

The Naval Stores Industry in the Antebellum South, 1789-1861

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Page 273:

“Further evidence of the rise of the industry in South Carolina can be found in the market news and marine lists of the clearances and arrivals of vessels. For example, the Boston market news of April 15, 1847, recorded the arrival of 500 barrels of tar and turpentine from Little River, South Carolina.”¹

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“An item tucked away in one of the columns of the *Wilmington Journal* in January, 1853, illustrates the keen competition among the North Carolina producers for available pine lands in South Carolina. “A fat, jocular old gentleman, writing from Conwayboro, (S.C.), to a young friend of ours in this place, says:— “There are so many men here hunting Turpentine land, that we can’t turn around without getting bruised, or our toes mashed;...”²

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“Olmsted, in his tour through the seaboard slave states in 1852, noted, as he passed into South Carolina on his way to Charleston, that “A few of the pines were boxed for turpentine; and I understood that one or two companies from North Carolina had been operating here for several years.”³

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“While naval stores were produced in all the Southern states from North Carolina to Alabama, the greater production outside of North Carolina in the eighteen fifties centered in South Carolina and Alabama. The South Carolina industry was in large measure an adjunct of the North Carolina industry, since the greatest centers of production, outside of the coastal counties near Charleston, were in the counties along the North Carolina line. The pine forests of this area were opened up by the building of the Wilmington and Manchester Railroad in the fifties [1850s], and in many instances the turpentine was produced by North Carolinians and the products were chiefly marketed in Wilmington. This development gave Wilmington a longer lease on life. For the producers who could not find locations convenient to the railroad or in South Carolina, however, nothing was left for them but to migrate farther south.”

¹ *Wilmington Journal*, April 23, 1847.

² *Wilmington Journal*, January 28, 1853. The Wilmington papers also contained occasional advertisements of producers in South Carolina and Georgia offering to sell virgin tracts of timber, although more often tracts which had been boxed and cultivated only one or two years. On March 4, 1853 the *Journal* printed a marine list and prices current for Conwayboro, South Carolina, which was the head of deep water navigation on the Waccamaw River. Among the vessels clearing were two schooners bound for New York, one carrying 2200 barrels of naval stores and the other 900 barrels. One of the principal shippers was D.W. Jordan who had moved from Brunswick County to Little River, and subsequently to Conwayboro in the early fifties [1850s]. Jordan Papers, Duke University Library.

³ Olmsted, *Journey in the Slave States*, 397-398. [Frederick Law Olmsted]