

# **Fugitive Slave Advertisements and the Rebelliousness of Enslaved People in Georgia and Maryland, 1790-1810.**

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## Abstract

This dissertation is a systematic investigation of fugitive slave advertisements aiming to understand the nature of fugitives' rebelliousness in Georgia and Maryland between 1790 and 1810. Hitherto, historical inquiry pertaining to slave fugitivity has focused on other states and other times. This study provides a close reading of 5,567 advertisements pertaining to runaway slaves and analyses extracted data pertaining to the prosopography of 1,832 fugitives and their fugitivity. Its main research questions focus on advertisements as manifest records of rebellion. Who were the fugitives? What do the fugitive slave advertisements reveal about enslaved people's contestation of slaveholders' authority? The principal findings are as follows. First, the typography and iconography of fugitive slave advertisements were expressly intended to undermine the individualism and agency of enslaved people. Second, with regard to Georgia and Maryland, while there were spikes between 1796 and 1798 and 1800 and 1801, fugitivity was a daily occurrence, and thus a normative act of rebellion distinct from insurrection. Third, quantitative analysis indicated fugitives were typically young males, in their twenties, likely to escape at any time of the year; Georgia fugitives were more likely to escape in groups. Fourth, qualitative analysis of advertisers' descriptions of fugitives revealed evidence of challenges to their authority. Depictions of fugitives' character and remarks or notes on their behaviour constitute evidence of observed characteristics. From the advertisers' perspective slaves were at their most dangerous when they could read and write or when they were skilled in deception. The "artful" fugitive in particular possessed many skills, sometimes including literacy, which could be used to defy the power that kept him or her in subjection. Fifth, further investigation established clear linkages between literacy and fugitives' rebelliousness. Qualitative studies to date speak of slave literacy's theoretical liberating and empowering effects but do not provide tangible accounts of who the literate slaves were or consider literacy as a factor in rebelliousness. The dissertation identified 36 literate slaves in Maryland and 9 in Georgia, and statistical analysis suggested 3.6 percent of US fugitive slaves were literate. Finally, it was evident that literacy was part of a larger contest to circumvent slaveholder authority and attain self-empowerment. Fugitivity itself was the outcome of a history of contestation that might be hidden from history were it not for the advertisements themselves.



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## Introduction

“Can man be in the midst of freemen, and not know what freedom is? Can he feel that he has the power to assert his liberty, and will he not do it?” asserted Henry Berry, “Yes, Sir, with the certainty of the current of time, will he do it whenever he has the power”. His speech on the abolition of slavery in the Virginia House of Delegates in January 1832 followed almost six months to the day after Nathaniel Turner, a literate slave and self-proclaimed messiah, had led an uprising of slaves in Southampton County, Virginia.<sup>1</sup> The spectacle of Turner’s rebellion had confirmed to Berry, a slaveholder, the “severe laws” intended to keep the “unfortunate creatures [slaves] in ignorance” could never “extinguish that spark of intellect which God has given them”. The severe laws to which Berry referred was anti-literacy legislation passed throughout the slaveholding South between 1740 and 1847. These laws were part of oppressive state slave codes intended to keep slaves physically and mentally oppressed. The notion that slaves could be “reduced to the level of the beasts of the field, and we should be safe”, was no longer credible; Virginian’s had been aroused from a “fatal lethargy” and now was the time to address the slavery question in Virginia and throughout the nation. The United States had reached a critical juncture – would the cancer of slavery be removed gradually or left to consume the republic and to “ultimately overwhelm and destroy us forever”, questioned Berry.<sup>2</sup> In reality, the seeds of rebellion had been sown before Turner, as evidenced by slave fugitivity in the early years of the young republic.

### Research Aims and Objectives

This dissertation is a systematic investigation of fugitive slave advertisements which aims to understand the nature of fugitives’ rebelliousness in Georgia and Maryland between 1790 and 1810. It uses data harvested from slave runaway advertisements, logged in an electronic database constructed specifically for this project, to construct a prosopography of fugitive slaves in both states and to examine the contestation of slaveholders’ authority.<sup>3</sup> Until now, there has been no study undertaken of the fugitive slaves in these states during this time period using fugitive slave advertisements. Statistical analysis of the advertisements

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<sup>1</sup> Slave and enslaved person are used interchangeably throughout this thesis. The terminology is used to denote persons held in bondage. There is no intent to undermine the personhood of the enslaved.

<sup>2</sup> Henry Berry, *The Speech of Henry Berry (of Jefferson) in the House of Delegates of Virginia on the Abolition of Slavery* (Richmond, 1832).

<sup>3</sup> The terms slave runaway advertisement, fugitive slave advertisement, and fugitive slave notice are used interchangeably throughout this thesis.

is performed to generate new data on the socio-cultural and socio-economic profile of fugitive slaves in the United States and regional patterns of slave fugitivity. The thesis stands to furnish the subject area with original empirical and quantitative information pertaining to fugitive slaves and fugitivity in the early national period.

## **Research Questions and Hypothesis**

The main dissertation research questions focus upon fugitive slave advertisements as manifest records of rebellion. As sources authored by slaveholders, fugitive slave advertisements offer insights on advertisers' observations and perceptions of their slaves—how they expected them to behave, reasons for absconding, their skills, personalities, and much more. A close reading of the semiotics, language, and descriptive patterns of fugitive slave advertisements will be used to address important research questions. Who were the fugitive slaves of Maryland and Georgia between 1790 and 1810? What do the advertisements reveal about enslaved people's contestation of slaveholder authority? Fugitivity was a normative and daily act of resistance but did it peak during particular years as enslaved people reacted to social, political, and economic developments in the early national period? Did advertisers use pejorative phrasing or descriptions to undermine the agency of enslaved persons—How should we best understand the links between the descriptive language of slaveholders and the ambitions and actions of fugitive slaves?

## **Historiography**

The dissertation draws upon an extensive historiography dedicated to examining slave responses to slavery. For the purpose of the introduction, it is unnecessary to delve too far beyond an overview of the extant literature, key findings, and the broader issues of debate among scholars of fugitives and fugitivity. The perception of slaves as docile and submissive, peddled in Ulrich B. Phillips's *American Negro Slavery* (1918), has long been discredited, beginning with the work of Herbert Aptheker and Melville J. Herskovits in the 1940s.<sup>4</sup> In *American Negro Slave Revolts* (1943), Aptheker established a spectrum which identified, and plotted by severity, eight methods of slave resistance.<sup>5</sup> These included the purchasing of

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<sup>4</sup> Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, *American Negro Slavery: A Survey of the Supply, Employment and Control of Negro as Determined by the Plantation Regime* (New York; London, 1929).

<sup>5</sup> Herbert Aptheker, *American Negro Slave Revolts* (New York, 1943).

freedom, running away, and violent revolt.<sup>6</sup> While Aptheker was guilty of overemphasizing the number of slave revolts and conspiracies, his work, and anthropologist Herskovits's *The Myth of the Negro Past* (1941), showed slaves responded daily against the conditions of their enslavement, mostly non-violently.<sup>7</sup> Slaves sabotaged crops, slowed their labour, and broke tools, argued Herskovits, while “thousands” risked their lives by running away.<sup>8</sup> While Kenneth Stampp explored the former in *The Peculiar Institution* (1956), discussions of the latter remained tentative.<sup>9</sup> Peter Kolchin's *American Slavery* (1993) cast doubt that “silent sabotage” of crops and labour even constituted resistance, describing it as more of a “pervasive irritant” which, counter-intuitively, reinforced white racial stereotypes of blacks as “lazy, foolish, and thieving”. Fugitivity, in contrast, was a more common and “clear cut” daily form of response, argued Kolchin, which “unlike silent sabotage, represented direct challenges to slave owners and their employees”.<sup>10</sup> This reiterated Peter H. Wood's argument in *Black Majority* (1975).<sup>11</sup> Wood urged a historiographical re-examination of slave fugitivity on the grounds that it had been “oversimplified” by historians. Among his major conclusions, Wood argued that “no single act of self-assertion was more significant among slaves or more disconcerting among whites than that of running away”.<sup>12</sup> Wood's work, one of the first to examine fugitive slave advertisements, was among the earliest examinations of slave fugitivity and slaves who *stole themselves*.<sup>13</sup>

