Celtic Names in the Antebellum Southern United States*

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Myths cling to the American South. "There are few areas of the modern world," observes George B. Tindall, "that have bred a regional mythology so potent, so profuse and diverse, even so paradoxical, as the American South."[1] Some myths help to explain reality, but others obscure more than they clarify and distort actuality. Consider, for example, a few widespread illusions accepted and perpetuated by scholars. First, the belief that southern ways were English ways. "The English influence [on the South] was powerful," insists Clement Eaton, who proclaims in the prestigious new *Encyclopedia of Southern History* that the "principal influences that shaped southern customs and manners were the English heritage, the frontier, the climate, slavery, and romantic literature."[2]

Closely related to the belief that English traditions prevailed in the South is the view that nearly all white Southerners are of Anglo-Saxon ancestry. A distinguished historian insists that "the South *is* the habitat of the quintessential WASP," and calls it "the biggest single WASP nest this side of the Atlantic."[3]

Such views, whether correct or not, may defy modification because they have been incorporated into those guardians of traditional knowledge, the textbooks. Standard histories of the South expound the view that the preponderant majority of southern whites are and always have been Anglo-Saxons. "They were mostly transplanted Englishmen with a scattering of continental Europeans," claims one author, who supports his argument with a quotation from Stephen Vincent Benet: " 'And those who came were resolved to be Englishmen, Gone to World's End, but

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[1]George Brown Tindall, *The Ethnic Southerners* (Baton Rouge, 1976), p. 22.

[2]Clement Eaton, "Customs and Manners," *The Encyclopedia of Southern History*, ed. David C. Roller and Robert W. Twyman (Baton Rouge, 1979), p. 321.

[3]Tindall, *Ethnic Southerners*, p. 8.

[4]Monroe Lee Billington, *The American South: A Brief History* (New York, 1971), p. 9.

English every one.'"[4] A different text contends that both the North and the South "were peopled by Englishmen,"[5] and yet another emphasizes "the gap between Anglo-Saxon and African in the South."[6]

These general accounts usually make such vague or sweeping references to cultural ethnicity that readers are likely to be confused over who are and who are not Anglo-Saxons. For example, the authors of a popular text state: "The German colonists of the South had many sterling qualities. . . . Their foresighted methods of farming contrasted with the wasteful methods of the Anglo-Saxons." According to these authors: "The Scotch-Irish early became Southerners. They were of the same Anglo-Saxon stock as the people of the coast regions."[7]

To contend that the Scotch-Irish, whose ancestors were Celts,[8] came from the "same Anglo-Saxon stock" as the English indicates a lack of understanding of the most important cultural conflict in the history of the British Isles. Moreover, ignoring the Germanic Anglo-Saxon heritage is as serious as overlooking the conquest and occupation of England by Anglo-Saxons (Angles, Saxons, and Jutes) and the significant Germanic contribution to the English language and culture.[9]

Standard histories of the South give no indication that Celts were important in the region. Some works notice the Scotch-Irish and the Scots,[10] but the *Encyclopedia of Southern History*—which devotes nu-

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[5]I. A. Newby, *The South: A History* (New York, 1978), p. 39.

[6]William B. Hesseltine and David L. Smiley, *The South in American History* (2nd edition, Englewood Cliffs, N. J., 1960), p. 2.

[7]Francis Butler Simkins and Charles Pierce Roland, *A History of the South* (4th edition, New York, 1972), pp. 36–37.

[8]Archibald A. M. Duncan, *Scotland: The Making of the Kingdom* (New York, 1975), pp. 1–78; Lloyd Laing, *The Archaeology of Late Celtic Britain and Ireland, c. 400–1200 AD* (London, 1975), pp. 3–88; Lloyd Laing, *Celtic Britain* (New York, 1979), pp. 139–143. An eighteenth century traveler noted that Gaelic was still so commonly spoken in Scotland that apprentices brought to Edinburgh from no more than seven miles away had to "be taught the English Tongue." R. Jamieson, ed., *Burt's Letters from the North of Scotland* (2 vols., 1754, reissued, Edinburgh, 1974), I, 165–166.

[9]Goldwin Smith, *A History of England* (4th edition, New York, 1974), pp. 13–30; W. O. Ault, *Open-Field Farming in Medieval England: A Study of Village By-Laws* (London, 1972), p. 16; Eric Kerridge, *Agrarian Problems in the Sixteenth Century and After* (London, 1969), pp. 32–33, 90–91, 161–162.

