

Title: The Demographics of Bowdoin Students: Class of 1806-Class of 1861

Legend for "Relationship to South" Category

Categories

NS- Native Southerner

TS- Traveled to/Resided in South

Subcategories

"-b" - business [includes any business occupation: merchant, land agent, broker, banker, surveyor, etc.]

"-c" - clergy [including missionaries.]

"-cf" - Confederate army service

"-e" - editor

"-en" - engineer

"-f" - farming

"-j" - journalist

"-l" - law [including attorneys, judges, law clerks, etc.]

"-m" - medicine [doctors, surgeons]

"-p" - politics [state and national.]

"-s" - student

"-t" - teaching [including college, law, medical, and school teaching. College presidents were also included under this subcategory, since they taught as well).]

"-t/c" - rector [this term has the double meaning of secular teacher and ecclesiastical instructor. The Catalogue was unclear about which of these meanings applied to the alumni, so "t/c" accounts for both.]

“-u” - Union army service

“-uk” - Occupation/activity in South is unknown.

Research Questions

1. Did the number of Bowdoin students who came from Southern states decline as sectional strife grew and the Civil War neared?
2. Did the number of Northern students who ventured South for their occupations decline as sectional strife grew and the Civil War neared?

My two research questions were the reason I sought to identify the following characteristics of each Bowdoin alumni from 1806 to 1861: class year, date of birth, homestate, location during/at the start of the Civil War, participation in the war, and relationship to South.

Sources & Methodology

The *General Catalogue of Bowdoin College and the Medical School of Maine: A Biographical Record of Alumni and Officers, 1794-1950* was the primary source of information for this study.¹ While there were less biographical details about the school’s non-graduates (who still counted as alums, since they signed the matriculation book and spent at least one semester at the College), it contained most of the information necessary for my research. When I needed more information, I consulted *The History of Bowdoin College: With Biographical Sketches of Its Graduates from 1806 to 1879, Inclusive (1882)*, by Nehemiah Cleaveland and Alpheus S. Packard.² Online obituaries and fraternity papers also provided some of the details the study sought to analyze. Likewise, for prominent Bowdoin graduates, online name searches occasionally led to biographies on state and municipal history websites. For the students for whom the necessary details could not be found, I used “Unknown” to signify the lack of information. “N/a” was used to describe the alumni who passed away prior to 1861. Given the very large group of students, I was unable to visit Bowdoin’s George J. Mitchell Department of Special Collections and Archives. I suspect that a search of the biographical files for each of the alumni that had gaps in their biographical record would reveal some of the missing information.

Occasionally, I had to make judgement calls as to how an ambiguity in a graduate’s biography should be classified in my spreadsheet. If the Catalogue listed two locations for the student’s residence in 1861, or included enough information to imply that the student was in a

¹ Bowdoin College, "General Catalogue of Bowdoin College and the Medical School of Maine: A Biographical Record of Alumni and Officers, 1794-1950" (1950), *Bowdoin Histories*, 4, <https://digitalcommons.bowdoin.edu/bowdoin-histories/4>.

² Cleaveland, Nehemiah and Packard, Alpheus S., "The History of Bowdoin College: With Biographical Sketches of Its Graduates from 1806 to 1879, Inclusive" (1882), *Bowdoin Histories*, 5, <https://digitalcommons.bowdoin.edu/bowdoin-histories/5>.

particular region of the U.S., I opted for the generic “North” or “South” classification. If it was not known where the alumni were in 1861 but there was information on the individual’s whereabouts during the other years of the war, I listed the location given for the years 1862-64. For students who were a part of multiple regiments throughout the war, I listed the state affiliation of their first regiment for the “Residence in 1861 or during Civil War” column. If a student’s biography listed a single state as his place of birth, occupation, and residence, but did not specify his location during the war, I marked the student’s residence as the state of his birth, since there was a high likelihood that he spent his entire life there.

