

Pre-Section Exercise, Week of Jan. 26

Outline

1. Logan (2015) argues that “qualitative empirical data” is important for understanding key elements of U.S. economic history: in this case, African American economic history. In his approach, he uses detailed data from cotton picking books from 1952 to 1965 from his own family, supplemented by interviews.

Now consider the following data on cotton productivity in the United States:

<http://research.stlouisfed.org/fred2/series/A0137KUSA521NNBR>. These data suggest that cotton output per acre rose on average when comparing 1950 with the 1860s. What does Logan’s approach add to an analysis just looking at these data?

Logan contends that the available evidence supports a conclusion that his own father “worked as hard as his slave forebearers nearly 100 years earlier.” Use the “Olney 5-Step method” to critically analyze this conclusion.

2. See Econ 113, Fall 2006, Midterm 1, Part 1, Question (2).