The scholarship on fugitives and fugitivity has found general consensus on a number of issues. Historians agree that fugitivity had temporary or permanent goals. Likewise, slaves were motivated to abscond for a multitude of reasons. Slaves ran away to avoid, or in reaction to, punishment, sometimes to gain respite from their daily labour routine, or when sale threatened to tear them from their families and friends. Some acts of fugitivity were opportunistic—the absence of an owner or overseer or the granting of more freedom than normal—were seized upon by enslaved people. Fugitivity generally increased during the most labour intensive months or when slaveholders absented themselves during the summer

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<sup>6</sup> Aptheker introduced the concept of a spectrum of slave resistance methods several years before the publication of *American Negro Slave Revolts* in a journal article. See Herbert Aptheker, ‘American Negro Slave Revolts’, *Science and Society*, 1:4 (Summer 1937), pp. 512-538.

<sup>7</sup> Melville J. Herskovits, *The Myth of the Negro Past* (New York; London, 1941).

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p.103.

<sup>9</sup> Kenneth Milton Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South* (New York, 1956).

<sup>10</sup> Peter Kolchin, *American Slavery, 1619-1877* (London, 1993), p.157.

<sup>11</sup> Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York; London, 1996).

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p.239.

<sup>13</sup> The idea of slaves *stealing themselves* was first coined by Wood in the title of Chapter IX of *Black Majority*. It has since become a common term associated with slave empowerment, specifically, the circumvention of slaveholder authority by running away.

months. Fugitivity also increased during periods of heightened socio-political tension and upheaval, most notably during and after the American Revolution.<sup>14</sup> It was common for slaves to run away to test the authority of a new owner or when the limited freedoms they had were threatened. Most slaves escaped on their own but group fugitivity did occur. Collective resistance was common among African, or “new” slaves, although families also escaped together when sale threatened to separate them forever.<sup>15</sup> It is also known that cross-border fugitivity occurred and that most slaves sought refuge in regions with large free black populations or proscriptions on slavery—which increasingly meant the northern states or Canada. Some fugitives, particularly those in the lower South along the Atlantic seaboard, sought refuge in the vast swamplands, forming and joining maroon communities with other runaways. Some slaves escaped westward into Native American land. Fugitivity was a dangerous and illegal undertaking and slavery scholars widely agree that most escapes ended in failure. Recaptured slaves were jailed or returned directly to their masters and mistresses. It was common for escapees to be whipped, beaten, or mutilated upon their return. Branding, amputation, and castration were among the more severe punishments for fugitivity and were intended to act as a deterrent for other slaves contemplating running away. Persistent runaways were commonly advertised with chains, bell racks, and irons attached to their person; physical restraints intended to control enslaved people and warn the public of their rebellious character.

Establishing precisely how many slaves absconded throughout slavery’s lifetime in the United States is impossible. “For every slave who struck out for freedom”, Eugene D. Genovese argued, “many – perhaps many hundreds – ran away a short distance and for a short period of time with a more limited objective”.<sup>16</sup> Advertised fugitivity constitutes but a fraction of all acts of fugitivity. Enumeration of fugitivity is further complicated by the absence of official figures prior to 1850 and, even then, uncertainty still surrounds the official estimates for the ante-bellum era. The US Census grossly under-reported the numbers of slave runaways, indicating 1,011 fugitives in 1850 and 803 in 1860.<sup>17</sup> Quantitative tabulation

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<sup>14</sup> David Brion Davis has shown slaves absconded in increased number as the libertarian and republican rhetoric of the Revolution was muted by the realities of slavery’s survival in the early United States. Sylvia R. Frey describes a “triangular process” in which slaves seized on the hostilities of patriots and loyalists to abscond. See David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770-1823* (London, 1975); Sylvia R. Frey, *Water from the Rock: Black Resistance in a Revolutionary Age* (Princeton, 1992); see also Cassandra Pybus, *Epic Journeys of Freedom: Runaway Slaves of the American Revolution and Their Global Quest for Liberty* (Boston, 2006).

<sup>15</sup> “New” slaves is a term commonly used to describe slaves recently imported to the United States.

<sup>16</sup> Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World Slaves Made* (London, 1975), p.649.

<sup>17</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, *Statistics of the United States (Including Mortality, Property, &c.) in 1860; Compiled from the Original Returns and Being the Final Exhibit of The Eighth Census, under the Direction of the Secretary of the Interior* (Washington, 1866), p.338.

of advertised fugitivity provides some indication, as this project does for the period 1790-1810, but cannot account for all cases of fugitivity.

Fugitive slave advertisements are records of slave rebelliousness that have become commonplace historical sources in the last few decades. The advertisements described rebellious slaves and their acts of fugitivity and were a regular feature of American newspapers. They were also sometimes printed as circulars. The digitization of newspapers has increased the accessibility of runaway notices available to slavery scholars. Their increasing accessibility and ability to provide “an otherwise unobtainable picture of the slave personality” has ensured advertisements are invaluable sources for historians interested in the social composition of slavery.<sup>18</sup> From the publication of the first fugitive slave advertisement in an American newspaper in 1705 to the last in 1864, it has been estimated that as many as 100,000 fugitive slave advertisements were printed in American newspapers.<sup>19</sup> Historians have used them to develop an understanding, and to make sense of, the lives of fugitive slaves and fugitivity patterns. This includes seminal works by historians including Ira Berlin, Patricia Bradley, Winthrop D. Jordan, Timothy J. Lockley, Philip D. Morgan, Robert Olwell, Simon P. Newman, and Shane White, among others.<sup>20</sup>

Fugitive slave advertisements have been used mainly in studies which sketch out demographic profiles of regional slave fugitivity. The coverage of these works, however, is skewed to the colonial period.<sup>21</sup> This is attributable, in part, to historians’ use of indexed

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<sup>18</sup> Lorenzo J. Greene, ‘The New England Negro as Seen in Advertisements for Runaway Slaves’, *The Journal of Negro History*, 29:2 (Apr., 1944), p.127.

<sup>19</sup> This is the estimation of the Cornell University-based ‘Freedom on the Move’ project which attempts, through crowd-sourcing, to digitalise and log, in a publically-accessible database, “all surviving” fugitive slave advertisements published in the United States. The project statement estimates that over 100,000 advertisements survive between the colonial era and Civil War. This information can be found on the project website, see <http://freedomonthemove.org/>. [Accessed 15 January 2017].

<sup>20</sup> Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge, Massachusetts; London, 1998); Patricia Bradley, *Slavery, Propaganda, and the American Revolution* (Jackson, 1998); Winthrop D. Jordan, *White over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550-1812* (Chapel Hill, 1968); Timothy James Lockley, *Lines in the Sand: Race and Class in Lowcountry Georgia, 1750-1860* (Athens; London, 2001); Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry* (Chapel Hill, 1998); Robert Olwell, *Masters, Slaves, & Subjects: The Culture of Power in the South Carolina Low Country, 1740-1790* (Ithaca; London, 1998); Simon P. Newman, *Embodied History: The Lives of the Poor in Early Philadelphia* (Philadelphia, 2013); Shane White, *Somewhat More Independent: The End of Slavery in New York City, 1770-1810* (Athens; London, 1991).

