

Warren R. Hofstra's book, *The Planting of New Virginia: Settlement and Landscape in the Shenandoah Valley* is the product of years of assiduous scholarship. Hofstra traces the evolution of the Shenandoah Valley during the eighteenth century. In the early 1700s, the valley was unsettled but contested by Native Americans. Beginning in the 1730s, European settlement created a region of dispersed private farms. The Seven Years War stimulated the economy of Winchester, which became a garrison town, and paved the way for the transition to a town and country landscape that produced wheat for the Atlantic commercial economy. In charting these changes, Hofstra demonstrates what was unique about the valley but also how its pattern of evolution was replicated as Americans moved westward during the nineteenth century.

To some degree, similar developments occurred in South Carolina. In 1731, shortly after the disastrous Yamasee war, the English Board of Trade authorized the colony's first royal governor, Robert Johnson, to establish townships along colony's frontier. Johnson and his superiors envisioned a landscape of towns and small family farms, a protective barrier against Indian threats on the frontier and slave rebellions by the black majority in the Carolina lowcountry. Subsidized by the colony's government, the region attracted German Lutherans, French Huguenots, and Welsh Baptists. Situated below the fall line, this first layer of backcountry settlement eventually became known as the middlecountry.

The purposes of South Carolina's inland towns, as well as their ethnic and religious diversity, mirrored the early settlement of the Shenandoah Valley described by Hofstra. In addition to concerns for South Carolina's security, the Board of Trade was alarmed that English settlement would be hemmed in by the French, who threatened to

extend their reach from Canada to Louisiana. The Board also wanted to forestall the destabilizing effects of Native American warfare. Settlement of the Shenandoah Valley promised to extend English influence westward. It also would protect Virginia from encroachment by Native Americans and prevent runaway slaves from fleeing to the valley and forming maroon communities. Like South Carolina's lowcountry of rice plantations, Virginia's Tidewater region of tobacco plantations contained a sizable and potentially rebellious slave population.

The settlers in the Shenandoah Valley were mostly German and Scotch-Irish Protestants, who created a landscape of dispersed family farms and a stable society that prized economic competency and disdained competition. In South Carolina, townships like Orangeburg and Saxe Gotha were overwhelmingly German. During the 1760s the backcountry area above the fall line, eventually known as the upcountry, received large numbers of Scotch-Irish settlers who migrated from Pennsylvania and Virginia.

Like Winchester, Virginia, South Carolina's inland towns were altered by the Seven Years War. Expeditions against the Cherokee created a demand for wheat that arrived by sea from Philadelphia and was transported overland from Charleston to towns like Camden. Soon settlers in Camden and Orangeburg began producing their own wheat. Their produce supplied not only the needs of South Carolina but also a surplus available for export to other colonies. Virginia's Shenandoah Valley likewise felt the reverberations of rising wheat prices, which stimulated farmers to eschew competency in favor of commercial agriculture.

Hofstra describes a Shenandoah Valley society that, compared to the South Carolina backcountry, was harmonious. The valley's relative stability was due in part to

the early settlers stressing cooperation over competition. Virginia's backcountry also owed its stability to the presence of elite leaders who were, by family relations, an extension of the Tidewater gentry. This dynamic was lacking in the South Carolina backcountry and was one factor in the Regulator movement of the late 1760s and early 1770s.

In Virginia's Shenandoah Valley the trend toward commercial agriculture begun before the American Revolution accelerated after independence. The valley's production of wheat was tied to the rhythms of an Atlantic commercial economy and Europe's growing demand for grain. American wheat fed workers in Britain's textile mills. These textile mills, in turn, created a demand for cotton that affected the evolution of South Carolina's backcountry. During the 1790s and early 1800s, after the invention of the cotton gin, cotton became the crop of choice for market-oriented Carolina backcountry settlers.

Before cotton penetrated South Carolina, its backcountry, like Virginia's Shenandoah Valley, contained a sizable slave population. In both areas, however, slave ownership paled when compared to the older settled coastal regions. In 1790 slaves comprised 73 percent of the population in the South Carolina lowcountry. In the middlecountry, by contrast, slaves were 32 percent of the region's total population, comparable to the Shenandoah Valley's Frederick County, where slaves were 24 percent of the population. While the Shenandoah Valley's slaveholdings remained fairly static, cotton altered the South Carolina landscape and population. The demographic changes over two decades are instructive. By 1810 slaves were 44 percent of the middlecountry's population. Of all South Carolina, the upcountry contained the fastest growing slave

population. From 1790 to 1810, the percentage of slaves in the total population increased from 15 to 26 percent. By mid-century, slaves comprised almost half the total upcountry population.

More than anything else, the transition to cotton agriculture made the landscape and population of South Carolina's backcountry different from Virginia's Shenandoah Valley. To trace in depth the evolution of the South Carolina backcountry's landscape and the role of upcountry and middlecountry towns in the cotton economy, we need a historian and geographer with the attention to detail and erudition Warren Hofstra demonstrates in his fine book.

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