The “Participation in War” column identifies Bowdoin alumni who participated in the Union and Confederate armies. Since my project brings together the Catalogue’s Confederate and Union members, John Cross’ research, and my own findings, it represents the most complete list of Bowdoin’s Civil War participants up to the Class of 1861 to date. In my data set, “participation in war” was defined broadly, and included quartermasters, paymasters, and chaplains. The logic behind this was that although those positions were not combat positions, they still required enlistment and travel with the army. Importantly, they still posed serious risks. The Catalogue mentions several instances of chaplains and paymasters dying while in service.

Findings

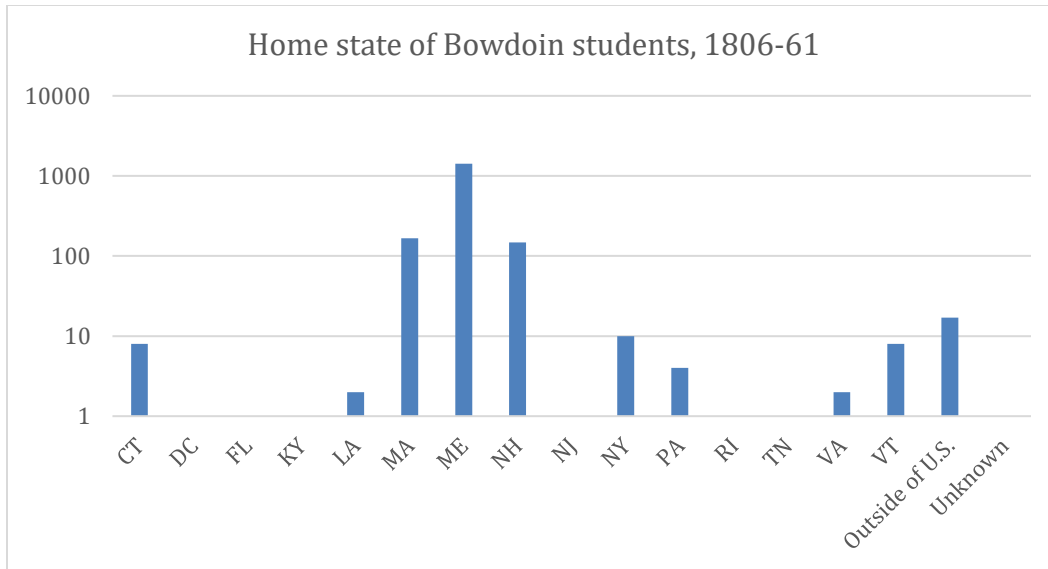


Figure 1. Bowdoin students overwhelmingly came from Maine and Massachusetts during the first decades of the College. (Note- the State of Maine was formally established in 1820, my data set distinguishes students between ME and MA from the first class year.) Maine was the homestate for 79.3% of Bowdoin students.

