

during the Civil War, an experiment in social engineering was underway. As the next chapter will explain, it was during the Home Colony period that the former slaves on the Bend got their first taste of freedom: they were sheltered, but they were also compelled to work. After the South's defeat, William Storrow Lovell was, like Vasili Yazikov, both pragmatic and effective, moving quickly to keep up with history's pace. In the next chapter, the demesnes will be comparatively analyzed within the framework of the legal arrangements which the authorities imposed on the freed peoples there for the purposes of securing their labor and maintaining social order.

Chapter 3

REGULATING FREEDOM IN THE MIDST OF LIBERATION

As the previous chapter made clear, following the tumultuous twin events of the Civil War's conclusion and the assassination of Abraham Lincoln in April 1865, members of the extended Quitman/Lovell family proceeded to apply for amnesty pardons from the president's successor, Andrew Johnson. Receiving a pardon would restore their citizenship and put them on a schedule to recover their property, which had been confiscated by Union armies during the war. The logistics of land restoration was placed in the hands of the Freedmen's Bureau. Anticipating that Palmyra Plantation would soon be returned to the Quitman/Lovell family, Colonel Samuel Thomas, the Freedmen's Bureau Assistant Commissioner for Mississippi, gave the following instructions in late August 1865 to his subordinate, Davis Bend Provost Marshal Gaylord Norton:

[I] expects [*sic*] [you] to control the colony at Davis Bend until the present crops are harvested. Not a pound of cotton must be shipped from the Bend till it is ginned and then only on permit [from your superior]. . . . Be kind and conciliatory to the Freedmen generally but firm in all points in which it is necessary to secure the interests of the whole colony and the Government. You know the necessity of crowding the work forward with all possible haste. Reduce rations used to the lowest figure possibly [*sic*].

Two weeks later, the Acting Assistant Commissioner for the Western District in Mississippi instructed Norton to report "the number of [labor] contracts made," which should include "the number of hands and dependents" per "contract."¹ Clearly, the officials knew that time was running out. The Home Colony experiment appeared to be

¹ Col. Samuel Thomas to Capt. G.B. Norton, 29 August 1865; and Capt. J.H. Weber to Capt. G. B. Norton, 13 September, 1865, Records of the Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, Record Group (RG) 105, Roll 65.

reaching its conclusion. It was critical that the crops be harvested and retained for sale and profit by the state.

A sense of urgency was also present amid the sweeping changes underway in the weeks and months after emancipation in Russia. As discussed in the previous chapter, in response to what they considered unfavorable terms of freedom, Russian peasants, including those at Yazikovo Selo, confronted the authorities during the critical spring planting season in 1861. In his report to the Tsar about the disturbance at the Yazikov estate in May, Colonel Essen warned that “It is of the utmost importance that the positions of the peace arbitrators be filled as the peasant complaints from the estates are increasing and increasing. . . .[In fact] I have heard that many have been elected, . . .” But the source of the delay was in St. Petersburg’s “bureaucratic red tape of the approval process.”² In addition, government officials instructed their subordinates to proceed to the next stage of the emancipation process as quickly as possible, so that the next year’s season would not be disrupted. This involved working out the terms of a mandated

² E. A. Morokhovets ed., *Krestyanskoie dvizhenie v 1861 godu posle otmeny krepostnogo prava* (Moscow-Leningrad, USSR: Isd-vo Akademii nauk, 1949), pp. 214-215 Report #142, 19 April 1861 Col. Essen to Alexander II. Created by the Emancipation legislation, the Peace Arbitrator was at once a mediator and arbitrator, whose job in particular was to see that the negotiations for land settlements between former serfs and their former masters proceeded smoothly. Every district in every province was assigned two. Members of the nobility, the former masters, elected them, with the Tsar’s approval. It is not surprising, then, that they were viewed with great skepticism by the peasants, but also viewed as potential turncoats or scalawags by the nobility. Because their job was temporary in nature, to facilitate the emancipation process, and they were officially phased out by 1874, as early as 1864 many three year terms were not renewed. See “Opening Public Space: The Peace Arbitrator and Rural Politicization, 1861-1864” by Roxanne Easley in *Slavic Review* 61:4 (Winter, 2002), pp. 707-731.

document, a Statutory Charter, for every estate across Russia.³ Among a number of issues, the Charter both prescribed for the freed people and preserved for the noble landlords a certain amount of land. It also included a variety of obligations that the former serfs owed their former masters until they worked out a payment schedule for the land which they would receive in the form of a Redemption Agreement. One of those obligations had to do with compulsory labor on the demesne. It is significant that the noble landowners and their associates drafted the charters. Vasili Yazikov wasted no time. On the eve of the Spring sowing season in March of 1862, he secured the Charter for Yazikovo Selo.

In this chapter I will examine the variety of rules and contractual arrangements which regulated freedom during the emancipation process at Yazikovo Selo and Palmyra Plantation. Specifically, these included the Statutory Charter for the former, and the “Rules and Regulations” for the latter when it was a member plantation of the Home Colony experiment at Davis Bend. These were official documents utilized by each set of authorities for the management of the demesne and the control of labor in the context of emancipation. Both had the backing of state power. Both contained labor obligations which were premised on a contractual agreement with the freed people. I will discuss

³ Literally translated as Statutory Charter, the *Ustavnaya Gramota* has undergone a variety of translations: See Peter Kolchin, “After Serfdom: Russian Emancipation in Comparative Perspective” in *Terms of Labor: Slavery, Serfdom, and Free Labor* Stanley Engerman, ed. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), pp. 87-115, in which he describes it as the Statutory Charter. Roxanne Easley, in *Emancipation of the Serfs in Russia: Peace Arbitrators and the Development of Civil Society* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2009), calls it a Land Transfer Charter, while Daniel Field, in *Rebels in the Name of the Tsar* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1976), calls it a Regulatory Charter. Peter Zaionchkovsky, in *The Abolition of Serfdom in Russia*, edited and translated by Susan Wobst (Gulf Breeze, Florida: Academic International Press, 1978), calls it the Land Charter.

how the freed people responded to and complied with these arrangements, and why. Because this was the same labor that they had performed in their former condition as serfs and slaves, this comparative study exposes the paradox of emancipation in each country: on the one hand, emancipation was about ending coerced labor. On the other, it did not solve the “problem” of the demand for cheap labor on the demesne. To varying degrees, this was a matter of both overarching state economic policy and the priorities of the local authorities with jurisdiction over each demesne. As was seen in the previous chapter, there is a discernible element of tension between the government officials’ humanitarian goal of emancipating the unfree and that of protecting the economic integrity of the demesne.

With respect to the labor contracts for the freed people at Palmyra Plantation, these made their appearances in two sequential parts. During the first part, or the Home Colony period, Union officials governed the colony with a number of “Rules and Regulations,” and labor contracts were mandatory. Note that this played out *during* the war, when the former slaves there had been liberated by the military, but *before de jure* emancipation. Significantly, because they were categorized as “refugees,” they were not free to leave the Bend, and their sustenance was contingent on complying with the authorities’ expectations for their labor. This was the former slaves’ first taste of freedom, which was unlike that of their counterparts at Yazikovo Selo, whose first encounter with liberation consisted of contesting emancipation’s terms in the spring of 1861, as illustrated in the previous chapter. Then, when the war ended, the Quitman/Lovell family’s recovery of the plantation coincided with *de jure* emancipation. The South’s defeat signaled it, and the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment made it

a fact. Although he was an in-law, William Storrow Lovell was a new landlord who proceeded to employ a variety of tools, including contracting, for the employment of laborers at Palmyra. Like Vasili Yazikov, who was compelled by the tsar's emancipation legislation to effect the Statutory Charter, Lovell was no doubt influenced by the prevailing tool of the day of management-labor relations: the labor contract. However, unlike both his Russian counterpart and Union predecessors, Lovell had a variety of approaches at his disposal to set work in motion.

This analysis will highlight the role of pseudo-contractual arrangements in an evolving process of emancipation in each region, as well as how they shaped the contours of freedom at Yazikovo Selo and Palmyra Plantation. Specifically, there were differences between the contracts' *functional role* in the emancipation process in each context, as well as their *cultural meaning* in each country. In Russia, being free was contingent upon the Statutory Charter, followed by the Redemption Agreement. In America, the former slaves were free, without conditions. Of course what happened at Palmyra meant that the emancipation process was also one of degrees, in that Union armies liberated the slaves there as early as the spring of 1862, and the Thirteenth Amendment made freedom official by December 1865. But the point is that the American "contract" was both an institutional and a cultural emblem of the ideal civil society irrespective of emancipation. These differences notwithstanding, the ideals of negotiation and compliance were implicit in the Russian expectations for the Charter period of the emancipation process as well as in the practice of contracting in America.

Points of comparison have to do with the contractual "terms" with which each set of freed peoples was expected to comply, and the extent to which they were complied with.

In the Russian case, freedom was contingent upon compliance. In the American case, while *de jure* freedom was without strings attached, during the Home Colony period at Palmyra, liberated slaves' sustenance was contingent on work. Then, when Lovell recovered Palmyra, and when the link between work and freedom had been removed by the Thirteenth Amendment, labor contracting took on a different meaning.

The element of mobility vs. immobility with respect to the freed peoples is important. As explained in both Chapters 1 and 2, for a number of reasons the terms of Russian emancipation anchored the freed peasants to the demesne.⁴ Similarly, Union policy during the Home Colony period anchored the former slaves to Davis Bend.⁵ Like the Russian peasants, the former slaves during the Home Colony period did not have freedom of movement. Only with *de jure* emancipation did the American freed people become what the Russians called "bird free." Freedom of movement was a cornerstone of the meaning of freedom in America. It also coincided with the Quitman/Lovell recovery, as well as the "contracting period;" the time when negotiations for the upcoming planting season commenced. As was also explained in the previous chapter, in general, the American freed people had both their labor and their freedom of movement with which to bargain during the contracting season. But unlike its Russian counterpart, American

⁴ The reasons for this were many: state officials feared that a large, landless, mobile class of people threatened social order. They also feared that real possibility that in urban areas, they might be radicalized. Also, many authors of the emancipation legislation were Slavophiles, who believed in the integrity of the Russian village. In this regard, preserving the Russian village with the emancipation legislation was an historical corrective.

⁵ Notwithstanding the *raison d'être* for the Home Colony, which had to do with the lofty principles of establishing a model community of former slaves, Union officials, like the Russian authorities, were trying to manage and control the movement of a landless people for the sake of social order and labor control.

emancipation legislation did not tie anything, such as land gifting, to liberation.

Therefore, while the freed people had their labor and mobility with which to leverage during the contracting process, they also had to find work in order to sustain themselves. This precluded an option of withholding their labor permanently, which was one open to the Russian freed people who had the security of land tenure. Because the freed serfs could not be evicted, they stood to lose little if they refused to comply with the terms of freedom imposed on them from above. They were not completely dependent on their liberators. Hence, there were differences in management styles and policies, as well as varying levels of compliance when comparing Yazikovo Selo and Palmyra Plantation. In the end, while the peasants at Yazikovo Selo resisted compliance, the freed people at Palmyra Plantation worked during both the Home Colony and Lovell recovery periods.

Finally, an analysis of the similarities and dissimilarities of the contracting *policies* and *processes* at each demesne is important for understanding the extent to which each set of freed people could realistically “negotiate” on its own behalf. For central to the meaning of a contract is mutuality. Before analyzing what played out at Yazikovo Selo and Palmyra Plantation, a brief discussion about the contracts in each setting will be instructive.

A Brief Overview of the Russian and American Contractual Arrangements

Contractual arrangements shaped the contours of freedom at each demesne in the emancipation era. As the previous chapter demonstrated, while the Russian emancipation legislation made provisions for labor obligations, the Thirteenth Amendment to the

United States Constitution did not. Still, subsequent federal and state legislation did make provisions with respect to plantation labor.

The Russian Statutory Charter was a significant feature of the tsar's legislation in that it was a crucial tool for the implementation of emancipation. Indeed, Allan Wildman has described the implementation of the Charters as the "defining moment" of emancipation in Russia.⁶ On every estate across Russia the Charter was supposed to have the appearance of contractual agreement, in that the former master and his or her former people were meant to negotiate the terms of land distribution and obligations, albeit within a range prescribed by the government. In fact, the Charter was composed by the former master and/or his/her representative and could go into effect without the peasants' consent. Compliance was mandatory. The Charter was to be drafted within one year of the emancipation date, February 19, 1861 (O.S.) and put into effect within two. The contractual agreement was between the estate's former master and the individual male peasants *in toto*, with a few selected representatives signing the document on behalf of the collective.

In the American case, the labor contract was typically between the former master and/or plantation manager and an individual or set of freed people who signed collectively, all putting their mark (x) on the document if they could not sign it. During the Home Colony period, all the former slaves were required to sign labor contracts with those Union officials who supervised the Bend. In addition, typically, there was one labor contract per group of laborers on each demesne at Davis Bend during the Home

⁶ Allan K. Wildman, "The Defining Moment: Land Charters and the Post-Emancipation Agrarian Settlement in Russia, 1861-1863," *The Carl Beck Papers in Russian & East European Studies* No. 1205 (1996), p. 3.

Colony period. In fact, none survive for Palmyra Plantation during the period of Union occupation. In that the labor contract was a part of the overarching Union “Rules and Regulations,” they are relevant in this comparison.

With respect to the nature of contracting once the Quitman/Lovell family recovered Palmyra after the war, official records and detailed accounts are scant. However, much can be gleaned from William Storrow Lovell’s plantation journals as well as a number of letters. These show that he utilized a variety of employment approaches. These included salaried, contractual, and sharecropping methods, as well as daily, weekly, monthly, and/or seasonal hires. These will be discussed in Chapter 5.

There was only one Charter contract per Russian estate, and one time only.⁷ In the American case, there could be as many contracts as there were laborers on any given plantation, but usually they were collective, and they were typically for one year only, with a new contract needed for every subsequent season. However, an American contract could also be verbal. Hence, although each landlord (and in principle, the peasants) on each Russian estate did have a little wiggle room with which to bargain, the Charter was based on a template, and duplicated by the thousands for a uniform outcome.

⁷ In 1861 there were approximately 115,000 Russian estates. Sergei G. Pushkarev cited 111,555 in “The Russian Peasants’ Reaction to the Emancipation of 1861” *Russian Review* 27:2 (April, 1968), pp. 199-214, p. 199. Citing A.P. Korelin, “Dvoryanstvo v poreformennoy Rossii” *Istoricheskie zapiski* no. 87 (1971), pp. 136-139, Terence Emmons reported 120,000 landed gentry families which constituted 80-85% of the entire noble estate. See “The Russian Landed Gentry and Politics” *Russian Review* 33:3 (July, 1974), pp. 269-283, p. 270. Illustrating the decline of rural estates owned by the nobility after emancipation (which Chapter 4 of this dissertation will touch on), I.M. Pushkareva cited 59,000 in 1877. See her “The Rural Noble Country House in Postreform Russia: (Defining the Issue) *Russian Studies in History* 42:1 (Summer, 2003), pp. 52-86, p. 81. The point is that there should have been approximately this many Statutory Charters emerging in the post emancipation period.

Notwithstanding the recommendations for the contractual terms which the Freedmen's Bureau made, the American contract was far more pliable, and far less streamlined than its Russian counterpart. Above all, agreeing to the Charter was part of the emancipation process in Russia. In America, former slaves were free whether or not they signed a labor contract. Still, both the Russian Charter and the American labor contract enshrined into law expectations for and compliance with labor on the demesne.

Finally, although the labor contract in the emancipation period could contain elements of social control, such as curfews, temperance, and the like, the Russian Charter dealt with a number of obligations in addition to labor requirements. It will be clear, however, that during the Home Colony period, the "Rules and Regulations" had such far reaching implications for social control and the management of labor that they exceeded the authoritarian parameters of the Russian Statutory Charter.

All these differences notwithstanding, important points of comparison and contrast between the two include:

- the terms of the contracts
- the subaltern groups' reception of the contracts
- the extent to which they were complied with thereafter, as exemplified in their labor patterns and productivity.

The extent to which the terms of the contracts were complied with is telling.

The Statutory Charter at Yazikovo Selo

Within one year of the emancipation date, Russian nobleman and landowner Vasili Yazikov composed the Statutory Charter which implemented the terms of freedom for the former serfs on his estate, Yazikovo Selo. Both the *Manifesto* and the *Regulations* mandated the Statutory Charter as the legal, contractual settlement which codified a pre-

determined amount of land allotted by the former master to the peasants on his or her estate. It also codified the peasants' obligations levied to compensate the former master until a payment schedule was worked out between the two sides, to be documented in the Redemption Agreement. These included either *barshchina* or *obrok*, as well as a variety of rents, taxes, payments for other privileges, and rights.

The *Manifesto* and *Regulations* also mandated that “within two years” of the February 19, 1961 date, the Charter be signed – and therefore certified and legitimized – by both former master and a handful of deputies, former serfs selected by their village peers. During this two-year period the former serfs were “temporarily obligated.” In fact, until the peasants entered into the Redemption Agreement with their former master, they remained “temporarily obligated.” In this condition, they were “free” in that they were no longer under the yoke of their former master. But, their freedom was compromised until they began paying for the land. Because the peasants did not have any money, the government advanced most of the price of the land up front to the former noble landowner, about 80%, in the form of bonds – not cash. From this amount, the noble landlord's debts to the state were subtracted. The peasants were to repay the money to the state with 6% interest in installments spread out over 49 years.⁸ They were responsible for paying the remaining 20% to the noble landlord, and, among other things, it is this amount that the Redemption Agreement was meant to address. Until they completed that debt, they were obligated to make payments or rents in the form of *barshchina* and/or *obrok*. The legal unit responsible for these payments was not the

⁸ As a result of the massive uprisings across the countryside during the 1905 Revolution, the government waived all remaining payments.

individual peasant. Rather, the village community, or “commune,”⁹ also known as “rural society” made the payments collectively. Instead of being tied to their former master, the peasants were now tied to the commune’s authority. Once the peasants had paid for the land they were “redeemed” and therefore free.

In addition, both the *Manifesto* and *Regulations* mandated that a kind of ombudsman should oversee and verify both the negotiation process and legitimize the Charter by adding his signature to the final draft. Embodying the “political spirit of the age,” the Peace Mediator, a.k.a. Peace Arbitrator (*Mirovoi Posrednik*) was a “potential generative agent of civil society in the post-emancipation countryside.” While those who became Peace Mediators were noblemen, their mission was to be a kind of broker, a crucial link between state and society as well as between the nobility and the peasants. Under the Mediator’s tutelage, rural peasants ideally had the potential to experience freedom and become political actors by communicating and negotiating for their individual and group interests with their former landlord. However, the Tsar mandated that if the noble landlord and peasants failed to draw up a Charter, the Peace Mediator could draft one

⁹ In “The Defining Moment,” pp. 6-7 Wildman explains that the term “commune” is a misnomer. Because nearly all decisions in the peasant village were made “communally,” there was no legal unit called a “commune.” The more accurate term of “assembly” (*skody*), he argues, should be used. The significance of the Russian Emancipation Legislation transferring governing power, and indeed social control, from the landed nobleman to the commune elders cannot be exaggerated. Indeed, the individual peasants in each estate were simply re-subordinated, from their former master and noble landowner to the village elders, who now had the power to collect taxes, distribute the land allotted to the commune, and issue travel passes to leave the village, the latter of which, they were rarely prepared to do since they needed every “hand” possible to help with the agricultural production levels for which they were responsible. Obviously, the Emancipation Legislation built into the new system corruption, favoritism, and cronyism. For a discussion of terminology and definitions see Steven A. Grant, “Obshchina and Mir” *Slavic Review* 35 (1976), pp. 636-651.

independently.¹⁰ A comparison between the position of the Peace Mediator and various representatives of the Freedmen's Bureau can be made since, like the former, the latter served as intermediaries between the former master and former slave and in a variety of ways sought to cushion the freed people's transition to freedom. Also, it is a striking similarity that the Statutory Charter was not valid without the Peace Mediator's signature and (before the Union presence in the American South disappeared) the labor contract between a former slave and a planter needed a Bureau official's validation.

Each district in Russia was to have two Peace Mediators, and each was selected by the Marshal of the Nobility of that district. Vasili Yazikov was the Marshal of the Nobility for Simbirsk District in Simbirsk Province. One of the two Peace Mediators for Simbirsk District that Vasili was instrumental in promoting was his own cousin, Mikhail Bestuzhev. Therefore, it is no coincidence that Bestuzhev was the Peace Mediator and signatory for Yazikovo Selo's Charter. To be sure, all of the approximately 1,700 men who became Peace Mediators in Russia were noblemen, and most had owned serfs. But Simbirsk Province was notorious in Russia for being saturated with an intricately related web of noble families, and the Bestuzhevs and Yazikovs were close.¹¹ Thus, while it was

¹⁰ Roxanne Easley, "Opening Public Space: The Peace Arbitrator and Rural Politicization, 1861-1864" *Slavic Review* 61:4 (Winter, 2002), pp. 707-731, pp. 708 and 711; and Wildman, "The Defining Moment," pp. 10 and 35. Also see Easley's opus *Emancipation of the Serfs*.

¹¹ Vasili's father, Petr Mikhailovich Yazikov, and Mikhail's mother, Praskovia Mikhailovna Bestuzheva, nee Yazikova, were siblings. Further, Mikhail's mother and father worked closely with the Slavophiles Alexander Mikhailovich Yazikov (brother of Petr M. Yazikov and Praskovia M. Bestuzheva), Dmitri Valuev (another sister, Aleksandra Mikhailovna Valueva, nee Yazikova's son), Aleksei Khomiakov (married to another Yazikov sister, Ekaterina Mikhailovna), and the Kireevsky brothers documenting folksongs of the Middle Volga region. Over the course of the 19th century many male

not surprising that Vasili Yazikov was closely related to the Peace Mediator for his estate, it was unique for Russia.¹² Whether it was Yazikov himself or his cousin that authored the demesne's Charter is hard to say. To be sure, if the nobleman did not, Bestuzhev must have since, as a Mediator, he was responsible for many estates in the district. More important is the extent to which Bestuzhev undoubtedly assisted with the favorable terms of his cousin's Charter. As will be evident, the favorability had not so much to do with the actual amount of land parceled out to Yazikov's former serfs. Indeed, as land allotments were prescribed, Vasili Yazikov was generous. Rather, it had to do with the stringent terms of payment or compensation.

The Charter for Yazikovo Selo was significant for several reasons. That it was signed on March 30, 1862 meant that Vasili Yazikov had complied with the tsar's time restriction for its completion. This is rather unusual because most estate owners in both Simbirsk Province and Russia in general had not completed their charters by this time.¹³

members of both the Bestuzhev and Yazikov family were Marshals of the Nobility in Simbirsk Province.

¹² Tatiana Zakharcheva, "Dva Kniaziazi" *Simbirskii Kur'yer* No. 36 (3204) 4 April 2009.

¹³ For all of 1861 only 2,403 Charters were signed in all of Russia. However, under government pressure, their completion and implementation speeded up by July 1862, by which date 20,108 were registered. By February 19, 1863, the two-year anniversary of emancipation, 92,000 had been completed, which represented approximately 80% of the estates. Of note, numbers for Simbirsk Province showed 95.52 % of former serfs being accounted for by January 1863. By September 1, 1866 95.4% of former serfs in all of Russia were accounted for in completed Charters. These official numbers make it seem as though things transpired smoothly, but they do not indicate the peasants' reception of the Charters. See Easley, "Opening Public Space," p.721; L.M. Ivanov, ed., *Krestyanskoe dvizhenie v Rossi v 1861-1869, gg.: sbornik dokumentov* (Moscow, USSR: Mysl', 1964), p. 10; S.N. Valk, ed., *Otmena krepostnogo prava: Doklady ministrov vnutrennikh del o provedenii krestyanskoi reform, 1861-1862* (Moscow-Leningrad, USSR: Akademiy nauk SSSR, 1950), pp. 95, 193, 285, and 287; Zaionchkovsky *Abolition of Serfdom in Russia*, pp. 132, and 177-178; and Wildman, "The Defining

In this respect Yazikov was a dutiful subject. By effecting the Charter in a timely manner, however, Yazikov leveraged himself into a position of power *vis-à-vis* his former serfs in this time of great social, economic, and political change. Swift implementation of the Charter was a way for him to get ahead of the historical moment, and in this respect he was pragmatic. In autocratic Russia the tsar's edict was irrevocable, so why resist? Besides, the emancipation legislation was favorable to the nobility, so why not move swiftly, especially if, as in Yazikov's case, the landlord stood to gain financially at a time when his estate had been mortgaged serially prior to 1861? Finally, because he effected the Charter on the eve of the spring sowing season, he was able to preemptively secure a legal claim to his former serfs' labor at this crucial time. Most significant, the Charter was not only not signed by the peasants of Yazikovo Selo, but, in an act of great defiance, they even refused a copy of the document. These acts compromised the Charter's legitimacy, if anything, certainly in the minds of the former serfs at Yazikovo Selo.

Before examining the specific contents of Yazikovo Selo's Charter, it will be instructive to briefly outline the structural parameters of the document as prescribed by the emancipation legislation. As noted above, the Charters were to be introduced during the two-year period following February 19, 1861, during which much of the *status quo ante emancipio* remained intact. The Charters standardized the land obligations by law

Moment," pp. 2, 27, and 39. Especially for Simbirsk see detailed descriptions of obstructionism and refusal to sign Charters in "Otmena krepostnogo prava" *Doklady ministerstva vnutrennikh del o posledstviakh krestyanskoi reformy, M-L* (Leningrad: Akademyi nauk USSR, 1950), pp. 138-140, 152, 160, 165-166, 198, 202, 231-232, and 235.

for every region across Russia according to exact maximum and minimum amounts, which took into consideration the soil quality, such as black soil versus steppe, and the like. Therefore, land allotment was neither proportional nor even across Russia. Rather, it was proportional to the soil quality and its fertility. In general, every soul¹⁴ was entitled to anywhere between 6 and 2.75 *desiatini* (1 *desiatina* = 2.7 acres). In Simbirsk Province, the maximum and minimum earmarks were 4.5 and 2 *desiatini* respectively.¹⁵ Although typically minimum amounts were set at one-third of the maximum, the estate owner was entitled to at least one-third of his pre-1861 estate, even if it reduced the soul's allotment to less than the minimum.

The *obrok* dues for the maximum amount of land were set at 8 to 10 rubles (silver) or the equivalent thereof in kind, per male soul per year. *Barshchina* obligations could be retained if the estate owner was entitled to at least one-third of his former lands. As will be evident, Vasili Yazikov retained well more than one-third of his former lands, and

¹⁴ The universal measure of the individual "soul" was male gendered, and replaced the anachronism of *tiaglo*, which was literally a "unit of labor," whether it be a man, woman, or horse. Associated with feudalism, *tiaglo* had been the typical unit on *barshchina* estates.

¹⁵ For Simbirsk District, the Charter for Yazikovo Selo indicates the maximum and minimum for Simbirsk Province was 4 and 1.3 respectively. I.S. Romanshin, in *Ocherki ekonomiki Simbirskoy Gubernii, 17-19 vv.* (Ulyanovsk, USSR: Ulyanovskiy oblastnoy institut usovershenstvovaniya uchiteley, 1961), p. 34 as well as his "Krestyanskaya Reforma v Simbirskoy Guberniya" *Uchenye Zapiski*, t.xxi (Ulyanovsk, USSR: Ulyanovskiy Gosudarstveniy Pedinstitut (UGPI), 1969), p. 13 also say this. *Prilozhenie k trudam redaktsionnoy komissii dlya sostavleniya polozheniya o krestyanakh, vykhodyashchikh iz krepostnoi zavisimosti: svedeniya o pomeshchikh imeniyakh t. III* (Sankt Peterburg, Rossiya: Tipografiya V. Bezobrazova, 1860), translated as "Appendix to the Proceedings of the Editorial Commission's Instructions for the Implementation of the Regulations for the Serfs' Emancipation" *Information regarding the Landlords' Estates, V. 3*, indicates the maximum and minimum Simbirsk Province was 4.5 and 2 respectively.

therefore could legally impose *barshchina*. Like those for *obrok*, the Charter's regulations standardized *barshchina* payments. That is, the typical amount for the maximum land allotment was 40 labor days per year per able bodied man (age 18-55 years old) and 30 labor days per year per able bodied woman (age 17-50).¹⁶ Other more complex rules governed estates that formerly had mixed obligations, the point being that a combination of prescribed obligations was relative to the region's traditions and quality of soil. (That *obrok* was never used at Yazikovo Selo is significant, since the emancipation legislation also allowed for the salience of tradition at each estate.) Two years after the February 1861 date the peasants had the right to demand that *barshchina* be converted to *obrok*. However, *barshchina* could be renewed by the landlord for three year periods indefinitely. The experience at Yazikovo Selo illustrates this latter point, as Vasili Yazikov renewed *barshchina* (40/30 days per year) every three years until he sold the estate in 1881. In addition, the so called "beggars' allotment" (*bednyatsky nadel'*) was allowed, whereby a peasant could opt out of the entire deal in exchange for a sliver of a plot, one quarter of the prescribed maximum, typically 1 *desiatina*, at no cost or obligation. Following Tsar Alexander II's assassination in March 1881, a mandatory Redemption Law ended the hated *barshchina* once and for all. It also ended the "temporary obligated" status, the term limit of which had not been addressed in the *Regulations*, thus ideally converting the landlord/peasant relationship to something that

¹⁶ It is worth noting that this was a sharp reduction from what had been common before emancipation, where, typically, each soul was obligated to work three days a week for his master, making it roughly 156 days a year. Richard Pipes, *Russia Under the Old Regime* (New York: NY: Penguin Books, 1974), pp. 147-8. It is also worth pointing out that while land was allotted to the men on the estate, the custodianship of which was placed with the commune, women received no land apportionments.

resembled more of a civil labor contract, i.e wage labor. Above all, the 1881 Redemption Law required the former serfs begin paying for the land, thus making them “property owners” in name if not in fact.¹⁷ These examples are just a smattering of those itemized in the 400 plus page *Regulations*. But it is clear, they were authoritative and formulaic.

What stands out for all Statutory Charters is that they were uniform. They comprised a list or inventory of property and a set of demographic statistics for the demesne. They contained the information prescribed by the *Regulations* in orderly paragraphs, citing the estate owner; the “society,” i.e. commune (*obshchestvo*), that was the party to the document; the soul count from the most recent census (*Reviziia*), which was 1858; field serfs; household serfs (who were not entitled to any land allotments); those serfs who chose the “beggars’ allotment;” the number of serfs entitled to allotments; the exact size of the estate prior to emancipation; the peasant obligations prior to emancipation; the allotments calculated; the amount of land remaining for the landlord; types of holdings with or without access rights such as plow land, pasture, forest, woodlands, gardens, ponds, fishing privileges, mills, bazaars, and the like; whether there was any disconnected or “splintered” land (*cherespolositsa*); whether the landlord planned on relocating any former serfs because, say, their dwellings were either too close or blocked his access to

¹⁷ The significance of this law should not be underestimated. It officially ended the “temporarily obligated” period and both *barshchina* and *obrok*; instated wage labor and the peasants as official property owners; and mandated that they pay for their property. Given that, by 1881, most former serfs were already under redemption agreements, the impact of this law was only on the relatively few numbers of peasants who were not yet free from their temporarily obligated status. Iurii Ivanov indicates as early as June 27, 1862 a Circular ruled *barshchina* could be used as a payment. See his “Have You Heard?: Rumors and Fears in Rural Russia” *Russian Studies in History* 47:2 (Fall, 2008), pp. 7-13, p. 11 specifically.

land or property that was exclusively “his;” the landlord’s property privileges over peasant holdings (such as the right to open a tavern); and finally the exact amount of *obrok* and/or *barshchina* due per soul.

With all this said, the Charter for Yazikovo Selo was as follows. (Items in bold are the significant details.) The title was regally official: “Charter: By Decree of Simbirsk Province, Simbirsk District for the village of Bogorodskovo, known as Yazikovo Selo, the estate of 2nd Lieutenant [*Podporuchik*] Vasili P. Yazikov, 1862.” And to paraphrase, it contained the following information in the following order: In the village of Bogorodskovo or Yazikovo there was according to the census, 23 male household souls out of a total of 101; and **422 male field/worker peasants**. That number included 160 souls who worked in the (wool) factory. Next, the Charter indicated **28 field/worker peasants** refused the land allotment and obligations, thus accepting the “beggar’s allotment,” amounting to 1 *desiatina*. The Charter then indicated that the total land amount at Yazikovo Selo in 1860 was 6,807 *desiatini*, and from this number the total amount of land the peasants used and had access to was 2,162 *desiatini*.¹⁸ The latter number was a total of detailed items such as 56 *desiatini* ploughed land for personal use; 41 *desiatini* green commons; 34 *desiatini* hay fields; 22 *desiatini* used for hay; 249 *desiatini* tilled fields; 123 *desiatini* for bushes and shrubbery; and the like. Next, Vasili Yazikov earmarked 4 *desiatini* – the maximum amount prescribed for Simbirsk District – for those former male serfs eligible, which was **394 souls**. Given this number, Yazikov was obligated to allot 1,576 *desiatini*, leaving him with 5,231 *desiatini*. As these

¹⁸ Plus 2,162 *sazhen*. Each Charter detailed the amount of land right down to the number of *sazhen*, 1 = 7 feet, but I am not including these minute details in the final numbers.

numbers show, even though he was “generous,” in that he earmarked the maximum amount of land to those eligible, Vasili Yazikov gained 586 *desiatini* relative to his holdings prior to 1861. Beyond this, the Charter reflected that wherever there was a discontinuous plot of land, Yazikov exchanged his own land with peasant plots in order to make their plots contiguous. This amounted to 294 *desiatini*.¹⁹ Further, at the end of the Charter, an addendum paragraph indicated that Vasili pledged a total of nearly 223 *desiatini* of wooded area dispersed around and on the fringes of the estate and river for the peasants to have access to for firewood, at no additional or obligatory cost. It also noted that the river and two ponds on the estate could be used freely by the peasants. Finally, no peasants were to be relocated on the estate. (See Table 3.1, next page)

Regarding obligations, the Charter registered that in 1860, the estate used only *barshchina*. Therefore, the Charter made no mention of commencing any *obrok* obligations. As for redemption payments for the garden plots (*usadby*), these included 9 (silver) rubles per soul. The village commune was responsible for a total of 3,546 silver rubles ($9 \times 394 = 3,546$), to be paid in two installments of 1,773 rubles each, according to the *Regulations*. The first of these was slated for April 1, 1862 and the second, six months later. I infer that no payments to Yazikov were ever made by the estate’s inhabitants because 1) no records exist indicating otherwise, and 2) the institution which was set up to provide loans to the peasants to assist their payments (The Peasants Land Bank) was launched in 1882, after Alexander II’s assassination. The peasants of Yazikovo Selo had no access to any financial aid. Above all, as Chapter Five

¹⁹ Note: this was in fact a gift – it was neither mandated by the *Regulations*, nor included as part of the redemption payments. However, that Yazikov swapped their plots with his does not change the overall final numbers.

Table 3.1

Summary of Statutory Charter

101 household serfs not entitled to land allotments (of whom 23 were male)
422 (male) field serfs (this number includes the serfs who worked in the wool factory at the estate)

28 refuse allotment & obligations, accepting “beggar’s allotment”

394 male field serfs entitled to land allotments

Prior to 1861: 6,807 *desiatini* total land at Y.S.

2,162 *desiatini* total land serfs entitled to (422 = 5.1 *desiatina* per male)

4,645 *desiatini* total land at Y.S. in V. Yazikov’s personal possession

After 1861: 6,807 *desiatini* total land at Y.S.

1,576 *desiatini* total land earmarked for former serfs (4 x 394)

5,231 *desiatini* total land at Y.S. left in V. Yazikov’s personal possession

<u>The differences:</u>	<u>Before 1861</u>	<u>After 1861</u>	
Vasili Yazikov	4,645	5,231	gained 586 <i>desiatini</i>
394 eligible peasants*	2,162 (or 5.5 <i>des.</i> per individual)	1,576 (or 4 <i>des.</i> per individual)	lost 586 <i>desiatini</i>

*This number should really be 422 as 28 chose to take the “beggar’s allotment.”

will make clear, when the nobleman sold the estate to a merchant in 1881, the peasants of Yazikovo Selo were still temporarily obligated – they had never entered into a redemption plan with their former master. All this suggests an absence of any payments at Yazikov’s desmense.

It is hardly surprising that the peasants would have never paid Yazikov since they had no money. Furthermore, it is worth noting that the first payment required for the garden plots was expected just two days after the Charter was signed by both Yazikov and Peace Mediator, Mikhail Bestuzhev,²⁰ on March 30 1862.²¹ Following the mandated protocols in the *Regulations*, Bestuzhev submitted the Charter to the District Conference of Peace Mediators, which was comprised of nobles. The Conference forwarded it, with other Charters from Simbirsk District to the Senate in St. Petersburg. All this was accomplished before the spring sowing season’s commencement in 1862.

²⁰ Like Vasili Yazikov, Mikhail Bestuzhev had an illustrious career of service to the tsar. He sat on the Simbirsk District Committee on “How to Improve and Establish the Everyday Life of the Estate Peasants” in 1858. In 1860 he served as a Bureaucrat for Special Tasks for the Governor of Simbirsk. From 1862-1870 he was a Peace Mediator for Simbirsk District. In 1872 he was hired as a bureaucrat with Ministry of Internal Affairs in St. Petersburg. Then from 1873-1876 he was sent to Sakhalin Island as an aid to help improve the living conditions of labor prisoners. From 1876-1882 he was the Vice Governor of Ufa, the capital of Bashkirai. From 1882-1886 he was the Vice Governor of Tambov Province. Both his great grandfather and great great grandfather had been Provincial Marshals of the Nobility. See “Formuliarnii spisok o sluzhbe M. P. Bestuzheva i nekrolog” *Tambovskikh Gubernskikh Vedomostiakh* 1886 g., no. 117.

²¹ Sources for the Yazikov Charter are: GAUO f. 85, op. 1, d. 19, l. 1-4, 45,46,47, and 48; I.S. Romanshin, *Ocherki*, pp. 33-37 and 471, and his “Krestyianskaya Reforma v Simbirskoy Guberniya,” Chapter 5, pp.10-15; and *Prilozhenie k trudam redaktsionnoi komissii dlya sostavlenia polozheniya o krestyanakh, vykhodyashchikh iz krepostnoi zavisimosti: Svedeniya o pomeshchik imeniyakh T.3*. It is also worth pointing out here that, because Vasili Yazikov retained well more than one-third of his land, he could impose *barshchina* legally, per the terms of the *Regulations*. See Wildman, “The Defining Moment,” pp. 6-8.

By way of comparison, the Charter for Undory, the estate of Vasili Yazikov's brother, Alexander, reflected the following on the eve of emancipation: 696 souls; no household serfs; and a total of 2,784 *desiatini* for the serfs' use (which amounted to approximately 4.0 *desiatini* per soul). The Charter reflected an earmark of 3.4 *desiatini* per soul, or 2,362 *desiatini* for the lot. Interestingly, it indicated neither the total amount of *desiatini* which comprised the estate before 1861, nor what Alexander was left with after the apportionment. However, we can extrapolate from the following numbers that after emancipation, Alexander Yazikov was left with approximately 7,600 *desiatini* since a document from 1853 indicated that Undory estate comprised 10,029 *desiatini*. Subtracting the 2,362 *desiatini* that were earmarked in the Charter from that number leaves 7,667.²²

There are two points of significance with respect to the deal struck in the Charter for Yazikovo Selo. The first has to do with the apparent absence of peasant approval. The second has to do with interpreting Vasili Yazikov's motivations for a swift execution of the Charter as well as the terms he put forward in it. As for the peasants' absence of signatures, as both the *Manifesto* and *Regulations* instructed, the prescription for a

²² GAUO f. 85, op. 1, d. 123, l. 71; Mikhail Vasilevovich Rusin, "Khroniki i istorii sela Voskresenskogo, Undory tozh, 1869" *Seleniya Simbirskogo uezda: materialy dlya istorii Simbirskogo dvorianstva i chastnogo zemlevladieniya v Simbirskom uezde P. Martynov* (Simbirsk, Rossiya: Izdanie Simbirskoy Gubernskoy Uchenoy Arkivnoy Komissii, 1903); *Prilozhenie k trudam redaktsionnoi komissii dlya sostavleniya polozheniya o krestyanakh, vykhodyashchikh iz krepostnoi zavisimosti: Svedeniya o pomeshchik imeniyakh T.3*. That the Charter reflected no household serfs at Undory implies either they owned their own garden plots of land, or, since they were not entitled to any land per the emancipation *Regulations*, they were not even mentioned. It would be impossible that an estate such as Undory, where the landlord was not absentee, had no household serfs. All this notwithstanding, Undory experienced a disturbance in May 1862. Like his brother Vasili, Alexander P. Yazikov sold the estate at an auction in 1881 to local merchants.

common sense, agreeable approach for all parties involved was made clear. Peasants' deputies were to give their "consent" to the "agreement" with their signatures. Implicit herein was the modern notion of a contractual arrangement regarding property made between two equal, civil parties, procured by the broker, the Peace Mediator. But we know this was not the case. In fact, it was a kind of a state-engineered consent that bore no resemblance to the liberal ideas about the contractual process and its role in a civil society. Instead, the arrangement (as prescribed by the *Manifesto*, and authored by the elites) privileged the noble landowners: *they* were compensated for the loss of their property (land) in the form of bonds (not cash); *their* rights to their former serfs' labor and other forms of obligations were preserved; and the peasants lost in terms of both the amount of land that was earmarked for them in relation to their use of land prior to emancipation, and their compensatory obligations for it. The peasants may have been illiterate, but they knew this "contract" was not in their best interest. They knew this was not freedom.