<sup>21</sup> For colonial studies of slave fugitivity, see Antonio T. Bly, “‘Pretends he can Read’: Runaways and Literacy in Colonial America, 1730-1776,” *Early American Studies*, 6:2 (Fall, 2008), pp. 261-294; Antonio T. Bly, ‘A Prince Among Pretending Free Men: Runaway Slaves in Colonial New England Revisited,’ *Massachusetts Historical Review*, 14 (2012), pp.87-118; Marvin L. Michael Kay and Lorin Lee Cary, ‘Slave Runaways in Colonial North Carolina, 1748-1775’, *The North Carolina Historical Review*, 63:1 (January 1986), pp.1-39; Daniel E. Meaders, ‘South Carolina Fugitives as Viewed Through Local Colonial Newspapers with Emphasis on Runaway Notices, 1732-1801’, *The Journal of Negro History*, 60:2 (Apr., 1975), p.288-319; Phillip D. Morgan, ‘Colonial South Carolina Runaways: Their Significance for Slave Culture’, *Slavery and Abolition*, 6 (December 1985), pp.57-78; Jonathan Prude, ‘To Look Upon the “Lower Sort”: Runaway Ads and the Appearance of Unfree Laborers in

collections of fugitive notices with coverage through the early national period. Lathan Algerna Windley's multi-volume work, spanning several states, remains one of the largest and most consulted collections of American fugitive slave advertisements but covers the period between 1730 and 1790.<sup>22</sup> Similarly, Billy G. Smith and Richard Wojtowicz's collection of Pennsylvania advertisements provides coverage from 1728 to 1790.<sup>23</sup> Graham Russell Hodges and Alan Edward Brown's collection of New York and New Jersey advertisements covers 1716 to 1786.<sup>24</sup> Indexed collections of fugitive slave notices do exist for the early national period. Freddie L. Parker has collated advertisements published in North Carolina from 1791 to 1840 and Daniel Meaders, for Virginia, between 1801 and 1820. More recently, Thomas Brown and Leah Sims have published a collection of runaway advertisements that featured in South Carolina's *City Gazette* between 1787 and 1797.<sup>25</sup> These collections have not been consulted during the data collection phase of this project but they are nonetheless useful sources of reference when comparing the profile of fugitives in Georgia and Maryland with those in other states and settings.

Slavery scholars have used fugitive slave advertisements to form insights into regional variations in the profile of fugitives and fugitivity and to test the findings of the larger survey works on slavery. In his examination of slave fugitivity in colonial South Carolina, Daniel E. Meaders concluded that slaves "were not passive" to ill-treatment by slaveholders, but rather, they "resisted the institution of slavery with a determination to be free that defies description".<sup>26</sup> Michael P. Johnston, examining motivations for group fugitivity in the same state between 1799 and 1830, concluded that while city slaves "commonly used their knowledge of white culture for their own ends", those in the country "turned more toward

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America, 1750-1800', *The Journal of American History*, 78:1 (Jun., 1991), pp.124-159; David Waldstreicher, Reading the Runaways: Self-Fashioning, Print Culture, and Confidence in Slavery in the Eighteenth-Century Mid-Atlantic', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 56:2 (Apr., 1999), pp.243-272; Lathan Algerna Windley, *A Profile of Runaway Slaves in Virginia and South Carolina from 1730 through 1787* (New York; London, 1995); For studies of slave fugitivity in the early national and antebellum periods, see Elwood L. Bridner, Jr. 'The Fugitive Slaves of Maryland', *Maryland Historical Magazine*, 66:1 (1971), pp.33-50; Michael P. Johnston, 'Runaway Slaves and the Slave Communities in South Carolina, 1799-1830', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, 38:3 (Jul., 1981), pp.418-441; Ivan Eugene McDougale, 'Slavery in Kentucky', *Journal of Negro History*, 3:3 (July, 1918), pp.211-328.

<sup>22</sup> Lathan Algerna Windley, *Runaway Slave Advertisements: A Documentary History from the 1730s to 1790* (Westport, 1983).

<sup>23</sup> Billy G. Smith and Richard Wojtowicz, *Blacks who Stole Themselves: Advertisements for Runaways in the Pennsylvania Gazette, 1728-1790* (Philadelphia, 1989).

<sup>24</sup> Graham Russell Hodges and Alan Edward Brown (eds.), "Pretends to be Free": *Runaway Slave Advertisements from Colonial and Revolutionary New York and New Jersey* (New York; London, 1994).

<sup>25</sup> Freddie L. Parker, *Stealing a Little Freedom: Advertisements for Slave Runaways in North Carolina, 1791-1840* (New York, 1994); Daniel Meaders, *Advertisements for Runaway Slaves in Virginia, 1801-1820* (New York; London, 1997); Thomas Brown and Leah Sims, *Fugitive Slave Advertisements in the City Gazette: Charleston, South Carolina, 1787-1797* (Lanham, 2015).

<sup>26</sup> Meaders, 'South Carolina Fugitives', p.317.



the culture of the quarters and its emphasis on kinship”.<sup>27</sup> Acculturated slaves—skilled, frequent visitors to urban centres, linguistically versatile, and sometimes literate—manipulated their knowledge of white culture for their own benefit, found David Waldstreicher.<sup>28</sup> His study of slavery in the Mid-Atlantic States during the late-colonial period introduced the “Confidence Man” slave type to describe slaves who frequently changed their names, appearance, and behaviour to remain inconspicuous during fugitivity.<sup>29</sup> Marvin L. Michael Kay and Lorin Lee Cary’s examination of fugitivity in colonial North Carolina claimed that it was acculturated and skilled slaves who were most likely to respond to their enslavement by running away but concluded that most escape attempts ended in failure.<sup>30</sup> Especially relevant to this project, Ivan E. McDougale’s analysis of fugitive slave advertisements published in Kentucky from 1792 to 1865 claimed, albeit intuitively, that learning bred slave discontentment and spurred fugitivity – “the more a slave learned the more liable he was to become dissatisfied and runaway”.<sup>31</sup>

To date, only a single published work explicitly harvests fugitive slave advertisements for evidence of literacy and to establish literacy rates—the topic which is of specific interest to this investigation—but again, the study is grounded in the colonial period. Antonio T. Bly’s *Pretends he can Read* (2008) was the first published work to use fugitive slave advertisements to explore “slaves achieving literacy and how that achievement changed over time and space during the eighteenth century”.<sup>32</sup> Bly’s methodology was inspired by Kenneth Lockridge, who quantified literacy rates in colonial New England using signatures on wills.<sup>33</sup> Bly mined slave runaway advertisements in newspapers published in Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Virginia during the period 1730 to 1776 for evidence of literacy. He counted as literate any slave described as able to read and/or write or in possession of forged passes, books, or newspapers. The advertisements were sampled in ten year intervals. Bly compared the number of advertisement examined and the number of literate runaways identified in the sample to produce a literate percentile for each decade. He used this to establish literacy rates among fugitive slaves and to project, where possible, regional slave literacy rates more generally. This project builds on Bly’s work but is especially

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<sup>27</sup> Johnston, ‘Runaway Slaves’, p.441.

<sup>28</sup> Waldstreicher, ‘Reading the Runaways’, pp.247-248.

<sup>29</sup> The “Confidence Man”, or “Con Man”, was first introduced by Herman Melville in his novel, *The Confidence Man* (1857).

<sup>30</sup> Kay and Cary, ‘Slave Runaways’, p.39.

<sup>31</sup> McDougale, ‘Slavery in Kentucky’, p.290.

<sup>32</sup> Bly, ‘Pretends he can Read’, p.265.

<sup>33</sup> Kenneth A. Lockridge, *Literacy in Colonial New England: An Enquiry into the Social Context of Literacy in the Early Modern West* (New York, 1974).

interested in the significance of literacy as a motive for slave fugitivity in the early national period. The methodology in this study is similar to Bly's but some adjustments are made to avoid potential flaws identified in his methodology, specifically, disproportionate sampling and his classification of what constituted "literate slaves".