[10]W. J. Cash, *The Mind of the South* (paperback edition, New York, 1941), pp. 30–33, 34, 56, suggested that the Southerner "had much in common with the half-wild Scotch [*sic*] and Irish clansmen" for "his chief blood-strain was likely to be . . . Celtic." Scots and Scotch-Irish are mentioned in Hesseltine and Smiley, *The South in American History*, pp. 34–35, 44, 51, 54–55, 58, 60, 62, 72, 75, 130; Billington, *The American South*, pp. 18–19; Simkins and Roland, *A History of the South*, pp. 34–36; and many local histories. See also such specialized studies as James G. Leyburn, *The Scotch-Irish: A Social History* (Chapel Hill, 1962); Charles A. Hanna, *The Scotch-Irish: Or, the Scot in North Britain, North Ireland and North America* (2 vols., 1902, reprint,

merous pages to such ethnic groups and their influence as the English, the Germans, the French, the Indians, the Africans, the Spanish, and even the Acadians — ignores the Scots, the Scotch-Irish, the Irish, the Cornish, and the Welsh. The indexes of most volumes on the South do not include the words Celt or Celtic. Few general works on the Old South even mention the Irish. Those that do usually state that only a meager number of Irishmen migrated to the antebellum South and those who did were generally hired to do work that slaves were too valuable to undertake. The common assumption seems to be something like this: because there were few Catholics in the antebellum South — except those of French or Spanish descent in Louisiana and Texas — and because the Irish were Catholics, therefore only a handful of Irish settled in the Old South.[11]

The myth that the South's heritage is English is especially detrimental to an understanding of southern history and culture. To insist, as most authorities do, that the white people in all regions of the United States during the antebellum period were overwhelmingly of British extraction is true but quite misleading. Deep cultural divisions had shaped the history of Great Britain. The people who occupied the British Isles when Roman invaders arrived in 43 A. D. were Celts, whose ancestors had appeared in central Europe between 800 to 600 B. C. and during the next few centuries had conquered most of the southern half of Europe from Spain to the Balkans and beyond. But after their first major defeat by the Romans in 225 B. C., Celtic tribes had gradually but inexorably retreated westward, pressed by Romans from the southeast and by Teutonic peoples from the northeast. The first Celts reached the British Isles about the seventh century B. C. and gradually conquered and acculturized the natives. Those Celts who survived the Roman conquest of England and

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Baltimore, 1968); T. W. Moody, "Irish and Scotch-Irish in Eighteenth Century America," *Studies*, 35 (1946), 84–90; W. T. Latimer, "Ulster Emigration to America," *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland*, 32 (1903), 385–392; E. R. R. Green, "The 'Strange Humors' That Drove the Scotch-Irish to America, 1729," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 12 (1955), 113–123; E. R. R. Green, "Queensborough Township: Scotch-Irish Emigration and the Expansion of Georgia, 1763–1776," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 17 (1960), 183–199; Robert L. Meriwether, *The Expansion of South Carolina* (Kingsport, TN, 1940), pp. 79–88; Patricia G. Johnson, *James Patton and the Appalachian Colonies* (Verona, VA, 1973), pp. 3–15; Robert Ramsey, *Carolina Cradle: Settlement of the Northwest Carolina Frontier, 1747–1762* (Chapel Hill, 1964); Robert J. Dickson, *Ulster Emigration to Colonial America, 1718–1775* (London, 1966); Desmond Clarke, *Arthur Dobbs, Esquire, 1689–1765; Surveyor-General of Ireland, Prospector, and Governor of North Carolina* (Chapel Hill, 1957); and Carl Bridenbaugh, *Myths and Realities: Societies of the Colonial South* (Baton Rouge, 1952).

[11]Clement Eaton, *A History of the Old South: The Emergence of a Reluctant Nation*, (3rd edition, New York, 1975), pp. 14, 255; Michael V. Gannon, "Catholic Church," *Encyclopedia of Southern History*, pp. 189–190.

Wales were either absorbed into Roman Britannia or pushed northward and westward. There, in Scotland and Ireland, Celts maintained their culture and power during the Roman occupation of the remainder of the British Isles as well as during the subsequent Anglo-Saxon invasion, and by 650 A. D. the Celts had retaken Wales, Cornwall, the Isle of Man, and the northwestern areas of Cumberland, Westmoreland, and Lancashire. Later Norman and Scandinavian invaders influenced both Celtic and Anglo-Saxon culture, but by medieval times a clear cultural and geographical division of the British Isles had been fixed. Archaeological evidence indicates, says Lloyd Laing, that "by the seventh century there is no doubt that the Celts were no longer a cultural entity in England. Those characteristics that can be traced from the fourth to the seventh centuries seem to be Roman rather than Celtic. . . . Outside the Romanized areas, however, the Celts had fought first the Romans and then the Anglo-Saxons, and maintained their independence with such success that it is often impossible to distinguish . . . a site in Scotland [from one in] . . . the remoter uplands of England and Wales."[12]

Conflict, cultural and often physical, between the English and the Celtic inhabitants of the British Isles has continued to the present. The English, strongly rooted in the southeastern part of what became the United Kingdom, eventually managed to dominate the whole through persistence, orderly habits, an internalized sense of propriety, a unique system of common law, the habit of obedience to that law, literacy, a capacity for devising flexible but stable political institutions, and other cultural traits. The Celtic peoples who occupied Cornwall, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, and the Hebrides, and strongly influenced the culture of the "Celtic fringe" of England — those counties in the extreme north and along the Welsh border west of the Pennines[13] — resisted successive