Although they were weak, the peasants had a number of tools at their disposal to both resist and obstruct the arrangement as well as take the matter of freedom into their own hands. First, peasant refusal to sign the charters was common. As Allan Wildman has made clear, 57% of the Charters in Russia did not have peasant signatures.²³ It was common in the middle Volga region as well.²⁴ For example, on an estate just to the south of Yazikovo Selo, Durasovka, the peasants refused to sign it even when pressured by the

²³ Wildman, "Defining Moment," p. 40.

²⁴ See "Otmena Krepostnogo Prava," especially pp. 138-140; and Romashin, *Ocherki*, p. 36.

Peace Arbitrator. They were “very rude” to him, “disrespectful, impudent, and. . . .” yelled at him ‘no way, we’ll not sign it’” until “we see the real *Regulations* from the Tsar.” Eventually the 4th Reserve Battalion was sent to punish the two ringleaders.²⁵ At another estate nearby, Susnovka, villagers refused to sign the Charter even after the landlord tried for “seven months” to get them to sign it by offering, as did Vasili Yazikov, an addendum with pledges of more land. Even in the end, when Susnovka’s landlord pledged lower *barshchina* and garden fees, and an additional 144 *desiatini*, they still declared that they “didn’t want any of it” adding that “what you ask of us is illegal.”²⁶

One topic of contention that peasants on many estates in Simbirsk Province shared had to do with the fact that, frequently, terms in the Charters had to do with the *type* of work being mandated: task work rather than field work. This was associated with the large presence of woolen factories in the region. Unlike field work, task work was typically more difficult since it was more regimented, required specific production quotas, and was far less collegial.²⁷ Thus, at Tushna, where, like Yazikovo Selo, a wool factory was in operation, after refusing to sign the Charter, the peasants literally stole the Peace Arbitrator’s stamp so as to foil the Charter’s legality altogether. The confrontation here fell into violence, and among the 81 arrested was the village priest Albinsky. Just a year earlier in May 1861, after a battalion was called in to arrest the ringleaders of the

²⁵ Ivanov, *Krestyanskoe*, p. 103.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 238-240 and 563.

²⁷ “Otmena Krepostnogo Prava,” p. 138.

disturbance at Tushna, the peasants there had yelled “We’ll not let anybody punish them, even YOU!”²⁸

The state was correct when it anticipated peasant obstruction and, in an effort to accelerate the negotiation process before the spring sowing season in 1862, it issued a circular from the Ministry of Internal Affairs as early as August 29, 1861, ordering that peasant signatures were not mandatory for the Charters’ legitimacy.²⁹

Next, a variety of discursive tactics was employed by peasants in these examples which evidence opposition to the Charters. Variations on the themes of both the tsarist myth trope and two-year obligation period emerged. It will be recalled that in the spring of 1861, the peasants invoked the good tsar myth, either because they genuinely believed the distant ruler was their benefactor and, like them, victimized by the greedy, conniving noblemen, or because they could use it as a discursive tool for leverage against the noblemen, or both. They argued the tsar had been tricked by the noblemen and, acting in defense of his wishes, asserted that the two-year obligated term contained in the *Manifesto* was really retroactive, and the *real freedom* had actually commenced in 1858. Now, in the spring of 1862 the peasants, utilizing the same rationale, insisted the *real freedom* would commence two years *after* the *Manifesto*, making the spring of 1863 the startup date. Clearly, confusion about or manipulation of the February 1863 deadline to effect a Charter may well have played a role in this rumor. Nevertheless, why play into the hands of the enemy and sign a document that was designed to trick them out of their

²⁸ Ivanov, *Krestyanskoe*, pp. 405-406, 563, and 580. The estates in these examples were between two and ten miles from Yazikovo Selo.

²⁹ Ivanov, *Krestyanskoe*, p. 8. See also “Otmena krepostnogo prava,” pp. 138-140, 152, 160, 165-66, 198, 202, 321-2, and 235.

land, labor, and freedom? And why sign it if their freedom did not commence until the spring of 1863? Cries that the good tsar “will declare a new *Polozheniia*” and “the Tsar will be angry if we accept any land before 1863” were common. Therefore, the peasants argued they should ignore the authorities’ demands.³⁰

Furthermore, they did not even want copies of the document.³¹ To accept a copy meant their explicit participation in the process. Of course, rejecting their own copy of the Charter precluded the possibility of defending their rights to the land in a court of law should that arise at a later date. But in that scenario “rights” may well have been moot since the terms were stacked against the peasants.

Other grievances expressed by the peasants included objections to paying for land that they perceived as already theirs, refusing allotments assigned to them in the Charter, and flat out rejecting payment requirements: “Why monetary obligations? . . . The land was created by God for everyone.”³²

There has been a debate among historians as to why the peasants did not sign the Charters. Roxanne Easley has argued that above all their refusal was rooted in the Mediator’s inability to promise peasant subsistence, which required at least 8 ½ *desiatini*

³⁰ Wildman, “The Defining Moment,” p. 43.

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18 and 28; and P.A. Zaionchkovskiy, ed., *Krestyanskoe dvizhenie v Rossii v 1870-1880 gg. sbornik dokumentov* (Moscow, USSR: Nauka, 1968), p. 36. Wildman notes that in addition to refusing to sign and accept a copy of the Charter, peasants also refused to tour the lands marked off for the peasants.

³² Easley, “Opening Public Space,” p. 718; Ivanov, *Krestyanskoe*, pp. 12-13, 23-26, and 399-402; and V. N. Ginev, *Narodnicheskoe dvizhenie v srednem Povolzh’e: 70-e gody xix veka* (Moscow, USSR: Nauka, 1966), p. 19.

per soul.³³ Although Soviet historiography continues to be valuable in that it provides crucial primary source and statistical information, it focused on the “revolutionary nature” of the peasants’ responses, and promoted the themes of “the crisis of the feudal order” and, similar to the Easley conclusion, “the peasants were robbed of the land.”³⁴ But Wildman has concluded that although the peasants were concerned about land and subsistence, they were far more worried about obligations. Since the obligations (*barshchina*, *obrok*, and payments for the land, or a combination thereof) were tied to the size of the plots, the greater the land allotment, the greater the obligations.³⁵ He holds that although it was meager, 4 *desiatini* did not threaten subsistence, especially when the peasants had their garden plots. And as for Soviet historiography, Wildman explains that it was only with the population explosion in the late 19th and early 20th centuries that the land to subsistence ratio became an issue, and therefore, Soviet scholars projected this back when analyzing the 1860s.³⁶

³³ Easley, *Ibid.*, p. 721.

³⁴ “Otmena Krepostnogo Prava,” p. 4; In general, the peasants received roughly 20% less land than what they used before the reform. Both Soviet and subsequent Russian historians use the marker of 5-8 *desiatini* of land needed to support a male peasant and his family. These are so commonly cited that it is hardly necessary to cite a source. However, see Tatiana I. Pon’ko and V. Trofimov, “Tema 11. Rossiya pravlenie Aleksandra II: §1. Epokha velikikh reform” *Soderzhanie Kursa Obshchestvoznaniya*, Sergei A. Nizhnikov, ed., (Moscow, Russia: Razpabotka Instituta Distantnogo Obrazovaniya Rossiyskogo Universityeta Druzby Narodov, 2006), also online dated 25 April 2007, <http://www.ido.rudn.ru/nfpk/hist/hist11.html>, accessed 8 June 2009.

³⁵ Wildman, “The Defining Moment,” pp. 15-16, 18, and 45. Wildman’s case study focuses on charters from estates in Saratov, a Middle Volga province and immediate neighbor of Simbirsk.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

Above all, Wildman argues that it was the nobility's structurally severe debt that explains the "generous" terms set forward in Charters, as exemplified by Yazikovo Selo's. Indeed, 60% of landed estates across Russia were mortgaged in 1860, and more than 65% of estates, or 897 of 1,380, in Simbirsk Province were deeply indebted. Estates, serfs, and town mansions were repeatedly put up as collateral in order to receive government credit. At 81%, Simbirsk Province had the highest number of mortgaged serfs in 1860.³⁷ Upon inheriting the estate when his father died in 1851, Vasili Yazikov mortgaged the entire property.³⁸ Even Seymour Becker, who has warned against the "declension of the nobility after emancipation" thesis, has conceded that in the Middle Volga region, the debt actually rose in the post-emancipation period.³⁹ All this said, it is incorrect to infer that indebtedness points to poverty. As the next chapter will make clear, both Yazikov and Lovell lived well during their stewardship.

³⁷ See *Ibid.*, p. 20; I.S. Romanshin, "Krestyanskaya Reforma v Simbirskoy Guberniya," pp. 10-15; "Simbirskikh v Gubernskikh v domostei" *Simbirski Gubernskie Vedomosti* no. 45 Subotta, 9 Noyabr 1863, pp. 10, and 15; Pavel Pikman, "150 Let 'Manifestu ob Otmene Krepostnogo Prava'" *Kaskad* no. 04 (376) Fevral' 2011, pp. 16-18; I.A. Stetsenko, "Krestyanini" *Ulyanovskaiya-Simbirskaiya Entsiklopediya*, t. I, A-M (Ulyanovsk, Russia: Simbirskay Kniga, 2004), p. 307.; and Interview with Aleksei Sytin, June 29, 2010. M.E. Naydenov argued the "severe debt" thesis well before Wildman. See *Klassovaya Bor'ba v Poreformennoy Derevne (1861-1863)* (Moscow, USSR: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo politicheskoy literatury, 1955), p. 290.

³⁸ Vladimir Aleksandrovich Aunovskiy, "Sukonnye Fabriki i Sherstomoyki v Simbirskoy Gubernii" ("Woolen Factories and Wool Washers in Simbirsk Province") *Simbirskii sbornik*, t. II (Simbirsk, Rossiya: Simbirskiy Gubernskiy Statisticheskii Komitet, 1870), pp. 82-102.

³⁹ Seymour Becker, *Nobility and Privilege in Late Imperial Russia* (Dekalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1986), pp. 47-51.

Official numbers on those Charters which the peasants signed and therefore “consented” to are also problematic. Less than half of the total number of Charters which were effected by the January 1, 1863 deadline (42% or 36,413 of a total of 50,284) contained peasant signatures. Obviously, Yazikovo fell in that majority of Charters which did not contain peasant consent. Once again Wildman warns that even these numbers can be misleading, since there are 854 documented cases in which the military was deployed during the Charter implementation period to force the peasants to sign.⁴⁰

The second significant aspect of the deal struck in the Charter for Yazikovo Selo has to do with its terms in light of the steps that Vasili Yazikov took over the course of the post-emancipation period. Although the peasants of Yazikovo Selo demonstrated resistance the previous year when they created a “disturbance” on the eve of the sowing season, as the previous chapter explained, Yazikov countered by summoning the army. Then, being deeply in debt, Yazikov earmarked for his former people the largest amount of land which the *Regulations* mandated for Simbirsk District, as this corresponded with a higher amount of financial compensation in the form of government bonds and peasant obligations. But the peasants were also worried about financial indebtedness. Typical cries of “We don’t want the redemption [the monetary requirement to pay for the land] even if you kill us,” are anecdotally attributed to the peasants of Yazikovo Selo.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Wildman, “The Defining Moment,” pp. 24-25.

⁴¹ Ivanov, *Krestyanskoe*, pp. 23-26; Interview with historian Larissa Yershova, Director Literaturnogo Muzeiya Dom Yazikovikh Filial Ulyanovskogo Oblastnogo Kraevedcheskogo Muzeiya, Ulyanovsk, Russia, May 31, 2010; A.S. Orlov, V.A. Georgiev, N.G. Georgieva, i T.A. Sivukhina, *Rossiia s drevneishikh vremen do nashikh dnei. Uchebnik dlya visshikh uchebnikh zavedeniy* (Moscow, Russia: Prospekt, 1999), specifically pp. 270-273; and Ponko, et. al., “Tema.”

In addition, Wildman insists that, because so many peasants across the Russian land did not request conversion from *barshchina* to *obrok* up through to the release of the 1881 Redemption Law, this points to the fact that they, like their former masters who sought to maximize monetary benefits, were also motivated by their financial realities: They preferred to minimize their monetary obligations. Thus, the inclusion of *barshchina* and the exclusion of *obrok* in Yazikovo Selo's Charter are significant. Clearly, the "arrangement" reached was based on the facts that everyone knew the peasants had no money, and therefore work could be extracted. *Barshchina* minimized monetary obligations for the peasants.⁴² As the next chapter on labor will show, both the work pace and production levels slowed at Yazikovo Selo in the post-emancipation period. This is significant since a large portion of the freed people there worked in the wool factory. The peasants owned their labor and withheld it. For now, however, they did not participate in the Charter stage of the emancipation moment. For the former slaves at Palmyra Plantation, the existential realities and outcomes were very different when it came to the contractual arrangements forced on them by Union authorities, as the next section will show.

The Rules and Regulations at Palmyra Plantation

The Quitman/Lovell family's recovery of Palmyra Plantation began with the Civil War's conclusion and the commencement of the Union's reconstruction in April 1865. Its completion coincided with the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment to the United

⁴² Wildman, "The Defining Moment," pp. 15-16, 18-20, and 23; and M.E. Naydenov, *Klassovaya Bor'ba*, p. 290.

States Constitution in December 1865, which made freedom a fact. But *de facto* emancipation was set in motion much earlier, with the eruption of hostilities between the North and South in 1861. As has been discussed, when the Russian serfs were emancipated in February 1861, they were not free quite yet. The *Manifesto* had a number of conditions built into it. Although the conditions and historical sequences were not identical, the American emancipation experience was similar to the Russian one in that freedom was evolutionary.⁴³

As a member plantation on Davis Bend, Palmyra was on war's front line since Union strategy in this region included securing the Mississippi River. The idea was to line the banks of the River with a loyal population which could give aid in securing navigation on the river. Another reason to resettle liberated slaves on confiscated plantations in the region was to keep them away from the armies' wakes. Yet another reason for concentrating them in this area had to do with trying to salvage what was left of cotton crops for sale in this lucrative region: ten Mississippi counties and Louisiana parishes within a one-hundred mile radius of Vicksburg produced more than one seventh of the entire South's cotton for the 1860-61 growing season. This also explains why Union policy relocated scores of refugee slaves to augment the labor force for cotton crops in this region.⁴⁴ It was during General Grant's Vicksburg campaign in the summer of 1863 that he decided to seize the entire 12,000 acre peninsula of Davis Bend and make it a

⁴³ Emancipation as an evolving process is one of the themes in James Oakes, *Freedom National: The Destruction of Slavery in the United States, 1861-1865* (New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2013).

⁴⁴ James T. Currie, *Enclave: Vicksburg and Her Plantations, 1863-1870* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 1980), pp. xxi.

“paradise” for former slaves. By December 20, 1863 all the plantations on the Bend were occupied. “. . .[T]he Yankees came and set the Negros All Free and the Work All Stopped [*sic*]” noted an overseer from a plantation opposite the Bend in his record book.⁴⁵

Over the course of the next two years, what played out on the Bend was a mixture of positives and negatives for the emancipated people there. The war presented at once an opportunity for and a constraint upon their freedom since 1) freedom’s fate was contingent on both Union victory and Union policy; 2) while the former slaves were wards of Union authorities they were now free from their former masters’ authority; 3) the former slaves lived in a free zone of sorts, protected by both the geographic isolation and the Union armies; and 4) as liberated people they were caught in the crosshairs of their liberators’ ideals and pragmatics.

Both the exigencies of war and the nascent stage of providing for the freed people on the Bend meant that the situation there was *ad hoc* and fluid. In fact, a bewildering series of Union representatives, both official and voluntary, and both military and civilian, jockeyed for institutional power and management over the Bend. This revolving door of custodians was disruptive, and often their sets of rules and regulations competed with each other. Furthermore, while the competing sets of authorities posed a problem for consistency and order, like the Charter for Yazikovo Selo the “Rules and Regulations” were authoritative and doctrinal. However, because of their close supervision and protection, the freed people on the Bend arguably fared much better than most across the war torn South. These facts explain the range of historiographical evaluations about the “success” of the Home Colony experiment. For example, William Ganus insisted that it

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p.xxii.

was a “grand success.” James Currie concluded that, for a place “so grandly conceived” it was not a “failure” since, quoting General John Eaton, it proved “the capacity of the Negro to take care of himself.” Others have not been as celebratory. Vernon Wharton concluded that, because the confiscated properties were returned to their original owners, “Davis Bend was doomed at the end of its first year.” Thavolia Glymph’s detailed study stressed the freed people’s “disappointment” and “discouragement” with Union overseers, as well as their lack of autonomy and the coercive nature of the rules and regulations. Janet Sharp Hermann’s opus remains the most thorough, balanced, and consistently solid analysis of what played out on Davis Bend. She focused on the Davis brothers’ plantations, from the early antebellum period where Joseph Davis hoped to create a model slave community based on the principles of Robert Owen, through to the Home Colony experiment, and finally to the relocation of its black community to Mound Bayou ten years after Reconstruction’s conclusion. Still, Hermann concluded that Union policies and attitudes “permanently embittered” the freed people toward the “Yankee officers.” These historians agree that, for reasons of its history of benevolent paternalism and geographic isolation, the Bend’s laborers possessed a unique sense of enterprise and work ethic.⁴⁶ Also, accounts of the Davis Bend experiment rightly focus in particular on

⁴⁶ Clifton L. Ganus, Jr., “The Freedmen’s Bureau in Mississippi,” Ph.D. Dissertation, Tulane University, 1953, p. 134; Currie, *Enclave*, p. 143; Vernon Lane Wharton, *The Negro in Mississippi: 1865-1890* (New York, NY: Harper Row, 1965), p. 41; Thavolia Glymph, “The Second Middle Passage: The Transition from Slavery to Freedom at Davis Bend, Mississippi,” Ph.D. Dissertation, Purdue University, 1994, pp. 48, 74,75,76,85, 88-89, 106, and 102-104 ; and Janet Sharp Hermann, *The Pursuit of a Dream* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp. 50, 61-62, 67, and 124. Robert May also explained that patriarch John Quitman practiced benevolent paternalism at Palmyra during the antebellum period. See his *John A. Quitman: Old South Crusader* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1985) and “John A. Quitman and

Joseph Davis' former slave Ben Montgomery, as he represents an extraordinary case study. However, implicit in any study of the slaves' liberation is the task of weighing the liberators' directives against the actions of the liberated. Therefore, I am concerned with the nameless, but real, liberated people on Davis Bend, and with measuring their compliance with their liberators' directives.

As explained above, the peasants of Yazikovo Selo resisted the terms of freedom handed to them in the form of the Statutory Charter in the way that they could: they did not sign it. Because the *Manifesto* signaled a break with the past, the peasants' deliberate refusal to have anything to do with the Statutory Charter was not passive. Emancipation emboldened them. However, their freedom was compromised until they entered into the Redemption Agreement. As the following will make clear, during the Home Colony period, the freed people of Palmyra Plantation were similarly caught in a kind of limbo – no longer slave, but not yet free. But unlike their Russian counterparts at Yazikovo Selo, they were utterly dependent on Union officials for their survival. That the liberated people at Palmyra Plantation consented to their liberators' contractual regulations must be considered in light of these and other facts.

At first glance the former slaves' condition on the Bend appeared to be relatively good after liberation since their quarters were still intact and the former owners were no longer there.⁴⁷ One Northern missionary on the Bend described Palmyra in the following way:

[Palmyra] has been saved from deprivations [*sic*] of soldiers, etc. it looks very well. . . .The Negro quarters are good and comfortable,

His Slaves: Reconciling Slave Resistance with the Proslavery Defense" *The Journal of Southern History* 46:4 (November, 1980), pp. 551-570.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

and being arranged in rows each house separate [*sic*], all whitewashed had a very neat appearance forming a street with houses uniform on either side. I . . . found them cleanly and . . . comfortably supplied with needful clothing.⁴⁸

This changed when the army ordered the eviction of many freed people from their homes on all the Bend's plantations so that Union soldiers could live in them. Over the next two years, a total of eight companies of African American troops were stationed there. Soon a canal was dug across the neck of the peninsula, thereby making complete the River's moat that wrapped around the Bend. A gunboat was strategically positioned to guard the island's entrance at the canal. Presumably designed to secure the Bend and protect the freed people from Confederate guerrilla raids, a military order was instated that whites could not cross over without a pass.

At first the Bend was managed by the Freedmen's Department, an adjunct to the War Department and headed by General John Eaton, who, with respect to those freedmen under his care, advised his subordinates to "adopt a rule to require utmost deference and obedience on the part of the Negroes and whenever anyone gets up any disturbance or insubordination turn him out of our lines." Still, with respect to the fate of the freed people he expressed a blend of Jeffersonian Republicanism and free labor ideology that was typical of Northern sentiment:

Our aim was. . .to bring labor and its rewards. . .to the [freed] people. . .their present skill at labor on this rich soil. . .yields fabulous profits. Freedom will increase the productiveness of that skill by rendering the laborer more intelligent and earnest, under its clearer light and new motives, . . . [T]he facts indicate. . .[in] five

⁴⁸ In James T. Currie, ed., "Freedmen at Davis Bend, April 1864" *The Journal of Mississippi History* 46:2 (May, 1984), pp. 120-129.

years. . . [we] will see this country cut up into small farms, and glorying. . . productiveness it never before attained.

Thus, freedom and labor were inseparable. Labor created virtue, and virtue was the key to being a civilian in a free republic.⁴⁹ This notwithstanding, white officials frequently found it difficult to “. . . be kind to the” former slaves since “The feeling against serving [him] in any capacity still prevailed.”⁵⁰ Indeed, one white overseer concluded that the freed people “worked one-third less time per day than had the slaves; hence cotton could never be produced as cheaply again. . . .”⁵¹

By September 1863 the War Department had drawn up a set of rules and regulations with respect to the freed people. The Freedmen’s Department was assigned the duties of registering all freedmen on the Bend, issuing all labor contracts, and ensuring that all persons were occupied with some kind of work. Companies of freedmen were to be organized to pick, gin, and bale all cotton. A ten percent tax was levied on the wages, which were set at \$7 per month for men over the age of 15 and \$5 per month for women. All horses, mules, oxen, wagons, carts, and farming implements that the armies had confiscated in the area as well as from the Bend’s inhabitants were inventoried for the purposes of redistribution.

Also in the spring of 1863 Congress had placed the supervision of all abandoned and confiscated property in the South in the Treasury Department’s charge. This meant that

⁴⁹ Glymph, “The Second Middle Passage,” pp. 79 and 84. See also Stephen Joseph Ross, “Freed Soil, Freed Labor, Freedmen: John Eaton and the Davis Bend Experiment” *The Journal of Southern History* 44:2 (May, 1978), pp. 213-232, especially pp. 215-216.

⁵⁰ Hermann, *Pursuit*, p. 45.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 59.

the Treasury Department and Freedmen's Department had joint authority on the Bend, as exemplified by the former's own rules and regulations: these included the creation of "Home Farms" supervised by "white lessees." Here refugees would obtain all provisions which were contingent upon their labor. They were divided into companies of approximately 20 laborers and allotted small tracts of land to farm on their own account. At \$25 and \$10, the wages recommended were more than what the War Department set. Palmyra Plantation's white lessee was one A.W. Hunt, a Louisiana planter with "Union sympathies" who had fled North when the war began. The Department agreed to pay him \$75 a month to "exercise complete supervision" over all the "colonists." This included labor contracts. Hunt and the other lessees were instructed to see to it that each company planted all the land allotted to each group, with at least two thirds of that land reserved for cotton. Like the other white lessees on the Bend, Hunt was expected to supervise the allocation of mules and equipment that had been confiscated. Further, the lessees were expected to require that the freed people keep their houses and grounds "swept every morning and the filth removed." Rations were to be regulated. Given that this was all playing out in the midst of a total war, such close scrutiny and quality control measures are understandable. Still, that the colonists were not left free to manage their own affairs was a direct contradiction of what the mission statement for the Home Colonies professed.⁵²

Seeing that their authority was compromised by the Treasury Department's rules and regulations, the Freedmen's Department petitioned the War Department for a change in policy which, coincidentally, was more in line with lessees' complaints: namely, that the

⁵² Hermann, *Pursuit*, p. 62.

colonists' wages were too high. By March 1864 the War Department persuaded the Treasury Department to reduce wages to a pay scale ranging from \$10 to \$3.50 per month plus rations. Thus, freedmen previously employed by the War Department saw their wages rise while those hired by the Treasury Department saw theirs fall.⁵³

In March 1864 General Eaton's assistant, Colonel Samuel Thomas endorsed a management plan put forward by the Provost Marshal for Davis Bend, Colonel Gaylord Norton. This became the notorious "Rules and Regulations" which remained as the working blue print for the Bend's management until Union representatives left in late 1865. Historically, the Provost Marshal was an institutional figure who operated in the capacity of military police. During the war and Reconstruction, however, his position and responsibilities were expanded. To be sure, the Provost Marshal was responsible for maintaining order and social control. To the extent that he, in either a formal or an informal capacity, served as a liaison between the freed people and various Union representatives, the Provost Marshal shared similarities with Russia's Peace Mediator. Especially with respect to labor, the Provost Marshal's powers were almost unlimited.⁵⁴ In the same way that the Russian Statutory Charters had to be signed by the Peace Mediators, all labor contracts with the freed people during the first few years after liberation had to be signed by the Provost Marshal. Although I did not find one labor

⁵³ In the above discussion, the salary statistics are taken from Hermann, *Ibid.*, Chapter 2 "The Chaos of War;" Glymph, "The Second Middle Passage," pp. 71-83, and 89; and Currie, *Enclave*, Chapter 4 "Davis Bend." It is worth noting that these three authors quote different statistics, all of which are based on archival records.

⁵⁴ See Ronald L. F. Davis, "The U.S. Army and the Origins of Sharecropping in the Natchez District – A Case Study" *Journal of Negro History* 62:1 (January, 1977), pp. 60-80, p. 66.

contract with any laborer at Palmyra Plantation, this does not mean that no one contracted for work there, as the final numbers below indicate.

Consisting of thirteen numbered paragraphs, the “Rules and Regulations” had sweeping mandates for both social and labor control. As detailed below, former slaves had to organize themselves into “companies” comprised of up to “twenty-five hands,” and must do their “share” of labor. The laborers would be registered in a “book,” that also included their children. The company’s “head” would transact all business on behalf of the group. Once the company had been formed, no changes in its make up could be made. No company could hire hands out to work for someone else. If any laborer refused to work, he/she would receive no rations. Land would be allotted to the laborers, with white superintendents as their managers. Supplies and equipment, housing, and rations were provided – all closely inventoried in account books, and all to be settled when the cotton crop was marketed. All crimes and disobedience would be punished “according to the nature of the offense.” Thieves would be banished to “Big Black Island.”⁵⁵ In closing, Norton explained that

Great efforts must be made by all good men . . . to change the present disgraceful and bad conduct of a large number of the negroes now living here who are stealing, plundering, killing stock, and living in idleness. . . . Extensive measures for punishment will be adopted and vigorously carried out. All those interested in the welfare of the people, and who wish to see the Bend improve will assist . . . in the efforts to bring about good order.

Clearly, the rules uniformly applied to all, and were doctrinal in that they laid out the military’s expectations for labor and production on the Bend. And clearly, the military

⁵⁵ Big Black Island was in the Mississippi River just south of Davis Bend, at the mouth of the Big Black River.

had the power and authority to dictate the terms of freedom, maintain order, and coerce labor.⁵⁶

Rules and Regulations

The following Rules and Regulations will for the present be adopted for the Government of the Freedmen at Davis Bend, Miss.

- I. The Bend with the exception of the Jeff Plantation will be leant to those who seem willing and able to work lands upon their own accounts.
- II. Those wishing to work lands upon their own account will be required to form themselves into companies of from three to twenty-five hands that are able to do their share of the labor. Before the land will be allotted, the companies will be registered (in a book kept for that purpose) together with the parents and children belonging to each member of the company. At this time each company will be required to select one from their numbers who will be known as the head of the company and who will transact the business for the entire company and no account will be kept with any other partner.
- III. After the companies are formed and registered no changes will be allowed except by the consent of two thirds of the members and the approval of the Post Superintendent.
- IV. No company will be allowed to hire hands to work for them except by the consent of the Post Superintendent. Each hand that is registered with the company and remains with it through the season will pay their portion of the expenses and receive their share of the profit.
- V. Each company will be required to pay for all the rations they receive and for the use of horses, mules, and farming utensils they receive from [the] Government. Rations will be issued to the companies only for the number registered.
- VI. In dividing land the quantity will be regulated according to the number of hands in the company – the number of acres to a hand will be regulated by the Post Superintendent.

⁵⁶ “Rules and Regulations. . .for the Government of the Freedmen at Davis Bend, Mississippi,” *Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, Davis Bend, 1865-1866*, Record Group 105, Box 39 (Mississippi), NA.

- VII. The companies will be divided into colonies for which Superintendents will be provided and whose duty will be to see that every company in his colony work their ground in the proper manner. He will have a general supervision over all the people in his colony and all companies and people living within his colony will be subject to his orders.
- VIII. Any member of a company who shall refuse or neglect to perform his share of the labor (except in cases of actual sickness) or shall absent himself from the company without their consent can be reported to the colony Superintendent and if he think it proper will be turned over to work without pay until he is willing to work for himself.
- IX. The Jeff Plantation will be reserved and worked as a Government Farm where all hands that are not registered with companies can find employment with pay and rations.
- X. No rations will be issued on the Bend except to companies and those employed on the Government Farm. All those not able to work will be required to show a certificate to this effect from the surgeon in charge or furnish their own rations.
- XI. All those having certificates of disability from the surgeon will be placed in a camp by themselves at some suitable place where they will be fed and properly cared for.
- XII. All crimes and disobedience of orders will be punished according to the nature of the offense. Thieves and robbers will when proved guilty be banished from the bend and sent to Big Black Island.
- XIII. Heads of companies who allow any of their numbers to steal from one another or from the Government will be dispossessed and sent from the Bend.

Coincidentally, also in the Spring of 1864, when several of the Quitman sisters, including Tonie, made statements of allegiance to Union authorities in Vicksburg, Palmyra was briefly returned to the family. The sisters quickly hired a northern man, one Alexander Warwick, to manage the plantation. Therefore, the Home Colony specific to Palmyra and under Hunt's management never got beyond the planning stage. Those freed people who had received allotments from the government now saw them relocated

back into the private hands of the Quitman/Lovell family. But the existential realities of the war's tumult and fluid circumstances combined with Palmyra's proximity to Union authorities, meant that Warwick, an individual manager competing with and surrounded by the Union's grand experiment, had great trouble getting the plantation up and running. Furthermore, that Warwick was hired *after* the season prep time meant that production at Palmyra for the 1864 season was compromised.

All this changed again for Palmyra, when the other plantations on the Bend could boast a profit by the year's end. The War Department issued an order on November 5, 1864 which reserved the entire Davis Bend peninsula to the military for the 1865 planting season. Thus, Palmyra was reconfiscated and reincorporated into the Davis Bend Home Colony, and therefore, again, fell under the government of Union authorities. Looking ahead to the 1865 season, Provost Marshal Norton issued an addendum to his "Rules and Regulations," in the form of twelve strict orders. One of these prioritized planting operations above all else, telling superintendents to ". . .[E]xercise a complete supervision over all the people in your charge. . . .[but listen] to their complaints and do all in your power to get along peaceably with them."⁵⁷

The 1865 sowing season coincided with the war's conclusion, the assassination of the President, and Congress' creation of the Freedmen's Bureau. The latter's purpose was to supervise the freed people's transition from slavery to freedom. Now this institution was put into the mix of managers and administrators on the Bend. It seems that no sooner had

⁵⁷ "To superintendents of Colonies, Davis Bend, Miss." April 17, 1865, *Henry Rowntree Letter Book*, BRFAL, RG 105 (Mississippi), NA, quoted in Currie, *Enclave*, p. 107. It is also worth noting that his superior instructed him to ". . .reduce the number of people supported by the Government as low as possible. . . ." Samuel Thomas "Special Order No. 12," July 20, 1865 BRFAL, RG 105 (Mississippi), NA.

the Bureau's take-off begun, when the realization set in that the Bend's property would soon be returned to its pre-war owners. Still, by the year's end, the Bend's plantations, including Palmyra, produced a profit of \$160,000. As in the previous year, the freed people had worked solidly for Union officials: 181 companies, comprised of roughly 7 adults each, produced 1,736 bales of cotton, 12,000 bushels of corn, and vegetables which produced a total crop value of \$397,700. After considering all expenses, the Union realized a profit of \$159,200, for an average of almost \$880 per company, or \$122.46 per adult. This translated to the superintendents receiving the majority share, and hired hands receiving little or no cash at year's end because of the deductions for rations and supplies. As was the case for the 1864 season, these numbers point to a great success, especially when the economies of both Mississippi and the greater American South experienced devastation and dislocation. With respect to how the majority of liberated people on the Bend fared, information is abundant in circumstantial evidence, but lacking in specifics.

Given that the freed people on the Bend were faced with the choice of work or starvation (see #10 of the Rules above), it is arguable that their labor had been coerced. But, unlike their counterparts at Yazikovo Selo, they had also been incentivized with the promise of pay corresponding to the crop size. This was a tangible, upon which the authorities delivered.⁵⁸

Discovering specific numbers for the 1864 season is problematic. Janet Hermann used General Eaton's numbers to identify 76 companies, with at least 70 freedmen, or heads, who closed out the year producing a combined total of 150 bales of cotton. (This

⁵⁸ Hermann, *Pursuit*, pp. 51, and 85.

is not impressive given the fact that in the antebellum period a typical crop in a good year was 1,500 bales. Indeed, Eaton had expected at least 1,000 bales to be produced in 1864.) After their debts and rentals had been cleared, these were left with between \$500 and \$2,500 in profit for the year.⁵⁹

When the numbers for freed people at the Bend are considered, it raises the question how so few earned so much money, or, alternatively, how so many earned so little, especially since the census numbers for the Bend were in constant flux. From January to February 1864 refugee numbers alone swelled from 950 to 3000; and by the summer the total reached 4,000. While in April, missionary Henry Rowntree counted “about 2,000 freedmen” at Palmyra, the Freedmen’s Department’s census for August 1864 listed a total of 318 freed people there. Of those, 110 were women and 208 were children, with no men accounted for at all. Indeed, as early as December 1863, the vast majority of freed people remaining on the Bend were women and children. This is not surprising since most of the men had enlisted in the Union army, a bold expression of freedom.⁶⁰ (These facts may very well explain the small earnings cited above.) The numbers for

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 59-60; Currie, *Enclave*, p. 100; Glymph, “Second Middle Passage,” pp. 101-104; and Ross, “Freed Soil, Freed Labor,” p. 221. See also Chungchan Gao, *African Americans in the Reconstruction Era* (New York, NY: Garland Publishing, 2000), p. 98.

⁶⁰ Currie, *Enclave*, p. 104; Hermann, *Pursuit*, p. 53; Mississippi Census, Freedmen’s Department 1863-1865, Box 36, Miscellaneous Records, RG 105, NA quoted in Glymph, “Second Middle Passage,” p. 95; and see U.S. War Department, *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*, 128 vols. (Washington, D.C. 1880-1901), Series 3, Volume 5, p. 138, quoted in Glymph, “Second Middle Passage,” p. 71. From this source Glymph cites 17,869 African American Mississippians fought enlisted in the Union armies. James Wilford Garner, *Reconstruction in Mississippi* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1901), p. 19 cites that approximately 79,000 African American Mississippians fought for the Union.

Palmyra stand in stark contrast to those listed on the eve of the war in 1860, which included 91 men, 93 women, and 109 children under the age of 15.⁶¹

The refugee situation on the Bend is a topic in its own right. It would appear that in its conception, there was a structural contradiction in Union policy. On the one hand, Grant envisioned it as a “paradise,” where the liberated slaves could demonstrate the virtues of freedom and their ability to evidence self determination. But on the other hand, the Bend was earmarked because of its isolation, as a place to relocate thousands of refugee slaves. Thus, as Union officials continued to relocate refugees to the Bend, and as numbers swelled, tension emerged between the Bend’s original inhabitants and the newcomers, and the differences in their standards of living were striking. For example, the same missionary who reported that the former slaves’ homes at Palmyra were neat and tidy simultaneously observed a ghastly sight, one that captured the other half of the story on the Bend:

. . .there huddled together were 35 poor wretched helpless negros, one man who had lost one eye. . .and the sight of the other fast going,Five women all Mothers, and the residue of 29 children, all small and under 12 years of age. One of the Women had the small pox, her face a perfect mass of Scabs, her children were left uncared for except for what they accidentally rec[eive]d. Another woman was nursing a little boy about 7 whose early life was fast ebbing. . . .Another was scarcely able to crawl about. They had no bedding. . . .being literally. . . .destituteThey were filthy and will all. . . .have the small pox. . . .Their fare was hard biscuit and smoked bacon which I saw some of the children eating uncooked. . . .they had no cooking utensils, nor any furniture.

and

about 150 poor, miserable hovels or sheds each filled to overflowing, in one I found 17 in a place I should not think over 12

⁶¹ Lovell Family Papers, Box 3, Folder 31, University of the South, Sewanee.

ft. square many had a dozen and so on, these cabins are simply sticks reared up, brush put on & around and some sods put on the top. . . .residences [which are] . . .not fit to shelter cattle in during a storm, yet therein are our fellow creatures in all weather subjected to disease, degradation and immorality.⁶²

Furthermore, other problems contributed adversely to the final numbers of production in 1864 and 1865. These included pestilence, agricultural pests, and raids. As the previous quote explained, disease was prevalent. Waves of smallpox, cholera, and yellow fever swept through the area cyclically for the war's duration.⁶³ Hunger and starvation were also serious problems. The notorious army worm devastated the crops in the spring and fall of 1864, with a summer of heavy rains sandwiched between. The quality of equipment left much to be desired, and shortages in supplies were rampant. Indeed, livestock was often unhealthy and diseased. Lastly, notwithstanding the Bend's relatively secluded location it was not immune to guerilla raids. Frequently, mules and supplies were stolen by "roving bands of soldiers." Even freed people were kidnapped.⁶⁴

The above illustrates that while the Union authorities tried to impose order and establish a uniform plan for both a model colony of liberated people and a successful economic enterprise, what played out revealed both positives and negatives. First, though not yet officially free, the former slaves at Davis Bend were liberated. They were

⁶² James T. Currie, ed., "Freedmen at Davis Bend, April 1864" *Journal of Mississippi History* 46:2 (May, 1984), pp. 120-129.

⁶³ Marshall Scott Legan, "Disease and the Freedmen in Mississippi during Reconstruction" *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 28:3 (July, 1973), pp. 257-267. Legan maintains that it is the preponderance of disease that explains the shortage of "hands" available for labor on the plantations in the post-war period.

⁶⁴ Currie, *Enclave*, pp. xxi, and 64; Glymph, "Second Middle Passage," pp. 66-70; Garner, *Reconstruction*, p. 252; and May, *John Quitman*, pp. 352-353.

also protected because of their geographic location and the fact that they were behind military lines. Relative to the region and greater American South, they were safe. That safety and sustenance, however, was contingent on Union protection, and Union authorities linked that protection to labor obligations. Thus, like their counterparts at Yazikovo Selo, they were not quite free, in that they were anchored to the demesne and had labor obligations. Still, in the midst of the grand experiment, chaos was pervasive. This included natural problems, such as disease, hunger, and pests. It was also related to the war itself: guerrilla raids were a constant threat, both during and immediately after the war. Food and supply shortages were such that the authorities closely managed rations. The war also explains the particular fluid nature of the male population on the Bend, with many, if not most, leaving to join the Union army to fight for their freedom.

What a contrast with the situation at Yazikovo Selo: the serfs had been liberated, but their freedom was contingent on moving into several stages, the contracting period associated with the Statutory Charter being one of them. Contrasted with what played out on the Bend, there is a sense of an abrupt cessation of all activity at Yazikovo Selo, where the peasants wanted nothing to do with this one time, and one time only agreement. Conversely, against the backdrop of epic military maneuvers and organization, the freed people at Davis Bend witnessed their numbers ebb and flow, even as the authorities forbade their movement. In annual cycles, they were told to make contracts and work, which they did.

What explains these differences? One explanation may well have to do with the “nature” of their freedom at that point in time: the freed people at Yazikovo Selo were presented with a document masquerading as a contract that cast into stone something that

did not comport with what freedom meant to them. The freed people on the Bend were “liberated,” but “freedom” was still not certain. They were at the mercy of their liberators, and their liberated status was contingent on compliance with the “Rules and Regulations.” Yet another variable has to do with the nature of the “contracts” themselves. The peasants of Yazikovo Selo did not have the option presented to them to look to another year; to anticipate that, with each year, an opportunity could emerge for new negotiations. In this sense, the “certainty” of the Statutory Charter was a negative for the Russian peasants. And although the “Rules and Regulations” did not allow for negotiation which is the cornerstone of a contractual arrangement, the Union authorities provided for financial incentive. Here was sharp contrast in terms of what played out at each demesne.

In addition to the great anticipation for land gifts that the American freed people had in late 1865, a great debate also emerged in the region about contracting vs. wage labor in the context of freedom. Reminiscent of former serfs’ fears of being tricked into another form of servitude, former slaves argued that “What [do] you want me to sign [a contract] for? I is free, . . . If I is already free, I don’t need to sign no paper, . . .” As Leon Litwack has explained the freed people lacked “confidence ‘in the white man’s *integrity.*” Many freed people feared the binding nature of the contract, as well as its potential to annul both their new found freedom and the possibility for land distribution. An opinion piece in a local African American newspaper best summarized the freed peoples’ sentiments about these issues:

. . . ‘insist upon regular weekly . . . wages.’ . . . The contract. . . is intended by the employer to renew a servitude or bondage. . . [it is]. . . the means of coercion. . . It is clear . . . that the laborer must not alienate his freedom, for any term of months. . . . remain

free to leave the plantation and go elsewhere laborers are always found on hand, under a regime of liberty. . . .Compulsion is nothing short of disguised slavery. . . .The laborer has nothing to lose by making . . . no written contract at all, but working by the week or by the day. . . . [only in this way] he preserves his freedom.