Significantly, disproportionate sample sizes have the potential to undermine Bly's estimated literacy rates. For the period 1730-1776, Bly sampled 2,651 fugitive slave advertisements for South Carolina compared to just 344 for New York for the same period, despite comprehensive newspaper coverage being available for New York during these years.<sup>34</sup> Of course, fewer newspapers were digitized when Bly conducted his study which may explain his reliance on indexed collections of fugitive slave advertisements and the disproportionate number of newspapers in several of his samples.<sup>35</sup> For some states, he relied upon a single newspaper title while for others he drew on multiple titles. While urban and rural newspaper coverage for specific time periods in specific states is not always available, both should be consulted before slave literacy rates are projected. Educational opportunities were different for urban and rural slaves. Urbanisation and the presence of large free black communities in urban centres such as Baltimore were presumably favourable to enslaved peoples opportunities to become literate. Consultation of only urban newspapers – where more slaves were likely to be literate – might, in Bly's case, not be an accurate reflection of literacy rates throughout the colonies.

Bly's classification of enslaved people as literate if they were advertised in possession of forged passes, books, newspapers and other literature lacks methodological rigour and has the potential to inflate regional literacy rates. Such intuitive assumptions are methodologically unsound. For example, it was common for advertisers to implicate free blacks in the forging of the passes and certificates slaves had in their possession. Some advertisers were more direct than others in implicating their slaves in forgery but, again, each advertisement must be judged on its own merits. For this reason, this project counts only fugitive slaves *explicitly* advertised as able to read and/or write as literate. Those *assumed* to be literate are not included in literacy figures. The methodological implications of this approach is that the regional literacy rates established in this study should be more accurate but also more conservative

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<sup>34</sup> Readex's America's Historical Newspapers, Early American Newspapers Series 1, 1690-1876, alone has nineteen newspapers for New York with coverage of the period between 1730 and 1776.

<sup>35</sup> Bly relies on Windley's indexed collection of fugitive slave advertisements for the Carolinas, Georgia and Maryland. For Virginia, he uses Thomas Costa's online database. For Philadelphia, a portion of Bly's sample is from Smith and Wojtowicz's collection. He samples from Hodges and Brown's collection of New York and New Jersey advertisements. For more detail of Bly's methodological approach, see Bly, *Pretends he can Read*, pp.293-294

than Bly's. It is presumed that there were slaves who were literate but not advertised as such by advertisers but it is for historians and other scholars to revise literacy figures upwards to account for such instances.

There are two major quantitative studies of fugitives and fugitivity. John Hope Franklin and Loren Schweninger's *Runaway Slaves: Rebels on the Plantation* (1999) is the seminal work in the field, having researched slave runaway advertisements for five states (Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Louisiana) between 1790 and 1816 and 1838 and 1860.<sup>36</sup> Jeremiah Dittmar and Suresh Naidu (2016) are yet to publish their results but is a much bigger survey than any previously attempted.<sup>37</sup> Both of these studies have undertaken comprehensive surveys of slave runaways and performed statistical analyses on samples of the material they have collected.

Franklin and Schweninger collected data on 8,400 slaves advertised as fugitives between 1790 and 1860. These were harvested primarily from slave runaway advertisements but also notices for slaves who had been stolen and arrested.<sup>38</sup> The five states chosen for the sample ensured comprehensive geographical distribution including the upper and lower South and the eastern and western United States. It also meant prominent "centres of the domestic slave trade"—specifically, Charleston, Richmond, and New Orleans—were accounted for in their samples.<sup>39</sup> Franklin and Schweninger estimated that nearly half their sample (4,084 fugitive slaves) were advertised during the "early period" (1790-1816) or the "later period" (1838-1860). Their analysis focused particularly on fugitive slaves advertised between 1800 and 1809 and the 1850s. From "important newspapers" with extensive runs when coverage for a particular year was large, Franklin and Schweninger compiled a population of 2,011 fugitive slaves. They logged this data, as this project does, in a self-created Runaway Slave Database (RSDB), comprising a total of forty-seven general and 183 individual variables.<sup>40</sup> These general categories included fugitive height, weight, gender, literacy, season of running away, among others. Naturally, there were advertisement which

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<sup>36</sup> John Hope Franklin and Loren Schweninger, *Runaway Slaves: Rebels on the Plantation* (New York; Oxford, 1999).

<sup>37</sup> Jeremiah Dittmar and Suresh Naidu, 'Contested Property: Fugitive Slaves in the Antebellum U.S. South' (2016), Version 0.2, preliminary working paper [cited with permission of the authors, [http://econ.tulane.edu/seminars/Naidu\\_Runaway.pdf](http://econ.tulane.edu/seminars/Naidu_Runaway.pdf). [Accessed 5 May 2017].

<sup>38</sup> Slave's stolen and arrested notices were a regular of newspapers in the American South.

<sup>39</sup> Franklin and Schweninger, *Runaway Slaves*, p.328.

<sup>40</sup> I was unsuccessful in locating Franklin and Schweninger's database. Dittmar and Naidu have also encountered this problem. They confirm, after approaching Schweninger, that the database is no longer available. See Dittmar and Naidu, *Contested Property*, p.30.

did not have information for all of the variable fields in the database.<sup>41</sup> They performed statistical analysis on this data using Statistical Analysis System (SAS).

Among the major findings of their study, Franklin and Schweninger argued that there was “remarkable continuity” in the profile of fugitive slaves across time and states. Given even the remotest chance of success, “young, strong, healthy, intelligent men” pursued freedom “from one generation to the next”.<sup>42</sup> Slave fugitivity was a powerful slave response against slaveholder authority, claimed Franklin and Schweninger, with each act of fugitivity striking a blow to the core “attitudes of the master class” and serving to undermine slaveholders’ ability to control and exploit their slaves.<sup>43</sup> “Few owners were unaware of the dissatisfaction or hostility among some of their slaves” but “could not publicly, or even privately, admit such widespread unrest existed”, concluded the authors.<sup>44</sup> Most acts of fugitivity ended in failure with slaves being brutally punished by their masters “for their unwillingness to submit”; evidence of which was recorded in the scarring, marking, and physical deformities recorded on the slave body.<sup>45</sup>

Dittmar and Naidu extracted data from over 29,000 fugitive slave advertisements printed in the United States during the period from 1840 to 1860.<sup>46</sup> The advertisements were harvested from a combination of digitalised newspapers, specifically Readex’s “American Historical Newspapers”, Series I-VIII, and those on microfilm at the Library of Congress. State and local archives were also consulted.<sup>47</sup> Data was extracted from a total of 114 different Southern newspapers from fourteen states and logged in a bespoke database.<sup>48</sup> Data was recorded from each advertisement, including the fugitives’ age, sex, height, and owner, owner’s place of residence, and reward value.

Dittmar and Naidu found in this large late Antebellum sample that slave fugitivity was far in excess of the official United States census figures, possibly as much as between 5 and 20 times more. Although only a small percentage of the entire United State slave population engaged in fugitivity, there were “considerable flows”, the authors found. Slave escapes were “frequent and short”, typically less than one month, suggesting fugitive slaves

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<sup>41</sup> Franklin and Schweninger estimate that slave runaway advertisement contained, at most, fifteen to twenty variables. See Franklin and Schweninger, *Runaway Slaves*, p.330.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p.233.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p.290.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p.291.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p.xv.

<sup>46</sup> Dittmar and Naidu, ‘Contested Property’, p.2.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p.30-31.