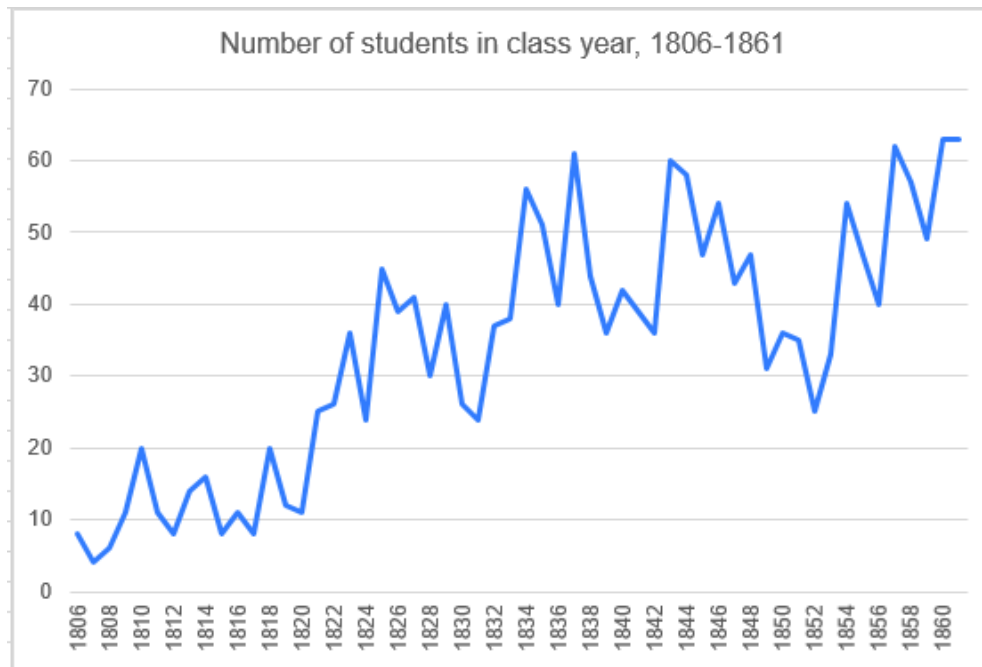


Figure 2. While the class size increased over the years, the late 1840s and early 1850s witnessed a steep decline in the number of graduating students.

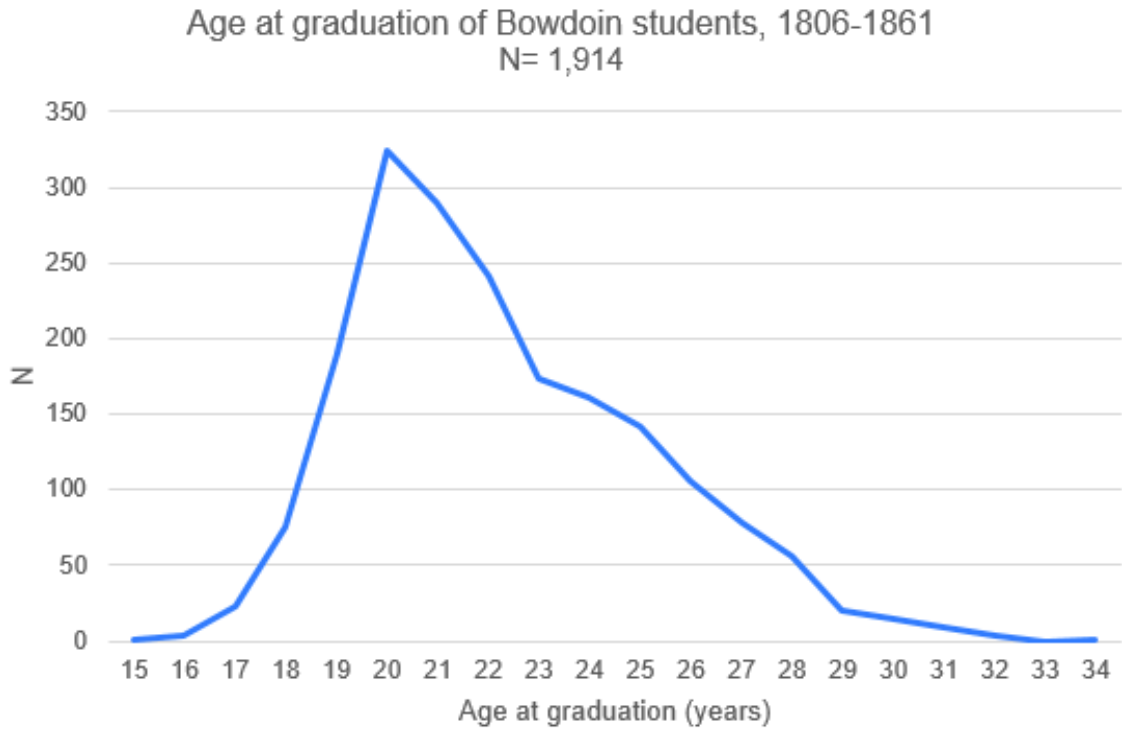


Figure 3. There was considerable variance in the age at which students graduated from Bowdoin.