A Bureau official dismissed these concerns as “absurd.”⁶⁵ Herein we see the intersection of the role of wages as an incentive, the fear of coercion, and the meaning of labor contracts in the context of a discussion about the meaning of freedom. At the heart of it, the concern seems to be one of genuine negotiation. It is clear that labor is identified as the crucial tool of leverage. Further, embedded in this quote is a suggestion about the authenticity of freedom. It makes an effort to have a say in the matter. As the story of Yazikovo Selo’s Charter and what played out in its neighborhood illustrates, the peasants understood they did not have a say in the matter. They understood “negotiation” was not genuine. They were concerned about an authentic freedom. So, too, does the story of what played out at Palmyra Plantation and on the Bend during the Home Colony period illustrate that the freed people did not have the option of negotiation.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have compared the specific and contextual circumstances of Yazikovo Selo and Palmyra Plantation, with the role of contracts as a category of analysis. The following has been made clear: First, the historical sequence was uneven. The serfs at Yazikovo Selo were liberated in February 1861, and *then* in 1862 the authorities imposed the Statutory Charter which defined their temporarily obligated status

⁶⁵ “Short Contracts” *New Orleans Tribune*, December 12, 1865, p. 4. Bureau quote in Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long*, pp. 413-415.

as well as their labor obligations. Meanwhile, as Union armies made their way into their neighborhoods, the American slaves were liberated piecemeal. During the Home Colony period, the former slaves, like their Russian counterparts at Yazikovo Selo, were attached to the land by the authorities. Like their Russian counterparts, American authorities had expectations for the freed people's labor. In each context, freedom was evolutionary and contingent on compliance with the authorities' expectations.

While the freed people on Davis Bend complied with Union authorities, the peasants of Yazikovo Selo did not. Explanations for this have to do with land tenure and the *de jure* fact of liberation for the latter; as well as the tenuous nature of freedom which the reality of total war presented for the former. The dire circumstances which the former slaves faced were also crucial. The peasants of Yazikovo Selo had the ability to subsist irrespective of contract compliance. The freed people of Palmyra Plantation not only did not have land tenure, but their subsistence was entirely dependent upon their liberators. It would also appear that, in addition to the contingency of rations and sustenance, the incentive of payment for labor made a difference in the American example.

Clearly, the functional role of the contracts in the Russian example and the Home Colony period had to do with protecting the integrity of labor on the demesne. Also, both the Charter and the "Rules and Regulations" had implicit connotations of paternalism, the idea being that the authorities knew what was "best" for the freed peoples, and that the latter needed supervision. Freedom was both defined and conditional. Both the Statutory Charter and the "Rules and Regulations" had the backing of the state and the military. There was no negotiation.

However, the cultural role of the contract had different meanings in Russia and America. In general, Russia was one great landed estate, with the tsar and his bureaucratic government as the landlord. Both the nobility and the serfs (and after emancipation the peasants) were participants in a service state. Negotiation might have been implied, but at the end of the day, the tsar's law was the law. Conversely, irrespective of what in fact played out during either the Home Colony period or the Quitman/Lovell recovery, or both, the contract was a cornerstone of American business, and the concept of negotiation was implicit in it. This latter point notwithstanding, both the freed serfs and slaves evidenced suspicion of the authorities' motives when it came to the contracts – they had a real aversion to anything that resembled re-enservment or – re-enslavement.

Crucial players for the enforcement of both the contracts and labor participation were featured in each case study. Both the Peace Mediator and Provost Marshal were figures who were intended to ameliorate the plight of the free, as well as mediate complicated issues. However, their first and foremost task was to enforce compliance. The essential message was “You will work so that you can be free.” Specifically, both Bestuzhev and Norton, as members of the group in power (Vasily Yazikov and Union management respectively), reflected and defended the interests and goals of each.

Both sets of freed peoples understood that labor was inextricably linked to freedom. And so although both traditional norms and the terms of liberation were crucial determinants of how freedom unfolded in each context, both acted in their own self interest as best they could, utilizing what options they had at the time. While the former slaves at Palmyra Plantation evinced a kind of rugged individualism, the former serfs at

Yazikovo Selo exemplified the “all for one and one for all” dictum associated so often with the Russian village community. In this sense, the meaning of freedom was more practical than ideological. That is, the freed people at each demesne did not articulate a sophisticated doctrine. Rather, for them, it was manifested in the immediate needs of every daily life. The inverse of this line of argument is obvious: for the first time in their lives the Russian freed people had an opportunity to make a choice – to not cooperate; the liberated people of Palmyra Plantation during the Home Colony period did not.

Additionally, that the Statutory Charter was a once and one time only deal (vs. the potentially endless multiples and cyclical nature of the American labor contracts) also explains the differences in compliance, since the former froze an arrangement in perpetuity (or, at least until negotiations for the Redemption Agreement commenced), while the latter presented elements of finiteness and renewal. That labor was made compulsory in both examples is significant. In this sense, then, it is equally striking that the peasants of Yazikovo Selo refused to comply. Then, when the Quitman/Lovell family recovered Palmyra Plantation, something closer to “negotiation” was evident in the plantation records. The next two chapters will address the wider and longer term implications of both the Statutory Charter and cyclic nature of the American contracting experience in conjunction with land, wages, and rates of compliance.

Chapter 4

BACKGROUND: CONTEXTUAL REALITIES

In March 1881, Russian nobleman Lieutenant Vasili Yazikov sold his estate, Yazikovo Selo, to a merchant, Feodor Stepanov. This included a wool factory that Yazikov's father had built at the estate in 1851 in anticipation of government requisitions for military uniforms, which the Crimean War (1854-1856) confirmed. Ever since the emancipation of his serfs in 1861, Yazikov had attempted to balance his responsibility to serve the state with his management of the demesne. However, when Stepanov bought the estate it was in complete disrepair. By 1881 the atmosphere at Yazikovo Selo was one of idleness. The fields lay fallow and the factory's condition was deplorable. The building's doors and window frames had vanished, the wheel for producing steam was out of commission, and the spinning machines were broken and had missing parts. The estate was producing less than half of its capacity with less than half of the total number of laborers working in 1861.¹ A neighbor reported that across Simbirsk Province, the terms of freedom led to the peasants' "deliberate sabotage" regarding work. As historian Zhores Trofimov has explained, in the first year alone after emancipation, the use of land in Simbirsk Province "declined by half."² It appears that the behavior of Yazikovo Selo's

¹ See Vyacheslav N Yegorov, "Ekonomika i Torgovlya" *Simbirskiy-Ulyanovskiy kray v Istorii Rossii* (Ulyanovsk, Russia: Korporatsia Tekhnologii Prodvizhenia, 2007), p. 222; and Aleksandr Rassadin, "Yazikovo" in *Ulyanovskaya-Simbirskaya Entsiklopediya*, t. II, N-Ya (Ulyanovsk, Russia: Simbirskaya Kniga, 2004) N.S. Rakov and V.N. Yegorov, eds, p. 472.

² Zhores A. Trofimov, *Zhil i umer dzhentl'menom poetom: dokumental'nye ocherki D.P. Oznobishinye* (Ulyanovsk, Russia: Pechatnyi dvor, 2005), pp. 84-85. Oznobishin was also an executive committee member of Simbirsk Province's Department of Peasant Affairs. His estate, Kitovka, was not far from Yazikovo Selo.

former serfs fits this pattern. When Stepanov took over the estate, he initiated repairs, investments, and a system of wage labor. Incredibly, within two years the factory's production was recognized by the All Russian National Industrial Exhibition in Moscow.³

Meanwhile, in the American South Lieutenant William Storrow Lovell had become by 1877 a "planting magnate," essentially operating Palmyra Plantation on Davis Bend as a "closed island community under his control."⁴ Since the end of the war Lovell had pursued his dream of becoming a planter – one that had commenced when he married General John A. Quitman's daughter, Tonie, in 1858. Born and raised in the North, although of "noble, high toned and intelligent" character, Lovell "lacked estate." This notwithstanding, he earned \$1,500 a year on his naval salary.⁵ When Tonie's father died one month after their marriage, Lovell, by proxy, inherited Palmyra Plantation. Therefore, he rationalized, "there was no need [for him] to continue a military career. . . . houses will burn down, stocks will break and fly to the winds, but a plantation is a solid thing, it is always there."⁶ But the war put Lovell's ambition on hold when he left to participate on behalf of the Confederacy. Only in late 1865 did he return to the Bend and

³ P.L. Martynov, *Gorod Simbirsk za 250 let ego sushchestvovaniya: sistematicheskii sbornik istoricheskikh svedenii o g. Simbirsk* (Simbirsk, Rossiya: Tipografiya gubernskogo pravleniya, 1898), p. 22.

⁴ Robert E. May, *John A. Quitman: Old South Crusader* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1985), p. 354; and Lynda Lassewell Crist, ed., *The Papers of Jefferson Davis, Vol. 7 1861* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1992), pp. 176-177.

⁵ May, *Ibid.*, p. 345. In today's money \$1,500 a year would be approximately \$43,500.

⁶ Robert E. May, "Southern Elite Women, Sectional Extremism, and the Male Political Sphere: The Case of John A. Quitman's Wife and Female Descendents, 1847-1931," *The Journal of Mississippi History* 50:4 (November, 1988), pp. 251-285, see p. 257.

pick up where he had left off. By submitting his Oath of Allegiance along with the rest of the Quitmans, Lovell simultaneously pledged his loyalty to the Union and re-acquired Palmyra, which he would manage for the next thirty years. Although the plantation was worth far less than what it had been on the eve of the war, by 1880 the Agricultural Census gave the plantation a value of \$114,150.⁷ But this did not come without effort or adversity, especially when it came to the freed people there. In late 1879, when agitation associated with the first migration from the Delta to Kansas was reaching its peak, Lovell faced collective action in the form of threats to stage a walkout over the meager wages he paid his laborers, which amounted to 50 cents per day without board or \$9 to \$10 a month with board.⁸

⁷ U.S. Census, 1860 and 1880, Agricultural Schedule, Warren County, Mississippi, MDAH; and Janet Sharp Hermann, *The Pursuit of a Dream* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1983), p. 26. Hermann notes that Palmyra was valued at \$200,000 in 1860. Given the deflation of the 1870s, it is arguable that the \$200,000 estimate of 1860 money could in fact have been less valuable than the \$114,000 estimate of 1880.

⁸ Due to the decline in the price of cotton, the rise in production costs, credit difficulties, and overproduction in good years, the typical rate in 1879 for the Delta region was 40 cents per day for men without board or \$8 to \$15 per month with board. See Vernon Lane Wharton, *The Negro in Mississippi: 1865-1890* (New York, NY: Harper Row, 1965), p. 66. Lovell insisted that he reduced the credit prices in the plantation store to help offset the drop in wages about which he said he had no choice because of the low price of cotton for that year. See Hermann, *Ibid.*, p. 209; William Storrow Lovell to Eliza Quitman, December 7 and 18, 1879, and Antonia Lovell to Eliza Quitman, 1879 (no specific date entered), Lovell Family Papers, University of the South, Sewanee; and May, "Southern Elite Women," p. 277. As for the "Exodus," Wharton insists that it involved a very "tiny fraction" of freed people from Mississippi and "excited far more attention than it. . .deserved." He also explains that the excitement about the great "Exodus" in the first quarter of the 20th century is often (and incorrectly) conflated or confused with the 1879 migration to Kansas. See *Ibid.*, p. 116. Both Nudie E. Williams and Nell Irvin Painter attach far greater importance to it. See respectively "Black Newspapers and the Exodusters of 1879," *Kansas History*, 8 (Winter, 1985-1986), pp. 217-225; and *Exodusters: Black Migration to Kansas after Reconstruction* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977). In *Forgotten Time: The Yazoo-Mississippi Delta after the Civil War* (Charlottesville, VA: University Press of Virginia, 2000). John C. Willis insists that

While Yazikovo Selo's decline is apparent during Yazikov's tenure, and its recovery coincides with Stepanov's management, Palmyra Plantation appears to have become a profitable enterprise in the period under study. This is extraordinary for a number of reasons. First, unlike its American counterpart, Yazikovo Selo did not experience confiscation and occupation associated with a total war. Conversely, unlike what played out in Russia, there were no "stages" of emancipation in America. The Thirteenth Amendment ended slavery. Therefore, unlike what happened at Yazikovo Selo, William Storrow Lovell did not have to navigate through a process of liberation as the plantation recovered from the war and occupation. This notwithstanding, he had to adapt to the changing circumstances of labor on the demesne.

Second, unlike his Russian counterpart, Lovell was new to the plantation way of life and management. Born and raised in the North, Lovell's upbringing did not include the expectation that he would become a planter, whereas Yazikov's did. While Yazikov did share with his American counterpart a military experience in his formative years, as a Russian nobleman he was imbued with a profound service ethic associated with his *estate* (*soslovie*). Although Lovell possessed no such trait, in taking over Palmyra after the war and managing it until his death in the late 1890s, he demonstrated that he had no qualms about stepping into the American South's planter class.

Third, while Yazikov was heavily indebted before emancipation and the Quitman/Lovells were not, the tumult associated with the Civil War and its aftermath meant that Palmyra's "recovery" was by no means certain. All this notwithstanding,

while it was short lived, the Kansas migration was great and posed an imminent threat to the cotton economy. See pp. 48-49.

cotton was still king. The trail of family and business correspondence indicates that various members of the extended Quitman/Lovell family travelled frequently and lived well for the time. While his indebtedness continued to plague him in the post-emancipation period, Yazikov was also not poverty stricken. Indeed, he continued to indulge in extravagance.

Finally, while both circumstantial and contextual evidence suggests that the former serfs at Yazikovo Selo seemed to be, at best, ambivalent with respect to working on the demesne which had been their home for generations, or, at worst, actively resisted said work, the records show that the freed people at Palmyra Plantation worked solidly and consistently there.

In this and the next chapter I explain what played out at Yazikovo Selo and Palmyra Plantation in the years after emancipation through to what is generally acknowledged as the end of the Reform period in Russia, 1881 and the end of Reconstruction in the United States, 1877. It will be made clear that the combination of certain circumstances and contextual realities, both in each country and in each region in which each demesne was located, determined the observable outcomes. However, delineating a number of unique traits associated with each demesne further helps us understand the outcomes. In addition, an examination of a number of interrelated issues help: I will consider how “labor” adjusted to the new condition of freedom at Yazikovo Selo and Palmyra Plantation. Although both circumstantial and direct evidence with respect to production and productivity are important, I also consider each demesne’s patriarch’s management. As stewards of Yazikovo Selo and Palmyra Plantation, Vasili Yazikov and William Storror Lovell each had a role in shaping the distinguishing characteristics of labor, and

therefore, the contours of freedom. The prevailing economic systems in each country, as well as understanding how each demesne was integrated into its respective regional economy, are also important.

Also relevant are the contextual circumstances with respect to the emancipation mandates in each country. Here it will be clear that the terms of freedom played a role in determining labor's features at Yazikovo Selo and Palmyra Plantation. The Russian emancipation settlement was premeditated and prescriptive, and charted a course for what labor would look like. To be sure, although in the United States labor on the demesne was crucial to the viability of the lucrative cash crops produced there, what that labor would "look like" remained to be seen. Therefore, labor, both in general and at Palmyra Plantation, went through a series of fine tunings. While the Russian *Manifesto* technically broke the master's authority over his or her former serfs, it was replaced by the village commune authority. Because the legislation required that the peasants' obligations, taxes, and compensation for land to both their former master and the government be collective, a communal response with respect to labor was predictable. In the American case, the freed people became "bird free." Although the liberated slaves' ideas about freedom did include land ownership, as it became evident to many if not most freed people that this would not materialize, either because they wanted to, or they had no choice, they evidently subscribed to the prevailing American tenets of individualism, free labor, and the idea of a "fair wage" for a day's work. Thus, whereas the Russian commune's authority was inserted between the freed people and the former master, the

American marketplace of supply, demand, and compensation stood between the former slaves and the plantation owner/manager.⁹

Herein lay a similarity between the two subaltern groups: under each set of circumstances, the freed people acted in self interest in the ways in which they could. Each set responded to, or worked within the constraints of the institutional and traditional structures in which they found themselves. As the previous chapter made clear, the freed serfs of Yazikovo Selo repudiated the Statutory Charter. Now they were entering a phase in which they were expected to agree to a Redemption Agreement with their former master. The latter was the final “buy out” whereby the landowners were to receive their compensation in government bonds; and the peasants were to purchase their lands through a government loan of up to four-fifths of the value, which would be paid off in forty-nine yearly installments. However, how could the former serfs enter into an agreement to financially compensate their former master as well as the government for land when they had neither cash nor freedom of movement? Moreover, they questioned the principle of paying for land which they considered already theirs. On the one hand they faced crushing debt. But on the other, they could not be evicted. Therefore, they were highly disincentivized to work for their former master. And now, under the new terms, their former master could not make them work. Resistance, either in the form of passive or overt, was a form of agency.

⁹ Michael Wayne has explained that by taking “to the road” the freedman “introduced the marketplace into the labor settlement.” Michael S. Wayne, *The Reshaping of Plantation Society: The Natchez District, 1860-80* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1990), p. 110.

Conversely, while the freed people at Palmyra Plantation did not have land tenure, they did have freedom of movement. This had both salutary and negative effects. In a place and time where plantation owners needed laborers, the freed people's mobility was an advantage during the crucial negotiating period on the eve of the planting season. However, without the guarantee of land tenure, the freed people had to find work in order to survive. They could not hold out forever. Therefore, circumstantial evidence suggests pragmatic agency: they negotiated as best they could for a fair wage with Lovell, and worked hard. And unlike Vasili Yazikov, who did not have to think about labor compensation so long as the freed peasants were obligated to him, Lovell paid his hired hands. It will be made clear that, unlike their Russian counterparts, who faced what was in fact an obligatory status in perpetuity, the freed people at Palmyra Plantation were prepared to commit to short work stints, as epitomized by contracting to work per season. In fact, while the Russian act of anchoring the peasants to the land meant that the freed people there had both land tenure *and* immobility, the American form of freedom did not include land gifting (with or without compensation) and unleashed the former slaves from their plantations which resulted in the latter's mobility. Thus, each set of freed people expressed what freedom meant to them as best they could where the means of survival and the realities of emancipation intersected.

At the heart of the story is a consideration of how emancipation affected each demesne's *raison d'être*. Because Yazikovo Selo and Palmyra Plantation were exceptional in a number of ways in relation to the typical profile of demesnes in each country, their respective stories complicate standard narratives. This comparison informs us about both the meaning of freedom and the process of liberation in each society at the

time. Above all it illustrates how labor was both sought and performed in the transformational context of emancipation.

This chapter consists of a background description of each demesne, as well as the historical political, economic, and social contextual circumstances of each. Here, too, I address the “personality” of Yazikovo Selo and of Palmyra Plantation. I also consider the *mentalite* of each demesne’s steward. Finally, I consider the consciousness of each demesne’s subaltern group. All this lays the groundwork for Chapter Five, where I explain why Yazikovo Selo appeared to stagnate and Palmyra evidently thrived as a cash crop plantation in the post-emancipation period.

Background

In order to understand what happened at Yazikovo Selo and Palmyra Plantation after emancipation a discussion of each demesne before 1861 is instructive. Here, aspects of the nature of labor, production and productivity, management, contextual circumstances, and *mentalities* will be addressed.

Yazikovo Selo

In addition to many other properties in Simbirsk Province, the land on which Yazikovo Selo stood was gifted to a Yazikov ancestor in the 17th century as part of an expansionist policy by the tsar. Therefore, Yazikovo’s serfs who were liberated in 1861 could trace their family roots back to this time. Continuity and tradition were fully entrenched by 1861. Seasonal crops and agricultural production ran their typical course. But the inhabitants could not rely solely on an agricultural economy. The landscape was

dotted with forests, craggy hills, and bluffs overlooking the Volga River, and it was marked by river estuaries. Its soil was sandy and primarily composed of clay. The climate produced seasonally extreme temperatures, and droughts were frequent since rainfall was irregular. Deposition of topsoil was an outcome of the frequent wind (*sukhovei*) that blew west from central Asia. Thus, Yazikovo Selo got its produce from other Yazikov properties located in what was known as the Kubyshev fields on the alluvial plateau on the left bank of the Volga. The peasants of Yazikovo Selo augmented their subsistence by taking small amounts of produce to local markets, crafting, and participating in informal, barter economies. One example of the latter was a lucrative trade in cat pelts.¹⁰ Above all the demesne was at once the Yazikov family nest and its serfs' homestead.

Beginning in the mid-19th century, a number of changes ensued which altered life at Yazikovo Selo. In 1851 Vasili retired from the military when he inherited the estate upon his father's death. That same year Vasili married his wife, Praskovia. At this point the demesne was registered with 430 souls and 5,379 *desiatini*. He immediately mortgaged it in order to draw more credit from the State Loan Bank.¹¹ Founded in 1786, the Bank was set up primarily for serf owners. Loans were secured not by the value of the land but by the number of serfs a landlord held, and the loan was typically for terms of 28 or 33

¹⁰ Indeed, cat fur was a thriving business in Simbirsk Province; the trade extended from local markets to China in the east and Europe in the west. For a description of this trade in the vicinity of Yazikovo Selo see Ivan Eduardovich Sivoplias, *Istorii s Kartinkami* (Ulyanovsk, Russia: Artishok, 2008).

¹¹ See Alexander M. Avdonin, *Pod Sen'yu Yazikovskikh Muz* (Ulyanovsk, USSR: Pechatniy Dvor, 1991), p. 4; and Steven L. Hoch, "The Banking Crisis and Peasant Reform" *The American Historical Review* 96:3 (June, 1991), pp. 795-820, p. 799.

years. In the post-emancipation period, however, the state policy of providing long-term credit to noblemen was discarded, with funds redirected towards financing railroads and steam navigation.¹² The expiration of Vasili's loan in the late 1870s or early 1880s must have played a role in his decision to sell the factory to Stepanov in 1877 and the remainder of the estate to him in 1881.

There was never an economic system in Imperial Russia comparable to the liberal, free market system that developed in Western Europe and the United States. To be sure, shadow, informal, and/or barter economies existed. But the tsarist regime spearheaded economic development and strategies, and specialization was regional. In anticipation of requisitions for military uniforms, the government initiated a development in which a number of wool factories were built on estates in Simbirsk Province. In 1852 the wool factory was built at Yazikovo Selo, and Vasili signed an agreement with the Treasury (*Kazna*) to produce uniforms for the military.¹³ When the factory opened for production in 1853, it had 40 spinning and weaving machines, and for that year produced 110,000

¹² Hoch, *Ibid.*, pp. 795-797.

¹³ A decree of February 16, 1809 established Simbirsk Province as a major center of wool/textile production. The Middle Volga River region was selected as a major hub for wool production because of its geographic proximity to sheep herders to the southeast. The roots of trade between the two regions ran deep. The brand name was labeled Simbirski Wool (*Simbirskii Sukhno*), and it specialized in camel and sheep wool from Orenburg. Factories came to be a regular feature across the rural landscape of the region. During the War of 1812 the Wool Commission of Simbirsk (*Commissiya Sukna Simbiraska*) was highly productive as it complied with government requisitions. It is estimated that at least one third of the army's uniforms and coats were made in Simbirsk Province. Although productivity waned after 1812, as a result of the European wars and rebellions of 1848, there was a spike in government requisitions again. Between 1850 and 1860 sixteen more woolen factories opened in Simbirsk, and one of these was at Yazikovo Selo. See Viachislav Golovin, "Pervyi brend gubernii" *Simbirskiy Kur'yer* 15 Avgust 2011.

arshina (1 *arshin* = 28 inches) of military cloth, or about 300 *arshina* a day. On the eve of the Crimean War production had spiked across Simbirsk Province, which boasted an increase from 764,000 *arshina* in 1854 to 1,472,000 in 1856. Now wool production represented 55% of the province's industry.¹⁴

At the close of the Crimean War in 1856 the factory at Yazikovo Selo must have been in relatively good shape since government requisitions had been certain and serf labor guaranteed production. Like others in the region, the factory at Yazikovo Selo was owned by a landowner who could rely on both government requisitions and unfree labor. The enterprise ran on a kind of autopilot. It was profitable only to the extent that it was part of the economic system's structure: Vasili Yazikov neither paid wages nor had a large overhead expense associated with operations. The factory buildings were quickly constructed and minimally outfitted. Because of the serf labor, low overhead, and the factory's *raison d'etre*, there was no need to retain capital for further investment, especially because this was all part of something akin to a proto-command economy.

It is arguable that the emergence of wool factories in the Middle Volga region was just another installment of the Tsarist-vassal relationship, in which the former commanded and rewarded service and the latter complied. In fact, it was not part of the typical provincial noble landlord's *mentalite* in the mid-19th century to imagine investing in and profiting from an industrial enterprise. (Nor, for that matter, did he typically have to negotiate for labor and its compensation.) To be sure, there were exceptions. But the economic system in place consisted of requisitions, emanating from the Treasury, and the

¹⁴ Vladimir Aleksandrovich Aunovskiy, "Sukonnye Fabriki i Sherstomoyki v Simbirskoy Gubernii" *Simbirskii sbornik, t. II* (Simbirsk, Rossiya: Simbirskiy gubernskiy Statisticheskii Komitet, 1870), pp. 82-102.

latter paying the landlord up front. Indeed, John LeDonne has described the relationship between the nobleman and the government as

. . . less a public commitment to private individuals to pay a definite sum for the delivery of goods than a mutual agreement between members of the apparatus and the political infrastructure and even an internal arrangement among members of the apparatus.¹⁵

Because of the rigid *estate* system in Russia, merchants could not compete with estate landlords, whom the state clearly privileged. Merchants had to pay wages and did not receive government contracts. As a result, over time merchants devised a variety of ways to piggyback onto the command system. The most common of these was in the trader profession, with the trader merchant being the point person between camel and/or sheep herders to the south and the nobles and/or their estate/factory managers in the province. In fact, it was at this point in the system where real profits could be made. Merchants had cash.¹⁶

After the Crimean War's conclusion many factories closed in Simbirsk Province because of the decline in government requisitions. Many of those that remained, however, were rented out by the landlords to those very merchants who had been

¹⁵ John P. LeDonne, *Absolutism and Ruling Class: the Formation of the Russian Political Order, 1700-1825* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 230. For a solid overview of the staggering economic realities and noble landlord and peasant *mentalities* (including freedom of movement (or lack thereof) and individual initiative (or lack thereof)) see Arcadius Kahan's Chapter 1 "The Russian Economy 1860-1913" in *Russian Economic History: The Nineteenth Century* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1989), by Roger Weiss, ed., pp. 1-90.

¹⁶ Interview with historian Aleksei Sytin, Ulyanovsk, Russia, June 29, 2010; and Dmitrii Yur'evich Murashov, "Provintsial'noe dvoryanstvo v kontse 50-x-70-x gg. XIX veka (po materialam Penzenskoy Gubernii)" Dissertatsia: Saratov, 2004, c. 245, pp. 171-172.

excluded from the formal economy. This is exactly what Vasili's brother, Alexander, did at his estate, Undory.¹⁷ For a variety of reasons it was not uncommon that merchants could graft the system and/or "fail" to right an enterprise whose sole purpose was to comply with central command requisitions: they were comfortable with operating in a shadow economy; the factories the merchants had been hired to manage were not *their* investments; and the noblemen could frequently fail to pay them due to the unavailability of hard currency. Above all, even in managerial positions, the merchants had no clout to force peasants to work.¹⁸

On the eve of emancipation, Vasili produced a detailed inventory of the factory. He noted that it was fully outfitted and in good working order. He registered 300 factory workers. Although he made no note of their gender or ages, this number is significant because, as the previous chapter made clear, just one year later, in 1862, 160 laborers were listed in the Statutory Charter.¹⁹ Also on the eve of emancipation, Vasili contracted

¹⁷ Mikhail Vasilievovich Rusin, "Khroniki i istorii sela Voskresenskogo, Undory tozh, 1869" *Seleniya a Simbirskogo uezda: materialy dlya istorii Simbirskogo dvorianstva i chastnago zemlevladieniya v Simbirskom uezde* P. Martynov (Simbirsk, Rossiya: Izdanie Simbirskoi Gubernskoy Uchenoy Arkivnoy Komissii, 1903), p. 9.

¹⁸ Aunovskiy, "Sukhonye Fabriki," pp. 82-102. In his insightful chapter "Old Believers and New Entrepreneurs: Old Belief and Entrepreneurial Culture in Imperial Russia," James L. West explains that merchants were the ultimate outsiders in Imperial Russia. See *Commerce in Russian Urban Culture, 1861-1914* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), pp. 79-89, ed. William Craft Brumfield, *et.al.*

¹⁹ Aunovskiy, "Sukonnye Fabriki," pp. 82-102; and Chapter Three, p. 107 above. The building was made of stone, and was 14 *sazhnei* or 98 feet in length (1 *sazhen* = 7 feet) and 6 *sazhnei* or 42 feet wide. The roof was wooden and painted. It was built on the Volga tributary, the Yuren, and it had a water pump transmission for power. The water wheel was on a wooden base. There were two additional, though much smaller out buildings, one for storage and the other used as an opening room. There was only one weaving work bench (*stanok*). Vasili had 5 weaving machines converted to the water powered pump. He had a kind of gin installed, and a total of thirty spinners (each with

with a merchant by the name of Mangushev to manage the wool factory for a two-year period, from September 1860 to September 1862. On the one hand he was doing what many noblemen had already begun to do, which was hire merchant managers. On the other hand, the significance of this is that, although the contract preceded emancipation, it is plausible to infer that his decision to hire a manager was a pre-emptive move in anticipation of emancipation since 1) as both a District Marshal of the Nobility and a member of one of the provincial committees on emancipation, he understood its potential impact, and 2) he knew he would no longer have direct control over his former “people.”²⁰

Mangushev’s pedigree made him the perfect managerial candidate: he was a member of the third guild, from the Province’s southern port district of Sengilei, and Tatar.²¹ In the Middle Volga area, while first and second guilds were mostly comprised of noblemen, the third guild was dominated in particular by that region’s subset of minorities – Tatars (Muslim), and Mordvins and Chuvashi (Russian Orthodox). The critical point here is that it appears that those noblemen in 19th century Russia who were

40-60 spools) which were powered by water. Other than speculating that Vasili transferred a considerable number of workers from the factory to the field in anticipation of emancipation, it is difficult to know why there was a marked drop in laborers in the period between 1860 and 1862.

²⁰ “Delo ob otmena dogovora c Mangushevom.” GAUO f. 88, op. 5, d. 92, l. 15.

²¹ See Wayne Dowler, “Merchants and Politics in Russia: the Guild Reform of 1824” *The Slavonic and East European Review* 65:1 (January, 1987), pp. 38-52. There were three guild levels in Imperial Russia, the third being the lowest. Ever since the Napoleonic Wars the first and second had been reserved for non-service members of the nobility, and their combined total membership was eclipsed by that of the third guild. Also since the turn of the century, third guild merchants had increasingly dominated the textile industry. Vasili Yazikov was not a guild member.

members of the first and second guild and who operated industrial enterprises, did so as part of a proto-command economic system directed by the autocracy. These people were neither structurally integrated with nor traditionally linked to a fully functioning economic market separate from the political system. Conversely, although the third guild merchant class' membership could be fluid and vulnerable to the vagaries of both the economy and autocratic power, it was distinguished for its integration into a fully thriving, informal economy, both horizontally and vertically. Many third guild merchants were enterprising, versatile, experienced, and well-connected. They frequently managed more than one enterprise, and most often were point people in a chain of trade, for example as retail buyers and sellers in the markets. They had a number of sources of income; and they were notorious for their shrewd business sense. Because Russia's industrial development was marked by regional specialization, the merchants of the Middle Volga, like their counterparts in other regions, were both insular and tied by alliances.²² Tatars were urban and literate, and, because they were not Russian, they had never been enserfed.²³ As it would play out, Yazikov would expect maximum results from Mangushev, who had minimum authority. For as long as they had land tenure as

²² See Alfred J. Reiber, "Businessmen and Business Culture in Imperial Russia" *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 128:3 (September, 1984), pp. 238-243. To be clear, Russian merchants were neither businessmen nor capitalists in the western, liberal tradition.

²³ See N.A. Krylov, "Vospominaniia Mirovago Posrednika pervago priziva o vvedenii v deistvie Polozheniya 19-go Fevralia 1861 goda" *Russkaia Starina* 74:6 (April, 1892), pp. 81-102, 615-641, and specifically pp. 86 and 90; and Robert P. Geraci, *Window on the East: National and Imperial Identities in Late Tsarist Russia* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2001), pp. 18-19 and 34-35. While it is true that down through the ages non-Russians were enserfed, both of these authors discuss the phenomenon in the Middle Volga region in which minorities such as Tatars had not been enserfed because they were not Russian.

well as the commune's authority, the freed people at Yazikovo Selo were not bound to be obedient to Mangushev.

As for Yazikovo Selo's factory workers, in general, before 1861 they were like those on most other estate factories in Simbirsk Province: they were on *barshchina* labor, with three days per week of seigneurial labor. Typically, the estate factory labor pool was endogenous and hereditary rather than exogenous, and was devoid of an institutional artisanal/apprenticeship practice. By the Crimean War a new system had evolved, whereby the laborer worked full time and came to live in barracks attached to the factory. They were no longer field workers.²⁴ It is reasonable to infer that this developed at Yazikovo Selo since a workers' barracks was itemized in the bill of sale when Stepanov bought the factory in 1877.

Historians have grappled with trying to understand the consciousness of these rural laborers who worked in factories on Russian estates. Lenin and subsequent Soviet analysts argued that they were rural proletariats, who, although still residing in the countryside, shed their peasant *mentalite* and village roots, and acquired an industrial working class consciousness whose life-style and expectations were shaped by the factory. Many western scholars of Russian labor and Russian peasants have held that they were "mere peasants in the factory," who were concerned far less with labor organization than with subsistence, and whose work stoppages and idleness were just

²⁴ Rassadin, "Yazikovo," pp. 472-3; and A.O. Lipinskiy, *Materialy dlya Geografii i Statistiki Rossii, sobranniye ofitserami General'nogo shtaba: Simbirsk Guberniia, t. II* (Sankt Peterburg, Rossiya: Voennay Tipografii, 1868), pp. 192-202.

variations of peasant disturbances (*volneniia*).²⁵ This notwithstanding, whether the village peasant worked in the estate factory or field, it was the village community (i.e. commune, or more correctly “society” (*obshchina*, or *obshchestvo* after emancipation) that was the determinant of individual behavior and consciousness. That the emancipation legislation relocated the noble landlord’s authority to the village commune is significant since the individual peasant was not emancipated from authority *per se*. Indeed, Boris Mironov has argued that the emancipation legislation actually strengthened the village commune and peasant *mentalite*.²⁶ This helps us understand both the refusal to sign the Statutory Charter (as was seen in the previous chapter), and outright resistance masquerading as ambivalence with respect to labor in the post emancipation period.

Palmyra Plantation

John Quitman acquired Palmyra Plantation in 1824, when he married his wife, Eliza Turner, a daughter of one of Mississippi’s most prestigious families. With hopes of fully owning one of the “finest estates” on the Mississippi River, he bought out Eliza’s siblings’ shares of the plantation in 1842 for \$200,000, which included “230 slaves and .

²⁵ See this discussed in Jeffrey Burds, *Peasant Dreams and Market Politics: Labor Migration and the Russian Village, 1861-1905* (Pittsburg, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1998), pp. 2-10. Boris Mironov also delineates the historiographical discussion in “The Russian Peasant Commune after the Reforms of the 1860’s” *Slavic Review* 44:3 (Fall, 1985), pp. 438-467.

²⁶ Mironov, *op. cit.*; and in *The Russian Peasantry: The World the Peasants Made* (London, UK: Addison Wesley Longman, 1999), p. 343, David Moon also holds that the reforms reinforced the peasants’ communal relations and attachment to the land. See his *The Russian Peasantry: The World the Peasants Made* (London, UK: Addison Wesley Longman, 1999). See also “The Peasant Commune in Russia: Rural Anarchy and Feudal Socialism” by M. Raphael Johnson in *NAMS-UK (National-Anarchist Movement Shropshire)* (Saturday, 7 January 2012).

.60 head of cattle.”²⁷ Cotton was so abundant at Palmyra that one visitor in 1845 doubted “very much whether the planters will be able to pick it all.”²⁸ Spreading over 2,500 acres of land, plowing required the use of 50 two-mule teams a year.²⁹ Palmyra had its own cotton gin, press, and saw mill, and marketed cotton in bulk. Abundant in wooded areas, Palmyra sold processed timber to river steamers from its own landing. It was also an integral part of the Quitman web of plantations, whereby products, tools, supplies, and slaves were exchanged, swapped, and moved around according to need and demand.³⁰ Tables 4.1 and 4.2 contain a number of categories which illustrate that Palmyra was a significant economic player before the war. The most telling figures are in bold.

Between his military, political, and business interests, John Quitman was in constant motion. A number of overseers managed the demesne over the years. It seems most of these were “semiliterates,” whom Quitman “accorded little respect.” His letters indicate that they were a constant source of stress and disappointment. On the contrary, Lovell would hire an overseer of sorts after the war, with whom he was well pleased.

With respect to his slaves, Quitman was a paternalistic master. As an absentee planter, his letters include frequent pleas to Eliza to be patient, permissive, and kind with the slaves. He fired an overseer in 1853 for being too “severe” with them. The slaves’ quarters consisted of a main path behind the big house, which was “neatly lined” with

²⁷ May, *Quitman*, p. 111.

²⁸ James T. Currie, *Enclave: Vicksburg and Her Plantations, 1863-1870* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 1980), p. 85.

²⁹ May, *Quitman*, p. 131.

³⁰ *Ibid.*

“whitewashed” homes. Evidently they had gardens and chicken coops, since Quitman frequently purchased fowl and other products from them. A number of individuals were with the Quitmans for many years, including before emancipation as slaves and afterwards as free people. A few Quitman descendents left provisions for them in their wills. This is an important distinction from Vasili Yazikov, who, not only did no such thing, but did not even mention his own children in his will. It is also an example of paternalism, a quintessential characteristic of the upper echelon of 19th century American society. Alternatively, although freed Americans could well have had fondness for their former masters, the ease with which they fled once the traditional sources of authority were weakened when the war broke out both shocked the planter class and demonstrated that the ties that bound them together were weak. While there is no evidence that suggests Vasili Yazikov considered that he had a close relationship with any of his former “people,” this does not mean that he did not. However, that he made no provision in his will for any of them is notable.³¹

The Quitman/Lovell family’s slaves frequently ran away and, when the war broke out, many fled both Palmyra and the mansion in Natchez, Monmouth. Eventually some returned, and became wage laborers, hired for a specific task or as help on a weekly or monthly basis. Years later, by the turn of the century, some even purchased a few plots of land at Monmouth from Quitman descendents. This fluidity contrasts sharply with the peasants of Yazikovo Selo, who remained at the estate for the duration of the period under study and beyond. To this day, while Yazikovo Selo’s inhabitants are direct descendents of the freed people there, there is no trace of the Yazikov noble family in all

³¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 131-139.

of Simbirsk Province. Conversely, today Davis Bend is bereft of any evidence of the plantation society that once thrived there. It is an inaccessible swamp infested with alligators and snakes.

Although various members of the Quitman family had fond feelings for their slaves, they also exhibited stereotypical attitudes toward their “people” which were based on both their race and their condition.³² On the one hand, this was no different from how the elites viewed the serfs on estates like Yazikovo Selo. Shared beliefs in each society considered the subaltern groups as simple, naturally lazy, childlike, and careless. On the other hand, the racial component as well as their ancestral origin meant that the slaves at Palmyra had an experience distinct from their Russian counterpart. Based on tradition, as well as the fact that there was an idea embedded in the emancipation legislation that former serfs were entitled to land allotments, the peasants could lay claim to the land at Yazikovo Selo. True, the freed peoples in the American South did argue that because they had tilled the soil, they were entitled to land earmarks. But both the specter and reality of being sold away from the plantation during the days of slavery meant that feelings of attachment to the actual land where they had lived and worked were, at best, more nuanced: they may well have had feelings of attachment to the demesne, but the freed people evidently shared with their American countrymen the values of freedom of movement, owning land, and earning a living based on one’s labor.

In the previous chapter I explained what happened at Palmyra during the Home Colony period. Because of Union supervision, the liberated people at Palmyra arguably fared better than those elsewhere who were vulnerable to the war’s effects. Still,

³² *Ibid.*, p. 144.

although they were “liberated,” the former slaves there were hardly “free.” In order to ensure the experiment’s viability and maintain order, Union overseers instated rations, rules, and regulations. No one was allowed to leave the premises. And all were compelled to contract with the authorities. This is where I identified parity with what officials in Russia were trying to accomplish with respect to the conditions imposed by the emancipation legislation on estates. One significant difference was that, while at Davis Bend the former slaves worked for both sustenance and a meager remittance because they faced eviction, at Yazikovo Selo the liberated people resisted because they could not be dispossessed of their homes.

