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Dreams of Industrial Utopias: Leading Manufacturers of the Deep South and their Mill Towns during the Civil War Era

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**Dreams of Industrial Utopias: Leading Manufacturers of the Deep South and
their Mill Towns during the Civil War Era**

Francis M. Curran

**Dissertation submitted
to the Eberly College of Arts and Sciences
at West Virginia University**

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy in
History**

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**Keywords: U.S. history, Southern history, industrialization, mill towns, reform,
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ABSTRACT

Dreams of Industrial Utopias: Leading Manufacturers of the Deep South and their Mill Towns during the Civil War Era

Francis M. Curran

Broadly speaking, this dissertation explores the intersection of industrialization and social reform in the nineteenth-century American South. It focuses on leading manufacturers of the Deep South and their mill towns during the Civil War era. More precisely, it investigates the relationship between these industrialists, their mill towns, and social reform efforts of the period. In the 1830s, 1840s, and 1850s, William Gregg, Daniel Pratt, and Barrington King created and managed some of the largest and most financially successful manufacturing establishments in the entire South. These men, however, were more than simply industrialists. They were also idealistic and steadfast social reformers who crafted and implemented ambitious programs of social reform in their respective mill towns. Interpreting Gregg, Pratt, and King in this manner adds significantly to our understanding of social reform efforts in the antebellum South. Moreover, so doing allows us to gain a more nuanced understanding of southern society and culture before the Civil War.

In addition to the history of social reform in the antebellum South, this work also contributes to the history of slavery and capitalism in early nineteenth-century America. The story of William Gregg and the Graniteville Manufacturing Company underscores the commercial interconnectedness of the North and the South during the period. Furthermore, by exploring southern textile manufacturing for northern markets, it complements recent work on northern industrial production for southern markets. Finally, the stories of all of the manufacturers under examination and their industrial enterprises reveal that industry in the Deep South and its white wage laborers relied on slavery's capitalism to survive. Free labor supported slavery in the Deep South.

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Introduction

Broadly speaking, the following work explores the intersection of industrialization and social reform in the nineteenth-century American South. It focuses on leading manufacturers of the Deep South and their mill towns during the Civil War era. More precisely, it investigates the relationship between these industrialists, their mill towns, and social reform efforts of the period. Over the past two decades or so, historians have furthered our understanding of the relationship between antebellum reform and the South. Collectively, their works argue for the existence of a strong reform impulse in Dixie in the decades preceding the Civil War. Despite its merits, this body of scholarship has its limitations. Most of these works, for example, focus on reform efforts in urban centers throughout the South, such as Baltimore, Charleston, Norfolk, Richmond, and Savannah, or large towns that were home to institutes of higher education, such as Athens, Georgia and Tuscaloosa, Alabama. In addition to large urban centers and college towns, these works focus primarily on the reform efforts of bankers, clerks, educators, merchants, ministers, and newspaper editors. As a result of these patterns in the historiography, much remains to be examined. For example, historians have largely overlooked the relationship between leading southern manufacturers, their mill towns, and social reform movements of the era.¹

¹ Major works that discuss social reform efforts in the antebellum South include John W. Quist, *Restless Visionaries: The Social Roots of Antebellum Reform in Alabama and Michigan* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1998); Gregg D. Kimball, *American City, Southern Place: A Cultural History of Antebellum Richmond* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2000); Jonathan Daniel Wells, *The Origins of the Southern Middle Class, 1800-1861* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004); Bruce W. Eelman, *Entrepreneurs in the Southern Upcountry: Commercial Culture in Spartanburg, South Carolina, 1845-1880* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008); Jonathan Daniel Wells and Jennifer R. Green, eds., *The Southern Middle Class in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2011); and Michael J. Gagnon, *Transition to an Industrial South: Athens, Georgia, 1830-1870* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2012).

This oversight is significant for a few reasons. To begin, leading southern manufacturers exercised immense power over their mill towns, which provided them with the opportunity to be influential social reformers. Whereas social reformers North and South and their organizations relied on voluntary pledges and charitable donations, these industrialists wielded the power to fire and evict employees and townspeople who violated company and town bylaws. In addition, these manufacturers played an active role in the day-to-day operations of their mills and demonstrated an unwavering dedication to realizing their vision of creating orderly, industrious communities.

This work seeks to inject leading southern manufacturers into scholarly discussions of antebellum reform efforts. Arguing that these men were steadfast social reformers, it considers their larger social and cultural significance to the region during the period. In so doing, the following work sheds new light on these industrialists and their mill towns. Moreover, it allows us to gain a more nuanced understanding of southern society and culture before the Civil War.

The following work focuses on three of the Deep South's foremost manufacturers during the antebellum era. In the 1830s, 1840s, and 1850s, these enterprising men created and managed some of the largest and most financially successful manufacturing establishments in the region. A native of Virginia, William Gregg (1800-1867) founded the Graniteville Manufacturing Company in Edgefield District, South Carolina. Boasting nearly 10,000 spindles, 300 looms, and roughly 300 operatives, the Graniteville mill was the largest cotton textile factory in not only the state, but the entire South during the antebellum period. The company marketed and sold its products not only in urban centers throughout the South, but also in Philadelphia and New York. Born in New Hampshire, Daniel Pratt (1799-1873) founded the Daniel Pratt Gin Company and the Prattville Manufacturing Company in Autauga County, Alabama. By 1850, with 2,800

spindles, 100 looms, and 136 operatives, Pratt's textile firm was the largest in the state. By 1860, his gin factory produced twenty-eight percent of all gins made in the South and twenty-five percent of all gins manufactured in the United States. A Georgia native, Barrington King (1798-1866) co-founded the Roswell Manufacturing Company with his father, Roswell King, in Cobb County, Georgia. By the late 1850s, with two mills boasting a combined total of about 160 looms and 8,500 spindles, the company was the largest textile firm in northern Georgia.²

Despite sharing the distinction of being some of the most well-known and respected manufacturers in the region during the period, their lives before becoming industrialists differed significantly. These men came from varied backgrounds and took long and unique paths to the field of manufacturing. They also differed in their motivations for founding their industrial enterprises. All, however, shared a tireless entrepreneurial spirit that propelled each of them to become leading southern manufacturers and acquire wealth, elevated social standing, and notoriety in their lifetimes.

These men, however, were more than simply industrialists. They were also steadfast social reformers. Alongside their manufacturing operations, Gregg, Pratt, and King built villages for their employees and their employees' families, over which they exercised a powerful and pervasive reform-oriented paternalism. Motivated by both the need for a reliable, well-disciplined workforce, they erected free schools for the education of their operatives' children,

² Lacy K. Ford, Jr., "The Tale of Two Entrepreneurs in the Old South: John Springs III and Hiram Hutchison of the South Carolina Upcountry," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 95, no. 3 (July 1994): 198; Tom Downey, *Planting a Capitalist South: Masters, Merchants, and Manufacturers in the Southern Interior, 1790-1860* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2006), 138; Curtis J. Evans, *The Conquest of Labor: Daniel Pratt and Southern Industrialization* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2001), 41 and 73; *Daily Constitutionalist* (Augusta, GA), October 24, 1849; George White, *Historical Collections of Georgia: Containing the Most Interesting Facts, Traditions, Biographical Sketches, Anecdotes, Etc.* (New York: Putney & Russell, 1854), 402; Michael D. Hitt, *Charged with Treason: Ordeal of 400 Mill Workers During Military Operations in Roswell, Georgia, 1864-1865* (Library Research Associates Inc., 1992), xv; Joe McTyre and Rebecca Nash Paden, *Historic Roswell, Georgia* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, 2001), 9.

donated land for the construction of Protestant churches, and enforced strict temperance measures, among other things. Throughout the antebellum era, officials of these companies and outside observers repeatedly asserted that the reform measures at Graniteville, Prattville, and Roswell were successful in morally and intellectually uplifting the towns' residents, the vast majority of whom were poor whites from the surrounding area. In reality, however, some residents actively resisted these manufacturers' attempts to exact greater control over their lives.

Unlike many antebellum Americans, social reform or social uplift meant something quite different for Gregg, Pratt, and King. It was not a means of expanding American democracy or achieving some religious aim, such as perfecting society and consequently ushering in the millennium. Rather, for these southern manufacturers, social reform or uplift was a means of social control aimed at engendering more efficient and obedient labor. Gregg, Pratt, and King were businessmen first and foremost. Their programs of social reform existed to promote the financial success of their manufacturing firms.

While these industrialists and town founders diligently managed their mills and communities, the issue of slavery—or more precisely, the question of whether or not it should be allowed to extend into the newly acquired western territories—slowly tore the nation apart. Throughout nearly the entirety of the antebellum era, Gregg, Pratt, and King held unionist views and opposed secession. Nevertheless, they sought to capitalize on the national political climate and the fears of many southerners in an effort to realize their vision of a more industrialized South. In so doing, they only helped to exacerbate southerners' fears and stoke the fires of sectionalism. Throughout the period, these men of industry also vehemently defended the South's "peculiar institution," an observation not at all surprising considering all were slaveowners. For Gregg and King, their unflinching proslavery stances eventually led them to

shed their unionist views and support secession. On the other hand, Pratt's loyalty to the Union remained strong and he continued to oppose secession until Alabama seceded in January 1861, after which he threw his full, undying support behind his home state. Moreover, the stories of Gregg, Pratt, and King demonstrate that slavery and strong proslavery rhetoric existed alongside ambitious social reform agendas.

Ultimately, the war proved calamitous for not only the South, but also the cherished factories and towns of these leading manufacturers. Almost as soon as the conflict began, the volunteer spirit carried away scores of their employees. The follow year, conscription threatened to take even more. The war also brought speculators, Confederate impressment officers, and the specter of sabotage. While large government contracts saved their companies from initial economic distress and uncertainty following secession, the Confederate government paid in Confederate currency, bonds, prepayment certificates, and certificates of indebtedness, which were completely worthless after the war. Moreover, these commitments to their states and the Confederacy hindered these manufacturers from being able to supply the demand of their local populations for cloth and thread, which bred anger and resentment for them among the local people. Finally, in the closing months of the war, federal armies threatened to finish what the war and Confederate government had started. Encouraged by either the presence of federal troops or trouble-making stragglers from Confederate armies, workers and residents of these mill villages, along with some people from the surrounding area, took advantage of temporary suspensions of law and order and rioted. They ransacked the mills, company stores, and even the abandoned homes of management and the town's ruling elite. In the end, the war brought disorder to these industrialists' communities and left their companies in ruin—either physically, financially, or

both—by the spring of 1865. In a few short years, it nearly destroyed everything Gregg, Pratt, and King had worked so hard to build in the preceding decades.

In the years following the war, as the federal government struggled to politically reincorporate the eleven former slave states into the Union, these prominent southern manufacturers assiduously worked to rebuild their devastated businesses. They also acted to restore order in their villages. Remarkably, all three men succeeded in doing both. While they were able and willing to revive their manufacturing enterprises and restore and maintain order in their towns during the postwar years, the same could not be said for the reformist fervor and paternalistic outlook they so strongly embraced during the antebellum era. Feeling deeply betrayed by the actions of their employees and townspeople during the conflict, these men expressed disdain for them in the postwar years, a sign of their weakening devotion to paternalism. Moreover, while some elements of their social reform programs in their mill towns endured long after the conflict, others faded away during the postwar years.

Admittedly, many historians of the antebellum South are aware of the programs of social reform implemented by Gregg, Pratt, and King in their respective mill towns. Broadus Mitchell, Curtis J. Evans, and Tom Downey, for example, have all mentioned them in their works to some extent or another. None of these scholars, however, placed the reform efforts of these manufacturers at the center of their interpretations. Moreover, none of them traced the fate of these social reform programs through the Civil War and into the late nineteenth century. In doing both, the following work seeks to make an original contribution to not only the scholarship on antebellum southern industrialists, but also social reform efforts in the antebellum South.

The following work employs a variety of primary sources to reconstruct the stories of these leading southern manufacturers, their companies, and their mill towns during the Civil War

era. These include sources familiar to most historians regardless of their specialization, such as newspaper columns, private journals, personal correspondence, census returns, government legislation, and magazine articles. Also included are sources familiar to business and economic historians, such as stockholders' meeting minutes, company bylaws, and annual reports of company presidents and treasurers.

In addition to the history of social reform in the antebellum South, this dissertation also contributes to the history of slavery and capitalism in early nineteenth-century America. Over the past several years, historians have examined the relationship between slavery and capitalism with great vigor. Collectively, their works argue that "slavery was indispensable to the economic development of the United States." In so doing, historians have highlighted the commercial interconnectedness of the North and the South during this period. Southerners shipped slave-grown cotton to not only international markets, but also northern textile mills. For their part, northerners shipped a variety of manufactured goods—many intended for slave use—to the South. The story of the Graniteville Manufacturing Company underscores the commercial interconnectedness of the two regions during the era. Furthermore, by exploring southern textile manufacturing for northern markets, it complements recent work done by scholars such as Seth Rockman on northern industrial production for southern markets.³

More significantly, the stories of all of the manufacturers under examination and their industrial enterprises reveal that industry and free labor in the Deep South relied on and

³ Some recent works that explore the relationship between slavery and capitalism in the early nineteenth century include Walter Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams: Slavery and Empire in the Cotton Kingdom* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2013); Edward E. Baptist, *The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism* (New York: Basic Books, 2014); Sven Beckert and Seth Rockman, eds., *Slavery's Capitalism: A New History of American Economic Development* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016); and Seth Rockman, "Negro Cloth: Mastering the Market for Slave Clothing in Antebellum America," in *American Capitalism: New Histories*, Sven Beckert and Christine Desan, eds. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018). Quote from Beckert and Rockman, eds., *Slavery's Capitalism*, 1.

supported slavery and slavery's capitalism. At Graniteville, Prattville, and Roswell, white wage workers manufactured goods for slavery's capitalism. While it shipped a proportion of its production to northern cities, the Graniteville Manufacturing Company sold much of its output to plantations. So too did the Roswell Manufacturing Company. Pratt's gin firm made essential machinery for cotton planters and his mills produced clothing for their slaves. Industry in the Deep South and its white wage laborers, therefore, relied on slavery's capitalism to survive. Free labor supported slavery in the Deep South.

A central theme of this work is paternalism or, more precisely, industrial paternalism. Historian Philip Scranton defined the term as "a style of management associated with industrial capitalism in which social relations between employer and employee are constructed upon the notion of patriarchal authority and/or mutual obligation." In general, employers provided jobs, housing, educational and religious opportunities, and protection from employer-perceived immoral influences in exchange for a loyal, well-disciplined workforce, which consequently "reinforced their self-esteem and on occasion their sense of religious or historical vocation." This type of paternalism, according to Scranton, emerged during the initial phases of industrialization—functioning as a bridge between workers' agricultural or artisanal pasts and their industrial futures by reconstructing bonds of authority and familiarity that had been severed in the transition—and operated for the purpose of contributing to the financial well-being of the company. Finally, industrial paternalism manifested itself in various forms across the country during the nineteenth century. The specific form of paternalism that was present in the mills at Lowell and Waltham, Massachusetts, which Scranton labeled formal paternalism, was different than that which characterized the management-employee relationship at textile mills in Rhode Island and Connecticut (familiar paternalism) and in Philadelphia (fraternal paternalism). With

respect to the study at hand, formal paternalism best characterized the employer-employee relationships at the southern mill towns of Graniteville, Prattville, and Roswell.⁴

In the field of southern history over the past half a century, paternalism has been most closely associated with the study of slavery. This is due largely to the work of renowned historian Eugene Genovese. In his seminal work *Roll, Jordan, Roll* (1974), Genovese examined the minds of the slaveholding class, arguing that they viewed themselves as benevolent paternalists. Since paternalism brought with it mutual obligations, enslaved individuals used owners' claims to paternalism to their advantage, carving out a more humane existence for themselves by establishing certain rights and creating autonomous cultural institutions. More recently, however, historians of the antebellum South have argued against Genovese's contention that paternalism defined the relationship between masters and slaves. In *Out of the House of Bondage* (2008), Thavolia Glymph detailed how white female slaveholders used violence as a means to extract labor from enslaved women within the plantation household. Walter Johnson, in *River of Dark Dreams* (2013), observed that slaveowners in the Mississippi River Valley, rather than giving concessions to their slaves and therefore implicitly recognizing their humanity, ruthlessly exploited their human property, attempting to extract as much labor from them as possible in the quest for fortune and fame. Paternalism, according to Glymph and Johnson, therefore, did not characterize the relationships between masters and slaves in either the plantation household or in the developing southwest during the antebellum era.⁵

⁴ Karen Bescherer Metheny, *From the Miners' Doublehouse: Archaeology and Landscape in a Pennsylvania Coal Company Town* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2007), 5; Philip Scranton, "Varieties of Paternalism: Industrial Structures and the Social Relations of Production in American Textiles," *American Quarterly* 36, no. 2 (Summer 1984): 235-243. Quote from p. 238.

⁵ Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World the Slaves Made* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1974); Thavolia Glymph, *Out of the House of Bondage: The Transformation of the Plantation Household* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008); and Johnson, *River of Dark Dreams* (2013). Additional works that challenge the paternalist thesis include Michael Tadman, "The Persistent Myth of Paternalism: Historians and the Nature of Master-Slave Relations in the American South," *Sage Race Relations Abstracts* 23, no. 1 (February 1998): 7-23 and

Paternalism is not only a central theme in works on slavery during the antebellum period. It is also a predominant theme in scholarship on the southern cotton textile industry during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In their discussions of paternalism, few if any of these works acknowledge or reference paternalism in mill villages before the Civil War. They seem to imply that industrial paternalism began with the explosive growth of the southern textile industry in the late nineteenth century. Historian Harold Wilson reminds us, however, that the Civil War “brought an end to an antebellum renaissance in Southern manufacturing.” In fact, “only England, France, two other European powers, and the North possessed more cotton and woolen spindles than the slave states.” The following work not only claims that the origins of industrial paternalism in the South lay in the antebellum era, but also suggests that historians in search of paternalism in the Old South should look to not only plantations and slavery, but also textile mill villages such as Graniteville, Prattville, and Roswell.⁶

In all, the following work provides new, valuable insights into the economic, social, and cultural history of the nineteenth-century South. By examining the programs of social reform created and implemented by leading southern manufacturers in their mill towns, it adds considerably to our understanding of social reform in the antebellum South. Moreover, this work contributes to recent work on the history of slavery and capitalism by not only underscoring the

William W. Freehling, *Road to Disunion*, vol. 1, *Secessionists at Bay, 1776-1854* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 59-76 and 229-230.

⁶ Some important works that discuss paternalism in the southern textile industry during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries include Melton Alonza McLaurin, *Paternalism and Protest: Southern Cotton Mills Workers and Organized Labor, 1875-1905* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Corporation, 1971); David L. Carlton, *Mill and Town in South Carolina, 1880-1920* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982); Gavin Wright, *Old South, New South: Revolutions in the Southern Economy Since the Civil War* (New York: Basic Books, 1986); Cathy L. McHugh, *Mill Family: The Labor System in the Southern Cotton Textile Industry, 1880-1915* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988); LeeAnn Whites, “Paternalism and Protest in Augusta’s Cotton Mills: What’s Gender Got to Do With It?” in Edward J. Cashin and Glenn T. Eskew, eds., *Paternalism in a Southern City: Race, Religion, and Gender in Augusta, Georgia* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2001); Timothy W. Vanderburg, *Cannon Mills and Kannapolis: Persistent Paternalism in a Textile Town* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 2013). Quote found in Harold S. Wilson, *Confederate Industry: Manufacturers and Quartermasters in the Civil War* (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2002), vii.

commercial interconnectedness of the North and the South before the Civil War, but also providing us with a better understanding of the relationship between free and slave labor in the antebellum South.

Chapter 1 – Men of Enterprise

Late in the summer of 1847, New Orleans journalist and magazine editor James Dunwoody Brownson De Bow traveled through Alabama. While there, he made a stop in “the remarkable town of Prattville.” Upon arriving, De Bow received the red-carpet treatment from the town’s founder, industrialist Daniel Pratt. Devoting “several hours” of his day to his special guest, Pratt personally gave De Bow a tour and provided him with explanations of not only his large gin factory and newly-built cotton textile mill, but also the bustling, growing town that grew up alongside them. Pratt even opened up his home to the magazine editor and New Orleans resident, showing De Bow his mansion with its meticulously landscaped grounds and attached art gallery. De Bow took careful notes, publishing his observations of Prattville in the September 1847 issue of his relatively new monthly agricultural, commercial, and industrial magazine, *De Bow’s Review*. Near the end of the short article, De Bow reflected on the character of the man that made all of what he saw possible. “His energies are indomitable, and his industry knows no impediment or regards no toil,” declared De Bow admiringly. “Night and day,” he continued, “this man of enterprise may be found at his post.”¹

In the 1830s and 1840s, four enterprising men—William Gregg, Daniel Pratt, and Roswell and Barrington King—built some of the largest and most financially successful manufacturing establishments in the entire South. Consequently, these industrialists became some of the most well-known and respected manufacturers in the region during the period. Despite sharing this distinction in their later years, their lives before becoming manufacturing magnates differed significantly. To begin, they came from a variety of backgrounds. Some were

¹ *De Bow’s Review* 4 (September 1847): 136-137.

born relatively poor or into humble circumstances, while others came from established, wealthy families. Some were native northerners, while others were born and raised in the South. Moreover, each of these men took a long, unique path to the field of manufacturing. Before becoming manufacturers, they were architects, artisans, judges, merchants, overseers, planters, and politicians. Most dabbled in multiple careers. Lastly, they differed in their motivations for founding their industrial enterprises. Some built their manufacturing establishments to prove that factories and mills could survive and thrive in the largely agricultural South, while others just saw an economic opportunity. While their backgrounds, paths to manufacturing, and motivations for founding their industrial enterprises differed significantly, these men shared a tireless, entrepreneurial spirit that propelled each of them to become leading southern manufacturers and acquire wealth, elevated social standing, and notoriety in their lifetimes.

Over the past twenty-five years or so, historians have interpreted the nineteenth-century South as a region in socio-economic transition. During the antebellum era, according to the scholarship, planters adopted some elements of modernity and encouraged some level of industrialization. A self-conscious middle-class emerged and challenged planter power. The South underwent a “transition from merely being a society with capitalist features toward becoming a capitalist society.” In addition to studies of the region as a whole, several community studies have closely examined industrialization at the local level. The following chapter seeks to build on the idea of the nineteenth-century South as a region in transition while also taking a deep dive into the creation of three of the most significant mill towns in the antebellum South. Moreover, the following chapter focuses on the backgrounds and motivations of a few of the

South's leading manufactures, along with the long, unique paths each took to the field of manufacturing.²

William Gregg was born in Monongalia County, Virginia (now West Virginia) on February 2, 1800. His father, who went by the same name, was born outside of Wilmington, Delaware in 1756. The elder Gregg eventually moved to Virginia and when war broke out between Great Britain and its thirteen North American colonies, he volunteered to fight for American independence. During the unsuccessful defense of Charleston, South Carolina in the spring of 1780, he was captured by the British. After managing to escape with other prisoners to a swamp, he returned to his native Delaware and married a woman by the name of Elizabeth Webb, who came from a Philadelphia Quaker family. Sometime after marrying, the couple moved to Newberry District, South Carolina. After an unknown period of time, they then moved to Monongalia County, Virginia, where Elizabeth gave birth to William.³

A few years later, a family tragedy would significantly alter the course of young William's life. When he was only four years old, his mother died. His father thought it best for William, the youngest of several children, that he be placed in the care of a female neighbor, who raised him for several years. The woman apparently took good care of the young boy and William developed a deep love and appreciation for her. Decades later, Gregg traveled with his

² Studies that focus on the nineteenth-century South as a region in transition include Mark M. Smith, *Mastered by the Clock: Time, Slavery, and Freedom in the American South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997); Jonathan Daniel Wells, *The Origins of the Southern Middle Class* (2004); Chad Morgan, *Planters' Progress: Modernizing Confederate Georgia* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005); Frank J. Byrne, *Becoming Bourgeois: Merchant Culture in the South, 1820-1865* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2006); and Tom Downey, *Planting a Capitalist South* (2006). Case studies of industrialization at the local level include Michael Shirley, *From Congregation Town to Industrial City: Culture and Social Change in a Southern Community* (New York: New York University Press, 1994); Bess Beatty, *Alamance: The Holt Family and Industrialization in a North Carolina County, 1837-1900* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1999); and Michael Gagnon, *Transition to an Industrial South* (2012). Quote from Downey, 8.

³ Mitchell, *William Gregg*, 1-2; *De Bow's Review* 10 (March 1851): 348.

family to visit his sisters in Iowa. At some point during the lengthy overland journey, the Greggs stopped at a farmhouse and asked for lodging for the night. To Gregg's astonishment, the owner of the farmhouse was none other than the woman who raised him. After an evening of reminiscing, Gregg left with his family the next morning to continue their journey. As a token of his appreciation for not only lodging him and his family for the evening, but also for raising him those many years ago, Gregg left the now elderly woman a check for a sizeable amount of money.⁴

When William was about ten years old or so, his father sent him to live with his uncle, Jacob Gregg of Alexandria, Virginia, to begin an apprenticeship. At the time, Jacob Gregg was a wealthy watchmaker, who also dabbled in manufacturing spinning machinery for cotton textile mills. In 1810, Jacob Gregg moved with his young nephew to Georgia, where he built a cotton textile mill along the Little River between the towns of Monticello and Madison. It was one of the first cotton textile factories in not only the state, but the entire South. Equipped with machinery that he made himself, Jacob Gregg's mill prospered during the War of 1812. Peace between the United States and Great Britain, however, undermined his manufacturing enterprise, as cheaper foreign manufactured goods flooded the country following the war. With his fortune gone and dreams of being a successful textile manufacturer dashed, Jacob Gregg decided to apprentice William to an old friend, a watchmaker and silversmith of Lexington, Kentucky. Although his industrial enterprise in Georgia failed, Jacob Gregg succeeded in planting within his young nephew an interest in cotton textile manufacturing that would one day lead the latter to become one of the most successful and well-known manufacturers in the South during the antebellum era.⁵

⁴ Ibid., 3-4.

⁵ Ibid., 4-5; Downey, *Planting a Capitalist South*, 129-130; *De Bow's Review* 10 (March 1851): 348.

In 1821, after spending a handful of years in Kentucky learning his trade, William Gregg moved to Petersburg, Virginia “to perfect himself in his profession.” While residing there, he continued his apprenticeship under a man by the surname of Blanchard. The relationship between master and apprentice was apparently healthy, productive, and marked by a mutual friendship. A decade after mastering his craft, Gregg, while returning from a trip out west, paid a visit to Blanchard, who had since relocated to Louisville, Kentucky. During his brief stay with his former master, Gregg fashioned a silver pitcher from the first coins he earned during his career and gifted it to Blanchard.⁶

After three years of honing his craft under Blanchard in Petersburg, Gregg moved to Columbia, South Carolina in 1824. There in Columbia, with meager capital, he sought to establish himself in his trade. Hard work and perseverance paid off. Within roughly a decade, Gregg had transitioned from craftsman to merchant and built a highly successful import firm that specialized in silver and fine goods. By the 1830s, Gregg’s business was extensive and lucrative. He employed a handful of artisans and built business connections in both the North and Europe. Within a decade, Gregg had accumulated a small fortune. This, coupled with health problems, facilitated his retirement from the business in the mid-1830s. The nature of the health problems that encouraged Gregg to end his mercantile business in Columbia is unknown.⁷

While traveling across the state on business, Gregg made innumerable stops in Edgefield District. One of those stops was at a store owned and operated by Colonel Mathias Jones in Ridge Spring. While at Jones’ store, Gregg became acquainted with his eldest daughter, Marina. Born in 1811, Marina was described as “a lady whose intelligence, and the general excellence of

⁶ Mitchell, *William Gregg*, 5; Quote from *De Bow’s Review* 10 (March 1851): 348.

⁷ Thomas P. Martin, ed. “The Advent of William Gregg and the Graniteville Company,” *The Journal of Southern History* 11, no. 3 (August 1945): 390; Downey, *Planting a Capitalist South*, 129-130; Mitchell, *William Gregg*, 5-6 and 8; *De Bow’s Review* 10 (March 1851): 348-349.

her character, render her an ornament to a sex and a blessing to her family.” William and Marina married in Edgefield District in April 1829. Soon after, the young couple made a house on Lady Street in Columbia their home. It was there that the three eldest Gregg children—Mary, William Jr., and James—were born.⁸

Shortly following his retirement from his mercantile business in Columbia, Gregg and his family moved to Edgefield District, probably the town of Aiken, specifically. Known at the time for its salubrious climate, Aiken attracted many from around the state seeking restored good health. While living in Edgefield District, Gregg once again became involved in textile manufacturing. In 1836 or 1837, “possessed of a restless mind and unemployed funds,” he acquired a large stake in the Vacluse Manufacturing Company. Founded in 1833 by George McDuffie and his business partners, the cotton and woolen textile mill sat along Horse Creek in Edgefield District, a short distance from the future site of the Graniteville mill and village. At the time of Gregg’s initial involvement, the company was \$6,000 in debt. In an effort to remedy the situation, Gregg fired the incompetent English overseer and personally took over management of the mill. He was ultimately successful in turning things around at Vacluse. Within eight months, the company doubled its output and turned a profit of \$11,000, which eliminated the debt and left a balance of \$5,000. Gregg’s second foray into textile manufacturing, like his first with his uncle, however, proved brief. In 1838, the company was sold and Gregg turned his attention elsewhere.⁹

That same year, Gregg and his family moved to Charleston. There in the port city, Gregg recommenced his mercantile career with an import firm organized by two Connecticut brothers,

⁸ Aimee E. Newell, *A Stitch in Time: The Needlework of Aging Women in Antebellum America* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2014), 81; Mitchell, *William Gregg*, 6-8; *De Bow’s Review* 10 (March 1851): 349.

⁹ Mitchell, *William Gregg*, 8, 12-13; Downey, *Planting a Capitalist South*, 129; Martin, “The Advent of William Gregg,” 390; *De Bow’s Review* 10 (March 1851): 349. Quote from Mitchell, 8.

Nathaniel and Hezekiah Sidney Hayden. Known as Hayden, Gregg, & Company, the business “became Charleston’s leading dealer in jewelry and fancy goods.” The firm’s success not only increased Gregg’s personal wealth, but also helped him cultivate strong ties within the city’s prominent business community, which would pay dividends for him while organizing the Graniteville venture.¹⁰

In the early 1840s, the senior member of the firm, Nathaniel Hayden, retired from the business to pursue a merchant banking career in New York City. Consequently, Gregg and Hezekiah Sidney Hayden drew up a new business agreement. According to the contract, by putting up the capital, Gregg became senior partner and the firm was renamed Gregg, Hayden, & Company. The designation of senior partner, according to the agreement, allowed Gregg to leave the day-to-day operations in the hands of Hezekiah Sidney Hayden, allowing him the flexibility to attend to other matters.¹¹

Free from the day-to-day operations of the firm in Charleston, Gregg once again turned his attention to textile manufacturing. In March 1843, Gregg and his brother-in-law, James Jones, purchased the Vacluse mill and the surrounding 11,000 acres of land along Horse Creek for \$25,000. Viewing the previous owner’s organization of the mill as overly complicated and inefficient, Gregg and Jones immediately reconfigured the factory. Planning to produce only the coarsest cotton textiles, they sold all of the factory’s woolen machinery and refurbished the cotton machinery. The changes, coupled with Gregg’s skillful management, paid off and Vacluse experienced financial success.¹²

¹⁰ Mitchell, *William Gregg*, 9; Downey, *Planting a Capitalist South*, 130; *De Bow’s Review* 10 (March 1851): 349. Quote from Downey, 130.

¹¹ Martin, “The Advent of William Gregg,” 391; *De Bow’s Review* X (March 1851): 349; Downey, *Planting a Capitalist South*, 130.

¹² Martin, “The Advent of William Gregg,” 392; Mitchell, *William Gregg*, 14; Downey, *Planting a Capitalist South*, 131.

With all going well at Vacluse, Gregg decided to embark on a trip north in the summer of 1844. While in New England, he toured the region's textile factories and villages, gathering as much information as possible. During his extended stay, encouraged by his experiences at Vacluse and inspired by his observations of New England's thriving manufacturing centers, Gregg began concocting a vision of a more industrialized South. He first published his plan of industrial development for Dixie as a twelve-part series of articles that appeared in the *Charleston Courier* over a nearly three-month span in the fall of 1844 under the pseudonym, "South-Carolina." Pleasantly surprised and encouraged by the positive public reaction to the series, Gregg decided to republish the articles as a pamphlet entitled *Essays on Domestic Industry* under his own name the following year.¹³

In *Essays on Domestic Industry*, Gregg argued that South Carolina and the rest of the cotton states ought to engage in cotton textile manufacturing. Observing that the South possessed numerous advantages, including an abundance of raw materials, water power, and cheap labor, he concluded that past failures in cotton textile manufacturing were due to ignorance and mismanagement on the part of owners, many of whom were planters. Explaining those failures, Gregg pointed to undercapitalization, neglect of day-to-day operations, and the production of too great a variety of products for such a small market. Gregg also reprimanded planter-industrialists for favoring slave labor over white labor. Detailing the benefits of industrialization for the South, he asserted that cotton textile manufacturing would not only provide the region's poor whites with stable employment and transform them into productive members of society, but also "strengthen their attachment to 'southern institutions,' that is, slavery." Moreover, according to

¹³ Mitchell, *William Gregg*, 16; Downey, *Planting a Capitalist South*, 131; *De Bow's Review* 10 (March 1851): 349.

Gregg, industrialization would help render the South more economically independent from the North.¹⁴

Periodicals across the South reprinted Gregg's writings. His work garnered high praise, but also sharp criticism. The *Charleston Courier*, which originally published Gregg's vision for a more industrialized South as a serial in 1844, boldly proclaimed that the essays "should be in the hands of every citizen, who desires to be enlightened as to the true interest of the South." The state's leading politicians and planters were not so enthusiastic. In the words of historian Tom Downey, *Essays on Domestic Industry* "was a blunt and sometimes scathing critique of southern agriculturalists and their failure to cultivate cotton mills along with cotton bolls." At times, the pamphlet also became personal. Gregg specifically called out George McDuffie—who at the time of publication was the governor of the state—for neglecting Vacluse. Gregg asked, "Why did you permit the establishment to dwindle, sicken and die, purely for the want of that attention, which you well know is essential to the success of your cotton plantation?" He continued, "Had you, in your new-born zeal for manufacturing, mixed a little more patriotism with your efforts, you would have taken the pains to ascertain why your Vacluse establishment did not realize the sanguine expectations of its proprietors." If some readers did not agree with Gregg on the topic of industrialization, others were undoubtedly put off or angered by either his tone or his penchant for publicly criticizing individuals.¹⁵

Shortly after the publication of *Essays on Domestic Industry*, Gregg set out to prove that cotton textile manufacturing could succeed in the South. In December 1845, Gregg and three

¹⁴ William Gregg, *Essays on Domestic Industry, or An Enquiry into the Expediency of Establishing Cotton Manufactures in South-Carolina* (Charleston: Burges & James, Publishers, 1845), iii-v; Downey, *Planting a Capitalist South*, 131-134. Quote from p. 133.

¹⁵ Ernest McPherson Lander, Jr., *The Textile industry in Antebellum South Carolina* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1969), 53-54; Downey, *Planting a Capitalist South*, 131; William Gregg, *Essays on Domestic Industry*, 8-9.

other investors successfully petitioned the South Carolina General Assembly for a charter for a cotton mill. The charter passed both houses of the state legislature relatively easily and with this the Graniteville Manufacturing Company was born. The South Carolina General Assembly approved an initial capital of \$300,000, which was to be divided up into 600 shares valued at \$500 each. By 1849, the same year construction of the mill was completed and it began to turn out product, all shares of stock had been purchased and the initial capital raised.¹⁶

The original stockholders of the Graniteville Manufacturing Company were some of the wealthiest and most powerful men in South Carolina at the time. One of the largest stockholders was Ker Boyce of Charleston. The quasi-retired merchant, occasional candidate for political office, and former president of the Bank of Charleston, who “was reputed to have been one of the wealthiest men in South Carolina” and “arguably the South’s premier venture capitalist,” held eighty shares—or \$40,000—of Graniteville stock. Along with Boyce, Hiram Hutchison, the president of the Bank of Hamburg, and Joel Smith, a prominent planter and member of the house of representatives from Abbeville District, purchased eighty shares of stock. John Springs, a friend of Hutchison and a retired planter and slave trader from York District, along with William Wright, also a retired planter from York District, both bought thirty shares of Graniteville stock. Otis Mills, a grain merchant from Charleston whose personal wealth was estimated between \$200,000 and \$380,000, purchased ten shares of stock. Staking both his reputation and personal finances on the venture, Gregg invested \$30,000 in Graniteville, purchasing sixty shares of stock in the company.¹⁷

¹⁶ Downey, *Planting a Capitalist South*, 134-136.

¹⁷ List of Original Stockholders of the Graniteville Manufacturing Company, 1846, The Papers of William Gregg and the Graniteville Company, Gregg-Graniteville Archives, University of South Carolina Aiken; James H. Slatton, *W.H. Whitsitt: The Man and the Controversy* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 2009), 36; Downey, *Planting a Capitalist South*, 135-137.

The stockholders of the Graniteville Manufacturing Company wasted little time completing the necessary steps in preparation for construction of the mill and village. In March 1846, the stockholders convened in Hamburg to organize the company and elect officers. Unsurprisingly, the stockholders elected Gregg president. They also appointed him chief engineer to oversee construction of the mill and village and installation of the mill's machinery. That same month, the company bought 9,000 acres of land along Horse Creek, a few miles from Vacluse. Gregg, Jones, and Boyce, in fact, owned much of the land. Soon after securing a site, the stockholders solicited carpentry and masonry contracts. Gregg traveled to the Northeast to purchase all of the necessary machinery to outfit the mill.¹⁸

Progress on the construction of the factory complex, village, and supporting infrastructure, however, was much slower. The foundation stone of the factory was laid in October 1846. The mill, however, did not begin producing textiles for market until 1849, nearly three years later. One reason for this was problems with contract workers. In 1846, the company contracted a carpenter and stonemason for work on the main factory buildings. Problems with both, however, soon arose. The stonemason "abandoned the job before it was finished," forcing the company to hire another mason to finish the work. In so doing "caused some complication and left a loop-hole for cavil, and we were sued by him for \$10,000." Despite owing the stonemason only \$500 for his services, the court ruled that the company pay him \$1,000. The carpenter, on the other hand, "did his work so badly that we had to take up all the floors and relay them, and throw out all the window sashes," which cost the company more than \$4,000.

¹⁸ Downey, *Planting a Capitalist South*, 137-138.

Fortunately, the company took the carpenter to court and won nearly all of the money back in compensation.¹⁹

Another reason was the sheer size of the mill and the scope of the entire Graniteville enterprise. Once completed, the factory was the largest cotton textile mill in the South. Moreover, it was three times larger than the second largest cotton textile mill in South Carolina and three times larger than the average cotton textile mill in the South. The mill measured 350 feet in length, fifty-five feet in width, and was two and a half stories tall. Made of hammered granite that the company quarried nearby, the factory contained 300 looms and approximately 9,000 spindles. When daylight was scarce, solar burners provided lighting. A canal nearly a mile long, thirty-seven feet wide at the surface, and five feet deep fed the mill abundant waterpower from two dammed ponds that covered hundreds of acres. The water from the canal turned a set of turbines at the factory that produced a combined 232 horsepower. The mill employed roughly 325 people and produced daily 12,000 yards of sheeting, shirting, and drills made from No. 14 yarn. In front of the factory lay a large manicured lawn adorned with neat graveled walkways and a gushing decorative fountain. Attached to the mill was a picker house, which was eighty-four feet long, forty-four feet wide, two stories tall, and also made of granite. Other buildings included a warehouse for finished goods and a raw cotton warehouse, which had a store attached to it.²⁰

On the opposite side of the canal was the company village, which boasted a population of about 900. Encompassing roughly 150 acres, the town was built on a gently sloping hillside to

¹⁹ Mitchell, *William Gregg*, 49; Reports of the President and Treasurer of the Graniteville Manufacturing Company, April 18, 1867, The Papers of William Gregg and the Graniteville Manufacturing Company, Gregg-Graniteville Archive, University of South Carolina Aiken, 4-5.

²⁰ Lacy K. Ford, "The Tale of Two Entrepreneurs of the Old South: John Springs III and Hiram Hutchison of the South Carolina Upcountry," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 95, no. 3 (July 1994): 198; Mitchell, *William Gregg*, 45, 49-50; Downey, *Planting a Capitalist South*, 138; *Hunt's Merchant Magazine* 21 (December 1849): 671-672; *De Bow's Review* 8 (January 1850): 27-28; *De Bow's Review* 10 (March 1851): 352.

allow rainwater to drain down into the canal, in the hope of creating a drier and thus healthier environment. Organized on a grid pattern with broad streets and large public squares, it contained a hotel, an academy, roughly a dozen stores, two Protestant churches, and about one hundred cottages for the workers and their families. While they differed in size from three to nine rooms, all of the cottages were Gothic in style and each possessed a small yard for the workers and their families to tend a vegetable garden if they so desired.²¹

The idea of employing and housing entire families in quaint cottages, however, was not part of the original plan for Graniteville. Initially, Gregg and the company intended to follow the Waltham-Lowell labor paradigm by building large boarding houses and renting the rooms to an almost exclusively young white female workforce. The company would also hire older white women as matrons whose “education and standing will exert a proper influence in the mental and moral culture of the females under their care.” In early September 1848, the company placed an advertisement in the *Edgefield Advertiser* calling for “the services of about *Three-Hundred additional White Operatives* principally Girls, above the age of fourteen; and also *Thirty Matrons* to take charge of their Boarding Houses.” Hoping to neutralize charges that employment at Graniteville would in any way compromise the virtue of these young women, the company promised that “they will not lose caste by such employment” for it “intend[ed] to establish and maintain a most exemplary state of morals in the place.” According to the advertisement, the company would screen potential employees, turning away anyone “who cannot bring the best testimonials as to their moral character.” Moreover, if an employee became immoral, the

²¹ Downey, *Planting a Capitalist South*, 139-140; Lisa Goff, “Something Pretty Out of Very Little: Graniteville Mill Village, 1848,” *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 78, no. 1 (March 2019): 58-62; *Hunt’s Merchant Magazine* 21 (December 1849): 672; *De Bow’s Review* 10 (March 1851): 352.

company promised that it would fire and evict them. “None will be permitted to remain in the place,” the advertisement continued, “who do not maintain such character.”²²

Unfortunately for Gregg and the company, the call went unanswered. Explaining the reason for the initial plan’s failure in a January 1850 article in *De Bow’s Review*, James H. Taylor, the company’s treasurer at the time, cited a strong reluctance on the part of young white women “to leave the home of their birth for strange places.” In attempting to adopt the Waltham-Lowell labor paradigm at Graniteville, Gregg and the company came up against one of the strongest social and cultural forces in the antebellum South, patriarchy. Throughout the South, but most especially in South Carolina, male heads of households possessed nearly unlimited power over their dependents and property. Moreover, as historian Stephanie McCurry pointed out, this authority was fiercely defended by male heads of households, backed by state law, and possessed larger political implications. At Graniteville, young unmarried white women would live beyond the control of their fathers. Employment at Graniteville, therefore, would undermine patriarchal authority. Male heads of households simply could not and would not allow it.²³

In response, Gregg and the company adopted a new plan, one that aimed to house entire families in company cottages at low rent. Taylor recalled that ‘neat, uniform cottages were built, which, with large lots of land each, were offered, at very low rent, to those who would bring in their families and place them in the mill.’ The company’s new plan was successful. “This plan worked well,” remarked the Graniteville treasurer. To the company’s relief, “the houses were soon filled with respectable tenants.”²⁴

²² *Edgefield Advertiser*, September 6, 1848.