[12]Anne Ross, *Everyday Life of the Pagan Celts* (London, 1970); T. G. E. Powell, *The Celts* (New York, 1958); Gerhard Herm, *The Celts: The People who Came out of the Darkness* (New York, 1977); Smith, *A History of England,* pp. 1–164; F. M. Stenton, *Anglo-Saxon England* (Oxford, 1972); Duncan, *Scotland,* pp. 1–132; Eoin MacNeill, *Celtic Ireland* (1921, reprinted, Dublin, 1981); L. M. Cullen, *Life in Ireland* (London, 1979), pp. 1–49; Laing, *Celtic Britain,* pp. 1–171 (quotation on page 13).

[13]On the "Celtic fringe," see J. G. A. Pocock, "British History: A Plea for a New Subject," *New Zealand Journal of History,* 8 (1974), 6. Pocock has not included the English border country as part of the "Celtic fringe," but others have. See, for example, Michael Hechter, *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development, 1536–1966* (Berkeley, 1977), pp. 47–78. On the distinctiveness and Celtishness of the English North Country, see Denis Hay, "England, Scotland, and Europe: The Problem of the Frontier," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society,* 25 (1975), 77–91; on that of the southwest, see A. L. Rowse, ed., *The West in English History* (London, 1949); and, on that of the Welsh border, see Howell T. Evans, *Welsh Drovers: Wales and Monmouthshire* (Cardiff, 1938); and H. R. Rankin, "Cattle Droving from Wales to England," *Journal of the Ministry of Agriculture,* 62 (1955), 218–221.

English attempts over the centuries not just to rule them but to obliterate their culture.

For several years we have insisted that the people who settled in the American South and in the American North were significantly different — in their ways and in their values — because their cultural heritages were different. More specifically, we contend that the North was settled mainly by Englishmen and culturally dominated by them and that the South was settled mainly by Celts and culturally dominated by them. Elsewhere we have examined the folkways and beliefs of Celts and Southerners and indicated how they differed from those of Englishmen and Northerners.[14]

We also have begun a reexamination of antebellum migration and settlement patterns to ascertain whether the antebellum North actually contained more English immigrants and the antebellum South more Celtic. Determining the national or ethnic composition of a sizable number of Americans is difficult. Ideally, the information would be recorded in censuses, but such was not done until late in the nineteenth century. Alternatively, the ethnic composition of the population might be reconstructed from lists of arriving immigrants, but only fragmentary records exist for the colonial and early national periods. Except for the years

[14]See, for example, Forrest McDonald and Grady McWhiney, "The Antebellum Southern Herdsman: A Reinterpretation," *Journal of Southern History*, 41 (1975), 147–166; Forrest McDonald and Grady McWhiney, "The South from Self-Sufficiency to Peonage: An Interpretation," *American Historical Review*, 85 (1980), 1095–1118; Forrest McDonald and Grady McWhiney, "The Celtic South," *History Today*, 30 (1980), 11–15; Forrest McDonald and Ellen Shapiro McDonald, "The Ethnic Origins of the American People, 1790," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 37 (1980), 179–199; Forrest McDonald, "The Ethnic Factor in Alabama History: A Neglected Dimension," *Alabama Review*, 31 (1978), 256–265; Grady McWhiney, "The Revolution in Nineteenth-Century Alabama Agriculture," *Alabama Review*, 31 (1978), 3–32; Grady McWhiney, "Jefferson Davis — The Unforgiven," *Journal of Mississippi History*, 42 (1980), 111–127; Grady McWhiney, "Continuity in Celtic Warfare," *Continuity: A Journal of History*, 2 (1981), 1–18; Grady McWhiney, "Saving the Best from the Past," *Alabama Review*, 32 (1979), 243–272; Grady McWhiney and Perry D. Jamieson, *Attack and Die: Civil War Military Tactics and the Southern Heritage* (University: University, AL, 1982). In using the term "Celtic," we do not mean to suggest a common genetic pool, for the people under discussion were clearly of different genetic mixtures. The Welsh are obviously of different genetic stock from the Irish, for instance, and Highland Scots had different bloodlines from Lowlanders. Rather, we are speaking of peoples who shared a common cultural heritage — customary lifestyles, attitudes, and ways of doing things. Even in that sense, of course, the various peoples we treat as Celtic were far from identical. But after a great deal of study we have concluded that it is legitimate to consider them as a single general cultural group, different from the English — much in the same way that Western culture is seen as distinct from Islamic culture, while recognizing that Italians and Swedes differ from one another even as do Libyans and Turks. A more accurate phraseology than Celtic, in the sense we are using the term, would be "people from the British Isles who were historically and culturally non-English" — but somehow that phrase seems less catchy.