During the Home Colony period, the groundwork was laid for what free labor would look like in this region after the war, specifically, wage labor and the labor contract. Ronald L.F. Davis has informed us that the U.S. Army played a key role in setting in motion the transition from slavery to sharecropping, and therefore created the guidelines for the freed people’s treatment during and after the war. The Union forces put liberated/refugeed slaves to work in gangs in the cotton fields for subsistence wages and rations. They also sought to “educate” the freed people about the binding nature of the “contract,” as well as “good and faithful” labor. Officials viewed wages as the perfect incentive as they could be garnished for disobedience, insolence, and time lost to illness or feet dragging; they could be paid in set portions, on a monthly basis, thereby having the element of withholding the incentive until the job was complete; and, it was believed, wages built into a labor contract had the salutary effect of “teaching” the freed people to learn to negotiate to their best advantage. Independence, not charity, was the goal. Due to the near absence of cash in the agrarian, war torn South; the need for securing labor for

the entire season; and widespread exploitation of the freed people (by both Northern lessees and Southern planters), Union officials came to embrace and promote annual/seasonal contracting, which evolved into a variety of forms and/or a combination of those: these included (both verbally but ideally written) contracting for monthly wages, wages plus board, tenancy (or rent) in exchange for work (with the laborer keeping all or part of his/her produce), and full sharecropping – the “cropper’s” share rather than income being “pay,” or the cropper’s profit being that which remained after he/she handed over the crop amount to the land owner for tenancy and land rent. Falling cotton prices meant that both planters/managers and the freed people came to prefer one form of sharecropping over wages (as the drop in cotton prices depressed wages).³³

When the Quitman Lovell family recovered Palmyra after the war’s conclusion, the real tests for freedom and free labor began. Throughout the South, many longed for a return to normality, and William Storrow Lovell wasted no time.

³³ See Ronald L. F. Davis, “The U.S. Army and the Origins of Sharecropping in the Natchez District – A Case Study” *Journal of Negro History* 62:1 (January, 1977), pp. 60-80 and his *Good and Faithful Labor: From Slavery to Sharecropping the Natchez District, 1860-1890* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1982), p. 5. See also “The Wartime Genesis of Free Labor, 1861-1865” in *Slaves No More: Three Essays on Emancipation and the Civil War* by Ira Berlin, et. al., (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 77-186; Lawrence L. Powell, *New Masters: Northern Planters During the Civil War and Reconstruction* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1980), p. 84; and Amy Dru Stanley, *From Bondage to Contract: Wage Labor, Marriage, and the Market in the Age of Slave Emancipation* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1998), Chapters 1, 2, and 3 in particular. Stanley pays close attention to the shift from dependency during slavery, to dependency that wage labor instated.

Contextual Realities: Economic Outlook, Culture, and *Mentalites*

Identifying the relationship between a demesne (such as Yazikovo Selo and Palmyra Plantation) and a national (or regional) economy is crucial to understanding both its “personality” and what played out there in the post-emancipation period. A number of contextual realities in both Russia and the American South affected the overall situation at Yazikovo Selo and Palmyra Plantation after emancipation. First a note about sources and their interpretation: Unlike the American case, where tax and census documentation and diaries and plantation records exist which provide much information, gauging one Russian estate’s relationship, such as Yazikovo Selo’s, to the national economy is tricky. As Carol Leonard has explained, because the first Agricultural Census in Russia occurred in 1881, it is difficult to ascertain and measure with precision the economic situation anywhere in Russia between 1861 and 1881. Quoting a Russian bureaucrat writing in 1869, Leonard noted: “the amount of land under crops is unknown; exacting and well defined household surveys do not exist, . . . , therefore, the evidence collected by committees for the public supply of food can be accepted only with extreme caution. . . .” Furthermore, one of a number of historians who have addressed the near absence of thorough records on agricultural and industrial production and trade during this period, Arcadius Kahan, has stressed that up to the revolution in 1905, whatever political or economic decisions the Russian government made, it went without saying that the agricultural sector was the source of all funding. Beyond this it is impossible to discern a consistent pattern associated with government agricultural policies.³⁴

³⁴ Carol S. Leonard, “Agricultural Productivity Growth in Russia, 1861-1912: From Inertia to Ferment” in *Growth and Stagnation in European Historical Agriculture (Rural History in Europe)* M. Olsson and P. Svennson, eds., (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols

This notwithstanding, drawing on a number of sources and contextual pieces of information, there are some things that we do know. For example, the end of the Crimean War signaled a drop in wool requisitions. Because wool factories like the one at Yazikovo Selo largely depended on government requisitions, the decline in the latter obviously had an impact on production. Requisitions did not begin to rise again until the eve of the Russo-Turkish War (1877-1878). This coincided with Vasili's sale of the factory to Stepanov.³⁵

Another reality which impacted the economic outlook after 1861 was the fact that emancipation signaled an end to unfree labor. Historiography has stressed that the inability of landowners to rely on unfree labor explains the “declension” of the Russian

Publishers, 2011), pp. 249-263, accessed online 2 January 2010 and November 8, 2012 http://www.rees.ox.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0016/35053/Productivity_CSL_Jan_2010.pdf In the first ten pages of the article Leonard provides an outstanding historiographical overview of the “crisis” vs. “declension” vs. “productivity” arguments regarding agricultural production in the post emancipation period. See also, Arcadius Kahan, *The Plow, the Hammer and the Knout: an Economic History of Eighteenth Century Russia* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1985), pp. 11-12; Moon, *Peasantry*, Chapter 4, pp. 118-155, and p. 118 specifically.

³⁵ Kahan, *Ibid.*, pp. 101 and 104; and Lipinskiy, *Materialy*, pp. 192-202. On the eve of emancipation the entire Middle Volga River corridor could boast approximately 100 estate wool factories. These could be divided roughly into three categories: one that consisted of those factories that had emerged as part of the first wave when the government spearheaded the plan. These approximated about 60% of Simbirsk's factories and 43% of its factory workers. For the most part, they were outmoded. The second category consisted of those of average size, representing about 17% of the province's factories. These were part of the wave that emerged on the eve of the Crimean War. The factory at Yazikovo Selo clearly fell into this category. Above all, the factories in groups one and two were completely dependent on requisitions. The third category consisted of the largest and newest factories and could well be run by merchants who invested in their enterprises.

estate in the post-emancipation period.³⁶ This carries weight. However, while ten factories in Simbirsk Province closed in 1861, the one at Yazikovo Selo remained open. Many estates, both in Russia in general and Simbirsk Province in particular, including the one at Yazikovo Selo, had *barshchina* labor built into the mandatory obligations itemized in the Statutory Charter.³⁷ Moreover, because the *Regulations* mandated that *barshchina* obligations be no more than 40 days per year, it is plausible that this would further explain the apparent stagnation of production and productivity at Yazikovo Selo relative to the period before emancipation. (Of course other crucial variables included requisition demand and factory maintenance and reinvestment.)

However, although the peasants had the right after 1863 to request that *barshchina* be converted to *obrok*, the landlord also had the right to renew the former every three years, indefinitely. This helps us understand why Vasili Yazikov's former serfs remained

³⁶ Even Seymour Becker makes a distinction between the nobility and the demesne, arguing that although the nobility did not decline after emancipation, Russia witnessed a decided shift from the rural estates to the urban centers. See *Nobility and Privilege in Late Imperial Russia* (Dekalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1986). For a thoughtful analysis of this issue see Michael Hughes, "The Russian nobility and the Russian countryside: Ambivalences and Orientations," *Journal of European Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 2 (June, 2006), pp. 115-137.

³⁷ The *Regulations (Polozheniia)* specified that *barshchina* obligations could be retained if 1) it had been the main form of obligations before emancipation and 2) the estate owner was entitled to at least one-third of his former lands. Since Vasili Yazikov did retain well more than a third, he could legally impose *barshchina*. See Allan K. Wildman, "The Defining Moment: Land Charters and the Post-Emancipation Agrarian Settlement in Russia, 1861-1863" *The Carl Beck Papers in Russian & East European Studies* No. 1205 (1996), pp. 6-8, and 19; and Interview with Larissa Yershova, Director Literaturnii Muzei Dom Yazikovikh filial Ulyanovskogo Oblastnogo Kraevedcheskogo Muzeiia, Ulyanovsk, Russia, May 31, 2010.

severely limited on *barshchina* until 1881, the year he sold the estate to Stepanov.³⁸ This also demonstrates the technicality that Vasili had a legal right to the former serfs' labor, at the minimum for 40 or 30 days per year, and that he never had the task of even considering wages or any other form of incentives. His "former people" were obligated to *him*. Despite this, many historians have explained that Russian peasants, both *before* emancipation and as "temporarily obligated" people *afterwards*, were far more "productive" under *obrok*.³⁹ In other words, they responded more negatively to *barshchina* obligations. Moreover, if they were "temporarily obligated," peasants could not "seek" employment, as the freed Americans could (at least in theory), since they were attached to the demesne, bound by their obligations there, and, especially, had to get permission from the commune if they wanted to leave. Their condition made it impossible (without securing a pass) to seek work outside of that to which they were assigned, i.e. the demesne.⁴⁰ On the one hand, all this helps us understand the "stagnation on the demesne" theory. On the other hand, because the former serfs were no longer

³⁸ For a brief synopsis of the complicated, technicality strewn terms which the *Regulations* prescribed for *barshchina* labor see Peter A. Zaionchkovsky, *The Abolition of Serfdom in Russia*, Edited and Translated by Susan Wobst (Gulf Breeze, Florida: Academic International Press, 1978), pp. 89-90, and 96. See also interview with Larissa Yershova, *op. cit.*

³⁹ Peter Kolchin, *Unfree Labor: American Slavery and Russian Serfdom* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987), pp. 63-65; and Peter Waldron, *The End of Imperial Russia, 1855-1917* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1997), p. 43-44.

⁴⁰ Hugh Seton-Watson, *The Russian Empire, 1801-1917* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 399-401; Moon, *Peasantry*, Chapter 4: Production, pp. 118-155; Kahan, *Russian Economic History*, Chapter One: The Russian Economy, 1860-1913, pp.1-90; Trofimov, *Zhil i umer*, pp. 84-85; and Andrey Gorovun, "Serfdom and Agricultural Efficiency: Evidence from the Russian Empire," February 2010. The latter is an unpublished work in progress, cited here with permission of the author.

bound to their former master's authority, emancipation provided the means with which they *could* resist working, in the form of either work stoppages or even non-compliance. These are not mutually exclusive explanations.

Conversely, notwithstanding the controls on labor for which, say, the Black Codes in Mississippi were intended, although William Storrow Lovell was determined to resuscitate Palmyra Plantation and may well have *felt* entitled to the freed people's labor, and/or could not conceive of looking to any group of people to work the plantation other than former slaves, the American emancipation legislation neither enshrined nor implied the plantation managers' claim to it. In fact, and as it will be clear in Chapter Five, Lovell initially turned to the norms set forth after March 1865 by the Freedmen's Bureau, namely contract and/or wage labor.⁴¹ Nevertheless, in spite of the fact that the Black Codes were quickly countermanded by federal authorities, in general, policymakers in Washington, D.C. never intended for the lucrative plantation system in the American South to be disrupted. Indeed, a *de facto* policy of "containment" was employed. For example, Adjutant-General Lorenzo Thomas, who had been stationed in the Mississippi River Valley region since 1863 and was in charge of the freed people there, explained "You cannot send them North. You all know the prejudices of the Northern people against receiving large numbers of the colored race. . . . [the plantations in the Mississippi River valley] are the places for those freedmen where they can be self-sustaining and self-supporting."⁴²

⁴¹ See footnote #33 above.

⁴² "Containment," in both *de jure* and *de facto* forms, is the subject of Gene Dattel's *Cotton and Race in the Making of America: The Human Costs of Economic Power* (Lanham, MD: Ivan R. Dee, 2009). For quote see pp. 211-212. For a detailed

Other realities, both national and international, proved that there was uncertainty about Russia's general economic picture in the 1860s. It is reasonable to assume that because of its expansive agricultural economy, Russia had the potential in the post-emancipation period to become a powerhouse in terms of grain exports to Europe and beyond. But this did not happen because of the near absence of logistics, such as a financial infrastructure and geographic transportation. In fact, the United States came to enjoy a boom in agricultural exports to Europe, filling the void which Russia either failed, or was unable, to fill. Indeed, Russia's decline in agricultural exports was proportional to America's increase.⁴³

Grappling with the impact of emancipation on economic productivity, Peter Gatrell has asserted that that the first several years after emancipation present a "disturbed picture," especially when compared with the real "take-off" period towards the end of the century. "Industry was thrown into confusion by the emancipation of unfree labor. . . .Capital investment and exports also behaved disappointingly," all "reflecting uncertainties." Above all, Daniel Field has made a critical contribution to understanding

discussion see Chapter Five. See also Stephen Cresswell, *Rednecks, Redeemers, and Race: Mississippi after Reconstruction, 1877-1917* (Jackson, MS: University Press of Mississippi, 2006), Chapter 3, "The Persistent Institution: *Black Labor and Race Control*," pp. 37-51; Powell, *op. cit.*, pp. 2-3, 38, and *passim*; and Louis S. Gerteis, *From Contraband to Freedman: Federal Policy Toward Southern Blacks, 1861-1865* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, Inc., 1973), pp. 122-123. In "The U.S. Army. . ." Ronald L. F. Davis suggests that it was his stint in Natchez before the war that explains General Lorenzo Thomas's sympathy for the planter elite during the war and afterwards. He was on a "first-name basis" with the "rebel planters." And Lawrence Powell describes the General as being very "obliging," and quotes him saying about the local planters, that he was "happy" to see his "old friends and talk of days gone by," and he was ready to do anything "to help his old friends out." See Powell, *op. cit.*, pp. 46-47.

⁴³ For a brief but solid understanding of this issue refer to Anatole G. Mazour, "Economic Decline of Landlordism in Russia," *Historian* 8:2 (Spring, 1946), pp. 156-162.

Russia and its economy in the immediate post-emancipation experience. It is worth quoting him at length:

The abolition of serfdom regulated and systematized more than it changed. . . .Because the reform deliberately perpetuated so many of the social and economic characteristics of serfdom, it may be that the regime was indulging in wishful thinking or placing hopes in the power of words, supposing that great benefits must accrue simply because it had found the courage to declare that serfdom. . . .was abolished. . . .The [emancipation legislation] could not and did not provide a great, immediate stimulus to economic development. The tsar and his advisers feared chaos more than they wanted progress. So the reform produced an imposed stability, . . .⁴⁴

The near absence of credit and cash in the economy was a reality which adversely impacted the viability of factories and agricultural production on Russian estates in the post-emancipation period. The Treasury relocated funds to railroad and steamer development and away from credit available to the nobility. Ironically, one of the purposes of this shift in policy was to aid both industrial and agricultural production on rural estates, since railroads would greatly assist the delivery of products to markets.⁴⁵ In addition to this, there was a general lack of cash in circulation.⁴⁶ These problems with

⁴⁴ Peter Gatrell, "The Meaning of the Great Reforms in Russian Economic History" in *Russia's Great Reforms, 1855-1881* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994), pp. 84-101, eds., Ben Eklof, et.al. Gatrell notes that in the 1860s and 1870s production stagnated. See pp. 88 and 90. For the Daniel Field quote, see his "The Year of Jubilee" also in Eklof, et.al., *Ibid.*, pp. 40-57, and specifically p. 53.

⁴⁵ Murashov, "Provintsial'noe dvoryanstvo," p. 178.

⁴⁶ See Hoch, "Banking Crisis;" Mazour, "Economic Decline;" Murashov, *Ibid.*, pp. 181-182; and Richard Pipes, *Russia Under the Old Regime* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1974, p. 207.

capital availability made it difficult for the estate manager to maintain, let alone modernize a demesne in the post emancipation period.

Dmitri Murashov has detailed the logistical complications associated with operating a demesne *after* emancipation but *before* the real “take-off” period of economic modernization in Russia, which was roughly 1880-1910. Already in debt before emancipation, noble landowners were hamshackled by the constriction of credit available to them afterwards. In addition, the near absence of circulating cash was especially problematic for those former serfs such as house servants, cooks, doormen, butlers, gardeners, and the like. As part of the category of non-field workers, they were not entitled to land. Therefore, many disappeared from estate operation since noblemen could not, or would not pay them wages. This notwithstanding, noblemen did not so much adjust their extravagant lifestyles, but continued to look for ways to borrow both money and time. In 1864, 75% of Simbirsk Province’s estates had been remortgaged, a 25% increase over 1855. On the estates where there were factories, all were in decline with the exception of vodka plants. Land owners were not accustomed to entrepreneurialism. “Negotiating” was not in their DNA. They were risk averse, and relied on bureaucratic measures for guidance. Nor could they imagine challenging the peasants’ age old methods of tilling the land. It appears that in the post-emancipation period the nobility was caught between its lack of concern for costs and expenses, and the nascent economic system which could not accommodate economic initiative.

As for the peasants, in February 1861, they first faced the Statutory Charter which imposed land allotments. Until a redemption payment schedule was instated, the peasants were temporarily obligated. But the peasants were not inclined to reach an

agreement for a number of reasons: they considered the arrangement fundamentally unjust if not a devious trick to cheat them out of their land which they considered rightfully theirs; and they knew they could not possibly pay for it. In addition, now that they had to supply and use their own materials, the peasants privileged their own garden plots over work for their former master on the land allotments. And it was not just a matter of one seasonal sowing period annually. In Russia, the agricultural year consisted of several sowing and harvesting seasons depending on the variety of crops such as barley (Spring), wheat (Summer), or beets and cabbage (Fall). All this said, it is little wonder they were, at best, ambivalent with respect to their obligations, and outright hostile at worst. Indeed, the passive tactic of work slowdown is a classic form of everyday resistance for peasants.⁴⁷

Murashov explains that many Russians believed a new economic era would soon begin in which money would be the common denominator, and that there was a prevailing idea that the old order was over. But that era had not yet arrived. In the meantime, the 1860s was a period of agricultural barrenness. Even where the soil was good and a harvest was produced, getting it to market was difficult and uncertain. Mechanized threshers and fanners were heard of and, sometimes, available. But the technical expertise to operate and repair them was not. Railroad improvements were anticipated, but they only became a reality by the late 1870s. Thus, rather than doing

⁴⁷ See James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987).

nothing, noble landowners began renting and selling estates to merchants.⁴⁸ This is exactly what Vasili Yazikov did.

In general, a comparison can be made between the economies of the American South and Russia. Both were largely rural and, at best, just on the cusp of modernization. Like the middle Volga River region, the Mississippi River Delta area seemed to be locked in time, trapped in the inertia of its past, and devoid of access to modern methods such as mechanization, scientific techniques, and fertilizers, all of which are geared towards maximizing efficiency and returns. Similar to Murashov's study, which details the nuances and particularities associated with the logistical difficulties of modernization in the middle Volga region, Stephen Cresswell has explained the economic realities in Mississippi in the second half of the 19th century. On the eve of the Civil War, when Mississippi plantations were essentially self-supporting, intricately connected to the economic infrastructure assisting cotton, enjoying slave labor, and practicing some diversification (such as corn crops, cattle, and the like), the state, as a producer of 1.2 million bales of cotton, was first in the nation in 1860. Notwithstanding the marked drop in the price of cotton over the course of the post-emancipation period (see Table 4.3), Mississippi remained stalwart, producing 960,000 bales in 1880. Still, by 1880 there was little if any mechanization, and cash flow and credit problems were rampant. For

⁴⁸ Murashov, "Provintsial'noe dvoryanstvo," pp. 169-181. See also "Everyday Forms of Resistance: Serf Opposition to Gentry Exactions, 1800-1861" by Rodney Bohac in *Peasant Economy, Culture, and Politics of European Russia, 1800-1921* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), Esther Kingston-Mann and Timothy Mixer, eds., pp. 236-260, especially pp. 237-238; and Burds, *Peasant Dreams*, Chapter 1 "The Roots of Ambivalence," pp. 17-39. Steven Hoch's "Banking Crisis" is an important study which explains the complicated and bewildering structural problems in the financial side of the Russian economy.

example, while planters may well have been drawn to the idea of a mechanized cotton harvester, which was developed as early as 1850, it was not commonly available until the 1940s. But even if it had been readily available, cash and credit were difficult to come by. And even if a planter could secure a loan to purchase a harvester, taking this step would have been a gamble he would have been hard-pressed to make given the realities of planting: in this region floods and the army worm could turn a good crop into an unmitigated disaster overnight. Furthermore, even if a planter had purchased one of the earliest models, the harvester would still have needed to have been pulled by draft animals since tractors were still in short supply. These examples illustrate the many loose links in the chain of modernization. “[F]rom Appomattox to the Great Depression, cotton culture,” remained “fixed in time.”⁴⁹ All this said, while both the Mississippi River Delta and the middle Volga River regions were backward, the former, which thrived economically, was dissimilar from the latter, which was marked by stagnation.

In addition to understanding the complex institutional, structural, and traditional realities associated with the economic viability at Yazikovo Selo and Palmyra Plantation, it is also important to understand several distinctions between the demesnes in this study, all closely related and reciprocally reinforcing. The first has to do with each demesne’s *raison d’etre*, or orientation. The second has to do with the *mentalite* of each demesne’s patriarch. The third has to do with the consciousness of the unfree. With respect to the

⁴⁹ Cresswell, *Rednecks*, pp. 1-13; and Neil R. McMillen, *Black Mississippians in the Age of Jim Crow* (Champaign, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1989), p. 150. It is true that after 1865, over time, the American South’s elite contracted and wealth was concentrated in fewer hands. In this regard, this factual trend and historiographic topic is similar to the Becker thesis with respect to the Russian nobility. See Wayne, *Reshaping of Plantation Society*; and Becker, *Nobility and Privilege*.

first, most if not all Russian estates, and certainly the Yazikov properties in Simbirsk Province, originated as “gifts” made to the nobility by the autocrat, in the Yazikov family’s case in the 17th century, for the purposes of rewarding service and ensuring it in the future, as well as expanding Russia’s territory via anchoring populations of loyal subjects to it. While it is true that in the first half of the 19th century, during the early republic, waves of often poor American migrants voluntarily went to the frontier southwest, thus effectively settling territory that had either already been earmarked by the United States government or would soon be, it is clear they were claiming land for the purposes of creating identity, securing socio-economic upward mobility, and participating in and expressing their interpretation of individual freedom which the revolution set in motion.⁵⁰ Insofar as he was a man who came from nothing, migrated to Natchez, married into “nabob” culture, and blended the management of extensive properties with local and national political participation, Palmyra Plantation’s patriarch John Quitman was a perfect example of the phenomenon of migrating westward in order to self improve, both socially and financially.

But Russian estates and American plantations were fundamentally different, and Yazikovo Selo and Palmyra Plantation exemplified this. While the latter was, in and of itself, a unit of primarily cotton production, intricately connected to the regional and larger market grid supporting that lucrative cash crop, the former was an isolated, self contained, closed community determined by and dependent on both a distant tsarist policy and the whim of its landlord. Moreover, while it comprised peasant households

⁵⁰ See Joyce Appleby, *Inheriting the Revolution: The First Generation of Americans* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2000).

that were the units of production, the peasants' agricultural way of life was not a business geared towards profit, but rather subsistence and tradition.⁵¹ Although there was a similarity between the two, in that Yazikovo Selo had a "factory enterprise" and Palmyra had its own cotton gin, unlike the former, the latter was a money-making enterprise. And while Palmyra was essentially self-supporting, with a variety of crops, livestock, and gardens, Yazikovo Selo's inhabitants were dependent on other Yazikov properties for sustenance.⁵² In the post-emancipation period, both the Russian and American legislation pertaining to the freed peoples appears to have *reinforced* those distinctions between Yazikovo Selo and Palmyra Plantation. While Palmyra continued as a capitalist enterprise after emancipation, the peasant village community continued to be the primary characteristic of Yazikov Selo.

The topic of *mentalite* can be tricky.⁵³ Suffice it to say that while in the pre-emancipation period, both demesnes' patriarchs exhibited paternalistic characteristics and habits with respect to their "people," later, in the post-emancipation period, the impulses

⁵¹ Moon, *Russian Peasantry*, p. 118. For understanding distinctions between "farmers" who are profit focused and peasants who are bound by routine and tradition see both *The Little Community* and *Peasant Society and Culture* (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1989), pp. 18-19 of the latter, by Robert Redfield.

⁵² For a description of Palmyra Plantation see Chapter 11 "Patriarch of a Plantation World" in May, *Quitman*, pp. 130-146. Yazikovo Selo was dependent on other Yazikov properties for food and supplies. See Mikhail Sergeievich Sudarev, "Nachalo" *Monomakh* #2 (2003), pp. 8-12; and Interview with historian Larissa Yershova, *op. cit.*

⁵³ The history of *mentalites* is an approach to history originating with the *Annales School* which considers the attitudes, mindset, and/or worldview over time of cultural and/or social groups. While generalizations can be made, they can be problematic and even controversial because, by definition, they categorize and make assumptions about individuals based on their social, economic, and/or political group, and at the end of the day one can never really be certain about what is in the mind of an individual. This notwithstanding, it is a useful category of analysis.

of formal political participation and paternalism at Palmyra may well have receded, if not vanished, but these persisted at Yazikovo Selo, as they did on many Russian estates. In a society where one's station in life was rigid, patron-client practices, if not paternalism, and service were part and parcel of the nobility's profile. Whereas William Storrow Lovell's ambition was to manage a plantation, Vasili Yazikov was neither "programmed" for, nor interested in "developing" or "modernizing" Yazikovo Selo. Furthermore, it is worth considering that the "mobility vs. immobility" theme in this comparative study played a role respectively in perpetuating vs. suppressing paternalism. That is, whereas the peasant village community and Vasili's presence at the village remained, at Palmyra, the constant turnover of laborers weakened, if not broke, a paternalistic impulse on the part of the landlord. Embedded in this analysis is a consideration of the potential conflict between paternalism and "modernization." Conversely, paternalism appears to be more entrenched in societies where the social, class, or *estate* system is more rigid and where there is less in and out migration.⁵⁴

A contrast between the Russian peasants and their American counterparts is also instructive. On the one hand it can be useful to discuss Russian society in terms of its *estate (soslovie)* structure, which can loosely be compared to the social stratification in the antebellum South. On the other hand, while Imperial Russia can be described as being one great demesne with the tsar as its landlord, at the local level Russia comprised

⁵⁴ In *Unfree Labor*, pp.60-61 and Chapter 2: "Planters, Pomeschiki, and Paternalism," pp. 103-156, Peter Kolchin explains that in many ways the absenteeist noble landlord may well have been less paternalistic than southern planters under serfdom and slavery. However, gauging the presence of paternalism in the context of emancipation, as well as in an absenteeist vs. resident landlord scenario is complicated as there are certainly exceptions to overall general findings.

villages that were essentially semi-autonomous, self-contained entities, where each individual peasant was subordinated to the power and peer pressure of the community. It is a debated topic among historians whether the Russian emancipation legislation reinforced this arrangement, which, arguably, repressed or arrested individual initiative. In other words, if all are responsible, no one individual is; if one does not work, why would the others, especially when neither could they be evicted from their homes nor dispossessed of their garden plots, per the terms of the emancipation legislation?⁵⁵

While the slave system on American plantations may well have included both formal and informal hierarchies of authority (such as gang leaders or drivers in the field for the former, and a rank or a pecking order because of age, occupation, gender, or association with the master class for the latter), as well as tightly knit communities, the freed people had limited, or no experience with a formal, structural, institutional, authoritarian

⁵⁵ This is discussed in great length in Burds, *Peasant Dreams; Making Peasants Backward: Agricultural Cooperatives and the Agrarian Question in Russia, 1861-1914* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1999) by Yanni Kotsonis; Wildman, "Defining Moment," pp. 6-7; and *The End of Imperial Russia, 1855-1917* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1997), "Chapter 2: Field and Factory: The Russian Economy" by Peter Waldron. The "commune" thesis does not assert that Russian peasants were precluded from, or incapable of individual agency or contingency. It does assert that any typical individual effort had to be cleared by the commune's elders, and that the elders had an interest in suppressing younger commune members' initiative. Long ago Hugh Seton-Watson made the observation that, unlike the progressive, liberal, socio-political tradition in Western Europe and America, which produced historical stages in which a new group of people entered the fold of social and political privileges and participation, in Russia, barring the autocrat and the elites, the prevailing view had always been if all cannot have the same, none should have any privileges or rights. See Seton-Watson, *Russian Empire*, p. 353. Recently, the research of Tracy Dennison and Steven Nafziger has challenged the "traditional, closed society" and "all for one and one for all" paradigms. See "Economy and Society in Rural Russia: The Serf Estate of Voshenazhnikovo, 1750-1860," *The Journal of Economic History* 65:2 (June, 2005), pp. 536-359, and "Micro Perspectives on Russian Living Standards, 1750-1917" *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 42:3 (2013), pp. 397-441. The critical caveat on which their thesis hinges is that individual initiative depended on the liberalness of the estate owner.

construct of intra-social organization such as that grafted onto the demesne in the post-emancipation period, nor with one that was so closely contained. Although the American freed people had strong ties of kinship and solidarity with their brethren, historians have stressed that two of the most significant ways they expressed their freedom after emancipation was in their mobility (when, for example, they searched for lost relatives and/or sought to establish nuclear families), and they set up living arrangements which were dissimilar to the days of slavery. (Often the physical and social cohesiveness of the slave community disappeared as the houses in the “quarters” were dismantled and relocated as dispersed, individual tenant homes.) Indeed, there was more mobility to and from the plantation at Davis Bend both during and after the war. Then, after the Quitman/Lovell recovery, the demesne witnessed a steady injection of hired hands every year, for years. Emancipation also led to a strong “separatist” impulse among the American freed people in that they preferred to live in communities set well apart from the plantation, composed of their own churches, schools, stores, and the like.⁵⁶ On the

⁵⁶ As for the “mobility” theme, one historian has characterized this as “scattering.” See Willis, *Forgotten Time*, p. 43; and Wharton, *Negro in Mississippi*, p. 126. As for schools, churches, and stores, and other sinews of community after emancipation, see Peter Kolchin, *First Freedom: The Responses of Alabama’s Blacks to Emancipation and Reconstruction* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1972); Leon F. Litwack, *Been in the Storm So Long: The Aftermath of Slavery* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1980); Eric Foner, *Reconstruction: America’s Unfinished Revolution, 1863-1877* (New York, NY: Harper & Row Publishers, 1988); and Lawrence L. Powell, *New Masters: Northern Planters During the Civil War and Reconstruction* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1980), especially pp. 119 and 135. The case could also be made that, while the Russian peasants physically remained on the estate, they could possess very strong sensibilities of “separateness” *vis-à-vis* their former master and other authorities. Broadly speaking, with respect to the slave community on the antebellum plantation, W.E.B. DuBois and Kenneth Stampp argued the traditional view that the institution arrested a community. John Blassingame, Eugene Genovese, and Herbert Gutman challenged this by identifying a thriving community on the demesne. Peter Kolchin has explained that while slavery absolutely damaged the development of a sustained cohesive

one hand, in so far the American freed people sought mobility in search of both loved ones and work, emancipation weakened community cohesiveness. On the other, in their desire to seek distance from the authorities and whites in general, the freed people sought to craft their own communities on their own terms, emancipation strengthened community cohesiveness. Above all, the freed people possessed a consciousness in which they identified with each other on a fundamental level because of their shared race, history of being enslaved, and African roots.⁵⁷ The town of Mound Bayou, Mississippi offers a perfect illustration. It was founded in 1887 by many former slaves who had been permanent residents on Davis Bend during both the pre- and the post-emancipation periods. To this day Mound Bayou comprises approximately 1,500 inhabitants who are direct descendents.⁵⁸

As for Palmyra Plantation in the post-emancipation period, it had a small subgroup of freed people who had lived there as slaves, and continued to live in the former slave quarters there. But it also witnessed an annual turnover of laborers who were hired from labor factors (or agents) in New Orleans by Lovell on the eve of each planting season's

community, American slaves nevertheless fashioned one. See W.E.B. DuBois, *The Negro American Family* (New York, NY: Negro Universities Press, 1908); Kenneth M. Stampp, *The Era of Reconstruction, 1865-1877* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 1966); John Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1972); Eugene Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 1974); Herbert G. Gutman, *The Black Family in Slavery and Freedom, 1750-1925* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1976); and Peter Kolchin, *American Slavery, 1619-1877* (New York, NY: Hill and Wang, 1993).

⁵⁷ See "Of Our Spiritual Strivings" in W.E.B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York, NY: Cosimo, Inc., 1903), pp. 7-15.

⁵⁸ For an account of the town's founding see Chapter 7: "Mound Bayou" in Hermann, *Pursuit*, pp. 219-245.

commencement. Although it is true that, like all Russian peasants, the freed people at Yazikovo Selo left the village to go to the local markets, bazaars, festivals, and the like, Palmyra Plantation had a far more fluid and mobile community of former slaves. And while it is correct that the seasonal hands at Palmyra were “attached” to the demesne for the term, in no way did they consider the plantation their permanent home, as the annual turnover rate suggests. Of course these characteristics impacted the integrity of “community” on each demesne – it being far more intact at Yazikovo Selo, than at Palmyra. This also helps explain the more uniform and consistent “neglect” of work at Yazikovo Selo.

The contextual realities of the post-emancipation South proved to be difficult and represented a period of adjustment of both the cotton economy and the relationship between planter and laborer. With respect to the latter, C. Vann Woodward noted that it represented “a . . . withdrawal of master and slave from obligations of the old allegiance: duties on the one side, responsibilities on the other” to a more formal and impersonal relationship between employers and employees in a free market system. This was easier said than done, as Michael Wayne has explained, since both planter and freedman brought “attitudes to the marketplace that inhibit[ed] immediate. . . change.”⁵⁹ Indeed, this new relationship was a tenuous one, based on mutual dependency: the new planter counted on laborers to make the plantation viable, and the freed people depended on labor for sustenance. However, as the above discussion regarding the general situation in Russia as well as the specific one at Yazikovo Selo illustrated, in the post-emancipation

⁵⁹ C. Vann Woodward, *American Counterpoint: Slavery and Racism in the North-South Dialogue* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, 1971), p. 252; and Wayne, *Reshaping of Plantation Society*, p. 110.

period this was not the case. Vasili Yazikov did not have the task of thinking about and planning for the seasonal labor cycle every year, for years as William Storrow Lovell did. Moreover, Vasili Yazikov was not fixated on the problem of how to make Yazikovo Selo operate more efficiently. All this notwithstanding, to be sure, both Russia and the American South faced the same labor question after emancipation: who would work for whom and under what terms?

The economic “adjustment” period in the Mississippi River delta region involved a number of dynamics. Cash and credit were in short supply.⁶⁰ When the war ended the region was almost devoid of liquid assets. The paper currency used locally during the war was worthless. “Railroad notes” and “cotton money,” which Mississippi had issued during the war, were also useless. While merchants and planters in river counties could have access to Union greenbacks, these were not reliably available everywhere. Gold and silver specie had been driven out by the war. Those people who hoarded money during the war continued to cling to it amid the economic uncertainties. While both new railroad and cotton notes were authorized for redemption by the legislature throughout the period of Reconstruction, the problem was a matter of establishing a reliable, accessible, and stable currency, which the notes were not. Finally, while the nation’s banking system had been overhauled during the war, it was not yet integrated into the yet to be reconstructed states, such as Mississippi.

⁶⁰ See Chapter 9 “Problems of Agricultural Recovery” in William C. Harris, *Presidential Reconstruction in Mississippi* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1967), pp. 154-185, which details the utter chaos with respect to cash and credit issues. See also George L. Anderson, “The South and Problems of Post-Civil War Finance” *The Journal of Southern History* 9:2 (May, 1943), pp. 181-195; and Theodore Saloutos, “Southern Agriculture and the Problems of Readjustment: 1865-1877” *Agricultural History* 30:2 (April, 1956), pp. 58-76.

Securing a labor force was imperative for planters. Unlike the days of slavery, it was something that now became a central feature of preparing for the planting season, every year, for years. As always, planters faced the vagaries of weather, floods, and crop plagues. And, as they prepared for the 1866 season, planters experimented with diversified crops and produce. Often cotton was supplemented with less labor intensive pursuits such as corn, cattle, and hay hauling.

Anxious to begin a new life, the freed people had in their sights the ideal of land ownership. Realistically, however, survival was immediate. Therefore, unlike their Russian counterpart, which was assigned labor obligations (whether in the form of a temporary obligated status or in that of working to pay for the land which had been earmarked for them), the American freed people came to prefer temporary work in the form of either weekly, or monthly, or, at the most, seasonal contracting, either verbal or written. In addition, while many American freed people initially preferred the Northern form of compensation, i.e. monetary, as it afforded them an opportunity to at least try to save money to purchase land, the realities of both cash shortages and low wages meant that this form of pay could never make land ownership possible. Moreover, the Mississippi Black Codes forbade, albeit briefly, the sale of real property to freedmen. This was another reality with which they had to contend.⁶¹ Also, cash and credit shortages meant that the crucial component in any monetary system – confidence – was absent. Hence, both the planter and the laborer could not rely on wage labor. Indeed,

⁶¹ In February 1867 Mississippi's governor signed a law which allowed former slaves to own property. See Herman, *Pursuit*, p. 111. While it is true that the Freedmen's Bureau and Union Army did not recognize the legitimacy of these "laws," their impact was to inject a level of intimidation into the community.

one form or another of sharecropping came to be the default. Falling cotton prices⁶² further reinforced the move towards sharecropping since it provided an actual connection between labor effort and yield. Indeed, sharecropping would prove to afford the freed people with a sense of autonomy.

Cash and credit problems also meant that cotton factors (a.k.a. commission houses), already crucial in the economy during the antebellum period, became even more integral to the viability of economic activity in the post-emancipation period. At once purchasing agents, credit providers, merchants, and suppliers of a variety of goods, factors in the post-bellum period also aided in the supply of seasonal labor.⁶³ In this scenario wage labor was further suppressed. For how could field hands be paid weekly or monthly if the planter could only realize his money once a year, at the end of the season? Still, many factors in New Orleans and elsewhere had great difficulty advancing funds to planters to do business since they, too, lacked capital in these scarce economic times. Adding to this complicated mixture was the fact that planters found it difficult to obtain favorable terms for credit advances given that land values (which they used as collateral) were at unprecedentedly low levels.

⁶² See Table 4.3 for a summary of post-war cotton prices.

⁶³ See Dattel, *Cotton and Race*, pp. 62-84 for a helpful explanation of the machinations of the factorage system in the South's antebellum economy. A typical Mississippi River transaction might have looked like this: the planter shipped his bales of cotton down river to New Orleans, which was then exchanged with a factor who supplied bills of receipt backed by cotton, who then repeated the process with factors in New York, or Philadelphia, or even Liverpool or London. All the while the price of cotton was watched carefully, as it could be adversely affected by variables ranging from floods, frost, army worms, banking crises, and international events.

Finally, similar to the Russian government's policy of prioritizing the railroads, the United States moved not only to rebuild what had been started before and damaged by the war, but to expand track laying for the purposes of aiding trade. Indeed, while the federal government financed much of the construction of new lines, private firms, including factors in New Orleans, New York, and abroad, invested in the railroad development. All this notwithstanding, there was a gap between enthusiasm and results. With only 120 miles of new railroad track opened in the state of Mississippi by 1875, the River and its tributaries continued to be the main mode of transportation, especially for cotton.⁶⁴

Thus far, both the background and the circumstantial realities of each demesne have been discussed. I have also examined the roles of *mentalites* and consciousness as they relate to this history. Understanding source availability and its meaning is also important. I identified a number of thematic and contextual similarities and dissimilarities. One similarity is the fact that both Yazikovo Selo and Palmyra Plantation were situated in economies which were on the cusp of modernization. Significant dissimilarities included the fact that Yazikovo Selo's "production" was largely a result of and dependent upon central government directives, and Palmyra's was fully integrated into the cotton economy's structure. Also, while Vasili Yazikov and John Quitman were largely absentee patriarchs before emancipation, afterwards, as we shall see, the Russian nobleman proceeded to act according to the socially prescribed role of his *estate*. Conversely, while Palmyra remained in the Quitman family, it witnessed a change in

⁶⁴ For a succinct overview of this see Chapter 11 "Restoration of the Railroads" in Harris, *Presidential Reconstruction*, pp. 194-216.

management in the person of William Storrow Lovell, who, as it will be made clear in the next chapter, was fully engaged. Finally, I demonstrated that, because they were attached to the land after emancipation, there was, arguably, a greater sense of continuity with respect to community cohesiveness for Yazikovo Selo's freed people as compared with Palmyra's. The purpose of the above discussion has been to provide a solid foundation for understanding what happened at both Yazikovo Selo and Palmyra Plantation in the more extended period between emancipation and the end of the Reform period in Russia (1881) and Reconstruction in the American South (1877). It is that which the next chapter will address.

Chapter 5

FREE PEOPLE, LABOR ADJUSTMENTS, AND MANAGEMENT AT THE DEMESNES IN THE POST-EMANCIPATION PERIOD

The Free People, Labor Adjustments, and Demesne Management at Yazikovo Selo in the Post-Emancipation Period

Factory and Financial Management

During the course of the post-emancipation period Vasili Yazikov spent considerable time trying to find ways to manage both the estate factory and the dire financial straits in which he found himself. As explained in the section on Yazikovo Selo in Chapter Four, Vasili Yazikov hired a Tatar merchant to manage the factory, most likely in anticipation of the emancipation decree, which, among other things, severed the landed nobleman's authority over his former serfs. I also suggested that, notwithstanding the shrewd business acumen for which merchants were notorious, Mangushev's hands were essentially tied since 1) although the peasants were temporarily obligated (in the form of *barshchina* labor), they could neither be forced to work nor evicted, and 2) the real source of authority on Russian estates after emancipation lay with the village commune. In fact, in May 1862 Mangushev produced a dismal, handwritten report which he submitted to Vasili, defending his inability to manage the factory. Just two years after Yazikov documented that everything was fully intact and in good working order,¹ Mangushev noted that the factory building had no frames; the doors as well as steps leading up to the buildings were missing; the water pump transmission was broken; and all the wadding, combing, and rolling machines, as well as a speeder and a spinner were

¹ See discussed above in section Yazikovo Selo, of Chapter Four.

in one way or another broken or had missing parts. Mangushev further indicated that since each of the seven wadding machines' parts were presumably interchangeable, when he attempted to combine the parts that were still in good shape, the machines still would not operate. The shearing machines were also inoperable. In a blatant criticism of a noble employer, Mangushev explained that ideally the factory was capable of producing more than one million *arshina* a year, but his failure to meet the Treasury's requisition had to do with "Gospodin Yazikov's poor management." The factory was utterly "hamshackled," and could not even produce half of the requisition. He concluded that the factory was a complete "burden." What a striking contrast between Yazikov's inventory report in 1856 and Mangushev's in 1862.²

Remarkably, on January 1, 1863 Vasili renewed the contract for another two years, the only difference being that it was now extended to include the "Mangushev brothers." This contract indicated the brothers were responsible to the Treasury for the production and delivery of 37,770 *arshina* of dark green and grey cloth by November 15, 1863. In fact, the Mangushev brothers delivered only 9,622 *arshina* to the Treasury by that deadline, leaving a debt of 28,148 *arshina*. Because Vasili owned the factory, he was responsible for the debt. He petitioned the Treasury for an extension, arguing that Mangushev had taken a portion of the produce and sold it in the private market, making a profit of 2,660 silver rubles. The Treasury granted the extension, with the new due date being March 15, 1864. Crucial to the extension was Vasili's city mansion in Simbirsk that he put up as collateral. Clearly, Vasili made repeated attempts to salvage the factory; and clearly the Treasury accommodated him.