²³ *De Bow’s Review* 8 (January 1850): 28; Stephanie McCurry, *Masters of Small Worlds: Yeoman Households, Gender Relations, and the Political Culture of the Antebellum South Carolina Low Country* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 85-86.

²⁴ *De Bow’s Review* 8 (January 1850): 28.

Once settled into their new homes, workers faced long and grueling workdays punctuated by strict regimentation and accountability. On a typical workday, a bell chimed before dawn to wake the workers of the village and signal the start of a new day. The company required workers to be at their stations by a second ringing of the bell. Immediately after the second bell, overseers locked the gates, forcing tardy workers to journey through the company office, where their tardiness would be recorded and possible punishment dealt. Once there was sufficient sunlight to operate the machines, the long workday began. At seven o'clock, the bell would ring once again and the machines slowed to a stop. Workers would then take a forty-five-minute long respite for breakfast. After the breakfast break, work continued until one o'clock in the afternoon, when the workers took their lunch break. After lunch, work continued until half past seven in the evening, when workers were allowed to return home. Workers labored at Graniteville for roughly twelve hours per day, six days per week, which was typical for workers in the textile industry throughout the country during the nineteenth century.²⁵

The workforce at Graniteville was almost exclusively white. It was also almost exclusively drawn from the native poor white population of the surrounding area. During the antebellum era, the company had no problem at all finding free white labor for its cotton factory. At the time, Edgefield District contained “a surfeit of cheap, unskilled, native white labor.” While the company did in fact hire a small number of slaves to help in the mill’s construction in the late 1840s and employed an even smaller number of slaves “for a few menial jobs outside the mill” in the 1850s, slave labor never constituted more than a miniscule fraction of the overall workforce.²⁶

²⁵ Ibid., 27-28; Mitchell, *William Gregg*, 61.

²⁶ Tom E. Terrill, Edmond T. Ewing, and Pamela M. White, “Eager Hands: Labor for Southern Textiles, 1850-1860,” *The Journal of Economic History* 36, no. 1 (March 1976): 84-99. Quotes from p. 99 and 92, respectively.

While he oversaw the construction of the Graniteville mill and village, Gregg embarked on yet another building project. This one, however, was much more personal in nature. In 1846 or 1847, Gregg and two Graniteville investors, Ker Boyce and James G.O. Wilkinson, purchased a large tract of land from the company in the rolling hills between the mill and the town of Aiken with the intent of erecting summer homes. On his handsome lot, Gregg built a house in what historian Broadus Mitchell referred to as “the prevailing Southern manner—of frame, large and about square, with a portico in front, the round columns of which rose the height of both storeys [sic].” Influenced by the beauty and pervasiveness of the mountain laurel shrubs (*Kalmia latifolia*) that grew wild in the area, Gregg named the house and the estate “Kalmia.” In the early 1850s, Gregg retired from his successful Charleston business to devote all of his attention to Graniteville. To transform Kalmia into a suitable year-round residence for himself and his family, Gregg added a wing that contained his study and retrofitted the entire house with gas lighting, a rare feature for a rural southern home at the time.²⁷

After having claimed their lots and constructed their summer retreats, Gregg, Boyce, and Wilkinson hired a surveyor to plan a village on the remaining land. They named the settlement “Kalmia.” Composed of twenty-four, thirteen-acre residential lots with a single avenue running through it, Kalmia village soon became the site of the permanent or seasonal residences of many well-known and well-respected local and state figures. They included Lowcountry botanist William Henry Ravenel and Edgefield Judge James P. Carroll.²⁸

At some point during the late 1840s, Gregg planted a peach orchard on his estate. Rather than starting from scratch by planting stones, he purchased two thousand peach saplings from New Jersey and had them shipped to Kalmia. Gregg placed them in long, neat rows on thirty or

²⁷ Downey, *Planting a Capitalist South*, 204; Mitchell, *William Gregg*, 86-88.

²⁸ Downey, *Planting a Capitalist South*, 204.

forty acres of land in front of the house. In late 1856, as Randell Croft observed, Gregg was in the process of considerably expanding his orchard by planting an additional six thousand peach trees on forty or fifty acres of land behind the house. By the Civil War, Gregg boasted a peach orchard at Kalmia of between seventy and ninety acres that contained about eight thousand trees.²⁹

In June of each year, Gregg's peaches began to soften slightly on one side and were ready to be harvested. His slaves—accompanied by dozens of hired-out slaves and white laborers—hand-picked the peaches and transported them to the on-site packing house. They plucked the fruit from the orchard “two or three days in advance of their maturity” to ensure that the peaches would reach peak ripeness by the time they arrived in New York City a few days later. At the packing house, Gregg's slaves and hired laborers meticulously inspected the peaches for any imperfections, such as bruises or rot. They packed only the unblemished specimens into “slatted boxes about two feet long, fifteen inches wide, and ten inches deep.” Each wooden crate, filled with clean straw, leaves, or paper shavings, contained about five or six pecks. The packing material provided proper cushioning and ventilation. Once the fruit was carefully packed and ready for shipment, Gregg's slaves and hired laborers loaded the wooden boxes onto wagons and transported them to Kalmia Station, a nearby depot on the South Carolina Railroad. After being loaded onto railcars at the station, the fruit traveled overnight to Charleston. Once in the port city the next morning, Gregg's peaches hitched a ride on a northbound coastal steamer. The luscious red and yellow orbs from Kalmia arrived in New York City a few days later.³⁰

The journey that Gregg's peaches undertook each year to New York City underscored the spectacular advancements in transportation technology witnessed by Americans during the first

²⁹ Mitchell, *William Gregg*, 89; *The Yorkville Enquirer*, February 26, 1857.

³⁰ *The Yorkville Enquirer*, July 21, 1859; Mitchell, *William Gregg*, 89-90 and 161.

half of nineteenth century. Thanks to the construction of the South Carolina Railroad, what was once an arduous and expensive 125-mile overland trip from Edgefield District to Charleston before the 1830s was relatively inexpensive and took only hours by the 1850s. Steamboats, which replaced sailing vessels in the coastal trade, enormously expanded the markets for agricultural products in particular. Commenting on the high price Gregg's peaches fetched on the New York market, the senior editor of the *Fayetteville Observer* wrote, "This is one item of the benefits resulting from railroads and steam boats, those annihilators of time and space, which have thus brought Mr. Gregg in reach of the greatest market in the country, though it is 8[00] or 900 miles distant from him." Simply put, without recent advances in transportation technology, Gregg and other fruit farmers in the Deep South would have been unable to access the lucrative New York market. Steamboats and railroads made southern commercial peach-growing possible.³¹

Able to relatively quickly and cost-effectively reach New York City thanks to recent innovations in transportation technology, Gregg capitalized on the demand for early-season fruit in the city and reaped the financial rewards. Reports of Gregg's gross yearly earnings, however, varied widely. For example, the *Edgefield Advertiser* claimed that Gregg earned nearly \$4,000 from his peach crop in 1856. The *Southern Recorder* of Milledgeville, Georgia, however, maintained that he brought in \$6,000 that same year. Since his annual costs are unknown, it is unclear how much Gregg profited—if at all—from his peaches. However, given Gregg's enterprising spirit, strong work ethic, and the fact that he continued cultivating peaches at Kalmia for over a decade, it is reasonable to conclude that he probably turned a profit.³²

³¹ *Southern Recorder*, September 16, 1856.

³² *Edgefield Advertiser*, August 13, 1856; *Southern Recorder*, September 16, 1856.

While the vast majority of Gregg's peaches went to New York City, a small amount remained in South Carolina. Of these, some stayed in Charleston and were sold to consumers there. A select few traveled the short distance to Graniteville. According to historian Broadus Mitchell, during the summer months, Gregg would fill a wagon with baskets of peaches from his orchard and personally deliver them to the children at the Graniteville Academy as a treat. After placing the baskets in the schoolyard, students excitedly helped themselves to the succulent fruit as Gregg looked on with a smile. Thus, it was here at the Graniteville Academy that Gregg's social and agricultural reformist visions met.³³

Once all construction at Graniteville was completed and the mill was in full operation, the Graniteville Manufacturing Company gradually became financially successful. In the early 1850s, however, the company experienced significant growing pains thanks to waste and inefficiency created by inexperienced workers and managers, along with a depressed national textile market. In 1850, the company broke even. The following year, however, brought even worse results as the company lost over \$12,000. Fortunately for the company, the growing pains did not last long. Workers and managers became seasoned and thus waste and inefficiency declined significantly. Consequently, the company began to turn a profit. Net earnings for 1853 and 1854 were \$30,596 and \$64,954, respectively. From the net earnings of these two years, the company declared two dividends in 1854, one at \$32,400 and another at \$18,000. The same year, Gregg recommended that an additional dividend of 12% be paid in stock. The company's financial success continued through the remainder of the 1850s. In 1859, for example, the company's net earnings were \$45,809.³⁴

³³ Mitchell, *William Gregg*, 82.

³⁴ Downey, *Planting a Capitalist South*, 205-206; Mitchell, *William Gregg*, 101-102; Treasurer's Report of the Graniteville Manufacturing Company, Report for 1859, The Papers of William Gregg and the Graniteville Manufacturing Company, Gregg-Graniteville Archive, University of South Carolina Aiken.

While he had already attained significant wealth before embarking on his manufacturing crusade, Gregg's success at Graniteville, along with his Kalmia peach business, enhanced his personal financial situation by 1860. In 1850, Gregg owned an estimated \$20,000 in real estate. By 1860, however, his wealth had grown exponentially. In that year, Gregg owned an estimated \$40,000 in real estate and \$250,000 in personal estate.³⁵

Daniel Pratt was born just outside of Temple, New Hampshire on July 20, 1799. A sixth-generation New Englander, his family's roots ran all the way back to the early 1640s and the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Pratt's father was Edward Pratt, a small farmer and joiner. His mother was Asenath Pratt. The couple, along with their three young children, had moved from Reading, Massachusetts, the home of Edward's parents, to the township of Temple, New Hampshire only a few months before Daniel's birth.³⁶

Pratt's parents instilled in him the values of perseverance, faith, frugality, and hard work. On their small farm, the Pratts, not unlike many New England agricultural families at the time, eked out a meager existence, only one bad harvest or accident away from complete financial ruin. Edward Pratt undoubtedly put Daniel to work on the family farm as soon as the young boy was old enough to carry out meaningful tasks. In addition to frugality and hard work, the Pratts valued faith highly and passed that trait onto their children. Despite being of humble means, the Pratts, soon after their arrival in Temple, purchased a pew in the town's Congregationalist meetinghouse for \$33.33, a considerable sum at the time for a humble farming family. The Pratts

³⁵ U.S. Census, South Carolina, 1850 Population Schedule, District of Charleston; U.S. Census, South Carolina, 1860 Population Schedule, Edgefield District.

³⁶ Curtis J. Evans, *The Conquest of Labor: Daniel Pratt and Southern Industrialization* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2001), 8; *De Bow's Review* 10 (February 1851): 225; Martin T. Olliff, "Life and Work in a Progressive Cotton Community: Prattville, Alabama, 1846-1860," *Agricultural History* 68, no. 2 (Spring 1994): 53.

attended church service each Sunday and regularly required their children to read the Bible or other sacred texts at home.³⁷

Pratt apparently possessed a deep affection for his hometown and looked back fondly on the time he spent there during his youth. In the summer of 1857, he contributed a handsome sum for the purchase of a new bell for the town's old Congregationalist meetinghouse, the same one in which his parents bought a pew for the family more than fifty years earlier. The new bell cost \$400. Citizens of the town raised half of the sum, while William Appleton of Boston and Pratt contributed the remainder. The following year, Pratt once again opened his pocketbook to help the town. In mid-August 1858, he received an invitation to attend Temple's centennial celebration. Responding to the invitation committee in early September, the Alabama industrialist regrettably informed them that he could not attend because of the distance. In his letter, Pratt revealed his feelings towards the town of Temple and the time he spent there in his youth. "Notwithstanding the length of time that has elapsed," he wrote, "I still look back with pleasure to the time when I lived in your town." In a gesture of good will and appreciation, Pratt wrote a check for fifty dollars to help fund the centennial celebration.³⁸

Unlike Gregg, Pratt was fortunate enough to receive some formal schooling. His family's socio-economic status, however, worked to limit it. As a young boy, Pratt attended the local district school to learn basic reading, writing, and arithmetic skills. His formal education, however, was often interrupted due to familial obligations. Coming from a humble farming family, Pratt was unable to attend school during the busy seasons when his family required his help on the farm. His oft-interrupted primary education left him with significant deficiencies in

³⁷ Evans, *The Conquest of Labor*, 8-10; Olliff, "Life and Work in a Progressive Cotton Community," 53.

³⁸ Henry Ames Blood, *The History of Temple, N.H.* (Boston: Geo. C. Rand & Avery, 1860), 51, 53, and 138. Quote from p. 51.

arithmetic and grammar. His sporadic formal schooling, however, led Pratt to value education highly in his later years and undoubtedly influenced his educational efforts at Prattville.³⁹

In 1815, at the age of sixteen, Pratt began a practical education. Believing that his son was a “mechanical genius,” Pratt’s father apprenticed him to Aaron Kimball Putnam, a house carpenter from adjacent Wilton Township. While living with Putnam, Pratt proved his father’s conviction correct. Despite his deficiencies in arithmetic, he demonstrated an uncanny knack for carpentry. Pratt quickly learned the skills of the trade and transformed into a talented young carpenter.⁴⁰

Pratt apparently formed a strong bond with his master. Near the end of his apprenticeship, when Putnam fell on hard times financially, Pratt went to great lengths to help him. In 1819, the economic panic devastated Putnam financially, compelling him to mortgage his house. In an act of extraordinary selflessness, Pratt left New Hampshire for Savannah, Georgia, hoping to find work and earn enough money to save his master’s home. In November of that year, Pratt landed in the port city with nothing more than a toolbox, the clothes on his back, and twenty-five dollars. Fortunately for Pratt, he quickly found employment in the city. The following year, he returned to his native New Hampshire with enough money to save Putnam’s house. As a token of his deep appreciation, Putnam named his next child after his altruistic and kindhearted apprentice.⁴¹

Despite living and working there for less than a year, Savannah made a strong impression on Pratt. Enticed by the economic opportunities he saw during his short stay, he left his native state for good and returned to Savannah in either late 1820 or early 1821. While living there,

³⁹ Evans, *The Conquest of Labor*, 9.

⁴⁰ Ibid.; *De Bow’s Review* 10 (February 1851): 225; Olliff, “Life and Work in a Progressive Cotton Community,” 53.

⁴¹ Evans, *The Conquest of Labor*, 10.

Pratt most likely found work under a master carpenter. His time in the bustling Georgia port city, however, was brief. In the summer of 1821, Pratt moved roughly 167 miles northwest to Milledgeville, the capital of the state at the time.⁴²

Over the next decade or so, Pratt put his carpentry skills to work earning a living in Georgia's wealthy cotton belt. He designed and built lavish homes in Milledgeville, Macon, and the rural counties in between for local elites. Architectural historians have labeled Pratt's work, "Milledgeville Federal." The houses he built were large two-story, symmetrical abodes. Two-story porticos supported by columns and front entryways topped by fan motif carvings or glasswork defined their facades, while a Georgian floorplan organized their interiors. Throughout the 1820s, Pratt's work garnered him high praise from clients and with it a reputation as one of the most highly esteemed carpenter-architects in the area.⁴³

Pratt's heavy workload and stellar professional reputation during this period, however, did not translate into financial success. Nor did it guarantee his happiness. In a letter to his father, dated June 1827, Pratt revealed that he was terribly lonely and mired in a significant amount of debt. On the surface, it appeared that he had it all as a successful carpenter-architect in a wealthy region of the state. Out of the public view, however, Pratt suffered from considerable emotional and financial problems at this point in his life.⁴⁴

The loneliness and indebtedness that tormented him in the early summer of 1827, however, proved temporary. Only a few months after writing his father, Pratt cured the former ailment and partially assuaged the latter by serendipitously meeting the love of his life and soon

⁴² Ibid., 11.

⁴³ John Linley, *Architecture of Middle Georgia: The Oconee Area* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2014), 36-37, 43-44, 47; Evans, *The Conquest of Labor*, 11; *De Bow's Review* 10 (February 1851): 225; Olliff, "Life and Work in a Progressive Cotton Community," 53.

⁴⁴ Evans, *The Conquest of Labor*, 11.

after marrying her. Sometime in the summer of 1827, Pratt crossed paths with a young woman from Connecticut named Esther Ticknor. A member of a wealthy and established New England family, Esther had traveled to Georgia to visit kin. After meeting, the two quickly fell in love. In early September, after a short but passionate courtship, the couple wed.⁴⁵

Four years after marrying, Pratt met another individual who would permanently alter the course of his life for the better. In 1831, he made the acquaintance of another New England native, Samuel Griswold. Born in Burlington, Connecticut in 1790, Griswold moved to Clinton, Georgia by 1819, where he purchased land. A merchant by trade, he soon realized a business opportunity in manufacturing cotton gins. By 1823, Griswold had erected a gin factory in Clinton. In 1825, he entered into a business partnership with a man by the name of Clark, forming Griswold & Clark, a manufacturing and mercantile firm. The two not only produced, repaired, and sold cotton gins at their Clinton shop, but also sold cast iron gears, wheat fans, iron ploughs, and wooden furniture. After less than a year, however, the partnership ended. In the wake of the failed partnership, Griswold decided to focus his attention on his gin factory. In the handful of years that followed, Griswold developed “the first important gin factory in the South.” By 1830, his firm was “easily dominating the business in central and eastern Georgia and the Carolinas.”⁴⁶

It was at this point that Griswold introduced Pratt to cotton gin manufacturing, a watershed in the life of the latter. In 1831, Griswold found himself in need of a superintendent to run his gin factory in Clinton. Griswold probably first became aware of Pratt and his work through Samuel Lowther, a friend and neighbor of Griswold for whom Pratt built a mansion.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 11-12.

⁴⁶ Ibid.; Angela Lakwete, *Inventing the Cotton Gin: Machine and Myth in Antebellum America*, 94-95. Quotes from Evans, *The Conquest of Labor*, 12.

Impressed by Pratt's work as a carpenter-architect, Griswold offered him the position and Pratt graciously accepted.⁴⁷

Pratt flourished as superintendent of Griswold's gin factory. Only a year after hiring Pratt, Griswold was so pleased with his performance that he made him a partner in the business. Over the next year, as the partnership thrived, the two decided to expand their business. To the west lay Alabama and Mississippi, two southern states that were in the throes of the cotton boom. The demand for not only new cotton gins, but also a firm that could repair them was extremely high among the states' planters. Their factory in Clinton could handle increased demand, but with the distance between them and their new clientele so great, communication and transportation problems were bound to arise. Griswold and Pratt saw an opportunity. They would construct a new factory somewhere in one of those two states and capture a large share of the southwestern market.⁴⁸

The plan, however, never materialized. Shortly after conceiving their idea, Griswold began having second thoughts. Due to his fear of possible hostilities with the Creeks, his cautiousness as a businessman, or both, Griswold decided against expanding operations westward. Undeterred by his business partner's change of heart, confident in his abilities, and still enticed by the opportunity that awaited him, Pratt set out for Alabama in 1833 to build a gin factory. Accompanying him were his wife Esther, two slave mechanics, and a dozen horses pulling thousands of pounds of gin-making material.⁴⁹

Pratt's story in Alabama, however, did not begin at Prattville. Instead, for six years prior to founding the village, the gin manufacturer bounced around the south-central part of the state

⁴⁷ Evans, *The Conquest of Labor*, 12; Lakwete, *Inventing the Cotton Gin*, 106; *De Bow's Review* 10 (February 1851): 225; Olliff, "Life and Work in a Progressive Cotton Community," 53.

⁴⁸ Evans, *The Conquest of Labor*, 13.

⁴⁹ Ibid.; *De Bow's Review* 2 (September 1846): 153; Lakwete, *Inventing the Cotton Gin*, 106.

leasing various locations. Once in Alabama, Pratt settled a few miles west of the small town of Wetumpka. For a workshop, he briefly leased Elmore's Mill on Mortar Creek, where he and his slave mechanics built fifty gins from the materials they had hauled with them from Georgia. To Pratt's delight, he sold out of the gins quickly. The following year, in 1834, Pratt moved southwest along the Alabama River and settled just north of the town of Washington. There, he leased McNeil's Mill on Autauga Creek for a term of five years. At McNeil's Mill, Pratt exercised his carpentry skills by building a two-story wooden structure. The first floor housed his gin shop, while the second floor served as a residence for him, Esther, and his workers.⁵⁰

Pratt's gin shop at McNeil's Mill prospered in the late 1830s. Pratt employed between sixteen and seventeen laborers, eleven men to assemble gins in the shop and five or six blacksmiths. The relatively small workforce was able to produce an impressive number of gins. Each year, Pratt's firm built roughly two hundred gins, which ended up on plantations all across the cotton belt of southern Alabama. One of those plantations belonged to Charles Tait of Wilcox County, who purchased a gin after his overseer observed that Pratt had "already sold server [sic] gins in this naborhood [sic] and they done well." While Pratt did face competition from New England-based gin firms and small producers in the state, high demand in the area, the innate logistical limitations of New England-based gin firms, and the high quality of his own gins converged to provide Pratt with a large, lucrative market to sell his gins.⁵¹

Despite the success of his McNeil's Mill workshop, Pratt had designs for something much bigger. When he and Griswold first hatched the plan of going west, they had planned to build a factory to capture a large share of the southwestern market for cotton gins. Despite Griswold choosing to stay behind, the desire to erect a factory still burned bright within Pratt. To

⁵⁰ Evans, *The Conquest of Labor*, 18; Lakwete, *Inventing the Cotton Gin*, 106.

⁵¹ Evans, *The Conquest of Labor*, 18-19. Quote from p. 19.

this end, the gin-maker purchased 2,000 acres along Autauga Creek, roughly four miles north of Washington, from Joseph May for \$21,000 in March 1835. May demanded that Pratt pay the sum in four installments over two years. Speaking to the quality of—and demand for—Pratt’s work, May mandated that the manufacturer pay the first two installments in gins. The remainder was to be paid in cash, which Pratt borrowed from the Montgomery branch of the Bank of Alabama and two wealthy in-laws, Elijah and Lydia Chandler.⁵²

To most people, May’s land left much to be desired. In eulogizing Pratt, H.J. Livingston remembered the large tract of land as “nothing but a dismal swamp, fit habitation only for the bear and panther.” The *Autaugaville Autaugan* described Pratt’s purchase as “an almost impenetrable jungle” where “silence and solitude held...undisputed reign.” The condition of the sawmill on the property apparently was no better. The periodical characterized the mill, which could only be accessed by “a single road, built over the treacherous earth, with slabs and puncheons,” as “old, dreary, and dilapidated.” A writer for the *Alabama Planter* remembered the land as “a wild and secluded spot.” Not surprisingly, therefore, most believed at the time that Pratt had made a foolish investment.⁵³

The land’s new owner, however, thought differently. Where others only saw untamed wilderness, Pratt saw untapped potential and opportunity. In his opinion, the tract of land contained two valuable resources. The first was ample waterpower provided by the creek, which had the ability to power a large gin factory. The second was plentiful yellow pine forests, which

⁵² Ibid., 19-20.

⁵³ Susan F.H. Tarrant, ed., *Hon. Daniel Pratt: A Biography, with Eulogies on His Life and Character* (Richmond, V.A.: Whittet & Shepperson, 1904), 110; Evans, *The Conquest of Labor*, 20, originally from *Alabama State Journal*, 6 October 1853, reprinted from the *Autaugaville Autaugan*; *De Bow’s Review* 3 (June 1847): 585.

could provide the raw material for building not only gin stands, but also additional structures on the property.⁵⁴

Journalist and magazine editor James D.B. De Bow agreed with Pratt's assessment. In the September 1847 issue of his influential periodical, *De Bow's Review*, he described the town of Prattville and its industrial operations. De Bow dedicated one paragraph of the article to a description of the land. He asserted that "everything is favorable for the erection of extensive manufactories." One of the site's most significant advantages was the creek. With a bit of hyperbole, De Bow declared that Autauga Creek was "the most uniform stream in the world—neither depressed by a protracted drought, nor much swollen by heavy rains. It is consequently one of the best character for manufactories, for it can always be depended upon." In addition to its reliable waterpower, the geology beneath and around it allowed it to be a great location for a large mill. "The bed of Autauga creek," observed the periodical, "is of a sand stone generally reaching across—hence the foundation is superior for mills." Besides the creek, the land contained an abundance of pine trees. "The woods abound with pine timber," De Bow noted, which stretched all the way to the edges of the creek.⁵⁵

During the late 1830s and early 1840s, Pratt developed his new land tract. In so doing, he began to lay the foundation for not only a large gin operation, but also a bustling community. In 1839, Pratt's lease at McNeil's Mill expired and he moved his gin-making operation three miles north of Washington to his newly acquired land on the banks of Autauga Creek. Soon after the move, he quickly worked to improve the site. First, he commenced draining the unhealthy mosquito-infested marshes near the creek. Then, in the winter of 1839-1840, Pratt built a two-story gin factory along with a new sawmill, planing mill, blacksmith shop, and residences for his

⁵⁴ Evans, *The Conquest of Labor*, 20.

⁵⁵ *De Bow's Review* 4 (September 1847): 136.

workers. Shortly thereafter, Pratt, along with investors Amos Smith and his brothers-in-law, Samuel and Simon Ticknor, established Daniel Pratt and Company. In 1841, he constructed a gristmill, which quickly experienced success as farmers from as far as 150 miles away brought their grains to be pulverized. Transitioning from a wilderness to a fledgling commercial center, the tiny village needed a name. While he originally conceived of naming it “Pratt’s Mills,” Pratt changed his mind at the advice of Amos Smith. The settlement, thereafter, was known as Prattville.⁵⁶

To market and sell his gins throughout the south-central states, Pratt established a large network of agents. Each agent earned a fixed monthly salary supplemented by commissions for each gin they sold. Pratt’s agents usually traveled around collecting contracts from planters in the spring and summer of each year. Agents then sent these contracts back to Prattville, where work would quickly begin to fill the order. By the fall, the factory manufactured the gins and shipped them either by water or overland to the planters. If planters were satisfied with their gins’ performance, they would provide the agent with a note payable in the spring after they sold their cotton crop.⁵⁷

Slaves composed the majority of the workforce at Pratt’s gin factory in the 1840s. While he owned roughly half of the skilled male slave mechanics that labored in his factory during the decade, Pratt also hired a significant number from other white owners. In 1840, Pratt’s gin factory had thirty-six employees, which “enabled Pratt to become a major cotton-gin manufacturer not only in Alabama but also across much of the South.” Roughly two-thirds of this workforce was black, male, and enslaved. Pratt, himself, owned about half of these skilled slaves. The other half were hired out from other white owners. Two, in fact, were owned by

⁵⁶ *De Bow’s Review* 10 (February 1851): 226; Evans, *The Conquest of Labor*, 20-21.

⁵⁷ Evans, *The Conquest of Labor*, 25.

Samuel Griswold. Throughout the decade, Pratt consistently hired six or more slave mechanics each year to work in the gin factory. Supplementing the primarily slave workforce were free white mechanics. In 1840, Pratt employed twelve white males at his gin factory, most of whom were native northerners. The number of white mechanics employed in Pratt's gin factory remained relatively consistent throughout the decade.⁵⁸

Slaves made up a majority of Pratt's gin factory workforce for a few reasons. As most antebellum southern manufacturers knew well, skilled white labor was hard to find in the rural Deep South. Exacerbating the situation, Prattville was relatively isolated during its first decade of existence. Consequently, Pratt was forced to rely on the most adaptable and mobile form of labor at the time, slavery. Roughly half of the slaves that worked in Pratt's gin factory in the 1840s were owned by Pratt himself. This was because purchasing slaves was more economical than hiring them out. For example, Pratt paid between \$1,200 for each skilled male slave he purchased in the 1830s and 1840s. On the other hand, however, hiring six or more skilled male slaves cost him at least \$2,500 each year. Buying slaves was simply a wise business decision.⁵⁹

Business was booming for Pratt's gin factory in the 1840s. Over a four-year period, from 1841 to 1844, Pratt sold just under 2,000 gins. This meant that the factory churned out about 500 gins on average per year in the early 1840s, an impressive number. Subsequently, the firm's partners rewarded themselves nicely. Following a successful 1844, the four partners divided \$30,000 in profit amongst themselves. Pratt's gins made their way not only to planters all across the south-central states, but also to a few in Mexico. Pratt had set out in the early 1830s to

⁵⁸ Ibid., 22-25. Quote from p. 24-25.

⁵⁹ Evans, *The Conquest of Labor*, 22-24.

capture a large share of the market for gins in the south-central states. By the mid-1840s, he had done so successfully and was reaping the financial rewards.⁶⁰

In the mid-1840s, Pratt expanded his manufacturing operations at Prattville to include cotton textiles. As with his gin business, this new manufacturing enterprise would cater exclusively to the needs of the planter elite. In January 1846, the Alabama legislature incorporated the Prattville Manufacturing Company. Along with Pratt, the two other incorporators were James Allen, a native of New York who later became a successful merchant in town, and Jesse Perham, a New Hampshireite who worked as a mechanic in Pratt's gin factory and minister of the town's Methodist church. Both men would later serve for short periods as the mill's superintendent in the late 1840s. The company was initially capitalized at \$110,000, which was divided into 110 shares each valued at \$1,000. Not surprisingly, Pratt was the largest shareholder with thirty-one shares of stock. His brothers-in-law, Samuel and Simon Ticknor, were the next largest shareholders with seventeen shares each. James Allen and Jesse Perham, two of the three incorporators along with Pratt, combined with Shadrack Mims to own fourteen shares of stock. Rounding out the original stockholders were three planters from Autauga County, William D. Smith, Organ Tatum, and Lewis Whetstone. Smith owned ten shares, Tatum fifteen, and Whetstone six.⁶¹

The process of building the mill and outfitting it with the necessary equipment went relatively quickly. Construction of the mill was well underway by the summer of 1846. In the fall, Pratt traveled to Boston, where he purchased \$40,000 worth of machinery that could produce osnaburg, a coarse and durable cotton fabric. From the beginning, he made it clear that the mill was founded "expressly for the purpose of making heavy cotton Osnaburgs for

⁶⁰ Ibid., 26-27; *De Bow's Review* 2 (September 1846): 153.

⁶¹ Evans, *The Conquest of Labor*, 66-69; *De Bow's Review* 2 (September 1846): 153.

plantation use.” By November, construction was complete and the mill had been outfitted with the new machinery. The mill was two-stories tall with a brick basement, roughly 150 feet in length, thirty-six feet in width, and attached to the gin factory. With his new cotton textile factory, Pratt boasted in a September 1846 letter to *De Bow’s Review* that he would “be able not only to furnish the cotton planter with gin-stands, but cotton Osnaburgs of as good a quality, and as cheap, as they can be procured elsewhere.”⁶²

The Prattville Manufacturing Company marketed most of its coarse cotton textiles in one major American city. While the company sold some of its goods in Montgomery, Mobile, and New York City, the most lucrative market was New Orleans. There, Pratt sold the company’s goods through two commission houses, Green and Hazard and H. Kendall Carter & Company. Demand for the company’s goods was so high in the late 1840s, in fact, that the commission houses could not keep up, frequently selling out. In response, Pratt directed even more supply to the Crescent City.⁶³

By 1850, Pratt’s cotton mill was the largest of its kind in the state. That year, the Prattville Manufacturing Company employed 136 workers, of whom seventy-three were women and sixty-three were men. The vast majority of the millhands were poor whites from the surrounding countryside. On average, millhands earned just under \$148 annually in 1850, which was significantly more than mill workers in six other southern states including Georgia, South Carolina, and Virginia. Despite this, the average yearly earnings of millhands employed by the Prattville Manufacturing Company were considerably less than the average for mill workers in New England. The cotton factory ran 100 looms and 2,800 spindles. These combined to churn

⁶² *De Bow’s Review* 4 (September 1847): 136; *De Bow’s Review* 10 (February 1851): 226; *De Bow’s Review* 2 (September 1846): 153.

⁶³ Evans, *The Conquest of Labor*, 72-73.

out 540,000 yards of osnaburg, valued at \$54,000, and 324,000 yards of sheeting, valued at \$30,780 in 1850.⁶⁴

The 1850s brought growth and success to the Prattville Manufacturing Company. As early as 1854, Pratt tinkered with the idea of expanding the company's production to include woolen textiles. Seeing an opportunity to capitalize on the demand for linsey in the state and fearful of oversaturating the market with osnaburg, the company built a woolen mill. Located a half of a mile from the cotton mill, the new woolen mill was a large two-story brick structure. The total cost of building the factory and outfitting it with the necessary machinery was \$10,000. In the spring of 1857, workers were installing the new carding and spinning machinery. A few months later, the factory was in operation. By 1860, the company's woolen mill operated 585 spindles and produced 265,000 yards of linsey with a value of just under \$80,000. These figures made it the leading manufacturer of linsey in the state.⁶⁵

The new woolen mill was not the only new construction that the company undertook along Autauga Creek in the 1850s. Near the end of the decade, the company's cotton textile operation received a new home. In 1859, the company erected a large brick structure on the opposite side of the creek as the gin factory. The new building, which replaced the original mostly-wooden 1846 structure, cost the company \$45,000.⁶⁶

In the 1850s, Pratt undertook a massive project to upgrade his gin factory. Over a two-year period between 1853 and 1855, he replaced the old factory building with a new, substantial three-story brick structure that measured 220 feet long and fifty feet wide. To this, the Alabama

⁶⁴ Ibid., 71 and 73-74; *De Bow's Review* 4 (September 1847): 136; *De Bow's Review* 10 (February 1851): 226; Olliff, "Life and Work in a Progressive Cotton Community," 54.

⁶⁵ Evans, *The Conquest of Labor*, 76-77 and 80.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 77.

gin manufacturer added a three-story extension that measured thirty-five feet long and forty feet wide. The entire project cost Pratt upwards of \$80,000.⁶⁷

The result was a massive, highly-organized factory complex. On the first floor of each building, workers produced those gin parts not manufactured at the nearby foundry, such as the wooden gin stands. On the second floor, mechanics assembled the gins and ran them through extensive testing, ensuring that each machine ginned raw cotton at a satisfactory speed. Finally, on the third floor, workers painted the gins and packaged them for shipping. The gins made their way from floor to floor via an elevator. An impressively-sized turbine fed by the reliable waterpower from Autauga Creek powered the machinery housed in both buildings. A short rail line connected the two factory buildings to both the foundry and lumber house.⁶⁸

As the gin factory expanded, the workforce grew. As the number of workers increased, the racial composition of the workforce changed dramatically in the 1850s. In the early 1840s, slaves constituted more than half of all workers at the factory. By the mid-1850s, however, slaves made up just under twenty-five percent of the total labor force. This proportion remained relatively stable throughout the remainder of the decade. On the other hand, not surprisingly, the percentage of white workers employed by Pratt at the gin factory increased significantly. By 1860, white workers constituted just over seventy-five percent of the factory's workforce.⁶⁹

The success of Pratt's gin factory and mills made him an incredibly wealthy man by the Civil War. In 1850, Pratt owned tens of thousands of dollars in real estate. That wealth would only grow in subsequent years. In 1860, he was undoubtedly one of the wealthiest men in

⁶⁷ Ibid., 40.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Ibid., 52-53.

Alabama. That year, according to the federal census, Pratt owned an estimated \$92,319 in real estate. He also owned an estimated \$250,000 in personal estate.⁷⁰

Barrington King was born in early March 1798 in Darien, Georgia. His father, Roswell King, was a successful and wealthy jack of all trades. Born in Windsor, Connecticut in 1765, Roswell King was the son of Captain Timothy King, a weaver and military veteran who commanded an American ship during the Revolutionary War. In the late 1780s, Roswell King left his native New England, journeyed south, and settled in Georgia. He was twenty-three years old. Roswell King settled in Darien, a small river town near the coast surrounded by large plantations. There, he found success and wealth as an architect-builder and a commission merchant selling cotton, lumber, and rice. He then parlayed his new-found wealth and social standing into political power, serving as a justice of the peace, a justice of the inferior court, a lieutenant in the Georgia state militia, and a member of the Georgia House of Representatives. In 1788, he married Catherine Barrington. Her father, Josiah Barrington, born in Ireland, emigrated to Georgia shortly after his relative and the colony's founder, James Oglethorpe, did so himself. The marriage produced ten children. Barrington was the couple's third child and third son.⁷¹

In 1802, Roswell King tried his hand at yet another profession. That year, Pierce Butler, the aristocratic planter and Founding Father from South Carolina, was searching for an overseer for his cotton and rice plantations on Butler and St. Simon's Islands, just south of Darien.

Wanting to live most of the year in Philadelphia, Butler sought a capable manager to handle the

⁷⁰ U.S. Census, Alabama, 1850 Population Schedule, Prattville; U.S. Census, Alabama, 1860 Population Schedule, Prattville.

⁷¹ William Harden, *A History of Savannah and South Georgia*, vol. 2 (Chicago and New York: The Lewis Publishing Company, 1913), 559; Mary Deborah Petite, *The Women Will Howl: The Union Army Capture of Roswell and New Manchester, Georgia, and the Forced Relocation of Mill Workers* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co, 2008), 9-10.

day-to-day operations of the plantations. He believed that he found that person in Roswell King. During his time as overseer of Butler's plantations, Roswell King earned a reputation for brutality, meting out uniquely brutal physical punishments with a frequency that often made Butler uncomfortable. Nevertheless, the relationship between the two was well until the War of 1812. In 1815, the British invaded St. Simons Island. Operating under the false impression that Butler's slaves would be loyal and not run away to the British lines, King did not move them further inland. To his surprise, however, one hundred and thirty-eight of Butler's slaves fled to the British, who offered runaway American slaves their freedom. In the wake of the incident, King expressed his frustration and genuine disbelief, calling them "foolish and ungrateful" and wondering how "Negroes that have been so humanely treated as yours" could flee. Butler placed the blame for the loss of 138 slaves—estimated to be worth a staggering \$61,450—squarely on King's shoulders. The incident soured the relationship between absentee planter and his overseer. In subsequent years, Butler kept a closer eye on King. He apparently disliked what he saw. Butler not only expressed his concerns directly to King, but also complained often about his overseer in his private correspondence. Over time, King became increasingly annoyed with Butler's frequent criticisms of his job performance. Desirous of washing his hands of the whole situation, King resigned the position in 1821.⁷²

The following year, Roswell King's son, Barrington, married Catherine Margaret Nephew. She was the daughter of James Nephew, a cotton and rice planter from McIntosh County. His wife, and Catherine's mother, was Mary Magdalene Gignilliatt, whose family was of French Huguenot descent and among some of the first settlers of Liberty County. Catherine came from a family of significant wealth and elevated social standing. Subsequently, she brought

⁷² Petite, *The Women Will Howl*, 10-12. Quotes taken from p. 11.

into her marriage a large dowry. It included South Hampton Plantation, a rice plantation in Liberty County, and a large number of field and domestic slaves. The newlyweds moved to South Hampton sometime after marrying.⁷³

During Barrington King's time as owner, the nearly 2,000-acre rice plantation thrived, thanks in large part to King himself. "Under King's supervision," eminent historian Erskine Clarke wrote, "South Hampton had become one of the most prosperous plantations in Liberty County." Subsequently, King accumulated tremendous wealth and with it established his place within the local planter elite. He undoubtedly used these to become a director of the Bank of Darien, an important position locally. Chartered by the Georgia state legislature in 1818 and touting branches in Milledgeville and elsewhere throughout the state, the Bank of Darien held just under \$470,000 in capital and slightly less than \$330,000 in circulation. Only four banks in Georgia held more capital and only two had a larger circulation.⁷⁴

Meanwhile, in the wake of his resignation as overseer of Pierce Butler's plantations, Roswell King returned to Darien. While his tenure at Butler's plantations may not have been his most enjoyable years, King reaped the financial rewards of the lucrative position, which he then used to acquire even more land and slaves. With an enlarged nest egg, King dove into several different business ventures throughout the 1820s. He built a steam-powered sawmill in McIntosh County and, with the help of one of his sons, William, purchased a cotton factor firm in Savannah. Also, at some point during this time, Roswell King became a representative for the

⁷³ Clarece Martin, *A History of the Roswell Presbyterian Church*, 15-16; Joseph Gaston Baillie Bulloch, *A History and Genealogy of the Habersham Family*, 98-99. Erskine Clarke, *Dwelling Place: A Plantation Epic*, 489.

⁷⁴ Erskine Clarke, *Dwelling Place: A Plantation Epic*, 194-195. Quote from p. 194. Clarece Martin, *A History of the Roswell Presbyterian Church*, 16; Arthur Franklin Raper, *The Tragedy of Lynching*, 224.

Bank of Darien. Whether his son, Barrington, helped him to attain the position or vice versa is unclear.⁷⁵

Around 1830, Roswell King traveled to northern Georgia on business for the Bank of Darien. Recently, gold had been discovered in the region and the bank was eager to investigate possible future investment opportunities there. The journey would eventually change the trajectory of Roswell King's life and that of his family's. During his travels, about twenty miles north of what would become the city of Atlanta, he crossed Vickery Creek, just north of where it spills into the Chattahoochee River, and gazed upon the land that would one day be the site of a thriving town and manufacturing company that would bear his name. King was impressed by the land's abundance of natural resources. Lush, seemingly-untouched forests filled with pine and oak trees covered its rolling hills. The creek's waters ran swiftly and reliably. In its ample natural resources, King saw a golden opportunity. Always eager to dive into new enterprises, he soon began envisioning a plan to construct a textile mill on the site.⁷⁶

In the meantime, however, King's business with the Bank of Darien was not yet finished. His travels apparently convinced the bank's board of directors to establish a branch in the gold boom town of Auraria. In 1833, King made his way back to north Georgia. He lived in Auraria for several months, working as a cashier and as a member of the branch bank's board of directors. When his business with the bank in Auraria came to an end, King returned to Vickery Creek and took the first steps to establishing a model town and cotton textile mill.⁷⁷

Upon returning to the land that captured his imagination a handful of years earlier, Roswell King began the process of transforming his dream into reality. In 1835 and 1836, he

⁷⁵ Joe McTyre and Rebecca Nash Paden, *Historic Roswell Georgia*, 9.