<sup>48</sup> Advertisements from Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, Missouri, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia were logged in the authors’ database.

were probably recaptured “relatively quickly”. The rewards that advertisers offered as an incentive for the recapture of their slaves were, in comparison to slave values, relatively low, ensuring only a “small private cost” to slaveholders, concluded the authors.<sup>49</sup>

## Methodology

This research project combines quantitative and qualitative analysis with a close semiotic reading of fugitive slave advertisements to offer an empirically-based interpretation of the nature of fugitives’ rebelliousness. It offers biographical insights into the experience of slaves throughout the formative years of the United States. The quantitative information collected in the project database stands to nuance existing slave studies and offer historians and scholars in other subfields new and original information (Appendix 1). It sheds light on slave literacy rates, age and sex profiles, naming patterns, fugitive groups, clothing and material culture, and much more. It also enables enumerations and projections to be made regarding the composition of the slave population and the behaviour of fugitives. The qualitative profile presented of slavery in Georgia and Maryland offers an original contribution to the current historical discourse on slave education and fugitivity. It provides insights into slaves’ experiences and slaveholder’s perceptions of fugitives and fugitivity. This project shuns the popular and historiographical tendency to dwell on the spectacular, but rarer, examples of slave resistance (insurrection and revolt) outwith these states. Instead, it reasserts a historical focus on the individual slaves for whom fugitivity was a more common and subtle expression of daily resistance and social identity. Through the collection and charting of micro-histories, this project illuminates the stories and experiences of over a thousand, as yet, unknown slaves; oppressed and enslaved people who were rarely allowed to act, talk, or think freely - let alone read or write.

The project examines fugitives and fugitivity in Maryland and Georgia for several reasons, the foremost of which is the neglect of these states within the historiography.<sup>50</sup> Historians who have comparatively examined slavery in the Chesapeake and lower South have traditionally focused their studies on Virginia and South Carolina. Franklin and Schweninger, the leading historians of slave fugitivity, did not include Maryland or Georgia in their samples. The contrasting socio-economic profiles of both states and their

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<sup>49</sup> Dittmar and Naidu, ‘Contested Property’, p.2.

<sup>50</sup> Mitsuhiro Wada is the exception. He comparatively analysed fugitive slave advertisement in Maryland and Georgia but his study examined the colonial period. See Mitsuhiro Wada, ‘Running from Bondage: An Analysis of the Newspaper Advertisements for Runaway Slaves in Colonial Maryland and Georgia’, *JSL*, 2 (2006), pp.11-21.

relationship with the slave trade, discussed in due course, are conducive to a project of this nature. Educational opportunities for enslaved people would appear to have been influenced by these wider developments but also by legislation targeting slave reading and writing instruction. A feature distinguishing both states, Georgia prohibited the instruction of slaves in reading and writing by 1770 but Maryland never enacted anti-literacy legislation despite a generally unfavourable attitude toward slave instruction prevailing in the state. As Phillip Morgan argued in *Slave Counterpoint* (1998), the slave societies of the Chesapeake and Lowcountry were “At once very alike, and yet significantly different” thus “provide intelligent commentaries upon another. They are not so dissimilar that comparison is fruitless. Rather, each society looks different in light of the other; and our understanding of each is enlarged by knowledge of the other”.<sup>51</sup>

This project set out to locate every fugitive slave advertisement published in Georgia and Maryland between 1790 and 1810, and to read and log in the database as many as possible. The objective was to compile a comprehensive dataset in order to construct a detailed prosopography of fugitive slaves from these states. Samples were also taken from newspapers published in the neighbouring states of South Carolina and Virginia.<sup>52</sup> This undertaking was dependent upon the availability of newspapers in online repositories.

Newspaper accessibility was initially limited to Readex’s “Early American Newspapers” Series II. Every issue of every newspaper published in Georgia and Maryland between 1790 and 1810 was examined for slave runaway advertisements.<sup>53</sup> This was an intentional decision to avoid methodological issues associated with Bly’s methodology, specifically, it ensured newspaper coverage included major seaports and rural newspaper titles. It became apparent that there were significant gaps in coverage of newspaper series between 1802 and 1810 (Georgia) and between 1790 and 1800 (Maryland). To compensate, access to Readex’s “Early American Newspapers” Series I and Genealogybank’s “Historical

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<sup>51</sup> Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, p.xvi.

<sup>52</sup> A sample size of 360 for each state was required for a confidence level of 95% and a confidence interval of 5, for comparison with a statistical population of 4993 adverts from Georgia and Maryland. Samples were collected using keyword searches in GenealogyBank Historical Newspapers, and these are described below in footnote 54. Random samples could not be generated automatically, therefore navigation keys were used to choose pages at random manually, from which the first or last advert listed was selected for inspection.

<sup>53</sup> The Georgia newspapers which met the criteria were the *Georgia Gazette*, *Southern Centinel and Universal Gazette*, and the *Columbian Museum*. There were a total of five Maryland newspapers initially examined. These were the *Republican Star*, *Republican Gazette and General Advertiser*, *Republican Advocate*, *North American and Mercantile Daily Advertiser*, and *Federal Republican*.

Newspapers, 1690-2016” was obtained and this rectified the issue (Appendix 2). These additional newspapers were searched systematically by keyword.<sup>54</sup>

In total, 5,567 fugitive slave advertisements (FSA) were collected and 2,350 fugitives identified, including 805 from Georgia and 1,027 from Maryland (See Table I.I and Table I.II).<sup>55</sup> All of the information contained within each advertisement was captured. Data was entered in a Microsoft Access relational database, the Fugitive Slaves Database (FSdb), currently containing over 9,000 extracted records, and described below. Records were filtered using MS Access SQL and exported to IBM SPSS and Microsoft Excel for statistical analysis.<sup>56</sup> The data that has been collected from fugitive slave advertisements published between 1790 and 1810 comprises a fraction of the information that could be harvested from fugitive slave advertisements during the early national period, let alone the span of American history from the colonial times to the Civil War.

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<sup>54</sup> Boolean keyword searches using a variety of combinations (such as “fugitive+slave”) quickly revealed that a combination of “runaway” and “reward” was the most reliable way of finding fugitive slave advertisements and excluding material relating to fugitive servants.

<sup>55</sup> The total number of fugitives examined for both Georgia and Maryland exceeded those reported by Franklin and Schwenger for a longer period, 1790 to 1816: 95 fugitives for Virginia, 536 in North Carolina, 516 in South Carolina, 138 in Tennessee, and 122 in Louisiana. Larger samples do not, of course, guarantee more precise or accurate statistics. See Franklin and Schwenger, *Runaway Slaves*, p.329.

<sup>56</sup> At each stage I worked closely with my supervisor, Dr. Colin Nicolson, checking and reviewing procedures, conducting analysis, and reviewing the results.

**Table I.I. Advertisements, 1790-1810.**

State	Advertisements	%	First Postings	%	Reposted	%	Records Extracted	%	Ratio of Records to Advertisements
Georgia	1859	33%	230	12%	1629	88%	4585	47%	2.47
Maryland	3134	56%	428	14%	2706	86%	4333	44%	1.38
South Carolina*	249	4%	198	80%	51	20%	444	5%	1.78
Virginia*	325	6%	143	44%	182	56%	442	5%	1.36
Total	5567	100%	999	18%	4568	82%	9804	100%	1.76

\* South Carolina and Virginia newspapers were sampled.

*Source:* Advertisements collected from newspapers published in Georgia, Maryland, South Carolina and Virginia between 1790 and 1810. Available Readex's "American Historical Newspapers", Series One and Two, and GenealogyBank, "Historical Newspapers, 1690-2016". Newspapers consulted are listed in Appendix 2.

**Table I.II. Fugitives by State of Escape, 1790-1810.**

State	Frequency	Percent
Georgia	805	34.3
Maryland	1027	43.7
South Carolina	287	12.2
Virginia	228	9.7
Florida	1	0.0
New Jersey	1	0.0
Tennessee	1	0.0
Total	2350	100

\* Fugitives identified in advertisements for runaway slaves in newspapers published in Georgia, Maryland, South Carolina, and Virginia, 1790-1810.

Source: Fugitive Slave Database



Two data sets were created from the (FSdb) to perform statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics were performed on a data set comprising all cases for the fugitive slave population of Georgia and Maryland (FSP). Analysis of the FSP enhances the study of fugitivity in these states. Random samples of 200 cases were taken for each of the four states considered (Georgia, Maryland, South Carolina, and Virginia) and stored in a separate data set (SampleFSP). Where possible, the SampleFSP was used for inferential statistics that might help in understanding patterns of fugitivity more generally throughout the slaveholding regions of the United States. These two data sets are not suitable for cross-group statistical comparison as several cases appear in both. Cases for South Carolina and Virginia, which do not appear in the FSP, were used for one sample t-tests. The results of statistical analysis are reported largely in tables and figures in Chapter Two and in Appendices 5-8.<sup>57</sup> Throughout, I have compared my findings to those of others reported in the secondary literature.