² "Delo ob otmena dogovora c Mangushevom." GAUO f. 88, op. 5, d. 92, l. 15.

The new rent time table began on February 1, 1863. Vasili pledged to come through with the requisitioned amount within the two-year period ending February 1, 1865. To do this would have required substantial repairs and investments in the factory. He closed the factory from June 29 to August 16, 1863, as he was waiting for a new “transmission.” Since it was during the summer months that production was supposed to be at its highest, this delay further exacerbated the situation.

By 1864 there were only 25 wool factories operating in Simbirsk Province, which netted a total of 1,840,000 rubles a year. This amount does not indicate productivity, because after 1861 the Treasury raised the standard price for wool. Because of this, some owners stopped production altogether, while others opted to rent their factories out to managers, traders who they believed possessed managerial traits. As early as 1870 a trend emerged of noblemen selling their factories to the merchant traders. This constituted the overall end to uniformity, or, conversely, signaled the beginning of a far more diverse system, in terms of ownership, management style, and combined, and/or vertical, and/or horizontal production.³

It is at this point that nature delivered a blow to the region in the form of the Great Simbirsk Fire in August 1864.⁴ Owing to a rumor that Vasili had somehow had a hand in

³ P.D. Vereshchagin, *Proshloe nashego kraya, 1648-1917: sbornik dokumentov i materialov* (Ulyanovsk, USSR: Privolzhskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, Ulyanovskoe otdelenie, 1968); and Avdonin, *Pod Sen'yu*, pp. 11-17.

⁴ Vyacheslav N. Yegorov, “Pozhar Ulyanovska” *Ulyanovskaiya-Simbirskaiya Entsiklopediya, t. II, N-Ya*, Vyacheslav N. Yegorov, ed., (Ulyanovsk, Russia: Simbirskaya Kniga, 2004), pp. 357-360. For nine days the fire swept through the province's capital, its course twisting and turning as a result of the winds that swept across the city on the bluff. Three quarters of the capital was destroyed, including 12 churches and the famous Karamzin Public Library, which housed sources on the region's settlement, uprisings, nobility, and serfs. Of its roughly 3,000 homes, approximately 1,500 went up in flames.

starting the fire, the Tsar's notorious Third Department initiated a secret investigation of him three years after the event in 1867. This is not surprising given that fire had often been used as a form of subversion. Indeed, arson was used especially by Russian revolutionaries in 1862 to express their dissatisfaction with what they considered the conservative nature of the emancipation statutes. But the Russian nobility was also suspected of using it to express its opposition to what it considered the liberal terms of emancipation.⁵ No one was exempt from suspicion. In the end, the Department found him to be innocent of the charge of arson, and local spies reported that, notwithstanding the fact that Vasili was quite often seen at the local "whorehouse," he was nevertheless a "man of good character, very well educated, and a loyal and reliable patriot."⁶ Clearly, notwithstanding the dire state of his finances after emancipation, Vasili continued to indulge in extravagance to say the least.

The fire spared the Yazikov city mansion. Now Vasili took steps to sell it to his wife. In the Bill of Sale, he wrote "I . . . sell out to my wife my home which I inherited from my father. . . .I was paid 3,000 rubles by Praskovia." Interpreting the purpose of this move is not difficult. Vasili "sold" his wife their city mansion to either remove his responsibility for the presumed multiple mortgaged debt incurred on it, especially as it

Estimates were that over 15,000 people became homeless. It took the city over fifteen years to rebuild.

⁵ Seton-Watson, *Russian Empire*, pp. 357-358, and 368-370.

⁶ GAUO f. 855, op. 1, d. 13, l. 5-7, May 26, 1867 – August 8, 1868. The report also noted that Yazikov was able to "get away with this lifestyle" for a number of reasons. These included 1) he was "married to the daughter of a close confidant of the tsar," 2) "his wife openly carries on an affair [with his first cousin]," 3) "he is a Marshal of the Nobility," and 4) "he has money and is well educated."

was collateral for the recent extension given by the Treasury, or make it possible for her to re-mortgage the property thereafter, or both. This said, Praskovia owned the mansion in name only. For by the late 1860s the Yazikovs began renting it to a local Tatar merchant by the name of Kartashov, who opened it as a hotel called “Yazikov Suites.” By 1875 they sold the mansion to said merchant, who changed the hotel’s name to “Kartashov Suites,” with Vasili retaining a room for his use when he was in the city.⁷ Though not considered an absentee landlord, clearly Vasili spent his time at both the city mansion and the family nest.

In 1865, Vasili took out a mortgage on the land at Yazikovo Selo. This should not be confused with his mortgaging the estate in 1851 when he inherited it. In that deal, he had mortgaged his serfs. In light of the fact that after 1861 the Treasury redirected funds from credit lines for the nobility to those for developing the railroads and river steamers, it may seem odd that Vasili was able to mortgage the land. However, he was well connected. For example, he became a council member of the Provincial Committee of Simbirsk for the State Land Bank, which was founded in 1866. He also worked on the Provincial Statistical Committee of the Nobles’ Land Bank, which was founded in 1885.⁸

⁷ “Khodataistvo ot Praskov’I Yazikova.” [A Petition from Praskovia Ivanovna Yazikova] GAUO f. 32, op. 3, d. 170, l. 1, 3, and 5, October 28 – November 3, 1865. “I own from my husband [2nd] Lieutenant Vasili Petrovich Yazikov a damaged stone two level mansion located in Simbirsk in the second section of the city relating to the parish of the Church of Vladimir, the Mother of God, on Spasskii Street, the purchase completed in Simbirsk Civil Court, the bill of sale on August 28, 1865.” And the Bill of Sale reads: “I Vasili Petrovich Yazikov sell out to my wife my home which I inherited from my father 2nd Lieutenant Petr Mikhailovich Yaziov on 22 June 1853. . . .I was paid 3,000 rubles by Praskovia.”

⁸ Avdonin, *Pod Sen’yu*, p. 9.

Aside from trying to manage both the demesne and his finances, Vasili was involved in an array of philanthropic endeavors and responsibilities associated with service.⁹ However, arguably the most significant was that he was the Marshal of the Nobility for Simbirsk District from March 1862 to December 1873, and the District Deputy of the Department of Peasant Affairs from 1863 to 1868.¹⁰

The year 1865 was also significant in that Vasili severed his ties with the Mangushev brothers and proceeded to rent the factory out to another Simbirsk merchant, first guild member Simon Ilich Repev. By the end of the decade, his son, Ivan Simeonovich Repev was renting the factory. The younger Repev registered the employment of 70 men, 4 women, and 70 teenagers, which was much lower than the pre-emancipation number. It is curious that the record indicates that Repev paid the labors 600 rubles per month (which amounted to an even distribution of a little over four rubles a person) since the Statutory Charter indicated that of the 394 souls who were entitled to land allotments, and who were obligated with *barshchina*, 160 were factory laborers. (See Chapter Three, p. 107) Without evidence of what the breakdown was between the men, women, and children, or what wages might have been paid on any other comparable estate, it is

⁹ Yazikov was involved in numerous philanthropic endeavors, too numerous to list here. For example, he sat on the board of the Society of Christian Compassion, he was a trustee of one of Simbirsk's orphanages, and he was Chief of Simbirsk's Society of Injured and Sick Soldiers. See Larissa Yershova, "Kak stranno tasuetsia koloda" *Monomakh* 3 (2002), pp. 23-25.

¹⁰ For a detailed list of Yazikov's official duties and services, see his logbook of service: "Formulyarnyi spisok o sluzhbe Simbirskogo Uezdnoego Predvoditeliy Dvorianstva Otvavnogo Poruchika ot Artilerii V. P. Yazikova." GAUO f. 88, op. 5, d. 92, l. 15 (June, 1879). A Marshal of the Nobility was elected (by his noble peers) head of the nobility for a district or province, and exercised an array of official and private functions. For a succinct overview see G.M. Hamburg, "Portrait of an Elite: Russian Marshals of the Nobility, 1861-1917" *Slavic Review* 40:4 (Winter, 1981), pp. 585-602.

difficult to estimate the significance of this figure. However, that a record exists of an earmark for wages is significant. It is also unclear whether these paid laborers, at least the men anyway, were new hires, or somehow remained in the temporarily obligated category as indicated in the Statutory Charter. While Peter Zaionchkovsky has explained that the *Regulations* abolished *barshchina* obligations in manorial factories and automatically transferred them to *obrok*, Larissa Yershova has stressed that the bill of sale to Stepanov in 1881 indicated that all the male peasants, including the factory laborers, remained on the the former. What is clear, is that it evidences one merchant's approach to labor management in the post-emancipation period. Under Repev's management, the contract with the Treasury was 50,000 rubles for an unspecified number of military uniforms, and 2,000 carpets. Reminiscent of the Mangushev story, Vasili complained that, although production at the factory seemed to be underway, Repev was taking produce that was earmarked for the Treasury and selling it at the market in Kazan.

By 1870, a fragment statistic indicates that the factory averaged 288 *arshina* a day. While this was close to the average for 1853,¹¹ it was much lower than what was being produced at Vasili's brother's factory on his estate, Undory, which was also managed by a Tatar merchant, one I.I. Aleev, who could report that it averaged 465 *arshina* per day.¹²

Vasili switched managers again in 1871; another Tatar merchant, one Kozlov, was hired. By 1872 he found the merchant Feodor Stepanov, who began managing the factory. In 1876 Stepanov placed an ad in a local newspaper for "teenage children" to

¹¹ See discussed above in section Yazikovo Selo, Chapter 4.

¹² Lipinskii, *Materiali*, 192-202; Aunovskiy, "Sukonnye Fabriki, pp. 82-102; and Interview with historian Larissa Yershova, *op. cit.* See also Zaionchkovsky, *Abolition of Serfdom*, p. 96.

come to work at the factory at Yazikovo Selo for wages.¹³ This was significant as Stepanov's move to offer wages for labor preceded the tsar's command to do so in the Redemption Law of 1881 by nearly five years.

The Agricultural Sector

As for the state of affairs in the agricultural sector at Yazikovo Selo, no specific source addresses this. However, evidence on conditions both in the demesne's neighborhood and elsewhere in the province is instructive. First, Simbirsk native, friend of Vasili Yazikov, Slavophil philosopher, and co-author of the *Emancipation Manifesto*, Yuri Samarin, wrote that peasant refusal to work in the fields was widespread in Simbirsk Province in the immediate post-emancipation period. He noted that many peasants in one village even refused to work on their own garden plots. As usual, a number of authorities were called to the estate. When the local Peace Mediator tried to persuade them to work, clearly speaking to the issue of the relationship between labor obligations and freedom, they replied “. . .we're prepared to go to the military, Siberia, and even to the death, but we'll not work.”¹⁴

¹³ Lipinskiy, *Ibid.* The ad was titled “*Malo letnikh detei.*” It is an interesting point of comparison that there is similarity between Stepanov turning to hire minors from the region, and the intent behind some of the Black Codes enacted by the Mississippi Legislature on November 22, 1865, which targeted young, black (and especially orphaned) children for both apprenticeships and labor. The turn to minors as a source in the post-emancipation period is an area for further comparative study.

¹⁴ M.E. Naydenov, *Klassovaya Bor'ba v Poreformennoy Derevne (1861-1863)* (Moscow, USSR: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo politicheskoy literatury, 1955), p. 291. During the days of serfdom, being unloaded onto the military was the Russian equivalent of the American practice of being “sold down river” in the days of slavery.

Second, an article in the weekly journal *The Simbirsk Provincial Gazette (Vedomosti Simbirskoi Gubernii)* in November of 1863 was devoted to the life of the peasants since emancipation. It noted that, in general, both the landowners and peasants in the province had stopped producing grain because of the high cost of preparing the land for sowing *and* because they did not have cash available for the venture. Indeed, they soon came to letting the fields lie fallow. Simultaneously, the landlords began renting out various facilities to merchants. These included the factories, the fields, and even city mansions. Moreover, the editor went on to note that, even where the peasants were on *barshchina*, it was still a question of whether or not the land was arable. In addition, while most landowners may well have understood the “fad” of “rational” agricultural practices, they considered it more of a “pipedream” than a realistic endeavor since 1) there was a shortage of both cash and credit to purchase machinery; and 2) even if the landowner could upgrade and purchase machinery, what was the landlord then to do with all those “idle” peasants who were attached to the demesne, per the terms of the emancipation legislation?¹⁵

In the 1870s a series of events unfolded that must have had played a role in Vasili’s decision to sell the estate in piecemeal fashion to Stepanov. First, triggered by a severe drought, the Volga Famine of 1873 has been cited as worse than even the most notorious ones of 1891 and 1921-22.¹⁶ Second, a severe economic downturn began in 1873 and

¹⁵ *Vedomosti Simbirskoy Gubernii* No. 45 Subbota 9 Noyabrya 1863.

¹⁶ For a solid overview see W. Edgar, “Russia’s Conflict with Hunger” and M. Halstead, “Politics of the Russian Famine,” both in *American Review of Reviews* Vol. 5 (1892), pp. 576, 572, and 579; Richard G. Robbins, *Famine in Russia, 1891-1892* (Columbia University Press, 1975), p. 19; and “The Famine” *Soviet Russia: A Monthly Journal of Information* 5:4 (October, 1921), pp. 138-142. For the argument that this famine

continued through to the end of the decade. Indeed, Boris Mironov has explained that an overall economic decline of twenty years followed thereafter.¹⁷ This notwithstanding, because it coincided with the Russo-Turkish War (1877-78), Stepanov's purchase of the factory in 1877 was salutary, since the conflict triggered a rise in government requisitions for wool. In 1878 the merchant renewed the advertisement he had placed two years earlier. Then, in 1880, the Address Calendar of Simbirsk Province featured an announcement noting the "the grand reopening of the clothes factory at Yazikovo Selo."¹⁸ On March 13, 1881, the tsar was assassinated in St. Petersburg. At the very least, this signaled an element of uncertainty with respect to tsarist policies and directives. Next, on September 26, 1881, Vasili's wife voluntarily entered the women's monastery located directly across the street from their city mansion.¹⁹ On December 16, 1881 Stepanov purchased the estate mansion.²⁰ Most significant, on December 28, 1881

devastated the middle Volga River region see V. N. Ginev, *Narodnicheskoe dvizhenie v srednem Povolzh'e: 70-e gody xix veka* (Moscow, USSR: Nauka, 1966), p. 16.

¹⁷ Boris N. Mironov, *The Standard of Living and Revolutions in Imperial Russia, 1700-1917*, ed. by Gregory L. Freeze (New York, NY: Routledge, 2012), pp. 398-399.

¹⁸ *Kalendar' Simbirskoi Gubernii (visokosnii)*, (Simbirsk, Rossiya: Izdanie Simbirskago Gubernskago Pravleniia, 1880), p. 83.

¹⁹ For an account of this story see my chapter "Praskovia's Redemption: A Case Study of a Russian Noblewoman's Self Cloistering" in *Cultural Identity and Civil Society in Russia and Eastern Europe: Essays in Memory of Charles E. Timberlake* edited by Andrew Kier Wise, *et.al.* (Newcastle upon Tyne, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012), pp. 112-124.

²⁰ Regarding the bill of sale "Statskiy Sovetnik V. P. Yazikov prodavshiy imushchestvo Simbirskomu Kuptsu F.S. Stepanovu 16 Dekabrya 1881" see GAUO f. 477, op. 3, d. 71, l. 25 and GAUO f. 137, op. 4, d. 105, l. 79; Aunovskiy, "Sukhoni Fabriki," 82-102; and P. L. Martynov, *Gorod Simbirsk za 250 let*, p. 22. In 1881 the sale to Stepanov included 3,645 *desiatini*. Given that the Land Transfer Charter in March 1862 indicated that Vasili Yazikov was left with 5,231 *desiatini*, this is a considerable discrepancy. Records of the village in 1903 indicate that it had 175 households, with a total population of 1,188

a new Redemption Law went into effect. This ended both *barshchina* labor and the peasants' temporary obligated status, standardized a legal concept of property, and made redemption payments and wage labor obligatory. As indicated above, Stepanov had already begun paying wages prior to this. The merchant also initiated repairs and investments at the demesne. Remarkably, in 1882, the factory's products were praised by the All Russian National Industrial Exhibition in Moscow.²¹

No Redemption Agreement

Significantly, when Stepanov completed the purchase in 1881, records show that there were 394 souls at Yazikovo Selo who were still on *barchshina* labor. They also indicate that the estate did not have a Redemption Agreement. Therefore, the peasants of Yazikovo Selo had remained in a temporarily obligated status throughout the period under review.²² Also significant is the number of souls cited on the bill of sale, which is identical to the number of souls entitled to allotted land evidenced in the Statutory Charter of 1862. Clearly, this must have been out of expedience, as the sale was effected

people (567 men and 621 women). Since we know that 422 souls (men), of which 160 were factory workers, were listed in the 1862 Land Transfer Charter, we can surmise that there were approximately 900-1000 people in the village in that year. Martinov argues that, although the village had grown in total numbers by approximately 200 people, this was feeble compared to the dramatic rise in Russia's population in the second half of the nineteenth century. He explains that, in addition to many leaving the village for the cities during these years, some must have succumbed to the famines that swept through the region. See Appendix for a description of the merchant Stepanov.

²¹ By 1900, 18 of the Province's 33 factories were still operating, and one of the *most* productive was the factory at Yazikovo Selo. See V. N. Yegorov, "Ekonomika i Torgovlya," p. 222; Rakov, "Yazikovskiy Park," p. 473; and P. L. Martynov, *op. cit.*

²² See both Aunovsky, "Sukonnye Fabriki" and Avdonin, *Pod Sen'yu*.

hurriedly, or without attention to accuracy, or both. Nevertheless, the official record shows that there was a relative stagnant population level between emancipation and the end of the Reform period at the demesne.

Furthermore, in light of the fact that Vasili Yazikov effected the Statutory Charter in 1862, for which he received imperial recognition, it is significant that he did not impose a Redemption Agreement. To be clear, unlike the Statutory Charter, the terms of emancipation did not require that the noble landlords initiate redemption. They had the choice of doing nothing at all with respect to a redemption plan. Clearly, Vasili did the latter.²³ By contrast, Vasili's brother, Alexander, implemented a payment schedule in 1864 at his estate, Undory.²⁴

Why did Vasili fail to implement a Redemption Agreement? Local Russian historians attribute it to Vasili's incompetence, frivolities, and broken marriage.²⁵ However, notwithstanding all this, Vasili was neither idle nor incompetent. To be sure, he was neither a "planting magnate" nor an entrepreneur. But, as explained above, in addition to living up to his responsibilities associated with service and philanthropy, and working within the realities and constraints of the political economic system in which he lived, the nobleman was fully engaged with managing both the logistics of production at the estate

²³ Vasili received an award of excellence from the emperor for his swift execution of the Statutory Charter. This award (*Ukazannoe otlichie za vpolnenie osvobozhdeniya krestyan*), was bestowed on Yazikov on April 17, 1863. See his logbook of service: *Formulyarnyi Spisok o Sluzhbe Simbirskogo Uezdnoogo Predvoditeliy Dvoryanstva Otvavnogo Poruchika ot Artilerii V. P. Yazikova*. GAUO f. 88, op. 5, d. 92, l. 15 (June, 1879).

²⁴ Aunovsky, *op. cit.*; and Avdonin, *op. cit.*

²⁵ Interview with Larissa Yershova, *op. cit.*; and interview with historian Aleksei Sytin, Ulyanovsk, Russia, June 29, 2010.

and his financial problems. As for a comparison with his brother's tenure at his estate, in spite of Alexander Yazikov's dutiful implementation of the Redemption Agreement, Undory's fate was practically identical to Yazikovo Selo's. Alexander auctioned the entire estate to Tatar merchants in 1881.²⁶

In fact, Vasili's "failure" to impose an Agreement can be understood. First, when considering the contrast between Vasili's completion of a Statutory Charter with the neglect of securing a payment schedule, it should be remembered that he had a number of incentives to implement the former in March of 1862. First, it was mandatory and had to be implemented within two years of the *Manifesto's* release in the spring of 1861. Second, he wanted to get the peasant "disturbances" behind him. Third, he wanted to preemptively effect it before the sowing season commenced. And fourth, he was assisted by the Peace Mediator for his District, his cousin, Bestuzhev.

Moreover, as explained in the previous chapter, indebted noble landowners were incentivized to effect Statutory Charters: a greater plot size allotted to a soul guaranteed a greater amount of financial compensation for it. Conversely, there were disincentives which worked against the implementation of Redemption Agreements. Although the government was responsible for compensating the landowner up front with 80% of that which he/she would gain upon securing a Redemption Agreement, the amount was in bonds, or more correctly "redemption certificates" - not cash. These redemption certificates could not be transferred or converted into other government bonds or cash. In addition, since the landowners' debts were to be subtracted from that which the

²⁶ E. I. Karamysheva, "Istoriya naseleennogo punkta: Undory" *Moya Malaya Rodina* 16 Fevral 2011 <http://rodina-portal.ru/settlements/history/id/7300100004600> Accessed 19 August 2014.

government would pay, and this, in theory, seemed like a convenient way to alleviate oneself of one's debts, to do so meant that an indebted nobleman could very well remain indebted even if the Redemption Agreement took place.

Historians have sought to explain the discrepancy between swiftly effected Statutory Charters and tardy Redemption Agreements. Peter Kolchin has explained delaying as long as possible an agreement to redemption payments could have the result of reducing what the peasants owed their former master by up to 20%-25%. Holding out was a form of resistance. It was a tactic to negotiate for reduced payments. Conversely, noble landlords also had an incentive not to reach an Agreement, since the longer they held out and did not impose redemption the greater chance they had of receiving full payment, since, as Avenir Korelin has noted, during the two decades following emancipation land prices steadily rose. (Boris Mironov has correctly pointed out that the allotted land for which the peasants had to compensate their former owners was priced at above market price.) Thus, in an era of rising land prices (either natural or deliberate), selling as late as possible on the part of the nobleman/woman seemed to offer a maximum price. And Leonid Ivanov has explained that landowners who did not have cash, who were indebted, and whose freed people were on *barshchina*, had no incentive to switch to a Redemption Agreement. It was only when rumors began swirling about the tsar's Redemption Law of 1881 being imminent that landowners either moved to effect a payment schedule or proceeded to sell off their estates, often to merchants. Obviously Vasili did the latter.²⁷

²⁷ Discussion with Peter Kolchin, February 20, 2015; Avenir P. Korelin, *Dvoryanstvo v poreformennoy Rossii, 1861-1904 gg.: Sostav, chislennost', korporativnaya organizatsiya* (Moscow, USSR: Nauka, 1979), p. 251; Mironov, *Standard of Living*, p. 398; and Leonid Mikhailovich Ivanov, *Krestyanskoe Dvizhenie v Rossii v 1861-1869 gg.: sbornik dokumentov* (Moscow, USSR: Mysl', 1964), pp. 11-12. In "Why and how were

A Redemption Agreement could occur either through a mutual agreement or through a noble landlord's unilateral act. However, while it was one thing for Vasili Yazikov to have pushed through the Statutory Charter irrespective of the peasants' participation, it was yet another altogether to fashion out of thin air a Redemption Agreement, which both documented and enforced a payment schedule. Herein was the crux of freedom in Russia: the freed serfs would never be free until they agreed to pay up front to their former owner one fifth the amount of land earmarked for them, and the remaining 80% to the government over the next 49 years. We know that the peasants of Yazikovo Selo utterly rejected the Statutory Charter in 1862, refused to accept a copy of it, and never made any payments for the garden plots. Therefore, it is not only plausible but probable that neither were they interested in entering into any agreement which extracted payment for land which they considered already theirs. Contextual evidence and national sources support this. For example, the Minister of Internal Affairs reported to the Tsar in 1871 that in twelve provinces, including Simbirsk, there was widespread peasant rejection of Redemption Agreements and even the allotted land plots. Sources are saturated with quotes of peasants' vehement rejection of payments for land, the following, of which is exemplary: “. . .we don't want the redemption. . . [and] we'll not pay [it]. . .even if

Russian serfs freed? Making Sense of the 1861 Emancipation Act” A Paper Presented at a Meeting of the Caltech Early Modern Group, March 16, 2012, <http://www.hss.caltech.edu/~jlr/events/Dennison-EMGV.pdf>, accessed September 15, 2014, Tracy Dennison notes that, in order to avoid a stampede, the government mandated sequential redemption agreements, privileging first estates on *obrok*, and then those on *barshchina*, of which Yazikovo was one. See pp. 11, and 15.

you'll kill us and bury us in the ground.” Embedded in this quote was the sentiment of the old Russian peasant proverb which stated “Die, but do not leave your father’s land.”²⁸

Statistics suggest that, although it was not an overwhelming phenomenon, the absence of a Redemption Agreement was not uncommon: by the end of 1862 Russia had 7,082 or 7.5% completed. By the end of 1865, only 16,800 or 18% were made. By 1870 roughly 55% of Russian estates were on a redemption schedule. By 1877 there were 61,784 agreements, with approximately 35% being mutual and 65% being ones that the landowners forced through. In January 1881 there were still 1.5 million peasants, or approximately 15% of the total number, who remained classified as temporarily obligated. Yazikovo Selo was among this 15%.²⁹

From the above discussion, it is clear that labor at Yazikovo Selo adjusted negatively to the new conditions set in motion by the emancipation legislation. Things only changed after both the Redemption Law went into effect and Stepanov purchased the estate in 1881. It appears that the variables which made the difference included both wage labor and the official end to the temporary obligated status which the Redemption Law set in motion. Further, Stepanov’s management experience, motivational direction, and financial capability also played a role. It is worth suggesting that all this coincided with a quirk of history: the ground work of modernization which had been laid during

²⁸ Ivanov, *Ibid.*, pp. 399-400. Ginev also makes clear that outright rejection of plots was common in the middle Volga River region. See Ginev, *Narodnicheskoe*, p. 19. For the proverb see Burds, *Peasant Dreams*, p. 15.

²⁹ See Wildman, “The Defining Moment,” p. 2; Seton-Watson, *Russian Empire*, p. 396; Ivanov, *Ibid.*, pp. 11-12, and 41; and P.A. Zaionchkovskiy, ed., *Krestyanskoe dvizhenie v Rossii v 1870-1880 gg.: sbornik dokumentov* (Moscow, USSR: Nauka, 1968), p. 11. (N.M. Druzhinin authored the Introduction to this source.)

the twenty years after 1861 had, by the early 1880s, begun to make a difference in outcome.³⁰ Let us now turn to a review of what happened at Palmyra Plantation.

The Free People, Labor Adjustments, and Demesne Management at Palmyra Plantation in the Post-Emancipation Period

When the Quitman/Lovell family recovered Palmyra Plantation, both the terms of the labor contracts and labor patterns changed. The departure of Union officials from the Bend meant that the freed people there were no longer anchored to the demesne. While Union pressure was great with respect to labor contracting, the freed people were no longer compelled to do so. Indeed, as it was made clear in Chapters 3 and 4, many American freed people were not keen on signing labor contracts with planters because, similar to their Russian counterpart who wanted nothing to do with Statutory Charters and the Redemption Agreements, they saw these as tricks to re-impress them into servitude.³¹ But the American freed people were mobile and, given the demand for labor in the region, they could and did negotiate with planters, such as Lovell, who now had the task of finding and maintaining a labor force. As I explained in Chapter 2, Lovell did make an official contract for the 1866 season with four freed people in the summer of

³⁰ Among others, Peter Gatrell makes this point. See his “The Meaning of the Great Reforms in Russian Economic History” in *Russia’s Great Reforms, 1855-1881* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1994), pp. 84-101, eds., Ben Eklof, et.al., p. 86 in particular.

³¹ Clifton L. Ganus, Jr., “The Freedmen’s Bureau in Mississippi,” Ph.D. Dissertation, Tulane University, 1953. In addition, why would they sign a contract if they expected to receive land allotments? See pp. 184-188, and 197.

1865.³² This was significant for it demonstrated that in the midst of the turmoil during the summer of 1865, Lovell meant to adjust to the new circumstances.

William Storrow Lovell's plantation journals document his complete attention to Palmyra.³³ He was a driven, entrepreneurial planter who obsessed about weather patterns, water levels, labor recruitment and efficiency, including planting, picking, and ginning as well as production levels in relation to previous years, insect scourges, the health and well being of livestock, the quality of farm equipment, and Palmyra's overall management. Furthermore, the journals show that, similar to Vasili Yazikov, Lovell was in a real life financial game of cat and mouse, shifting, borrowing, and paying monies to this or that entity and/or person, including many family members.

Although Vasili Yazikov was not idle during his tenure at Yazikovo Selo in the post-emancipation period, Lovell was far more effective than his Russian counterpart. First, he was managing a plantation that was not only viable and had a proven track record but had an exceptional capacity to produce. He was also operating within an economic

³² The contract was with four individuals, Lewis, Britt, Vini, and Ranson, ages forty-five, twenty-eight, twenty-five, and five respectively. (The five-year old was hired as a "maintenance boy.") In the 1860 Slave List for Palmyra, a "Lewis," and a "Vini," both age eighteen, are cited. Because of the age disparity, it is improbable that this could be the same Lewis. But it is possible that the Vini cited in each record is the same individual. The monthly wage agreed to was \$5.00, with room and board included. This seems paltry given that the Freedmen's Bureau recommended in March 1865 \$10.00 per month, and could report in June of 1866, that on the Davis plantations, some laborers earned up to \$15.00 per month. Finally, just because there is evidence of four individuals Lovell contracted with, this does not mean that he did not contract, either formally or informally, with anyone else.

³³ William Storrow Lovell Plantation Records, 1866-1887, Quitman Family Papers #616, Collection Number 00436, Folder 1, Volumes 1-3, The Southern Historical Collection at the Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, NC. Hereafter referred to as Lovell, Plantation Records, Vol. 1, 2, or 3, page # for citation.

context that, notwithstanding real difficulties of logistics and backwardness, demonstrated resilience, pliability, and adaptability. Furthermore, Lovell found a foreman to supervise the plantation who, like Mangushev and other Russian merchants, was competent, but, unlike these counterparts, was given incentives and tacit guidelines and authority with respect to the demesne's mission. Above all, the freed people at Palmyra were not on some kind of American equivalent of *barshchina*. Significantly, Lovell was able to secure every year, for years, seasonal, migrant labor to make the plantation work. Finally, notwithstanding the war-torn South, the fractured nation, and the drop in prices, cotton remained king.³⁴

In a sense Lovell was what historians have identified as the “new master” prototype, displaying a “time is money” industriousness and an ethic of overcoming “obstacles.”³⁵ Like his father-in-law, Lovell was a man in constant motion. But Lovell was far more directly involved with Palmyra's management than Quitman had been. The journals evidence his rigorous schedule over a thirty plus year period in which he managed Palmyra. For the purposes of securing labor, managing credit, purchasing supplies, and field work for the inspection of crops and productivity, Lovell travelled at a dizzying pace, by boat, train, horse, and/or carriage, from the family's city mansion in Natchez, to

³⁴ Actually Michael Wayne has argued that cotton was only king for those planters who could attract and maintain labor pools every year, for years. In this sense Palmyra Plantation was, indeed, exceptional. See “Ante-Bellum Planters in the Post-Bellum South: The Natchez District, 1860-1880,” Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1979, pp. 68-69.

³⁵ Hermann, *Pursuit*, p. 173. See also Powell, *New Masters*, Chapters 1 and 5, pp. 1-7 and 73-96.

Palmyra, to New Orleans, to Vicksburg, to Jackson, to Cairo, and other Quitman/Lovell properties, and often a combination of many of these all within the same week.

Adjustments and Adaptations in the Cotton Economy

The year 1866 was a difficult one for the Mississippi Delta region in general and the Bend's plantations in particular. Heavy rains in the spring prevented cotton cultivation, and the summer produced a severe drought. In September the dreaded army worm appeared and devoured any crops that had been planted. Signaling what would become a trend until the turn of the century, the drop in the price of cotton further reduced profits. All this notwithstanding, Lovell closed out the year with 188 bales of cotton. Although this amount was paltry compared to the property's yields in the antebellum period, Lovell noted that the 1866 bales each weighed about 570 pounds, which, according to the price of cotton in New Orleans, accrued about \$171. However, hay production at Palmyra supplemented cotton. Although it was far less labor intensive and vulnerable to the elements, it did not have the lucrative potential of cotton. Typically paying a laborer \$15 or even as little as \$2 to cut hay in the meadow, Lovell recorded one bale in June weighing 840 pounds, which brought in \$101. To glance at his entries for 1866 alone one discovers a rough tally of 173 "loads," with one load earning a paltry \$8.73 and another \$5.³⁶

The year 1867 was one of "wreck." The bottom fell out of the cotton market when its price dipped to 14 cents a pound. Creditors called in loans, setting in motion a chain reaction of recalls. These developments not only adversely affected planters. They also

³⁶ Lovell, Plantation Records, Vol. 1, pp. 1-7.

brought home to the freed people the full force of their destitution and made clear their only option to survive – turning to plantation work. In addition, the flood was one of the worst in the region’s history, so that most of the Bend was almost completely submerged. Indeed, the narrow isthmus which connected the pear shaped peninsula to the mainland was washed away. Now the Bend became an island, permanently.³⁷ Because Palmyra was situated on the east side of the Bend, it now had direct access to the traffic on the river’s new route. However, this benefit would prove to be offset by the burden of shouldering the responsibility of maintaining the fragile levees needed to protect the Bend from the river’s new route. Many of the Bend’s inhabitants fled, throwing an already fragile labor pool into further disarray. Those inhabitants that remained worked around the clock all spring to rebuild levees and repair buildings, including the gin and sawmills. The flood-soaked fields drew insect pests like a magnet. Cutworms appeared at night and disappeared into the ground at dawn. Army worms arrived by mid July. A local planter noted that the worms worked so swiftly that, whereas one day the fields looked green, by the next they were “blackened like fire had swept over them.” Of the cotton that was produced, the drop in prices for that year made things worse. Although it was far less when compared to Palmyra’s production in the past, Lovell closed out the year with about 310 bales.

With next to no crop to put up as collateral, as well as the fact that many if not most laborers had fled, the prep time for 1868 was also devastated. But these were teachable moments. Innovation and adaptation emerged, especially with respect to finding labor. One innovation was renting the fields out for so many dollars per acre or season.

³⁷ As a result of its re-routing, the river’s length in this area was shortened by 20 miles.

Contracting (both written and verbal) was also used. As for finding laborers, a phenomenon emerged. Rather than attract labor *to* the plantation, the planter *left* it for the urban areas, most notably New Orleans, to hire laborers from factors for the season.³⁸

On the one hand, 1868 shared some similarities with the previous year. Lovell hired eight “teams” (typically two or four hands) of laborers for several weeks in the spring to reinforce the levees. This was worth it since they held when the river peaked again in late spring.³⁹ That summer a drought adversely affected both crops and livestock. The arrival of fall rains also ushered in another blight of worms.

On the other hand, 1868 proved to be a pivotal year in a number of ways. During the next five years the region was free from floods, droughts, and pests. The cash that was laid out for investments immediately after the war, such as draft animals and farm equipment, was by now in an economy of scale mode. 1868 was also a watershed year in that it witnessed the departure of most of the Northerners who had come to the region immediately after the war’s conclusion to try their hand at planting. The cotton rush had begun as early as 1863. But these “new masters” left in droves as they conceded defeat by droughts, floods, army worms, and falling cotton prices.⁴⁰ Above all, adjustments in labor’s shape and arrangement began making their appearance as 1868 ushered in an element of confidence. A variety of sharecropping arrangements began replacing wage labor. Again, this modality was desirable for a number of reasons: it was a way to get around the scarcity of cash and credit; planters saw it as a way to secure a labor force for

³⁸ Hermann, *Pursuit*, pp. 116-119, and 132-136.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 135.

⁴⁰ Powell, *New Masters*, p. 122, and *passim*.

the duration of the planting season; and it was more appealing than paying cash, since, irrespective of the crop produced, one would have to pay a laborer for his or her work. In good years, and if the planter had cash, this was alright. But in bad years, such as the seasons of 1866 and 1867, it was a further loss to have to pay laborers in cash. Vernon Lane Wharton attributed the adoption of sharecropping to the planters' realization that there was no turning back: slavery was dead; the freed people's mobility was a fact; and their status as free laborers had to be reckoned with.⁴¹ Conversely, the freed people saw it as a way to have greater control over their earnings as well as a stepping stone to land tenure.⁴² In one sense, sharecropping was a great compromise.

Lovell's Journals generally support these findings. After 1867, Lovell began utilizing both share and wage contracting for both the planting season and specific, self-contained jobs. After 1868, the journals reveal that Lovell contracted with hands for planting as well as other jobs required around the plantation, such as reinforcing levees for the season. For example, in January 1868, Lovell made the following agreement:

I now have about twenty men hired and some four or five women. I am going to put in a strong man force and a small woman force. I think about 30 men and 10 women will work the place with the arrangement I have made with the women who do not contract, that is to hire them when we require them and for only such days. Most of the men do not want to put their wives in regularly. I like the plan very much, for they are on hand when we want them and

⁴¹ See Wharton, *The Negro in Mississippi*, p. 120.

⁴² John C. Rodrigue, *Reconstruction in the Cane Fields: From Slavery to Free Labor in Louisiana's Sugar Parishes, 1862-1880* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2001), pp. 71-76. Rodrigue focuses on contrasting the labor patterns in the sugar parishes after emancipation with the cotton plantations in the Mississippi Delta region.

at no expenses to us when we do not. I am giving first class men \$7 women \$5. I get some men for \$6, half grown for \$4 and \$5. . . .⁴³

Here was evidence of verbal contractual negotiations, with both sides asserting their self interest. Lovell closed out the year with 554 bales of ginned cotton.⁴⁴

Squad Labor

It was not until about 1870 that something resembling a uniform labor system made its appearance in the Delta region, and that was what one historian has classified as “slavery’s stepchild,” squad labor.⁴⁵ Growing out of the planters’ paramount need for labor and the freed people’s destitution and rejection of anything that resembled gang labor (which included drivers and overseers), squad labor was described in *De Bow’s Review* in the summer of 1869, as a system in which “from two to eight hands only work together, in many instances a single family.” Michael Wayne has explained that, notwithstanding *De Bow’s* definition, squad labor was almost as varied and nuanced as was the phenomenon of sharecropping. Indeed, sometimes squad members were sharecroppers. While some planters could and did lease their land and/or crops to small, nuclear families of freed people (which could include tenancy and victuals), others, such

⁴³ William Storrow Lovell to Joseph Lovell, January 25, 1868, Lovell Collection, University of the South, Sewanee, Box 1, Set 57.

⁴⁴ Hermann, *Pursuit*, p. 138. It is interesting to contrast this amount with the 790 bales produced at the Davis plantations, which together comprised approximately 2,000 acres. See Thavolia Glymph, “The Second Middle Passage: The Transition from Slavery to Freedom at Davis Bend, Mississippi,” Ph.D. Dissertation, Purdue University, 1994, p. 271.

⁴⁵ Harris, *Presidential Reconstruction*, see Chapter 9: Problems of Agricultural Recovery, pp. 154-185; and Willis, *Forgotten Time*, p. 38. See also Roger L. Ransom and Richard Sutch *One Kind of Freedom: The Economic Consequences of Emancipation* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1977), pp. 56-105.

as Lovell, had squads comprised of twenty plus “hands” each. Here Wayne has suggested that the difference between Lovell’s squads and the slave gangs of yesteryear was in name only. This is not accurate for a number of reasons. First, the numbers of squads and hands per squad at the plantation over the entire period of Lovell’s tenure was not fixed, although by the 1880s and 1890s he typically had 3 squads composed of approximately 20 hands each. Rather, as the late 1860s and early 1870s came around, Lovell travelled to both New Orleans and elsewhere (mostly, to Selma) to hire hands for the season. These increased in numbers over time. Indeed, his squads could also consist of several “teams.”⁴⁶ Second, in relation to other plantations in both the region and in general, the squads at Palmyra were in proportion to its size and scope. That is, Palmyra was exceptional both before and after emancipation in both its acreage and its capacity to produce. Often eight and even twelve ploughs were in operation on the plantation, and, later, in 1885, Lovell noted that 24 were running.⁴⁷ Planters of smaller holdings could neither afford to pay for this migrant labor, at least consistently, nor did they possess the connections with both creditors and labor factors to acquire them. Lovell not only had the means with which to achieve both of these, but he also did the ground work. In addition, that Palmyra, like other large holdings, was situated on the Mississippi, meant that Lovell, and other landlords, had the advantage of attracting laborers. As Wayne has explained, while the planter who lived far from the river found that he had to make substantial financial concessions to overcome the disadvantage of his unfavorable

⁴⁶ Lovell, Plantation Records, Vol. 1, p. 91. In the 1880s he had “20 teams.” Vol.III, p. 99.