⁷⁶ Petite, *The Women Will Howl*, 12; Joe McTyre and Rebecca Nash Paden, *Historic Roswell Georgia*, 9.

⁷⁷ Petite, *The Women Will Howl*, 12-13.

purchased scores of forty-acre lots in the area. King bought most of the land from Fannin Brown, who had acquired it in the state land lottery a few years earlier. Next, he played the role of booster, inviting family and friends from the coast to join him in starting anew in northern Georgia. His brainchild, King fittingly named the settlement Roswell. Ultimately, King was successful in convincing a small number to join him in the endeavor. They would constitute an exclusive group, the founding families of the town. These included planter and long-time friend Major James Stephens Bulloch of Savannah and his family, John Dunwody and his family, Camden County planter Archibald Smith and his family, and King's recently-widowed daughter, Eliza King Hand, and her children. In 1838, Barrington King sold South Hampton and forty-two slaves to his brother, Roswell King Jr., for \$22,000. That same year, his wife, nine children, and eight slaves joined him in north Georgia.⁷⁸

At its origin, Roswell was a planned community. Roswell and Barrington King designed it with broad streets and a town square in the center. Rather than functioning as a common gathering place, the square acted as a divider. On one side of the square, the Kings marked off plots that the founding families would select on which to build their homes. On the other side of the square, perched on a ridge overlooking the mill and the creek, was the mill village where employees and their families would reside. The village was composed primarily of rows of identical, small, and plain single-story cottages that each housed one family. In addition to the single-family cottages, there were two apartment-style buildings known as "The Bricks," which probably housed higher-ranking company employees, such as managers, and their families. Each apartment had two-stories. The first floor contained a living room and a kitchen, while the second floor had one bedroom.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Ibid., 15-18; Erskine Clarke, *Dwelling Place: A Plantation Epic*, 195.

⁷⁹ Petite, *The Women Will Howl*, 16, 29-30; Paden and McTyre, *Historic Roswell Georgia*, 23.

After arriving in 1838, the founding families constructed palatial homes. On the highest point overlooking the town, Barrington King built a massive white Greek Revival mansion adorned with a three-sided porch supported by fourteen columns. Major James Stephens Bulloch built a white two-story Greek Revival home. Completed in late 1839, Bulloch Hall would become the site of the wedding of their youngest daughter Millie to a man by the name of Theodore Roosevelt. The couple's son would become the twenty-sixth President of the United States. Per the request of his wife, who was James Bulloch's sister, John Dunwody built a grand Greek Revival home adjacent to Bulloch Hall. Horrifically, the house caught fire on the night of the housewarming party and burned to the ground. A few years later, Dunwody constructed a new home and named it, for obvious reasons, Phoenix Hall. After the war, a new owner, taking note of the proliferation of Mimosa trees on the property, renamed the home Mimosa Hall. A mile north of town, away from the homes of the other founding families, Archibald Smith built a two-story farmhouse surrounded by 300 acres of cotton-growing land.⁸⁰

A few years before most of the founding families migrated to north Georgia in 1838, Roswell, his sons, Barrington and Ralph, and their slaves began constructing the cotton mill. Built into the side of a hill overlooking the creek, the factory, which was completed in 1839, was eighty-eight feet in length and forty-four feet in width. Made of brick formed from the red clay of the creek, the factory stood three-stories tall and contained a basement. A thirty-foot tall dam constructed of boulders, logs, and clay blocked Vickery Creek and provided the waterpower for the mill. In addition to the factory, the Kings and their slaves built a machine shop, company store, office, and housing for workers. Roswell, Barrington, and Ralph King, along with a few

⁸⁰ Petite, *The Women Will Howl*, 16-18.

other of the town's founding fathers such as John Dunwody and James Bulloch, incorporated the operation as the Roswell Manufacturing Company in December 1839.⁸¹

With the mill and other buildings completed, the company moved to outfit the factory with the necessary equipment. In 1839, Roswell King hired Henry Merrell, a young engineer from upstate New York, to supervise the installation of the mill's new machinery and guide the factory through its formative years. Upon arriving at the site, Merrell discovered that the mill's foundation could not support the heavy three-story brick building. After reinforcing the foundation with granite blocks, he commenced installing the machinery. By 1841, the cotton factory was in full operation and employed just under thirty hands.⁸²

By the time the mill was fully operational and construction on the lavish homes the founding families was well underway, Roswell King was well into his seventies. He had surpassed the average life expectancy of a white American male at the time by a few decades. In February 1844, however, King's life came to an end, the result of natural causes. He was seventy-eight years old. King was buried in the Roswell Presbyterian Church cemetery. With the death of his father, Barrington King became the leader of the town's founding families.⁸³

Throughout the 1840s and 1850s, the Roswell Manufacturing Company prospered and grew. In the mid-1840s, the factory operated forty looms and 3,500 spindles, which produced 1,100 yards of shirting and 1,500 yards of osnaburg each day. The mill also churned out 1,200 bundles of yarn each week. It was capitalized at \$80,000 and employed 150 hands, almost all of whom were poor whites from the surrounding area. In the mid-1850s, the company not only expanded the original 1839 cotton mill, but also built another larger cotton factory upstream. The

⁸¹ Petite, *The Women Will Howl*, 23; Joe McTyre and Rebecca Nash Paden, *Historic Roswell Georgia*, 9; Darlene M. Walsh, ed., *Roswell: A Pictorial History*, 2nd ed. (Roswell, G.A.: The Roswell Historical Society, 1994), 38.

⁸² Petite, *The Women Will Howl*, 23-24; Joe McTyre and Rebecca Nash Paden, *Historic Roswell Georgia*, 9.

⁸³ Malcolm Bell, Jr., *Major Butler's Legacy*, 316.

new cotton mill was 140 feet in length, fifty-three feet in width, and four stories tall. It operated 120 looms and just over 5,100 spindles. It employed 250 hands. As with the original 1839 cotton mill, almost all of hands employed in the new cotton factory were poor whites from the surrounding countryside. Once the company's expansion in the mid-1850s was complete, "Roswell's mills were the largest in North Georgia."⁸⁴

The Roswell Manufacturing Company was a financial success throughout the 1840s and 1850s. The company declared its first dividend in April 1842, only about a year after its lone cotton mill was fully operational. Over a two-year span from April 1845 to October 1846, the company on average declared a dividend of ten percent. Throughout the 1850s, dividends averaged significantly less, around five percent. Despite this downturn, the company, however, remained profitable. To the delight of stockholders, profitability increased significantly by the end of 1860. That year, the company declared two dividends, one of ten percent and another of nine percent.⁸⁵

Millhands employed by the Roswell Manufacturing Company faced long, exhausting workdays. In 1840, the company ran its cotton mill twelve hours each day. The workday began at five o'clock in the morning and concluded at six o'clock in the evening. The company gave workers thirty-minute breaks twice per day for breakfast and dinner. By the mid-1850s, the company modified the workday slightly. Millhands began working at five o'clock in the morning and finished at seven o'clock in the evening. On Saturdays, the workday ran from five o'clock in the morning to five o'clock in the evening. Workers were given Sundays off. In 1854, the Georgia state legislature passed a law setting working hours in factories from sunrise to dusk.

⁸⁴ Petite, *The Women Will Howl*, 25; George White, *Historical Collections of Georgia* (New York: Pudney & Russell, 1854), 402; Joe McTyre and Rebecca Nash Paden, *Historic Roswell Georgia*, 9.

⁸⁵ Meetings of the Stockholders of the Roswell Manufacturing Company, October 30, 1854, Roswell Manufacturing Company Records, Roswell Historical Society, Roswell, Georgia.

“To remedy this evil,” the stockholders authorized Barrington King to reduce wages in the winter, unless “the hands of Families will agree to petition to return to the old rule of the Factory.”⁸⁶

While the vast majority of its workforce was white, the Roswell Manufacturing Company did, in fact, own slaves. In 1842, in an effort to settle his debts with the company, Archibald Smith “[offered] a family of nine negroes for two thousand four hundred & fifty dollars.” The stockholders at their April meeting authorized Barrington King to purchase the slaves and give Smith one share of stock valued at \$600. By 1850, the number of slaves owned by the company grew to at least thirteen. Of the thirteen listed in the census, four were male and the rest female. In addition, their ages varied widely. The oldest was sixty years old while the youngest was only six months of age. Owning a group of slaves such as this was highly unusually for a southern manufacturing company, which usually owned or hired out young male slaves almost exclusively. This highly unusually composition is undoubtedly due to the company’s purchase of slaves from Archibald Smith eight years earlier. The documented slaveholdings of the company, therefore, demonstrates that while it did own slaves and probably use them in some capacity, the company’s reliance on slave labor was negligible.⁸⁷

While he had already achieved considerable wealth and social standing before moving to Roswell, the success of the company in the 1840s and 1850s further solidified Barrington King’s wealth and power. In 1850, the value of his real estate was estimated to be around \$20,000. In addition, he owned at least seventy slaves. By 1860, the value of his real estate swelled to an

⁸⁶ Roswell Manufacturing Company Insurance Application, February 1840, Roswell Manufacturing Company Records, Roswell Historical Society, Roswell, Georgia; Meetings of the Stockholders of the Roswell Manufacturing Company, October 30, 1854, Roswell Manufacturing Company Records, Roswell Historical Society, Roswell, Georgia.

⁸⁷ Meetings of the Stockholders of the Roswell Manufacturing Company, October 30, 1854, Roswell Manufacturing Company Records, Roswell Historical Society, Roswell, Georgia; 1850 U.S. Federal Census, Slave Schedules, Roswell District, Cobb County, Georgia.

estimated \$94,000. The number of slaves he owned, however, slipped to forty-four by 1860. Despite this decrease, King's human property that year held an estimated value of \$26,300.⁸⁸

During the antebellum era, William Gregg, Daniel Pratt, and Roswell and Barrington King built some of the most significant manufacturing establishments in the South and consequently became some of the most well-known and respected manufacturers in the region. Despite sharing this distinction in their later years, these men came from a variety of backgrounds and took long and unique paths to the field of manufacturing. They also differed in their motivations for founding their industrial enterprises. In spite of these differences, they shared a tireless, entrepreneurial spirit that propelled each of them to become leading southern manufacturers and acquire wealth, elevated social standing, and notoriety in their lifetimes. These men, however, were more than simply industrialists. They were also steadfast social reformers who, in an effort to create reliable, well-disciplined workforces, formulated and implemented ambitious programs of social reform in their mill villages.

⁸⁸ Barrington King Tax Documents, Barrington King Papers, Roswell Historical Society, Roswell, Georgia.

Chapter 2 – The Magic Wand of the Manufacturer

Solon Robinson had seen a lot in his forty-six-odd years of life. Born in New England in 1803, he made his way west to Cincinnati, possibly as a peddler, sometime before 1827. In 1830, he left Cincinnati, traveled down along the meandering Ohio River, and settled near Madison, Indiana, where he earned a living for a few years as a rural auctioneer and realtor. Robinson then moved to Lake County, Indiana, on the western frontier, where he served as the county's first clerk and later as a postmaster. In the 1840s, he made a name for himself as a prolific agricultural advice columnist. Letters detailing the results of his agricultural experiments and observations from dozens of lengthy agricultural tours of the country frequently made their way into prominent national periodicals such as *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine* and the *American Agriculturalist*. Later, sometime before 1852, Robinson moved to New York City with the hope of founding a national agricultural magazine. Although Robinson's dream never came to fruition, Horace Greeley's *New-York Tribune* hired him as its agricultural editor, thus helping to further cement his legacy as "one of America's most enthusiastic agricultural authors."¹

What Robinson saw at Graniteville while on an agricultural tour of the South in 1849, however, profoundly impressed him. "I have just visited one of the finest new Cotton Factories in all the South, and, taken all in all, one of the neatest and best establishments I have ever seen any where [sic]," Robinson declared in a letter to a Washington, D.C. newspaper. What dazzled Robinson were the ways in which the cotton mill and company village positively transformed both the land and its inhabitants. Before, according to Robinson, the landscape lay wild and

¹ Paul Salstrom, *From Pioneering to Persevering: Family Farming in Indiana to 1880* (West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue University Press, 2007), 93-94. Quote from p. 91.

unimproved and the people languished in a state of ignorance and poverty. “The whole tract around Graniteville, three years ago,” Robinson explained, “was a wild barren waste and the greater portion of the operatives almost as wild as the aborigines—living a sort of vegetable life, of little profit to themselves or others.” The creation of the Graniteville factory and village, however, precipitated a seemingly magical transformation. “Presto—change,” exclaimed Robinson, “the magic wand of the manufacturer waved over the rocky bed of the stream that for ages had spent its idle force adown that valley, and up rose the granite palace of the spindle and loom.” Across from the mill, “almost a hundred neat and comfortable dwellings now sheltering almost a thousand souls, nine-tenths of whom had never before been sheltered by a domicile worthy the name of a comfortable house” appeared where once there was only wilderness. In the village, rules that imposed compulsory education and temperance sought to uplift morally and intellectually the factory hands and their families, who previously were “as inert as indolence and poverty and total want of education for ages can make a people.” Robinson concluded by praising Gregg and Graniteville, asserting that further industrialization in such a manner would continue to help to elevate the moral condition of the region’s poor white population. “If there were a few more such men as William Gregg to build up in wilderness places a few more such villages as Graniteville,” he argued, “it would prove a great blessing to the lower classes of people, for it would elevate their character to a position of far greater usefulness than they will ever attain by any other pursuit.”²

In the three decades before the Civil War, William Gregg, Daniel Pratt, and Barrington King founded and managed some of the largest and most successful manufacturing establishments in the South. These men, however, were more than simply industrialists. They

² *National Intelligencer*, May 10, 1849; *Hunt’s Merchants’ Magazine* 22 (January-June 1850): 350-351.

were also steadfast social reformers. Alongside their industrial operations, these leading manufacturers constructed villages for their employees and their employees' families, over which they exercised a powerful and pervasive reform-minded paternalism. Motivated by the need for reliable, well-disciplined workforces, Gregg, Pratt, and King erected free schools for the education of their operatives' children, donated land for the construction of Protestant churches, enforced strict temperance measures, and employed other aspects of the built environment to encourage morality and industry. Throughout the antebellum era, company officials and outside observers repeatedly asserted that the reform measures at Graniteville, Prattville, and Roswell were successful in morally and intellectually uplifting the town's residents, most of whom were poor whites from the surrounding areas. In reality, however, many workers and residents actively resisted these industrialists' attempts to exact greater control over their lives.

The centerpiece of William Gregg's reformist vision at Graniteville was temperance. The origins of the antebellum crusade against liquor lay in the late eighteenth century among a small number of Protestants, both in the clergy and laity, from the Northeast. In response to a sharp increase in liquor consumption and heightened concerns of its adverse effects on individuals, families, and society as a whole, early activists founded state and local temperance organizations. These associations tended to advocate for restraint as opposed to total abstinence and focused only on distilled alcohol as opposed to fermented. The Second Great Awakening and the rise of evangelicalism in the 1820s and 1830s, however, turned temperance into a national mass movement. Evangelicals cast drinking in religious terms, not only associating intemperance with sin and moral degradation, but also abstinence with self-improvement and redemption. With their belief in self-improvement, evangelicals, like earlier temperance advocates, relied on persuasion

to influence individuals to give up demon rum. With the help of evangelicals, the first national temperance organization, which called for total abstinence from intoxicating liquors, was established in 1826. Within a decade, membership in temperance organizations across the country skyrocketed to about 1.5 million. In addition, these organizations claimed that approximately two million Americans had taken the abstinence pledge. In the 1840s, in large part due to an influx of Irish and German immigrants into the country, the movement took a radical turn with the formation of the boisterous Washington Temperance Societies and the tactical shift from persuasion to calls for legal prohibition. While anti-liquor advocates succeeded in getting many state legislatures to pass prohibition laws in the 1850s, immigrants and anti-reform groups organized a powerful counter-movement, which succeeded in overturning most state prohibition laws by the end of the Civil War. Despite this, the antebellum temperance movement did precipitate positive cultural change. Its greatest achievement was helping to drive down significantly the annual per capita consumption of distilled liquors from seven gallons in 1830 to less than three gallons by 1840s.³

As the founder and first president of the Graniteville Manufacturing Company, Gregg implemented his reformist vision primarily through the rules and regulations that governed the company village. The first rule of the Graniteville community pertained to intoxicating liquors. The law expressly prohibited both employees of the company and residents of the village from bringing liquor into the community. “Persons employed by the Company, or who occupy their Houses,” reads the regulation, “will not be permitted to bring into the place any intoxicating liquors.” Rule number one also prohibited employees and residents from patronizing liquor vendors outside of Graniteville. The penalty for violators was termination of their employment

³ Steven Mintz, *Moralists and Modernizers: America's Pre-Civil War Reformers* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 72-76.

with the company and eviction from the company town. “Persons will not be continued in the service of the Company,” the remainder of rule number one stated, “who lend their aid directly or indirectly to the encouragement of those who may vend liquors in the vicinity.” Gregg reiterated the company’s policy towards liquor and the precise punishment for violators in a letter to Freeman Hunt of *Hunt’s Merchant Magazine* in 1849. “The use of alcohol,” Gregg declared, “is not permitted in the place—young people, particularly males, are not allowed to remain in the place in idleness—the maintenance of a moral character is necessary to a continued residence in the place.”⁴

The built environment at Graniteville also helped to promote Gregg and the company’s anti-liquor policy. Once construction of the mill was completed in the late 1840s, the company built a lavish courtyard on the land directly in front of it. The courtyard contained a large manicured lawn adorned with neat graveled walkways lined with hedges, a few trees, and a large, beautiful fountain that “[threw] up [a] constant stream of nature’s healthful beverage.” Each morning as workers entered the mill to begin the workday, the fountain delivered “a perpetual lecture in favor of cold water.”⁵

James H. Taylor, a friend of Gregg’s from Charleston and the company’s treasurer for a short time in the late-1840s, underscored the importance of the temperance principle in the town. “Graniteville is strictly a ‘temperance’ town,” he declared in an article that appeared in *DeBow’s Review* in January 1850. Taylor continued, “There is no liquor sold, and if it is known that any one brings it into the place to drink, he is expelled, driven off in disgrace.” As a result of this strict policy, he argued, “there is no noise or disturbances, and but little of any kind of

⁴ “Rules for Graniteville,” Records of the Graniteville Manufacturing Company (S.C.), South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina; *Hunt’s Merchants’ Magazine* 21 (December 1849): 672.

⁵ Downey, *Planting a Capitalist South*, 140; *Edgefield Advertiser*, July 19, 1848.

immorality.” Moreover, Taylor firmly believed that the company’s strict policy towards alcohol should be replicated elsewhere throughout the state to the benefit of society. “Should the system be rigidly enforced, in regard to spirituous liquors, that existed in Graniteville,” he hypothesized, “it would be but a few years before our State would be immeasurably purged from that vice which has so often violated the fairest social circles.”⁶

Believing temperance to be vital to the success of the Graniteville enterprise, Gregg constantly feared the infiltration of alcohol into the village. A letter written by Gregg to the company’s superintendent, James Montgomery, in December 1850 illustrates his heightened concern with keeping the town dry. At the time, the company was in search of a new proprietor for the Graniteville Hotel. One prospective proprietor expressed his desire to one of the company’s founding stockholders to keep alcohol on hand for his more esteemed guests. “Mr. Moses told Mr. Boyce that he would expect to keep wine and brandy to accommodate his fashionable boarders,” wrote Gregg. “If he [Moses] takes the house,” Gregg declared, “he must sign the rules and carry them out. We don’t want a set of loafing wine drinkers about the place.” Gregg continued, “Whatever money we spend in buildings for the accommodation of the public must be used for the accommodation of that class of persons called business men or at least those who can restrain themselves sufficiently to conform to the moral rules, the maintenance of which we consider vitally important to the success of our enterprise.”⁷

Gregg’s letter to Montgomery reveals not only his heightened fear of alcohol finding its way into the village, but also his logic behind it. During the antebellum era, temperance reformers argued that alcohol consumption inevitably led to a variety of negative consequences

⁶ Mitchell, *William Gregg*, 92-94; *De Bow’s Review* 8 (January 1850): 28.

⁷ William Gregg to James Montgomery, December 31, 1850, The Papers of William Gregg and the Graniteville Company, Gregg-Graniteville Archives, University of South Carolina Aiken.

for not only the individual, but also their families and society as a whole. Intemperance, they claimed, not only adversely effected an individual's body, mind, and spiritual state, but also led to the abuse and neglect of spouses and children. Additionally, they contended, intemperance transformed once productive individuals who were assets to their families and the state into disorderly or lazy drunkards. At Graniteville, Gregg labored to not only create a successful manufacturing enterprise, but also establish and maintain an orderly, industrious community. Intemperate workers would be unreliable and pose a danger to themselves and others in an industrial workplace, undermining the mill's financial well-being. Intemperate townspeople would be either unruly or lazy, threatening the order and industriousness of the community. Alcohol, therefore, according to Gregg, had no place at Graniteville.⁸

In his never-ending quest to prevent alcohol from seeping into the town, Gregg went as far as to attempt to create a liquor-free buffer zone around Graniteville. In 1854, the president of the Graniteville Manufacturing Company petitioned the South Carolina legislature, calling for the passage of a law that would outlaw the sale of intoxicating liquors within three miles of the company town. Residents of the area quickly organized to oppose Gregg's petition and drafted one of their own. While they praised the company for "all their laudable and legitimate enterprises," they made it patently clear that they strongly opposed its attempt to "place our estates under any restricts, for their imaginary benefit or aggrandizement whatsoever." Ultimately, the state legislature rejected Gregg's petition. It did so not because it believed the Graniteville president's cause to be wrong or unjust. Rather, the legislature rejected Gregg's

⁸ Joe L. Coker, *Liquor in the Land of the Lost Cause: Southern White Evangelicals and the Prohibition Movement* (Lexington: The University of Kentucky Press, 2007), 16.

petition because it believed that ample laws concerning the sale of liquor already existed and that if properly enforced would bring about the desired effect sought by Gregg and the company.⁹

The robust and swiftly-organized opposition to Gregg's petition is noteworthy because it provides a window on resistance to antebellum reform. During the era, temperance reformers faced stiff opposition and in no other section of the country was this resistance stronger than in the South. Opponents of temperance in the South, like opponents elsewhere, argued that temperance laws constituted an attack on their personal liberty, a reckless attempt by government to legislate morality, and—if they were farmers or tavern owners—a threat to their financial well-being. Residents of the area surrounding Graniteville objected fiercely to Gregg's petition, which attempted to extend his and the company's reform-minded paternalism beyond the town, for all of the aforementioned reasons. Added to their opposition was also a strong class dimension. According to them, it was one thing for Gregg and the company to attempt to regulate the behavior of Graniteville's residents, the vast majority of whom were poor white laborers. It was quite another for Gregg and the company to attempt to control the behavior of white farmers and tavern owners of the surrounding area to further their reformist vision in the company town. In the words of historian Tom Downey, residents of the surrounding area asserted that "such forms of paternalism may have been fine for the poor white operatives of Gregg's factory, but were not to be suffered by the republican agriculturalists of Edgefield District." They maintained that the president of the Graniteville Manufacturing Company "should not be permitted to exercise the same kind of control over his neighbors as he did his employees."¹⁰

⁹ Downey, *Planting a Capitalist South*, 208-209. Quotes taken from p. 208.

¹⁰ Ibid.; Elizabeth R. Varon, *We Mean to Be Counted: White Women and Politics in Antebellum Virginia* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 32-33.

Not surprisingly, Gregg played a leading role in the town's temperance society. On October 2, 1850, the *Edgefield Advertiser* reported on the annual meeting of the Graniteville Temperance Society, which convened at the town's Baptist church the previous week. According to the publication, "the proceedings [of the organization] were of a highly interesting character, and the audience large and respectable." Gregg served as chair and gave an "able and elegant" speech to those in attendance. Near the end of the meeting, the organization's members elected Gregg president of the organization for the upcoming year. Elected to the position of vice president was James Montgomery, who would later serve as the company's superintendent and treasurer.¹¹

Gregg's temperance activity, however, was not confined to Graniteville. In fact, while still residing permanently in Charleston, he was active in city's temperance community. On the evening of January 11, 1854, Gregg noted in his almanac that he hosted a large meeting of temperance advocates at his home on Calhoun Street. At the gathering, those in attendance discussed Maine's 1851 liquor law, a ground-breaking statute that outlawed the manufacture and sale of liquor in the state. Five days later, while still in Charleston, Gregg attended another temperance meeting. It is apparent, then, that Gregg's efforts in the temperance crusade extended beyond Graniteville to one of the South's most important urban centers.¹²

Graniteville's temperance policy caught the attention of many periodicals outside of Edgefield District. One such publication was the *Lexington Temperance Standard* of Lexington, South Carolina, a tiny settlement about fifteen miles west of Columbia. In 1854, the newspaper published an article on Graniteville. The piece, which the *Edgefield Advertiser* later republished,

¹¹ *Edgefield Advertiser*, October 2, 1850.

¹² William Gregg Almanac, 1854, The Papers of William Gregg and the Graniteville Company, Gregg-Graniteville Archives, University of South Carolina Aiken.

not only recognized Graniteville's contribution to the history of the temperance crusade in South Carolina, but also credited the town's temperance policy for the company's financial success.

"When we consider that the history of Graniteville for the last eight years, is closely identified with the history of the temperance cause in South Carolina, it must be a matter of congratulation not only to the friends of Southern enterprise, but also to the friends of temperance and morality to learn that this institution is in a prosperous condition," the article happily declared. "For their efforts in thus attempting to promote the principles of temperance and good order, they have been amply rewarded." The article also credited the company for helping to rescue as many as one hundred men from the evils of the bottle. "Through the personal efforts of several of the stockholders, in connection with the regulations of the Company, upwards of one hundred men have been reclaimed from the habits of gross intemperance," the piece boldly proclaimed.

Thanks to Graniteville, the article argued, "they are now reformed, the tears of joy, and gladness have chased from the eyes of their wives and children, the bitter tears of sorrow and distress. In the place of poverty, indolence and want, they are now blessed with plenty, industry and contentment." According to the *Lexington Temperance Standard*, therefore, Graniteville, through its temperance measures, not only secured financial prosperity, but also positively transformed the lives of many individuals.¹³

Another such periodical outside of Edgefield District that took notice of Graniteville's temperance policy was the *Southern Baptist*. Sometime in early 1848, a correspondent for the religious newspaper traveled to Graniteville and then published an article based on his observations. The piece, which the *Edgefield Advertiser* republished on July 19, 1848, was largely a description of the textile mill and village as construction was nearing completion. After

¹³ *Edgefield Advertiser*, October 5, 1854.

describing the aesthetic beauty of the company town with its three-quarters-of-a-mile-long canal, handsome little cottages, broad streets, and picturesque fountain, the article's author asserted that the town's most pleasing feature was its temperance policy. "But above all," he declared, "we were delighted with hearing that it was the determination of the Company to permit no establishment to be opened within the limits of their town for the sale of intoxicating liquors." Attesting to the power of both the company and its president, the correspondent correctly noted, "this they can accomplish without the aid of the law, as they are the entire proprietors of the soil." The company's temperance measures, in addition to its other reform-minded policies, the author asserted, "entitle them to the respect and gratitude of every lover of religion, learning and morality, and excites the earnest desire of our heart, as it justifies the settled conviction of our mind, that Graniteville may, and must become the seat of industry, but a powerful auxiliary to the cause of knowledge, of virtue and true piety."¹⁴

Some Graniteville residents resisted the company's prohibition on liquor. One chronic offender, according to historian Broadus Mitchell, was a man named Dawse Jordan. On several occasions, Gregg, while making his way back to his Kalmia estate, intercepted Jordan, liquor jug in hand, on the road outside Graniteville. Upon seeing the Graniteville resident, Gregg would jump from his carriage, grab the jug, and smash it over one of the wheels of his carriage. Gregg would then reimburse Jordan for the alcohol and order him home. On one such occasion, Jordan, already well lubricated with liquid courage, became extremely irate with Gregg and threatened him. Gregg responded by threatening to use his horsewhip on Jordan, which forced the Graniteville resident to quickly come to his senses. Gregg kept such a close eye on Jordan that he

¹⁴ *Edgefield Advertiser*, July 19, 1848.

ordered his slaves at Kalmia to inform him immediately if they ever heard the drinking song Jordan was known to sing on the road on his way back to Graniteville.¹⁵

Another story of resistance to the temperance law in Graniteville involved a town merchant, Thomas Marshall. In 1854, it came to the attention of Gregg and the company that Marshall, in clear defiance of town law, was selling liquor at his store. Gregg took quick and decisive action, forcing Marshall to close his business. In the wake of the incident, Marshall lashed out at Gregg, denouncing “the spirit of *Monopoly* and *Persecution* that has been recently manifested toward us by the *President* of the Graniteville Manufacturing Company.” Gregg did not allow Marshall’s perspective to go unchallenged. Soon after, he made a public statement himself. “When the excitement subsides,” Gregg reasoned, “you will come to the conclusion that you have been in the wrong, and that I have done nothing more than my obligations to the Graniteville Company require of me.” Gregg’s duty to the company apparently required him to be the “enemy of all evil-doers” and thus not “to encourage those who would lay a snare in the way of persons whose weakness would subject them to become a burden instead of a support to their families.”¹⁶

Gregg’s actions against Marshall and the subsequent public exchange between the two underscores a few important points. As with the controversy surrounding Gregg’s petition to the state legislature, this incident provides a window on resistance to antebellum reform. Marshall strongly objected to Gregg’s omnipotence, which allowed him to impose his reform-minded vision on the village and its inhabitants. Marshall interpreted this reformist vision, specifically the town’s temperance law, as not only an attack on his personal liberty, but also a threat to his ability to make a living as a merchant. Gregg justified his actions by reaffirming his paternalistic

¹⁵ Mitchell, *William Gregg*, 84.

¹⁶ Downey, *Planting a Capitalist South*, 207-208. Quotes from p. 208.

obligation. It was his duty to protect the people of Graniteville, who were perceived to be vulnerable to innumerable vices including intemperance. By selling liquor, Marshall was seen by Gregg as a threat to the community. Backed by company law, Gregg moved swiftly and decisively to extinguish that threat.

When Graniteville residents could not smuggle liquor into the community or obtain it from a source inside the village, they simply traveled outside of town to patronize grog shops and taverns in the surrounding area. The existence of these establishments infuriated Gregg, in part because his attempt to solve the problem with his petition to the legislature was unsuccessful, but more importantly because these establishments complicated his and the company's attempt to keep liquor out of the hands of the town's residents. In late 1860, the Graniteville president penned a letter voicing his concern about a whiskey retailer just outside of Graniteville. "He puts himself at defiance & has the most boisterous nuisance that has ever been within 5 miles of Graniteville," Gregg snarled. He confessed, "Most of our reformed drunkards have returned to the bottle and lay about this nuisance day & night." According to Gregg's personal correspondence, therefore, outside influences such as grog shops and taverns undermined his and the company's attempt to reform the town's residents.¹⁷

In addition to temperance, another important piece of Gregg's reformist vision at Graniteville was education. More precisely, Gregg was one of the earliest proponents of compulsory education in the South. From its inception, the company provided a school—officially called the Graniteville Academy—for the education of its operatives' children free of charge. Graniteville law required all children living in the village, who were between the ages of six and twelve, to attend. "It is considered a part of this contract, and indispensable to the

¹⁷ Quote found in Ernest McPherson Lander, *The Textile Industry in Antebellum South Carolina* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1969), 94.

occupancy of a house, and employment by the Company, that parents and heads of families, shall send all their children to the Graniteville public school, whose ages will permit, and who are under 12 years of age.” If parents failed to send their children to school or failed to produce a sufficient excuse for their absence, the company fined the family five cents per child for each absence. The company used the money collected for the school’s upkeep and to ensure that education within the village remained free. Rule number two continues: “parents and heads of families...will be required to pay 5 cents a day to the School Fund for each absentee from school without a good and sufficient excuse.” In an October 1849 letter to Freeman Hunt of *Hunt’s Merchant Magazine*, Gregg reiterated the town’s compulsory education policy. “All parents,” explained Gregg, “are required to keep their children, between the ages of six and twelve, at school—good teachers, books, &c. furnished by the company, free of charge.”¹⁸

The Graniteville Academy did not exclusively benefit the children of the village, however. In fact, Gregg implored some families from the surrounding area to send their children to the company’s free school. “Not only did he insist that the children of the village proper go to school,” historian Broadus Mitchell explained, “but he was anxious to have neighboring families benefit from it.” One of these was the Perdue family, which lived two miles from Graniteville. Mr. Perdue was a small farmer who could not afford to send all of his children to school simultaneously. One morning, Gregg paid a visit to the family. Seeing the school-aged children playing around the house, Gregg inquired as to why they were not in school. After Mr. Perdue explained that financial reasons were the cause, Gregg muttered in disgust and then demanded that Mr. Perdue send all of his children to the Graniteville school. Mr. Perdue complied.¹⁹

¹⁸ “Rules for Graniteville,” Records of the Graniteville Manufacturing Company (S.C.), South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina; *Hunt’s Merchants’ Magazine* 21 (December 1849): 672.

¹⁹ Mitchell, *William Gregg*, 78-79.

Gregg kept a very close eye on the Graniteville Academy. He made it a point to pay the academy a visit at least once when he was in town. Historian Broadus Mitchell wrote: “Gregg would usually include the school in his daily visits to the mill...Very often he would go in and talk to the pupils.” Gregg also put it upon himself to verify the excuses provided by families for why their children missed school on a particular day. “All excuses,” rule number two declared, “[are] to be rendered to the President of the Company for his decision.” Gregg kept a close eye on the school because it held such great importance to him, probably more so than any other reform measure enforced in the company town. Mitchell claimed that the academy was so “very near the proprietor’s heart” that “after 1854, Gregg lived the year ’round on the hilltop overlooking the village” in part to “give it the closest supervision.”²⁰

The stockholders of the company also monitored the Graniteville Academy, albeit not as closely as Gregg. Each year, they inspected the schoolhouse, spoke with the teachers, and examined the pupils. Most importantly, the stockholders possessed the power of the purse. They were responsible for authorizing company funds for the financial support of the academy. Despite claims that the Graniteville Company supported the academy entirely on its own, Edgefield District in fact provided considerable funding. According to historian Vernon Orville Burton, “the free school records [for Edgefield District] indicate that the largest amount of the district’s public school money went to the teachers at Graniteville.”²¹

Gregg, however, was more than just a supervisor. He played an important role in the day-to-day operations of the Graniteville Academy. In fact, he served unofficially as the school’s truant officer and was not afraid to dish out harsh punishment. “Gregg not only had his

²⁰ Ibid., 77 and 79; “Rules for Graniteville,” Records of the Graniteville Manufacturing Company (S.C.), South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina.

²¹ Orville Vernon Burton, *In My Father’s House are Many Mansions: Family and Community in Edgefield, South Carolina* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 88.

compulsory school attendance law,” observed historian Broadus Mitchell, “but he was his own enforcement officer.” Mitchell continued, “If he [Gregg] came across a truant, he would return the boy to school, or, if the offense was repeated, would take him to the office for a licking. Nobody wanted to be taken to the office!”²²

A few anecdotes illustrate not only Gregg’s unofficial job as the school’s truant officer, but also how deeply involved he was in its day-to-day operations. On one occasion, Gregg received word that a chronic truant, a young boy, had left school early and without permission or an excuse to go fishing. Gregg went to the stream where the boy was thought to be fishing and laid in wait on the road in his personal horse-drawn carriage. As soon as the young boy appeared from the thick vegetation that lined the banks of the stream, Gregg grabbed him by his clothes, lifted him into the carriage, and made haste for the mill office. There, Gregg forced the young boy to stand still on top of a tall bookkeeper’s desk. After secretly letting company employees in on his plan and demanding that they ask him questions upon entering his office, Gregg responded to them by saying loudly, as to embarrass the boy, “There stands the boy that would rather go fishing than get an education.” Gregg’s punishment worked. After a while, the young boy beseeched the company president to let him down and promised never to skip school again. In another instance, on a hot South Carolina day, Gregg received word that a few boys had skipped school to go swimming together. Gregg then went to the swimming hole, horsewhip in hand. As soon as the youngsters caught sight of Gregg at the edge of the swimming hole with his horsewhip, they immediately panicked, frantically swam to the water’s edge, hastily grabbed their clothes and shoes, and ran straight back to the academy.²³

²² Mitchell, *William Gregg*, 77 and 79.

²³ *Ibid.*, 79-80.

Stories portraying him as a strict disciplinarian aside, Gregg undoubtedly possessed a deep fatherly affection for the schoolchildren. For as many anecdotes that exist about Gregg tracking down or dishing out harsh discipline to truants, there exist just as many of him treating them to after-school excursions, holiday festivities, or the produce of his own orchard. Gregg often took the children on picnics and, each spring, would take the children for rides on the millpond in flatboats. During the Christmas season, Gregg would purchase copious amounts of firecrackers for the children and gather the residents of the town together for a festive bonfire. When peaches were in season, Gregg would fill a wagon from his homestead's orchard and personally deliver them to the academy for the children.²⁴

The feeling was mutual. The schoolchildren also possessed a fondness for the father of the town. Gregg's daily visits to the academy usually came at recess. Upon catching sight of him in his carriage, the schoolchildren would rush to the fence of the schoolyard, eventually climbing over it and crowding into the street. Smitten by this, Gregg "would laugh and play with them as they climbed over his buggy." No doubt Gregg's generous gift-giving helped to win their affection.²⁵

Despite Graniteville's strict compulsory education law, school attendance was poor. In the early years of its existence, the town contained about 100 children between the ages of six and twelve. Only sixty of them, however, attended the Graniteville Academy. Considering that a few of those sixty students were probably from families living outside of town, it is reasonable to conclude that only about half of Graniteville's children between the ages of six and twelve actually received an education.²⁶

²⁴ Ibid., 80 and 82.

²⁵ Ibid., 79.

²⁶ Lisa Goff, "'Something Pretty [sic] Out of Very Little': Graniteville Mill Village, 1848," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 78, no. 1 (March 2019): 64.

In addition to being an advocate of temperance and compulsory education, Gregg exhibited a hint of sabbatarianism. A spirited, but relatively short-lived movement, sabbatarianism attempted to keep holy the Lord's Day by promoting church attendance and discouraging recreational and work-related activities on Sundays. The crusade focused its ire on an 1810 federal law that required post offices to be open on Sundays. Throughout the decade, Presbyterians and Congregationalists in New England formed local sabbatarian organizations and petitioned the federal government for the law's repeal. Their efforts failed and by 1817, the movement died out. The completion of the Erie Canal in 1825 and the religious fervor of the Second Great Awakening, however, provided a spark that resurrected the movement. Outraged by commercial activity on Sundays, ministers and concerned citizens of Rochester, New York, with the help of Lyman Beecher and Lewis Tappan, founded the first national sabbatarian organization in the late 1820s, the General Union for Promoting the Observance of the Christian Sabbath. Soon after, local chapters sprang up in New England and the Midwest. In the context of the Market Revolution and the Second Great Awakening, the sabbatarian movement illuminated one of the great tensions of the era. In the words of one historian, "To many men and women who were uneasy about their society's rapid growth and mounting materialism, respect for the Sabbath became an important symbol of whether Americans were prepared to place spiritual values ahead of success." To the dismay of sabbatarians, the latter proved victorious. Despite sending hundreds of petitions to Congress calling for the repeal of the 1810 law, boycotting merchants who opened on Sundays, and holding innumerable rallies, sabbatarians once again suffered defeat in the late 1820s when Congress voted to continue Sunday mail services.²⁷

²⁷ Alexis McCrossen, *Holy Day, Holiday: The American Sunday* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), 23-24; Mintz, *Moralists and Modernizers*, 70-71. Quote from p. 71.

Gregg's tinge of sabbatarianism exhibited itself in company's workweek and the town rules. To begin, the factory did not run on Sundays. Employees' seventy-two-hour workweek consisted of six, twelve-hour working days, Monday through Saturday. In addition to the work schedule, Graniteville's rules and regulations treated Sunday as a special day. Rule number eight mandated that employees of the company and residents of the company town refrain from playing sports in the streets on Sundays or engaging in any other activities in and around the village that threatened the peace and quiet of the Lord's Day. "As the Sabbath is a day of rest and peace," the rule reads, "no street sports, or disorderly conduct, either in the village or neighborhood, will be permitted on that day." In a January 1850 piece on manufacturing in South Carolina, Graniteville's treasurer James H. Taylor noted the company and town's commitment to keeping the Sabbath. "The Sabbath," he declared, "is regarded with reverence."²⁸

Gregg and the company also attempted to employ religion as a means of accomplishing their goal of creating an orderly, industrious community at Graniteville. "Determined to impart an entirely religious and moral tone to the community of Graniteville," the company donated land to the newly-formed Baptist and Methodist congregations of the village for the construction of churches. The company did so, however, under one condition: that the houses of worship be designed by reputable architects that met its approval. Gregg played a central role in this process. He hired Edward Brickell White, "an up-and-coming Gothic Revival architect from Charleston," to design First Baptist Church. Gregg also retained the services of architect Richard Upjohn, "the

²⁸ Pamela M. White and Edmond T. Ewing, "Eager Hands: Labor for Southern Textiles, 1850-1860," *The Journal of Economic History* 36, no. 1 (1976): 95-96; "Rules for Graniteville," Records of the Graniteville Manufacturing Company (S.C.), South Caroliniana Library, University of South Carolina; *De Bow's Review* 8 (January 1850): 28.

leading practitioner of the [Gothic Revival] style,” to provide plans for St. John Methodist Church. Both houses of worship were completed in 1848.²⁹

It is uncertain whether church attendance at Graniteville during the antebellum era was high, low, or somewhere in-between in relation to the overall population of the village. What is known, however, is that church membership was relatively low. In 1849, St. John Methodist Church had 103 members. First Baptist Church had a comparably-sized congregation. That same year, Gregg reported to Freeman Hunt, the editor of *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine*, that the population of Graniteville was 900. Fewer than one in four residents, therefore, were official members of a church. These membership statistics, however, are not surprising and unfortunately fail to tell us much about church attendance at Graniteville. Before the Civil War, evangelical churches had strict membership requirements. Membership, however, was not a prerequisite for attendance. In fact, countless southerners attended church services, but never became official members. Membership rolls, therefore, tell us little about the actual number of people who attended services regularly at Graniteville.³⁰

In addition to alcohol, ignorance, and Sabbath-breaking, Gregg targeted any leisure activities that he perceived as threats to the morality and order of the community. In early 1851, he decided to put a stop to the actions of the village merchant, Thomas Marshall, who rented out his hall for public dances. “Further reflection in relation to the balls at GVille,” Gregg wrote to James Montgomery from Charleston in March 1851, “have convinced me of the necessity of taking some decided steps on the part of the company to put a stop to them.” He felt it necessary

²⁹ Quote found in Mitchell, *William Gregg*, 51; White and Ewing, “Eager Hands,” 95; Goff, ““Something Pretly [sic] Out of Very Little,”” 52 and 60. Quotes taken from p. 60.