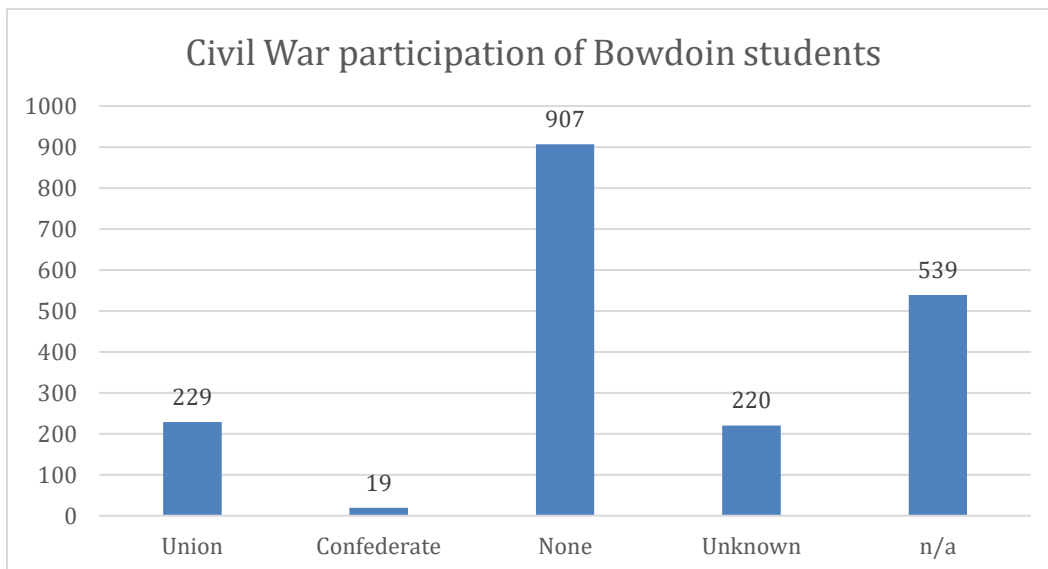


Figure 4. "N/a" signifies the Bowdoin graduates who were deceased at the time the Civil War began. Since the data set included all students from 1806, many were too old to participate in

the war. Also, many graduates supported the war effort outside of military participation, such as working for the Civil Service.

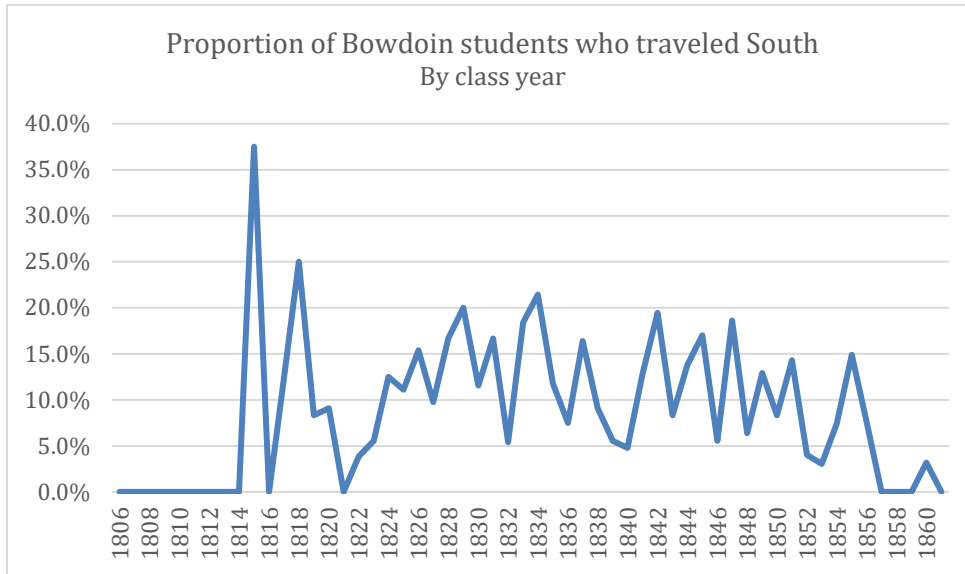


Figure 5. This graph depicts the percentage of students from each class year that resided in the South. With the exception of the four years leading up to the war, there does not appear to be substantial variation in the preceding three decades. A total of 178 students traveled to the South from 1814-1860.