⁴⁷ Lovell, Plantation Records, Vol. III, p. 15.

location, the former slaves expected far more compensation for going to work on a more remote demesne. This had the net effect of pushing the labor pool even further into the realm of the already more lucrative and exceptional holdings such as those on the river, including Palmyra.⁴⁸

Large squad groups typically had leaders who were responsible for motivation and productivity. John C. Willis has explained that often it was these leaders who were charged with the task of travelling to hubs such as New Orleans or Selma to hire migrant laborers and secure the form of compensation. In Lovell's case, although his squads did have leaders, it was he who travelled to engage the laborers. Willis also explains that while some freedmen contracted individually, others did so collectively. In the early years after 1868, it appears that Lovell contracted with individuals. But after 1880 he regularly engaged large numbers of laborers who comprised many squads. Above all, Willis adds, the freed people preferred short stints; at most, commitments were for the season.⁴⁹ Thus, notwithstanding the similarities between the work of their former condition as slaves and squad labor, the latter became the default adjustment at this point in time: planters of large holdings could hire seasonal (temporary) help to work solidly through the planting cycle, and pay them in either wages or crop shares at the season's

⁴⁸ Wayne, "Ante-Bellum Planters," pp. 184-185.

⁴⁹ *De Bow's Review* XXXVIII-XXXIX (1869), p. 609; Wayne, "Ante-Bellum Planters," pp. 191-197; Willis, *Forgotten Time*, pp. 32, and 38-39; and Lovell Plantation Records, Volumes 1-3. For the 1880s and beyond consult Volumes II and III. In 1884 Lovell did note that one of his squad leaders returned with ". . . a good many hands. . . [now] I shall have all the hands I want [need?]." See Vol. II, p. 149.

end.⁵⁰ It appears that during Lovell's tenure, the period of time from 1865 (the year of the family's recovery) to 1879 (the era of labor unrest associated with the exodus to Kansas) was one in which adjustment and calibrations were made.

This is a striking contrast to what played out at Yazikovo Selo from 1861 (the year of emancipation) to 1881 (the year when the nobleman sold out to the merchant).

Notwithstanding the efforts Vasili Yazikov made to "work" with the hand that he was dealt, things largely stagnated. Yazikov's tenure in the post-emancipation period coincided with one of uncertainty about the meaning of emancipation. After the merchant's purchase, however, and similar to the situation after about 1880 at Palmyra Plantation, things picked up. Of course a significant difference between the two in the later period is that Stepanov paid wages and Lovell utilized a combination of sharecropping and wage labor.⁵¹

What were the terms of Lovell's contracts? These, like the numbers of both squads and their composition, represent a moving target in terms of both form and composition. On the one hand, it is astonishing that nowhere in Lovell's journals did he present a detailed, orderly pay scale. Rather, references are circumstantial, cursory, occasional, and, likely, embedded in the overall general numbers he cited when he paid this or that

⁵⁰ Note that, as I indicated in the section Palmyra Plantation of Chapter Four, the terms "share wages" (which was cash wages), "share renting" (which was renting land for a share of the crop), and "sharecropping" could mean many things and produce many variations, thus evidencing the "...wide variety of approaches" that were taken by landowners "seeking a solution to 'the labor problem'" in this period. See Ransom and Sutch, *One Kind of Freedom*, p. 88.

⁵¹ While it is true that there was wage labor in Mississippi, and forms of what was called sharecropping in Russia did exist, the point here is that these were differences between the two demesnes in this study.

lump sum to this or that factor and/or creditor. There are a number of specific and inferential examples. Vague entries such as “. . .some of the hands have cotton crops,” or “I have made arrangements with Mr. Adams [the leader of one of the squads] to manage. . .Palmyra for next year. . .for \$1,500.00,” or “. . .employed Mr. Lane as overseer at Palmyra @ \$75.00 per month,” or “contracted with Mr. Dillard to oversee for one year,” were typical. Or, for example, in 1871 an entry noted that “hands \$472.63” were “paid.” Much later, in 1886 Lovell wrote that he had returned from Natchez with “a large family,” including “11 hands. they [*sic*] have 2 mules.” And, he would occasionally refer to “tenants” (presumably renters) by name.⁵² On the other hand, perhaps the absence of a meticulous pay scale is not surprising. Perhaps this was intentional so as to hide the details for tax purposes. Or perhaps it was a remnant of an oral, barter oriented economic culture.

Lovell’s daughter-in-law explained that hiring laborers was part and parcel of the whole cotton industry: like other planters of large holdings on the river, Lovell would get an advance from cotton factors, and use part of that to hire hands, while owing the factors the amount he was advanced at the end of the cotton season. In addition, an informative number is one cited in Table 4.4 (end of this chapter) which shows that Lovell entered wages for the year 1879 as \$12,000. We also know that Lovell’s neighbor and former Davis slave, Ben Montgomery, charged his hands four to six dollars per acre tenancy share in the early years, and that Lovell “charged more.” Vernon Lane Wharton has explained that, short of owning land, the freed people preferred a variety of forms of rent

⁵² Lovell, Plantation Records, Vol. I, pp. 61 and 102, Vol. II, pp. 31-38, 104, 130, 132, and 143, and Vol. III, pp. 8, 38, and 63.

since this allowed the “maximum of freedom for themselves and in the supervision of the land. . . .and offered the possibility” of profits.⁵³ Clearly, the above demonstrates that 1) Lovell utilized a variety of compensation methods, and 2) the freed people he employed accepted those terms.

Here a number of distinctions must be made. In the rent configuration, the laborer paid the owner either in the form of shares of crop or cash. In the wage arrangement, the laborer could be paid in cash *or* receive a share of the crop as compensation for his labor. Thus, although the specific and comprehensive details of what Lovell paid his hands over time is lost to history, the numbers, both in terms of bales produced and earnings, inform us that the freed people worked for Lovell. (See Table 4.5) Unlike Vasili Yazikov, whose former “people” were obligated to him, Lovell had to adapt, and come up with ways to attract and compensate laborers. In theory, to the extent that they would work on land allotted to them by their former master and hand over at least some of the produce to the estate, the former serfs at Yazikovo Selo were “sharecropping.” However, the “intent” of sharecropping in the American South was, in effect, a compromise which both

⁵³ See Caroline Couper Lovell, *The Bend of the River* (Unpublished Manuscript), pp. 24-25; Hermann, *Pursuit*, p. 135; and Wharton, *The Negro in Mississippi*, p. 63. With respect to trying to identify how \$12,000 was paid to whom and at what rates, the variables to take into consideration are great. For example, we know that a Quitman/Lovell relative Lemuel Connor (who was discussed in Chapter Two), paid his laborers between 1869 and 1875 cash income ranging from \$70 to \$300 for the year, depending on their assignments. These could change over the course of a season. These could also be altered depending on whether or not rations and tenancy rates were factored in. As for the wages Lovell paid in 1879, given that he had three squads comprised of approximately twenty hands each, this figure might be considered generous. However, the journal shows that, as always, labor was fluid at Palmyra Plantation: additional, temporary hands were hired for specific jobs or months and, especially, work on the ditch was ongoing. Therefore, that figure may well have included many other “employees” in addition to squad hands.

the employer and the employed defaulted to in the midst of liberation. The “intent” of obligated labor on the allotted land in the Russian case was meant to 1) control and/or inhibit the mobility of the former serfs; 2) protect the integrity of labor on the demesne; and 3) compensate the former serf owner for the “loss” that he/she incurred as a result of emancipation. The liberated slaves may well have had to work for their freedom during the Home Colony period at Davis Bend, but after the Thirteenth Amendment was ratified, freedom was never contingent on one’s labor.

In terms of the logistics of hiring these temporary hands the story runs in two directions; with Lovell’s experience of going to factors and securing labor running in one direction and that of the laborers securing work and going to the plantation for that work stint in the other. With respect to the former, Lovell documented this only in short notes, such as indicating he had gone to “N.O.” and returned with the number of hands. Regarding the latter, the freed people’s scattering that was set in motion by the war continued afterwards, and is exemplified by migrant labor and the labor factorage system. Ronald L. F. Davis has explained that while little is known about the labor factorage system, it is not difficult to connect the dots. Like sharecropping, labor factors emerged in a context in which the demand for labor was great, and when the freed people had mobility and needed sustenance.⁵⁴

Merchants, agencies, and cotton factors in New Orleans, Selma, and elsewhere worked essentially as clearing houses: they pulled in people looking for work and paired them up with planters. In one sense this operation functioned as a shadow economy. In another, however, it was a formal enterprise functioning in an entrenched cotton

⁵⁴ Conversation with Ronald L. F. Davis, March 13, 2013.

economy. For example, newspapers from the time contained advertisements for laborers.⁵⁵

Many, if not most laborers hired for this or that season were part of a much larger migration and/or labor transportation effort that originated in the Upper South immediately after emancipation. Originally, this migration grew out of the fact that the liberated people were withholding contracting and refusing to work with any planters because they saw doing so as limiting their freedom. But, as William C. Harris has explained, there were legitimate and pragmatic realities which set in motion the freed people's desire to migrate from the Upper and Lower South to the Deep South after emancipation. One of these realities included the fact that the economies there had deteriorated greatly as a result of the war. Another was the fact that white inhabitants there abused the freed people. There was also a greater demand for labor in the Delta region, as well as the promise of higher wages. Hence, they left in search of a better situation.

Furthermore, entrepreneurial opportunists seized the moment. Agents, including former slaves and African American pastors, went into business as head hunters of sorts, enticing the freed people with ads in newspapers and statements such as “. . .It is the will of God that negroes should move to Mississippi. . . .Your failure in” Georgia, (or elsewhere, such as Alabama and even Mississippi itself) “is proof that God” wants you to

⁵⁵ See for example advertisements in the *New Orleans City Directories*, 1866-1877.

“go to Mississippi,” the “Promised Land.” These labor agents escorted freed people as consignees westward across the American South to New Orleans.⁵⁶

Who were the migrants who made the trek? Countless freed African American men, some of whom brought family members with them, and others who did not. To be sure, Lovell contracted with scores of freedmen during his tenure. However, he not only had laborers who brought their families to Palmyra, but he employed them as well.⁵⁷ All this said, the labor forage system during the Reconstruction period is an area of study that deserves further attention.

Lovell routinely commented on the quality of the squads’ work. “Found everything working well,” “I think I never saw a better cotton stalk on 365 acres than there is in the Palmyra Squad,” “I have never seen finer farming than was done in R. Squad this year,” and “there is not as fine [a squad] a[s] Rosedale Squad” were typical evaluatory comments.⁵⁸

Lovell employed many people over the course of his tenure at Palmyra, but one individual stands out. O. Kelly was the foreman at Palmyra for over ten years, as well as a business associate of Lovell’s well up into the 1890s. Although Lovell made no

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*; Wharton, *Negro in Mississippi*, pp. 107-113; and William C. Harris, *The Day of the Carpetbagger in Mississippi* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1979), pp. 508-509.

⁵⁷ For example, see Lovell Plantation Records, Vol. II, pp. 99 and 132; and Vol. III, p. 63.

⁵⁸ Lovell Plantation Records, Vol. II, pp. 34, 42-45, and 91-92; and Vol. III, p. 109. “R” refers to the “Rosedale Squad.” The Squads were named after the plantation, Palmyra, the “house,” Rosedale, at Palmyra, and the leaders or overseers, such as “Jeter Squad,” “Adams Squad,” and the like. For further examples of Lovell’s praise see Vol. I, pp. 39, 40-42, 45, 46, 47, 56, 61, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 69, 75-80, 84-86, 89, and 96-97; and Vol. II, p. 94.

mention of him until September of 1871, Kelly was at Palmyra well beforehand since 1) he is listed in the Freedmen's Bureau records regarding the Home Colony period at the Bend, and 2) his particulars are listed in the 1870 Agricultural Census. (See Table 4.4) With respect to the former, the Bureau records note that Kelly had owned three slaves there, Betsy, Thomas, and Lucinda Murray. Therefore, I presume he was white. In the Quitman slave inventory from 1859, there is a Betsy, Thomas, and Lucinda registered; but no surnames. Whether or not these were the same individuals is hard to tell. With respect to the 1870 Census, clearly, Lovell provided Kelly with the incentives of both land and sharecropping.

As a resident sharecropper and foreman, Kelly performed the nuts and bolts of the planting season. He regularly wrote notes to Lovell, which could be likened to reports, keeping him informed of both productivity and the quality of produce. He also appraised chattel and farming equipment, and ensured that they were working properly. Lovell would go on to hire other foremen, or "overseers" as he came to refer to them after 1880, but the Journals are laced with references to Kelly, including one note in 1886 which indicated he had contracted with him for a specific levee augmentation for \$224.63 for a week's work.⁵⁹

Lovell routinely commented on the quality of Kelly's performance, as well as other employees over the years. He praised "everything running smoothly," "everything

⁵⁹ List of Indigenous Inhabitants, Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, Davis Bend, 1865-1866, Record Group 105, Volume 123, Box 39 (Mississippi), M1907, Roll 16, NA, 325; Slave Inventory, Quitman Family Papers, Box 3, Folder 31, University of the South, Sewanee, TN; Lovell Plantation Records, Vol. I, pp. 26, 34, 37, 45, 62, and 74, and Vol. III, pp. 63 and 69; and U.S. Censuses, 1870, Agricultural Schedule, Warren County, Miss., MDAH.

looking well,” “Mr. O. Kelly commenced planting cotton,” “Mr. Kelly hard at work,” and Mr. Kelly has “Palmyra in [a] better fix than anywhere else on the island.” He even admitted that “Kelly’s cotton is better than mine.” That Lovell referred to his foreman with a formal “Mr.” lends further support to the presumption that Kelly was white.⁶⁰

Lovell did not hold back when he was disappointed with those he employed, occasionally even discharging them. “Things have not been working as well as they should. . . [the foreman’s replacement] does not work well,” “discharged Mr. Rhea as Overseer of Rosedale Squad,” “Ichler [sp.?] is a poor manager. . . and I am fearful,” and the like were typical notes on this subject.⁶¹ In these comments we see a striking similarity to Lovell’s father-in-law’s dissatisfaction with his overseers in the antebellum days.

The 1870s and Beyond

After the rough start following the war’s conclusion and emancipation, the economy began to improve. Indeed, 1870 produced a bumper crop, the proof of which came on October 9 when the Davis plantations earned a prize of \$500 for the best single bale of long staple cotton at the St. Louis Fair.⁶² And then the Panic of 1873 hit, causing widespread distress and triggering an economic depression that lasted until 1879. Reminiscent of the early post-war years, 1874 was as disastrous for planters of the river

⁶⁰ Lovell Plantation Records, Vol. I, pp. 35-37, 39, 40-41, 45, 66, 72, and 77-78; and Vol. II, pp. 28 and 95.

⁶¹ Lovell Plantation Records, Vol. II, pp. 62, 66, 87, 135, 139, and 156.

⁶² Hermann, *Pursuit*, p. 151.

counties. The spring brought several floods, which delayed planting. The summer brought a drought. In addition to the dire economic situation, the mules at Palmyra were besieged by buffalo gnats, with 10 dying in the space of one week in April. And the river swelled again to record proportions in the early fall, with Lovell indicating that he had informed the hands that they all should expect to rebuild the levies, and noting somberly, “. . .hope better times are coming.”⁶³ Cotton prices continued to fall, which squeezed earnings. While Lovell would comment on the dreadful developments of 1874 that “our prospects are truly gloomy,” he would also report that 1,440 bales of cotton were produced.⁶⁴

Lovell was consistently emotive and anxious about the water levels. His exasperation with both the weather and the battle to reinforce the levies was shown as flood after flood came. For example, during the flood of 1882 he had a total of 300 laborers working at a fever pitch to augment the banks. He feared the whole Bend would “go under.” Then, when the levees did break, he registered that water had completely surrounded Rosedale. He also recorded that the “people at Ursino,” which was Mr. Kelly’s land, were “truly in a deplorable condition,” and “many hands are leaving daily. The future is anything but bright. Hard times ahead.” Two years later, during another onslaught, he despaired “I have given up all hope, . . .nothing can save us but a miracle,” “it is a hard [battle] for a man to fight,” and “having a devil of a time.” He also expressed complete exasperation with Jefferson Davis, who “will not keep up” his end of the bargain at maintaining the

⁶³ Lovell Plantation Records, Vol. I, pp. 62-64; and Hermann, *Pursuit*, p. 201.

⁶⁴ Lovell Plantation Records, Vol. I, pp. 63 and 68; and see Table V.

integrity of the Bend's levees, adding that ". . .if I had control of the island I would make it the finest place in the South."⁶⁵

Nor were floods and droughts of the mid-1870s the only menaces with which the inhabitants of Davis Bend had to contend. The Mississippi Delta region was also a breeding ground for diseases such as malaria and yellow fever, and, notwithstanding the development of a vaccine in 1798, smallpox was common. A combination of drought, low cotton prices, and a deadly outbreak of yellow fever in 1878 irreparably damaged the Delta's economy. Estimates were that roughly 3,000 laborers in the river counties would be laid off. All this notwithstanding, Lovell's reports for the year portrayed an opposite scenario, with "everything looking well," "good farming weather," and "Mr. Kelly thinks we shall make. . .more than last year."⁶⁶

Like his Russian counterpart, Lovell had his own set of problems associated with finances and family issues. With respect to the former, Lovell's financial gymnastics were exhaustive. His financial responsibilities were most often one and the same as those of his extended family. Lovell was in constant motion, extending and collecting notes of credit with multiple factors, agents, family members, and other individuals, both named and unnamed. He was also the point person who spearheaded and managed the family's 35 year effort to receive compensation from the Federal Government for its confiscation of Palmyra during the war. Lovell's practice of transferring titles to property and I.O.U.s

⁶⁵ Lovell Plantation Records, Vol. II, pp. 67, 69-73, 155-156, and 162. Besides the floods and the constant search to find and secure seasonal labor, another example of the typical stressors which Lovell experienced was in September 1882 when a steamer ran aground and he lost 63 bales of cotton. Vol.II, p. 93.

⁶⁶ See Wharton, *Negro in Mississippi*, p. 112; and Lovell Plantation Records, Vol. II, p. 18-30.

from one family member to another was not dissimilar to the types of financial machinations Vasili Yazikov engaged in, such as selling the family's city mansion to his wife. For example, on January 1, 1875 Lovell documented that, as a result of General Quitman's estate being compensated to the tune of \$22,550 by the Federal Government for its confiscation of Palmyra in 1864 and 1865, Tonie, as the rightful heir, "loaned" it to her husband, Lovell, at 8% interest. Lovell put Palmyra up as collateral to secure the loan. This was no small amount.⁶⁷ Therefore, clearly, both Yazikov and the Quitman/Lovells were not only not poverty stricken, but lived very well in the post-emancipation period.

As for the freed people at Palmyra Plantation, unlike their counterparts at Yazikovo Selo, in the long term, they did not resist. On the contrary, notwithstanding the fact that the squad labor configuration and the overseer arrangement that Lovell instated at Palmyra were reminiscent of the former days of unfree labor, they worked solidly over the course of the period under study. The exception, however, was the commotion associated with the 1879 Kansas exodus movement with which this chapter opened. Lovell expressed that "There is a great deal of dissatisfaction among the hands," and that "Six familys [*sic*] from Montgomerys [*sic*] left...for Kansas. It is worth noting that the collective action demonstrated by the freed people does not necessarily mean that there

⁶⁷ For notations regarding challenging the U.S. Government for compensation see Lovell Plantation Records, Vol. I, pp. 9, 21, 41; and see pp. 47-60 for a detailed accounting inventory for the year 1874 only, which suggests that Lovell paid out stipends or "allowances" to all the family members, of which the amounts could vary greatly. For typical examples of financial entries, suggesting payments for contracts, and credits and debits with cotton factors see Vol. I, pp. 14, 17, 24, 43-44, 46, 57, 62, 72, 74, and 78, and Vol. II, pp. 30 and 62. For the statement borrowing the \$22,550 see Quitman Family Papers, Lovell Family Papers, University of the South, Sewanee, TN, Box 1, Set 79. For other examples of financial matters see Box 1, Set 79

was uniform solidarity. For the exoduster movement dissipated almost as quickly as it emerged. Still, in early 1879 Lovell wrote to his double sister in law, Louisa Quitman Lovell, telling her that he could not pay her the \$2,250 he owed her because “the Hands had struck for a reduction in work.” Soon, however, he observed that things appeared “to be over and everything” was working “better than I had expected,” adding cryptically, “Kansas fears [are now] quiet[.] Peace not suffers much by it.” And he concluded “I truly hope it will” remain this way as “I have had a hard time of it getting anymore hands.” Then, by September, Lovell wrote regarding the cotton crop, “[we]...have shipped over double [the] amount up to this time last year.” Still, in the new year he expressed that “1880 will I think prove the hardest year since the war,” as there was so much “dissatisfaction among the hands.”⁶⁸

By 1880 the Agricultural Census indicated that the plantation was worth \$114,150.⁶⁹ As this chapter has demonstrated, this value did not happen without effort. The information in Tables 4.1 and 4.4 is telling. It indicates that the production of cotton for 1860, 1867 (Home Colony period), 1870, and 1880 was 325 b/c, 554 b/c, 1,228 b/c, and 1,600 b/c respectively. That each bale of cotton weighted 400 pounds before 1870 and 450 pounds afterwards makes these figures even more significant. The sharp increase in cotton production after the war – at both Palmyra and Davis Bend in general – suggests that free labor was far more productive than slave labor. Whether this productivity was

⁶⁸ Lovell Plantation Records, Vol. II, pp. 32-37, and 49. William Storrow Lovell’s brother Joseph was married to his wife, Tonie’s sister, Louisa.

⁶⁹ U.S. Census, 1880, Agricultural Schedule, Warren County, Mississippi, Mississippi Department of archives and History. In today’s money that would be the equivalent of \$3 million.

due to the seasonal commitments, or due to the form of compensation, or to the fact that the freed people had mobility, or because they were free is difficult to say. But certainly these all played a role.

Conversely, with respect to the 1880 amount of \$114,150, clearly the value had diminished when compared with those of 1870, 1860, and 1850, which were \$129,490, \$200,000, and \$90,000 respectively. On the one hand this is not surprising, given the rampant deflation in the period. On the other hand, there is another explanation.

Although the categories are not available in the censuses before 1870, the “land under cultivation” afterwards explains these numbers in part, with 4,400 acres worked in 1870 and 5,670 in 1880. In this respect, what happened at Palmyra Plantation is in line with what Michael Wayne has argued, that the wealth and number of plantations in the Mississippi River Delta region contracted after 1865 and, by 1880, there were fewer large plantations, but they were wealthier. Moreover, that wealth in 1880 was not as great as it was in the antebellum period. (Of course “wealth” before emancipation took into account the value of slaves.) Still, those wealthy planters such as the Lovells travelled to spas, sent their children to private schools, and had class and station. In this respect, this analysis is similar to the Seymour Becker thesis, that while the Russian nobility and its holdings contracted after emancipation, they still had status and standing.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ See Wayne, “Antebellum Planters,” pp. 122-142; Becker, *Nobility and Privilege*, *passim*; Hermann, *Pursuit*, p. 214; and George S. Pabis, *Daily Life Along the Mississippi* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2007), p. 151.

Conclusion: The Meaning of Freedom

From the above discussion in both Chapters Four and Five the following conclusions can be drawn: First, although both traditional norms and the terms of emancipation were crucial determinants of how freedom unfolded in each context, both sets of freed people acted in their own self interest as best they could, utilizing what options they had at the time, especially with respect to labor performance on the demesne. Some resisted while others complied, though not necessarily unconditionally. I also suggest that each set of freed people operated according to the cultural principles in place at the time: while the former slaves at Palmyra Plantation evinced something more akin to rugged individualism, the former serfs at Yazikovo Selo exemplified the “all for one and one for all” dictum associated so often with the Russian village community.

These case studies demonstrate a number of crucial variables at play in the relationship between labor and freedom. The terms of Russian emancipation “compelled” the freed people to “work” until they were “free.” Therefore, although they must have worked on their own plots to sustain themselves, the Russian freed people had little incentive to work for their former master. And, because they were set free from their former master’s authority, there was nothing to “force” them to cooperate, especially when they had land tenure.⁷¹ Although the terms of American emancipation

⁷¹ To be sure, the vast majority of peasants had most of their *barshchina* obligations converted to *obrok*. Like the Southern freed people, they arranged various additional forms of compensated work, from wages to sharecropping (*otrabotka*) to migrant labor. Discussion with Peter Kolchin, June 9, 2015. In *Otmena krepostnogo prava: Doklady ministrov vnutrennikh del o provedenii krestyanskoy reformy, 1861-62* (Moscow/Leningrad, USSR: izdatel'stvo Akademiy nauk SSSR, 1950), p. 294, Sigizmund Natanovich Valk used the word *izdol'nik* for sharecropping; while Dmitri Murashov uses two: *izdolshchina* (land tenancy), which the *Bol'shoi entsiklopedicheskiy slovar'* (Moscow, Russia: Nauchnoye izdatel'stvo, 1999), p. 104 also uses and describes

set the former slaves “bird free,” the system of government and traditional practices allowed many laws governing labor, both *de jure* and *de facto*, to take shape. While the freed people were compelled to work for sustenance, they had the “freedom” to migrate and negotiate for some kind of compensation. In each society, the vision of freedom which the liberators set in motion produced mixed results, as each demesne demonstrated. To be sure, embedded deep within American culture was the notion that there was no conflict between being free and working. Indeed, there was an implicit connection between the two. Conversely, and perhaps, in part, because of the history of the service ethic embedded deep in Russian culture and history, work was not generally associated with freedom. Indeed, to be free from authority and a “loose” or extra legal interpretation of land ownership as far as the former serfs were concerned seemed to epitomize freedom.⁷² Most of all, the peasants clearly considered work they were obligated to perform for their former masters as punitive, whereas the compensation component for labor for the liberated Americans was crucial.

Notwithstanding the fact that they had to pay for the land they received, the peasants’ homesteads on the demesne were kept intact. They could not be evicted. And they had their own garden plots attached to their homes which were theirs. Yazikovo Selo’s peasants could resist *barshchina* obligations since they had their own garden plots for their survival. In America, the terms of freedom did not include land allotments. But,

as the estate owner paying the peasant some part of the harvest, and *izpolshchina* (where the peasant used the land and paid the estate owner one half of the harvest). See Murashov, “Provintsial’noe dvoryanstvo,” pp. 181-183.

⁷² See Donald MacKenzie Wallace, *Russia, Vol. II* (London, UK: Cassell, Petter, and Galpin, 1877), p. 297.

just as the freed people worked for Union authorities because they were compelled to during the Home Colony period, they also worked for Lovell *after* emancipation. Because of the American freed people's mobility and their desire to work for shorter terms, they committed to seasonal work.⁷³ This comparison demonstrates that the theme of mobility versus immobility and its relation to freedom's meaning was crucial. Furthermore, although they were essentially "commanded" to work, that the peasants did not do so was an act of sovereignty in the Russian context. Conversely, that the former slaves worked was also an act of sovereignty in the American context. In this sense, whereas the former slaves were in the system, but not of it, the peasants were of it, but refused to be in it.

The terms of emancipation in Russia were rigid and perpetual. Only with the Redemption Law of 1881, which instated both redemption and wage labor, was a shift in the labor performance at Yazikovo Selo apparent. Conversely, the American emancipation legislation made possible a more pliable and evolutionary approach to contract labor. The incentive of wage labor appeared at first, but was replaced with, or augmented by, a variety of sharecropping modalities, the most significant in this study being seasonal tenancy combined with the squad labor hires. To be sure, neither wage labor nor seasonal contracting emancipated the former slaves from dependence. Conversely, and clearly, their tenancy security enabled the peasants to resist working for their former master. Both sets of freed people had contingency.

⁷³ Peter Kolchin has pointed out that Russia also witnessed an increase in seasonal migrant labor in Russia after emancipation. Discussion with Peter Kolchin, June 9, 2015.

Comparing the stewardship styles of Vasili Yazikov and William Storrow Lovell includes the following observations. First, while both were military men in their early years, both became stewards of demesnes, acquiring them either through inheritance or by proxy through marriage. However, to the extent that Vasili Yazikov continued to live and act according to his *estate* and Lovell seemed to epitomize the “new master” prototype, they were different. This notwithstanding, both strove to find suitable managers. Clearly, both Yazikov and Lovell sought a particular “type” to hire: at Yazikovo Selo, Vasili, like most if not all noble landlords in Simbirsk Province, hired Tatars because of their business acumen as well as marginalized position in Russian society. Kelly was not an outsider. He had an association with the Palmyra Plantation before emancipation, and, although Lovell was fully engaged in managing the demesne, it appears Kelly’s mission had narrow, acknowledged parameters and the support of his boss. Unlike Mangushev, Kelly was both in the system and of it. It is interesting that by the 1880s Lovell, like Stepanov, utilized child labor. And both Stepanov and Lovell utilized the incentive of wage labor, but at opposite ends of their tenure: whereas the American planter utilized it immediately after his recovery of the demesne, and more infrequently as years went by, Yazikovo Selo witnessed it at the end of Vasili’s tenure and at the beginning of Stepanov’s. Notwithstanding the fact that Russian merchants typically dealt in cash regardless of the Redemption Law of 1881, Stepanov’s use of wage labor coincided with the overall trend of it making its appearance in Russia.

Both Yazikov and Lovell faced the common problem of how to secure labor; and both sets of freed people faced the common problem of how to support themselves while also working for others. Further, both Yazikov and Lovell grappled with financial issues,

natural disasters, and family problems. To be sure, many of the problems they faced were due to both the similarities and differences between each of their economic and cultural contexts: while both demesnes were situated in economic systems which were on the cusp of modernization, cotton remained a viable enterprise, especially at an exceptional plantation like Palmrya, and the factory's viability at Yazikovo Selo was dependent upon both government requisitions *and* labor which the peasants withheld.⁷⁴ In addition, while the dichotomy between factory and agricultural labor at Yazikovo Selo remained a salient during the pre- and post-emancipation periods, at Palmyra the mono enterprise of cotton dominated.

What do these findings contribute to our understanding and the historiography? Clearly, the authorities in both Russia and the United States were concerned with ending servitude, but sought ways to secure labor on demesnes for the purposes of maintaining social order and protecting economic activity. In this regard, emancipation did not solve the problem of the demand for cheap labor on the demesne. Nor did it change the elites' attitudes towards the freed people and beliefs about their station in society.

In the case of Yazikovo Selo, the Statutory Charter had been enshrined without the peasants' signature. But this did not ensure their compliance. But neither was the American freed people's compliance certain. Hence, a compromise of temporary, seasonal work was the default. Neither demesne was "typical." While most estates in Russia did not have wool factories on site, many did have an "enterprise" of one kind or another. Further, while by 1881 a great majority of Russian estates had effected a

⁷⁴ Lovell was clearly aware of the backward state of affairs in the regional, cotton economy. He observed in March 1878 "I think with a well made machine, one team could cut down 10 acres a day." See Lovell Plantation Records, Vol. II, p. 24.

Redemption Agreement, Yazikovo had not. That Yazikovo Selo was also still on *barshchina* labor until 1881 is striking. Conversely, Palmyra was rather atypical if compared with the vast number and variety of plantations across the American South: notwithstanding the numerous variables, it was a powerhouse of sorts with respect to cotton production, both before and after emancipation. As a member plantation of the Davis Bend Home Colony experiment it was unique. In that these stories deviate from the norm, this study complicates the grand narratives of generalizations and trends in the post-emancipation period in each country.

The meaning of freedom shifted according to contextual circumstances. In previous chapters, freedom's meaning emerged particularly when traditional sources of authority were constrained, threatened, or compromised. For the freed people, freedom could mean to be free from their former master's authority – or any authority for that matter. In this chapter it had to do with owning one's labor, negotiating with it, or resisting work altogether. Clearly, both sets of freed people understood that labor was inextricably linked to freedom. The peasants of Yazikovo Selo generally withheld labor, while the freed people of Palmyra Plantation used it to negotiate conditional terms. In this regard, both the peasants of Yazikovo Selo and freed people of Palmyra Plantation forced adaptation. Because the former refused to cooperate and work for Yazikov according to the prescribed terms of emancipation, Vasili Yazikov eventually came to the decision to sell the demesne to the merchant. Conversely, the freed people who worked at Palmyra Plantation contracted, in one way or another for specific jobs and/or time frames, and Lovell had to make repeated trips to New Orleans and/or elsewhere in order to seek out and hire labor. Thus, the meaning of freedom was more practical than ideological. The

freed people at each demesne did not articulate a sophisticated doctrine. Rather, for them, it was manifest in the immediate realities of everyday life, and shifted according to the changes that occurred on a day-to-day basis.

To be sure, in addition to it being expressed in the category of analysis of labor, there were other meanings of freedom. Some of these will be addressed in the next chapter.

Table 4.1⁷⁵

Produce at Davis Bend

Produce for **1850** at Davis Bend

	Cotton bales (400 lbs. per bale)	Indian Corn (bushels)	Butter (lbs.)	Implements & machinery	Value of stock	Value of farm	No.of Slaves
Davis Plantations	251	20,000	600	\$ 4,000	\$21,500	\$125,000	314
Palmyra Plantation	369	16,000	2,300	\$20,500	\$23,000	\$ 90,000	423

Produce for **1860** at Davis Bend

	Cotton bales (400 lbs. per bale)	Indian Corn (bushels)	Butter (lbs.)	Implements & machinery	Value of stock	Value of farm	No.of Slaves/Houses
Davis Plantations	232	1,000	500	\$ 900	\$20,000	\$175,000	467/104
Palmyra Plantation	325	1,000	2,000	\$1,000	\$10,000	\$200,000	308/ 80

⁷⁵ The sources for Table I include: 1850 U.S. Census, Agriculture Schedule, Warren County, Mississippi; 1850 Population Schedule, Mississippi; 1860 U.S. Census, Agriculture Schedule, Warren County, Mississippi; 1860 Agriculture Schedule and Slave Population Schedule, all in the Mississippi Department of Archives and History; and Hermann, *Pursuit*, pp. 60, 85, 134, and 138.

Produce at Davis Bend during the Home Colony period and mid-late 1860s

	Cotton bales (400 lbs. per bale)/YEAR		PROFIT	Cotton bales (400 lbs. per bale)/YEAR		PROFIT
Home Colony	150	1864	n/a			
Home Colony	1,736	1865	\$159,200			
Davis Plantations	620	1867	n/a	790	1868	n/a
Palmyra Plantation	310	1867	\$ 2,000	554	1868	n/a

1. The contrasts between 1850 and 1860 for both the Davis Plantations and Palmyra Plantation are striking: although the value of the farm was considerably less for both properties in 1850, the Davis properties had more slaves in the later decade and Palmyra had fewer; the difference of which the former gained 153 and the latter lost 115. Also, the number of cotton bales remained essentially the same.
2. The contrast between 1860 and the mid-late 1860s for the number of cotton bales for both properties is great, with the Davis Plantations gaining 558 and Palmyra Plantation gaining 229.
3. While the Produce for 1860 indicates that Palmyra Plantation listed 308 slaves, Table 4.2 shows that in 1859 it had 359, the difference being that the demesne lost 51 in one year.

Table 4.2⁷⁶

Personal Tax Rolls

Davis Plantations

Year	Cattle (over 20 head)	Slaves (under 60 yrs.)	Amount of State Tax (\$)	Cotton bales (400 lbs. per b/c)	
1848	350	289	194.00		
1854	45	300	118.00		
1856	115	336	132.00		1,265
1857	200	384	167.00		
1858	200	410	176.00		
1859	169	402	173.00		
1860	-	429	332.65		
	<u>Acres tilled for cotton</u>	<u>Total Farm Production (\$)</u>	<u>Bushels corn</u>	<u>Bushels sweet pots</u>	<u>Cotton bales (400 lbs. per b/c)</u>
1869	3,700	192,000	2,000	100	1,900
1879	1,000	50,000	6,000	1,000	800
					(worth \$32,000)

Palmyra Plantation

Year	Cattle (over 20 head)	Slaves (under 60 yrs.)	Amount of State Tax (\$)	Cotton bales (400 lbs. per bale)	
1848	110	311	189.00		
1854	50	291	110.00		
1856	50	310	117.00		2,200
1857	60	338	136.00		
1858	134	348	140.00		
1859	108	359	145.00		
1860	-				
1871	22		2,326.00		
	<u>Acres tilled for cotton</u>	<u>Total Farm Production (\$)</u>	<u>Bushels corn</u>	<u>Bushels sweet pots</u>	<u>Cotton bales (400 lbs. per b/c)</u>
1869	3,700 (approximate)				1,228
1879*	500				1,600
					(worth \$64,000)

*Property in 1879 valued at \$7,720.00

⁷⁶ The sources for Table II include: for each year cited Personal Tax Roll, Warren County, Mississippi Department of Archives and History; 1870 and 1880 U.S. Censes, Warren County, Mississippi; 1850 and 1860 Agriculture Schedule and Slave Population Schedule, Mississippi Department of Archives and History; and Hermann, *Pursuit*, pp. 21-25 and 152.

Table 4.3⁷⁷

Cotton Prices in U.S. dollars

New York Market (per pound)		New Orleans Market (per pound)	
1860	\$1.90	May 1865	\$.45
1861	.31	November 1865	.50
1862	.67	December 1866	.30
1863	1.01	December 1867	.15
1864	.83	December 1870	.12
1865	.45	1879	.10
1866	.25		
1867	.19		
1868	.16		
1869	.19		
1870	.18		
1871	.13		
1872	.15		
1873	.14		
1874	.13		
1875	.13		
1876	.12		
1877	.11		
1900	.05		

⁷⁷ The Sources for Table III include: For New York prices see M. B. Hammond, *The Cotton Industry* (New York, NY: Macmillan, 1897), reproduced in Gavin Wright, "Cotton Competition and the Post Bellum Recovery of the American South" *Journal of Economic History*, 34 (September, 1974), pp. 610-635, see p. 611. For New Orleans prices see Harris, *Presidential Reconstruction*, pp. 79, 166, and 181; Cresswell, *Rednecks*, pp. 1-13; and Hermann, *Pursuit*, pp. 152 and 209. It should be pointed out that the amount in pounds per bale of cotton could vary. Some sources have the amount as 400 pounds, while others make it 500 pounds. See John S. McNeily, "War and Reconstruction in Mississippi, 1863-1900" *Publications of the Mississippi Historical Society, Centenary Series*, II, (1918), pp. 135-535. For a detailed table for New Orleans prices see James E. Boyle, *Cotton and the New Orleans Cotton Exchange: a Century of Commercial Evolution* (Garden City, NJ: The Country Life Press, 1934), pp. 180-181.

Table 4.4⁷⁸

Produce at Palmyra Plantation

	1870		1880
	Agricultural Census		Agricultural Census
	WSL	Kelly	WSL
Total Acres of Land	4,400		5,670
Value of Farm	\$ 85,000	\$ 800	\$103,650
Value of Farming Implements	\$ 5,500	\$ 40	\$ 3,500
Horses	10		7
Mules	36		100
Cows	7	2	10
Butter (lbs)	-----		104
Oxen	8		8
Cattle	11		20
Sheep	-----		45*
Lambs	-----		10
Swine	8		20
Value of Livestock	\$ 6,800		\$ 7,000
Oats (bushels)	-----	20	
Indian Corn (bushels)	2,600		-----
Cotton (Bales 1=450 lbs.)**	1,228	18	1,600***
Improved Land	400 acres	40 acres	
Estimated value of plantation	\$129,490****	\$1,860	\$114,150
Estimated value of all Farm Production	-----		\$ 83,200
Amount paid for wages for Farm labor during 1879 Including Value Of Board			\$ 12,000

*Does not include 10 killed by dogs.

**Note that in the 1870 Census cotton bales were 450 lbs, whereas in 1860 they were 400lbs.

***See Hermann, *Pursuit*, pp. 208-209.

**** Clearly, this total figure is more than the sum of its parts, which is \$93,340. However, these are the numbers entered on the 1870 Census.

⁷⁸ U.S. Censuses, 1870 and 1880, Agricultural Schedule, Warren County, Mississippi, Mississippi Department of archives and History.

Table 4.5⁷⁹

Bales of Cotton (year end) at Palmyra Plantation over time

<u>Year</u>	<u>Bales</u>
1866	188*
1867	310**
1868	554
1869	100***
1870	N/A
1871	N/A
1872	N/A
1873	1,640
1874	1,440**
1875	2,018**
1876	1,093**
1877	1,674
1878	1,129
1879	1,634***
1880	1,174
1881	1,713
1882	685**
1883	1,084
1884	678**
1885	981
1886	704**

*This was from Belen.

**Year of severe flood. The river's course at the Bend's site was changed in 1867. The flood of 1875 was the notorious anomaly "August flood." And, even though 1875 was a flood year, Palmyra produced a post bellum record crop.

***The contrast of these years with the bales of cotton produced at the Davis plantations is striking: In 1869 they produced 1,900 and in 1879 they produced 800.

⁷⁹ Vol. I, pp. 1-7, 17, 41,68, and 89, and Vol III, p. 31; Hermann, *Pursuit*, pp. 116-119, 132, 136, 138, and 208.