³⁰ Goff, ““Something Pretly [sic] Out of Very Little,”” 64; *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine* 21 (December 1849): 672; Charles F. Irons, *The Origins of Proslavery Christianity: White and Black Evangelicals in Colonial and Antebellum Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 4.

to do so because he was “fully convinced of their injurious tendency upon the morality and good order of the village.” Gregg then instructed Montgomery to “call on Mr. M. and talk with him on the subject and if he persists in hiring his hall for the purpose of such balls, I would advise him that all connection between him and the company in interest and reciprocity would be severed.” If this still did not stop Marshall from renting out his hall for these public dances, Gregg would punish those Graniteville employees who attended them. “I would have it understood,” wrote Gregg, “that any girl who attended these balls would have no further employment from the Company.” Gregg believed that coming down hard on Marshall and those employees who attended the dances was justified because it not only helped to protect the morality and order of the community, but also maintained Graniteville’s image in the eyes of possible future residents. “I consider this course better than any temporizing measures and not only absolutely necessary for the preservation of our standard of morality in G-Ville but also to give confidence to those persons of good character who might desire to become residents of our industrious village.”³¹

Graniteville’s built environment not only promoted temperance, but also encouraged morality and industry in general. As mentioned in the previous chapter, most structures in Graniteville—including the workers’ cottages, the Graniteville Academy, and the two Protestant churches—were Gothic Revival in style. According to historian Lisa Goff, this was no accident. Rather, Gregg “consciously employed a style of architecture to create a moral imperative—a strategy that sent a powerful message not only to his potential workforce...but also to his investors and detractors, who fought over the wisdom of establishing a manufacturing base in the South.” At the time of the town’s construction, Gothic Revival was closely associated with moral

³¹ Downey, *Planting a Capitalist South*, 207-208; William Gregg to James Montgomery, March 20, 1851, The Papers of William Gregg and the Graniteville Company, Gregg-Graniteville Archives, University of South Carolina Aiken.

and intellectual uplift. This style of architecture, it was believed, helped to promote religious devotion, build good character, refine taste, and elevate the mind. Graniteville's architecture, therefore, was meant to promote not only Gregg's reformist vision in the village, but also his vision of a more industrialized, self-sufficient South.³²

Just as it was for Gregg at Graniteville, temperance was the centerpiece of Pratt's reformist vision in Prattville. In each town deed that he issued, Pratt included a clause that expressly outlawed the sale of liquor. An 1852 deed, which gave George F. Perlette a parcel of land for six hundred dollars, also granted him all the privileges of landownership "saving and excepting the privilege of selling, bartering, and exchanging or in any manner dealing in ardent spirits or other intoxicating liquors." The penalty for violating this clause was forfeiture of the land. In a profile of Pratt in its February 1851 issue, *De Bow's Review* mentioned the temperance clause in the town deeds and the punishment for those who violated it. "Intemperance has strictly been guarded against," declared the article. "In selling building lots," it continued, "the sale of ardent spirits has been prohibited, by a forfeiture of the lot in any event of the kind."³³

Unlike Gregg, Pratt was successful in extending his town's temperance policy beyond the town's boundaries. At some point before the Civil War, Pratt petitioned the state legislature to outlaw the sale of alcohol within two miles of Prattville, essentially creating a buffer zone between his town and the surrounding area. Whereas the South Carolina legislature rejected Gregg's petition, the Alabama state legislature accepted Pratt's petition and passed a bill. While discussing the town's temperance policy in their February 1851 profile of Pratt, *De Bow's Review* briefly mentioned Pratt's success in securing a temperance buffer zone around his

³² Goff, "'Something Pretty [sic] Out of Very Little,'" 52 and 57. Quote from p. 52.

³³ Curtis J. Evans, *The Conquest of Labor: Daniel Pratt and Southern Industrialization* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2001), 74; "Daniel Pratt Deed Book," Autauga County Heritage Center, Prattville, Alabama; *De Bow's Review* 10 (February 1851): 226.

village. “The legislature,” the article acknowledged, “has also prohibited the retailing of it within two miles of the place.”³⁴

Like Graniteville, Prattville was home to a temperance society. By 1847, the Prattville chapter of the Sons of Temperance boasted seventy-two members. The following year, the organization was highly active, convening its members each month and coordinating public marches. Middle-class residents of the town composed much of the voluntary organization’s leadership. Its president was Amos Smith, the superintendent of the gin factory, while town merchants filled the secretary position and two-thirds of the society’s business committee. No evidence exists of Pratt’s direct involvement in the association, but he undoubtedly supported its mission of sober living.³⁵

Outside observers argued that Prattville’s temperance policy was successful in morally uplifting the town’s residents. Visitors often remarked on Prattville’s residents and credited the town’s temperance policy for their perceived elevated character. J. Slater Hughes, a long-time temperance advocate and speaker, visited Prattville in the spring of 1847. He was so impressed by what he saw that he “almost felt like saying ‘here let me be buried.’” Hughes “held Prattville up as a beacon of sobriety,” confidently proclaiming, “They have no drunkard-maker, nor drunkards.” Consequently, “they have no idlers. All have something to do, and all do something.”³⁶

In addition to outside observers, Pratt himself claimed that the town’s temperance policy was successful in morally uplifting the town’s residents. In 1860, the founder of Prattville proudly declared that the town was “unusually free [of] the vice of *loafing* and dissipation.”

³⁴ *De Bow’s Review* 10 (February 1851): 226.

³⁵ *Tuscaloosa Independent Monitor*, November 9, 1847; Evans, *The Conquest of Labor*, 85-86 and 151-152.

³⁶ Evans, *The Conquest of Labor*, 86; *Tuscaloosa Independent Monitor*, November 9, 1847.

Perceiving the goal accomplished, Pratt eliminated the temperance clause in the town deeds in 1859. That same year, a town grocer advertised a wide assortment of liquors for sale at his establishment.³⁷

Despite strict temperance measures and the presence of a respectably sized temperance society, liquor found its way into Prattville. In 1848, George Cooke, a painter and friend of Pratt's from New Orleans, regrettably informed the manufacturer that alcohol could potentially find its way into the town. "The demon of alcohol," warned Cooke, "has access to your village." That same year, Ferdinand Smith recorded in his journal that he "was pained to hear that Doct[or] Townsend [a member of the Sons of Temperance] has returned to his intoxicating cup." During the festivities surrounding an election in 1851, George Littlefield Smith, Ferdinand Smith's brother, noted in his journal the actions of "a number of partly inebriated young men" in the town. He also recorded that Gardner Hale, the cotton textile factory's able superintendent, dismissed a factory worker for "drinking too much liquor."³⁸

In addition to temperance, Pratt was a champion of education. Pratt himself never received a formal education; however, this did not prevent him from understanding its value. On the contrary, his lack of a formal education, he argued, made him realize the importance of it. In two letters to college literary societies, Pratt made it clear that he valued education highly. In a December 1848 letter to the Philomatic Society at the University of Alabama accepting an honorary membership extended to him, Pratt declared, "Although I have never received the benefit of an education no man holds it in a higher estimation than myself. Probably the want of an education causes me to appreciate it quite as high as the possession of it would." In a December 1850 letter to the Adelphi Society at Howard College accepting an honorary

³⁷ Quote found in Evans, *The Conquest of Labor*, 86.

³⁸ Evans, *The Conquest of Labor*, 70, 86, and 161. Quote taken from p. 86.

membership into the organization, Pratt once again proclaimed, “Unfortunately I never had the advantage of an education. I am probably more thoroughly convinced of its importance than I should have been, had I received, as every day experience shows me the necessity of it.”³⁹

Education played a key role in Pratt’s larger reformist worldview. For Pratt, self-improvement came before societal improvement. In order to affect positive change in society, therefore, individuals must first improve themselves, specifically their minds, by receiving an education. “It will be a great source of happiness to look back on a life spent in improving and benefiting society,” Pratt asserted. “And to be able to do so,” he reasoned, “we must first improve our own minds then we shall be able to impart it to others.”⁴⁰

To this end, Pratt provided a free education for the children of his operatives and town residents. In 1857, he opened a free school. Pratt’s niece, Augusta Pratt Morgan served as the school’s primary instructor with help from Eliza Abbot, a young New Jersey native. Hassan Allen, a piano company agent, provided music lessons to the students. Between forty and fifty children attended the school in its first year, far surpassing the estimation by Pratt and others of between twenty and thirty. The unexpectedly high initial turnout created problems, the most notable of which was a shortage of chairs, which forced some students to bring their own from home. The problem of overcrowding was short-lived for attendance slowly dropped after 1857. By 1860, only twenty-one children attended the free school. Despite this plummet in attendance, this number still constituted about thirty percent of all school-aged children of mill families living in Prattville at the time, a respectable number considering the town lacked any compulsory education laws. In the words of Pratt’s biographer Curtis J. Evans, “although the free

³⁹ Daniel Pratt to Thomas Bugbee, December 19, 1848, Autauga County Heritage Center, Prattville, Alabama; Daniel Pratt to W.D. Lee, December 21, 1850, Autauga County Heritage Center, Prattville, Alabama.

⁴⁰ Daniel Pratt to Thomas Bugbee, December 19, 1848, Autauga County Heritage Center, Prattville, Alabama.

school...reached only a portion of the operative community, it nevertheless remained a viable institution.”⁴¹

Observers perceived the free school to be effective in its role of elevating the intellect and morality of its students. The school and its primary instructor, Augusta Pratt Morgan, received ample praise from observers, including the editor of the town’s leading periodical, the *Autauga Citizen*. He applauded Ms. Morgan for the students’ intellectual and moral progress.

“Considering the raw and unlettered material which she has had to operate upon,” the editor reasoned, “we think she deserves the greatest credit for the progress she has made in the moral and mental culture of the children under her supervision.” According to observers, then, Augusta Pratt Morgan—and by extension the free school—made progress in advancing the intellect and morality of mill family children.⁴²

The free school was not the only educational institution that existed in Prattville during the antebellum period. The mill town also contained a private academy, known as the Prattville Male and Female Academy. With tuition costing between \$32 and \$132 per year depending on course selection, the academy almost exclusively served the elite families of Prattville and the surrounding area. In addition to reading, writing, and arithmetic, students of the academy could receive instruction in a musical instrument, either the piano or the guitar, and a foreign language, either French or German. If they came from a wealthy enough family, they could receive instruction in all four. Reverend E.D. Pitts, a native southerner and head of Auburn Masonic Female College, served as the academy’s principal. Pratt himself acted as the president of the

⁴¹ Evans, *The Conquest of Labor*, 89-90. Quote taken from page 90.

⁴² Ibid., 89.

academy's board of trustees and chief benefactor, spending in excess of \$9,000 to construct a new brick Italianate building to house the academy in 1860.⁴³

In addition to being an advocate of temperance and free schools, Pratt was an art patron. In 1844, Pratt made the acquaintance of George Cooke, who at the time was a struggling itinerant artist surviving off portrait commissions. Sharing the same views on politics, religion, and art, the two men quickly became close friends. That same year, Pratt rented out the top two floors of his property on Saint Charles Street in New Orleans to Cooke for an art gallery. In December, Cooke opened his gallery, which featured his work and that of other American artists, to the acclaim of the city's newspapers and art community. Despite widespread praise after its initial opening, Cooke's gallery struggled to sell paintings. By the end of 1845, Cooke could barely cover his expenses.⁴⁴

Once again, Pratt swooped in to save the struggling Cooke. In November of that year, Pratt commissioned the artist to paint a larger version of his work *Interior of St. Peter's, Rome*. By this time, Pratt had decided to construct an art gallery onto his residence and wanted Cooke's work to function as the gallery's focal piece. Cooke, working mostly during the summer months when his New Orleans gallery was closed for the season, completed the work in 1847. The massive painting, fifteen by twenty-three feet in size to be precise, completely covered the wall at one end of the gallery. In addition to his larger version of *Interior of St. Peter's, Rome*, several other paintings by Cooke highlighted the gallery's collection, including his portraits of Henry Clay and John C. Calhoun and copies of famous religious-themed works such as Da Vinci's *The Last Supper* and Raphael's *The Transfiguration*. To the Cooke works, Pratt later added a number

⁴³ Ibid., 89 and 150-151; *Prattville Southern Statesman*, January 12, 1861.

⁴⁴ Evans, *The Conquest of Labor*, 107-108.

of American and European landscape pieces. In all, Pratt's gallery came to house one of the "finest private collections in the antebellum South."⁴⁵

As he did with temperance and education, Pratt used his art gallery as a tool by which to uplift morally and intellectually some of his operatives and residents of the town. Throughout the antebellum era, Pratt invited guests to visit the gallery. These guests were often business acquaintances from out-of-town, newspaper correspondents, politicians, and local planters. One piece of evidence shows, however, that Pratt opened his art gallery to others, namely some of his employees and their families. Susan Frances Hale Tarrant, daughter of Gardner Hale, the cotton factory's superintendent, in her 1904 biography of Pratt, reflected on her experiences with the art gallery. "In my girlhood days I spent hours in this gallery of paintings, inspired by the revelations on canvas," recalled Tarrant. She remembered being "always grateful that there was one man—I've never seen his like—who was willing to spend money for the fine arts, and make the same accessible to those who otherwise might have no opportunity to gratify their love for the beautiful."⁴⁶

Two aspects of Tarrant's recollection are striking. Firstly, she recalled that Pratt's gallery was "accessible to those who otherwise might have no opportunity to gratify their love for the beautiful." Tarrant herself was middle-class. Her father was the superintendent of one of Pratt's factories and her mother came from a well-to-do New England family. She undoubtedly had opportunities to access artwork thanks to her elevated socio-economic status and having lived in New England during her childhood. Her emphasis on the accessibility of Pratt's gallery "to those who otherwise might have no opportunity to gratify their love for the beautiful" suggests that

⁴⁵ Ibid., 108-111. Quote taken from p. 110.

⁴⁶ S.F.H. Tarrant, ed. *Hon. Daniel Pratt: A Biography, with Eulogies on his Life and Character* (Richmond: Whittet & Shepperson, 1904), 85.

Pratt may have opened his gallery to almost all who desired to see it. The possibility exists, then, that some of his less fortunate operatives and their families may have gazed upon the impressive collection of portraits and landscapes.⁴⁷

Secondly, Tarrant remembered being “inspired by the revelations on canvas.” During the antebellum period, many Americans believed that art possessed the power to aid in the moral uplift of individuals. In the words of one historian, “A substantial number of Americans of the pre-Civil War decades believed in the power of art to contribute to moral uplift.” What Tarrant experienced during her time in the art gallery speaks directly to this pre-war belief in American culture. Like temperance and education, Pratt’s art gallery, therefore, was a means by which he sought to realize his reformist vision in the mill town.⁴⁸

Much like Gregg, Pratt hoped religion would function as a means of accomplishing his goal of creating a virtuous community at Prattville. Churches services and Sunday school classes—the thinking went—would provide mill hands and their families with appropriate moral instruction. By the mid-1840s, the town was home to three Protestant churches, a Methodist church, a Baptist church, and a Presbyterian church. Pratt generously donated land on the western side of Autauga Creek for the construction of all three houses of worship. Mill hands and their families composed large percentages of the congregations of the town’s Baptist and Methodist churches. Only one mill family, however, belonged to the town’s Presbyterian church before the war.⁴⁹

Pratt’s connection with the town’s churches went further than simply donating land for their construction. Pratt and his wife, Esther, were deeply engaged in the affairs of the churches

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.; Isabelle Lehuu, *Carnival on the Page: Popular Print Media in Antebellum America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 86.

⁴⁹ Evans, *The Conquest of Labor*, 86-87.

during the antebellum period. From its inception, Pratt sat on the board of trustees of the Baptist church. He also served as a church steward for the Methodist church, the congregation to which he and his family belonged. Never afraid to roll up his sleeves and get his hands dirty, Pratt also filled the role of sexton for all three churches as long as his health allowed him. In addition to his duties as sexton, Pratt frequently traveled around the village stopping at houses and urging Sunday school and church attendance. Meanwhile, Esther Pratt spent her leisure hours making proper clothes for the children of mill families so that they had proper clothes for Sunday school and church services.⁵⁰

What ministers preached from the pulpit and what ladies of polite society taught in their Sunday school classes occasionally failed to stick with certain members of mill families. Records left behind by Prattville's Methodist church spell this out quite clearly. Between 1849 and 1852, the Methodist church expelled fourteen individuals. At least seven of these individuals, three males and four females, were teens and young adults from mill families. The church expelled four of the seven for failing to fulfill their religious duties. The church expelled the other three for dancing. In addition to these expulsions from the Methodist church, two daughters from mill families gave birth to children out of wedlock in 1848.⁵¹

As with that of Gregg and Pratt in their respective towns, temperance was the centerpiece of Barrington King's reformist agenda in Roswell. Reverend George White, in his *Historical Collections of Georgia*, published in 1854, noted the town's anti-liquor policy. White observed, "The temperance principle [is] strictly enforced." John A. Nourse of the Chicago Board of Trade Battery, during the Union occupation of Roswell in July 1864, also acknowledged the town's adherence to the temperance principle. He also noted Barrington King and the Roswell

⁵⁰ Ibid., 144-147.

⁵¹ Ibid., 87-88.

Manufacturing Company's degree of control over the village and its residents. "These mills and the whole country around here," reported the Union soldier, "is owned by the King & Co. They own all the stores, provisions etc; they allow no liquor sold in town, and in truth run everything to suit themselves."⁵²

Barrington King's temperance activity was not confined to Roswell. In late February 1853, he attended a state-wide anti-liquor traffic convention in Atlanta as one of nearly two dozen delegates from Cobb County. After two days of debate and deliberation, the meeting produced a petition that called on the Georgia legislature "to pass a law embracing all necessary regulations for authorizing the legal voters of each County to decide by vote whether retail traffic in ardent spirits may be allowed or should be prohibited within their respective counties." At the time, state law gave elected county courts the power to issue liquor licenses. The state, however, did not allow these courts to reject all applications. The petition, therefore, sought to put the issue of liquor licensing directly before the people, circumventing possibly unsympathetic county courts, in the hope of extinguishing liquor retailing in their respective counties. At the convention, delegates not only chose King to serve as an officer, but also vested him with the responsibility of circulating the petition, gathering signatures of support, and collecting relevant statistics within Cobb County.⁵³

As with Graniteville and Prattville, Roswell was home to a vigorous temperance society during the antebellum period. In July 1842, Reverend Nathaniel Alpheus Pratt, head of the Roswell Presbyterian Church and brother-in-law of Barrington King, along with the minister of

⁵² George White, *Historical Collections of Georgia* (New York: Pudney & Russell, 1854), 402; Quote found in Michael D. Hitt, *Charged with Treason: Ordeal of 400 Mill Workers during Military Operations in Roswell, Georgia, 1864-1865* (Monroe, N.Y.: Library Research Associates, 1992), 21.

⁵³ *The Federal Union*, March 8, 1853; Ann-Marie E. Szymanski, *Pathways to Prohibition: Radicals, Moderates, and Social Movement Outcomes* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 71 and 250n12.

the nearby Lebanon Baptist Church, founded a local chapter of the Washington Total Abstinence Society. Its members pledged “not to drink any Spirituous or Malt Liquors, wine or cider.” The organization modified the pledge the following year to exclude wine and cider, probably because members found the original version too strict. Members included both whites and African Americans. By the mid-1840s, the temperance organization boasted 295 members. Of the total membership, 151 were white men, 102 were white women, and forty-two were free and enslaved blacks.⁵⁴

Barrington King, like Gregg and Pratt, valued religion and its perceived capacity to reform individuals. As Roswell’s other founding members, King was a devout Presbyterian. The actual and figurative center of the community was its house of worship, the Roswell Presbyterian Church. Built on land donated by the King family, the Roswell Presbyterian Church opened its doors in 1840. Designed and constructed by Connecticut native Willis Ball, the church reflected its creator’s architectural style and native region. The exterior was Greek Revival, with four sizeable columns and a gigantic pediment. The New England meetinghouse provided inspiration for the church’s interior, which sported a raised pulpit, box pews, and a gallery to seat slave members.⁵⁵

King was also an advocate of education. In 1838, the leadership of the Roswell Presbyterian Church, of which King was included, constructed a schoolhouse to serve the educational needs of the town’s children. Built on church property donated by the King family, the original school building was a two-room log cabin. Soon after construction of the Roswell Presbyterian Church finished in 1840, church leadership replaced the original log cabin

⁵⁴ Mary Deborah Petite, ‘*The Women Will Howl: The Union Army Capture of Roswell and New Manchester, Georgia, and the Forced Relocation of Mill Workers*’ (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., Inc., 2008), 20.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 19.

schoolhouse with a Greek revival brick structure. While it functioned as a free school, the school operated irregularly during the antebellum and Civil War eras, primarily due to a chronic shortage of instructors. In addition, most of the school's pupils came from the Roswell's ruling class. According to the 1860 census, of the thirty-three children and adolescents who attended the school that year, only two came from mill families.⁵⁶

Gregg, Pratt, and King imposed such reform measures in their respective towns to create reliable, obedient, and industrious workforces for their industrial enterprises. In what proved to be his final president's report to the stockholders of the Graniteville Manufacturing Company in April 1867, William Gregg dispensed some words of wisdom to the future leaders of the company. One of those pieces of advice related to the Graniteville Academy. "As one of the prominent means of keeping us a steady working force at Graniteville," Gregg declared, "I advise, by all means, that you support the Graniteville school with a liberal hand." He continued, "Any one [sic] who has visited it will see for himself that it is a nursery for the best class of factory operatives." While acknowledging its charitable role in uplifting morally and intellectually the company's poor white operatives and their families, Gregg argued that it was indispensable to the company's bottom line and funding it in the future would be a sound business decision. "Aside from a charitable point of view, it is most assuredly a source of profit to our Company, and the money spent upon it will produce a rich harvests [sic] of results."⁵⁷

William Gregg, Daniel Pratt, and Barrington King were not only leading industrialists, but also steadfast social reformers. They founded and managed not only some of the largest and

⁵⁶ Ibid., 20 and 30.

⁵⁷ Reports of the President and Treasurer of the Graniteville Manufacturing Company, April 18, 1867, The Papers of William Gregg and the Graniteville Company, Gregg-Graniteville Archives, University of South Carolina Aiken; Orville Vernon Burton, *In My Father's House are Many Mansions*, 88.

most successful manufacturing establishments in the South before the Civil War, but also some of the most significant incubators of social reform in the region at the time. Alongside their manufacturing operations, these industrialists constructed villages for their employees and their employees' families, over which they exercised a powerful and pervasive reform-minded paternalism. Motivated by the need for a reliable, well-disciplined workforce, they erected free schools for the education of their operatives' children, donated land for the construction of Protestant churches, enforced strict temperance measures, and employed other aspects of the built environment to encourage morality and industry. Throughout the period, company officials and outside observers repeatedly asserted that the reform measures at Graniteville, Prattville, and Roswell were successful in morally and intellectually uplifting the town's residents, most of whom were poor whites from the surrounding areas. In reality, however, many workers and residents actively resisted these industrialists' attempts to exact greater control over their lives.

While Gregg, Pratt, and King diligently managed their factories and villages, a growing sectional divide between the North and the South threatened to tear the nation apart. American territorial expansion, particularly in the wake of the Mexican War, fueled intense debate concerning slavery's extension into newly acquired western lands, federal power, state sovereignty, and individual property rights. As slave owners, these leading southern industrialists could not—and did not—ignore the growing national crisis. Their reformist visions had limitations. There was absolutely no place for abolitionism. Over time, debate over slavery—to various degrees—radicalized these industrialists and paved the way for their eventual support of the Confederate war effort.

Chapter 3 – The Coming of the Civil War

William Gregg knew Charleston, South Carolina like the back of his hand. As a young artisan in the watch repair and jewelry trade and then later as a prosperous merchant in Columbia, he undoubtedly made countless business trips to the bustling port city. In the late 1830s, he and his young growing family made Charleston their home. While living there, Gregg resumed his successful mercantile career in the firm of Hayden, Gregg, and Company, which grew into the largest and most successful jewelry and fine goods supplier in the city. Gregg and his family would reside in Charleston for roughly the next decade and a half. In 1854, the Greggs left the city and moved to Edgefield District. Charleston, however, remained Gregg's home away from home. From the late-1850s until his death in 1867, he frequently traveled to Charleston on business for the Graniteville Manufacturing Company and to look after shipments of his prized Kalmia peaches.¹

The sights, sounds, and people of Charleston, however, were markedly different on this day, December 18, 1860. When Gregg's train screeched to a halt at the station, cadets from the Citadel accompanied by a unit of the Washington Artillery greeted him and the other members of the special convention with a thunderous fifteen-gun salute. As he navigated his way through the city, Gregg witnessed a crowded urban center "full of animation" where "everybody is in good spirits at the early prospects of independence." Two days later, their hopes would become reality.²

¹ Mitchell, *William Gregg*, 5-6, 9-10, and 86-87; Downey, *Planting a Capitalist South*, 130.

² *Charleston Mercury*, December 19, 1860.

During the afternoon of the twentieth, in Saint Andrew's Hall, the 169 representatives of the special convention voted on the state ordinance of secession. All voted in the affirmative. That evening, the delegates moved in procession to Institute Hall where Governor Pickens and the legislature awaited them to sign the ordinance. After Judge James Parsons Carroll, Gregg's political nemesis in Edgefield County, finished signing, Gregg stepped up to the table on which the document rested, firmly grasped the writing utensil, and signed his name. It took two hours for all of the representatives to affix their signatures to the historic document. After the last signed, the governor, legislature, and delegates cheered, church bells throughout the city chimed, celebratory artillery fire boomed in the distance, and the women in the galleries joyfully waved their handkerchiefs. A correspondent for the *Charleston Mercury* captured the sheer euphoria of the moment. "To describe the enthusiasm with which this announcement was greeted," he wrote, "is beyond the power of the pen. The high, burning, bursting heart alone can realize it."³

In the context of the sectional crisis of the late antebellum era, historians have largely portrayed leading southern manufacturers in two distinct ways. Some scholars have depicted them as helpless figures, strong opponents of secession who were nevertheless forced into secession and eventually war by the more powerful planter interest. Others have asserted that some of these men of industry were actually ardent secessionists who openly and deliberately advocated for southern independence. Additionally, few scholars have considered how prominent southern manufacturers' opinions on the Union and secession may have changed over time and what factors may have influenced such transformations.⁴

³ Robert Selph Henry, *The Story of the Confederacy* (Old Saybrook, CT: Konecky & Konecky, 1988), 22-23; Charles B. Dew, *Apostles of Disunion: Southern Secession Commissioners and the Causes of the Civil War* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2001), 37; Mitchell, *William Gregg*, 203; *Charleston Mercury*, December 21, 1860.

⁴ Works that characterize southern manufacturers as opponents of secession who were nevertheless forced into secession and eventually war by the more powerful planter interest include Mitchell, *William Gregg*; Curtis J. Evans, *The Conquest of Labor*; and Harold S. Wilson, *Confederate Industry: Manufacturers and Quartermasters in*

The stories of William Gregg, Daniel Pratt, and Barrington King suggest that the relationship of leading southern manufacturers to the coming of the Civil War was actually much more complex. Throughout nearly the entirety of the antebellum era, these leading manufacturers of the Deep South held unionist views and opposed secession. Nevertheless, they sought to capitalize on the national political climate and the fears of many southerners in an effort to realize their vision of a more industrialized South. In so doing, they only helped to exacerbate southerners' fears and stoke the fires of sectionalism. Throughout the period, these men of industry also vehemently defended the South's "peculiar institution," an observation not at all surprising considering all were slaveowners. For Gregg and King, their unflinching proslavery stances eventually led them to shed their unionist views and support secession. On the other hand, Pratt's loyalty to the Union remained strong and he continued to oppose secession until Alabama seceded in January 1861, after which he threw his full, undying support behind his home state.

Moreover, with the previous chapter in mind, the stories of Gregg, Pratt, and King demonstrate that slavery and strong proslavery rhetoric existed alongside ambitious social reform agendas. For decades, historians have argued that the "peculiar institution" impeded many social reform movements of the era from taking hold and flourishing in the South. Heightened concern for slavery's well-being, they asserted, led southerners, especially slaveholders, to look upon social reform movements and their advocates with great suspicion, fearing that they would subvert the status quo and by extension sow the seeds of slavery's demise. Gregg, Pratt, and

the Civil War (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 2002). For works that characterize southern manufacturers as secessionists who contributed to the coming of the Civil War, see Eric H. Walther, *The Fire-Eaters* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992); John Majewski, *Modernizing a Slave Economy: The Economic Vision of the Confederate Nation* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009); and John F. Kvach, *De Bow's Review: The Antebellum Vision of a New South* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2013).

King, however, saw things differently and proved otherwise. Slavery and social reform coexisted in the antebellum South.⁵

Throughout nearly the entirety of the antebellum era, William Gregg vehemently opposed secession. His views on the topic were evident in his public writings. In *Essays on Domestic Industry* (1845), his most well-known work, Gregg called secession the “greatest of calamities.” In the same publication, he scolded South Carolina’s political leadership for encouraging “so direful a calamity as the dissolution of our Union.” Gregg argued that the people of South Carolina would have been better served had their state’s political leadership focused their energy on diversifying the state’s economy rather than disunion. “It would indeed be well for us,” Gregg claimed, “...if the talent, which has been, for past years, and is now engaged in embittering our indolent people against their industrious neighbors of the North, had been with the same zeal engaged in promoting domestic industry and the encouragement of the mechanical arts.” In the words of historian Broadus Mitchell, “South Carolina’s political statesmen of the day engaged their attention principally in accusation against the North and excuse for the South; Gregg accused the South.”⁶

Despite opposing secession throughout nearly the entirety of the antebellum period, however, Gregg sought to capitalize on the national political climate and the fears of many southerners in an effort to realize his vision of a more industrialized South. In his writings, he

⁵ A few examples of works that argue that slavery stifled reform efforts in the antebellum South include Joyce Appleby, *Inheriting the Revolution: The First Generation of Americans* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000); Jonathan Daniel Wells, *The Origins of the Southern Middle Class, 1800-1860* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2004); Bruce W. Eelman, *Entrepreneurs in the Southern Upcountry: Commercial Culture in Spartanburg, South Carolina, 1845-1880* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008); Michael F. Conklin, “The Dangerous *Isms* and Fanatical *Ists*: Antebellum Conservatives in the South and the North Confront the Modernity Conspiracy,” *Journal of the Civil War Era* 4 (June 2014): 205-233.

⁶ William Gregg, *Essays on Domestic Industry*, 7 and 14n; Broadus Mitchell, *William Gregg*, 18.

argued that the only way to secure southern rights and safeguard southern institutions—namely slavery—was economic independence from the North. The primary way to achieve this, according to Gregg, was through industrialization. In *Essays on Domestic Industry*, Gregg, advocating for the creation of cotton textile mills in his home state of South Carolina, contended that industrialization equaled security for the South. “It must be apparent to all men of discernment,” he wrote, “that...our only safety, in this State, lies in a change of our industrial pursuits.” In the same piece, Gregg argued that South Carolina possessed the natural resources necessary to spur an economic transformation that would help to prepare itself for any crisis that it might encounter in the future. “We have the materials among us,” he asserted, “which, set in motion by this branch of industry, would create an energy that would revolutionize our State...and which would place us in a condition to meet any emergency that might arise.” Reiterating both his unionist sentiments and pro-industry agenda, Gregg contended that South Carolina’s politicians should encourage the people of the state to “think less of their grievances and more of the peaceable means of redress.” Elaborating on his recommendation to the state’s political leadership, Gregg argued that real resistance to the North could be found in promoting industrialization. “Let our politicians, instead of teaching us to hate our northern brethren, endeavor to get up a good feeling for domestic industry—let them teach our people that the true mode of resistance will be found in making more and purchasing less.”⁷

Fifteen years after the publication of *Essays on Domestic Industry*, Gregg once again looked to take advantage of the national political climate and southerners’ fears to promote his economic vision for the South. In the first installment of “Southern Patronage to Southern Imports and Domestic Industry,” which appeared in *De Bow’s Review* in July 1860, Gregg

⁷ Gregg, *Essays on Domestic Industry*, iii, 7, 15-16.

reiterated the argument he made years earlier, albeit with more urgency and a new call for direct trade with Europe. “We have been forced to the conclusion,” he wrote, “that the time has come when the Southern poople [sic] should begin in earnest to prepare for self-defense and self-reliance.” The reason for this, according to the South Carolina manufacturer, was the growing threat of abolitionism. “Abolition of Southern slavery was, but a few years ago,” he observed, “nothing more than an insignificant political hobby. Now it has become a religious sentiment.” Gregg rhetorically asked, “Where is the Southern man who can feel safe under a government which is to be controlled by men who are imbued with abolition fanaticism, and who profess to be governed by a higher law than the Bible and the Constitution of the United States?” He then reminded fellow southerners that “the nation that may be our friend and great customer to-day, may make war upon us to-morrow. Hence the necessity of the South becoming more self-reliant, by the encouragement of direct Southern commerce, and, as far as possible, diversified home industry.”⁸

In a subsequent installment of the same work, which appeared in the December 1860 issue of *De Bow's Review*, Gregg reiterated his argument. “This, and this alone,” wrote Gregg of domestic industry, “will be the means of rendering us independent of the North, and secure us against their further crusades in the cause of emancipation.” Later, to drive home his point, he reminded his readers of the important link between industrialization and security. “Let us not forget that in order to secure our independence and safety,” Gregg claimed, “our watchword in the future must be—diversified labor and *home patronage* to domestic industry.” In the late antebellum era, therefore, Gregg sought to capitalize on the national political climate and the fears of many southerners in an effort to realize his vision of a more industrialized South. In so

⁸ *De Bow's Review* 29 (July 1860): 77, 78-79.

doing, the South Carolina manufacturer only helped to exacerbate southerners' fears and stoke the fires of sectionalism.⁹

In addition to being opposed to secession throughout nearly the entirety of the antebellum period, Gregg was also staunchly proslavery. His strong proslavery views are evident in an 1850 exchange with wealthy Boston merchant, Amos A. Lawrence. In August of that year, Lawrence wrote Gregg. His letter dealt primarily with business, specifically manufacturing in their respective regions of the country. He informed Gregg that he had recently read his two letters published in *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine*, praising Gregg for his fair and balanced assessment of the North and South's advantages for cotton manufacturing. Lawrence also commented on the "sad condition" of cotton manufacturing in New England, lamenting the high cost of cotton and labor accompanied by falling prices. In addition, Lawrence passed along information on the cost of manufacturing cotton goods in New England and the cost of selling them. Finally, Lawrence enclosed with his letter a copy of a newspaper, which contained an article on southern manufacturing that he thought Gregg might be interested in reading.¹⁰

In his response to Lawrence's letter, Gregg launched into a proslavery tirade against New Englanders and antislavery advocates. After claiming that a protective tariff would "set evry thing [sic] right at this time" for cotton textile manufacturers and that the South was willing to discuss such a measure, he blamed northerners for complicating the situation. "Unfortunately for the country," Gregg wrote, "just when the south was ready to receive reasonable propositions on this head, you people of the North, East, & West, raise up a bone of contention which has spoiled all." He asserted that the institution of slavery "is mere phathom [sic], an abstraction to you New

⁹ Ibid., 29 (December 1860), 774.

¹⁰ Amos A. Lawrence to William Gregg, August 21, 1850, found in Thomas P. Martin, "The Advent of William Gregg and the Graniteville Company," *The Journal of Southern History* 11, no. 3 (1945): 420.

England people, who I had hoped had too much hard common sense to run mad about.” For southerners, however, slavery was much more than that. “With us,” Gregg reminded Lawrence, “slaves are property, and it amounts to Many Millions, the protection & free use of which is guaranteed to us by the Constitution, without that protection the Union is of no use to us.” Gregg warned the Bostonian that support for separation from the Union was strong among the South’s leaders. “I am sorry to confess to you,” wrote Gregg, “that among our best men here, a severance of the Union is desirable, and I believe this sentiment to be almost universal in south Carolina & Georgia, the old substantial men who stood up for union during nullification, are now on the other side.” The reason for this, according to Gregg, was the fear that abolitionism would spread like wildfire among northerners, leaving wiser men helpless to stop it. “We are under the impression here,” the South Carolina industrialist wrote, “that the spirit of abolitionism is becoming so rife with you that it will over ride [sic] the politicians and wise men of the country.” If abolitionist sentiment was to become so powerful as to influence the actions of the federal government, Gregg contemplated, then southerners would essentially be funding the demise of slavery. “We look forward to the possibility that the mad sprit of abolitionism may lead to more disastrous results,” he wrote, “that the money which we contribute to the support of the government may in time be used against us to take away our property.”¹¹

Gregg’s proslavery views remained strong throughout the remainder of the antebellum era. In an installment of “Southern Patronage to Southern Imports and Domestic Industry,” which appeared in the January 1861 issue of *De Bow’s Review*, Gregg argued that slavery was “founded in nature, and sanctioned by the Bible and the teachings of its blessed Author.” In a subsequent installment of the same work, the South Carolina manufacturer characterized the

¹¹ Ibid.

South's slaves as "civilized, Christianized, and contented." Throughout the 1850s and up to the commencement of the war, therefore, Gregg unwaveringly defended the South's "peculiar institution."¹²

In his defense of slavery, Gregg employed various arguments. In his letter to Amos Lawrence, he invoked the Constitution of the United States and stressed private property rights. In "Southern Patronage to Southern Imports and Domestic Industry," Gregg utilized the "positive good" proslavery argument, which grew increasingly popular among southern slaveholders over the course of the antebellum era. Rather than making excuses for slavery's existence and portraying it as a necessary evil as did many of the Founding Fathers, the "positive good" argument asserted that the institution was responsible for "a litany of beneficial consequences for both blacks and white, the North and the South, the United States and the world." It claimed that slaves in the South were content and happy in their condition, well-cared for by their benevolent masters and "civilized" by Christianity. The "positive good" argument also emphasized that slavery was vital not only to the South's economy, but also that of the entire nation and even the world. Finally, it contended that God and the sacred scriptures implicitly sanctioned the "peculiar institution."¹³

Gregg's unflinching defense of slavery comes as no surprise considering that he was, in fact, a slaveowner. The exact number of slaves that he owned, however, is uncertain. In his biography of the pioneering South Carolina textile industrialist, historian Broaddus Mitchell stated that Gregg had "five or six servants, and their children" at Kalmia. According to Mitchell, "they were all of one family, purchased from Mrs. Gregg's grandmother Jones' estate." Historian

¹² *De Bow's Review* 30 (January 1861): 102; *De Bow's Review* 30 (February 1861): 221.

¹³ David F. Ericson, *The Debate Over Slavery: Antislavery and Proslavery Liberalism in Antebellum America* (New York and London: New York University Press, 2000), 24-25. Quote from p. 25.

Tom Downey asserted that the president of the Graniteville Manufacturing Company “owned fourteen slaves by 1860.” Regardless of the exact number of slaves that he owned before the Civil War, it remains that Gregg was, in fact, a slaveholder. Self-interest, therefore, played a large—if not central—role in his defense of the South’s “peculiar institution.”¹⁴

National political developments of the 1850s undoubtedly hardened Gregg’s defense of slavery and gradually eroded the unionist views he expressed so publicly a decade earlier. One such event was John Brown’s raid on Harpers Ferry. In October 1859, radical abolitionist John Brown and a small group of armed followers, hoping to precipitate a mass slave insurrection in the South and bring the entire institution crumbling down, seized the federal arsenal at Harpers Ferry, Virginia. Unfortunately for Brown, the slave rebellion he envisioned never materialized and he and his followers were captured by a detachment of U.S. marines. Brown and his fellow conspirators were tried by the state of Virginia and later hanged. In the wake of his death, many northerners, especially abolitionists, hailed Brown as a martyr, while many in the South, particularly white slaveowners, cursed him as a murderous madman and the sum of all of their deepest fears. While his plan failed, Brown “set in motion a chain of events which was to lead to that precious goal he had pursued with such frenzy, the destruction of slavery.”¹⁵

John Brown’s raid on Harpers Ferry deeply disturbed Gregg, so much so that he referenced it in one of his publications. In an installment of “Southern Patronage to Southern Imports and Domestic Industry,” which appeared in the August 1860 issue of *De Bow’s Review*, Gregg lamented the lack of southern patronage for southern engine manufacturers, observing that

¹⁴ Mitchell, *William Gregg*, 89; Downey, *Planting a Capitalist South*, 225; Goff, ““Something Pretty [Sic] Out of Very Little,”” 54 and 66n16.

¹⁵ James M. McPherson, *Ordeal by Fire: The Civil War and Reconstruction* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2001), 125-129; Steven A. Channing, *Crisis of Fear: Secession in South Carolina* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970), 18. Quote from Channing, 18.

southerners instead opted to patronize engine manufacturers in the North. According to the South Carolina industrialist, this had potentially severe unintended consequences for the institution of slavery. Noting that northern engine manufacturers would send their laborers south to build engines for their customers, Gregg argued that these northerners would “talk with our negro laborers, and possibly instil [sic] in them the same kind of mischief that was attempted at Harpers Ferry.”¹⁶

It is clear that John Brown’s raid left an impression on Gregg, a white southern slaveowner. The event more than likely helped to alter his perception of northerners. In *Essays on Domestic Industry*, they were brethren. In this installment of “Southern Patronage to Southern Imports and Domestic Industry,” however, northerners were potential abolitionists secretly sowing the seeds of slavery’s destruction. None, therefore, according to Gregg, could be trusted. Most notably, however, his mention of Harpers Ferry in a piece on southern patronage for southern industry also reveals a heightened concern for slavery’s safety within the Union and fear of future attempted slave insurrections after John Brown’s raid.