Newspapers are the predominant source of reference in this project but the core datasets are supplemented with archival and printed primary materials. Slavery collections were consulted in archives in both the United States and United Kingdom. Slaveholder correspondence, plantation diaries and ledgers, and documentation relating to slave sales and fugitivity comprise most of the material collected. The slavery collections consulted in Maryland were held at the Maryland Historical Society and the Maryland State Archives, in Baltimore and Annapolis, respectively. Most of the materials relating to slavery in Georgia came from the Hargrett Library in Athens, although manuscripts were also consulted at the Georgia Historical Society in Savannah and the Georgia State Archive in Morrow. The archival material in the United Kingdom comes from the Bodleian Weston Library at the University of Oxford. Other printed primary materials that have been used in the dissertation include former slave narratives, census data, and legislation relating to slavery.

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<sup>57</sup> Samples were generated in SPSS from the data set of 2,350 fugitives identified in the FSA and recorded in the FSdb using the random feature of the select cases menu. A percentage value was entered that would randomly generate approximately 200 cases; if more were reported, excess cases were randomly selected and manually deleted. This process was undertaken separately for each of the four states and all cases merged into a new data set Sample FSP. For a slave population of 1,191,362 in 1810, a sample size of 384 was needed to perform statistics with a confidence level of 95% and a confidence interval of 5. The SampleFSP comprises 800 cases, more than twice the minimum requirement, and enables calculations to be undertaken with a confidence interval of 3.46 (assuming a 50 percent “response”). The FSP of 1,832 cases for Georgia and Maryland permits a confidence interval of 2.29.

Fugitive slave advertisements adhered to a common publication pattern between 1790 and 1810. When a case of slave fugitivity was discovered, slaveholders composed an advertisement intended to facilitate recapture of the fugitive or fugitives. The advertisement was sent to the local printer of the newspaper for inclusion. The advertiser did not have to subscribe to the newspaper in which he or she advertised. The advertisement contained a description of the fugitive or fugitives, a reward, and, although not always, the date of composition, the date of escape, and the likely whereabouts of the fugitive or fugitives. Advertisers almost always inserted their name at the foot of the notice. Advertisements were printed in a single newspaper but sometimes in addition to another newspaper. It was not uncommon for advertisers to have their notice published in neighbouring states or in locations they believed the fugitives may be hiding or harboured. An example of this is Roger Abbott's advertisement for his runaway slave, Lewis. At the foot of the advertisement, Abbott included an editorial note which requested "The editors of the *Washington Federalist*, Geo. Town, the *Federal Gazette*, Baltimore, and *U. States Gazette*, Philadelphia ... to publish the above advertisement once a week, for 3 weeks, in their respective papers, and send their accounts to the Editor".<sup>58</sup> Advertisements typically ceased upon the recapture of the runaway, although this cannot be assumed, or until the advertiser decided to cease advertising for other reasons.

The advertisements collected (FSA) comprised first or original publications (18 percent) and repeats (82 percent) (Table I.I). It was common for fugitive slave advertisements to be reprinted with little or no revisions. Revisions typically included adjustments to the reward value or the inclusion of more current information on the whereabouts of the slave or the company they were keeping. Runaway advertisements were placed without any reposting for 42.51 percent of the fugitives identified in the FSA. Around 72 percent of fugitive slaves in Georgia and 59 percent in Maryland featured in repeat advertisements (Table I.III). Most advertisements contained information on a single fugitive, but in Georgia, 52 percent listed two or more runaways (Table I.IV). Chapter Two examines these associations in more detail and explores how the chronology of publication and escape assists in estimating the length of fugitivity.

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<sup>58</sup>*Alexandria Daily Advertiser*, 3 August 1803.

**Table I.III. Fugitives and Advertisements, 1790-1810.**

Printing Frequency of Advertisements	All		Georgia		Maryland		South Carolina		Virginia	
	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent	n	Percent
<b>1</b>	999	42.51%	230	27.91%	428	41.31%	198	73.33%	143	65.00%
<b>2-9</b>	1133	48.21%	465	56.43%	529	51.06%	67	24.81%	72	32.73%
<b>10-19</b>	156	6.64%	91	11.04%	55	5.31%	5	1.85%	5	2.27%
<b>20-29</b>	29	1.23%	20	2.43%	9	0.87%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
<b>30-39</b>	17	0.72%	12	1.46%	5	0.48%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
<b>40-49</b>	4	0.17%	2	0.24%	2	0.19%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
<b>50-59</b>	4	0.17%	4	0.49%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
<b>60-69</b>	2	0.09%	0	0.00%	2	0.19%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
<b>70-79</b>	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
<b>80-89</b>	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
<b>90-99</b>	2	0.09%	0	0.00%	2	0.19%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
<b>100-109</b>	3	0.13%	0	0.00%	3	0.29%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
<b>110-119</b>	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
<b>120-129</b>	1	0.04%	0	0.00%	1	0.10%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%
	<b>2350</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>824</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>1036</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>220</b>	<b>100.00</b>

n = number of fugitives

Source: Fugitive Slave Database

**Table I.IV. Fugitives in Advertisements, 1790-1810.**

Fugitives in Advertisements, 1790-1810	All	Percent	Georgia (a)	Percent	Maryland (a)	Percent	South Carolina (a)	Percent	Virginia (a)	Percent
<b>1</b>	3640	65.42%	884	47.58%	2343	74.81%	170	68.27%	243	74.77%
<b>2-9</b>	1891	33.99%	943	50.75%	789	25.19%	77	30.92%	82	25.23%
<b>10-19</b>	33	0.59%	31	1.67%	0	0.00%	2	0.80%	0	0.00%
	<b>5564</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>1858</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>3132</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>249</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>325</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

a=advertisements

Source: Fugitive Slave Database

The data harvested from the FSA was classified into various fields in the FSdb (Appendix 3). It is organised thematically by advertisement, reward, advertiser (and other persons including overseers, estate administrators, owners), fugitivity, and, the fugitives. Under each of these themes are several fields of data. For advertisements, data logged includes 'newspapers title', 'state of publication', 'date of issue', and 'page and column number'. There are several fields used to log reward information including a 'reward description field', 'reward value', and 'indexed reward'.<sup>59</sup> For advertisers, the 'advertiser' field is used to log the advertiser by a unique identification number. The 'advertiser comment' is an especially useful field. It is used to log advertiser remarks on how they expected fugitives to behave, details of former owners and family members, and other information concerning the history of the fugitive. Numerous fields are used to log details of the act of fugitivity including the 'method of escape', 'place of escape', 'county of escape', and 'state of escape'. A 'date of escape comment field', using advertiser comments, provides more specific information on the events of escape. A 'date of escape first given' and 'date of escape last given' account for instances when advertisers did not know precisely when the slave absconded. The data logged for the fugitives include general biographical data as well as personality, skills, and physical appearance data. Where possible, the wording has been left in its original form but spelling errors have been amended when logged in the FSdb. In instances where advertisers' descriptions were particularly lengthy, some words were shortened and/or the descriptions paraphrased to ensure all information could be input into the database.

### Research Context

This project concentrates on the years 1790 to 1810, a period of transition in the history of American slavery. It accounts for the early years of the young United States following the ratification of the Constitution and ends shortly after the formal abolition of the international slave trade in 1808. The research period start date was also the year in which the first United States census was published thus establishing a base for proper statistical study of the slave population. While slavery had been entrenched during the colonial era, it expanded considerably during the research period. For slaves who had expected that the republican and libertarian rhetoric promoting the freedom and equality of *all* men included them, fugitivity was a viable form of protest and means to achieve freedom. While it is

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<sup>59</sup> The fields and reward values are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2, in the subsection entitled 'The Value of Enslaved People', p.159.

outwith the scope of this project to account fully for the growth of the slave populations of Georgia and Maryland, it is important to highlight aspects relevant to enumerating fugitivity and profiling the fugitive slaves.