Chapter 6

THE MEANING OF FREEDOM IN THE FREED PEOPLE'S DAILY LIFE: EDUCATION, FESTIVITIES, AND SUSTENANCE

Thus far this study has comparatively examined emancipation's roll out and freedom's terms in Russia and the United States in general, and at Yazikovo Selo and Palmyra Plantation in particular. Aside from issues of land, labor, obligations, and resistance, the historian still craves answers to the following questions: what about the freed people? How did they live? What did they do? What did they think? What are the specifics with respect to continuity and change? Here we are met with answers that are insufficient primarily because firsthand accounts are rare if non-existent. This notwithstanding, there are several ways to try to address this lacuna by posing different questions, such as, in what *ways* were the freed people free? In what ways did they live that were different from their pre-emancipation experiences? In what ways did they shape a sense of place? The evidence I uncovered can be categorized into sub-headings under the broad topic of daily life. Some of these categories include schools, festivities, and sources of sustenance. What today is quotidian was on the eve of emancipation unimaginable. And yet, that change in circumstances which in the post-emancipation period represented great strides, was also plagued by old attitudes and habits.

Education and the Freed People

Before emancipation it was rare in the American South for a slave to receive a formal education. To be sure, there were exceptions. The experience of Fredrick Douglass demonstrated that a slave could both self teach and receive informal reading and writing

instruction. However, that example was extraordinary, and it demonstrated the surreptitious nature of, and danger involved in the education of a slave. In general, while most Americans in the North had access to formal education in the antebellum period, for a variety of reasons, many in the South did not. Still, in one way or another all slave states outlawed the education of slaves. Although there are no tabulations of slave literacy from the antebellum period, illiteracy among the slave population was widespread, but not universal. For example, in the cities educated slaves could be found. Therefore, it would be fair to say that roughly five to ten percent of slaves were literate.¹

In Russia, education also reached a small portion of the country's overall population before emancipation. However, unlike America, which saw the initiative for public education emerge in the 1830s and 1840s in New England, the majority of schools were set up by state initiatives and were reserved for members of the nobility, specifically in the forms of *gymnasia*, *lycees*, and cadet corps. And even these were reserved for males only. In addition, various departments of government sponsored schools.

Like their American counterpart, the overwhelming majority of serfs were illiterate. However, unlike what happened in the slave states, it was not illegal for serfs to be educated. Indeed, Russian peasants could set up and run their own schools, *if*, of course, they were approved by their master. But for a variety of reasons they were often short lived. Some of these included cash and supply shortages, attrition, and the peasants' privileging seasonal work over studies. Already overtaxed and burdened with

¹ Roger L. Ransom and Richard Sutch, *One Kind of Freedom: The Economic Consequences of Emancipation* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 15. See also Janet D. Cornelius *When I Can Read My Title Clear: Literacy, Slavery and Religion in the Antebellum South* (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1992).

obligations, peasants did not like chipping in money for schools, especially when they perceived education as a bad thing for their children. In a rural society where children were needed by the family for both their labor and their youth, education was often eschewed because parents saw it as pulling the young away from the field and family. And anyway, they rationalized, the merchants were a perfect example that education was not needed to “get ahead.” Furthermore, and just as Chapters Two, Three, and Five illustrated a number of ways in which they were suspicious of authorities’ motives,² peasants were also wary of formal education. While they may very well have sent their children to school to learn to read or write, often, after perhaps one or two years, they had “no use for the cultural baggage” of educated Russia. Peasants could also see education as spoiling their children, and teaching them to be disobedient.

During the pre-emancipation era, peasant children often attended parish schools run by Russian Orthodox priests. These were the closest approximations to the nascent parish school system in America. Many pupils at the Russian parish schools lived on the premises. Moreover, in addition to their studies, they participated in, or more correctly were impressed into participating in the maintenance and operation of the church and/or monastery. In fact, often “education” was merely a smokescreen for attracting boys for the sole purposes of being assistants, or more correctly servants to the clergy. Indeed, peasants were suspicious of the clergy because of the history of abuse and exploitation of children at their hands. Conversely, and similar to how the Russian army was often a

² Chapter Two addressed the peasants’ suspicions with respect to emancipation’s authenticity as it had been presented to them in the spring of 1861; while Chapter Three considered their concerns with freedom being contingent on their signing a Statutory Charter; and Chapter Five dealt with their resistance to labor obligations.

“dumping ground” for villages who wished to cull their population of, say, wayward and/or difficult young men, poverty stricken parents might send their offspring to parish schools if given opportunity. This was a way for parents to unload an unruly or an unwanted child. Or, it was a way to guarantee a reliable and structured standard of living for a child whom they could not support.³

Emancipation appears to not only have reinforced peasant attitudes towards education, but contributed to even more negative ones. For example, as Ben Eklof has informed us, many came to see it as another attempt by elites to re-enserv them. Indeed, many, if not most peasants saw formal education as just another form of conscription. And Aleksei Sytin has gone so far as to say that after emancipation two thirds of all peasants opposed schools. Conversely, because of the state’s historic distrust of private initiatives, peasant schools were often suppressed.⁴

³ Ben Eklof, *Russian Peasant Schools: Officialdom, Village Culture, and Popular Pedagogy, 1861-1914* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990), pp. 16 and 34; and Ben Eklof, “Peasants and Schools” in Ben Eklof and Stephen P. Frank, eds., *The World of the Russian Peasant: Post-Emancipation Culture and Society* (Boston, MA: Unwin Hyman, 1990), pp. 115-132. For a grim description of rural parish schools, and peasant attitudes towards them and education in general see Valerian Nikolaevich Nazar’yev, “Sovremennaya glush” *Vestnik Yevropi* N. 3, 1876, pp. 10-36, which the author dedicated to Vasili Yazikov’s uncle, poet Nikolai Yazikov. Nazar’yev was a colleague of Ilya Ulyanov, the Inspector of Public Schools in Simbirsk Province, 1874-1886, and the father of Vladimir Lenin.

⁴ Eklof, *Russian Peasant Schools*, pp. 16 and 34; David Moon, *The Russian Peasantry: The World the Peasants Made* (London, UK: Addison Wesley Longman, 1999), pp. 345-346; Dmitrii Yur’evich Murashov, “Provintsial’noe dvoryanstvo v kontse 50-x-70-x gg. XIX veka (po materialam Penzenskoy Gubernii)” *Dissertatsia*: Saratov, 2004, c. 245, p.181; Avenir P. Korelin, *Dvoryanstvo v poreformennoy Rossii, 1861-1904 gg.: Sostav, chislennost’, korporativnaya organizatsiya* (Moscow, USSR: Nauka, 1979); Interview with historian Larissa Yershova, Director Literaturnogo Muzeiya Dom Yazikovikh Filial Ulyanovskogo Oblastnogo Kraevedcheskogo Muzeiya, Ulyanovsk, Russia, May 31, 2010; and Interview with historian Aleksei Sytin, Ulyanovsk, Russia, June 29, 2010.

Following emancipation in 1861, Russian elites proceeded to initiate both formal and informal educational efforts. Conceived and instated by the government, the rationale for education in the context of emancipation was to uplift the newly liberated children, both girls and boys, and instill proper religious beliefs, as well as make them reliable politically. Furthermore, in conjunction with the decision to modernize the country, the vision for public schools also made allowances for schools in factories, the idea being that it would aid productivity. Therefore, in 1863 and 1864 statutes pertaining to education were issued. The latter statute established public literacy schools which primarily targeted the peasant population. The most common school after emancipation became that run by the local government (*Zemstvo*) councils, which were also set up as part of the Great Reforms. Also part of the 1864 law, women were allowed to teach.⁵ Ideally, the subjects earmarked for instruction included reading, writing, arithmetic, science, geography, history, and Bible studies. Three years of education were guaranteed for each pupil.⁶

The Russian government estimated that by 1864, 1/117 of the Russian population was enrolled in a school of one kind or another. This was up from 1/170 in 1854 and 1/208 in 1838. But as one historian has put it, the accuracy of these statistics was a “comic unreality.” For they did not take into consideration important qualifiers such as the fact

Both Eklof and Moon maintain that peasants embraced education so long as they were in charge.

⁵ Two of Lenin’s sisters, Anna and Olga, would become teachers in Simbirsk Province.

⁶ Tatyana I. Pon’ko, *Istoriia otechestvennoi kul’turi 9-21 vekov* (Moscow, Russia: Rossiiskiy Universitet Druzhbi Narodov, 2009), pp. 198, 203-204, and 244-247; and Eklof, *Russian Peasant Schools*, pp. 32, 35, and 65.

that “enrollment” did not necessarily mean attendance; or that both the cities and the Western Provinces, especially in the Baltic region, had far more schools than those in rural and Eastern Russia. In fact, one could make the case that the farther East one went, fewer formal, functioning schools were found. Also, those statistics did not include informal schools such as those established by the peasants.⁷

Besides official efforts set in motion by government edicts, a more informal approach was initiated by upper and middle class elites who sought to “go to the people” and educate them. Originating as an agrarian, socialist, and populist movement, the “Norodniks,” (*Narodniki*), from the word *narod*, or people, debated among themselves about the place of capitalism in Russia. Indeed, some of them were the forebears of what would become the kaleidoscopic and multifaceted collection of revolutionaries and terrorists who would plague Imperial Russia for the next fifty years. While Avrahm Yarmolinsky criticized the movement as a “children’s crusade,” Daniel Field explains that in its nascent form, the movement comprised many professionals and members of the intelligentsia, mostly students and academics, who sought to “bring light” to the liberated peasants. To be sure, in addition to an activist agenda, many were motivated by both paternalism and benevolence.⁸

⁷ In 1863 the Russian government issued a University Statute which reorganized colleges and universities into essentially self governing organizations and granted sweeping freedoms to faculty and students; and in 1864 an Elementary School Statute set in motion the idea for public schools which would be governed and managed locally. In his chapter “Peasants and Schools” in *The World of the Russian Peasant*, Eklof and Frank, Eklof cites the following figures: in 1856 1/143; 1878 1/77; and 1896 1/33. See page 116.

⁸ See Cathy Frierson, *Peasant Icons: Representations of Rural People in Late Nineteenth-Century Russia* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 1-25, and 68; Theodore H. von Laue, “The Fate of Capitalism in Russia: the Narodnik Version” *American Slavic and East European Review* 13:1 (February, 1954), pp. 11-28;

Although the first wave of activists commenced in 1874, as early as 1861 a small number of propagandists set out to tutor the peasants. One, Peter G. Zaichnevsky, founded a group of supporters in Kazan, just north of Simbirsk. Speaking and writing in the peasant milieu, he and others used colloquialisms and invoked Biblical law. They seized on the peasants' suspicions of the authorities' intentions, and tried to dispel rumors of the "real freedom's" imminence.⁹

A number of well intentioned professionals were also involved. Some of these included the notorious "Inspectors." A combination of facilitator and critic, the Inspector had broad powers to effect state educational policies. Those people who became Inspectors during the reform period were a heterogeneous lot. Some were passive, paper-pushing bureaucrats, while others were socialist opponents of government. Still others were enthusiastic reformers, such as the "extraordinary" father of Vladimir Lenin, Ilya Ulyanov. Of Chuvashi heritage, Ulyanov was an educator by profession, had great organizational talent and, with a "missionary zeal," had high expectations for modernizing the education system in Simbirsk Province. Appointed Inspector of the province's schools in 1869, he served in this capacity until his death in 1886. Indeed, Ulyanov was a man in constant motion over the course of his career, travelling

and Daniel Field, "Peasants and Propagandists in the Russian Movement to the People" *The Journal of Modern History* 59:3 (September, 1987), pp. 415-438. The cool reception with which these intelligents were met by the peasants is both notorious and evidence of the peasants' distrust of outsiders. Still, Daniel field has made it clear that, to a large degree, the cold reception with which the intelligents were met by the peasants is a trope and rooted in the Danilov Affair. See p. 423.

⁹ Leonid Mikhailovich Ivanov, *Krestyanskoe Dvizhenie v Rossii v 1861-1869 gg. sbornik dokumentov*. (Moscow, USSR: Mysl', 1964), pp. 26-27, and footnote #54 on pp. 162-165.

throughout the province, and working to open rural, estate schools and inspect them.¹⁰ One of these was the school at Yazikovo Selo.

In the spring of 1869, under Ulyanov's supervision, a school was opened at both Yazikovo Selo and Undory, Vasili's brother's estate. This was an historic moment for both demesnes. Although, like many Russian estates, the peasants at Yazikovo Selo and Undory may well have had some kind of tutoring affiliated with the village church, this was a first in that it was an official, government sanctioned school.¹¹ Because of Ulyanov's direct influence – indeed, he attended the inauguration event at Undory - the schools were opened as a result of the local governments' direction. However, while records indicate that Vasili Yazikov stopped funding both the church and the hospital¹² in the village after emancipation, they do show that he paid for the renovation of a house at one end of the village which became the school building. He also paid for materials and supplies required to open it. In 1875 Vasili funded the building of a new school specifically designed for education. This included proper windows and a blackboard at one end of the room. Although records do not indicate how many of Yazikovo Selo's inhabitants were enrolled, in 1876 the school at Undory had registered 30 students ages 9-14. This is surprisingly low given the fact that the village's population in 1881 had 321

¹⁰ Eklof, *Russian Peasant Schools*, pp. 66, 128-129, and 135-136; and Sytin, *op. cit.*

¹¹ See Nazar'yev, "Sovremennaya," especially pp. 30-3.

¹² It is an overstatement to call it a hospital. It was more correctly a kind of a health clinic with just the very basics of medical care and attention, such as a few beds, bandages, herbs, and liquor.

households and 1,856 people.¹³ In the same way that Vasili Yazikov was a dutiful servant and swiftly effected the Statutory Charter (see Chapter Three), it is arguable that his efforts at the demesne with respect to education also came from the same motive of service to country. Although an additional motive may have been his genuine paternalism, his efforts were nonetheless part of the government agenda.

Yazikovo Selo's school and hospital were not included in Feodor Stepanov's rehabilitation of the estate after he purchased it in 1881. To the extent that he seems to have been devoid of paternalistic proclivities at the demesne, here was a similarity with William Storrow Lovell. However, all things changed when he died in 1898 and his son inherited Yazikovo Selo. Mikhail F. Stepanov's upbringing was exceptional for a member of a Russian merchant family in that he was educated in Western Europe and steeped in its culture. Clearly, he considered the historical value of Yazikovo Selo since, after building a smaller, but charming, two story home for himself on the estate grounds, he preserved the mansion and its contents, freezing it in time, including the Pushkin room where the famous poet had spent several nights and etched his initials in the pane glass window. He expanded the estate's gardens and added a greater variety of plants. He had the village church restored and, drawing from the factory workers, he organized a church choir, whom he paid a salary. He modernized the factory by implementing mechanized processes, including electricity. Next to the factory Mikhail modernized a barracks for its workers. In 1903, he was instrumental in opening a school near the factory for 60 of the

¹³ P.L. Martynov, *Gorod Simbirsk za 250 let ego sushchestvovaniya: sistematicheskii sbornik istoricheskikh svedenii o g. Simbirsk* (Simbirsk, Rossiya: Tipografiya gubernskogo pravleniya, 1898), pp. 3-4; Sytin, *op.cit.*; and E. I. Karamysheva, "Istoriya naselennogo punkta: Undory" *Moya Malaya Rodina* 16 Fevral 2011 <http://rodina-portal.ru/settlements/history/id/7300100004600> Accessed 19 August 2014.

workers' children. In all he spent an estimated 15,000 rubles to buy books for the school's library and the children's education. He also built a small maternity hospital for the village and donated thousands of rubles for its maintenance.¹⁴ All this and more was the result of the younger Stepanov's make up which was a combination of merchant-entrepreneur, paternalist, and aesthete. Above all, his power as the new lord of Yazikovo Selo meant that he had the authority to effect and implement his goals. The Peasant Orchestra of Yazikovo Selo demonstrated a merchant landlord's creative way to simultaneously attach the factory workers to the estate, "uplift" the peasants, and provide entertainment both on the estate and via touring events. Approximately fifteen years later, when a Yazikov relative visited the estate, he observed that the village had one hospital with 30 beds and two schools that were "fully functioning."¹⁵

Sources cite the establishment of schools at Yazikovo Selo and Undory, but tell little else about education and the peasants' experiences with it. Just as the previous chapter demonstrated that after emancipation production associated with labor obligations appeared to stagnate, does it follow, then, that the school at Yazikovo Selo languished in the period between the school's founding in 1869 and its rehabilitation by Stepanov in

¹⁴ Alexander M. Avdonin, *Pod Sen'yu Yazikovskikh Muz* (Ulyanovsk, USSR: Pechatniy Dvor, 1991), pp. 13-34. It was in the arts that Stepanov took his boldest steps. In 1905 he organized a children's cappella and a peasant orchestra. He had an 800 seat theatre/cinema built on the estate, where operas, concerts, and dances were performed by the former serfs who now worked in the factory and on the estate. Additionally, Stepanov was instrumental in opening the Opera House in the city of Kazan, north of Simbirsk on the Volga where, in the first month alone of its opening season, the box office made 40,000 rubles.

¹⁵ Vladimir Radaev, "Po sledam velikikh poetov" *Monomakh* 1:48 (2007), pp. 42-44, p. 43.

1903? Indeed, it is one thing to open a school, but another one altogether to make education work and sustain it.

One way of trying to understand what happened is to consider an account left by Simbirsk native, close friend and colleague of Ulyanov, and neighbor of Vasili Yazikov, Valerian N. Nazar'yev. Like Lenin's father, Nazar'yev was an educator, and was appointed Inspector of Schools in 1869. He was also instrumental in opening the schools at both Yazikovo Selo and Undory. In his article, "Contemporary Wilderness," (*Sovremennaya Glush*) Nazar'yev vividly documented the grim realities associated with educating the peasants after emancipation. Penned in 1876, approximately seven years after the first wave of post-emancipation schools opened, he explained in the article that he wanted to document the realities of the situation of education in the province while they were "still fresh." It was published the same year in the liberal magazine, *Vestnik Evropy*, located in St. Petersburg. In it several themes are clear. First, he addressed the logistical difficulties associated with the founding and maintenance of schools. It was one thing to open a school and another to maintain it by collecting money from the peasants every year, for years, and retaining both students and teachers. The facilities were ghastly, including roach and other insect infestations, poor ventilation, and no heat. Often the "school" could be a room in a basement, or in an old shack behind the church, or a dark, damp, filthy room, or even in a former jail. No thought was given to whether or not its location was beside a noisy factory or tavern. Moreover, there was no oversight or organizational professionalism, i.e. no lists of teachers and their assignments; no uniform curricula had been implemented, and no inventories existed. For example, 10,000 books had been collected for the distribution across the province. Instead, they

were discovered years later, still in the warehouse, many of which had been devoured by mice. Indeed, as Nina Bogdan has explained, funds allocated for the schools were normally redirected by the local authorities to bars and churches.

Another theme found in Nazar'yev's account is that of looking at the *mentalite* of various groups, especially the peasants. For example, he observed that these rural peasants' lives were devoured by isolation and boredom. He was "astonished" by their "dull minds," "apathy," and "manners," and noted that they could not understand that to be educated required months and months, if not years of work. Rather, they expected an "instant result." When that did not happen, they lost all interest, and this only reinforced their pre-conceived notions about education. They completely distrusted education and were suspicious of the authorities' motives. They were not receptive to the teachers, as, on the one hand they associated them with the history of abuse, and with the distant, modern, city on the other. They certainly resented the petition drives for financial contribution to the schools and their maintenance, including teachers' salaries, and even candles for the icons. All they were truly interested in was that which had been seared into their memory, the desire for land. For them, freedom did not mean education and work. Rather, it meant to be free from authority and obligations. Therefore, to be free was to be, in Nazar'yev's words, "idle." He even argued that the peasants' superstitions and cultural style of communicating, such as the use of archaic, quaint, and esoteric sayings and home spun advice and parables, inhibited education, noting that dialogic conversation and reflection was alien to them. When they did attend school, the village pecking order was transferred over, and therefore, the concept of equal treatment was

absent. If they were taught and learned anything at all, it was to memorize this or that, but not to understand why.

Nazar'yev was even more critical of the bureaucrats and teachers who had been in the education system for years and were not only "lazy" and "incompetent," but grafted the system at every opportunity. A scathing portrait, Nazar'yev noted they could talk a good talk, make endless pronouncements (a frequent one being "Hope and Change"), have voluminous reports, and could participate in all kinds of organizational meetings, all which simulated productivity, but when the time came to make a decision or implement one, nothing came of it. Everything reverted to the *status quo*. And if anyone tried to right the ship, make corrections, indeed tell the truth and even expose incompetence, he was frozen out by his colleagues. Here, Nazar'yev argued, education was a sham, with no instruction or studying going on. Instead, games, pranks, brawls, boozing, idleness, and even beatings and orgies were the norm in terms of activity. Those who were competent and had a conscience got themselves out and escaped to the cities.

He was far more conciliatory towards and supportive of the new crop of activists who had set out to help the peasants, however. Driven by a "sincere desire to serve society," these teachers, especially the women, were a new breed who demonstrated and believed in Christian morals, cleanliness, self discipline, and self control. They were truly educated and wanted to educate. Nazar'yev reserved his highest praise for his friend and colleague, Ulyanov, whom he described as someone who saved the schools in Simbirsk from complete destruction with his energy, persistence, and genuine dedication to not only educating the peasants, but establishing an education system in the province. He concluded his account with the opinion that while serfdom had ended, emancipation did

not emancipate the people from their culture. As was so typical of Russia, he argued, “education” had gotten off to a great start with an enthusiastic burst of energy, but thereafter plunged into “ambivalence.”¹⁶

On the one hand, it is important to put into context Nazar’yev’s dismissive views of the peasants’ *mentalite*. They were typical of an educated bureaucrat in the post-emancipation period. Clearly, with condescension and paternalism, he considered the peasants uneducated, simple, and practically incapable of adjusting to the norms set by cultural elites. On the other hand, as an educator driven by an altruistic desire to uplift the liberated, the problems he identified and described help us understand the great and logistical difficulties associated with education in the reform period.¹⁷

All this said, to the extent that the decade or two following emancipation witnessed an initial flurry of enthusiasm and participation on the part of authorities and elites, and was followed by a “withering” of initiative and idealism, Ben Eklof agrees. The official account has it that the initial period of “ferment” was followed by a languishing of schools. However, Eklof has also explained that an informal and remarkable expansion of peasant schools flourished in the thirty years after 1861. Literacy statistics support this, the main ones being military/conscription and factory literacy records. Peasants were the driving force behind unofficial, “un-schooled,” or “wild,” as they were called, literacy schools. Of course to be literate does not mean that the availability of schools

¹⁶ Nazar’yev, “Sovremennaya.” Nina Bogdan is Nazar’yev’s granddaughter. See her *The Desolation of Exile: A Russian Family’s Odyssey* (North Charleston, SC: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2012), p. 108.

¹⁷ Another Inspector, S.I. Miropol’skii, reached the same conclusions in his famous study, *Inspektsiya narodnykh shkol*, especially page 159. See Eklof, *Russian Peasant Schools*, p. 391.

was universal and widespread, or that enrollment was 100% and sustained. There is also a difference between learning to read and learning from reading. But it does mean that, given the dismal record of official school and education records following the initial flurry of enthusiasm, something must explain the widespread literacy rates observed by Russian authorities after 1900, and it was the peasants themselves.¹⁸

This demonstration of agency and evident enthusiasm for literacy may well explain the apparent ease with which the younger Stepanov was able to establish a school at Yazikovo Selo during his tenure. For it was during this period that official, formal schools, frequently, if not always, built on and incorporated that which had already been set up by the peasants themselves.¹⁹

Coincidentally, education in the American South also emerged with a burst of energy and optimistic spirit of reform. Although schooling for the freed people was built into each state's reconstruction legislation, unlike Russia, it was not part of the central government's emancipation mandates. This notwithstanding, as in the Russian case, education was at the forefront of ideas about the meaning of freedom in the midst of liberation. And, just in the way that both central government directives and local public leaders instated schools in Simbirsk Province, to the extent that organizations such as the Freedmen's Bureau were created by federal authorities to set education efforts in motion, this too happened in Mississippi. Plus, similar to the "go to the people" movement of the

¹⁸ See Eklof, *Russian Peasant Schools*, see Chapters 3 and 10, respectively titled "Who Built the Schools" and "The Expansion of Schooling," pp. 70-96 and 283-314, and specifically pp. 83-4.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 85-86.

1870s in Russia, officials and volunteers flooded into the American South from the North, albeit much earlier, during and immediately after the Civil War.

With them they brought their ideas about education. Similar to those Russian activists' beliefs, these included the ideas that slavery had degraded the unfree. Whereas both emancipation and education was part of the Russian government's modernization policies, the American activists believed that literacy was not only crucial for both moral and Christian religious purposes (specifically for reading the Bible), but equally key to the American beliefs in "upward mobility," "self-improvement," and the work ethic. In addition, they considered education conducive to civil society and the republic's survival. In short, the education agenda was about integrating the former slaves into American society. As in the Russian case, it was a marriage of sincere benevolence and paternalism that motivated Northerners to set up schools in the South in the midst of liberation. A passage in a report from one activist to another is instructive:

I often say to our teachers...that the great results of emancipation are not by any means yet developed. What these results shall be will depend greatly upon the character of the instructions given by the teachers and missionaries now on the ground laboring among them. I cannot think it right to refer very often to the past and I think it is especially unwise & [*sic*] dangerous to inculcate the feeling among the ignorant peoples that they are now to be elevated to all the rights of the citizens here. The time may come when they should be entitled to all the privileges of white citizens but that time is not yet. . . Privileges guaranteed to citizens will be theirs when they are qualified to use them wisely.²⁰

²⁰ To Rev. George Whipple from S.G. Wright, March 28, 1865, American Missionary Association Papers (AMA) (microfilm), *University of Delaware*. The Reverend George Whipple was the Secretary of the A.M.A. and the Reverend S. G. Wright was the Chaplain of a "Colored Regiment."

Here was clear evidence of sentiment that was similar to that which was enshrined in the Russian legislation, that freedom was conditional.

Also similar to both the sentiment and the evaluation contained in the Nazar'yev article, especially inferencing “wildness” and specifically alluding to “idleness,” a Freeman’s Bureau Circular of February 1865 noted that the freed people,

Their time in idleness, and vagrancy, . . . must be taught, and encouraged to provide better homes, to labor, and to understand and conform to the domestic, and civil laws which should govern them. . . .The educational interests of this people should be more general, . . .than mere book education. . . .greater efforts [should be] made to instruct them in the more practical lessons of life. Much good can be done in visiting their houses and assisting them in organizaing and conducting their homes by many suggestions, which are much needed. . . .Their social and family relations should be fully explained to them, and they be urged to faithfully observe them. They should be taught a greater regard for truth, and the right of property, and to more faithfully observe and fulfil [*sic*] all contracts. . . . [live with] less caprice and spend less money for trifles, . . .²¹

Here in this account in another demonstration of the condescending, paternalistic benevolence, and didacticism for which many authorities were notorious.

When the Freedmen’s Bureau was established in March 1865, part of its mandate was to cooperate with the benevolent organizations in establishing and funding schools for the freed people.²² The student who scours their records notices the overarching theme that educating the freed people was a high priority. In addition, and unlike their Russian counterpart, the history of this period is saturated with records of the freed people themselves holding education as one of the most important things they associated with

²¹ Circular, Lt. A.W. Brobst, February 1865, AMA.

²² See Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, School Reports, 1865-1870, Record Group 0775, Series #011, “Mississippi,” War Department, NA.

freedom. Indeed, Michael Wayne has noted that it was the symbol of freedom.²³

Although it is true that the vast majority of those liberated from slavery were never served by the schools set up by the Freedmen's Bureau and other aid societies, many, both adult and child alike, experienced their first taste of freedom in the classroom. Here was another dissimilarity between the two subaltern groups in this study. Whereas in Russia education was for children, in the American South it was for both adults and youth. Therefore, education was an aspirational manifestation of freedom.

Even before the Freedmen's Bureau was mandated, schools were established at Davis Bend as part of the Home Colony. As in the Russian case, the schools were under the central government's supervision:

...all the schools in this Department are brought under Military rule. No Schools are allowed, except such as the "Powers that Be" chose to favor, & as in all government operations, there must be an infinite amount of Red Tape. . . .No One can teach a private School, or any other without permission."²⁴

In February 1864, the Bend could boast three large schools, ten teachers, seven schools, and 699 pupils, which included men, women, and (mostly) children. All three rotated reading, writing, and arithmetic classes, and religious instruction. In April Quaker missionary Henry Rountree reported that ". . .it is gratifying to witness how eager they are to obtain it (learning.) These schools. . .furnish good opportunities of giving religious and moral influences with their scholastic requirements. . . ." By February 1, 1865 the schools were run by the United Presbyterian Mission, and Palmyra Plantation had four

²³ Michael S. Wayne, "Ante-Bellum Planters in the Post-Bellum South: The Natchez District, 1860-1880," Ph.D. Dissertation, Yale University, 1979, pp. 164-173.

²⁴ J.P. Bardwell to Rev. M.E. Strieby, January 5, 1865, AMA.

one room schools with six teachers, and 493 enrolled pupils with 341 being the average attendance. It is not surprising that the freed people at Davis Bend expressed their freedom through education. Again, Rountree observed that they seemed “universally eager to learn to read and write.” Furthermore, as time would pass, the freed people would learn the practical value of education so as to prevent any employer from taking advantage of their illiteracy.

Similar to those singled out for praise by Nazar’yev in his account, the majority of the teachers on the Bend were young women from middle class families who came south with a sincere desire to help the former slaves. The conditions they lived and worked in were far from ideal: the only housing available was in the main houses and out buildings on the Bend, which had already been cannibalized as a result of both the owners’ abandonment and the war’s vagaries.

The context of war, occupation, and Reconstruction in which schools for the liberated made their appearance meant that things were not seamless, and a variety of problems plagued the efforts. First, even though Union authorities controlled movement to and from the Bend, the population of freed people there fluctuated, thus adversely affecting any kind of academic structure and salience. Often, a pupil who had left weeks before, could reappear, ready to pick up his or her lessons where they had left off. Also, not all freed people saw education as the priority. Similar to their Russian counterpart, many parents could not afford the luxury of losing the labor of their children. Plus, both the benevolent societies and the Freedmen’s Bureau consistently urged a policy of taxation and tuition for the freed people’s education. Typically, this might be around \$1.25 per month. However, the local Superintendent had the authority to admit “scholars,” as they

were referred to, at his discretion. This notwithstanding, the tuition could be a tall order for the former slaves to fill, and triggered defections.²⁵

In addition, as more teachers arrived, their superiors required that paperwork and reports be submitted with increasing regularity, the goal being better quality control. This took time away from teaching. Furthermore, friction, and even competition between teachers and the organizations they were affiliated with ensued. For example, one activist explained that teachers from different groups all seem to scramble to “get the best” students and location. He also accused a teacher from another affiliation of having motives which were “something besides the glory of God in view.” A government official observed that the agents’ “zeal produces ill-will and recrimination.” Moreover, the competition had the potential to “diminish the confidence of the colored people in [them]. . .and. . .the Government.”²⁶ Plus, while many of the volunteers and teachers were well intentioned, sincere people, others were described in a most disparaging way. For example, with condescension and racism, one report described some teachers as “unchaste miscegenationists, promoters of social equality between whites and blacks, and of discord between employers and laborers, and encouragers of idleness.”²⁷

A number of volunteers succumbed to the Delta’s hot, humid, mosquito filled summers and damp and chilly winters, the roads during the latter being comprised of knee deep mud. Because Mississippi was mostly rural, it meant that many, teachers and

²⁵ Clifton L. Ganus, Jr., “The Freedmen’s Bureau in Mississippi,” Ph.D. Dissertation, Tulane University, 1953, pp. 315-317; and Wharton, *Ibid.*, p. 243. See also J.P. Bardwell to Rev. M.E. Strieby, January 5, 1865, AMA.

²⁶ *Extracts*, p. 6; and J.P. Bardwell to Rev. M.E. Strieby, January 5, 1865, AMA.

²⁷ Ganus, “Freedmen’s Bureau,” pp. 327-328.

students alike, were frequently isolated. Illness and death were commonplace. Since mules and horses were earmarked for production in the field, walking was the method of transportation.²⁸

As Union soldiers and representatives receded from the South after the war, so, too, did their educational efforts. To be sure, the local white population was opposed to educating the freed people, and rejected the idea that they might have to contribute to it monetarily. This notwithstanding, as it became clear that there was no turning back and that the education of former slaves was a certainty, many plantation owners came to see it might be in their interest to allow a school on the premises.²⁹ Like the younger Stepanov, they recognized the salutary benefit of keeping them at that location for their labor. But not William Storrow Lovell. There is no record of a school existing at Palmyra Plantation after Union authorities left. Indeed, thereafter the Bend's freed people were forced to get "most of their education on their own." Moreover, the Palmyra "Negroes were uneducated."³⁰ Why? First, as the previous chapter explained, for the next thirty years, there was a steady turnover of laborers at Palmyra Plantation. This fact alone worked against establishing a permanent school and maintaining some kind of salience. Second, Lovell may well have been financially well off relative to the majority of Mississippians, but it is clear, at least based on the record in his plantation journals, that he did not make any paternalistic or benevolent efforts with respect to these employees.

²⁸ See *Extracts, op. cit.*; and Hermann, *Pursuit*, pp. 54-56.

²⁹ Michael S. Wayne, "Ante-Bellum Planters in the Post-Bellum South: The Natchez District, 1860-1880," Ph.D. Dissertation, Yale University, 1979), p. 172.

³⁰ Hermann, *Pursuit*, p. 183; and Caroline Couper Lovell, "The Bend of the River," (Unpublished Manuscript, 1935), p. 19.

Indeed, Lovell was a completely detached, impersonal employer. Perhaps because he was not born and raised on a plantation, but from the North, Lovell was not imbued with any paternalistic tendencies. Alternatively, perhaps this is a clear example where emancipation broke the ties between paternalism and the plantation.

Conversely, and similar to their Russian counterpart, while the freed people may well have appreciated the idea of education, they certainly had their suspicions. In addition, there is evidence that they were fiercely autonomous, desiring full independence from all authorities. This was illustrated in a number of reports discussing the situation at Davis Bend. For example,

There is a colored young Lady, well educated, who has for a long time been teaching a Sort of Select School & has some thirty scholars. She rents a room at \$6.00 per month, & her scholars pay her \$2.00 per month, but under the Military rule, her school must be broken up, because the Authorities will recognize no teacher that is not in connection with some regular organization. . . .I have visited no school room that was kept in better order & no school that appeared to be under better discipline. She is a pious young Lady, & . . . Her name is Miss Josephine C. Nicks. . . .There is another colored woman here, not as well qualified. . .but who has taught among her fellow slaves for many years, & that too, when she had to do it in the night & by stealth. She is a pious woman. . .

³¹

Even more condescending was the following observation by another official,

I have come to the conclusion that [the freed people] are truly an ungrateful people, buried in the idea that to be free is to be ungrateful and to do what they are entirely unfit for. . . .One case to illustrate what I have stated [is] I asked permission to open a school in the gallery of . . . [their] Bapt. Church. I was refused upon the plea that the . . . church was not the proper place to have a school. Since [then] . . . they have opened a school there. . . .There are other schools opened here under “black colors,” in small rooms crowded to their utmost extent. It is the prevailing opinion among

³¹ J.P. Bardwell to Rev. M.E. Strieby, January 5, 1865, AMA.

those laboring for the “Freedmen” that they are determined to have the rule in regard to teachers and preachers and their favorite is Black.

And quoting a colleague of his, this official added that “The greatest hinderance to the elevation of this people was their ingratitude and . . . unappreciation of what was being done for them. It will be impossible for us to do anything here after the Military is removed.” Indeed, still another official warned in November 1865 that there was “no safety for teachers where there are no troops. . . .the feelings of the white citizens throughout the state, they are generally opposed to Schools for the education of Freedmen & will do all they dare to break them up.”³² Tangential to this, speaking of the “extreme prejudice” with which the freed people held against formal institutions, a surgeon stationed at the Bend’s hospital observed that they would “rather die or linger than go to a hospital,” adding that “some planters keep a ‘granny’ or [witch] doctor on the premises of the plantation because they are preferred” by the freed people.³³

By January 1866 there were 68 schools in Mississippi, with 5,271 pupils enrolled.³⁴

These were mostly in either urban areas or on plantations where the population of freed

³² Rev. James I. Frazer to Rev. S. G. Wright, July 25, 1865, AMA; and J.P. Bardwell to Rev. M.E. Strieby, November 20, 1865, AMA.

³³ Report of S. B. Varney, July 1865, Roll 1, Target 3 Miscellaneous Reports from Subordinates and Staff Officers, December 1863-July 1865. Bureau of Refugees, Freedmen, and Abandoned Lands, Record Group 105, (Mississippi), M1914, Roll 1, NA. The Bend’s hospital closed in April 1866. Hermann, *Pursuit*, p. 95.

³⁴ See first Rountree quote in “Freedmen at Davis Bend, April 1864,” James T. Currie, ed., in *The Journal of Mississippi History* 46 (1984), pp. 120-129. See also *Extracts from Reports of Superintendents of Freedmen compiled by Rev. Joseph Warren, D.D. From the Records in the office of Col. John Eaton, Jr. General Superintendent of Freedmen, Department of the Tennessee and State of Arkansas Second Series, June 1864* (Vicksburg, MS: Freedmen Press Print, 1864), pp. 3 and 10; and William C. Harris,

people was relatively dense. Clearly, Davis Bend fell into this category. Vernon Wharton has asserted that, notwithstanding the state's Constitutional mandate of education in 1868, 1866 was the peak year for public schools for the freed people in Mississippi since, thereafter, the number of enrolled students declined steadily. Indeed, he has argued, by 1870 the state gained only four schools, rounding the total number out to 72. Conversely, the quality of both teachers (in terms of their qualifications and experience) and lessons improved as the years passed, the early efforts illustrating the starting point in the trajectory of missionary work which was marked by correctives and adaptations.

Peter Kolchin has pointed out that these were schools largely run by the Freedmen's Bureau and other volunteer groups, and that by the 1870s the public schools for the freed people in Mississippi had enrolled tens of thousands. Literacy rates support this. Black literacy rates in all the American South surged from 20.1% in 1870 to 69.5% by 1910. To the extent that Wharton discussed the educational realities in Mississippi in the 1860s and Kolchin has addressed the over arching trend in the American South over a much longer period of time, both historians help our understanding of what played out during the Reconstruction period.³⁵ Above all, like Eklof, Kolchin's observations and both

Presidential Reconstruction in Mississippi (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1967), p. 85.

³⁵ Lawrence L. Powell, *New Masters: Northern Planters During the Civil War and Reconstruction* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1980), p. 94.; Vernon Lane Wharton, *The Negro in Mississippi, 1865-1890* (New York, NY: Harper and Row Publishers, 1965), p. 244; and Peter Kolchin, "Reexamining Southern Emancipation in Comparative Perspective," *Journal of Southern History* 81:1 (February, 2015), pp. 2-40, p. 37.

Ronald Butchart and Christopher Span have informed us that, indeed, the American freed people not only took charge of their literacy and education but sustained it for decades.³⁶

What happened to “education” at Davis Bend after Union officials left? The Freedmen’s Bureau had assigned one missionary teacher there through to 1867. As late as 1872 the Davis plantations could still boast two schoolhouses, with nearly fifty children attending. That the schools welcomed all who lived on the Bend, Palmyra’s inhabitants, therefore, would have been eligible. But still, there were no schools at the Lovell demesne.³⁷ It seems the plantation was devoid of all formal educational activities in the entire period following Union officials’ departure. The fact that Lovell was not interested in paternalistic endeavors to uplift the former slaves helps us understand why this was so. In addition, given that it was in private hands and, truly, as the previous chapter explained, a capitalist enterprise, it also helps our understanding. Indeed, the majority of inhabitants at Palmyra were migrant laborers who worked in short bursts during the season and then departed.

But a small minority of former slaves remained at Palmyra in the post-emancipation period. One was “old Nicey,” a former slave of Lovell’s wife, Tonie. In an account of life at Palmyra in the post-emancipation period, Lovell’s daughter-in-law, Caroline Couper Lovell, noted that, other than when she had been “refugeed to Alabam” during the war, “old Nicey” had never left Palmyra in her entire life. Nor had she ever even seen

³⁶ See Ronald E. Butchart, *Schooling the Freed people: Teaching, Learning, and the Struggle for Black Freedom, 1861-1876* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2010); and Christopher Span, *From Cotton Field to Schoolhouse: African American Education in Mississippi, 1862-1875* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009).

³⁷ Hermann, *Pursuit*, pp. 102 and 183.

the Davis plantations! Lovell noted that “old Nicey. . . ’didn’t had no edycation. – Pity? Education don’t tek you no furdern de grave.”³⁸

Education emerged in the midst of liberation as central to freedom: on the one hand, the authorities in each context believed it was both their moral duty and crucial to their respective country’s future to uplift the former serfs and slaves. Here was a tenuous mixture of sincere benevolence and condescending paternalism. The governments were either directly or indirectly responsible for setting up schools for the freed people. Notwithstanding their well intentions, the above discussion illustrates that there was a gap between the authorities’ and elites’ expectations, and the freed peoples.’ Whereas the elites’ in each context had an agenda, perhaps literacy was more correctly what they could and should have aimed for. For it appears that after the initial burst of energy and enthusiasm, a structural educational system could not be sustained for a variety of reasons. While the Russian peasants did not see education as central to freedom, clearly the liberated Americans did. And yet, both subaltern groups wanted self determination and autonomy with respect to education. Furthermore, perhaps, in part, because of their experiences with education before emancipation as well as their deeply engrained memories of past abuse, the liberated peoples were highly suspicious of the authorities. In addition, perhaps because they were fearful of being re-enserfed and -enslaved, they were also suspicious of the authorities.