1798–1800, recording the arrival of immigrants was not required by law until 1819. The resulting records are useless in analyzing the ethnic makeup of the southern population because so few migrants came to the South after 1800. Only about 4.2 percent of the white people in the South in 1850 were foreign-born, and most of them were concentrated in such urban places as New Orleans, Mobile, and Charleston.[15]

Since records of early settlers are either unavailable or sketchy, we have relied on name analysis. Tracing ancestry through surnames is both complex and inexact, but fairly reliable approximations can be reached if the list of European names is full and accurate, if the body of American names being analyzed is large enough to absorb the invariable flukes and exceptions, and if a rigorous methodology is formulated. Wherever possible, we have relied upon the work of other scholars, but we have developed, thus far, three methods of name analysis. None is foolproof, but each provides a useful check on the others and together they offer what we consider a reasonable approximation of the ethnic composition of the areas analyzed.

Our first method of analyzing names is a projection technique devised by Forrest and Ellen McDonald for dealing with large numbers of people. It is described in detail in the April 1980 *William and Mary Quarterly* along with their analysis of the ethnic composition of the American people in 1790. The McDonalds discovered, besides serious flaws in Howard F. Barker's traditional breakdown of "national stocks,"[16] that sectionalism based upon settlement patterns existed throughout the United States at the time the first federal census was taken. Well over three-quarters of the people living in New England were of English origins. New York, having originally been a Dutch colony, retained a large Dutch component in its population; but the single largest group, comprising something over two-fifths of the people, was English. Pennsylvania was heterogeneous: two-fifths of the people were of Celtic origins, a third were German, fewer than a fifth were English. Elsewhere, the further south and west from Philadelphia, the more Celtic the population: in the upper South Celts and Englishmen each constituted about two-fifths of the population; in the Carolinas more than half the people were Celtic and Celts outnumbered Englishmen five to three.

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[15]Calculations and data on the legislation concerning the recording of immigrants are from *Statistical History of the United States from Colonial Times to the Present* (Stamford, CT, 1965), pp. 48, 11–12, 57.

[16]Howard F. Barker, "National Stocks in the Population of the United States as Indicated by Surnames in the Census of 1790," *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1931* (3 vols., Washington, 1932), I, 126–359.

Even more significantly, Celts completely dominated the frontier from Pennsylvania southward, where they constituted from three-fifths to nearly a hundred percent of the total population. In the North Carolina tidewater districts, from 39 percent of the population in Edenton to 48 percent in Newbern were Celts, but in the upland interior they constituted 63 percent of the population in the Fayette district and almost 100 percent in the Hillsborough district. In the western Virginia counties of Fayette and Lincoln, Scots and Irish alone numbered nearly 80 percent of the population.[17]

Using the projection technique applied in the 1790 census by the McDonalds, we also have analysed the censuses of 1810, 1830, and 1850 and found that the Celtic portion of the southern white population stabilized at 50 percent or slightly less; the English stabilized at about a third of the total; the remainder were largely of German, French, or Spanish origins. Nearly 60 percent of the white Southerners of British extraction were Celtic; just over 40 percent were English. In New England and the upper Middle West, the English continued to constitute about three-quarters of the population until the 1840s, when the arrival of numerous refugees from the Irish potato famine changed the ratio to about 60-40 English.

Our conclusions on settlement patterns are supported by other works. Charles Banks, for instance, in his study of 2,885 English immigrants to New England between 1620 and 1650, indicates that only 185 originated in the Celtic fringe; 2,043 (71 percent) came from the east and southeast of England. Conversely, in an analysis of 7,359 references to seventeenth century Virginians, John Eacott Manahan found that 6,647 (90 percent) came from Cornwall, Wales, Ireland, or the Celtic fringe of England.[18] Several additional studies also confirm that many more Celts settled in the antebellum South than traditional sources acknowledge. In 1850 some 25,000 or more Irish, a quarter of the city's population, lived in New Orleans; and even in Apalachicola, Florida, the Irish were the largest foreign born element in the population.[19] Not all of the Irish in the South

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[17]McDonald and McDonald, "The Ethnic Origins of the American People, 1790," 179–199.

[18]Charles Edward Banks, *Topographical Dictionary of 2885 English Emigrants to New England, 1620–1650,* edited and indexed by Elijah E. Brownell (3rd edition, Baltimore, 1963), pp. xii, passim; John Eacott Manahan, "The Cavalier Remounted: A Study of Virginia's Population, 1607–1700," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Virginia, 1946.