The period from 1790 to 1810 is an understudied period in slavery studies. The demographic and socio-economic transformations associated with the expansion of slavery in the regions were in their early stages during the last years of the eighteenth century and first decades of the nineteenth. Historical records for the period are also less extensive than for later years, especially between 1840 and 1860. Furthermore, whereas the Revolutionary War (1775-83) and the American Civil War (1861-65) provided opportunities for mass fugitivity, the period 1790-1810 did not. There were no major wars in the United States during the research period.

Nonetheless, the early years of the research period coincides with the slave uprising in St. Domingue (1791-1805), the impact of which was experienced throughout the Americas, and the research period ends shortly before the onset of the Second British War (1812-14) and the Creek War (1814).<sup>60</sup> These external events must be considered when evaluating fugitivity in the American South, though need not always be in focus. In *Africa in America* (1994), Michael Mullin described the period 1775-1815 as “one of fundamental change in the Caribbean and the American South”.<sup>61</sup> Eugene D. Genovese and Douglas R. Egerton both describe the slave uprising in Saint Domingue as an epoch in the history of black resistance. For Genovese, it ushered an historical shift from slave revolts intended to secure freedom to those attempting to overthrow the slave system.<sup>62</sup> Egerton argued that news of the Haitian Revolution inspired black Americans “determined to realize the egalitarian promise of the American Revolution” that “if they dared, the end of slavery was within reach”.<sup>63</sup> Gary B. Nash’s argument that “Haiti would continue to stand as a symbol

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<sup>60</sup> For studies of the Haitian uprising, see Robin Blackburn, ‘Haiti, Slavery, and the Age of Democratic Revolution’, *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 63:4 (Oct., 2006), pp.643-674; Laurent Dubois, *Haiti: The Aftershocks of History* (New York, 2012); David Barry Gaspar and David Patrick Geggus (eds.), *A Turbulent Time: The French Revolution and the Greater Caribbean* (Bloomington; Indianapolis, 1997); David Patrick Geggus, *Slavery, War, and Revolution: The British Occupation of Saint Domingue, 1793-1798* (New York, 1982); David Patrick Geggus (ed.), *The Impact of the Haitian Revolution in the Atlantic World* (Columbia, 2001); David Patrick Geggus and Normal Fiering (eds.), *The World of the Haitian Revolution* (Bloomington; Indianapolis, 2009); David Geggus (ed.), *The Haitian Revolution: A documentary History* (Indianapolis; Cambridge, 2014).

<sup>61</sup> Michael Mullin, *Africa in America: Slave Acculturation and Resistance in the American South and the British Caribbean, 1736-1831* (Urbana; Chicago, 1994).

<sup>62</sup> Eugene D. Genovese, *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern World* (Baton Rouge, 1992), p.3.

<sup>63</sup> Douglas R. Egerton, ‘Slave Resistance’, in Robert L. Paquette and Mark M. Smith (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Slavery in the America’s* (New York, 2010), p.450; See also Douglas R. Egerton, ‘Slaves to the Marketplace: Economic Liberty and Black Rebelliousness in the Atlantic World’, *Journal of the Early Republic*, 26:4 (Winter, 2006), p.620.

of black autonomy and equal rights for many decades” for black Philadelphians is applicable to slaves throughout the United States.<sup>64</sup>

Watson W. Jennison has shown that while the revolution in Haiti “unsettled slave communities throughout the Americas and shattered long-standing beliefs about race”, this fear was especially pronounced in Georgia.<sup>65</sup> In Savannah, such was the heightened fear of slave insurrection, that the city council urged slave masters fleeing Saint Domingue to land their ships at “such other places as would be less obnoxious to the people”.<sup>66</sup> Walter Charlton Hartridge’s study of the more than 500 refugees from the island to Maryland suggests news of the uprising quickly filtered into Maryland’s slave population.<sup>67</sup> While there is no evidence that fugitivity in the United States increased in these states or, indeed, any slaveholding state in the United States South, as a direct response to the French and Haitian Revolution, their inception most certainly unsettled white Southerners fearful of slave insurrection. Yet, while the Caribbean was besieged by “major slave rebellions,” the American South “had to contend with only one major revolt and a few conspiracies”.<sup>68</sup> Inhabitable hinterlands, a heavily armed white population, and resident landlord class were among the reasons the United States was less conducive to slave revolt and insurrection than the Caribbean, argued Egerton.<sup>69</sup> Revolt was perceived among the enslaved in the Old South, Genovese contends, as effectively “suicidal”.<sup>70</sup> These conditions were more favourable to fugitivity; a more common and subtle form of slave resistance. The first federal legislation addressing the growing issue of slave fugitivity, the Fugitive Slave Act (1793), was passed in the early years of the research period. While state slave codes restricted slave mobility and recognised slaves as the legal property

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<sup>64</sup> Gary B. Nash, ‘Reverberations of Haiti in the American North: Black Saint Domingans in Philadelphia’, *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies*, 65 (1998), p.66.

<sup>65</sup> Watson W. Jennison, *Cultivating Race: The Expansion of Slavery in Georgia, 1750-1860* (Lexington, 2012), p.41;

<sup>66</sup> Thomas Gamble, Jr., *A History of the City Government of Savannah, GA., from 1790-1801/Compiled from Official Records by Thomas Gamble, Jr., Secretary to the Mayor, Under Direction of the City Council, 1900* (Savannah, 1901).

<sup>67</sup> Walter Charlton Hartridge, ‘The Refugees from the Island of St. Domingo in Maryland’, *Maryland Historical Magazine*, 96:4 (Winter, 2001), pp.475-489.

<sup>68</sup> Mullin, *Africa in America*, pp.216-217; For a useful history of slave revolts in the United States, see Marion D.deB. Kilson, ‘Towards Freedom: An Analysis of Slave Revolts in the United States’, *Phylon*, 25:2 (2nd Qtr., 1964), pp.175-187.

<sup>69</sup> Egerton notes that these factors conspired to ensure that large scale insurrection such as those witnessed in French, Portuguese, and Spanish colonies only rarely occurred in the United States. See Egerton, ‘Slave Resistance’, p.447.

<sup>70</sup> Genovese argues that slaveholder paternalism and the development of “reciprocal” relationship between enslaved people and their masters ensured slaves in the United States were less likely to revolt than Caribbean slaves. The “reciprocal” master-slave relationship is also explored by Peter Kolchin. He argued that slaves were more likely to resist their enslavement when masters threatened what little autonomy, “rights”, and “privileges”, they had formed for themselves or when slaveholders behaved in a manner deemed “unacceptable”. See Genovese, *From Rebellion to Revolution*, p.6; Kolchin, *American Slavery*, p.163.