Note- There were only 10 Bowdoin students who came from the South between 1806 and 1861. Given the small size of this group, no graphs were made to show their characteristics. For more information, see "Alumni Groups to Study Further, Native Southerners."

How the Information Could Be Used

My findings present an overview of travel trends in the Antebellum period as well as the army affiliations of Bowdoin alumni. The information could be used to study the way national developments affected the Bowdoin community and the decisions students made after graduating. The data set could be further manipulated in many ways to glean revealing information about the first 55 classes of Bowdoin students. Since the Northern students who traveled South were subcategorized by the type of occupation they had, the group can be studied further to see if there were any occupational trends.

Further Expansion of the Data Set

The data set could be expanded in a number of ways to allow for other prosopographies:

1. There were many students who enlisted in the Union army and then attended Bowdoin. Expanding the data set past the Class of 1861 would make it the most comprehensive database of Bowdoin Union troops to date.

2. John Cross has identified some alums who were prisoners of war (POW). This factor could be incorporated into the data set.
3. The Catalogue lists the fraternities to which each alumnus belonged to. If the data set included these affiliations, the students could be evaluated along fraternal lines.
4. A study of the military rank of each Bowdoin soldier would shed light on which positions were most commonly held by graduates.

Alumni to Study Further

1. Harrison Allen- Class of 1824, went on a mission to the Choctaws, died in 1829 in Mississippi.
2. Thomas Parnell Beech- Class of 1833, abolitionist leader.
3. James Means- Class of 1833, supporter of Freedmen, Capt., died in 1863.
4. John Appleton- Class of 1834, U.S. Minister to Russia 1860-61.
5. Charles Horace Upton- Class of 1834, U.S. Congressman from Virginia 1861-62, Consul to Switzerland 1863-77.
6. Owen Lovejoy- Class of 1834, Abolitionist in Missouri, 1835. U.S. Congressman 1856-64, underground railroad conductor.
7. Thomas Fitch Perley- Class of 1837, Physician in Florida until 1861. Became USV surgeon and Lt. Col., Medical Inspector General (1861-65).
8. Ebenezer Stockbridge- Class of 1837, Teacher in Georgia, college president and clergy member in Tennessee, clergy in Virginia. Died in Texas. Pro-Union views led to 6 month prison term in Libby Prison.
9. Elisha Bass- Class of 1840, worked at U.S. district court in Texas in 1862.
10. Elias Haskell Sargent- Class of 1844, Teacher in Arkansas, 1845-48. Merchant in Arkansas and Louisiana, 1848-61. Returned to Maine in 1861.
11. David Ladd Towle- Class of 1844, Principal of Academy in NY (1847-62), then became a planter in Louisiana (1862-67). Probably followed Union army and became planter.
12. Joshua Young- Class of 1845, Preached sermon at the funeral of John Brown, John Cross' list says Young served in the army.
13. Oliver Stevens- Class of 1848, Eastern Campaign Manager for Stephen Douglas in 1860.
14. Eugene Bergin Hinkley- Class of 1849, Secretary to Commodore Thatcher, Rear Admiral of the Navy.
15. James Francis Miller- Class of 1856, Col. 7th Me. Vols., La. Sec. of State 1862-63, Mayor of New Orleans 1863-64, Asst. Adj. Gen. 1864.
16. Thomas Blanchard Lenoir- Class of 1856, Cotton planter Mississippi 1857-67. Adj. Gen. Miss. 1864-65. CSA Soldier according to obituary. Lt. of ordinance on staff of Brig. Gen. Samuel J. Gholson, CSA. POW, forced to sign parole papers disavowing the CSA.
17. Osceola Jackson- Class of 1858, Merchant West African Trade 1859-63.
18. Isaiah Perley Smith- Class of 1858, Chaplain 29th Me. Vols, 1865-67. Stayed with volunteer army after the war.
19. Samuel Stillman Boyd- Class of 1860, unlike brother from the same class year, he did not enlist.