Republican electoral success in November 1860 proved to be the tipping point for Gregg. Two days after the 1860 presidential election, on the evening of November 8, Gregg, with the help of other prominent members of the community, called together the residents of Graniteville at the town’s Baptist church for what turned out to be a “large and enthusiastic meeting.” Once gathered, Reverend A.P. Norris, the church’s minister, called Gregg to the chair. After thanking Norris and others for the honor of chairing the meeting, the company and town’s founding father lamented that “he had long cherished a hope that the good sense of the Northern people would overcome their prejudices, and that the union would be preserved; but that recent events had

¹⁶ *De Bow’s Review* 29 (August 1860): 227.

caused him to abandon all such hopes.” The “recent events” that caused Gregg to publicly declare himself a secessionist were the electoral successes of the Republican Party and their presidential candidate, Abraham Lincoln. “He said that the late election,” explained the *Edgefield Advertiser*, “had driven him from all his Union hopes.” Subsequently, Gregg declared that “he was now openly, fearlessly, and unqualifiedly a disunion man.” He then reminded those gathered of their patriotic duty to their state in this time of revolution. “A revolution had already commenced in South Carolina, and it became every good citizen to support the State in any measures she may adopt, whether they be secession with, or without the other Cotton States.” For his own part, Gregg vowed to do everything in his power to support his adopted state. “He had determined to place himself, and all he possessed, at the service of his State—that her fortunes were his, be they better or worse,” recorded the *Edgefield Advertiser*.¹⁷

Gregg perceived northerners’ embrace of the Republican Party as an unforgivable betrayal of the South. He used Connecticut, or more specifically its merchants, manufacturers, and artisans, to make his point. “The example of Connecticut was a convincing proof that we have no right to look for justice from the North,” Gregg asserted. “There is not a people in the world who are so well informed about the institutions of the South as those of the latter State; none who are under such obligations to prompt them to a bond of union and friendship,” he contended. After detailing how Connecticut merchants, artisans, and manufacturers profited immensely off the southern people in the preceding decades, Gregg could not help but feel anger and distain at their support of Lincoln and the Republican Party. “To see that people arrayed against us in the ranks of the Republican Party,” the *Edgefield Advertiser* noted, “he thought sufficient to shake the confidence of the most conservative Southern man.”¹⁸

¹⁷ *Edgefield Advertiser*, November 14, 1860.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

Gregg then spoke directly to the workers and families of Graniteville in an effort to inspire unity. He contended that northerners believed that the South was deeply divided along racial and class lines and that if it were ever to leave the Union it would be quickly torn asunder by racial and class tensions. “They believed that if we were left alone,” Gregg asserted, “the slaves would murder their masters, and the poor men who were not slaveholders would turn traitors to their country.” He argued that this was a foolish assumption. “Was there ever such an error crammed into the minds of a people?”, Gregg asked. “All history proves that the poor man has as pure patriotism burning in his breast as the richest man upon earth, and that those in the humblest walks of life are the first to fly to arms in the defense of their country,” he asserted. To be frank, Gregg also warned them of the possible hardships that lay ahead if the South sought independence. “He exhorted them to prepare for hard times, for in case of secession they would have to struggle with some difficulties and trials.” In preparation for those possible hard times, Gregg “exhorted them to economy, and courage, knowing that they would sustain Carolinian reputation of promptitude in the discharge of every patriotic duty.” He comforted them, however, by stating that he would do everything in his power to keep the factory running and provide for the people of Graniteville. “He stated...that the Company had Cotton enough to last two months, and as long as his exertions could procure money to pay hands and buy Cotton the mill should go on running, and their children should find a home.”¹⁹

After making his remarks, Gregg appointed a committee “to draft Resolutions expressive of the meeting.” The committee notably included Reverend A.P. Norris and Gregg’s second son, James J. Gregg. Following a short recess, the committee returned with a preamble and resolutions, which the meeting of citizens unanimously adopted. The defense of slavery and

¹⁹ Ibid.

Lincoln and the Republican Party's perceived desire to eradicate took center stage. "Wherees [sic], it becomes necessary for us as a people either to submit to the domination of a party, the avowed object of which is to make war upon our most cherished institutions—or else to resist the encroachments of our Northern enemies," the committee and citizens of Graniteville declared their "unwilling[ness] to submit to the authority of a Black Republican President." They justified their support of secession and the dissolution of the Union by citing the results of the latest election. "We regard the election of *Abraham Lincoln* as more alarming than any 'overt act' which he may commit, and consider it a sufficient cause for the dissolution of the Union." They concluded on a patriotic and sacrificial tone by pledging their unwavering support to South Carolina. "Whenever it may please the State to demand our services," they proclaimed, "we are as ever '*Animus Opibus que* [sic] *parati*' [prepared in mind and resources]."20

Republican electoral success in November 1860 proved to be the tipping point for other prominent southern manufacturers, including Virginian Joseph R. Anderson. Moreover, Anderson's political journey from unionist to secessionist draws many parallels to that of Gregg. A Union man and Whig during the 1840s and early 1850s, the Richmond iron manufacturer's devotion to both the Whig Party and the Union wavered in the mid- to late 1850s as the Republican Party emerged on the national political scene. Fearing "Black Republicanism," Anderson turned to the Democratic Party, in his mind the last best political hope of stopping the Republicans. When Lincoln and the Republican Party scored major victories in November 1860, Anderson became convinced that the time for secession had arrived. As the Virginia Assembly debated secession in the early spring of 1861, the Richmond iron manufacturer did everything in

20 Ibid.

his power to persuade them, including arranging a parade in favor of secession and hoisting the Stars and Bars over one of his factory buildings.²¹

Like Gregg, Daniel Pratt held strong unionist sentiments during the antebellum era. In August 1858, Pratt received an invitation to attend the centennial celebration of his hometown, Temple, New Hampshire. Responding to the invitation committee in early September, Pratt regretted to inform them that he could not attend. “I should be much pleased to be with you on that interesting occasion,” he wrote, “but the distance is such, I could not conveniently attend.” Rather than leaving it at that, as most of the other respondents who could not attend for various reasons had done, the father of Prattville felt compelled to “say a few words on this interesting occasion.”²²

Given his excuse for not attending the celebration, Pratt ironically began by commenting on the significant advancements made in transportation and communications technology since he last lived in the small New England town more than four decades earlier. “When I first settled in Alabama the distance in point of time between here and New Hampshire was great. It took me between two and three weeks to travel it. I can now do so in one-fourth part of that time, and with much more ease.” According to the gin and cotton textile manufacturer, however, this improvement paled in comparison to advances in communications technology over the same period. “This is certainly a great improvement: it is, however, almost lost sight of when we consider the lightning speed at which we can communicate with our friends and with business men.”²³

²¹ Charles B. Dew, *Ironmaker to the Confederacy: Joseph R. Anderson and the Tredegar Iron Works*, 2nd ed. (Richmond: The Library of Virginia, 1999), 38-42, 61-62, and 83-84.

²² Henry Ames Blood, *The History of Temple, N.H.* (Boston: George C. Rand & Avery, 1860), 51.

²³ *Ibid.*, 51-52.

Pratt's purpose in mentioning these improvements was to underscore the benefits of living in the United States. Simultaneously, his observations implicitly questioned the wisdom of those who would advocate separation from it in a foolish quest for something better that did not exist. "When we reflect on the great advantages we enjoy as a nation, and the superiority of our privileges over those of any other people on the globe," Pratt wrote, "ought we not to be grateful to that Being who, by a special Providence, has granted us these blessings?" He continued, "And furthermore, ought we not, by all means in our power, endeavor to perpetuate these precious privileges through all time?"²⁴

According to Pratt, the key to ensuring the survival of the nation and the continuation of such blessings lay in the economic interdependence of the sections. He argued that each section of the country possessed its own natural advantages, which destined them to engage in particular industries. "The New England States," Pratt observed, "are blessed with a healthy location, excellent water-power, and an enterprising, energetic people. Their soil is nothing to boast of; that, however, is compensated by their excellent water-power and health of their location. Nature seems to have designated them for manufacturing States." The New England states, however, could not survive on their own. "After all, what could New England do by herself, disconnected from other portions of the country? A large portion of its inhabitants would be obliged to leave for more fertile regions, or starve." Whereas New England was best suited for manufacturing, the western and southern states were best suited for food production and cash crop agriculture, respectively. "What was the great Western country designed for? Was it to raise Wheat, Corn, Beef, and Pork, all to be consumed at home?", Pratt rhetorically asked. "What were the Southern States designed for? Was it to raise Cotton, Sugar, Rice and Tobacco, for their exclusive

²⁴ Ibid., 52.

consumption?” For Pratt, it was clear that the sections of the country were divinely engineered for unity and cooperation. “It seems to me that it needs but little reflection to decide that this great and fertile country was intended for a great and united people,” he declared. “We were made dependent on each other for the purpose of securing strength, and developing the agricultural and mechanical skill and resources of the country.” In summation, therefore, “One thing is necessary to secure the perpetuity of these blessings; that is, for each division of the country to attend to its own individual interests; the North to manufacture, the South to provide the raw material, the West to furnish the provisions, and California the circulating medium.” Pratt then closed his letter with a nationalistic blessing: “May God continue to bless us as a nation, and may we appreciate the blessing and strive to retain it.”²⁵

In addition to holding unionist sentiments, Pratt ferociously defended the rights of northerners living in the South. In 1850, Pratt boldly reprimanded a powerful Montgomery newspaper for its prejudicial claims against native northerners living in the state. The *Advertiser and State Gazette* was the foremost Democratic newspaper in Alabama at the time, functioning as the organ of the national party in the Yellowhammer State. In early November 1850, the periodical published a letter signed “Charles Pym.” The letter charged that the northern-born population of the state was “unfriendly and opposed to the interests of the South.” Subsequently, according to the author, northern-born residents of the state should be silenced. “‘Pym’ thinks, because a man was born North,” Pratt observed, “he has no right to express his opinions, and if he does so, he must be *marked*.” The interests of the South, according to the letter’s author, did not include the creation of banks, which apparently was the issue that sparked the letter.

²⁵ Ibid., 52-53.

Referring to “Pym,” Pratt noted: “He thinks if a man happens to be interested in a Bank in Alabama, he must be *marked*.”²⁶

In his letter, Pratt made both his motivation for writing and position on the issue crystal clear in the opening sentence. “I should not ask permission to trespass on your columns at this time, did I not consider it due to myself and others to notice the unwarrantable course pursued by the *Advertiser & State Gazette*,” he declared. Pratt charged the periodical with “improperly reflecting upon the character and calling into question the patriotism of certain citizens of the state of Alabama merely from the fact that they owe their birth to States where slavery does not exist.” According to Pratt, it was one thing if such statements would have been uttered by an individual. “Should a private individual under the influence of passion or prejudice entertain or express such sentiments he might be pitied for the littleness of soul which dictated them, or be passed unnoticed,” he reasoned. It was quite another, however, in his opinion, for such a prominent newspaper to publish such ignorant and disgraceful sentiments. “When a public journal, claiming to be the organ of a party...strives to embitter the feelings and array the prejudices of one portion of citizens against another thus recklessly, it argues but little in favor of the cause which requires such means to sustain it,” he roared. Pratt reminded the newspaper that despite his New England origins, he claimed “to be as much attached to the State and to feel as deep an interest in its welfare and future prosperity as either of the Editors of the *Advertiser*, or any contributor to that paper who so freely denounces all Northern born citizens.” Where an individual happens to be born, Pratt asserted, does not determine good citizenship. “The mere accident of birth is not the true test of good citizenship,” Pratt lectured. Concluding his letter, the greying industrialist promoted free speech and respect. “I desire that every man should express

²⁶ Lewy Dorman, *Party Politics in Alabama from 1850 Through 1860* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1995), 232; *West Alabama Journal*, November 16, 1850.

himself on the important and all absorbing subjects now agitating the people, no matter where he was born,” stated Pratt. “Let each at the same time respect the feelings and opinions of others, if they would have their own regarded.”²⁷

Like Gregg, Pratt sought to capitalize on the national political climate and the fears of many southerners in an effort to realize his vision of a more industrialized South. In an 1859 letter to the editor of *The Cotton Planter and the Soil of the South*, he declared that he was a southern patriot. “I profess to be a Southern-rights man,” Pratt declared, “and strongly contend that the South ought to maintain her rights at all hazards.” His approach to defending southern rights, however, he admitted, differed from that taken by many of the region’s politicians. “I would, however, pursue a somewhat different course from that of our politicians,” Pratt wrote. Rather than deliver bombastic speeches and level threats as they did, the Alabama industrialist advocated that southerners labor to make themselves less economically dependent on the North. “I would not make any flaming fiery speeches and threats,” advised Pratt, “but on the other hand, I would go quietly and peaceably to work, and make ourselves less dependent on those who abuse and would gladly ruin us.” Pratt not only urged southerners to harness the capability of their natural resources to manufacture goods for themselves, but also encouraged them to patronize southern industry. “I would use our own iron, our own coal, our own lime, our own marble,” he wrote. At the same time, he urged southerners to purchase and use “our own make of axes, hoes, spades, firearms, powder, wagons, carriages, saddles, bridles, and harness, clothing for our negroes, plows, doors, sash and blinds, shoes, and boots, and last, but not least, our own cotton gins.”²⁸

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ *The American Cotton Planter and the Soil of the South*, Volume 3, 114-115.

Pratt again sought to capitalize on the national political climate and the fears of many southerners to advance his economic vision for the South in a letter published by the *Autauga Citizen* in February 1860. Earlier that month, a committee of citizens of Wetumpka, Alabama—a large town less than twenty miles east of Prattville—wrote Pratt informing him that the town was raising a company of dragoons. The purpose of their letter was to ask if he could supply them with the proper colored cloth for uniforms. Pratt regrettably informed them that he did not manufacture the colored cloth necessary for their purposes. He, however, kindly provided them with a recommendation.²⁹

In the letter, Pratt praised the citizens of Wetumpka, the state of Alabama, and other southern states for their heightened military spirit. “I am much pleased to see a military spirit getting up in Alabama, as well as in other Southern States,” he wrote. Fanning the flames of fear in his fellow southerners, Pratt contended that the times called for a heightened military spirit among southerners. “If ever there was a time when the Southern States ought to look to the future with apprehension,” Pratt asserted, “it is now.” Preparation on the part of southerners, according to Pratt, would serve them well regardless of whether or not war lay in their future. “Nothing will do more to prevent war than a preparation for it,” declared the manufacturer, “and if it does not prevent it, a preparation is absolutely necessary to carry it on.” Pratt praised the committee for its decision to patronize southern industry by outfitting their dragoons with southern-made cloth. “The spirit that seems to pervade the newly formed military companies I am much pleased with, especially your desire to furnish your outfit from goods manufactured at home,” he wrote. According to Pratt, the actions of the committee were commendable considering the tough history of manufacturers and their establishments in the region. “It’s been

²⁹ *Autauga Citizen*, February 23, 1860.

up hill business for manufacturers at the South,” he reflected. “They have never received that encouragement which was due them.” Subsequently, southerners’ dependence on the North for manufactured goods has placed them in a vulnerable position. “We of the South, are much more dependent than we suppose, and if we were at once cut off from the trade of the Northern and Eastern States, we would suffer greatly for a few years.” The solution, according to Pratt, was clear. “Let us go silently but earnestly to work,” he beseeched his fellow southerners, then “we shall be prepared compete successfully with all who come in conflict with us commercially, or interfere with our civil and political institutions.” Pratt, therefore, sought to capitalize on the national political climate and the fears of many southerners in an effort to realize his vision of a more industrialized South. In so doing, he only helped to exacerbate southerners’ fears and stoke the fires of sectionalism.³⁰

Gregg and Pratt were far from the only southern manufacturers and advocates of industrialization to attempt to capitalize on the national political climate and the fears of many southerners in an effort to realize their vision of a more industrialized South. In November 1856, a committee from the southern commercial convention held earlier that year in Richmond informed the readers of *De Bow’s Review* “that the objects of the Convention were ‘to secure to the Southern States the utmost amount of prosperity as an integral part of the Federal Union or to enable them to maintain their rights and institutions in any event.’” At that same commercial convention, Richmond lawyer R.G. Morriss argued that “to retain our rights, to secure southern independence, it is necessary to show to northern men that we can do without them; that we can have manufactories at the south sufficient for our wants.”³¹

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ *De Bow’s Review* 21 (November 1856): 551; *De Bow’s Review* 20 (May 1856): 626; Majewski, *Modernizing a Slave Economy*, 98.

Like Gregg, Pratt defended slavery during the antebellum era. The arguments he employed to defend the South's "peculiar institution" and the manner in which he did so, however, changed significantly throughout the period. In June 1827, a miserable and financially-distressed Pratt wrote his father, Edward, pleading for a loan. In the course of the letter, he confirmed Edward's suspicion that he owned slaves, a fact that he had hoped to keep a secret for he knew it would not go over well with his strict Congregationalist father. In an effort lessen the blow and not make Edward "think [his son] was ruined eternaly [sic]," Pratt attempted to justify his ownership of fellow human beings. "I have but three [slaves]," he confessed, "and it is not probal [sic] that I shall keep them long." The New England transplant explained that "to live in anny [sic] country it is necessary to conform to the customs of the country in part." Despite owning slaves, Pratt assured Edward that he had "brought no man in to bondage" and that he had "rendered no man[']s situation more disagreeable than it was before." According to historian Curtis Evans, Pratt adopted a "When in Rome" defense of slavery, while also emphasizing that he owned only a few and that he took good care of them.³²

Pratt continued to defend slavery throughout the 1850s. Notably, he began to publicly defend the South's "peculiar institution." Moreover, he did so by employing the "positive good" argument. In a letter to the *Alabama State Journal* concerning the Compromise of 1850, Pratt noted "the blessings resulting from our slave institutions." In addition, the Alabama manufacturer declared that slavery "was designed by Providence to christianize that degraded people."³³

The following year, Pratt again publicly defend slavery and did so using the "positive good" argument. In a letter to the editor of the *West Alabama Journal* in September 1851, Pratt

³² Evans, *The Conquest of Labor*, 6-7 and 13-14. Quotes from p. 7 and 13.

³³ Ibid., 175-176. Quotes from p. 176.

asserted that slavery benefitted those held in bondage within it. “The result of my observation is,” he wrote, “that there is no situation in which our Negroes could be placed that they would be as well off and as happy as in the one which they now occupy.” He contended that blacks in their ancestral homeland existed in a deplorable state of poverty and ignorance. “Every person who is familiar with the condition of the African race in their own country,” he declared, “know that they are perhaps the most degraded being on the face of the earth.” Pratt continued, “Ignorant, indolent and savage, they are but little above the brute creation, and so situated as to have but little chance of their condition being materially improved at present.” In the United States, however, according to Pratt, Africans become civilized and their condition improved significantly. “Here they are well fed and clothed, taught industry and economy, agriculture and the mechanic arts, and the Christian religion. They are taken care of when sick, and in old age provided for.”³⁴

Pratt publicly defended slavery once again in 1859; and again he employed the positive “good” argument. In a letter to the editor of *The Cotton Planter and the Soil of the South*, the Alabama manufacturer confessed that his patience had run out for the rhetoric of free soil advocates. “I have no patience to listen to a class of person, who speak of fencing in or penning up slavery,” Pratt declared. He believed that “slavery will eventually go where it can be profitable.” Pratt continued by acknowledging that many Americans perceived the South’s peculiar institution as morally wrong and a blight on the nation. “I am well aware,” Pratt proclaimed, “that a large portion of the present generation in the Eastern States have been educated to believe that African slavery is a curse and a sin against High Heaven.” He asserted that their views are tragically ill-informed. “These people have never considered the subject in its

³⁴ *West Alabama Journal*, September 13, 1851.

proper light.” Pratt continued by advancing a positive-good proslavery argument, contending that slaves benefitted from the institution. “They do not take into consideration the degraded state of cannibalism, ignorance and poverty the negro is in his home country,” he wrote. Pratt continued, “They do not consider, that this is the only way the African can be improved, physically, morally and religiously. They do not consider that this is the only means to Christianize Africa.”³⁵

Pratt’s strong defense of the South’s peculiar institution comes as no surprise given that he himself was a large slaveholder. What’s more is that the number of slaves he owned more than doubled during the 1850s. Census returns for 1850 indicate that Pratt owned 47 slaves at that time. The number of slaves he owned dropped to 40 by 1852; however, by 1855 that number surged to 59. In January 1858, Pratt purchased a plantation—along with its 32 slaves—near Washington Landing, just a few miles south of Prattville on the north bank of the Alabama River. By 1860, Pratt owned a total of 107 slaves.³⁶

While the national political developments of the 1850s failed to shake Pratt’s loyalty to the Union, they did, however, affect his views on other matters. Nearly a decade after his spirited public defense of the rights of northern-born citizens living in the South, Pratt’s views on the subject apparently changed. In the three years preceding the Civil War, residents of Prattville “held public meetings to discuss the supposed danger posed by alleged abolitionist agitators within their midst and to pursue appropriate remedies.” Pratt played a direct role in one of these hysterical episodes. In late March 1858, at a public meeting, residents of Prattville discussed the supposed actions and views of three northern-born mechanics. Shadrack Mims, an upper-level employee of Pratt’s and his personal confidant, chaired the meeting. Pratt, alongside other prominent citizens of the town, sat on a committee of ten, which Mims ordered to “investigate

³⁵ *The American Cotton Planter and the Soil of the South*, Volume 3, 114-115.

³⁶ Evans, *Conquest of Labor*, 204-205.

the character and conduct of” the three men in question and “to draft resolutions as to what course should be pursued in regard to said individuals.” After brief deliberations, Pratt and the committee returned with their resolutions. The committee recommended that M.W. Leland be asked to leave the state “because of suspicions resting upon his character in regard to tampering with slaves.” The committee also asked the second man in question, Edward Slocum, to leave the state within two days “on account of entertaining and promulgating abolition sentiments.” Lastly, the committee of ten recommended that Joseph H. Wentworth leave town “on account of his abolition sentiments.” The residents of Prattville present at the meeting adopted the recommendation of the committee unanimously and Mims appointed another committee to deliver the news to the three accused.³⁷

In late November 1859, a suspicious man “hailing from a *cold* climate” arrived in Prattville. When questioned by locals as to his business in town, the individual stated that he intended to sell books as soon as they arrived from the North. When pressed about his place of origin, the man told four people four different answers, most of which, however, were northern states. Noticing that the individual in question received letters at the post office in Prattville from “*suspicious* places north of Mason & Dixon’s line,” concerned citizens paid the man a visit and asked to inspect the letters. The man agreed. One of the letters lacked a signature and directed the individual to make his way to Kingston and make the town his headquarters. It also directed him to “prosecute his *work* with vigor, and thoroughly canvass the county.” Troubled by the suspicious letter, concerned citizens asked the man to leave the town immediately, which he did. The *Autauga Citizen*, at the conclusion of its column on the suspicious man, stoked fears of abolitionists in their midst by ordering citizens of Autauga County to apprehend all suspicious

³⁷ Evans, *Conquest of Labor*, 201; *Autauga Citizen*, April 8, 1858.

individuals found about town and question them about their business in Prattville. “We think it behooves the people of our county to arrest all suspicious individuals that may be found lurking about our village and plantations, and compel them to give an account of themselves.”³⁸

The following month, at a public meeting, the citizens of Prattville discussed the views and character of one Luther Cleaveland, a sixty-something-year-old millwright from Maine. After several speeches, the meeting concluded that “the evidence adduced against Luther Cleaveland clearly establishes the charges preferred against him, to wit; that he is an abolitionist, and that he has so expressed himself, and that therefore he is an unsafe member of a Southern community.” The Chair then appointed a committee of fifteen to notify Cleaveland of the meeting’s decision and inform him that he had ten hours to leave the county. If he refused or failed to leave the county within the required time frame, the Chair empowered the committee to remove him by force.³⁹

No evidence exists to show that Daniel Pratt played a role in the two aforementioned incidents of anti-northern hysteria in Prattville in late 1859. Pratt’s silence at this time, however, is significant. Nearly a decade earlier, he vehemently defended the rights of northern-born citizens against accusations leveled at them by an unknown Alabamian in the pages of the *Autauga Citizen*. Yet, in 1859, as anti-northern hysteria gripped his own town and his fellow citizens ousted northern-born individuals from Prattville, Pratt neither publicly objected nor attempted to stop it. What is more, Pratt played a direct role in the ouster of three northern-born mechanics the previous year. Pratt’s actions in 1858 and lack thereof in 1859 seem to suggest that his views on northerners and their rights underwent a radical transformation in the 1850s.

³⁸ *Autauga Citizen*, December 1, 1859.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, December 15, 1859.

As the presidential election of 1860 neared, Pratt publicly made his choice clear. In a letter to the editor of the *Montgomery Mail* dated August 1, 1860, he declared his support for the Constitutional Union Party's ticket of Bell and Everett. Correcting the *Mail*'s previous statement that he supported John C. Breckinridge, Pratt informed the newspaper and its readership that he had always supported Bell and Everett. "Having seen in your daily issue of 31st ult. that you have put me down a Breckinridge man," observed Pratt, "I think it proper to notice the fact, and state my real position." He continued: "I must say however, that my preference has been all the time for Bell and Everett." The manufacturer justified his choice, admitting that he perceived Bell and Everett "as honest men as could have been selected, [and] as well qualified for that high station." Additionally, he asserted that southerners could "look to them as confidently as to any men, for an honest and safe administration of the Government." In other words, Pratt not only believed that these men were of high integrity and well-qualified for the jobs they sought, but also that southerners would need not fear for the safety of their institutions and way of life if they won in November.⁴⁰

Even after Lincoln and the Republican's electoral successes in November 1860, Pratt remained opposed to secession. He did so because he not only still held a deep affection for the Union, but also because he genuinely feared that secession would bring utter ruin to the South. Once his adopted state seceded, however, Pratt threw his complete support behind Alabama and the Confederate cause. Writing to the editor of the *Montgomery Mail* in 1863 condemning wartime profiteers, Pratt lamented that "we might have pursued a wiser course from the commencement. But as Job says, 'what I greatly feared is upon us.'" Shadrack Mims, in his short history of Prattville, written in the late 1870s, recalled, "It is generally known that [Pratt] was

⁴⁰Ibid., August 9, 1860, originally printed in the *Montgomery Mail*.

opposed to secession...yet when Alabama did secede, he sustained her to the last.” In his eulogy at Pratt’s funeral, Henry J. Livingston remembered that Pratt believed “the election of Abraham Lincoln would not be a justifiable cause for secession” and warned that if the South seceded because of this, it would find itself “in a gigantic internecine war.” In his speech at the 1949 Alabama Dinner of The Newcomen Society of England, Merrill E. Pratt, Daniel Pratt’s nephew and managerial successor to his industrial operations at Prattville, remembered that Pratt opposed secession before the war.⁴¹

Like Gregg and Pratt in the early to mid-1850s, Barrington King opposed secession and expressed unionist sentiments. On November 20, 1856, a national day of public thanksgiving, Reverend Nathaniel A. Pratt delivered a sermon at the Roswell Presbyterian Church entitled “Perils of a Dissolution of the Union.” Shortly after, at a public meeting in Roswell, citizens called for the creation of a committee to publish Reverend Pratt’s apparently popular and moving sermon that was “replete with patriotic and conservative sentiments.” Three prominent members of the community composed the committee: John Dunwoody, a charter member of the church and one of the founding fathers of the town, George H. Camp, agent for the Roswell Manufacturing Company, and Barrington King. On November 24, the committee wrote Reverend Pratt, requesting a copy of the sermon for publication. Reverend Pratt obliged.⁴²

The sermon, as its title suggests, was patriotic and pro-Union. It was also proslavery. Pratt reminded his congregation of “the blessings which have resulted from our confederation.” He asserted that the Union has “conferred unexampled prosperity on the inhabitants of the

⁴¹ Evans, *Conquest of Labor*, 213; *Autauga Citizen*, September 10, 1863, originally printed in the *Montgomery Mail*; Susan F.H. Tarrant, ed., *Hon. Daniel Pratt: A Biography with Eulogies on His Life and Character* (Richmond: Whittet & Shepperson, 1904), 57, 111; Merrill E. Pratt, *Daniel Pratt: Alabama’s First Industrialist* (The Newcomen Society of England, American Branch, 1949), 18.

⁴² N.A. Pratt, “Perils of a Dissolution of the Union: A Discourse, Delivered in the Presbyterian Church, of Roswell, on the Day of Public Thanksgiving, November 20, 1856,” (Atlanta: C.R. Hanleiter, & Co., Printers, 1856), n.p.

United States,” resulting in a “perfect anomaly in the history of the world.” Simultaneously, Pratt warned of “the calamities which must necessarily arise from the rupturing of the tie which has bound them for nearly seventy years.” The threat to this peace and prosperity brought about by the Union was none other than an internal force, abolitionism. Subsequently, Pratt condemned abolitionists, who he referred to as an “infatuated minority, which would stake our political salvation on the issues of a fearful experiment, that would, in all human probability, result in the dissolution of this union, and the destruction of the happiest, freest, and most prosperous country in the world.” The “fearful experiment” was obviously emancipation and black equality. Pratt went even further, however, calling this abolitionist threat to the existence of the Union an evil, which God has thankfully delivered the nation from thus far. “From this evil, which is *the evil* most to be deprecated by the citizens of this country,” he declared, “God has, at least for a time, delivered us.”⁴³

Considering that Barrington King willingly served on the committee that published the patently pro-Union sermon, it is relatively safe to assume that King held many of the same views as the sermon espoused. Moreover, Reverend Pratt was a close relation of King. Pratt was, in fact, King’s brother-in-law and thus belonged to the ruling elite of the town. Therefore, in the mid-1850s, Barrington King was a strong Unionist, who, like his brother-in-law, feared the dissolution of the Union and likewise condemned northern abolitionists for the threat they posed to it.

King undoubtedly also agreed with the Presbyterian clergyman on the issue of slavery. Barrington King, himself, was a large slaveholder. Local tax records and census information reveal that while the number of slaves that King owned in Roswell fluctuated considerably

⁴³ Ibid., 6-8.

during the 1850s, the overall number always remained relatively high. The 1850 slave schedule for Roswell indicates that King, in that year, owned 70 slaves. Five years later, in 1855, local tax documents for Roswell show that the manufacturer owned 60 slaves valued at \$20,000. The following year, the number of slaves King owned in Roswell rose to 61 and the total value to \$21,000. By 1857, however, local tax documents reveal that the president of the Roswell Manufacturing Company owned only 50 slaves in Roswell valued at \$17,850. By 1860, the number of slaves that King owned in Roswell slipped to 44. Despite this decrease in number, the total value of the 44 slaves was \$26,300.⁴⁴

In addition to the slaves he held at Roswell, Barrington King had a small number of slaves in Savannah. A state tax document from 1858 reveals that the manufacturer not only owned 47 slaves in Roswell valued at \$23,250, but also possessed an additional eight in Savannah valued at \$3,400. As with his slaves in Roswell, King's slaves in Savannah were a mix of old and young, male and female. The oldest of King's slaves in Savannah was an unhealthy 58-year-old male named Kasiah (or Kaziah), while the youngest was an infant born to a 16-year-old female slave woman named Sarah Ann. The 1858 state tax document, therefore, shows that the number of slaves King owned at Roswell was always the minimum number he actually owned, which was supplemented in the 1850s by holdings elsewhere in the state.⁴⁵

Not only did King own slaves, but so did the Roswell Manufacturing Company. The 1850 slave schedule for Roswell reveals that the company owned thirteen slaves in that particular year. Four were male and the rest female. Two of the enslaved men were in their twenties, while

⁴⁴ 1850 U.S. Census, Slave Schedule, Roswell District, Cobb County, Georgia; Barrington King Tax Documents, Barrington King Papers, Roswell Historical Society, Roswell, Georgia.

⁴⁵ Barrington King Tax Documents, Barrington King Papers, Roswell Historical Society, Roswell, Georgia.

one was sixty years of age and the other only six months. Most of the enslaved women were in their teens and twenties. The rest were under the age of ten, save one that was fifty-years-old.⁴⁶

Despite holding strong pro-Union sentiments in the mid-1850s, Barrington King apparently underwent a change of mind by late 1860. Contained within the King, Baker, and Simpson Family Papers at the Roswell Historical Society is a crinkled, yellowing political ribbon once owned by King. It is a Democratic political ribbon from the presidential election of 1860. It is apparent, then, that King supported the Democratic Party in 1860. Given the chaos of the party's national convention that year and his position on slavery, King most likely went the way of other proslavery southern Democrats and supported John C. Breckinridge. King's support of Breckinridge reveals that the Georgia textile manufacturer, while not a secessionist yet, was in a position that would leave him susceptible to embracing separation from the Union. The electoral successes of Lincoln and the Republicans in November 1860 pushed many southerners to embrace secession. King was probably one of them.

By early 1861, Barrington King had embraced secession. The only surviving evidence of his transition from a Unionist to a secessionist coming complete comes from a family letter written in early 1861. On January 28, Catherine Margaret Nephew King, the wife of Barrington King, wrote to her daughter, Eva. In the letter, she indicates that both she and her husband supported Georgia's withdrawal from the Union. Yet, both feared what secession could bring. "My beloved child, you have heard before this of the secession of our dear state from the Union," wrote Catherine King. She continued: "although we thought it right; yet Father and I could not participate in their rejoicing that was made in this place." King and his wife held out hope that the situation could have a peaceful resolution. "Father says when they tell him that all

⁴⁶ 1850 U.S. Census, Slave Schedule, Roswell District, Cobb County, Georgia.

matters are amicably arranged,” wrote Catherine, “then he will illuminate his house from top to bottom.” The picture of Barrington King that we get from this family letter is one of a reluctant rebel, a man who probably held a deep affection for the Union during the antebellum years according to the evidence, but with the events of 1860 and his interest in the South’s peculiar institution viewed secession as a justifiable course.⁴⁷

As the stories of Gregg, Pratt, and King demonstrate, the relationship of leading southern manufacturers to the coming of the Civil War was much more complex than previously thought. These men of industry were not helpless figures dragged kicking and screaming into secession and eventually war by the more powerful planter interest. Nor were they unabashed fire-eaters who supported secession for years before most southerners even entertained the idea. Rather, their stories highlight change over time and reaffirm the centrality of slavery to the shifting allegiances of southerners and the coming of the Civil War. The stories of these leading manufacturers also reveal that slavery and proslavery rhetoric existed alongside ambitious social reform agendas in the antebellum South.

Regardless of whether or not they supported it, secession came in the winter of 1860-1861. Shortly thereafter, so did a bloody four-year-long conflict over southern independence. The Civil War would prove to be an utter disaster for these manufacturers and their communities. It would not only wreak financial and physical havoc on their industrial enterprises, but also undermine their dreams of creating orderly, industrious communities.

⁴⁷ Catherine Margaret Nephew King to Eva Baker, January 28, 1861, Barrington King Papers, Roswell Historical Society, Roswell, Georgia.

Chapter 4 – The War

The Civil War proved calamitous for not only the South, but also the cherished factories and towns of the leading manufacturers under examination. Nearly as soon as the conflict began, the volunteer spirit carried away scores of their employees. The follow year, conscription threatened to take even more. The war also brought speculators, Confederate impressment officers, and the specter of sabotage. While large government contracts saved their companies from initial economic distress and uncertainty following secession, the Confederate government paid in Confederate currency, bonds, prepayment certificates, and certificates of indebtedness, which were completely worthless after the war. Moreover, these commitments to their states and the Confederacy hindered these manufacturers from being able to supply the demand of their local populations for cloth and thread, which bred anger and resentment for them among the local people. Finally, in the closing months of the war, federal armies threatened to finish what the war and Confederate government had started. Encouraged by either the presence of federal troops or trouble-making stragglers from Confederate armies, workers and residents of these mill villages, along with some people from the surrounding area, took advantage of temporary suspensions of law and order and rioted. They ransacked the mills, company stores, and even the abandoned homes of management and the town's ruling elite. In the end, the war brought disorder to these industrialists' communities and left their companies in ruin—either physically, financially, or both—by the spring of 1865. In a few short years, it nearly destroyed everything Gregg, Pratt, and King had worked so hard to build in the preceding decades.

Almost as soon as it started, the war began to take its toll on the mills and communities at Graniteville, Prattville, and Roswell. Following the bombardment of Fort Sumter in mid-April 1861, a volunteer spirit swept through the South, carrying hundreds of millhands from the cotton factories at Graniteville, Prattville, and Roswell off to war. In either late April or early May 1861, Company F of the Seventh South Carolina Volunteer Infantry Regiment left Graniteville for Virginia. Almost all of the men were from Graniteville and employees of the company. One of them, the company's second lieutenant, was Gregg's third son, John B. Gregg, who had first joined the Washington Light Infantry that January. Sadly, only months after departing Graniteville, John caught pneumonia while stationed in Charlottesville, Virginia and was sent to a military hospital. In early December, he succumbed to his ailment. He was twenty-three years old. Following his death, the *Edgefield Advertiser* published a short obituary, calling Lieutenant Gregg "a young man of exceptional character" who "enjoyed the confidence and respect of the community" and whose "kindness and gentleness of manners won the hearts of his associates in the camp." After his remains returned to South Carolina, he was buried in the Graniteville cemetery.¹

In late summer 1861, a cavalry company known as the Edgefield Rangers, which functioned as Company B of the Sixth South Carolina Cavalry Regiment, also departed for the front. A large portion of the men came from Graniteville. The company's second lieutenant was James J. Gregg, the Graniteville president's second son and one of John B. Gregg's elder brothers. In 1862, James Gregg was promoted from second to first lieutenant. The following

¹ *Edgefield Advertiser*, December 18, 1861; John Abney Chapman, *History of Edgefield County: From the Earliest Settlements to 1897* (Newberry, S.C.: Elbert H. Aull, 1897), 430; Mitchell, *William Gregg*, 213. Wallace, "A Hundred Years of William Gregg and Graniteville," 156; Randolph W. Kirkland, *Broken Fortunes: South Carolina Soldiers, Sailors, and Citizens Who Died in the War for Southern Independence, 1861-1865* (Columbia: South Carolina Historical Society, 1997), 139.

year, he was promoted to the rank of captain. In June 1864, James was wounded at the Battle of Trevilian Station, but survived. He remained in the Edgefield Rangers until the end of the war.²

Like his two brothers, William Gregg's eldest son, William, volunteered to serve. In the spring of 1861, he enlisted in Company K of the Nineteenth South Carolina Volunteer Infantry Regiment. The following year, he was promoted to the rank of captain. Both William and James Gregg, however, did not deploy to the front with their respective units immediately. In fact, both Greggs were furloughed and stayed behind in Graniteville working for the company. They remained in Graniteville for at least a year, joining up with their respective companies no earlier than mid-1862.³

The departure of scores of millhands for military service severely disrupted operations at Graniteville. According to historian David Duncan Wallace, the volunteer spirit that swept through Graniteville forced the mill to cease all production for a few days that spring. Full operations, he added, did not return to the Graniteville mill until early 1862. "The departure of the men for the war in the spring of 1861 necessitated the complete stoppage of the mill for a few days," Wallace wrote, "the slow resumption of operations extending even into early 1862." As early as the spring of 1861, therefore, the war was causing serious problems for Gregg and the Graniteville Manufacturing Company. Unfortunately for Gregg and the company, the situation would only worsen with time.⁴

The loss of volunteers to the war significantly tightened the labor situation at not only the Graniteville mill, but also the nearby Vaocluse mill. On May 21, 1862, James J. Gregg wrote

² John Abney Chapman, *History of Edgefield County*, 462; W. Eric Emerson, *Sons of Privilege: The Charleston Light Dragoons in the Civil War* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2005), 63; Wallace, "A Hundred Years of William Gregg and Graniteville," 157.

³ Wallace, "A Hundred Years of William Gregg and Graniteville," 157.

⁴ Ibid.

Secretary of War George Randolph, requesting the release of two Vacluse operatives who were currently serving in volunteer state regiments. The two men, probably skilled laborers, were John Duncan and Lewis Coon, privates in Company I of the Twenty-Fourth South Carolina Volunteer Infantry Regiment and Company K of the Nineteenth South Carolina Volunteer Infantry Regiment, respectively. James informed Secretary Randolph of the recent death of “one of our best and most experienced operatives.” According to James, the employee’s death “seriously affected our operations, stopping one half of our night work.” With “no prospect of filling his place,” James pleaded the Secretary of War to detail the two men. While it is uncertain whether or not James’ appeal worked and if the two men returned to the Vacluse mill, it is clear that the volunteer spirit left both the Graniteville and Vacluse mills in a precarious situation early in the war.⁵

The volunteer spirit also swept through the ranks of Daniel Pratt’s employees. Departures hit the Prattville Manufacturing Company particularly hard. In the spring of 1861, twelve mill workers—eight mechanics, three mill bosses, and one spinner—enlisted in the Prattville Dragoons, a volunteer cavalry company. Later that summer, another three mechanics joined the Autauga Guards, a volunteer infantry company. The following year, Merrill Pratt, Daniel Pratt’s nephew, protégé, and heir, organized Company K of the First Alabama Volunteer Infantry Regiment. In addition to Merrill, the company included fifteen of Pratt’s employees. One of these men was a spinner, another a mill boss, a third an agent, and the remainder were most likely mechanics.⁶

⁵ James J. Gregg to George W. Randolph, May 21, 1862, The Papers of William Gregg and the Graniteville Company, Gregg-Graniteville Archives, University of South Carolina Aiken.

⁶ Evans, *The Conquest of Labor*, 224.

The volunteer spirit also undermined Daniel Pratt's gin business, whisking off to war valuable shop hands and agents. On April 27, 1861, Shadrack Mims Jr. wrote southwest Mississippi-based agent W.S. Thurston, informing him of the depressed state of Pratt's gin factory. "Nearly all of the shop hands have enlisted themselves for the Confederate Army which leaves Mr. Pratt in a bad condition," Mims observed. Consequently, he told Thurston, "business here [is] almost entirely suspended with us." That same day, in a letter to central Louisiana-based agent W.G. Yarbrough, Mims once again disclosed the sad condition of Pratt's gin shop. "Nearly all of Mr. Pratt's hands have joined the army and the consequence is business is nearly suspended," wrote Mims.⁷

Unfortunately for Pratt and his gin business, shop hands were not the only group of employees to catch the war fever in the spring of 1861. Agents also answered the South's call to arms. On May 10, 1861, Shadrack Mims Jr. wrote to an agent headquartered in northeast Louisiana, updating him on recent developments within the marketing firm. "A good many of our agents have quit and gone to the wars," Mims informed him. In a letter dated May 29, 1861 to a customer in Mississippi who purchased three gin stands, Pratt himself revealed that nearly all of the agents who sold his gins had volunteered for service. "Most all of our agents," wrote Pratt, "have gone to the war."⁸

The volunteer spirit of the spring of 1861 swept through not only Pratt's manufacturing enterprises, but also the town of Prattville, rendering the typically bustling central Alabama community a ghost town. In a letter dated April 20, 1861, Shadrack Mims, Jr. reported on recent

⁷ Shadrack Mims, Jr. to W.S. Thurston, April 27, 1861, Pratt & Ticknor Letter Book, Autauga County Heritage Center, Prattville, Alabama; Shadrack Mims, Jr. to W.G. Yarbrough, April 27, 1861, Pratt & Ticknor Letter Book, Autauga County Heritage Center, Prattville, Alabama.