Clearly what played out at Yazikovo Selo and Palmyra Plantation is that schools were set up in the midst of liberation. Beyond that, however, they either languished, such as what happened at Yazikovo Selo, or disappeared altogether, as Palmyra Plantation

³⁸ Lovell, “Bend of the River,” pp. 19 and 80.

demonstrated. Only with Stepanov's custodianship of Yazikovo Selo was reform, sustained commitment, and logistical and financial support evident. This coincided with the overall "surge in energy" and commitment to public school education that emerged in Russia in the late 1890s. Conversely, while the previous chapter demonstrated that William Storrow Lovell was a competent plantation manager, clearly, at a capitalist, cotton enterprise like that at Palmyra Plantation, the planter did not include education as part of his agenda. Given the high turnover rate at Palmyra Plantation that was explained in Chapter Five, it is not difficult to imagine that this further inhibited sustained efforts. Indeed, for all American freed people, official, public support for their education was plagued by underfunding and segregationist policies up until the watershed moment in 1954 when, in the *Brown vs. Board of Education* decision, the Supreme Court ruled segregation unconstitutional, thus turning the tide. In addition, given the permanence of the community at Yazikovo Selo, it is interesting that a formal school was only established when the merchant purchased the estate. These stories demonstrate that it is one thing to instate schools and education, and another one altogether to sustain them. The next section illustrates a few ways in which the freed people were able to express freedom on their terms.

Festivities, Daily Lives, and Sources of Sustenance

Festivities are a way for people to come together, and to communicate and to commemorate something. They provide a format for a community to memorialize something lost, or that which has passed, as well as celebrate something gained.

Festivities are also a way for people to acknowledge that they have a shared history and

future. They provide a sense of belonging and a source of sustenance, especially in hard times. In times of change they can provide continuity. And, they can signal hope for the future. In times of boredom, they are a source of entertainment and pleasure. In the days of serfdom and slavery, both serfs and slaves had their festive traditions.³⁹ For both serfs and slaves, festivities were often surreptitious. Freedom allowed them to come out of the shadows, however. Freedom gave them the freedom to be openly festive.

On July 4, 1863 an event took place at Davis Bend to celebrate the fall of Vicksburg. The conflation of the country's independence and the fall of the strategically important city on the bluff overlooking the Mississippi River was a cause for celebration. A photograph was taken of the liberated people that day. (See Photo #1 next page) The group in the photo consists of a number of women, men, and children, both standing and sitting. The backdrop is significant because it is the recognizable "Library" at Joseph Davis' plantation, Hurricane. That they are dressed so well is extraordinary, given that their condition on the Bend was dire. (see Chapter Three).

Although no photographs exist of Yazikovo Selo in the midst of liberation, it is possible to glean information by extrapolating from one taken of the former serfs at Undory, Vasili's brother's estate. The "Emancipation Day Commemoration" photograph was taken on March 3, 1862 to commemorate the one year anniversary of the momentous

³⁹ See David W. Blight, *Race and Reunion: The Civil War in American Memory* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2001), Chapters 2 and 3, respectively "Regeneration and Reconstruction" and "Decoration Days," *passim*; John W. Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1979), *passim*; Priscilla Roosevelt, *Life on the Russian Country Estate: A Social and Cultural History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1995), *passim*; David Moon, *The Russian Peasantry: The World the Peasants Made* (London, UK: Addison Wesley Longman, 1999), *passim*; and Eklof and Frank, *World of the Russian Peasants*, *passim*.

event.⁴⁰ (See Photo #2 next page) This photograph is significant for a number of reasons. First, because the Undory mansion was torched in 1921, and because there are



Photograph 6:1 Liberated Slaves at Hurricane Plantation cottage,
Davis Bend, July 4, 1863
(Copyright© permission,
J. Mack Morre Collection, Old Court House Museum, Vicksburg, Miss.)

⁴⁰ I am grateful to Larissa Yershova, Director of the Literary Museum “House of Yazikovs,” 22 Sovetskaya Street, Ulyanovsk, Russia, for giving me a copy of this rare photograph, which was part of the Museum’s archives.



Photograph 6:2 Emancipation Anniversary of the Liberated Serfs
at Undory Estate, Simbirsk Province, March 3, 1862

no other photographs of the estate, it is a valuable primary source. Also, like the Davis Bend photo, it is significant because it documents real people, in real time, against a recognizable backdrop. And, like the subjects in the Davis Bend photo, those in the Undory snapshot are evidently dressed finely. Their homes are in the background. All this suggests festivity, celebration, and commemoration. These were the freed peoples at Davis Bend and a Yazikov estate. The photos humanize the subjects of emancipation, and therefore create a bond between the subjects and the viewer. Thus, the photographs are examples of photo realism. It is true that we do not know whether the freed people in each photo sought their own documentation, or whether they were included in the photo because it was designed by an authority to self congratulate. Clearly, there was oversight

by an authority or authorities. For how else could they have been taken? However, to be sure, the freed peoples must have known that these were historical times. Therefore, it was a significant event that the sense of place and time was juxtaposed with freedom's subjects.

One year later, on July 4, 1864, a gala event was organized by the white authorities at Davis Bend, again, to celebrate and commemorate both Independence Day and the anniversary of the fall of Vicksburg one year earlier. A long newspaper account of the event penned by an army officer present at the gathering described the festivities. It noted that a number of speeches were delivered and patriotic songs were sung. Although the Civil War was raging across the American South and supplies and victuals were both scarce and a luxury, tables were spread with assorted food. A sign reading "The House that Jeff Built" was mounted over the Confederacy's president's front door. However, although the location was described as a "Freedmen's Paradise," the article specified that, other than those who were there in the capacity as servants, no freed people participated in the festival. This is significant since it was at the height of the Home Colony period, when all whites were banned from the premises. Whether it was because the freed people chose not to participate or because they were excluded is difficult to say. However, if it was because of the former, this would suggest agency. If it was because of the latter, it suggests that old patterns and beliefs were fully entrenched in Union officials' beliefs and practices after liberation. Given that, over thirty years later, Caroline Couper Lovell documented that the former slaves at Palmyra had celebrated the "fath" day every year

since emancipation, it is plausible that the freed people fashioned their own celebration that day.⁴¹

Sunday, January 1, 1865 was the second anniversary of emancipation day. A celebration/commemoration took place at Davis Bend. “It was of course a day of uncommon interest” wrote a Union representative. The day opened up with a Sunday school celebration,” which consisted of each of the schools’ pupils singing and reciting prayers, and culminated with a reading of the Emancipation Proclamation. This was followed in the afternoon by a series of short speeches, declarations, and orations. In all about 400 children attended, and it was not possible to account for the number of adults present. Speaking of the children’s efforts, the representative noted

They did remarkably well, & usually repeated their verses with great accuracy. Occassionally, however, an amusing mistake would be made, but usually of such a nature as to show that the children think as well as memorise, & if they can’t recall the exact word, they will substitute another, expressing the idea they got from reading the verse. For instance, one boy. . . [said] ‘Little children let no man fool you.’⁴²

This account is important for a number of reasons. First, notwithstanding Union oversight, it documents the freed people’s participation in a festive, commemorative event. Like the commemorative photographs discussed above, although the events may well have been organized by the authorities, the freed people were not passive. However, that the above quote wreaks of paternalism demonstrates the persistence of old beliefs.

⁴¹ Hermann, *Pursuit*, pp. 56-57; *Vicksburg Daily Herald*, July 6, 1864; and Lovell, “Bend of the River,” p. 76.

⁴² J. P. Bardwell to Rev. M.E. Strieby, January 5, 1865, AMA.

Commemoration took on a far more somber tone when, in April 1865, President Lincoln was assassinated. Now a military authority observed that “all the colored people, men, women, and children have” black crepe string attached to their lapels.⁴³

Whether they were photographs or commemorative festivals honoring national events, in the above examples it seems as though the freed peoples were auxiliary to that which was honored. But this in no way suggests the freed people at each demesne were bereft of their own festivals and/or events which were full of excitement and joy.

Of significance, and as part of the long wave of revivalism that had begun prior to and had been interrupted by the Civil War, a religious impulse swept the Bend during the summer of 1872. Although the Lovells were vacationing in Niagra Falls and the planter’s journals are devoid of any references to the event, records indicate that emotional worship occurred for two weeks during July and August, and participants included those from all the plantations on the Bend.

Women go into a frenzy of excitement and roll on the floor for two or three hours together, screaming and crying, “lord, take me,” “Jesus save me,” till, utterly exhausted, they fall asleep, or experience . . . “coming through,” when they jump up in ecstasy of joy, . . . shouting “Glory, glory, hallelujah,” . . .

As Janet Hermann has explained, this revivalist impulse no doubt provided an emotional outlet and broke the monotony of life on the Bend.⁴⁴ To be sure, as was the case in Russia in general, religious life at Yazikovo Selo was such that the calendar year was punctuated with important events, such as Christmas, the New Year, Lent, and the

⁴³ Hermann, *Pursuit*, p. 64.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 187-188.

name day of numerous saints. These important celebratory events contained rituals and traditions which were deeply entrenched in Russian peasant culture. As Christine Worobec has made clear, “The rituals that post-emancipation Russian peasants observed, and the mores and behavioral norms they set were remarkably resilient.”⁴⁵

Unlike their Russian counterpart, slaves were not allowed to legally marry. However, they were allowed to marry by custom, and the permission of their owners. Moreover, slaves did not have parental rights to their children. The love for, and legal right to family was the most important aspect of freedom to the American freed people. After emancipation, marriages were a time for great celebration. One photograph remnant of Davis Bend captures this. (See Photo #3 next page) Although both the participants and the actual plantation are not identified, I contend it is at Palmyra since, 1) it is certainly neither Brierfield nor Hurricane, the Davis Plantations, and 2) it matches descriptions of the plantation house.⁴⁶ As one Union official made clear, in addition to their natural desire to marry, it appears that federal policy mandated marriages. “There is a great time of marrying among this people now, in accordance with directions from the War Department. No matter how long they have lived as Husband & Wife, they are required

⁴⁵ Christine D. Worobec, *Peasant Russia: Family and Community in the Post-Emancipation Period* (DeKalb, IL: Northern Illinois University Press, 1995), p. 14.

⁴⁶ It is not Hurricane because it was burnt to the ground by Union troops in June 1862. It is not Brierfield because it was a single floor dwelling only. In this photograph the dwelling clearly has two floors. The Palmyra house had two floors and its façade consisted of clapboard panels, which is shown.

to be married. One boy in reciting a verse [he has been taught] says, 'I am the true vine



Photograph 6:3 Wedding party and celebration at a plantation on Davis Bend
(Copyright© permission,
J. Mack Morre Collection, Old Court House Museum, Vicksburg, Miss.)

& my Father is a married man.”⁴⁷ Notwithstanding the mandate, making their marriages official were both formal and festive rites of passage to freedom for the newly liberated. Because serfs were allowed to marry, marriage was not a cornerstone of freedom in the Russian context. However, certainly marriage was celebrated with feasts and ritualized

⁴⁷ J. P. Bardwell to Rev. M.E. Strieby, January 5, 1865, AMA.

festivities. In Russia, it was common that weddings coincided with important religious events, such as Lent, as well as pauses in the agricultural calendar.⁴⁸

These festive events were ways in which the freed people both reinvested in and renewed their communities. Because they were punctuations in what was otherwise a rural and isolated way of life, they were sources of sustenance. On the one hand, the Home Colony period was an extraordinary experiment in social engineering; and the episodes at Yazikovo Selo when both the armies and authorities paid visits there were exceptional. On the other hand, these extraordinary times did not sustain the freed peoples in the long term. What was the daily rhythm of life like after emancipation at each demesne? While emancipation irrevocably altered life for the freed people in each context, both the drag of culture and contextual realities were major determinants. As in any rural, agricultural setting, life at Palmyra Plantation was set by the routine of the cotton crop season. Winter clearing and plowing were followed by spring planting. Cultivation with plough and hoe was completed by midsummer. Now the cotton bolls began to open. From August through November cotton was picked by those scores of hired laborers. As Janet Hermann has stressed, “These busy days brought the excitement of competition between individuals and farms to see who could pick the most in a day, and which planter...produced the largest quantity...of cotton that year.” Indeed, as “Old Nicey” boasted to Caroline Couper Lovell, “I was jes de same as er mule wen I was young, . . . I was a fiel han’. I could pick my two hundred poun’ a day—and den some. Ole Marster rid by de fiel’ one day, and seed me pickin’. Say “Dat she is a dandy gal!”

⁴⁸ See Chapter V “Marriage: Family and Community Renewal” in Worobec, *Peasant Russia*, pp. 151-174.

Dat wot he say. [*sic*]” Lovell noted that, “Old Nicey” seldom smiled, but during this story, “she could not...suppress a smile of pride.” Before Christmas the harvest pace slowed to a near halt, with the winter months consumed with ginning.⁴⁹

Still, there were some changes that were marked breaks with the past. For example, notwithstanding “Old Nicey’s” experience as a field hand, as well as William Storrow Lovell’s occasional note that he had hired a family who pooled their labor (see Chapter Five), in general women and children had all but disappeared from the fields.⁵⁰ Indeed, as the previous chapter made clear, most of the laborers at Palmyra Plantation were migrant and male.

Certainly, when formerly unfree women and children worked in the field after emancipation, they did so to augment the family income. However, because American slavery had “fostered a family structure among blacks that was often radically different from the dominant white pattern and at odds with the social ideals upon which white family relations were based,” in the post-emancipation period liberated people sought to both recover family ties and establish legal marriages. This phenomenon followed the nuclear family model, already entrenched in white, middle class America at the time. This was a significant signpost of freedom’s meaning in the American context. That Lovell had documented families at Palmyra demonstrates this remarkable change.

⁴⁹ See Hermann, *Pursuit*, p. 150; and Lovell, “Bend of the River,” p. 80.

⁵⁰ Hermann, *Pursuit*, pp. 182 and 213. It should be made clear that, notwithstanding the well known myth that freed female slaves were anxious to adopt the middle class socially prescribed role for women to “keep house,” the economic realities of the time meant that they, too, went to the fields to help support their families.

Conversely, in the Russian context, recovery and establishing families was not a characteristic of freedom because, as Worobec has explained, “The patriarchal. . .family was but a microcosm of a [centuries old] hierarchical social order. . . .which depended upon an elaborate misogynist ideology that could successfully subjugate just over 50 percent of the peasant population.” Via cultural norms, which included forms of “power, rewards, and safeguards,” Russian peasant women “accommodated themselves to the patriarchy.” While the marked break of the noble landlord’s authority over his/her former people was revolutionary, the peasant family was an entrenched component of the overarching Russian culture which was hierarchical, service and obligations oriented, and, at least in the rural/peasant sphere, subsistence aligned.⁵¹ This notwithstanding, some flexibility emerged, albeit slowly. For example, by as early as the 1870s court records show that, occasionally, peasant women went to court to challenge extraordinarily abusive treatment from their husband or mother-in-law. However, following the informal “law of non-interference,” typically, the village commune handled domestic disputes.

Like life at Palmyra Plantation, that of Yazikovo Selo was similarly determined by tradition and annual routines. To help our understanding of the composite picture of the apparent decline of Russian estates in Simbirsk Province and the continuation of life there, Valerian Nazar’yev explained that, before emancipation, the typical village

⁵¹ See Peter Kolchin, *First Freedom: The Responses of Alabama’s Blacks to Emancipation and Reconstruction* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1972), Chapter 3 “Strengthening the Black Family,” pp. 56-78, especially p. 46; and Worobec, *Peasant Russia*, Chapter VI “The Culture of Patriarchy,” pp. 175-207, especially pp. 175-178. Worobec has made it clear that subordination in Russian culture “must be understood in the context of both the general hierarchical structure of Russian society. . .and that of environmental challenges.” See p. 185.

witnessed deadly boredom in the winters, spring and fall sowings, fall weddings and orgies, and frequent fires. Above all, Nazar'yev stressed that after emancipation, there was an overwhelming feeling on all estates of "incompleteness." That is, the former serfs knew that they would not be free until they received their land. And so they waited, and held out for that day. Writing almost one hundred years later, M. E. Naidenov's work confirmed Nazar'yev's analysis: the freed peasants overwhelmingly did nothing but "hold out for the land."⁵² Notwithstanding the overall picture of stagnation portrayed in the previous chapter, life did go on at the demesne. For example, we know that the peasants at both Yazikovo Selo and Undory augmented their way of life by participating in an array of enterprises in a kind of shadow economy. These included things such as bee keeping and participating in the cat pelt trade.⁵³

How are we to make sense of this apparent standoff between the liberated but obligated peasants and the authorities? David Moon has explained that the terms of freedom left life on the estates "largely unchanged and unchallenged the rural economy and the peasants' basic units of social organization, and households and communes." In fact, the reforms not only did not "fundamentally alter Russian peasant society," but reinforced, rather than weakened, the peasants' desire for the land and their ways of

⁵² Nazar'yev, *op. cit.*, pp. 29-30; and M. E. Naidenov, *Klassovaya Bor'ba v Poreformennoy Derevne (1861-1863)* (Moscow, USSR: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo politicheskoy literatury, 1955), especially pp. 290-292.

⁵³ See E.I. Karamysheva, "Istoriya naseennogo punkta: Undory" *Moya Malaya Rodina* 16 Fevral 2011 <http://rodina-portal.ru/settlements/history/id/7300100004600> Accessed 19 August 2014; and Ivan Eduardovich Sivoplias, *Istorii s Kartinkami* (Ulyanovsk, Russia: Artishok, 2008).

strategizing resistance.⁵⁴ Here some striking observations about the differences in outcomes of emancipation in each country, or at least, between Yazikovo Selo and Palmyra Plantation are clear: notwithstanding William Storrow Lovell's temperament and style as a planter/manager, if it did not disappear altogether at the demesne, paternalism was greatly weakened. Furthermore, emancipation in the United States liberated the freed people from forced attachment to the demesne. Alternatively, clearly, the peasants of Yazikovo Selo were holding out for land and resisted labor obligations as much as they could, because they could.

As this study has made clear, one of the challenges of writing the history of people who were marginalized and largely illiterate, and whose experiences were documented by elites who interpreted those experiences through their own lenses, is to give them voice. Further, it is difficult to capture the essence of any society, such as those in this study, where a rural way of life and an oral tradition were the norms. Years after emancipation, when Mikhail Stepanov was in the midst of taking the Peasant Orchestra of Yazikovo Selo on tour throughout Europe, included in its performances were folk songs from the village and the surrounding region. Over fifty years earlier, with the goal of collecting the "jewels of our past," Yazikov relatives meticulously documented over 1,500 folksongs from the Simbirsk region. Many originated from Yazikovo Selo itself. Their topics ranged from work routine and the weather, to love and rebellion. Some of these had quaint titles, such as "On the Steppe of Saratov," "How the Cuckoo Crushed the Nightingale," and, presumably a reference to the War of 1812, "He'll take Russia, the French Thief Bragged." To be sure, these were folk songs and stories from the time well

⁵⁴ Moon, *Russian Peasantry*, p. 343.

before emancipation. However, as it is commonly known, folk songs and stories are passed down through the years, and amended here and there to fit the times. In the collection, many included lyrics which expressed aspirational themes of getting away from the master, the desire for land, and revenge. Finding freedom along the Volga River and beyond Russia's borders to the east were common expressions. One, titled "Village, my little village," presaged emancipation in that its lyrics expressed the heroic desire to leave one's beloved village, and, on behalf of its people, foment rebellion to overthrow masters everywhere. Indeed, a salient theme of the folk songs is that freedom meant that an individual was completely free from all authority. As has been demonstrated throughout this dissertation, Yazikovo Selo's inhabitants' capacity to resist was great. Years after the estate's sale to Stepanov, the factory laborers there launched what amounted to a strike in 1895 over 14 hour days. And then, as part of the Russian Revolution of 1905, a military unit was called to the demesne to suppress rebellious commotion.⁵⁵

Caroline Couper Lovell's private, unpublished manuscript is also important for the insights into the freed people's way of life before and after emancipation. For she documented conversations she had with Palmyra's freed people, stressing that "I feel sure that every word that was told me. . . . was the Gospel truth." Her detailed descriptions of appearances might not be flattering, but, in realistic terms, she tried to portray their harsh

⁵⁵ A.D. Soimonov, ed., *Sobraniye narodnykh pesen P.V. Kireevskogo: Zapisi Yazikovykh v Simbirskoy i Orenburgskoy Guberniyakh, t. I* (Leningrad, USSR: Izdatel'stvo Nauka, 1977), pp. 11, 16, 18-21, 24, 28, 30-33, and 38; Zhores Trofimov, *Nikolai Yazikov i pisateli pushkinskoy pory* (Ulyanovsk, Russia: Karavan, 2007), p. 312; Interview with historian Larissa Yershova, *op.cit.*; Avdonin, *op. cit.*, p. 14; and Documenty proizvodstva V.P. Yazikova, 1853, Literaturnyi Muzei dom Yazikovykh v Ulyanovske.

life which was a result of both their condition and work. Living in a hot, humid, swampy wilderness filled with snakes, floods, and disease was brutal. Descriptions, such as skin “wrinkled like crepe,” “so old that her eyebrows had worn off,” and the “white of her eyes looking as though they had been stained with tobacco juice;” or “bald and scarred,” and “jamber jawed, with no upper teeth;” and healing practices, such as “rubbing one with mustard,” and “putting hot bricks to one’s feet for hangovers,” provide a textured and nuanced picture. Details of the freed people’s cabins included “planks over planks of wood,” which, over the years had been “polished” due to wear and scrubbing, and four poster beds standing on blocks of wood for high water. Lovell saw “dog eared” copies of a common hymnal of the time, *Zion’s Songsters*, as well as Bibles on the bedside tables. Heavy drinking was occasional. And liquor was used as currency. But, she contended, there was a total lack of crime on the Bend. If there were any breaks in protocol in their community, an unwritten code of punishment was enforced swiftly. Likely not understanding that subaltern people, as a result of their proximity to their superiors, had strategies of surreptitiously understanding what is going on, Lovell attributed their knowledge of all that transpired on the demesne to their “caute”⁵⁶ hearing. For, she rationalized, they were capable of discerning from their own quarters a conversation between Lovell family members taking place inside the main house. Capturing both their idiom and attitude, Lovell documented “old Nicey’s” evaluation of freedom. Speaking with regret, she estimated that “Dese times ent wot dee uster be, . . . Wen you was ole. . .you was well token keer of. . .Gawd knows I war’nt glad when I was sot free. Call dis freedom! I calls hit bondage!” As is sometimes the case with elderly people, who

⁵⁶ Acute.

express nostalgia for seemingly better days in the past and whose memory might be more selective, clearly, for “old Nicey,” freedom had made its appearance long ago, but its meaning had disappeared.⁵⁷

Conclusion: The Meaning of Freedom

In this chapter I have discussed some of the ways in which the freed people at Palmyra Plantation and Yazikovo Selo experienced freedom in their daily lives. To the extent that it aided our understanding of what happened at each demesne, I contextualized each within some trends in each country and region where each was located. Emancipation represented such a marked break with the past that nothing was ever the same again. There was no going back and in a number of ways, such as in education, where both sets of freed people took charge of their own literacy, or, certainly, with respect to the emergence of legal marriage and the institution of the family in the American context, there was revolutionary change. These remarkable changes happened *because of* emancipation and the freed people’s agency.

I also touched on a number of ways in the daily lives of the freed people where life was very different, while other things remained the same. In this sense, the power and inertia of culture served as a break on change, especially with respect to the authorities’ cultural attitudes and expectations for the freed people’s labor and citizenship. However, as this study has made clear, this was freedom in its nascent stage and emancipation set in motion forces for change which would “evolve,” to quote Peter Kolchin. Nineteenth century American culture was experiencing a clash of cultures, in that Northern ways and

⁵⁷ Lovell, “Bend of the River,” Chapters 1, 2, and 6, especially, pp. 1-31 and 74-89.

attitudes, which, above all, rejected slavery, confronted those of the South. Still, the two sections did have many shared cultural values, such as the ideas of individual liberty, freedom of movement and choice, and self determination. Therefore, the American freed people both embraced and demonstrated these values as best they could, when they could. This, too, was *because* of emancipation. In many ways, the Russian freed people did not have to re-invent their daily lives. During the pre-emancipation era, they had intact villages and families. However, as in the case of the American freed people, freedom “allowed them to maximize control of their lives and labor” as best they could, again, to quote Peter Kolchin.⁵⁸ These conclusions are part of a larger conversation about the meaning of freedom as it unfolded, both at each demesne and in each country. This will be addressed next, in the conclusion.

⁵⁸ For the quotes see Peter Kolchin, “Reexamining Southern Emancipation in Comparative Perspective,” *Journal of Southern History* 81:1 (February, 2015), pp. 2-40, pp. 36 and 34 respectively.

CONCLUSION

This study has examined the mechanics of the emancipation process on a Russian estate and a Southern Plantation. That is, it has described both the “roll out” of emancipation and a number of ways it impacted each demesne. This included looking at some ways in which the various players in the story responded to emancipation. The main players were the authorities in each country, each demesne’s landlord, and the freed peoples. Labor on the demesne loomed large since the freed peoples’ former condition as serfs and slaves seemed to link them to the demesne’s work in the post-emancipation period. To the extent that it helped an understanding of what happened at Yazikovo Selo and Palmyra Plantation, this study also considered what happened to estates and plantations which were in their neighborhoods and/or region, as well as the general trends in each country.

This micro, case study simultaneously considered a variety of players in the context of real life events, and compared them across time and space. As a result, I was able to identify each demesne’s norms, distinguishing characteristics, and exceptionalisms. The comparison revealed a number of striking similarities and dissimilarities between the two. Some of the similarities included the authorities’ expectations of compliance from the freed people, the role and power of rumor, and the freed people’s desire for land as well as distance from the trappings of their former condition. Some of the dissimilarities included the roles of mobility vs. immobility, a communal vs. an individual ethos, wage labor, and obligations between former masters and their former “people.”

An overarching contextual theme in this study has been that, while Russia preemptively choreographed the terms of emancipation, how it was to proceed, and what

freedom would look like, America's emancipation track evolved. Initially used as a weapon of war, freeing the slaves quickly became a matter of living up to the principles encoded in America's political and social culture. Nevertheless, like the authorities in Russia, those in America were concerned about social control and the integrity of labor on the demesne. These issues and developments blended with the political, social, and cultural traditions and structures, and *mentalities*, and thus produced the distinguishing features of freedom in each country.

What specifically played out at Yazikovo Selo and Palmyra Plantation was a result of each demesne's distinguishing characteristics, including its *raison d'etre*, and in relation to both the terms of emancipation and various traditions and practices in each country. With respect to each demesne's owners and freed people, each player, or set of players, acted according to both norms which culture had historically prescribed *and* the changed circumstances that emancipation afforded: the master's authority was broken and, therefore, the former serfs of Yazikovo Selo showed non-compliance a number of times. Conversely, the population of freed people at Palmyra Plantation was fluid and fulfilled its "obligations" under the restricted conditions of seasonal commitments, to which they agreed.

With just a few exceptions, most notably the Redemption Law of 1881, all Russian legislation pertaining to emancipation was worked out in great detail *before* February 19, 1861. In the American case, after the war's conclusion the Thirteenth Amendment was the irrefutable *de jure* act ending slavery. However, over a period of years, federal, state, and local authorities developed and implemented, or tried to implement, a variety of policies with respect to emancipation and the parameters of freedom. Whereas the

Russian legislation took into account regional particularisms and traditions, such as the quality of the soil and the type of obligations (for instance *barshchina* versus *obrok*) for the former, the details of how the freed Americans would live and work remained to be seen. Thus, both tradition and innovative adjustments played roles in both *de jure* and *de facto* developments in America. All this had a direct impact on Yazikovo Selo and Palmyra Plantation. But the shape that freedom took at each demesne was also influenced or determined by the distinguishing characteristics of Yazikovo Selo and Palmyra Plantation.

What were the most important discoveries? First, although it was not unheard of that a Russian estate did not have a Redemption Agreement by the time that the Redemption Law was put into effect in 1881, this study sheds light as to why both the landlord and the former serfs were incentivized not to agree to one. Second, although the phenomenon of squad labor has been tangentially touched on in other studies, I teased out some of the mechanics associated with it, and the links in the chain which connected the employer and employees in the post-emancipation period. Third, comparatively speaking, I identified the fact that, although they may not have been sequentially identical, certain trends and/or themes were shared in each experience of emancipation in its early years. Some of these included the longing for land and desire for autonomy on the part of the freed people, the power and role of rumor, the appearance of armies in terms of implementing and/or enforcing emancipation, and the various players' expectations for labor on the demesne. Fourth, I demonstrated that, notwithstanding their subaltern status, both sets of freed peoples had agency. Fifth, notwithstanding the evident stagnation at Yazikovo Selo and economic activity at Palmyra Plantation, I demonstrated that 1)

although Vasili Yazikov worked to manage the demesne within the political, economic, and social context in which he found himself, he was still nevertheless a servant; and 2) although William Storrow Lovell was an engaged, hand-on manager, he was not a paternalistic plantation patriarch which was a hallmark of the antebellum period.

In all of the chapters in this study the concept of continuity and change was either explicitly or implicitly addressed. Peter Kolchin has advised that perhaps the more important question about continuity and change is what changed and why.¹ As this study has stressed repeatedly, emancipation was a watershed moment in each country's history. The unfree were liberated. The world was turned upside down, and there was no going back. However, because this study has focused on the nascent stage of freedom in each country, it is clear that even where there appeared to be little change, the freed people's outlook and expectations for the future were transformed by emancipation. The contingencies that they had were available to them *because* of emancipation. The freed people were not operating from the vantage point of, say, 1950, or 2016. They were living in the moment. Perhaps this explains why the freed people often used the tools and mechanisms with which they were familiar, and seized on the fact of freedom to promote what was in their self interest.

One theme lurking in the background throughout this study has been how there was a difference between establishing something and sustaining it, whether it had to do with labor on the demesne or founding schools for the freed people. All this points to the fact that, in both Russia and the American South, the period following emancipation and

¹ Peter Kolchin, "Reexamining Southern Emancipation in Comparative Perspective," *Journal of Southern History* 81:1 (February, 2015), pp. 2-40, p. 39.

roughly concluding with the respective years of 1881 and 1877, was one of anticipation, adjustments, and varieties of resistance. All of these occurred because of the raw, or uncooked, nature of the emancipation moment. This was a new era when, notwithstanding the drag of culture in each country, what freedom would look like remained to be seen. In a number of places I have demonstrated that only well after the cut off years of 1881 and 1877 did things take hold, such as wage labor, education, and the cessation of obligations. Thus the period between emancipation and the cut off dates in this study represents a kind of an incubation stage, and thereafter one of maturation.

The ways in which the freed people experienced freedom had to do with what it meant to them. These were not articulated as lofty principles of political philosophies. “Freedom” was not defined as an abstract concept. Rather, freedom was defined in terms of what it meant in practice, and how it had a direct impact on their everyday lives. Both sets of freed people were similar in their desire to be free from authority, and both were suspicious of the authorities and afraid of being re-enslaved and re-enslaved. Both believed land was central to independence. Furthermore, the freed people’s experiences of freedom were incremental, where kinks in the system were worked out in the moment, here and there. The freed people also experienced freedom in the places in their lives where they were most similar and dissimilar to their former condition, i.e. labor for the former, and education for the latter.

This comparison brings what happened at each demesne into sharper focus. Each had both exceptional and typical experiences during the post-emancipation period. While they had categories of analysis in common, such as resistance and/or rumors of rebellion, rules and regulations for compliance and obligations, labor performance on the demesne,

or education, clearly, the way things played out at each demesne had to do with the characteristics of emancipation in Russia and America, the political, socio-economic, and cultural traditions in each country, as well as the unique characteristics of each demesne. While the trajectories in which these similar themes made their appearances and played out at each demesne were not identical, this comparative analysis demonstrates that the struggle for freedom everywhere has specific salients. And, from this analysis of two demesnes we can see that against the backdrop of overall trends, there were nuances, and particularisms.

This comparative case study has brought into sharper focus some details of the experiences of emancipation. Some of these included the significance of the absence of peasants' signatures on a Statutory Charter, the absence of a Redemption Agreement, and the personal and variegated experience of both seasonal and squad labor. Therefore, it has added complexity and nuance, indeed put a face on a kind of history which is often reduced to an impersonal one of emancipation, composed of assumptions and generalizations. This study has also put a spotlight on the ways in which each country's experience of emancipation was distinctive, while at the same time placing the topic of the history of it in a broader, indeed global context. In this sense, this study is useful for its contribution to our understanding of emancipation as a transnational, global phenomenon, while considering its regional particularisms.² It also serves as a roadmap for other comparative, micro studies.

² In addition to the many sources cited in this study's bibliography, Peter Kolchin remains the foremost authority on the comparison of Russian serfdom and American slavery, as well as emancipation and its aftermath in Russia and the United States.

EPILOGUE

On a cold January day in 1894 the big house at Palmyra went up in flames. Whether this was due to an unkept fire in the hearth or arson is unknown. However, the “plantation bell was rung in the Lower Quarters, and the Negroes came rushing from every direction to the Big House, and made heroic efforts” to save the place. William Storrow Lovell’s daughter in law wrote that she was “perfectly shocked” that the “dear old house” had burnt down. Injecting elements of what would later be labeled Southern Gothic, Caroline Couper Lovell expressed the following:

To think of its being no longer in existence. To me it was consecrated by the happiness of my life there & I will always hold a peculiar place in my heart & memory [for it]. . . .I cannot bear to think of it a heap of charred ruins – how desolate – melancholic. . . .I don’t think I could bear to see it – How terribly sad for the old man [William Storrow Lovell] to lose his house. . . .It is a real sorrow to think the dear old place is no more. I loved it almost as though it had a being.³

Herein is an example of how Southern elites attached to the plantation house strong feelings of family history and identity, as well as tinges of animism. Equally significant is the symbolism of the house’s demise and Lovell’s emotions about it. In her comments we see elements of romanticism, the history of Palmyra reduced to a remnant, and the old social order’s demise.

³ Caroline Couper Lovell, “The Bend of the River,” (Unpublished Manuscript, 1935), pp. 213-214; and Caroline Couper Lovell to Antonia Quitman Lovell, February 11, 1894, Box 1, Folder 11, Lovell Family Papers, University of the South, Sewanee, TN.

A few years later, during the Great Flood of '97, Todd Lovell, Caroline's husband and William Storrow's son, wrote that a staggering "164 negroes" were rescued at the place's levee. When Todd and his family left Palmyra and moved to Birmingham, Alabama to go into the coal business, Palmyra's demise was complete. None of the family ever returned, and soon thereafter, Palmyra was bereft of those freed people who had remained.⁴

But the story of Palmyra's freed people did not end there. Early in 1888 a number of Davis Bend's freed people left the peninsula and established a community, Mound Bayou, in the northwestern corner of Mississippi. By 1907 the town had become the center of a "thriving agricultural community of some 800 families, with a total population of about 4,000" people. Of the 30,000 acres in the municipality, approximately 6,000 were under cotton cultivation, producing about 3,000 bales annually for a number of years. There were 13 stores and a number of shops "doing a combined annual business of about \$600,000." The train station was a "hub of activity, handling \$40,000 in freight and \$6,000 in passenger traffic each year." The town could also boast one saw mill and three cotton gins, as well as a telephone exchange, a weekly newspaper, *The Demonstrator*, a bank, 10 churches, and 2 schools. Although it remains in a rural corner of Mississippi, to be sure, the community of Mound Bayou is historically significant for its continuity with its rich past. It is also significant as an example of the freed people's agency.⁵

⁴ William Storrow Lovell, Jr. to William Storrow Lovell, April 21, 1897, Box 1, Folder 43, Lovell Family Papers, University of the South, Sewanee, TN.

⁵ Janet Sharp Hermann, *The Pursuit of a Dream* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp. 223-224.

After the Russian Revolution in 1917 the Bolsheviks confiscated Yazikovo Selo. By the early 1930s Mikhail Stepanov and his young adult son were purged. No record exists of what ultimately happened to them. But they were never seen alive again. In 1921, the estate mansion went up in flames when a *Sovkhoz*⁶ farm official set fire to it in an attempt to hide evidence of the stolen grain he had been hoarding in one of its rooms. This notwithstanding, the village of Yazikovo Selo and its inhabitants, many of whom are direct descendents of the freed people there, remain as shining examples of the estate's legacy. Every June the inhabitants organize a festival comprised of songs, dances, food, poetry, and drama, all which are designed to honor and commemorate the Yazikov family and its impact on the region. Their recent decision to rebuild the mansion is the latest installment of their efforts to recover the purged culture of the Russian noble family.⁷

It is ironic that the demesne in this study which was marked by apparent stagnation in the post-emancipation period endured, while not a trace is left of the one that evidently thrived as an economic enterprise. In this sense, Yazikovo Selo was what David Moon has asserted, that “most noble estates were peasant villages far more than they were ‘nests of gentry’ portrayed in some nineteenth-century Russian literature.” Conversely, Palmyra Plantation and its environs became a gothicized landscape, marked by swampy ruins and decay.⁸

⁶ Sovhoz was an abbreviation of *Sovetskoe khozyaistvo*, or Soviet farm. They began appearing in the early 1920s after the Bolsheviks seized power. They were precursors to the *kolkhozes*, or collective farms.

⁷ Lidia Pekhtereva, “V starom parke” *Simbirskiy Kur’yer* #73, 9 July 2009.

⁸ David Moon, *Abolition of Serfdom in Russia, 1762-1907* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2002), p. 17. For a brief summary of the southern gothic see “Promoting the Gothic South” in *Southern Cultures* 11:2 (Summer, 2005) by Rebecca C. McIntyre pp. 33-61.

Meanwhile, the Yazikov and Quitman-Lovell mansions in Simbirsk and Nachez survived and today are historic landmarks in their respective cities. The former is a literary museum and houses the Yazikov family archives. The latter's fate is one shared by many antebellum mansions. It is a high-end bed and breakfast where patrons can experience the grace and charm of an imagined old South.

As for the freed peoples of Yazikovo Selo and Palmyra Plantation, liberation from serfdom and slavery opened a new chapter in their lives. They were freedom's first recipients. As it has been made clear in the preceding pages, they did not have the luxury of social capital to overcome many of the hurdles that were in front of them. However, notwithstanding their struggles and the "reimposition of 'hegemony' by the dominant elites," the freed peoples were active agents.⁹ They were the trailblazers for future generations who would press on for equality and full citizenship.

⁹ Allan K. Wildman, "The Defining Moment: Land Charters and the Post-Emancipation Agrarian Settlement in Russia, 1861-1863" *The Carl Beck Papers in Russian & East European Studies* No. 1205 (1996), p. 4.

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Appendix A

FEODOR STEPANOVICH STEPANOV

Born in 1828, Feodor Stepanovich Stepanov owned by 1875 2,600 *desiatini* of land in Simbirsk Province. In 1869 he was elected a Marshall of Merchants (*Kupets Starosta*). In 1870 he was elected a member of Market Committee in Simbirsk, as well as Treasurer of Simbirsk Orphans Court. From 1871 to 1875 he was a Deputy to the Simbirsk Duma. In 1871 he was elected for 3 years as a Deputy of the City Council of Simbirsk. That same year he became a member of the Committee of the Society of Caretakers of the Prisons. In 1872 he became the Director of the Simbirsk Provincial Prison Committee. In 1874 he received a medal of Catherine II for his charity work with the Simbirsk Society of Christian Charities. He donated more than 1,000 rubles to the Society of Charities for the Sick and Injured. He directed the Honorary Caretakers of Simbirsk Chuvash school -- Unlike most merchants in Simbirsk Stepanov was not a Tatar, but of Chuvashi heritage. Like the Volga Tatars, the Chuvashi were a minority, indigenous people of Turkic, Bulgari descent. They, too, had deep roots in merchant culture. Unlike the Tatars, the Chuvashi were (and are) Christian. Together with Nikolai Alexandrovich Yazikov (Vasili Yazikov's nephew) Stepanov was listed in the 1879 Simbirsk Address Calendar as a first guild merchant. He was also listed as a member of the Loan and Statistical Committee; and a member of the Board of the Simbirsk Society of Exchange Credits. He left an account of Mangushev's management of the factory: "The Severe

Exploitation of the Workers of the Yazikov Factory” in which he described the deplorable conditions of the workers: they did not receive a salary and Mangushev charged them well above the market price for basic provisions, e.g. 50 kopeks for a pood (16 kilograms) of rye, when the market price was 30 kopeks. Stepanov died in 1902. In 1898 the factory was taken over by his son Mikhail, who was born in 1868 in Simbirsk, and educated in Germany. In 1899 the younger Stepanov rebuilt the factory, and founded a school and a hospital in Yazikovo Selo. Among many other causes, he established what became the famous Peasant Orchestra of Yazikovo Selo. During the Russian Revolution, the estate was seized by the government. In 1931, Mikhail Feodorovich Stepanov, along with his young adult son, was purged.

There is no trace of public service for Vasili Yazikov after 1881. He died on October 30, 1890 of a stroke. Praskovia introduced Vasili’s will, written in 1882, to the Simbirsk Regional Court. All property went to Praskovia. It totaled 500 rubles. Vasili’s two children have vanished from the record pages.¹

¹ See Alexander M. Avdonin, *Pod Sen’yu Yazikovskikh Muz* (Ulyanovsk, Russia: Pechatniy Dvor, 1991), pp. 9-15; and P. L. Martynov, *Gorod Simbirsk za 250 let ego sushchestvovaniya: sistematicheskii sbornik istoricheskikh svedenii o g. Simbirske* (Simbirsk, Rossiya: Tipografiya gubernskogo pravleniya, 1898), p. 22.

Appendix B

LETTERS OF COPYRIGHT PERMISSION

1. Copyright Letter from William D. Hermann.

6/27/2016

Dear Sally -

Certainly you have my permission to copy any part of Janet Sharp Hermann's Pursuit of a Dream.

Bill Hermann

2. Copyright Letter from George C. Bolm, Director/Curator, Old Courthouse Museum, Vicksburg, Mississippi.

6/10/2015

Dear Sally,

You have the Museum's permission to use the images, "Hurricane Plantation Cottage" a.k.a. Joe Davis' Library and "Davis Bend Wedding Party," for your project.

George C. Bolm,
Director/Curator