20. Joseph Nicholas Metcalf- Class of 1860, took medical classes in Tennessee, M.D. from University of Pa. 1863, then physician in Kentucky 1863-1900. Kentucky was firmly in Union control at this point. He left the South after his father appealed to him to come North.
21. David Osgood Stetson- Class of 1860, according to Nehemiah Cleaveland's *History of Bowdoin College with Biographical Sketches*, Stetson "went to Texas after graduating, taught awhile, when the political aspect led him to return..."
22. Albion Howe- Class of 1861, Bowdoin's only Native Southerner who fought for the Union.

Alumni Groups to Study Further

1. U.S. Civil Service Employees - Many alumni spent the war years working for the civilian service. An examination of the agency and their work there could provide insight into a common kind of non-military support for the war effort.
2. "Carpetbaggers" - This term refers to Northerners who ventured to the former Confederate states after the war to reap the financial and political benefits of the occupied territory. Identifying and studying the Bowdoin men who traveled to the South after the Civil War could provide interesting information about their motivations and the circumstances that led them to move South.
3. Union Diplomats during the Civil War - A number of Bowdoin men were diplomats abroad during the war. Some are noted in the notes section of the alumni list. For example, John Appleton'34 was U.S. minister to Russia from 1860-61. Charles Horace Upton, also from the class of 1834, was Consul to Switzerland from 1863-1877. Their files in the Bowdoin Archives may contain information about how the war was presented to other countries, and if that changed between 1861 and 1864.
4. Alumni involved in Southern Politics - The graduates who had political careers often left behind the most information about their lives and political views, much of which is available online on city and state history websites. Classified under "TS-p" in the Alumni list, these men held positions from U.S. Congressman to local mayor.
5. Alumni who resided in the South but returned to the North - These Bowdoin graduates provide an important counterexample to Bowdoin men who remained in the South and/or joined the Confederate army. In compiling the alumni list, some evidence was found that identified sectional strife and the impending civil war as a motivating factor for some alumni to return north (see *David Osgood Stetson'60*).
6. Alumni who resided in the South but did not join the Confederate Army - A prosopography of Bowdoin alumni who moved south, remained throughout the war, and did not participate would further contextualize the lives of the alumni who joined the Confederacy. In not joining the war

effort, this group of men were probably least motivated by ideology. Analyzing the patterns of their lives would contribute to the study of war motivations.

7. Alumni who lived in border states - The border states – Delaware, Maryland, West Virginia, Kentucky, and Missouri – were the sight of a lot of turmoil during the Civil War. The notes section highlights the many Bowdoin men who resided in Kentucky before and during the Civil War. There were also alums present in the other border states. As a group, they can be compared to both northerners and southerners for a study of political views, enlistment, interstate movement, etc.

8. Medical School students - There were both Union and Confederate members who graduated from the Maine Medical School, which was owned by Bowdoin College. While these men were outside of the scope of my project, John Cross has done extensive research to identify all the medical school alumni who participated in the war, and they are featured in a separate section of his list. A statistical comparative analysis of both groups could reveal important similarities and differences between the two student bodies, both of whom spent several years in Brunswick.

9. Native Southerners - This unique group consists of the 10 Bowdoin students who graduated between 1806 and 1861. Three of them graduated in 1861, five fought for the Confederacy, and one fought for the Union. An in-depth look into the lives of these men could reveal insightful parallels and divergences in their personal lives and careers.