⁸ Shadrack Mims, Jr. to H. Shelton, May 10, 1861, Pratt & Ticknor Letter Book, Autauga County Heritage Center, Prattville, Alabama; Daniel Pratt to David Hunt, May 29, 1861, Pratt & Ticknor Letter Book, Autauga County Heritage Center, Prattville, Alabama.

developments in Prattville to New Orleans-based agent Jacob J. Link. “We are having considerable excitement here about present difficulties,” wrote Mims. He continued, “We hear of nothing but war and see nothing but volunteers marching into service.” Roughly two weeks later, Mims once again commented on the state of affairs in Prattville. “We are having quite a warlike spirit amongst our people at this time,” Mims informed an agent in Cass County, Texas. “Nearly 400 volunteers have left our county and nearly all of them from the lower part,” he wrote. Consequently, Mims observed that “Prattville is as near deserted as any place you ever saw.”⁹

Understanding the risk posed by so many men leaving for military duty to not only his operations, but also the town and the surrounding area, Pratt wrote the Governor of Alabama, Andrew Barry Moore, in early July 1861 in an attempt to prevent the mobilization of a reserve unit, the Prattville Grays. The Alabama manufacturer informed Governor Moore that “this company is made up of our mechanicks [sic], clerks, overseers, and a few planters in the neighborhood.” The recent wave of volunteerism, Pratt asserted, had carried off to war “about one hundred men” from Prattville and the surrounding area. The departure of the Prattville Grays, he warned, would “[take] mostly every man that is left.” According to Pratt, this would have dire consequences for not only his manufacturing operations, but also the town and its surrounding communities. “Should the Prattville Grays leave,” he alerted Moore, “we have very few men left in our village and vicinity.” Pratt continued, “I scarcely know of a Plantation that would have an overseer or owner to attend to it. Not a work shop that would have an overseer or

⁹ Shadrack Mims, Jr. to J.J. Link, April 20, 1861, Pratt & Ticknor Letter Book, Autauga County Heritage Center, Prattville, Alabama; Shadrack Mims, Jr. to W.F. Smith, May 3, 1861, Pratt & Ticknor Letter Book, Autauga County Heritage Center, Prattville, Alabama.

many hands.” Therefore, he reasoned, “would it not be well to have our company until their actual services are necessary[?]”¹⁰

War fever also spread like wildfire through the ranks of Barrington King’s employees and the town of Roswell. In a letter to his son-in-law, Reverend William E. Baker, dated October 12, 1861, King noted the growing impatience among the town’s young men to enlist and go off to war. “All our young folk say they can stand it no longer and must go to defend their country,” he observed. King continued, “We old ones must work the harder to support our men on the battlefield.”¹¹

The volunteer spirit also took hold among King’s own family. In the spring of 1861, Thomas Edward King, Barrington King’s charismatic and well-admired fourth son, turned down a safe and comfortable position as a colonel in the quartermaster’s department to organize the Roswell Guards. A volunteer infantry company composed of both the sons of the town’s elite families and ordinary mill workers, the Roswell Guards drilled in the village square in preparation for service. The company was mustered into service on the final day of May 1861 as Company H of the Seventh Georgia Volunteer Infantry Regiment and made their way to Atlanta. The flag they carried with them—a flag composed of a solid blue silk field with the letters “R” and “G” and eleven white satin stars—was sewn by Thomas’ King’s wife and sister-in-law.¹²

Roughly three weeks later, Captain King and the Roswell Guards were in northern Virginia and saw action in the first major battle of the war. At the First Battle of Bull Run (or First Manassas), the company, along with the rest of the Seventh Georgia and the Seventeenth

¹⁰ Daniel Pratt to Governor A.B. Moore, July 10, 1861, Malcolm McMillan Collection, Special Collections, Auburn University, Auburn, Alabama; Evans, *The Conquest of Labor*, 225.

¹¹ Barrington King to Reverend W.E. Baker, October 12, 1861, Barrington King Papers, Roswell Historical Society, Roswell, Georgia.

¹² Mary Deborah Petite, *The Women Will Howl: The Union Army Capture of Roswell and New Manchester, Georgia* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co., 2008), 36-37.

Virginia, was tasked with neutralizing a ten-piece Union artillery battery. While on the frontlines commanding his men, Captain King was struck just above the ankle by a round ball. The lead projectile shattered his ankle bone, forcing his men to carry him to the rear for immediate medical attention. Thomas King was not the only member of the family to be wounded in the engagement. His younger brother, Joseph Henry King, a private in the Eighth Georgia Volunteer Infantry Regiment, suffered a bullet wound to the hip. Both of the Kings were sent to a soldiers' hospital in Richmond for treatment. Fortunately for themselves and their families, both men survived their injuries. Joseph Henry King, however, remained permanently disabled.¹³

Not yet fully recovered from his wound, Thomas Edward King returned to Roswell sometime before mid-February 1862. Upon arriving home, he received a hero's welcome. Enjoying increased popularity among Roswell's residents, King decided to capitalize on it by running for mayor. After winning election to that office, King worked tirelessly for the people of Roswell and the Confederate cause. An educated man, he assisted millhands' widows with their Confederate pension applications by acting as their power of attorney and providing them with references. Cognizant of the food shortage that plagued northern Georgia at the time, Roswell's mayor wrote to Confederate President Jefferson Davis, beseeching him to prohibit the distillation of liquor, which deprived soldiers and civilians of precious corn and other grains. While its unknown if King's plea worked, a few weeks later Georgia Governor Joseph Brown issued an edict that outlawed the distillation of intoxicating liquors.¹⁴

While his political ascent was meteoric, Thomas' recovery from his battle wound was frustratingly slow. Still unable to walk on his own by May 1862, King's commission with the

¹³ Ibid., 37-39; Rebecca Nash Paden and Joe McTyre, *Historic Roswell Georgia* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2001), 71.

¹⁴ Petite, *The Women Will Howl*, 39.

Roswell Guards expired. Despite his grueling recovery, he still contributed to the war effort. In early summer of 1863, with federal troops inching closer to the state, Governor Brown organized the Georgia State Guard. To fill its ranks, the unit drew able-bodied men from previously exempted groups, such as factory managers and millhands. The Georgia State Guard, however, was only to be called up by in emergency situations and to remain active until military threats to the state had passed. Thomas King, eager to contribute to the cause, organized the Roswell Battalion in early June.¹⁵

Thomas King, however, would not remain on the sidelines for long. In September 1863, despite his father's wishes and his inability to mount a horse without assistance, King left Roswell and rode north to join General Braxton Bragg's Army of Tennessee at Chickamauga. He eventually found work on the staff of Brigadier General Preston Smith, serving as an acting aide-de-camp. Following a successful late-evening Confederate offensive on the second day of the battle, Smith and King rode to the front. Enveloped in darkness, the two unknowingly stumbled upon Union troops. Before they could escape, the federal soldiers cut them down from their horses with a shower of lead. Mortally wounded, Thomas King clung to life long enough to pass along his personal effects to an officer at the scene. A cousin of his serving as the chaplain of the First Tennessee Regiment oversaw the preparation and shipment of Thomas' body to Marietta, where James King, Thomas' brother, escorted it back to Roswell. On September 22, the King family buried him in the Roswell Presbyterian Church cemetery.¹⁶

Unfortunately for Barrington King, Thomas would not be his only son to die in battle. In September 1861, Barrington King's fifth son, Barrington Simeral King, enrolled in the cavalry of Cobb's Legion. In 1862, Barrington Simeral was tasked with raising a new cavalry unit. Known

¹⁵ Ibid., 46.

¹⁶ Ibid., 39, 46-47.

as the Roswell Troopers, the unit served as Company E of the cavalry division of Cobb's Legion. In early March 1865, King and the Roswell Troopers were involved in fighting near Fayetteville, North Carolina. During the engagement, Barrington Simeral was hit by small arms fire. The lead projectile struck him in the thigh, tearing open an artery. He was thirty-one years old. His men buried him on the battlefield, but later the King family had his remains disinterred, brought back to Roswell, and reburied in the Roswell Presbyterian Church cemetery.¹⁷

In addition to the Kings, Roswell's other founding families also sent their sons off to war to fight for their home state and southern independence. Archibald Smith saw both of his sons join the Confederate army. William Seagrove Smith, affectionately known as "Willie" to his family and friends, was his eldest son. In late November 1861, Willie enrolled as a private in Company A of the First Georgia Infantry Regiment, which was part of the Savannah Volunteer Guards. The following year, he was transferred to the Signal Corps in Savannah. After the fall of the city to federal forces in late 1864, Willie retreated with Lieutenant General William Hardee to Raleigh, North Carolina. While there, in May 1865, he contracted a severe case of typhoid fever. After languishing for several weeks, he died on July 7. Archibald Smith's younger son, his namesake, also enlisted, but filled a role behind the lines. He served as quartermaster sergeant for the Battalion of Cadets of the Georgia Military Institute.¹⁸

All four of the Dunwodys' sons served in the war. The eldest son, James, was a Presbyterian minister and served as a chaplain during the conflict. The Dunwodys' second son, John, worked as an infantry disbursing agent. Henry Macon Dunwody served as a captain in the Fifty-First Georgia Volunteer Infantry Regiment. In May 1863, he was promoted to the rank of

¹⁷ Ibid., 40 and 137.

¹⁸ Arthur N. Skinner and James L. Skinner, eds., *The Death of a Confederate: Selections from the Letters of the Archibald Smith Family of Roswell, Georgia, 1864-1956* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1996), ix-x, xiii; Petite, *The Women Will Howl*, 138-139.

major. Less than two months later, Henry was killed at the Wheat Field during the second day of the Battle of Gettysburg. The Dunwodys' youngest son, Charles, was commissioned a first lieutenant in the Roswell Guards in the spring of 1861. Like his captain Thomas Edward King, Charles Dunwody was severely wounded in the fighting at First Manassas and never reunited with his company. The following year, he received a commission as a major and oversaw a training camp in Calhoun, Georgia.¹⁹

Two of James Stephens Bulloch's sons—James Dunwody Bulloch and Irvine Bulloch—fought for the Confederacy. James Dunwody Bulloch spent fifteen years in the United States Navy before the war. During the conflict, he played a critical role as a naval agent for the Confederacy. Stationed in Europe, James Dunwody Bulloch oversaw the purchase, construction, and arming of ships for the Confederate navy. He was responsible for buying the *Alabama*, which would become the Confederacy's most productive commerce raider during the conflict. James Dunwody Bulloch's stepbrother, Irvine Bulloch, served the Confederacy as a midshipman and was on the *Alabama* when it was sunk by the *Kearsage* off the northwest coast of France in 1864. After being rescued by a civilian vessel, Irvine was transferred to the *CSS Shenandoah*. After the war, both Bullochs decided to remain in Great Britain.²⁰

All but one of Reverend Nathaniel Pratt's son served the Confederacy in some capacity during the war. Prior to the war, Dr. Nathaniel Alpheus Pratt, Reverend Pratt's namesake, was a professor of chemistry and geology at Oglethorpe University near Milledgeville. When the war commenced, he organized a company known as the Jordan Grays and assumed the rank of captain. Before the unit was called up, however, the Confederate government, "recognizing Dr.

¹⁹ Petite, *The Women Will Howl*, 138; Joseph Gaston Baillie Bulloch, *A History and Genealogy of the Habersham Family* (Columbia, S.C.: The R.L. Bryan Company, 1901), 159.

²⁰ Petite, *The Women Will Howl*, 139.

Pratt's unusual scientific ability," selected him to fill the position of assistant chief of the Confederate States Niter and Mining Bureau with the rank of lieutenant colonel. Two of Reverend Pratt's other sons, Bayard Hand Pratt and Horace Pratt, served in the Georgia State Troops. Another son, Henry Barrington Pratt, served as a chaplain. Another son, Charles Jones Pratt, was assigned drill master at a training camp in Macon. The only one of Reverend Pratt's son not to serve during the war was William, who was only twelve years old when the conflict broke out.²¹

For the King family and the other founding families of Roswell, and as for William Gregg and Daniel Pratt, the war was just as much a rich man's fight as it was a poor man's fight. During the conflict, Barrington King sent six of his sons to fight for Georgia and the Confederacy. Two returned to Roswell in coffins. Three of William Gregg's sons volunteered for service, one of whom made the ultimate sacrifice. While he and his wife never had children, Daniel Pratt reluctantly watched as his nephew, protégé, and heir, Merrill Pratt, organized a volunteer infantry company and went off to war. The wartime experiences of the Gregg, Pratt, and King families, therefore, provide evidence that runs counter to the popular belief of the Civil War as a rich man's war, but a poor man's fight. On the contrary, as their stories underscore, southerners from all socio-economic backgrounds sacrificed for the cause of southern independence.

The secession crisis and the subsequent advent of war not only generated a volunteer spirit that whisked away valuable workers, but also inaugurated a relatively short period of economic distress and uncertainty for these manufacturers and their mills. War with the United States meant that southern manufacturers and their factories were cut off from their northern

²¹ Ibid., 140; "Dr. N.A. Pratt, Scientist and Builder," *Commercial Fertilizer and Plant Food Industry*, November 1920, 55; U.S. Census, Georgia, 1860 Population Schedule, Cobb County, Roswell, Georgia.

markets, forcing them to look elsewhere for customers. “At the commencement of the war,” reflected William Gregg to a meeting of stockholders in April 1867, “the demand for our goods was not equal to their production.” In response, the president of the Graniteville Manufacturing Company “paid a visit to Nashville, Memphis and New Orleans, and also Richmond, Virginia,” where he “took large cash orders and made many valuable customers, so that we [the company] had from that time forth, orders in advance for all we could make, deliverable at our door.”²²

The commencement of the war also dealt a crushing blow to Daniel Pratt’s gin business. Not only did the volunteer spirit strip him of valuable shop hands and agents, but the Union blockade of southern ports along the Gulf of Mexico and early military campaigns in western states cut him off from his customers and made conducting business nearly impossible. Moreover, Pratt relied on steel imported from Great Britain and screws from Rhode Island to build his gins. “Much to Pratt’s chagrin,” wrote Pratt’s biographer Curtis Evans, “he often found himself forced to rely on northern manufacturers for materials and machinery.” Consequently, Pratt’s gin business ground to a halt during the war.²³

Likewise, secession and the onset of war spelled trouble for the Roswell Manufacturing Company and its employees. With commercial connections between the United States and the Confederacy severed, the company was unable to ship its goods to its clients in major northern cities. To make matters worse, goods already in the North sat unsold. Consequently, yarn began to pile up in Roswell and elsewhere. “We have a large stock n. 20 yarn in Philadelphia and here, cannot sell until we have peace,” Barrington King informed his son-in-law from Roswell in early May 1861. While the company experienced strong cloth sales that spring, sluggish yarn sales

²² Report of the President of the Graniteville Manufacturing Company 1867, The Papers of William Gregg and the Graniteville Company, Gregg-Graniteville Archives, University of South Carolina Aiken.

²³ Evans, *The Conquest of Labor*, 27, 200, and 223.

dealt it a serious blow. “We are running the looms full time on 7/8 & 4/4 shirting and made 4,500 yards per day, good demand this spring for all our cloth, but have to pile up the yarn, only running ½ time on yarn merely to feed our hands,” King continued. The company’s troubles forced agent George H. Camp to search for new buyers in Alabama and Mississippi and dismiss thirty millhands the previous month. According to King, the company also “advise[d] some [workers] to move off until our troubles are over, but they prefer standing their chance of support at this place with what work they can get.” The welfare of his employees and their families weighed heavily on King, who was determined to ride out the difficult times. “We have about 750 mouths to provide for—told them we expect to keep moving and exert every nerve to prevent starvation. They all require looking after, and must be satisfied with bread & water,” he wrote.²⁴

Uncertain and stressful economic times spurred manufacturers across the South to come together, discuss the problems that plagued them, and debate possible solutions. Just over a week after South Carolina seceded from the Union, a small group of Georgia manufacturers and businessmen headed by John J. Gresham, Thaddeus G. Holt, and Enoch Steadman, sent a circular to manufacturers across the state. “The undersigned beg leave to call your attention to the very important subject of introducing Southern Spun Cotton Yarns into the markets of France, Belgium, Switzerland, Germany and Russia,” the opening line read. The circular informed “those interested in this great measure” that a meeting would take place in Atlanta in February. On February 13, 1861, the group calling itself the Direct Trade and Cotton Spinners’ Convention of Georgia assembled in Atlanta’s city hall. After a few rousing speeches, including that of C. G. Baylor, who asserted “that separate political existence, unaccompanied by financial

²⁴ Barrington King to Reverend W.E. Baker, May 4, 1861, Barrington King Papers, Roswell Historical Society, Roswell, Georgia; Petite, *The Women Will Howl*, 41-42.

and commercial independence, was but the shadow without the substance of liberty,” the convention agreed to send out another more general circular throughout the South and to meet again the following month. On March 19, the convention reconvened in Atlanta. Delegates from four southern states and eight manufacturing establishments attended, in addition to several economists and politicians. At the meeting, the delegates renamed the convention the Manufacturing and Direct Trade Association of the Confederate States and elected William Gregg and Daniel Pratt president and vice president of the association, respectively. The delegates then appointed three committees. One committee was charged with writing a constitution for the organization, another was tasked with shipping southern textiles to Germany, and the third was ordered to travel to Montgomery to lobby the Confederate Congress to allow imports of textile manufacturing machinery into the country duty-free for a period of two years.²⁵

The Manufacturing and Direct Trade Association of the Confederate States, which was renamed the Manufacturers’ Association of the Confederate States in 1864, continued to meet for the duration of the war. It functioned as both a forum for southern manufacturers to discuss problems and solutions concerning their industry in wartime and an organization to lobby for economic policy change in Richmond. Possibly due to both his being an unwavering advocate of southern industrialization and the success of his enterprise at Graniteville, Gregg won re-election as president of the association and served in that position for the duration of the war.²⁶

Fortunately for these manufacturers, their companies, and the residents of their mill towns, tough times did not last long. They soon found reliable customers for their goods, their

²⁵ Wendy Hamand Venet, *A Changing Wind: Commerce and Conflict in Civil War Atlanta* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2014), 43; Harold S. Wilson, *Confederate Industry: Manufacturers and Quartermasters in the Civil War* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 2002), 17-18; *Southern Cultivator* 19, no. 3 (March 1861): 85; *Southern Cultivator* 19, no. 4 (April 1861): 136.

²⁶ Ibid.

state governments and the Confederate government. With large government contracts and newfound demand for its products, the Graniteville Manufacturing Company increased the mill's operating hours. In a printed broadside, Gregg informed the workers that company leadership wanted to run the factory an additional two hours each day. For the two extra hours, workers would receive double their hourly wages. To win support for the extended workday, Gregg made an impassioned, patriotic plea to the workers of Graniteville. "The Government is pressing us for more cloth, charitable societies and the people are pressing us...Our fathers, brothers, sons and husbands in the army want clothes, and the quantity made is not sufficient," he informed them. "The patriotic women of our land, rich and poor, are working day and night for our suffering army. The girls of tender age as well as older maidens and matrons are working by candle and torch light for the relief of our soldiers, and shall we at Graniteville hesitate to do our part?", Gregg asked rhetorically. He estimated that "in two hour sat night we can make five thousand yards of cloth, a day's work for six thousand women—enough to make a shirt apiece for a thousand men, shall we shrink from this additional labor? We hope not." Gregg concluded, "the spark of patriotism is kindled in every Southern bosom, even to the little children who cannot go to the war to fight, but will be found willing to toil and suffer for their country's good."

Beginning in August 1861, the Roswell Manufacturing Company received the first of many large government contracts. Throughout the war, the Roswell Manufacturing Company would supply the Confederate government with brown muslin sheeting, candlewick, rope, and tent cloth. By early 1862, the company's situation had undergone a one-hundred-and-eighty-degree turn. In fact, demand for the company's goods was so high that it could not keep up with orders. In early January, King reported to his son-in-law that "the Factory is now doing a fine business." He continued, "We are pressed with work and cannot supply the demand." The

company's success trickled down to the millhands. "We are paying higher wages to our hands," King happily noted. By May, business was still booming for the Roswell Manufacturing Company. "Pushing all we can," King reported to his son-in-law, "but cannot supply the demand." The situation would remain much the same until the summer of 1864.²⁷

While his gin business floundered during the war, Daniel Pratt's cotton textile factory enjoyed unprecedentedly high demand for its products. In addition to the Alabama state government, the cotton mill at Prattville, as for the Roswell Manufacturing company, found a reliable customer in the Confederate government. Throughout the war, Pratt's cotton mill sold the vast majority of its output—primarily osnaburg and sheeting—to both the state and Confederate government.²⁸

The Confederate government compensated southern manufacturers, including Gregg, Pratt, and King, for their goods in a variety of ways. Some manufacturers received Confederate currency. Others received a combination of Confederate currency and Confederate bonds. Late in the war, short on Confederate currency and bonds, regional quartermasters increasingly paid southern manufacturers in prepayment certificates, a form of pseudo currency that "entitled the holder to priority in relief whenever government funds were available," or certificates of indebtedness, "interest-bearing papers that would be exchanged for Confederate bonds whenever the Treasury might issue them." The ways in which the Confederate government compensated southern manufacturers would prove problematic for the latter once the war ended.²⁹

²⁷ Petite, *The Women Will Howl*, 42; Barrington King to Reverend W.E. Baker, January 11, 1862, Barrington King Papers, Roswell Historical Society, Roswell, Georgia; Barrington King to Reverend W.E. Baker, May 1, 1862, Barrington King Papers, Roswell Historical Society, Roswell, Georgia.

²⁸ Evans, *The Conquest of Labor*, 73, 223, and 226.

²⁹ Wilson, *Confederate Industry*, 207, 213, 235-236.

Unfortunately for Gregg, Pratt, and King, the volunteer spirit of early 1861 would not be the only development to jeopardize their workforces during the war. Beginning in early 1862 and continuing throughout the conflict, Confederate conscription threatened to do the same. In early 1861, sons of the South enthusiastically answered the call to arms. The deluge of volunteers was so immense, in fact, that the Confederate government was forced to turn away tens of thousands of men because of its inability to adequately arm them. By early 1862, however, this initial wave of enthusiasm had dissipated almost entirely. Moreover, twelve-month enlistments were due to expire in the spring and most of these volunteers showed no desire to re-enlist despite the Confederate Congress' attempt to persuade them with various incentives. Adding to the gravity of the moment for the Confederacy were recent military setbacks at Shiloh and Forts Henry and Donelson in Tennessee, the impending federal assault and capture of New Orleans, and the commencement of Union General George McClellan's Peninsula Campaign, which sought to eventually seize Richmond.³⁰

At the end of March 1862, President Davis wrote to the Confederate Congress, imploring its members to act to ameliorate the critical manpower situation. In his letter, Davis reasoned that "in a great war like that in which we are now engaged all persons of intermediate age not legally exempt for good cause should pay their debt of military service to the country, that the burdens should not fall exclusively on the most ardent and patriotic." To this end, he advised Congress to draft and pass legislation that declared all white males residing in the Confederacy between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five to be eligible for military service. The Confederate Congress obliged. In just under three weeks, the Confederate Congress easily passed the first national conscription law in American history. Along with empowering Davis to conscript white male

³⁰ William L. Shaw, "The Confederate Conscription and Exemption Acts," *The American Journal of Legal History* 6, no. 4 (October 1962): 371-373.

residents of the Confederacy between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five for military service, the statute allowed for the hiring of substitutes and required “those already serving...to remain for three years dating from their initial enlistment.”³¹

The April 16, 1862 conscription law, however, did not address the topic of exemptions. It was up to subsequent legislation to do that. On April 21, less than a week after passage of the conscription act, the Confederate Congress approved “an act to exempt certain persons from enrollment for service in the armies of the Confederate States.” The new law exempted from military service southern men employed in professions deemed vital to the war effort and law and order on the home front. These included political officeholders, civil servants, ministers, educators, telegraph operators, printers, railroad conductors, apothecaries, miners, and “superintendents and operatives in wool and cotton factories.” To obtain an exemption, individuals employed in these professions were required to write Secretary of War George W. Randolph and Quartermaster General Abraham C. Myers in Richmond.³²

With his workforce already depleted by the volunteer spirit of the previous spring and now with conscription threatening to exacerbate the grave situation, Gregg acted to prevent the conscription of his workers and by extension keep the Graniteville factory up and running. On May 7, he wrote to Secretary of War George Randolph. With his letter, Gregg enclosed “a list of names which are indispensable to the operation of the Graniteville Factory.” To add weight to his appeal for the exemptions, Gregg asked Robert Woodward Barnwell, a wealthy planter, educator, and Confederate senator from South Carolina, to endorse the letter. Barnwell obliged.

³¹ Ibid., 373-374; William J. Cooper, *Jefferson Davis, American* (New York: Vintage Books, 2000), 413-414.

³² *Public Laws of the Confederate States of America*, First Congress, First Session, Chapter LXXIV, 51-52; Shaw, “The Confederate Conscription and Exemption Acts,” 379; Wilson, *Confederate Industry*, 44.

That same day, Gregg son, James, wrote a similar letter to Randolph for the Vaucluse factory. Like that of his father, James Gregg's letter also received the endorsement of Senator Barnwell.³³

Gregg received a reply from Richmond relatively quickly. Randolph's response, however, was curt and certainly not what Gregg had hoped for. "The Secretary of War," Randolph informed the South Carolina industrialist, "is authorized to exempt only persons employed in cotton and woolen factories." He continued, "Your letter does not state whether your factory belongs to either of these classes." After receiving Randolph's letter, Gregg must have been extremely frustrated over not only the small, yet critical omission on his part, but also the fact that his already-depleted workforce at Graniteville remained vulnerable to the conscription law for the time being.³⁴

Gregg wasted precious little time before putting pen to paper and responding to Randolph. Less than a week after receiving Randolph's reply, Gregg wrote back to the Secretary of War in Richmond. "The Graniteville factory is a cotton mill," he informed Randolph, "one of the largest in the Confederacy—working on shirting, sheeting, [and] drills." Gregg's mention of the Graniteville mill as being "one of the largest in the Confederacy" was meant to not only add weight to his appeal for exemptions for a group of his operatives he deemed indispensable, but also to possibly take a jab at the Secretary of War for his ignorance of manufacturing in the region. Regardless, Gregg hoped that this letter would finally secure the vital exemptions he and the company desperately sought.³⁵

³³ William Gregg to George W. Randolph, May 7, 1862, The Papers of William Gregg and the Graniteville Company, Gregg-Graniteville Archives, University of South Carolina Aiken; James J. Gregg to George W. Randolph, May 7, 1862, The Papers of William Gregg and the Graniteville Company, Gregg-Graniteville Archives, University of South Carolina Aiken.

³⁴ George W. Randolph to William Gregg, May 12, 1862, The Papers of William Gregg and the Graniteville Company, Gregg-Graniteville Archives, University of South Carolina Aiken.

³⁵ William Gregg to George W. Randolph, May 19, 1862, The Papers of William Gregg and the Graniteville Company, Gregg-Graniteville Archives, University of South Carolina Aiken.

He was wrong. In early June, James Gregg wrote to Randolph again on behalf of the Vacluse factory. “We wrote you on the 7th & 21st of May concerning the exemption of operatives in our employ,” he informed the Secretary of War. He continued, “presuming you did not get our letter we send you a list of operatives necessary to the carrying on of our work.” On the bottom of the letter, James scribbled a post script, “The Prest. of the Graniteville Manfg. Co. has not heard from you.” By early June, therefore, Gregg still had not received confirmation from Randolph concerning exemptions for Graniteville workers. This delay must have not only frustrated and worried Gregg, but also undermined his confidence in the Confederate government.³⁶

In mid-June, Gregg and his son James finally heard back from Richmond. Rather than receiving a communication from Randolph himself, they received a letter from the Assistant Secretary of War Albert Taylor Bledsoe. The dispatch from Bledsoe, however, much like the one from Randolph the previous month, did nothing to assuage their anxiety and frustration. On the contrary, it probably heightened both considerably. Responding to Bledsoe on June 17, James Gregg revealed that the Assistant Secretary of War’s letter failed to clarify “whether they [the indispensable workers] will be exempted or not.” Instead, Bledsoe “sent us the very order which prompted our first letter to you.” In closing, James beseeched Bledsoe and the War Department to “please give us and the Graniteville Mfg. Co. some definite answer as to whether the men whose names we sent on will be exempted.”³⁷

Nearly two weeks passed, yet William and James Gregg still did not receive a definitive ruling from Richmond on exemptions for their essential workers. This time, the president of the

³⁶ James J. Gregg to George W. Randolph, June 5, 1862, The Papers of William Gregg and the Graniteville Company, Gregg-Graniteville Archives, University of South Carolina Aiken.

³⁷ James J. Gregg, to Colonel A.T. Bledsoe, June 17, 1862, The Papers of William Gregg and the Graniteville Company, Gregg-Graniteville Archives, University of South Carolina Aiken.

Graniteville Manufacturing Company took it upon himself to write Randolph. In his letter, Gregg underscored the importance of securing exemptions for some of his employees. He also made the Secretary of War aware that time was running out; soon these men would be required to report for duty. “The time [illegible] calling out our conscripts is almost at hand,” Gregg informed Randolph, “and we are waiting with much anxiety for an answer to our petition [illegible] for exemptions.” He continued, “It is a sweeping call, & if not [illegible] in time, our factories will be entirely stopped.” Gregg concluded his letter by reiterating his two main points. “Our men are ordered into service on the 2nd of July,” he wrote, “& have no authority from the war department to return.” He continued, “We have furnished a list of those who are absolutely necessary to carry on our works and we most respectfully request an early answer with such authority as will enable us to retain our men & keep our two cotton mills in full blast.”³⁸

The persistence and patience of William Gregg and his son James paid off. The Graniteville and Vaucluse mills apparently received exemptions for their vital operatives between the ages of eighteen and thirty-five years of age. William Gregg Jr., William Gregg’s eldest son, who at the time served as the superintendent of both mills, revealed as much in a letter to General P.G.T. Beauregard dated November 28, 1862. “All our operatives under the conscript law from 18 to 35,” he informed the Confederate commander, “have been exempted by Colonel Preston.” Despite finally securing exemptions for their indispensable workers, William and James Gregg undoubtedly experienced a great deal of anxiety and frustration during the

³⁸ William Gregg to George W. Randolph, June 29, 1862, The Papers of William Gregg and the Graniteville Company, Gregg-Graniteville Archives, University of South Carolina Aiken.

months-long ordeal. Moreover, the episode must have undermined their confidence in the fledgling Confederate government and its ability to effectively oversee the war effort.³⁹

Unfortunately for Gregg and the Graniteville Manufacturing Company, the problem of conscription did not go away. Rather, it remained a constant threat to his workforce throughout the war. On September 27, 1862, in the wake of the Battle of Antietam, the bloodiest day of the conflict, the Confederate Congress passed legislation that modified the existing conscription law. Now, in addition to men eighteen to thirty-five years of age, men between the ages of thirty-five and forty-five were also eligible for military service. In early November, Colonel Thomas G. Bacon, commander of the Fifth Regiment State Reserves, called up men from the Graniteville and Vacluse mills for duty. In response, Gregg reached out to Colonel Bacon and pleaded for their release. Bacon furloughed the men until the first of December, allowing time for Gregg and the company to secure exemptions. Gregg then instructed his eldest son, William Jr., to write General Beauregard, who was in charge of all Confederate forces in South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida, pleading for exemptions. Emphasizing the importance of securing the exemptions, William Jr. wrote, “our factories will have to be closed on Monday and all work stopped unless we get the exemptions, as all our overseers & skilled mechanics are included in the list.” After informing Beauregard of the work done for the Confederate government, he tied the fate of the mills to the fate of the fledgling nation. “It would be a calamity to the country,” William Jr. argued, “to have our large factory stopped now.” Fortunately for the Graniteville Manufacturing

³⁹ William Gregg Jr. to General P.G.T. Beauregard, November 28, 1862, Abel Platt file, *Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers Who Served in Organizations from the State of South Carolina*, Record Group 109, Publication M267, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

Company, the impassioned appeal on the part of William Gregg's eldest son worked. Beauregard detailed the men.⁴⁰

In 1864, conscription once again threatened the Graniteville and Vacluse workforces. On February 17 of that year, the Confederate Congress passed legislation that made men between the ages of forty-five and fifty years old, along with seventeen-year-olds, eligible for military service. In addition, legislation passed in the preceding two months brought an end to the practice of substitution. As they had before, Gregg and his sons moved to protect their vital workers and keep the mills running. In mid-October 1864, William Gregg Jr. wrote to Quartermaster George W. Cunningham, headquartered in Atlanta, and Quartermaster General Alexander R. Lawton. With his letter, he enclosed a list of employees from both the Graniteville and Vacluse mills whose presence was vital to the continued operation of the mills. Once again, the appeal of Gregg's eldest son proved successful. The operatives received exemptions.⁴¹

Daniel Pratt also dealt with the problem of conscription, albeit much more efficiently than did Gregg. In the summer of 1862, with the onus on him and other manufacturers to act to shield their workforces from the conscription law, Pratt moved to secure exemptions for operatives he deemed irreplaceable. He ordered his mill agent William Fay to write Alabama Governor John Gil Shorter, calling on him to secure exemptions for more than twenty of Pratt's workers. Delighted by the relatively low prices that Pratt charged the state for his cloth, Shorter happily penned letters to Secretary Randolph and General Braxton Bragg on Pratt's behalf. With

⁴⁰ Shaw, "The Confederate Conscription and Exemption Acts," 376; William Gregg Jr. to General P.G.T. Beauregard, November 28, 1862, Abel Platt file, *Compiled Service Records of Confederate Soldiers Who Served in Organizations from the State of South Carolina*, Record Group 109, Publication M267, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

⁴¹ Shaw, "The Confederate Conscription and Exemption Acts," 376-377; Wilson, *Confederate Industry*, 100; William Gregg Jr. to G.W. Cunningham, October 14, 1864, The Papers of William Gregg and the Graniteville Company, Gregg-Graniteville Archives, University of South Carolina Aiken.

the help of such a powerful ally in the governor, Pratt secured the vital exemptions, which allowed him to keep his mills running throughout the war.⁴²

While it is unclear from extant sources exactly how Barrington King and the Roswell Manufacturing Company dealt with Confederate conscription, a glimpse at how a nearby mill fared might provide some insight. In early May 1862, James Roswell King wrote to Secretary of War Randolph asking for exemptions for workers he deemed irreplaceable, mostly skilled operatives. One of Barrington King's sons, James, along with his brother Thomas Edward King, owned the Ivy Woolen Mill, located near the mouth of Vickery Creek a few miles downstream from the cotton mills of the Roswell Manufacturing Company. Founded in the mid-1850s, the woolen mill produced, among other goods, a particular woolen cloth known as "Roswell grey," which was used to make Confederate uniforms. James Roswell King's plea for exemptions in the spring of 1862 proved successful. Secretary of War Randolph granted his request and spared the Ivy Woolen Mill's essential workers from military service. Considering the relative ease with which James Roswell King secured exemptions for his essential employees at the Ivy Woolen Mill, Barrington King more likely than not fared similarly.⁴³

In addition to levies on their workforces and a brief period of economic uncertainty at the beginning of the war, these manufacturers and their companies faced intense criticism from the local population throughout the conflict. During the war, the public often charged industrialists and their factories with profiteering. As early as the first year of the war, the prices of certain items that textile factories needed in order to operate, such as oil and card clothing, began to steadily rise because of the blockade. In addition, the Confederate government forced textile manufacturers to sell their products at prices that were well below market value. These

⁴² Curtis J. Evans, *The Conquest of Labor*, 223, 225-226.

⁴³ Petite, *The Women Will Howl*, 25 and 45; David Evans, *Sherman's Horsemen*, 12.

developments forced textile manufacturers to raise the prices of the products they sold to civilians, which elicited strong, unremitting protest. “As factory prices rose,” historian Harold Wilson wrote, “so did the public outcry.”⁴⁴

In his speech at a meeting of the Manufacturers’ Association of the Confederate States in June 1864, Gregg described the intense public criticism directed at him and the Graniteville company over the past few years. “By the time 4-4 sheetings, drills and osnaburgs had advanced to twelve and thirteen cents,” he declared, “...we had the whole community down on us, berating us through the news papers [sic], at public meetings, and even in the pulpit as a set of heartless extortioners, worse than the Yankee vandals.” As prices rose, however, the situation became even more toxic, so much so that the safety of the mill came into question. “And before our goods had reached twenty-five cents,” Gregg recalled, “the public mind had become so exasperated that many thought our mills were in danger of violent destruction from the mob.”⁴⁵

Likewise, the Roswell Manufacturing Company came under fire for its prices during the war. In mid-September 1862, George H. Camp, the company’s agent, penned a letter to an Atlanta newspaper, declaring the Roswell Manufacturing Company’s desire to donate 1,000 bunches of yarn to poor families residing in counties throughout north Georgia. Later that same month, a letter appeared in a Mobile newspaper from a northern Georgia resident, excoriating the company for its donation, which the author interpreted as an attempt to distract from the real problem. “But this is not what we want,” the unnamed man wrote. “Reduce your prices greatly, Mr. Camp! Otherwise it will be truly said of your donation—‘With one hand he put a penny in the urn of poverty, and with the other took a shilling out.’”⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Wilson, *Confederate Industry*, 48.

⁴⁵ *Edgefield Advertiser*, June 15, 1864.

⁴⁶ Quote found in Petite, *The Women Will Howl*, 44.

Charges of profiteering were not the only reason that these manufacturers and their mills received intense public criticism during the war. Their inability to satisfy the demand of their local populations for cloth and yarn also made them targets for criticism. In an address to the stockholders of the company at the annual meeting in the spring of 1866, Gregg recalled that during the war he and the company came under immense criticism for not being able to supply the demand of the local population for cloth. “During the war,” he explained, “every body [sic] about the office was over worked. Sometimes as many as two hundred letters were received in a day, and I had to answer the Government requisitions and all the beggars that came in person or by letter, I had to answer.” Gregg continued, “Soldier’s aid societies, sewing societies, stocking knitters, soldier’s wives, indeed, every class of applicants had to be answered and conciliated. If we refused to grant their demands, however unreasonable they might be, the pulpit and the press denounced us in unmeasured terms of abuse.”⁴⁷

The Roswell Manufacturing Company also came under fire for not being able to supply the demand of the local population for yarn. Large government contracts may have saved the Roswell Manufacturing Company during the war, but they also gobbled up the vast majority of its output. Little was left to sell to the people of the surrounding area. Consequently, the company was unable to satisfy the demand of the local population for cloth and thread, which not only exacerbated their suffering, but also bred anger and resentment. “We are yet supplying the soldiers’ wives & poor at 24/100 per yard,” King explained to his son-in-law in June 1862, “but cannot supply half the wants.”⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Report of the President of the Graniteville Manufacturing Company 1867, The Papers of William Gregg and the Graniteville Company, Gregg-Graniteville Archives, University of South Carolina Aiken.

⁴⁸ Barrington King to Reverend W.E. Baker, June 19, 1862, Barrington King Papers, Roswell Historical Society, Roswell, Georgia.

The Prattville Manufacturing Company, on the other hand, seemed to have been able to better supply the demand of the local population. Citing an absence of contemporary observations of people descending upon the town in search of cloth, Pratt's biographer, Curtis Evans, argued that "Pratt's mills, in combination with the Autaugaville mill, were better able to supply the needs of the local population, despite government demands." More significantly, if Pratt and his mills were able to adequately supply the demand of the local population, this may help to explain why Prattville did not witness the social unrest that rocked Graniteville and Roswell in the final years of the war.⁴⁹

Long before federal armies threatened their mills and villages, intense public criticism from their own people forced Gregg, Pratt, and King to begin worrying about the security of their mills. In particular, the fear of sabotage weighed heavily on the minds of manufacturers. In north Georgia, fear transformed into reality for the Roswell Manufacturing Company. On the evening of May 14, 1862, the cotton house and picker room of one of the company's mills caught fire. The two structures, along with the adjacent mill, would have burned to the ground had it not been for the operatives, who responded quickly and put out the flames. King estimated that the cost of the damage ranged between ten and fifteen thousand dollars. Suspicion fell upon a male employee who the company hired just eight weeks previously. Despite not working that day due to illness, the man was spotted lurking about the mills around stopping time. He eventually confessed to setting the fire, admitting that two men from Tennessee paid him \$500 to set fire to the mills. The man was arrested, tried, and sent to a jail in nearby Marietta. King claimed that it would take the company six to eight weeks to repair the damage. In the meantime, the picker room at the other mill would be forced to work overtime. Despite this, King admitted that

⁴⁹ Evans, *The Conquest of Labor*, 227.

production would be hampered until the damage was repaired. To prevent any such incident from happening again, the company hired an eight-man guard force to protect the mills at night.⁵⁰

In an effort to deflect criticism and build good will among the local people, southern manufacturers and their firms made generous donations to support the war effort and aid soldiers' wives and the poor. Throughout the war, Gregg and the Graniteville Manufacturing Company donated generously to local ladies' aid societies. Between 1861 and 1865, women all across the Confederacy founded these voluntary organizations to provide relief for soldiers at the front and the families and communities they left behind. Coming mostly from white middle and upper-class backgrounds, members of ladies' aid societies staffed soldiers' hospitals, sewed and knitted socks, blankets, mittens, scarves, and uniforms for needy troops, and solicited monetary donations to either purchase raw materials or buy items that they could not produce on their own. The work of these women and their associations proved vital to the Confederate war effort by providing soldiers with much-needed supplies, which in turn helped to sustain morale among the troops.⁵¹

Three such ladies' aid societies that operated in and round Edgefield District were the Edgefield Village Aid Association, the Southern Sister's Aid Society, and the Lamar Aid Association of Hamburg. The women of these particular aid societies solicited donations and sacrificed their leisure time to make socks, blankets, uniforms, and other necessities for local companies and regiments in need at the front. In November 1862, Gregg personally donated

⁵⁰ Barrington King to Reverend W.E. Baker, May 23, 1862, Barrington King Papers, Roswell Historical Society, Roswell, Georgia; Barrington King to Reverend W.E. Baker, June 19, 1862, Barrington King Papers, Roswell Historical Society, Roswell, Georgia; Petite, *The Women Will Howl*, 44; Wilson, *Confederate Industry*, 198-199.

