

manuscripts, newspapers) as well as the relevant historical literature. She seems on sure ground in revising the familiar thesis of Willard Hurst on law stimulating economic growth. As she points out, different parts of the economy had conflicting interests; and therefore the legal system often favored one at the expense of another. Though she also has worthwhile observations on the constitutional competition of judicial and legislative branches, the long-range distribution of the commerce power between them receives less emphasis.

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*Agriculture and Slavery in Missouri's Little Dixie.* By R. Douglas Hurt. (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1992. Pp. xv, 334. Maps, figures, notes, tables, illustrations, appendix, bibliography, index. \$37.50.)

R. Douglas Hurt remedies Missouri's exclusion from studies of Upper South agriculture in the antebellum period by providing an in-depth description of seven Missouri counties: Clay, Lafayette, Saline, Cooper, Howard, Boone, and Callaway. These counties earned the sobriquet of "Little Dixie" for their fealty to the Democratic party and by the concentration of slave labor found there.

Farmers who began arriving in Little Dixie after the War of 1812 remained subsistence producers up to the 1820s because of a scarcity of markets rather than from lack of desire. These settlers also suffered from contentious land sales stemming from Spanish titles in the old Louisiana territory and from the economic depression following the Panic of 1819. Still, with the Missouri "fever" running high, Little Dixie did not lack for immigrants by the mid-1820s.

A majority of the immigrants shared a heritage which disposed them toward southern crops and southern labor systems. Migrants from the Upper South transplanted tobacco cultivation to their new home and found rich Missouri soils far more productive than worn-out Upper South soils. The southern economy's increased reliance on cotton made hemp cultivation, to produce rope and bagging for cotton bales, a mainstay of Little Dixie agriculture. Missouri farmers also raised hogs, sheep, cattle, and mules. Much of the livestock was sold on a local market, but Little Dixie farmers also drove herds of animals to eastern and southern markets. Although quality control and prices remained a problem throughout the antebellum era, these products tied Little Dixie to a larger market.

While Missouri averaged a slave population of 10 percent of the total population by 1860, in Little Dixie the percentages ran

from 22 percent to 37 percent. Little Dixie farmers considered slavery essential to the profitability of commercial agriculture. Hurt documents the concern of Missouri slaveholders with abolitionism and the fate of Kansas Territory as well as the day-to-day problems of policing, feeding, clothing, and providing medical care for a slave population. Hurt interprets Little Dixie's support for John Bell, Constitutional Union party presidential candidate in 1860, as evidence of the region's devotion to a moderate solution to the sectional issue.

Perhaps unintentionally, Hurt inserts himself into the quarrel over the timing and extent to which frontier farmers moved from self-sufficiency to involvement in the market economy by repeatedly asserting that Missouri farmers wanted, from the very beginning, to produce their crops for market.

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*Half Slave and Half Free: The Roots of the Civil War.* By Bruce Levine. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1992. Pp. x, 292. Bibliographical essay, index. \$30.00.)

Bruce Levine describes his new book on the coming of the Civil War as a "resynthesis of social and political history" (p. vii). It attempts to integrate newer works in social and cultural history into a wide-ranging reconsideration of how sectional and intrasectional differences led to what the author calls the "second act of America's democratic revolution" (p. 14). Despite a fairly sophisticated interpretative framework, Levine sees slavery as fundamental to the complex political, economic, social, and cultural conflicts of the antebellum decades.

As the book's title and much of the text suggests, the paradox between liberty and slavery was a central theme of American history and a source of chronic and finally irreconcilable tensions. Joining James Oakes and others in downplaying the importance of paternalism, Levine views slavery as a mechanism for labor exploitation. Indeed, an interest in labor systems—and in the history of workers—is a powerful thread running through the book and one that distinguishes it from other works on this topic.

New material on religious, social, and cultural life in the North and South, however, is not especially well integrated with the more conventional descriptions of sectional politics. Moreover, Levine sometimes exaggerates the degree of sectional distinctiveness. For instance, he underestimates the influence of evangelical religion on more traditional notions of honor in the South and is too quick to accept some provocative but at times misleading generalizations found in a number of secondary works. To be fair, how-