[19]Earl F. Niehaus, *The Irish in New Orleans, 1800–1860* (Baton Rouge, 1965), p. 110; H. P. Owen, "The Port of Apalachicola," *Florida Historical Quarterly,* 48 (1964), 1–25. See also Patrick O'Sullivan, "Catholic Irish in the Deep South," *Ecumene,* 8 (1981), 42–48.

arrived in the late antebellum period; nor were they confined to urban areas. One investigator has found records of "a great infusion of Irish blood" into the South throughout the colonial period.[20] Another writer concludes that thousands of Irish were transported to America between 1703 and 1775 and that many settled in Virginia, the Carolinas, and Georgia.[21] And yet another scholar estimates that in 1790 Irish settlers constituted 26 percent of the population of South Carolina and 27 percent of that of Georgia.[22]

Many of these Irish have been overlooked by historians who have assumed incorrectly that during the colonial period of American settlement all natives of Ireland outside Ulster were devout Catholics. "The passionate and exemplary attachment of the Irish nation to the Catholic faith dates from a later time," writes a distinguished Irish historian about the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; "the real contest was between Englishmen and Irishmen rather than Protestants and Catholics. . . . In Ireland in the seventeenth century . . . the Irish laity were still for the most part only passively and traditionally Catholic."[23] Nor did the situation change during the first part of the nineteenth century. "The figures on church attendance in pre-famine Ireland indicate that only thirty-three percent of the Catholic population went to mass," notes an eminent authority. "Most of the two million Irish who emigrated between 1847 and 1860 were part of the pre-famine generation of nonpracticing Catholics, if indeed they were Catholics at all." Not until the latter part of the nineteenth century, long after most of the Irish who came to the South had migrated, did the "devotional revolution" turn Ireland into a country of churchgoers who equated Irish Nationalism with Catholicism.[24]

Irish settlers in the South, especially those who arrived in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, suffered little cultural shock; nominal Catholics at most, they mixed with the Scotch-Irish and Scots — people

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[20]Michael J. O'Brien, *Irish Settlers in America* (2 vols., Baltimore, 1979), I, 10–39, 73–104, 158–178, 196–216, 250–256, 259–269, 324–329, 416–426, 522–524, 539–542, 558–567; II, 1–38, 56–72, 128–153, 165–244, 344–365, 397–402, 556–591; Michael J. O'Brien, *A Hidden Phase of American History: Ireland's Part in American's Struggle for Liberty* (1919, reprinted, Baltimore, 1973), pp. 241–252, 322–372.

[21]Audrey Lockhart, *Some Aspects of Emigration from Ireland to the North American Colonies between 1660 and 1775* (New York, 1976), pp. 90, 96, 134, 140.

[22]David Noel Doyle, *Ireland, Irishmen and Revolutionary America, 1760–1820* (Dublin, 1981), p. 75.

[23]Edward MacLysaght, *Irish Life in the Seventeenth Century* (1939, reprinted, Dublin, 1979), pp. 280–284.

[24]Emmet Larkin, "The Devotional Revolution in Ireland, 1850–75," *American Historical Review*, 77 (1972), 636–651.

with whom they had shared traditions and ways for centuries — feuded and stole each other's livestock, just as they had always done, and helped to spread Celtic culture across the southern backcountry.[25] The evidence indicates that large numbers of Irish simply adopted the religion of their neighbors. For example, Andrew Leary O'Brien, who was born in County Cork, Ireland, in 1815, migrated to South Carolina, married a local girl, and converted to her Methodist faith.[26] A Catholic bishop, after traveling in the antebellum South, maintained "that, calculating from the names of the people, no less than forty thousand had lost the Faith in the Carolinas and Georgia."[27] Later a British Catholic observed that the South was full of Irish names. "No doubt," he wrote, "the Wesleyan missionaries on circuit baptised the children and grandchildren of Irish who had not brought their women or their priests. Wesleyan ministers, Methodist bishops, bear Irish names — Healy, Murphy, Connor. Their blood could only have come from Ireland. . . . One of these Irish Patriarchs from famine days did meet a priest after fifty years, and could only present two grownup generations of Methodists."[28]

A second method of name analysis that we have developed also suggests that a Celtic cultural hegemony existed in the South. Our system is based upon tabulations made by Henry B. Guppy (published in 1890) and Sir Robert Edwin Matheson (published in 1909).[29] Guppy's volume, which contains the surnames of more than 5,000 English and Welsh farmers (the most "stay at home" class and thus likely to bear traditional local names), is the only existing county-by-county analysis of the more common and characteristic names in England and Wales as well as the only existing tabulation of the frequency per 10,000 with which each name appeared in each county; it also lists in an appendix the common

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[25]On the similarity of Scots and Irishmen, especially of their ways and beliefs, see John D. Sheridan, "The Irish Character," *Ireland by the Irish*, edited by Michael Gorman (London, 1963), p. 34; Peter Hume Brown, ed., *Scotland Before 1700, from Contemporary Documents* (Edinburgh, 1893), p. 12; Thomas Crofton Croker, *Researches in the South of Ireland* (1824, reprinted, New York, 1969), p. 116.

[26]Andrew Leary O'Brien, *The Journal of Andrew Leary O'Brien . . .* (Athens, GA, 1946), pp. 4, 5, 12, 38, 40.

