

# Sentimental Importance of Place in Oppressed Voices



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Developed from work by:  
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## BACKGROUND

American Regionalism, a literary movement of the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, prominently featured local styles, customs, and landscapes. Scholars claim this was especially so for women and Black Americans, **oppressed groups** longing for places they could feel equal or empowered. *Do the numbers support this claim?*

## METHODS

1. Compared a representative sample of such authors against works in matched decades from the Corpus of Historical American English
2. Across author-era pairs, compared: base frequency of locative words, and n-gram sentiment (via *sentimentr*)

## RESULTS

1. Selected works are largely typical of their decades in freq. of locative use

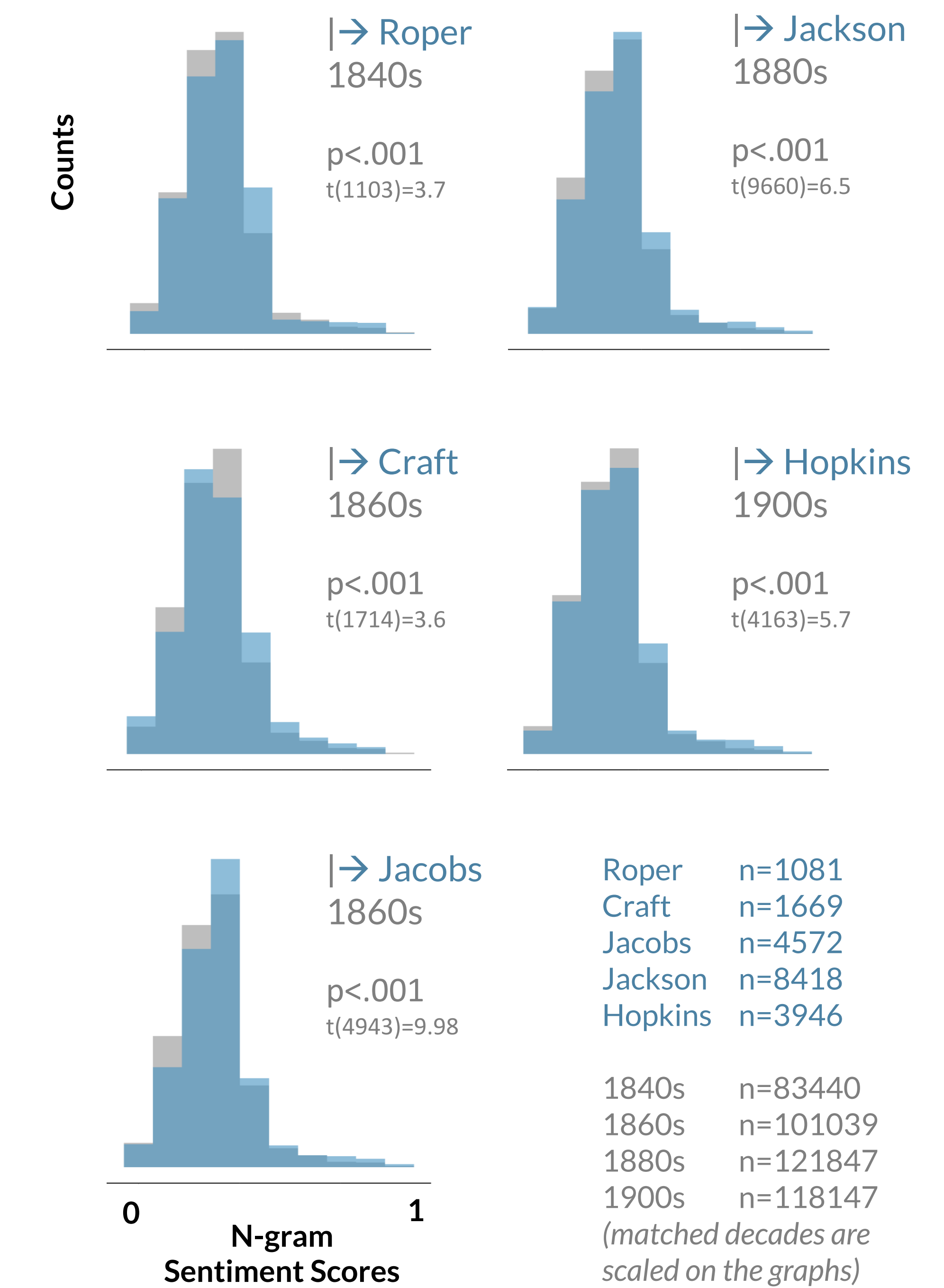
Work vs. Decade in COHA	
1840s / Roper (1846) <i>Narrative of the Adventures and Escape of Moses Roper</i>	p=.03 V = 548
1860s / Craft (1860) <i>Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom</i>	p=.43 V = 447
1860s / Jacobs (1861) <i>Incidents in the life of a slave girl</i>	p=.10 V = 337
1880s / Jackson (1884) <i>Ramona</i>	p=.79 V = 1211
1900s / Hopkins (1902) <i>Of One Blood, or The Hidden Self</i>	p=.73 V = 530

*Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Tests excluding blanks*  
*H<sub>0</sub>: Freq. of use is the same across matched works & eras*

# Historically oppressed writers write about places at the same frequency as era-matched writers, but use more sentimentally valenced terms

## RESULTS, cont'd

2. All representative writers used locative phrases in more sentimentally valenced ways



## Notes

Raw sentiment scores are +/- or 0  
0s were discarded and abs. value taken  
Sentiment N-grams were 4-grams

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