⁵¹ Karen L. Cox, "Aid Societies," in Lisa Tendrich Frank, ed., *Women in the American Civil War*, vol. 1 (Santa Barbara, C.A.: ABC-CLIO, 2008), 96.

twenty-five dollars to the Southern Sister's Aid Society. The same month, Gregg pledged to the Edgefield Village Aid Association that he would donate half of the total amount of money raised by the organization by the first of December. The president of the Edgefield Village Aid Association, Mrs. Ann Griffin, hoped Gregg's generosity would "prove a great inducement to every one [sic] to give as much as they possibly can." In late March 1863, Gregg and the company donated a large amount of cloth to the same organization. Sometime before April 1863, Gregg donated an impressive five hundred and fifty dollars to the Lamar Aid Association of Hamburg.⁵²

Gregg and the company also financially supported local military units. One such local fighting force was the Edgefield Rangers. At a special meeting on July 15, 1862, the stockholders of the company donated the handsome sum of \$2,500 to equip the Edgefield Rangers. Not only did they provide the funds to properly equip the cavalry company, but they also gave one of its officers a healthy sum of money to dispense to any soldiers in need. At the meeting, the stockholders also provided Lieutenant James J. Gregg with \$500 "for any exigencies of individuals of said Company."⁵³

Daniel Pratt also supported the Confederate war effort with a liberal hand. Throughout the war, he helped to not only outfit a few local military units, but also financially support the families that volunteers left behind. In the spring of 1861, the Alabama manufacturer donated \$500 of his own money to support the families of men who volunteered to serve in the Autauga Rifles and the Prattville Dragoons. Accompanying his initial contribution was a pledge "to turn over ten times more if necessary." At around the same time, Pratt supplied the Prattville Dragoons with dress uniforms "made of black broadcloth, trimmed with gold braid." According

⁵² *Edgefield Advertiser*, November 12, 1862; March 25, 1863; and April 1, 1863.

⁵³ Mitchell, *William Gregg*, 213.

to Susan Frances Hale Tarrant, the daughter of the Prattville Manufacturing Company's superintendent Gardner Hale, "no other company in the State had a uniform so handsome." Later during the war, the father of Prattville donated \$17,000 of his own money to help outfit Autaugian Henry J. Livingston's Eighth Alabama Cavalry Regiment. Livingston, in his eulogy of Pratt at his funeral, recalled that the Alabama manufacturer's "ample means were lavishly offered upon the altar of her sacred cause."⁵⁴

Pratt also supported the Confederate war effort by purchasing war bonds. In the summer of 1861, the Confederate government launched a national bond drive. Doing his duty for both his adopted state and the Confederacy, the Alabama manufacturer bought \$14,000 worth of Confederate bonds. In addition to buying war bonds, Pratt also served the Confederate government by encouraging others to do as he had. The same summer that Pratt purchased \$14,000 worth of war bonds, the Confederate government appointed him a bond agent for Autauga County.⁵⁵

Another major concern for southern manufacturers, their companies, and their towns during the war was impressment. In the first year of the war, the Confederate government attempted to purchase the food and supplies necessary to feed and equip its armies. Confederate officials published the prices it was willing to pay for certain goods and went about attempting to purchase food and supplies from civilians and businessmen. As early as 1862, as the government in Richmond struggled to adequately supply its troops, Confederate armies in the field began impressing food and supplies from local civilians. Confederate officers paid for what they seized, but usually did so with promissory notes or inflated paper currency. To make matter worse for

⁵⁴ Evans, *The Conquest of Labor*, 222; Susan Frances Hale Tarrant and Shadrack Mims, eds., *Hon. Daniel Pratt: A Biography, with Eulogies on his Life and Character* (Richmond: Whittet & Shepperson, Publishers and Printers, 1904), 83 and 112.

⁵⁵ Evans, *The Conquest of Labor*, 222.

civilians, the amount Confederate commanders were willing to pay for the goods seized was often well below the actual market value. Responding to the government's inability to adequately supply its armies in the field and to regulate future seizures of civilian property for military use, the Confederate Congress passed an impressment law in late March 1863. The law allowed Confederate military officials to seize civilians' private property—food, supplies, and livestock—in the name of wartime necessity. It created an entire bureaucratic system for handling impressments, which included a legion of impressment agents who contacted local farmers and businessmen to set fair prices. If the two parties failed to agree, a third-party arbiter made the final decision. Despite this, the Confederate government continued to set prices well below the market value for certain goods, which infuriated southerners and led to hoarding, speculation, and even violence with Confederate impressment officers. Therefore, while impressment provided Confederate armies with necessary food and supplies, it also significantly undermined morale among southern civilians on the home front.

The Confederate policy of impressment irritated William Gregg and left the people of Graniteville vulnerable, particularly late in the war. In early November 1863, a Confederate agent in Augusta named James F. Francis, acting under orders from a Confederate major in Atlanta, seized a large shipment of salt purchased by the Graniteville Manufacturing Company that was en route by rail to the company town. Catching wind of the confiscation, Gregg quickly penned a letter to Secretary of War James Alexander Seddon pleading that the 11,000 pounds of salt be released immediately. In the letter, the South Carolina manufacturer informed Seddon that the salt shipment was meant to help feed the town's approximately nine hundred residents, who were working hard day and night to fill the Confederate government's orders for cloth. Moreover, Gregg argued that Confederate seizures of goods heading for the company town had

grave consequences for the future well-being of the people of Graniteville. Gregg wrote, “This salt was purchased for the special consumption of our people, who will be brought to starvation by this system of seizing produce, for people are becoming so alarmed that they are deterred from bringing us supplies that are indispensable to our carrying out & executing our large Government orders for cloth.”⁵⁶

Less than a year later, Confederate impressment once again complicated Gregg and the company’s ability to feed the people of Graniteville. In mid-June 1864, Gregg wrote to James Henry Hammond expressing his frustration in obtaining corn to feed the residents of Graniteville. The South Carolina textile manufacturer revealed that he was having “so much trouble in procuring corn in small quantities, having to haul it when I do purchase.” The source of the problem, according to Gregg, was the Confederate government and its policy of impressing foodstuffs for its soldiers in the field. “The Government,” Gregg asserted, “is taking the corn up & down the rail roads & when we purchase alot [sic] it is impressed immediately,” forcing him to buy small amounts wherever he can and haul them himself. Fortunately for the president of the Graniteville Manufacturing Company and the people of Gits company town, the Confederate government usually released the impressed shipment, but only after the company made a strong appeal. The corn, wrote Gregg, “has always been released when we demand it to feed our people now working almost entirely for the Government.” Despite these occurrences usually having a happy ending, Confederate impressment was a common annoyance for Gregg and the company.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ William Gregg to James A. Siddons, November 10, 1863, The Papers of William Gregg and the Graniteville Company, Gregg-Graniteville Library, University of South Carolina Aiken.

⁵⁷ William Gregg to James Henry Hammond, June 14, 1864, The Papers of William Gregg and the Graniteville Company, Gregg-Graniteville Library, University of South Carolina Aiken.

In addition to impressment, southern manufacturers dealt with speculation on their goods. In north Georgia, Barrington King and the Roswell Manufacturing Company tried their level best to evade speculators. In early March 1862, King informed his son-in-law that he and the company were “doing all we can to keep clear of speculators.” The strategy centered on two tactics: charging civilians only enough to make sensible profits and limiting the number of goods purchased by any one individual. King reported that the company was “getting from \$1.90 to \$2 for yarn, 19 cents for 7/8 and 21 cents [for] 4/4 goods.” Despite operating “expenses [being] tremendous” and being “offered more by some men,” King and the company reasoned that “those rates [were] high enough.” They were determined to make profits “large enough for reasonable men.” Additionally, King and the company committed to “only selling a few bales to one person” with the goal of “let[ting] no person hold enough to monopolize.”⁵⁸

Unfortunately, the strategy proved ineffective. In late 1863, King lamented that speculation was rampant. Nauseated by the situation, he confessed to his son-in-law that “he no longer derived any satisfaction in doing business.” Moreover, with soaring production costs, King and the company made the decision to scrap the idea of only making reasonable profits and instead charge market prices for their goods, prices that were three to four times higher than those before the war.⁵⁹

Union offensives in the latter half of 1863, following on the heels of monumental victories at Gettysburg and Vicksburg, increased manufacturers’ concern for the safety of their mills. In July 1863, William Gregg reasoned that “if the Yankees reach Augusta they will be apt to make a raid to this place and to burn our factory.” In mid-December of that same year,

⁵⁸ Barrington King to Reverend W.E. Baker, March 6, 1862, Barrington King Papers, Roswell Historical Society, Roswell, Georgia; Barrington King to Reverend W.E. Baker, May 23, 1862, Barrington King Papers, Roswell Historical Society, Roswell, Georgia; Petite, *The Women Will Howl*, 44-45.

⁵⁹ Petite, *The Women Will Howl*, 45.

Barrington King lamented that “the defeat of our army at Chattanooga makes our situation at Roswell more dangerous.” He predicted that “we may look for raids from the enemy this winter.” Later that same month, King forecasted, “should our army fall back to Atlanta, the vandals will destroy our mills.”⁶⁰

Anticipating a visit from federal troops, Gregg appealed to Richmond for one hundred rifles to defend Graniteville. In a letter to Confederate Senator R.W. Barnwell, the President of the Graniteville Manufacturing Company expressed his concerns about the defenseless state of Graniteville. “We have over a hundred men able to bear arms and stand in defense of this property against yankee Raids,” he observed, “but we are unarmed, and could do nothing in the way of defense.” If adequately supplied with the proper firearms, however, he argued, “the men here on the spot could hurl-back a formidable raid.” Justifying his call and giving it some teeth, Gregg linked the factories’ defense with the local and national well-being, asserting that they “have now become public necesites [sic] and their destruction would be a national calamity.”⁶¹

The next day, Senator Barnwell penned a letter to Secretary of War James Siddons, informing him of Gregg’s request. Siddons’ response came less than a week later. It was not what Gregg hoped for. The Secretary of War informed Senator Barnwell, and by extension Gregg, that the request could not be met. Equipment losses during the war necessitated that all arms purchased by or in the possession of the Confederate government be placed in the hands of trained soldiers in the field. Gregg, the Graniteville Manufacturing Company, and the residents of Graniteville were left to fend for themselves.⁶²

⁶⁰ Gregg quote found in Wilson, *Confederate Industry*, 203; Barrington King to Reverend W.E. Baker, December 14, 1863, Barrington King Papers, Roswell Historical Society, Roswell, Georgia; Barrington King to Reverend W.E. Baker, December 31, 1863, Barrington King Papers, Roswell Historical Society, Roswell, Georgia.

⁶¹ William Gregg to R.W. Barnwell, July 10, 1863, The Papers of William Gregg and the Graniteville Company, Gregg-Graniteville Library, University of South Carolina Aiken.

⁶² James A. Siddons to R.W. Barnwell, July 17, 1863, The Papers of William Gregg and the Graniteville Company, Gregg-Graniteville Library, University of South Carolina Aiken.

The concerns of Gregg and King for the safety of their mills were well-founded. Not only were Union armies drawing closer to them, but the Union high command was beginning to embrace a new strategy centered on hard war measures, which sought to undermine, among other things, the South's economic infrastructure. Not surprisingly, textile mills that aided the Confederate war effort were prime targets. Just prior to embarking on the 1864 campaign season, General William Tecumseh Sherman ordered his generals to "burn all the mills, factories, etc. etc., that could be useful to the enemy." Later that same year, General Halleck advised Sherman, "I would destroy every mill and factory within reach which I did not want for my own use."⁶³

In the final months of the war, Union forces crept closer and closer. While federal troops ultimately never disturbed Graniteville and Prattville, Roswell was not so fortunate. In early May 1864, Union Major General William Tecumseh Sherman launched what would become known as the Atlanta Campaign. Part of a wider federal spring offensive that year, Sherman was ordered to embark from Chattanooga and advance his army nearly one hundred and twenty miles through north Georgia to Atlanta. Known at the time as the "Gate City to the South," Atlanta boasted four railroad lines, which connected it to several other important urban centers in the region and consequently made it a vital transportation, supply, and communications hub for the Confederacy. On his way to Atlanta, Sherman was "to move against Johnston's army, to break it up and to get into the interior of the enemy's country as far as you can, inflicting all the damage you can against their War resources." By early July, Sherman was closing in on the Chattahoochee River.⁶⁴

⁶³ Mark Grimsley, *The Hard Hand of War: Union Military Policy Toward Southern Civilians, 1861-1865* (Cambridge University Press, 1995), 2-4 and 142-144; Quotes found in Wilson, *Confederate Industry*, 203.

⁶⁴ Stephen Davis, *A Long and Bloody Task: The Atlanta Campaign from Dalton through Kennesaw*, 9; Venet, *A Changing Wind*, 5.

A few miles upstream on Sherman's left flank was Brigadier General Kenner Garrard and the Second Division Cavalry Corps. Before daybreak on July 5, Sherman ordered Garrard to seize the ford across the Chattahoochee and a covered bridge that spanned the river, both of which were located just south of Roswell, roughly twenty-four miles north of Atlanta. That morning, Garrard broke camp and advanced southeast toward Marietta. Once a few miles outside of the town, Garrard pivoted eastward towards Roswell and stopped at Sope Creek, a tributary of the Chattahoochee a few miles southwest of the town. The Union commander then ordered the Seventeenth Indiana and the Seventh Pennsylvania to advance on Roswell. Garrard directed the former to first destroy the paper mills operating further down Sope Creek, while the latter advanced on Roswell directly. A few miles west of the town, the Seventh Pennsylvania stumbled upon the Fourth Tennessee Cavalry, who along with the Roswell Battalion were the only Confederate forces in the immediate area. The federal cavalry engaged the Confederates and chased them through Roswell and south to the covered bridge over the Chattahoochee. After crossing it, the Confederates covered their retreat by setting fire to the bridge, which they had loaded with straw and wood days before to prevent it from falling into federal hands. Despite losing the bridge, the federal cavalry secured the ford.⁶⁵

With Confederate forces on the other side of the river, Garrard moved to secure the town. He moved his First and Second Brigades toward Roswell. A few miles west of town, Garrard stopped and setup his headquarters along Willeo Creek. While he took the First and Second Brigades, Garrard ordered his Third Brigade to remain behind on the east bank of Sope Creek to cover his rear and right flank. Once settled into his headquarters at Willeo Creek, Garrard wrote a quick note to Sherman, reporting that his men took the ford but were unable to save the

⁶⁵ Petite, *The Women Will Howl*, 76-78.

covered bridge. He also informed his superior officer that he intended to move on the factories and destroy them.⁶⁶

Meanwhile in Roswell, with the arrival of federal troops, prominent residents began to fear for their own safety and the safety of their families and property. That evening, Theophile Roche, a French national and weaver at the Ivy Woolen Mill to whom James King had transferred a large interest in the mill before departing, led a group of concerned Roswell residents to Garrard's headquarters outside of town. After securing a meeting with the federal commander, Roche informed Garrard of his French citizenship and expressed his hope that neutral property rights would be respected. The Union Brigadier General told Roche that he had no order to destroy the mills.⁶⁷

The following morning, Garrard summoned Captain Darius Livermore of the Third Ohio Cavalry to his headquarters. He ordered Livermore to take a squadron from his regiment, another from the Fourth Ohio Cavalry, and a section of the Chicago Board of Trade Battery and move on the town and secure it. Garrard also instructed the captain to contact Roche and secure the French flags he was flying above the Ivy Woolen mill. When Livermore and his men arrived in Roswell, they found it largely abandoned. The town's ruling elite had fled months before and Confederate forces in the area had moved south across the Chattahoochee the previous day. The only people nearby were the hundreds of millhands still hard at work inside the factories along Vickery Creek. Livermore sought out Roche and the latter turned over the French flags under the condition that the woolen mill would remain unharmed.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Ibid., 78.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 78-79.

With the town secure, Garrard, skeptical of Roche's claim of neutrality, rode in with his officers to have a look at the woolen mill himself. To his dismay, he discovered that the mill was in fact supplying cloth for the Confederacy. Garrard immediately ordered all of the Roswell mills destroyed. In the late afternoon, Garrard ordered Captain Livermore and his men to confiscate "all goods suitable for Hospital and Army use" from the woolen mill and the two cotton mills further upstream. Then, after evacuating the workers from the factories, Livermore was to "set them on fire and burn them to the ground." He was, however, to do so with great care. "in burning the factories," instructed Garrard, "you will be very careful to see that none of the houses of the inhabitants are burned, and use all effort to save the property of the factory employees."⁶⁹

Garrard ordered Livermore to begin with the woolen mill. Livermore's men rushed into the mill and demanded that Roche shut down the machinery and lead the operatives out in an orderly manner. Sensing what was about to transpire, Roche stood his ground and refused to abide by the order. In response, Livermore had Roche and the mill hands forcibly removed from the factory. Once the machinery was halted and the operatives had vacated the mill, Livermore's men went floor by floor spiking the machinery and then set the factory ablaze.⁷⁰

With the woolen mill destroyed, Captain Livermore sent a small contingent, composed mostly of men from the Seventh Pennsylvania Cavalry and a section of the Chicago Board of Trade Battery, led by Major J.C. McCoy, Sherman's aide-de-camp, upstream to destroy the cotton mills. After a brief inspection of the factories, McCoy ordered the superintendent Olney Eldridge to stop the machinery and lead the workers out of the mills. With the factories vacant, McCoy's men packed each floor of the buildings with oil-soaked cotton. Beginning with the top

⁶⁹ Ibid., 79.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

floors, they set fire to the cotton tinder. The floors of the mills slowly collapsed on one another in a controlled conflagration until on their scorched stone foundations remained. In addition to the factories, McCoy's men also destroyed the company's storehouses, cotton houses, and president and superintendent's offices. As the factories burned, the mill hands stood in awe on the banks of the creek. Some of them openly wept. Others smiled and "laughed with joy."⁷¹

The federal occupation of Roswell, coupled with the absence of the Kings and the other founding families of the town, ushered in a temporary suspension of law and order. With their place of employment destroyed and little else to do, workers and townspeople, along with some people from the surrounding countryside, took full advantage of the situation and enacted revenge against the town's ruling elite. They ransacked the vacant homes of the founding families, taking anything of value to them. Some even squatted in the mansions. Others symbolically celebrated the temporary toppling of the Roswell elite. According to Evelyn Barrington Simpson, one of Barrington King's great-granddaughters, and Natalie Heath Merrill, whose grandfather was Reverend Nathaniel Alpheus Pratt, "women paraded in the streets dressed in the clothes of Misses Lizzie, Helen, Belle, Anna, or Eva, as the case might be." Lizzie and Helen were the daughters of Archibald and Anne Smith. Belle and Anna were the daughters of Reverend Pratt. Eva was Catherine Evelyn King, one of Barrington King's daughters.⁷²

That evening at his headquarters just outside of town, Garrard wrote a report of the day's activities and forwarded it to Sherman. In it, Garrard not only informed his superior that he had destroyed the cotton and woolen factories at Roswell, but also that all three were running up until

⁷¹ Ibid., 79-80.

⁷² Evelyn Barrington Simpson and Natalie Heath Merrill, "Roswell and Those Who Built It" (1938), 35, Roswell Historical Society, Roswell, Georgia; Arthur N. Skinner and James L. Skinner, eds., *The Death of a Confederate: Selections from the Letters of the Archibald Smith Family of Roswell, Georgia, 1864-1956* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1996), 122n.

their demise. Sherman responded the following day. "I had no idea that the factories at Roswell remained in operation, but supposed the machinery had all been removed," he admitted. "Their utter destruction is right," he declared, "and meets my entire approval." Sherman then instructed Garrard to detain all those associated with the mills and remove them from Roswell. "To make the matter complete," he wrote, "you will arrest the owners and employees and send them, under guard, charged with treason, to Marietta." As for the antics of Theophile Roche, Sherman declared, "I will see as to any man in America hoisting the French flag and then devoting his labor and capital in supplying armies in open hostility to our Government and claiming the benefit of his neutral flag." Sherman, however, gave Garrard the greenlight to punish Roche any way that he saw fit. "Should you, under the impulse of anger, natural at contemplating such perfidy, hang the wretch," Sherman stated, "I approve the act beforehand." Near the end of his letter, Sherman not only reiterated his order to arrest all people associated with the Roswell mills and remove them to Marietta, but also revealed his plans for them after their arrest and forced removal from the town. "I repeat my orders that you arrest all people, male and female, connected with those factories, no matter what the clamor, and let them foot it, under guard, to Marietta, whence I will send them by cars to the North."⁷³

Sherman justified the arrest and deportation of the millhands by blurring the distinction between combatants and non-combatants. In the same order to Garrard, he argued that "useful laborers excused by reason of the skill as manufacturers from conscription, are as much prisoners as if armed." According to Sherman, factory laborers working in mills supplying cloth and other war materiel to the Confederacy were no different than and did as much harm as Confederate troops. In a letter to General J.D. Webster who was stationed in Nashville, where the Roswell

⁷³ Michael D. Hitt, *Charged with Treason: Ordeal of 400 Mill Workers During Military Operations in Roswell, Georgia, 1864-1865* (Library Research Associates, Inc., 1992), 22.

millhands would be moved to after arriving in Marietta, Sherman revealed this thinking. He instructed Webster to “have them sent across the Ohio River and turn them loose to earn a living where they won’t do us any harm.”⁷⁴

Shortly after receiving his orders, Garrard set Sherman’s plan in motion. In the late afternoon of July 7, Garrard sent a staff officer into town to find Roche, Eldredge, and other important men associated with the mills and instruct them to make their way to the town square. Upon their arrival, four federal cavalymen arrested them and brought them to the general’s headquarters just outside of town. The following day, some of Garrard’s men rode to Factory Hill to inform the millhands of their fate. After providing the millhands with a short period of time to gather their belongings, the men in blue placed them under arrest and marched them to the town square. Rather than force the workers to walk the thirteen miles to Marietta, Garrard chose to load them into supply wagons. His decision was influenced more by military considerations than mercy. Garrard reasoned that after unloading their human cargo at Marietta, the wagons could be filled with supplies to be sent to his troops back in Roswell.⁷⁵

Once herded into the town square, the millhands waited under guard to be loaded into the federal supply wagons. Some of the workers and their children, along with Roche and Eldridge, left Roswell for Marietta on the eighth. Contemporary reports from federal troops, however, suggest that not all of the millhands departed that day. Some workers and their children remained in Roswell for a few days before ultimately being sent to Marietta.⁷⁶

As he orchestrated the deportation of the millhands, Garrard moved his entire division into Roswell. The Union cavalry commander made Barrington King’s home, Barrington Hall, his

⁷⁴ Hitt, *Charged with Treason*, 22 and 37.

⁷⁵ Petite, *The Women Will Howl*, 88-89.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 89.

new headquarters. Garrard's men transformed the Roswell Presbyterian Church and Dunwody Hall into makeshift hospitals. Horses, mules, and equipment littered the grounds of Great Oaks, Reverend Pratt's residence. Federal soldiers set up camp in the middle of town, pitching hundreds of white tents in the town square as many factory workers waited under guard to board supply wagons for Marietta.⁷⁷

On July 9, the first wave of federal supply wagons loaded with factory workers and their families from Roswell arrived in Marietta. Upon their arrival, a brigade from the XIV Army Corps, under the command of Colonel Newell Gleason, ushered them off the wagons and marched them to the Georgia Military Institute. There, under guard, they huddled in the academy's vacant classrooms for days awaiting transport north. Additional wagonloads of Roswell workers and their families arrived in Marietta the next day and even more in the following days. As the number of captive mill operatives in town grew, space within the military academy quickly ran out, forcing Colonel Gleason to order his men to quarter some of them in nearby vacant houses. The arrival of between four and five hundred Roswell millhands and their families overwhelmed federal forces and the small town. In the words of one war correspondent, "Marietta, for three days has been overrunning with men, women, and children from Roswell."⁷⁸

After waiting for a few days in Marietta, some of the Roswell millhands and their families began their trip north. As early as July 11, Colonel Gleason's men loaded the first wave of workers into boxcars. Most of the remaining men, women, and children from Roswell would leave Marietta in subsequent days, but some waited in excess of three weeks. Federal trains first carried them to Chattanooga and then to Nashville, in which the first wave arrived in late July.

⁷⁷ Petite, *The Women Will Howl*, 92, 96-97; Nathaniel Alpheus Pratt to Barrington S. King, December 18, 1864, Barrington King Papers, Roswell Historical Society, Roswell, Georgia.

⁷⁸ Petite, *The Women Will Howl*, 114-116.

Before their arrival in Nashville, Sherman wrote his chief-of-staff, General J.D. Webster, informing him of the incoming shipment of Georgia prisoners and instructed him to see that they are sent “across the Ohio River.” By the end of the month, all of the detained Roswell operatives and their families had passed through Nashville. They next arrived in Louisville. While federal commanders orchestrated the shipment of the workers across the Ohio River, the hundreds of Roswell workers and their families crowded into a massive, newly-constructed hospital building at the intersection of Tenth Street and Broadway. By late August, a large proportion of the Roswell captives had left Louisville. Many, however, still remained in Louisville. Federal troops dumped the detained Roswell workers and their families at Evansville, Jeffersonville, and nearby New Albany, leaving them to their own devices and the mercy of the local populations.⁷⁹

Several months after they occupied Roswell and torched its mills, federal forces neared Graniteville. In early February 1865, Sherman commenced his Carolinas Campaign. His goal was to further diminish southern morale by destroying all war materiel in his path while simultaneously marching northward in the hope of pinning Confederate General Robert E. Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia between his force and that of Union General Ulysses S. Grant. On Sherman’s left flank, the Fifth U.S. Cavalry under the command of Major General H.J. Kilpatrick moved westward towards the town of Aiken—just six miles east of Graniteville—in the hope of fooling the Confederates into thinking that Sherman’s target was Augusta. On the morning of February 11, Kilpatrick neared Aiken. Wheeler, having caught wind of Kilpatrick’s plan, positioned a large cavalry force just outside of town, hoping to catch the federals by surprise. Despite warnings by locals and his own scouts that a large Confederate force was lurking in the vicinity, Kilpatrick casually moved into Aiken. Once the Union cavalry reached its

⁷⁹ Ibid., 116, 118, 120-123, 125.

streets, Wheeler sprung his trap. His numerically superior force scored a minor victory against Kilpatrick, stopping his advance and sending him fleeing east. Given the Union cavalry commander's penchant for destroying southern property, Wheeler's victory probably saved Graniteville. The only trouble federal troops caused Gregg and the company was the destruction of the branch of the South Carolina Railroad between Aiken and Blackwell, which forced the company to ship its products forty miles over land to Orangeburg via mule teams.⁸⁰

While federal forces never disturbed Graniteville, the same could not be said for Confederate troops. The day before the battle, stragglers from Confederate Major General Joseph Wheeler's cavalry corps passed through Graniteville. Upon entering the mill town, they began to raid the company's mill and store. Capitalizing on the temporary suspension of law and order, poor whites and slaves from the surrounding area, along with some residents from the company village, joined in on the plundering with the men in grey. The mob combined to steal an estimated thirty-three thousand yards of finished cotton cloth, some torn straight from the looms, and an undetermined amount of other goods. When their arms, pockets, and knapsacks were full, they disappeared into the rolling hills and long-leaf pine forests of the surrounding countryside.⁸¹

In the wake of the mob action, Gregg issued a proclamation, which the *Edgefield Advertiser* published a few weeks later. In it, he called for the immediate return of the stolen merchandise to the company. He warned the perpetrators of future criminal prosecution and called on locals to provide any information that would aid in the thieves' capture. The company

⁸⁰ James M. McPherson, *Battle Cry of Freedom: The Civil War Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 508 and 510; John G. Barrett, *Sherman's March Through the Carolinas* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1956), 56-57; Mitchell, *William Gregg*, 230-231; Janice McDonald and Paul Miles, *Images of America: Aiken* (Charleston: Arcadia Publishing, 2011), 27-30.

⁸¹ *Edgefield Advertiser*, March 1, 1865; D.D. Wallace, "A Hundred Years of William Gregg and Graniteville" (unpublished manuscript, 1944), 174 A, The Papers of William Gregg and the Graniteville Company, Gregg-Graniteville Library, University of South Carolina Aiken.

president went as far as to threaten that he would personally search the homes of suspected perpetrators and “require them to show where the articles in their possession were obtained.” Gregg concluded by illuminating the irony and tragedy of the situation. The company had produced the cloth for donation to local soldiers’ wives and children in need.⁸²

In all, the war was an unmitigated disaster for leading southern manufacturers, their mills, and their communities. Almost as soon as the conflict began, the volunteer spirit carried away scores of their employees. The follow year, conscription threatened to take even more. The war also brought speculators, Confederate impressment officers, and the specter of sabotage. While large government contracts saved their companies from initial economic distress and uncertainty following secession, the Confederate government paid in Confederate currency, bonds, prepayment certificates, and certificates of indebtedness, which were completely worthless after the war. Moreover, these commitments to their states and the Confederacy hindered these manufacturers from being able to supply the demand of their local populations for cloth and thread, which fostered anger and resentment for them among the local people. Finally, in the closing months of the war, federal armies threatened to finish what the war and Confederate government had started. More significantly, workers took advantage of temporary suspensions of law and order and rioted, ransacking the mills, stores, and even the homes of the town’s ruling elite. In the end, the war brought disorder to these industrialists’ communities and left their companies in ruin—either physically, financially, or both—by the spring of 1865. In a few short years, the conflict nearly destroyed everything Gregg, Pratt, and King had worked so hard to build in the preceding decades. In the wake of the war, they were left to pick up the pieces.

⁸² Ibid.

Chapter 5 – We Have Done Much for That Class of People, but They Have No Gratitude

The Civil War left most factories and mill towns throughout the South in ruin—either physically, financially, or both—by the spring of 1865. Industrialists such as William Gregg, Daniel Pratt, and Barrington King were left with the unenviable task of picking up the pieces. In the years immediately following the conflict, as the federal government struggled to politically reincorporate the eleven former Confederate states into the Union, these leading southern manufacturers diligently worked to rebuild their devastated industrial enterprises. In addition, they moved to restore order in their villages. Remarkably, Gregg, Pratt, and King succeeded in doing both relatively quickly. While they were able and willing to revive their manufacturing establishments and restore order in their towns during the postwar years, the same could not be said for the reformist spirit and paternalistic outlook they so strongly embraced before the war. Moreover, while some elements of their social reform programs in their mill towns endured long after the conflict, others faded away during the postwar years.

The Graniteville mill and village emerged from the war in dire straits. While federal troops never paid them an unwelcomed visit during the bloody, four-year-long conflict, both were in literal and figurative shambles by the conclusion of it. To begin, the company was in serious financial trouble. In late May 1865, Gregg assessed the company's financial situation. He calculated that the company had a working capital deficit of \$221,000. Adding insult to financial

injury, Confederate debt to the company was at least \$800,000, a gigantic sum of money that the company would never see.¹

All was not bleak for the company financially in the spring of 1865, however, thanks to the actions taken by its president during the war. Against the wishes of many of the company's stockholders, Gregg invested in one thousand bales of cotton. He then divided the bales up and hid them in districts throughout the state and even across the Savannah River in Augusta. In late May 1865, when President Andrew Johnson ended the federal naval blockade of southern ports, the Graniteville president shipped four hundred bales to Great Britain. Gregg's decision to invest in cotton and hide it during the conflict proved incredibly wise. Sale of the cotton provided the company with a quick injection of capital, which aided it considerably in the rebuilding process.²

This injection of capital was substantial. Gregg's cotton sold for a handsome sum on the British market. During the war, cotton prices rose exponentially as the federal blockade almost entirely shut off supply from the South, precipitating a cotton famine in industrial North West England. By 1864, the price of cotton in Liverpool reached as high as 31 ¼ pence per pound. While the average price of a pound of cotton in Liverpool decreased to about nineteen pence by the end of the conflict, Gregg still received over £12,600—or nearly \$61,000—for his 400 bales.³

In addition to being on generally shaky ground financially, the company's property was in rough shape. At the end of the war, the mill's dams and canal were crumbling. "The dams and canal banks were all out of order, and in a dangerous condition, and required the expenditure of a

¹ *Reports of the President & Treasurer of the Graniteville Manufacturing Company, made to a Called Meeting of the Stockholders, April 18, 1867* (Augusta, G.A.: Constitutionalist Book and Job Printing Office, 1867), 12; Wilson, *Confederate Industry*, 236.

² Wilson, *Confederate Industry*, 240.

³ Harold D. Woodman, *King Cotton and His Retainers: Financing and Marketing the Cotton Crop of the South, 1800-1925* (Washington, D.C.: Beard Books, 1999), 227; James Lawrence Watkins, *King Cotton: A Historical and Statistical Review, 1790-1908* (New York: James L. Watkins & Sons, 1908), 20; Roger L. Ransom and Richard Sutch, *One Kind of Freedom: The Economic Consequences of Emancipation*, 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 190.

large amount of labor,” Gregg recalled at a meeting of stockholders in April 1867. Exacerbating the company’s situation, neglect of regular maintenance during the conflict had caused the creek below the mill to become littered with trash and organic debris, raising its bed and significantly diminishing waterpower to the mill. “By neglect, from 1860 and up to my return [from Great Britain in May 1866],” Gregg reported, “the creek below here had become filled up with fallen trees and trash, and its bed raised, with mud and sand, fully four feet, thus taking from us one-tenth of our power.” The work necessary to rehabilitate the creek bed was arduous and dangerous. “In the month of August the removal of these obstructions was dangerous to health, and required many hundreds of days work and the supervision of an experienced eye,” stated Gregg. Never afraid to get his hands dirty, the Graniteville president did the work himself. “The consequence was that I traversed the bed of the creek, with my water-proof boots, more than a mile down, a half dozen or more times, and finally brought the bed of the creek to where it ought to be.”⁴

The mill and company’s buildings were in an equally dilapidated state following the war. An alarmingly high number of structures required new floors and new roofs. The mill needed a new waterwheel installed, a project Gregg estimated would take five months to complete and would require a complete shutdown of all operations. Most of the mill’s machinery was worn down and needed to be replaced. Gregg and the company planned to completely replace the mill’s machinery in 1861. The war, however, delayed their plans. Exacerbating the situation,

⁴ *Reports of the President & Treasurer of the Graniteville Manufacturing Company, made to a Called Meeting of the Stockholders, April 18, 1867* (Augusta, G.A.: Constitutionalist Book and Job Printing Office, 1867), 8.

replacement parts and the skilled labor necessary to refurbish the mill were in extremely short supply during and immediately following the conflict.⁵

In addition to the physical degradation of the company's property at war's end, Gregg reported that the people of Graniteville were "demoralized and ungovernable." Returning from Europe in the spring of 1866, the Graniteville president discovered to his horror that liquor had infiltrated the village. According to Gregg, he found four stills operating in the immediate vicinity of Graniteville, one less than three-quarters of a mile from the village. Moreover, residents were both selling and consuming liquor in the company town. Gregg also reported that raucous, dangerous behavior was common in the streets of Graniteville. "The firing of pistols and guns and drunken rows were common occurrences in our streets," he lamented. Gregg continued, "fences were being torn down, gates unhinged, and in one instance a house burned." He unsurprisingly was appalled by what he saw stating, "such a state of affairs was entirely incompatible with successfully prosecuting our works."⁶

The restoration of law and order in Graniteville, in fact, was a major concern for Gregg immediately following the war. He expressed such sentiments in a letter to his son, James, written from Manchester in late September 1865. Gregg revealed that during the war the company purchased a large number of rifles to protect the mill and other property of the company. "We purchased during the war 150 fine rifles for the defense of our property against insurrection and raids," wrote the Graniteville president. The majority of the rifles were later confiscated by the United States federal government at the end of the war. "The Government

⁵ Ibid.; Case Files of Applications from Former Confederates for Presidential Pardons ("Amnesty Papers"), 1865-1867, M1003, Roll 45; William Gregg to John C. Whitin, August 19, 1865, The Papers of William Gregg and the Graniteville Company, Gregg-Graniteville Archives, University of South Carolina Aiken.

⁶ *Reports of the President & Treasurer of the Graniteville Manufacturing Company, made to a Called Meeting of the Stockholders, April 18, 1867* (Augusta, G.A.: Constitutionalist Book and Job Printing Office, 1867), 8-9.

took them, leaving us but 40,” he lamented. Quite alarmingly, Gregg asserted that the return of those rifles to the company would be necessary at this particular time. “They will be more needed now than ever,” Gregg declared. To this end, he recommended that they call on the federal government for the return of their arms. “I think that a petition to the President,” he reasoned, “will cause this private property to be restored to us.”⁷

This brief paragraph is revealing for a few reasons. To begin, in light of the raid on the factory and its property by the town’s residents in early 1865, the word “insurrection” can be interpreted as referring to not only a possible slave uprising, but also an uprising of Graniteville’s residents. Gregg’s letter to his son, therefore, demonstrates that Gregg and the company were not only concerned about possible federal raids during the latter stages of the war, but also potential uprisings of nearby slaves, poor whites, and even disgruntled Graniteville residents. Second, Gregg’s assertion that the rifles were “more needed now than ever” in the fall of 1865 indicates an elevated level of concern over not only the possible actions of newly freed African Americans and possible violence between blacks and whites, but also the actions Graniteville’s residents, some of whom had already attacked the company’s property. Gregg desire to bolster the number of firearms in the company’s possession, then, can be seen as part of his desire to restore order to Graniteville in the early postwar years.

By the spring of 1867, morality and order were well on their way to being restored at Graniteville. Gregg and the company destroyed the stills that surrounded the village. They also identified residents who sold liquor and engaged in raucous behavior deemed detrimental to the morality and order of the community. The punishment was the loss of their jobs and eviction from the village. “We have broken up the stills and indicted many for retailing and for riotous

⁷ William Gregg to James J. Gregg, September 27, 1865, The Papers of William Gregg and the Graniteville Company, Gregg-Graniteville Archives, University of South Carolina Aiken.

conduct, and have discharged and are discharging men and women without reference to their skill and value as factory workers,” Gregg informed the company’s stockholders in April 1867. Consequently, he happily reported that “things are rapidly assuming a state of sobriety, quiet and order, so essential to profitable results.”⁸

The above-mentioned quote from Gregg reinforces an argument made earlier in this work. The program of social reform at Graniteville was geared towards profit-making. Gregg and the company formulated and implemented this program of reform to create a reliable, well-disciplined workforce, which they believed would bode well for business. Sobriety, quiet, and order in the company village equaled profits; drunkenness, raucous behavior, and disorder did not. The program of social reform at Graniteville, therefore, was vital to the company’s financial well-being.

As Gregg and the company resorted order and morality in the village, they also moved to upgrade the mill. In early June 1865, Graniteville’s Board of Directors authorized Gregg to purchase new machinery. Armed with \$116,000, the proceeds from the sale of cotton and cloth that the company had on hand at war’s end, Gregg traveled north to Massachusetts where he placed a small order with the firm of John C. Whitin. Shortly thereafter, he sailed for Manchester, England, where he purchased most of the machinery that he would buy on his trip at a public auction of a bankrupt factory. In early May 1866, Gregg returned to South Carolina and Graniteville after being gone for roughly ten months. Returning with him were 680 crates of brand-new machinery.⁹

⁸ *Reports of the President & Treasurer of the Graniteville Manufacturing Company, made to a Called Meeting of the Stockholders, April 18, 1867* (Augusta, G.A.: Constitutionalist Book and Job Printing Office, 1867), 9.

⁹ Wilson, *Confederate Industry*, 267-268.

After returning from his European business trip, Gregg immediately set to work refitting the mill. He hired “an experienced and skillful hydraulic mill-wright” to help install the new waterwheel. Gregg and the company offered him \$4,000 for the year. If the hydraulic millwright completed his work in less time, he received fifteen dollars per day for his services. Shortly after, Gregg also hired another millwright, this time one who had plenty of experience “putting up gearing and shafting.” Both millwrights ended up working for the company for roughly five months. When they left, the mill boasted a new, more powerful turbine wheel and the new, mostly British, looms.¹⁰

Only two weeks prior to embarking on his European business trip, Gregg moved to restore his U.S. citizenship. On June 20, 1865, Gregg and his two sons, William Jr. and James, petitioned U.S. President Andrew Johnson for special pardons. In late May, President Johnson issued his Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction. In it, he offered full pardons to southerners in exchange for taking an oath of future loyalty to the Union, which mandated that they hereafter support and defend the Constitution and the nation and accept the end of slavery. Despite its apparent leniency, the proclamation excluded several groups of southerners. The thirteenth exempted class included “all persons who have voluntarily participated in said rebellion and the estimated value of whose taxable property is over \$20,000.” Southerners who fell within this group, if they desired to regain their citizenship, and thus their political and civil rights as American citizens, needed to write directly to President Johnson for a special, personal pardon. “Special application may be made to the President for pardon by any person belonging to the exempted classes,” the proclamation reads, “and such clemency will be liberally extended as may be consistent with the facts of the case and the peace and dignity of the United States.”

¹⁰ *Reports of the President & Treasurer of the Graniteville Manufacturing Company, made to a Called Meeting of the Stockholders, April 18, 1867* (Augusta, G.A.: Constitutionalist Book and Job Printing Office, 1867), 9-10.

Gregg required a special pardon for owning more than \$200,000 in taxable property and for participating in the state's secession convention in December 1860. His sons required special pardons only for the former.¹¹

The group's application cover letter, written by William Jr., was—as most were—a masterful exercise in historical amnesia. Justifying his father's request for amnesty, William Jr. informed President Johnson that his elderly father “had always been a strong Union man up to the time of the last troubles.” As for his father's vote in favor of secession, William Jr. argued that his father “had to follow with the rest although against his inclinations.” William Jr. must have forgotten that his father helped to fan the flames of sectional strife during the antebellum era and then later publicly declared himself an unwavering secessionist shortly after Lincoln's election victory. Subsequently, Gregg was doing anything but following the herd when he signed the state's secession ordinance. Nevertheless, shortly after submitting it, the group's application was accepted and President Johnson quickly granted a special pardon to all three men on June 28, 1865. Their pardons were three of the roughly 2,700 approved by President Johnson that summer.¹²

The reformist spirit and paternalistic outlook that Gregg embraced so strongly during the prewar years faded considerably during the postwar period. Shortly after the war, Gregg expressed disdain for the people of Graniteville, who he believed had betrayed him by joining in with straggling Confederate soldiers to loot the company mill and store. While in Manchester,

¹¹James D. Richardson, *A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1897*, vol. 6, Andrew Johnson (1902), 310-311; 312; Brenda Wineapple, *The Impeachers: The Trial of Andrew Johnson and the Dream of a Just Nation* (New York: Random House, 2019), 32.