[27]J. J. O'Connell, *Catholicity in the Carolinas and Georgia* (New York, 1879), p. 180. For this and the following reference, we are indebted to Professor David Edward Harrell of the University of Arkansas.

[28]Sir Shane Leslie, "Lost Irish in the U.S.A.: The Church in the Deep South," *The Tablet*, 211 (February 1, 1958), 103.

[29]Henry Brougham Guppy, *Homes of Family Names in Great Britain* (1890, reprinted, Baltimore, 1968); Sir Robert E. Matheson, *Special Report on Surnames in Ireland* (1909, reprinted, Baltimore, 1975). Matheson's work was originally issued as an appendix to the *Twenty-ninth Annual Report of the Registrar-General for Ireland* (Dublin, 1894).

Scottish names in Scotland. Matheson's work is a compilation of all the surnames with five or more listings in the birth indexes of Ireland in 1890.[30]

Using Guppy's and Matheson's lists, we can analyze any list of American names and assign to each name a figure representing its relative Englishness and Celtishness. This is how the method works. Names that are native to Cornwall, Wales, Scotland, Ireland, and are not found in England, are obviously Celtic. Most, but not all, of those that are native to England are English; exceptions are the names native to the "Celtic fringe" border counties of England, which for historical reasons were culturally more like their Celtic neighbors than they were like Englishmen.[31] First we determine how often, if at all, each name occurs per 10,000 in each of seven British geographical units: English counties, North Country counties, Welsh border counties, Cornwall, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland. Some names are found only in the English counties, some only in the Celtic areas; certain names appear in both, while still others are either foreign to the British Isles or not listed in any of the sources that we consulted.[32]

Next we determine the average number of times that a name appears per 10,000 in the English counties and in the Celtic areas. The average for the English counties is obtained by totaling the number for each name per 10,000 in the twenty-eight English counties and dividing by twenty-eight. The average for the Celtic areas is determined by totaling the numbers for each name per 10,000 in the fifteen Celtic units (six North Country counties, four Welsh border counties, Cornwall, North and South Wales, Scotland, and Ireland) and dividing by fifteen. If a name is found fewer than once per 10,000 in any unit, or is found only in sources other than Guppy and Matheson, that name is arbitrarily counted as 0.5 per 10,000.[33] Englishness and Celtishness are ascertained by adding together

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[30]We derive our figures on Irish surnames per 10,000 from Matheson's *Special Report*. Additional Irish surnames, without figures on frequency, are derived from Matheson, *Varieties and Synonyms of Surnames and Christian Names in Ireland* (1901, reprinted, Baltimore, 1975).

[31]See note 13. The "Celtic fringe" includes the North County counties of Cumberland, Durham, Lancaster, Northumberland, Westmoreland, and York, and the Welsh border counties of Chester, Hereford, Monmouth, and Salop.

[32]Other useful sources for identifying British names include George F. Black, *The Surnames of Scotland: Their Origin, Meaning, and History* (1946, reprinted, New York, 1962); Henry Barber, *British Family Names . . .* (1903, reprinted, Baltimore, 1968); C. L'Estrange Ewen, *A History of Surnames of the British Isles . . .* (1931, reprinted, Baltimore, 1968); Sir William Addison, *Understanding English Surnames* (London, 1978).

[33]Matheson gives only the number of births per name for Ireland in 1890, rather than the numbers per 10,000, but his figures can be converted into how often each name occurs per 10,000 in the Irish population of about 4,800,000 by multiplying the number of births per name by 44.8, the birthrate, and then dividing by 480.

the averages for the English counties and the Celtic areas and by dividing the total into each of these averages. The resulting numbers, expressed in decimals, represents the likelihood of Englishness and Celtishness for each name. If a name is found to be exclusively one or the other, English or Celtic, it is assigned the number 1.0.

To illustrate how the formula works on names found in both areas, let us consider the name Smith, which was the most common name in both England and Scotland and was found in all parts of the British Isles. That name appears 4,032 times in Guppy's listing of the twenty-eight English counties. Dividing this figure by twenty-eight we find that the average per 10,000 throughout the English counties is 144. The name Smith appears per 10,000 in the Celtic areas as follows: in the North Country 748 times, in the Welsh border counties 356 times, in Cornwall 32 times, in Wales 52 times, and in Scotland 144 times. (To arrive at the number of appearances per 10,000 in Ireland we start with the figure of 753 Smiths born there in 1890. We multiply this figure by the birth-rate of 44.8 to arrive at 33,734, which we divide by 480 to arrive at 70 as the average per 10,000.) Adding all the figures for the fifteen Celtic units together we get a total of 1,402. Dividing this number by fifteen we arrive at an average per 10,000 of 93. The next step, adding English counties and Celtic areas, gives a total of 237. We now divide 144 by 237, yielding .608 Englishness. We divide 93 by 237, yielding .392 Celtishness. In analysing any list of American names we count each Smith as .608 of an Englishman and .392 of a Celt.