¹² William Gregg, Jr. to Andrew Johnson, June 20, 1865, William Gregg file, *Case Files of Applications from Former Confederates for Presidential Pardons* (“Amnesty Papers”), South Carolina, 1865-1867, Record Group 94, Publication M1003, National Archives, Washington, D.C.; Paul H. Bergeron, ed., *The Papers of Andrew Johnson*, vol. 8, May-August 1865 (Knoxville, The University of Tennessee Press, 1989), 264; Wineapple, *The Impeachers*, 32.

Gregg received numerous letters from his youngest daughter, Clara. In one of her letters from early summer 1866, Clara informed her father of the hardships faced by the people of Graniteville. Writing her back on February 14, 1866, Gregg stated that while he regretted to hear of such tough times in the company town, that the people of Graniteville deserved some punishment. “I don’t take pleasure in hearing of suffering and want at Graniteville,” he wrote, “but think it is time for that people to realize that they had a faithful and watchful friend in me.”¹³

This line from Gregg is quite telling. The biting comment reveals Gregg’s deep bitterness toward the people of Graniteville in the wake of the war. Even though more than a year removed from the riot, Gregg’s feeling of betrayal is still incredibly palpable. More importantly, Gregg’s unsympathetic reaction to distress among the residents of Graniteville in the early years of Reconstruction suggests a wavering sense of paternalism on his part. He offers no suggestions on how to ameliorate the suffering and he expresses no desire to cut his journey short to address it. An idea that he practiced so strongly in the antebellum years seems to be falling out of favor with him following the war.

The sectional crisis and the war also left Gregg with an equal level of contempt for the North and its institutions. Those developments also seemingly invested him with a heightened sense of southern patriotism and pride. In the same letter to his daughter Clara from Birmingham, the elderly industrialist wrote of the joy he and his traveling party had upon hearing the news of Clara giving birth to a baby boy. “We were all rejoiced to hear of the birth of your boy and expect to see him walking about when we get home,” he wrote. After expressing his hope that his new grandson would “carry a Gregg to his name” and comically predicting that he

¹³ William Gregg to Clara Gregg, February 14, 1866, The Papers of William Gregg and the Graniteville Company, Gregg-Graniteville Archives, University of South Carolina Aiken.

would become “a busy little fellow and a saucy chap,” Gregg voiced his opinion regarding the future education of the child. “You must not send him to any Yankee College,” he implored his daughter. “He must be brought up in the faith a true southerner and a Reb every inch of him.”¹⁴

Unfortunately for Gregg, he would not live long enough to see his grandson grow up. In early September 1867, while Gregg was in Columbia on business, disaster struck. One of the mill’s dams, weakened by a lack of proper maintenance during the chaos of the war, gave way to heavy flood waters, the result of an unusually wet late summer in Horse Creek Valley that year. Company officials at Graniteville quickly telegraphed Gregg, who immediately rushed back to Edgefield District. For two days, Gregg, outfitted in rubber waders, labored alongside his workers in waist-deep water to repair the dam. The sixty-seven-year-old manufacturer threw himself so deeply into the task that he often neglected his own well-being by eating almost no food.¹⁵

Gregg’s body eventually gave out from overexertion. “A severe inflammation of the stomach” forced him to his bed at Kalmia. News from the latest stockholders’ meeting did not lift his spirits. On the contrary, it probably further weakened him. Since the end of the war, Gregg twice stressed to the stockholders the importance of raising mercantile capital and beseeched them to concoct some type of plan to do so. Both requests proved unsuccessful. At this latest meeting, the company’s treasurer reported to Gregg that the stockholders had become indifferent on the subject; only two had bothered to attend. In addition, the company was saddled with immense loan debt, just over \$150,000. Bed-ridden, Gregg came to the grim realization that

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Mitchell, *William Gregg*, 254-255.

all he had worked for over the past twenty-two years might be for not. Closing the mill was a real possibility.¹⁶

Gregg, however, would not survive to find out the fate of his company. His health declined rapidly. As word spread of Gregg's failing health, an eerie malaise descended upon Graniteville. Less than a week after falling ill and being forced to his bed at Kalmia, Gregg died on September 13, 1867. The mill bell, which normally rang to signal the start of a new workday or the beginning and end of break periods throughout the workday, instead solemnly chimed to announce the company and town founder's passing. Gregg was laid to rest in the Graniteville Cemetery, which sat atop a hill overlooking the mill and village. All Graniteville residents and mill employees, along with many people from the surrounding area, attended the funeral.¹⁷

In the years following Gregg's death in September 1867, elements of his program of social reform lived on, while others faded away. The centerpiece of Gregg's reformist vision, temperance, continued to be enforced by the company throughout the remainder of the nineteenth century. A copy of the rules and regulations of the Graniteville Manufacturing Company, dated sometime between 1867 and 1876 when Gregg's son James served as superintendent, reveals that the company's ban on liquor continued well after his death. Rule number eleven partially reads, "The drinking of intoxicating liquors in, or about the Mill, will not be allowed." Given that the village lay just across the canal from the mill, the regulation banning liquor covered it as well. Historian David Carlton pointed out that "liquor selling remained

¹⁶ Ibid. Quote from p. 255.

¹⁷ Ibid., 255; *Aiken Press*, September 19, 1867, reprinted in *Charleston Mercury*, September 23, 1867.

forbidden at Graniteville during the Hickman-Rennie regime.” Hamilton H. Hickman succeeded Gregg as the company’s president, serving in that position until his retirement in 1899.¹⁸

Unlike temperance, compulsory education in Graniteville ended shortly after Gregg’s death. In late 1869, Graniteville residents petitioned the company’s board of directors to eliminate the town’s decades-old compulsory education law. After some deliberation, Hickman and the board of directors granted their request. Consequently, Graniteville residents not only “won the right to educate their children as they saw fit rather than be compelled to send them to the company school,” but also gained greater control over their lives and the lives of their children.¹⁹

The Graniteville Academy continued to operate after the repeal of the compulsory education law. Furthermore, the company continued to financially support it. In 1880, the *News and Courier* surveyed the Graniteville mill and village. It reported that the academy had an average attendance of 118 students. To support the school financially, each year the company contributed \$1,000.²⁰

Labor protest at Graniteville near the end of the Civil War may have laid the groundwork for collective action among the mill’s workers in later years. In 1875, workers at Graniteville went on strike after the company announced a wage cut. The earliest of its kind in the region’s textile industry, the strike lasted about a month, during which time workers sabotaged the factory

¹⁸ “Rules and Regulations of the Graniteville Manufacturing Company,” The Papers of William Gregg and the Graniteville Company, Gregg-Graniteville Archives, University of South Carolina Aiken; David L. Carlton, *Mill and Town in South Carolina, 1880-1920* (Baton Rouge: LSU Press, 1982), 108.

¹⁹ Ward, “Industrial Workers in the Mid-Nineteenth Century South,” 334 and 334n12; Goff, “Something Pretty [sic] out of Very Little,” 64.

²⁰ The South Carolina Department of Agriculture, *The Cotton Mills of South Carolina: Their Names, Location, Capacity and History* [From the *News and Courier* of Charleston, S.C.] (Charleston, S.C.: The News and Courier Book Presses, 1880), 4.

and even shot the superintendent. In the end, the workers lost and the wage cut remained.

Striking workers, however, were not disciplined by the company.²¹

As with Graniteville, Prattville was fortunate enough to be spared a visit from federal forces during the war. Consequently, Daniel Pratt's gin business and the Prattville Manufacturing Company emerged from the conflict physically intact. The same, however, could not be said for them from a financial standpoint. Cotton gins sales for Daniel Pratt and Company ground to a halt during the war. Subsequently, throughout the conflict, the cotton gin manufacturing company "necessarily remained in a state of absolute inactivity." In the early 1870s, Pratt's legal team calculated to the best of their ability that the war cost the firm almost \$405,000 in sales.²²

The Prattville Manufacturing Company did not fare much better. In spring 1865 at a meeting of the company's board of directors, of which Pratt occupied the office of president, agent Shadrack Mims informed those assembled that while the company was fortunate enough to have 700 bales of cotton on hand, the mill's machinery was "completely run down." Running the mill in its current state would only result in heavy financial losses for the stockholders. Mims offered the directors an ultimatum. Either they could close the mill or they could approve an effort to refit the mill with new, state-of-the-art machinery. The stockholders opted for the latter. According to Mims, the determining factor for the stockholders was concern for the well-being of the millhands. "The interest of the operatives turned the scale," observed Mims. Paternalism

²¹ William J. Cooper, Jr., Thomas E. Terrill, and Christopher Childers, *The American South: A History*, 5th ed., vol. 2, *From Reconstruction to the Present* (Lanham, M.D.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), 481; Tom E. Terrill, "Murder in Graniteville," 209, found in Orville Vernon Burton and Robert McMath, eds., *Toward a New South?: Studies in Post-Civil War Southern Communities* (Charlottesville, V.A.: The University of Virginia Press, 1982).

²² Evans, *The Conquest of Labor*, 236.

and compassion for the millhands, apparently, was not dead for Pratt and the other esteemed resident of the town who served on the company's board of directors.²³

Pratt moved quickly to restart and rejuvenate his manufacturing firms. Just a year after the end of the war, Pratt submitted a large ad for his gin factory for publication in *De Bow's Review*. In the advertisement, the Alabama industrialist declared that his operation was up and running and prepared to take orders immediately. In addition, Pratt informed readers of his new, enlarged network of gin agencies. Four were located in his firm's home state of Alabama, four in neighboring Mississippi, and one each in Louisiana, Tennessee, and Texas. Most notably, the remaining five agencies were located in Georgia, a brand-new market for Pratt's gins. The reason for this was the demise of Samuel Griswold's gin making operation in Jones County, Georgia, which federal troops destroyed in late November 1864. Old and in failing health, Griswold decided not to rebuild.²⁴

Pratt's gin company slowly worked to recapture, and then exceed, its antebellum sales levels throughout the late 1860s. In 1866, the same year that Pratt's new advertisement appeared in *De Bow's Review* announcing his recommencement of operations, Daniel Pratt and Company sold approximately 700 cotton gins. In 1870, that number had grown to 897, which was forty more than the total number of gins the company sold in 1860. This steady increase in sales, however, did not equal a steady increase in production. In fact, between 1866 and 1870, the firm manufactured only 700 new gins. Most of the gins sold in the late 1860s were surplus inventory that had accumulated in the antebellum years. While sales were steadily improving and beginning to exceed antebellum levels by 1870, the manufacturing of new gins was only just

²³ Ibid., 244-245.

²⁴ Ibid., 238-239.

reanimating. Nevertheless, Pratt's gin making firm was recovering nicely from its hiatus during the war years by the 1870s.²⁵

As his cotton gin manufacturing firm regained its financial footing in the early postwar years, Pratt moved to rehabilitate the physical condition and business prospects of the Prattville Manufacturing Company. Shortly after the cessation of the war, Pratt and the stockholders sent superintendent Gardner Hale to England to buy new machinery. Hale was successful and the new machinery for the mills began arriving in the summer of 1866. Two years later, in 1868, Pratt personally embarked on a marketing blitz for the company. Traveling to major northern urban centers, the Alabama industrialist promoted the quality of the company's products and the relatively low cost at which they could be manufactured. He also entered into agreements with commission merchants he perceived as the most business savvy to peddle the company's wares in these large, lucrative northern markets.²⁶

Shortly after Pratt's business trip north, orders began to pour in. This exponential spike in demand forced Pratt to expand the company's operations. In 1860, the company possessed 3,285 spindles, 141 employees, and produced 874,102 yards of osnaburg. As a result of this expansion in the early postwar years, the company boasted 5,088 spindles, 167 employees, and produced 1,324,992 yards of not only osnaburg, but also higher quality sheeting and shirting. To provide adequate power for the expanded operations, Pratt increased the height of the dam on Autauga Creek by an additional ten feet. In early 1871, an agent for R.G. Dun & Company, a pioneering commercial credit reporting agency, remarked that both Pratt's gin business and the Prattville Manufacturing Company were "as good as gold dust...as good as ever."²⁷

²⁵ Ibid., 239.

²⁶ Ibid., 243-244.

²⁷ Ibid. Quote from p. 243.

Like Gregg, Daniel Pratt sought to restore his U.S. citizenship shortly after the war. In August 1865, Pratt petitioned President Johnson for a special pardon and took the oath of future loyalty to the Union. By early September, Pratt grew nervous that he still had not received a response from Washington. Hoping to possibly speed up the process and enhance his applications' chances of being accepted, the manufacturer called on former U.S. senator and Autauga County resident Benjamin Fitzpatrick to write a letter of support on his behalf. In his letter to the Reconstruction governor of Alabama Lewis Parsons, Fitzpatrick spoke highly of Pratt, asserting that he should be pardoned because of his politically conservative sentiments and opposition to secession before the war. "You could not recommend a more worthy man [for a pardon]," argued Fitzpatrick, "nor one who was more decided in his opposition to secession." The former U.S. senator continued by declaring that Pratt "is now and ever has been one of the most conservative men in the C[ounty]." It is unknown whether either Fitzpatrick's letter to Governor Parsons or Pratt's trip to Washington in late September 1865 had any effect on his application. Nevertheless, Pratt finally received his long-awaited presidential pardon at the end of September and returned to Prattville in early October.²⁸

In addition to the affairs of his companies and the quest to restore his U.S. citizenship, Pratt was also concerned with maintaining order in Prattville during the early postwar years. Unlike at Graniteville, which witnessed a riot by its townspeople and general lawlessness among its residents during the war, Prattville suffered no such chaos. Rather, Pratt and the newly formed town council sought to keep the peace between whites and African Americans in Prattville immediately following the war. In January 1866, the town council authorized the construction of a brick guardhouse. The next year, fearing that violence would break out over the fall elections to

²⁸ Ibid., 235-236. Quote from p. 236; *Autauga Citizen*, October 5, 1865.

decide whether or not to hold a state constitutional convention, the council imposed two new town ordinances, which outlawed the carrying of concealed weapons and protected residents participating in public meetings. It is difficult to determine whether or not the new measures helped to keep the peace in Prattville. Fortunately, though, the fall election unfolded without any major incidents of violence.²⁹

In mid-April 1873, Pratt became gravely ill. Although the thin, grey-haired manufacturer had suffered from neuralgia and rheumatism for decades, the precise sickness that plagued him in the spring of 1873 is unknown. Later that month, the *Autauga Citizen* published encouraging news. The newspaper happily reported that Pratt had recovered from his ailment. Shortly after, however, Pratt's illness returned with a vengeance. Just after daybreak on May 13, Pratt, the native of New Hampshire who migrated to Alabama forty years earlier and created the largest gin company in the western hemisphere, breathed his last. He was seventy-three years old. According to a local newspaper, following Pratt's death, a palpable sense of mourning descended upon the town and its residents. "Universal sorrow, consequent upon the inevitable conviction of a great public loss, hangs over our town like some dire pall of evil," the periodical observed. Businesses closed for days and black ribbons and cloth draped homes and public buildings. Pratt's remains were buried in the family cemetery, a small fenced plot that overlooked his 1843 neo-classical home.³⁰

Unlike at Graniteville and Prattville, the war left Barrington King's Roswell Manufacturing Company in literal ruins. On July 6, 1864, federal cavalry under the command of

²⁹ Evans, *The Conquest of Labor*, 273.

³⁰ Ibid., 104 and 294; S.F.H. Tarrant and S. Mims, *Hon. Daniel Pratt: A Biography, with Eulogies on His Life and Character* (Whittet & Shepperson, Publishers and Printers: Richmond, 1904), 87-88. Quote from p. 88.

Brigadier General Kenner Garrard entered Roswell. On the evening of the seventh, they set fire to the company's two cotton mills and woolen mill. In addition to the textile factories, Union troops set fire to the company's machine shop, cotton house, and office. Fortunately for the company, federal troops disturbed neither the company store nor the operatives' houses.³¹

Returning to Roswell from Atlanta in mid-July 1865, King was relieved to find his beloved Greek Revival mansion still standing and having suffered little damage. Fortunately, the same was true for the town. "In walking the streets to Brother Pratt's, no one would imagine the place had been occupied by the army," King wrote to his son Ralph in late July 1865. Joined by the company's agent, George H. Camp, King then ventured down to Vickery Creek. Unfortunately, the rumors that he heard while in exile concerning the fate of the mills were true. The occupying Union troops had, in fact, destroyed the mills. All, however, was not lost. King observed that "the foundation of the new [1854] mill [was] good, the corners to third story not impaired...the machine shop, cotton house and office can be repaired by putting on new roofs etc. before winter." Encouraged by what they saw, King and Camp "concluded to go to work and make another start."³²

The return of King and other members of the town's ruling elite, along with the departure of federal troops and the end of hostilities, helped to restore law and order to Roswell. While surveying the situation at his home and along Vickery Creek, King observed the conduct of the townspeople and his employees. In the same letter to his son Ralph in late July 1865, the Georgia

³¹ Meetings of the Stockholders of the Roswell Manufacturing Company, Roswell Manufacturing Company Records, Roswell Historical Society; Petite, *The Women Will Howl*, 79-82.

³² Barrington King to Ralph B. King, July 22, 1865, Barrington King Papers, Roswell Historical Society, Roswell, Georgia.

textile manufacturer noted, to his relief, that things had returned to normal. “Now all quiet,” King observed, “everyone on their best behavior.”³³

While King and other members of Roswell’s ruling elite returned home, the vast majority of the deported millhands never saw Roswell again. Most found work and lived out the remainder of their lives in the North. After his arrest and forced expulsion from Roswell, Thomas Kendley, along with his brother George, found employment in the Indiana Cotton Mill in Perry County, Indiana. He never married and remained in Perry County for the rest of his life. Georgiana Morgan was a widowed nineteen-year-old mother of two when she was arrested and deported by federal forces. She and her children settled in Cannelton, Indiana. Like Thomas and George Kendley, she soon found employment in the Indiana Cotton Mill. Elizabeth and Sarah Smallwood were employed by the company before the war. After deportation, they settled in Jeffersonville, Indiana. Elizabeth found employment at a Clark County woolen mill. Neither of the women ever returned to Roswell. Littlejohn Fretwell was a millhand for the Roswell Manufacturing Company before the war. After his forced removal, Fretwell and two of his children found work in Cannelton at the Indiana Cotton Mill.³⁴

A small number of Roswell millworkers lived in the North for a short time, but later returned to Georgia. Margaret Smith Duffey was one of them. She and her two-year-old daughter were arrested and deported to Indiana. After reuniting with her husband, who served in the Fifty-Sixth Georgia, in Indiana after the war, Margaret gave birth to a son in 1866. By 1868, she and her husband had moved to Forsyth County, Georgia, where Margaret gave birth to another son.³⁵

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Petite, *The Women Will Howl*, 147-148.

³⁵ Ibid., 148.

Lucinda Wood was another Roswell millworker who would later return to Georgia. She, along with her grandmother, mother, and sisters, were arrested and deported to Kentucky. Her grandmother and mother, unfortunately, did not survive the forced journey north. Before finding housing and employment, Lucinda and her sisters were forced to rely on a refugee hospital for survival. In 1866, Lucinda married James Shelly. At around the same time, her sister Molly married a man from Illinois. When Molly and her new husband moved to Illinois, Lucinda and her husband accompanied them. In 1886, Lucinda fell ill. Her doctor advised her to seek a warmer climate or she might not survive another harsh Illinois winter. Taking her doctor's advice, Lucinda and her family moved to northern Georgia, where she would remain the rest of her life.³⁶

A select few managed to return to Roswell after the war. One of them was Olney Eldredge. Before the war, he served as the company's superintendent. Eldredge, along with his three children, were arrested and deported with the hundreds of other workers in July 1864. Federal authorities released him and his children in Nashville. Eldredge then made his way to Louisville, where charitable members of a local Presbyterian Church assisted him and his children in traveling to Cincinnati. While in Cincinnati, Eldredge and his children secured the assistance of the local Refugee Aid Society to return to his native Massachusetts, where he and his family lived for the duration of the war. Shortly after the war, Eldredge moved back to Roswell, where Barrington King hired him to his old position as superintendent.³⁷

Even if the majority of the deported mill workers had returned to Roswell following the war, they likely would not have found their jobs waiting for them. Feeling bitter and betrayed by their actions towards the company and the founders' property during the federal occupation,

³⁶ Ibid., 146.

³⁷ Ibid., 145.

King made it clear that he wanted to start fresh with a mostly new workforce. “Some of the families that were sent north have returned, desirous of coming to Roswell,” King declared in a letter, “but we are determined to have a new sell, with very few exceptions.” The abundance of labor allowed King to enforce such a strict, vengeful policy. “No difficulty about laborers,” observed King, “the returning soldiers anxious to work at 60/100 per day and appear very orderly.”³⁸

Despite the devastating blow dealt the company by federal forces in the summer of 1864, the stockholders, like King and Camp, were determined to resurrect operations. On July 19, 1865, a meeting of the stockholders was called “to ascertain the views of the stockholders upon rebuilding the factories and the financial capacity of the company to do so.” At the meeting, the stockholders expressed their strong desire to rebuild and do so quickly. In one of the resolutions passed during the meeting, the stockholders ordered King “to rebuild as rapidly as possible the New [1854] Factory recently destroyed by fire; to stock it with machinery, and to recommence operations.” The adoption of the resolution, as the meeting minutes read, “evinced a[n] unanimity of feeling upon the point of reconstruction.” Equally as important, the stockholders agreed that reconstruction—albeit of only one of the cotton factories—was financially feasible. “The financial exhibit,” the stockholders concurred, “proved conclusively that unless the company should meet with unexpected reverses their ability to rebuild without delay one of the mills was unquestionable.”³⁹

It was financially feasible for the Roswell Manufacturing Company to reconstruct the 1854 cotton mill and restock it with machinery thanks to the wise decision-making of its

³⁸ Barrington King to Ralph B. King, July 22, 1865, Barrington King Papers, Roswell Historical Society, Roswell, Georgia.

³⁹ Meetings of the Stockholders of the Roswell Manufacturing Company, Roswell Manufacturing Company Records, Roswell Historical Society, Roswell, Georgia.

president during the war. In 1864, fearing a possible federal raid and occupation of the town, King moved 1,400 bales of cotton from Roswell and relocated them to various locations throughout Georgia, including Augusta, Griffin, Macon, Newnan, and Savannah. Before the end of the war, most of the cotton was seized or destroyed. During the evacuation of Augusta, for example, Confederate authorities torched roughly 1,000 bales of the company's cotton rather than have it fall into the enemy's hands. Nearly 400 bales, however, did survive the chaos and destruction of the war. The sale of this cotton would provide the company with the capital necessary to start rebuilding. "Our losses very heavy," King wrote of the company's situation immediately following the war, "but fortunately cotton enough on hand to fill our mill and put into motion, without calling in the stockholders for a dollar."⁴⁰

While he worked to rebuild his manufacturing firm and reestablish order to Roswell, King moved to restore his U.S. citizenship and, with it, his political and civil rights. Back in December 1863, President Lincoln issued his proclamation of amnesty and reconstruction. The proclamation simply required southerners to take an oath of future loyalty to the Union for their rights to be restored. While the proclamation did contain exempted classes, King did not fall into any of them. On April 26, 1865, the president of the Roswell Manufacturing Company, still in exile in Savannah, made his way to the headquarters of the city's provost marshal, lieutenant colonel Robert P. York. There, King signed the future loyalty oath.⁴¹

Lincoln's assassination, however, complicated matters for King. With Johnson's ascension to the presidency came a new proclamation of amnesty and reconstruction on May 29, 1865. King, therefore, found himself having to undergo the amnesty process once again. Like

⁴⁰ Wilson, *Confederate Industry*, 239; Barrington King to Ralph B. King, July 22, 1865, Barrington King Papers, Roswell Historical Society, Roswell, Georgia.

⁴¹ The Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction, December 8, 1863; Barrington King Amnesty Papers, Barrington King Papers, Roswell Historical Society, Roswell, Georgia.

Gregg and Pratt, King, owning in excess of \$20,000 in property, fell into the thirteenth exempt category, thus requiring him to petition for a special pardon, which he did in late August. On October 2, President Johnson officially pardoned the Georgia textile manufacturer.⁴²

Near the end of the war, Barrington King expressed disdain for the people he paternalistically ruled over during the antebellum era. In mid-September 1864, during his exile from Roswell, the president of the Roswell Manufacturing Company and his wife made the long journey north to Staunton, Virginia to visit their daughter and son-in-law. A few days after arriving in Staunton, King wrote Archibald Smith, one of the co-founders of Roswell who, like King himself, was in exile. In the letter, King passed along news of Roswell's fate at the hands of federal troops. King informed Smith that he had received a letter from his sister who along with her husband, Reverend Nathaniel Pratt, stayed behind in town during the occupation. King reported relatively good news. "They were all well, had not been treated rudely by the vandals—the officer commanding protected her house, but all the fencing &c outside demolished—so far no interference with Brother Pratt," he wrote. The same could not be said, however, for the conduct of the townspeople. King informed Smith that residents of Roswell encouraged the Union troops to enter and search the Pratts house. "Our home people," King angrily wrote, "did all they could to make them [the federal troops] search the house, saying that goods &c were hid away." Expressing his anger and feelings of betrayal, King exclaimed, "we have done so much for that class of people, but they have no gratitude & now shew what we have had to manage."⁴³

⁴² Proclamation of Amnesty and Reconstruction, May 29, 1865; Barrington King file, *Case Files of Applications from Former Confederates for Presidential Pardons* ("Amnesty Papers"), Georgia, 1865-1867, Record Group 94, Publication M1003, National Archives, Washington, D.C.

⁴³ Barrington King to Archibald Smith, September 16, 1864, found in Arthur N. Skinner and James L. Skinner, eds., *The Death of a Confederate: Selections from the Letters of the Archibald Smith Family of Roswell, Georgia, 1864-1956* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 1996), 120-121.

King's statement is a direct reference to his reformist vision and the paternalism he practiced during the antebellum period. It also reveals his deep frustration with the townspeople, who he believed, with their antics during the federal occupation, had bit the hand that fed them. From King's perspective, he provided these poor whites, or "that class of people," with not only steady employment in the company's mills, but also a community that fostered moral and intellectual improvement through temperance laws, educational opportunities, and religion. Rather than receive thanks and respect in return, the townspeople instead raided and damaged the mills, squatted in his home, and publicly disrespected the founding families and their property when the opportunity presented itself. In his mind, the townspeople had shown their true character, something King had attempted to change for the better through his paternalistic reforms.⁴⁴

Barrington King, unfortunately, would not live to see the reconstruction of the company's mill. In mid-January 1866, King died in a horse riding accident. According to the attending physician and his daughter, King was out riding when his horse unexpectedly spooked and bolted. After an unknown period of time, the manufacturer was able to bring the horse under control. King then dismounted and, for whatever reason, made his way towards the horse's rear. At that moment, the horse bucked and kicked him in the chest. Rather than being killed instantly, King languished in excruciating pain for some time, at least long enough for a telegraph to be sent to his sons in Savannah informing them of their father's unfortunate accident. King eventually succumbed to his injuries. He was buried in the Roswell Presbyterian Church Cemetery.⁴⁵

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Petite, *The Women Will Howl*, 140; *The Atlanta Intelligencer*, n.d., Roswell Historical Society, Roswell, Georgia; Katharine Baker Simpson to Yolanda Gwin, September 29, 1975, Roswell Historical Society, Roswell, Georgia;

In the decades following King's death, some aspects of his reformist vision were scrapped, while others were reinforced. Throughout the late 1860s, the Roswell Academy continued to sporadically operate as a free school, much as it did during the antebellum era. In the late 1870s, however, due to financial difficulties and a surge in student enrollment, the Roswell Presbyterian Church decided to deed the school to the town. Once under its control, the town began charging a fee for attendance. In December 1892, the state passed legislation that directed the town to establish a school board and levy a tax to support the school. Consequently, the Roswell Academy was renamed the Roswell Public School and housed students from the elementary to the secondary level. While attendance was free for students who lived within city limits, students living in the surrounding area who wanted to attend were required to pay tuition. By 1896, the schoolboard recognized the need to construct a new building to house the school. That year, the state empowered the mayor and town council to sell bonds for the construction of a new building to house the town's public school.⁴⁶

While Roswell's ruling elite and its Presbyterian Church relinquished control over the education of the town's children during the postwar years, the state of Georgia reinforced and expanded the temperance measures promoted by King and the church during the antebellum era. In March 1875, the Georgia General Assembly passed legislation that made it illegal to "sell, barter or exchange, or otherwise dispose of any spiritous or intoxicating liquors of any kind or name" within three miles of several mills within the state. This included the Roswell Manufacturing Company. Any individual caught selling or bartering liquor would be charged with retailing liquor without a license and thus subject to punishment outlined by extant law. The

Telegraph from D.A. Adams to Reverend C.B. King and William Nephew King, January 17, 1866, Roswell Historical Society, Roswell, Georgia.

⁴⁶ Petite, *The Women Will Howl*, 20; Darlene M. Walsh, ed., *Roswell: A Pictorial History*, 86.

new law, therefore, not only reinforced preexisting law pertaining to liquor within the town that had been in place since the antebellum era, but also created a sizeable liquor-free buffer zone around the company's property and the town.⁴⁷

As with Graniteville, labor protest at Roswell near the end of the Civil War may have paved the way for collective action among the company's workers in later years. In the summer of 1889, officials of the Roswell Manufacturing Company discovered to their horror that several mill hands were members of the Knights of Labor. The company fired them immediately. In response, the Knights of Labor sent a representative to Roswell to speak with management and the discharged workers. During his time there, the labor union official discovered that, unbeknownst to management, almost the entire workforce were members of the organization. After some negotiation, the union representative was able to convince management to sign an agreement that greatly benefitted workers. In the agreement, the company promised to not only rehire the discharged workers, but also never dismiss an employee because of their affiliation with the Knights of Labor or discriminate against members of the labor union in the hiring process in the future.⁴⁸

In the years immediately following the Civil War, William Gregg, Daniel Pratt, and Barrington King assiduously labored to rebuild their devastated industrial enterprises. Additionally, these leading southern manufacturers acted swiftly to restore order in their mill towns. While they were able and willing to do both during the postwar years, the same could not

⁴⁷ *Acts and Resolutions of the General Assembly of the State of Georgia, Passed at the Regular January Session, 1875*, Compiled and Published by Authority, [Savannah] J.H. Estill, Public Printer, 1875, 335.

⁴⁸ The Knights of Labor General Assembly, *Proceedings of the General Assembly of the Knights of Labor of America* (Philadelphia: Journal of United Labor Print, 1889), 20; Frederic Meyers, "The Knights of Labor in the South," *Southern Economic Journal* 6, no. 4 (April 1940): 479.

be said for the reformist spirit and paternalistic outlook they so strongly embraced during the antebellum era. Feeling deeply betrayed by the actions of their employees and townspeople during the conflict, these men expressed disdain for them in the postwar years, a sign of their weakening devotion to paternalism. Moreover, while some elements of their social reform programs in their mill towns endured long after the conflict, others faded away in the postwar period.

Conclusion

The Graniteville Manufacturing Company long outlived its founder. In the late nineteenth century, the company expanded, building a new factory at Warrentonville and purchasing Sibley and Enterprise mills in Augusta. In 1915, after falling on hard times financially, it entered receivership. Only seventeen months later, however, contracts with the federal government following the country's entry into the Great War helped the company emerge from it. Tough financial times followed in the 1920s and 1930s thanks to increased domestic competition and the Great Depression, but America's entry into another world war helped the company once again rebound. In 1996, Georgia-based Avondale Mills, Inc., which owned textile mills throughout the southeast, bought the Graniteville Manufacturing Company.¹

Textile production at Graniteville ended abruptly in 2005 as a result of a catastrophic accident. At 2:39 a.m. on the morning of January 6, two Norfolk Southern freight trains collided and derailed in the middle of town. While passing through Graniteville at just under fifty miles per hour, Norfolk Southern Train 192, hauling forty-two cars, came upon an improperly aligned switch, which sent it hurtling onto a spur track and into the rear of a parked and unoccupied two-car Norfolk Southern freight train. The collision derailed sixteen of Train 192's cars, three of which were tank cars holding ninety tons of pressurized liquid chlorine gas. One of those tank cars sustained significant damage and released sixty tons of chlorine into the surrounding area.

¹ Alexia Jones Helsley, *Lost Aiken County* (Charleston, S.C.: The History Press, 2019), 138-139; Tom Downey, "Graniteville Company," *South Carolina Encyclopedia*, <http://www.scencyclopedia.org/sce/entries/graniteville-company/>.

As a result of the accident, nine people lost their lives, hundreds required medical treatment, and nearly 5,500 residents within a one-mile radius of the crash site were displaced for several days.²

The train collision and derailment dealt a fatal blow to Avondale Mills. The escaped chlorine gas not only ended or affected the lives of thousands of people, but also damaged machinery in the mill complex, including the computer systems. Immediately following the accident, Avondale Mills closed the Graniteville complex with the hope of reopening in the near future. The mills, however, never reopened. In October 2005, the company announced layoffs at Graniteville, leaving 350 people unemployed. In July 2006, Avondale Mills folded, leaving additional Graniteville residents without jobs. In all, the incident put an end to the more than one-hundred-and-fifty-year history of textile production at Graniteville.³

Today, Graniteville is still reeling from the economic and social repercussions of the 2005 accident. Unemployment is relatively high and, unfortunately, so too is the crime rate. Few businesses operate in town. What was once a bustling mill town is now a mere shadow of its former self, a statement not at all unfamiliar to former industrial towns across the South and America's Rust Belt. There is reason, however, for optimism. In 2014, an appliance recycling firm, Recleim, opened a plant in one of the former mill buildings in downtown Graniteville. Within six years, it has created over 300 jobs for residents of Graniteville and the surrounding area.⁴

Over the past several decades, residents of Graniteville and Aiken County have worked to ensure that the memory of William Gregg and the Graniteville Manufacturing Company lives on.

² U.S. National Transportation Safety Board, "Railroad Accident Report: Collision of Norfolk Southern Freight Train 192 with Standing Norfolk Southern Local Train P22 with Subsequent Hazardous Materials Release at Graniteville, South Carolina, January 6, 2005," <https://www.hsd1.org/?view&did=26562>, v and 1; Larry Wood, "Nine Lost Their Lives in Graniteville Train Derailment 15 years Ago," *Aiken Standard*, January 6, 2020.

³ Helsley, *Lost Aiken County*, 138-141; Lynn Price McWhorter, "Avondale Mills," *Encyclopedia of Alabama*, <http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-2141>.

⁴ "Frayed Fabric: Graniteville Train Wreck, 2005-2020," *The Augusta Chronicle*, January 4, 2020.

In 1978, they persuaded the National Parks Service to list the Graniteville Historic District—which included the original mill building, the Graniteville Academy, St. John Methodist Church, the canal, and some of the original workers’ cottages—on the National Register of Historic Places. That same year, the Graniteville Historic District became a National Historic Landmark. More recently, the Aiken County Historical Society sponsored the erection of state historical markers at the original mill in 2001 and Kalmia in 2014, while the Horse Creek Historical Society sponsored one for the Graniteville Academy in 2014. The congregation of St. John Methodist Church, which remains active today, sponsored a marker for its own house of worship in 2007.⁵

As with the Graniteville Manufacturing Company, Daniel Pratt’s gin business long outlived its founder. Following his uncle’s death in 1873, Merrill Pratt inherited the company. He successfully ran the business until his death in 1889, at which time ownership passed to his son, Daniel Pratt, who Merrill named after his beloved uncle. In 1899, the Daniel Pratt Gin Company merged with four other gin firms to become the Continental Gin Company, which operated factories in several cities across the South including Atlanta, Birmingham, and Dallas. In the mid-1980s, the Continental Gin Company changed its name to the Continental Eagle Corporation. The company continued to manufacture gins in Prattville until 2009, when it moved production overseas to India. Despite this, the Continental Eagle Corporation continued some

⁵ South Carolina Department of Archives and History, National Register Properties in South Carolina, Graniteville Historic District, Aiken County (Graniteville), <http://www.nationalregister.sc.gov/aiken/S10817702011/index.htm>; South Carolina Department of Archives and History, *South Carolina Historical Markers: A Guidebook* (2019), 11-33, [https://scdah.sc.gov/sites/default/files/Documents/Historic%20Preservation%20\(SHPO\)/Programs/Programs/Historical%20Markers/SC%20Historical%20Marker%20Program%20Guidebook%20-%20Winter%202019%20\(12-9-19\).pdf](https://scdah.sc.gov/sites/default/files/Documents/Historic%20Preservation%20(SHPO)/Programs/Programs/Historical%20Markers/SC%20Historical%20Marker%20Program%20Guidebook%20-%20Winter%202019%20(12-9-19).pdf).

light manufacturing and research and development activity at Prattville until 2011, when the company permanently ended all operations at Prattville.⁶

Much like those of Graniteville and Aiken County, residents of Prattville and Autauga County have labored to ensure that the memory of Daniel Pratt and his manufacturing firms will not be forgotten. In the mid-1970s, the Prattville Study Club founded the Autauga County Heritage Association with the purpose of bringing together those interested in local history, collecting and preserving artifacts and documents relevant to the town and county's history, providing a forum for lectures and discussions on local history, and assisting local officials in historic preservation efforts. Today, the Autauga County Heritage Center, the headquarters of the Autauga County Heritage Association, houses invaluable primary sources on Pratt, his manufacturing enterprises, and the early history of the town. In the mid-1980s, the Autauga County Heritage Association persuaded the National Parks Service to list the Daniel Pratt Historic District—which included most of the historic downtown and some of the original mill buildings across the creek—on the National Register of Historic Places. In 2014, at a public auction, the Historic Prattville Redevelopment Authority purchased the former Pratt gin complex for \$1.74 million. The organization hopes to first preserve the buildings before eventually selling them to residential real estate developers.⁷

Today, the City of Prattville markets itself as “a town rich in history, but with a firm focus on the future.” Indeed, over the last handful of decades, the Autauga County Heritage

⁶ Herbert J. Lewis, “Daniel Pratt,” *Encyclopedia of Alabama*, <http://www.encyclopediaofalabama.org/article/h-1184>; Thomas McAdory Owen and Marie Bankhead Owen, *History of Alabama and Dictionary of Alabama Biography*, vol. 4 (Chicago: The S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1921), 1849.

⁷ “Our Purpose” and “Our History,” Autauga County Heritage Association website, <https://autaugahistory.org>; U.S. Department of the Interior, National Parks Service, National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form, Daniel Pratt Historic District, https://npgallery.nps.gov/NRHP/GetAsset/NRHP/84000596_text; “HPRA Buys Prattville Landmark for \$1.7 million,” *Montgomery Advertiser*, December 18, 2014, <https://www.montgomeryadvertiser.com/story/news/local/progress/2014/12/18/auction-prattville-landmark-locals-nervous/20618541/>.

Association and the Historic Prattville Redevelopment Authority have done commendable work preserving and showcasing the city's rich history. However, problems common to most former industrial towns throughout the country still plague Prattville, including relatively high crime and poverty rates. Nevertheless, the city has reason for optimism. Over the past twenty years or so, the opening of new shops and restaurants have helped to revitalize the historic downtown. Hoping to spark the interest of outdoor enthusiasts, the City of Prattville has boasted its abundance of outdoor recreational activities along Autauga Creek. Amateur and professional golfers too have made their way to Prattville to play at beautiful Capitol Hill, a Robert Trent Jones Golf Trail site, which opened in 1999.⁸

Much like the Graniteville Manufacturing Company and the Daniel Pratt Gin Company, the Roswell Manufacturing Company survived long after the death of its founder. In 1882, the textile firm expanded, building a second cotton mill on Vickery Creek. In 1923, Wilmington, North Carolina industrialist William G. Broadfoot purchased the company and changed its name to Roswell Mills, Inc. Three years later, a lightning strike set ablaze the 1854 mill, which had been rebuilt after the Civil War. The company decided to expand the 1882 mill rather than rebuild the other. In 1947, Southern Mills, Inc. purchased the Roswell mills. In 1975, when Southern Mills folded, the mills at Roswell closed and never reopened.⁹

Over the past several decades, the City of Roswell and its residents have worked hard to preserve a great deal of the town's early history and ensure that the memory of the town's founders, the Roswell Manufacturing Company, and the deported millhands persists. In 1973, the

⁸ "About Us," City of Prattville website, <https://www.prattvilleal.gov/about/about-us.html>.

⁹ Paden and McTyre, *Historic Roswell, Georgia*, 91; Description of the Roswell Manufacturing Company Records (MS5), 1840-1975, Roswell Historical Society, 2, https://www.roswellhistoricalsociety.org/uploads/5/2/1/9/52195545/ms_5_roswell_manufacturing_company_records.pdf.

National Parks Service placed the Roswell Historic District—which included much of the original blueprint of the town—on the National Register of Historic Places. In subsequent decades, the city of Roswell purchased some of the founders’ homes. These included Barrington Hall, Bulloch Hall, and the Smith Plantation. Today, all are open for public tours. In addition to taking historic house tours, visitors to Roswell can view the ruins of the mills along Vickery Creek in Old Mill Park. Interpretive waysides, put together by the Roswell Historical Society, tell the stories of the founding families, the Roswell Manufacturing Company, the millhands, and the Civil War. In the summer of 2000, the Roswell Mills Camp of the Sons of Confederate Veterans gifted the city a monument to honor the Roswell mill workers deported by the Union Army in 1864. The ten-foot-tall broken-column monument stands in a small park in the center of town.¹⁰

Today, Roswell is a bustling, white-collar suburb of Atlanta that bears little resemblance to the small mill town that it was in the mid-nineteenth century. At the time of the last federal census in 2010, the city’s population was nearly 90,000. Quaint boutiques and upscale restaurants line its downtown streets, while plentiful outdoor recreation opportunities enhance its livability. While many residents commute to work in Atlanta, an increasing number are employed by North Fulton Regional Hospital, the Kimberly-Clark Corporation, and the City of Roswell. Residents of the city boast some of the highest household incomes and home values in the state. In 2015, according to the City of Roswell, the median household income was just over \$102,000 and the median home value was a little over \$212,000.¹¹

¹⁰ Petite, *The Women Will Howl*, 157-159.

¹¹ Paden and McTyre, *Historic Roswell, Georgia*, 113; “Demographics and Population,” City of Roswell website, <https://www.roswellgov.com/discover-us/demographics-population>.

Regardless of the fate of their mills, towns, and programs of social reform following their deaths, it remains that William Gregg, Daniel Pratt, and Barrington King founded and managed some of the largest and most financially successful manufacturing establishments in the South during the antebellum era. The stories of their industrial enterprises contribute substantially to the history of slavery and capitalism in early nineteenth-century America. These men, however, were more than simply industrialists. They were also idealistic and steadfast social reformers who created and implemented ambitious programs of social reform in their respective mill towns. Interpreting Gregg, Pratt, and King in this manner adds significantly to our understanding of social reform efforts in the antebellum South. Moreover, so doing allows us to gain a more nuanced understanding of southern society and culture before the Civil War.

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