The likelihood that a person bearing any given name will accord with this formula will vary, of course, with the overall size of the population of the two statistical units. If, for example, our formula indicates that .392 of the Smiths are Celtic, but there were twice as many Englishmen as Celts in Britain, the figure would have to be weighted to adjust for the population difference. As it happens, in 1891 the population of the Celtic areas as defined here was approximately 21,000,000; that of the English areas approximately 16,700,000.[34] Properly, then, the apportionment of Celts should be adjusted upwards. We have deliberately not made such as adjustment, however, on the ground that we want all possible biases in the method to work counter to our thesis.

Certain biases are inherent in the use of these nomenclature sources and this system of classifying names, and each of the biases must be taken into account. The first, relating to apportionment, has been mentioned above. The second concerns the use of 1890 British name analyses to study an American population which, for the most part, had emigrated from the

[34]Calculated from B. R. Mitchell, *Abstract of British Historical Statistics* (Cambridge, 1962), pp. 22–23.

homelands more than a century earlier. The time differential affects our study because of the migration patterns within the British Isles between the mid-eighteenth century and the late nineteenth. During that period people in large numbers moved from the rural areas of Wales, the Scottish Lowlands, Ireland, and the north and west of England toward such great industrial centers as Liverpool, Manchester, and Birmingham; otherwise, the flow was from north to south and from west to east — toward Glasgow, Edinburgh, and London.[35] The spread of the name Jones, originally found only in Wales, is a good example. By 1890 there were Joneses distributed all along the way to London.[36]

The result of this pattern of internal migration was to spread people with Celtic names into English counties but not the other way around. For our purposes, then, the use of Guppy's and Matheson's names biases the study in favor of indicating Englishness and against indicating Celtishness, and more than compensates for the earlier and numerically much smaller movement of Englishmen into Ireland.

A third inherent bias pertains only to the use of Matheson's work. In the two centuries prior to his study, and particularly since the 1840s, there had been an enormous exodus of people from Ireland. During most of that time, however, the surnames of the Irish people had not yet hardened into their modern, more or less Anglicized forms; that hardening took place only in the few decades before Matheson made his analysis. Consequently, many Americans of Irish descent bore names different from those of their distant kinsmen in the old country. To rely on Matheson's list is therefore again to bias our study against indicating Celtishness.[37]

A fourth inherent bias derives not from our nomenclature sources but from a historical peculiarity of American life. It has been demonstrated (as one might expect) that there was a strong tendency among census takers, tax collectors, and other public officials, as well as among persons of immigrant stock themselves, to Anglicize the spelling of non-English names. Thus, for example, the Scottish names Allan and Thomson tended

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[35]*Ibid.*, pp. 5–52; Edward P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York, 1964); Peter Mathias, *The First Industrial Nation: An Economic History of Britain, 1700–1914* (London, 1969); H. J. Habakkuk, *Population Growth and Economic Development since 1750* (Leicester, 1971).

[36]Guppy (*Family Names*, pp. 509–510) found Joneses at a frequency of 1,500 per 10,000 in North Wales and 650 in South Wales; in the adjoining border counties to the east and southeast the frequency of Joneses was 350 to 650 per 10,000, but in Chester to the northeast only 81; in the next layer of counties toward London, Gloucester and Worcester, the frequencies were 105 and 138, respectively; and so on, steadily thinning to driblets as one moved eastward.

[37]Matheson's list of Irish names may be checked against Father Patrick Woulfe, *Irish Names and Surnames* . . . (1923, reprinted, Baltimore, 1967), and Edward MacLysaght, *The Surnames of Ireland* (5th edition, Dublin, 1980).

in America to be transformed into the English names Allen and Thompson.[38] Once again, the bias is toward indicating Englishness and against indicating Celtishness.

Despite these biases, the apportionment system, when used to analyze lists of American names, produces figures that support our previous conclusions. Some sample results: An examination of the names recorded in the early censuses of three Georgia counties — Lincoln (1800), Laurens (1838), and Tattnall (1838) — reveals that fewer than a third of the 1,484 families listed were English; more than half were Celtic. Of the 1,207 families identified as being of British extraction, 62 percent were Celtic and 38 percent were English. A similar pattern was found in Lowndes County, Mississippi, where an examination of the 1,616 families listed in the 1850 census revealed that more than half were Celtic and only a third were English. Of the 1,371 families (or 85 percent) identified as British, 61 percent were Celtic and 39 percent were English.[39]

The significance of these figures from Georgia and Mississippi becomes clear when we look at the ethnic pattern in a comparable northern area. For example, Eaton County, in central Michigan, was settled between 1834 and 1860 primarily by people from New England, New York, and Ohio. Nearly half of the first 2,175 families to acquire land in the county were of English ancestry; fewer than a third were of Celtic ancestry. Of the 1,702 families (or 78 percent) identified as British, fully 61 percent were of English extraction and only 39 percent were Celtic — the exact reverse of the southern pattern.[40]

In an effort to overcome some of the biases inherent in our apportionment technique, we have experimented with yet another method of name analysis. We compiled a list of 2,468 names that are common to and peculiar to the shires of the south and east of England.[41] To see just how many of these names, supposedly the most English of English names,

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[38]Barker, "National Stocks," 133–163, contains a good discussion of the problem of Anglicization of names.

[39]Calculated from Frank Parker Hudson, comp., *An 1800 Census for Lincoln County, Georgia* (Atlanta, 1977), pp. 51–103; Brigid S. Townsend, comp., *Indexes to Seven State Census Reports for Counties in Georgia, 1838–1845* (Atlanta, 1975), pp. 19–25, 47–53; Betty Wood Thomas, comp., *1850 Census, Lowndes County, Mississippi* (Columbus, 1978), pp. 5–172.

[40]Calculated from E. Gray Williams and Ethel W. Williams, comps., *First Land Owners of Eaton County, Michigan* (Kalamazoo, 1967), pp. 1–64.

[41]Guppy, *Family Names*, pp. 67–68, 71–72, 76–77, 82–83, 168–169, 183–184, 194–195, 204–205, 214–215, 222, 224–226, 258–259, 268–269, 281, 283–285, 298–299, 319–320, 327–328, 344–346, 365–366, 375–376, 379–380, 387–388, 392–394; Addison, *Understanding English Surnames*, pp. 143–159. The shires from which this list of peculiarly English names was compiled are Bedford, Berks, Buckingham, Cambridge, Dorset, Essex, Gloucester, Hamps, Hertford, Huntingdon, Kent, Leicester, Lincoln, Middlesex, Norfolk, Northampton, Nottingham, Oxford, Rutland, Somerset, Suffolk, Surrey, Sussex, Warwick, and Wilts.

could be found in the deep South in the late antebellum period, we compared them with the 20,000 or so names listed in the United States Census of Alabama in 1850.[42] We also compiled a list of 1,087 different names, almost all of them Celtic, found on gravestones in the counties of Antrim and Down in northern Ireland,[43] which we also compared with the Alabama census of 1850. The results: 84 percent of the Celtic names but only 43 percent of the English names were also found in Alabama.

Such ratios of Celts to Englishmen as our various name analysis methods reveal suggests that the North and the South were settled and dominated numerically during the antebellum period by different people with significantly different cultural backgrounds. This is not to suggest that either North or South was totally homogeneous: there were hustlers, go-getters, eccentrics, hard workers, even literate people sprinkled throughout the South. Similarly, there were individuals and groups in the North that resisted amalgamation. Some Scotch-Irish in New England, for example, refused from the outset to fit into Puritan society.[44] But the tendency, by and large, was for Celts in the North to become Anglicized and for Englishmen in the South to become Celticized.

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[42]Ronald Vern Jackson, *et al.*, eds., *Alabama 1850 Census Index* (Bountiful, UT, 1976). We are grateful to Pam Pugh for comparing both English and Celtic names against this census index.

[43]George Rutherford, comp., *Gravestone Inscriptions: County Antrim, Volume 1, Parish of Islandmagee* (Belfast, 1977), pp. 1–101; A. C. W. Merrick, comp., *Gravestone Inscriptions: County Down, Volume 17, Barony of Ards* (Belfast, 1978), pp. 1–203.

[44]Maldwyn A. Jones, "Scotch-Irish," *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*, edited by Stephen Thernstrom (Cambridge, 1980), p. 899. "In 1718 several hundred newly arrived Scotch-Irish immigrants were sent from Boston to the frontier," writes Jones. "But even from the first there were misgivings about the new arrivals. New England in the early 18th century was as ethnically homogeneous as its name implied and was disposed to look suspiciously on strangers. The New England clergy had assumed that, because the Scotch-Irish were staunch Calvinists, there would be no doctrinal barrier to their absorption into the Congregational church. But the Scotch-Irish brought with them their own distinctive brand of Calvinism. . . . To the surprise and irritation of the spiritual leaders of the Bay Colony, Scotch-Irish ministers wasted no time in denouncing New England churches for theological error. . . . Besides religious antipathy there were other reasons for Puritan dislike of the Scotch-Irish. Although many settled on the frontier, the poor remained in Boston, adding to what was already a considerable burden of pauperism. Hence the fear expressed by the Surveyor General of the Customs at Boston in 1719 that 'these confounded Irish will eat us all up.' In July 1719, when a number of immigrant vessels arrived from Belfast and Londonderry, a mob prevented the passengers from landing. Even so, the Boston town records reveal that between 1729 and 1742, two-thirds of the inmates of the almshouse were Scotch-Irish. In addition to being a burden, the Scotch-Irish seemed to Bostonians to be a barbarous crew. There were frequent complaints of their drinking, blasphemy, and violence that revealed itself most graphically in the practice of biting off ears in the course of fights. [And] court records . . . confirm that the Scotch-Irish committed more than their share of crimes."