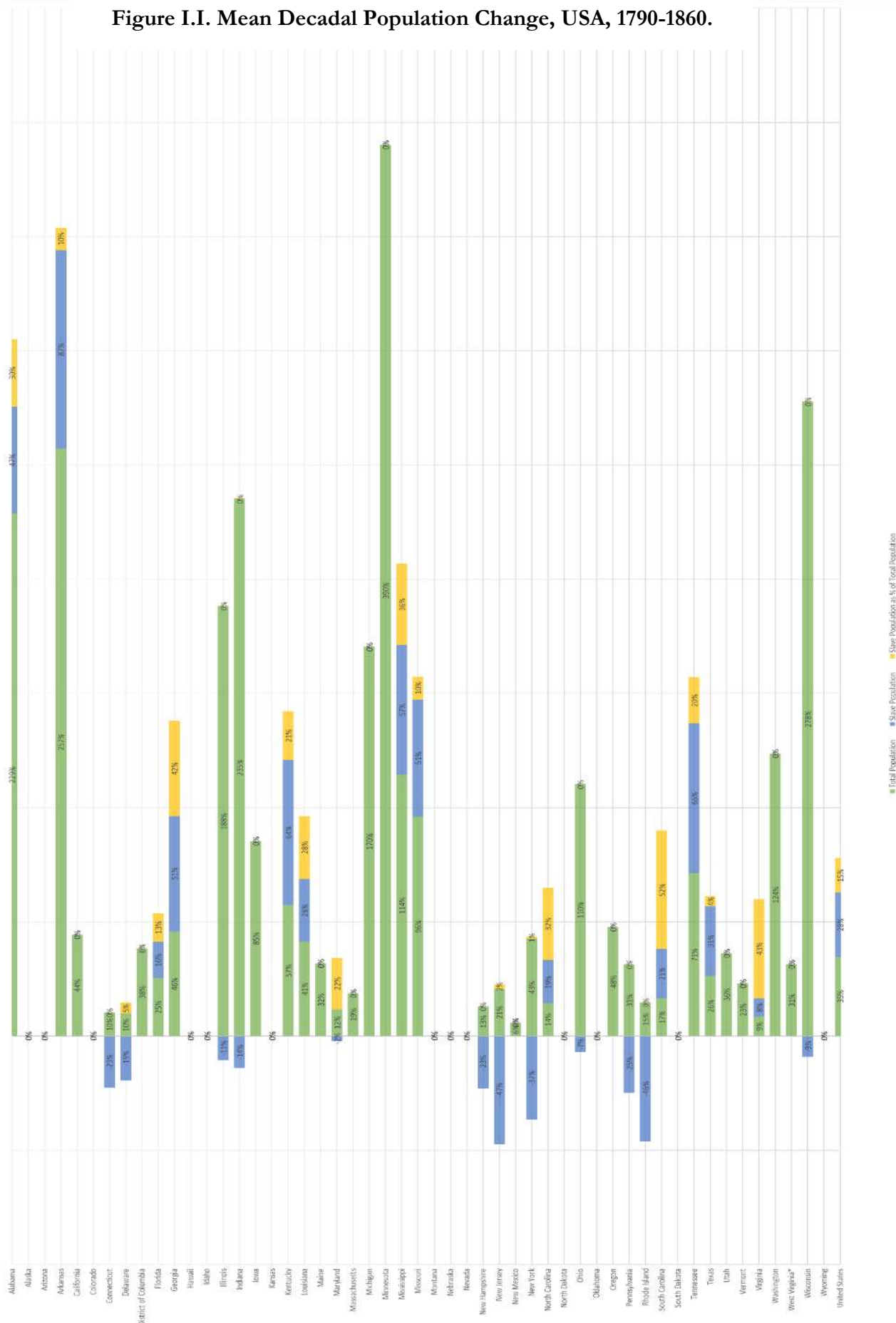
of their masters, the Fugitive Slave Act permitted persons to hunt fugitive slaves and return them to the states from which they had fled.<sup>71</sup>

The US slave population was 697,624 in 1790, rising to 3,953,760 by 1860. By this time, slaves comprised 13 percent of the total population of the United States having increased on average 28 percent each decade. The slave population increased at a slower decadal rate than the total United States population. Only Georgia, among the former British colonies, surpassed the national average, with its slave population increasing by 51 percent, on average, per decade. In Maryland, the slave population declined by an average of 2 percent per decade (Figure I.I). Slaves lived and worked in urban areas, but the overwhelming majority were found on farms and plantations. By 1850, most slaves resided in states that had entered the Union after 1790.

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<sup>71</sup> *The Constitution of the United States with the Acts of Congress, relating to Slavery, Embracing the Constitution, The Fugitive Slave Act of 1793, the Missouri Compromise Act of 1820, the Fugitive Slave Law of 1850 and the Nebraska and Kansas Bill, carefully compiled* (Rochester, 1854), pp.16-17.

Figure I.I. Mean Decadal Population Change, USA, 1790-1860.



\*Extrapolated from figures for Virginia by US Census Bureau

Sources: US Census Bureau <https://www.census.gov/population/www/censusdata/pop1790-1990.html>. Slave population figures taken from <https://www2.census.gov/prod2/decennial/documents/00165897ch14.pdf>



Cotton cultivation provided the economic impetus for the expansion of slavery throughout the lower South and westward. Where cotton thrived, the slave population grew. This growth was most pronounced throughout the so-called Black Belt of the South, arching from Virginia to Louisiana. The slave population also grew in Georgia and South Carolina, and, to a lesser extent, in Maryland and Virginia.<sup>72</sup> The demand for slaves in the lower South as cotton production increased reinvigorated the marketability and value of the slave population in the upper South. While the “full implementation” of the domestic slave trade did not occur until the 1830s, after the formal ending of the transatlantic slave trade, the forced migration of enslaved people from Maryland to Georgia via the domestic slave trade was common practice during the research period, Steven Deyle has shown.<sup>73</sup> By 1790, Maryland was the second leading supplier of slaves to the domestic slave trade—“the second middle passage”—behind Virginia.<sup>74</sup> Socio-economic transformations in the profiles of the lower and upper South states, including Georgia and Maryland, were fuelled by the domestic slave trade. The “Upper South and the Lower South recognized that they each needed each other for their continued economic success”, contended Deyle, “the interregional slave trade held together the various states within it in a mutually dependent relationship”.<sup>75</sup> While the sale of Maryland slaves into the cotton regime of the lower South generated personal wealth for planters, it was also a vital source of finance for developing the emerging industrial economy of the upper South.<sup>76</sup>

While the growth of the cotton economy had grave implications for slaves who became victims of the domestic slave trade, the rise in cotton production provided economic opportunities for white migrants. Artisans from the Northern states and Europe migrated to the Southern Cotton Belt between 1790 and 1830, over time establishing themselves as planters.<sup>77</sup> In Georgia, artisans’ skills were in great demand from 1790. Walter J. Fraser, Jr., estimates “thousands” descended on “Middle Georgia”, or central Georgia, from the neighbouring Carolinas and Virginia following the American Revolution. Approximately

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<sup>72</sup> The enslaved population of Maryland only grew until 1810, when it peaked, before it began to decline.

<sup>73</sup> Steven Deyle, *Carry Me Back: The Domestic Slave Trade in American Life* (New York, 2005), p.41.

<sup>74</sup> Seth Rockman, *Scraping By: Wage Labor, Slavery, and Survival in Early Baltimore* (Baltimore, 2009), p.31.

<sup>75</sup> Deyle, *Carry Me Back*, p.41; For the antebellum slave trade, see Walter Johnson, *Soul by Soul: Life Inside the Antebellum Slave Market* (Cambridge (Mass.); London, 1999).

<sup>76</sup> Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, p.265.

<sup>77</sup> Michele K. Gillespie, ‘Planters in the Making: Artisanal Opportunity in Georgia, 1790-1830’, in Howard B. Rock, Paul A. Gilje, and Robert Asher (eds.), *American Artisans: Crafting Social Identity, 1750-1850* (Baltimore, 1995), p.33.

nine-tenths of Georgia's white population and one-half of the black population resided in the northern upcountry by the 1790s, argued Fraser, Jr.<sup>78</sup>

The contrasting historical demography of slavery in Georgia and Maryland is an important backdrop to an investigation of slave fugitivity. Georgia's slave population was approximately 29,264 in 1790, which appears modest in comparison to Maryland's of 103,036.<sup>79</sup> But in Georgia's case, slaves accounted for 35 percent of the state population (82,548), whereas in Maryland, slaves accounted for 32 percent (of 319,728). Thereafter, Georgia's slave population soared: it reached 149,656 in 1820, comprising 44 percent of the state population, a level that it retained until in 1860 when the slave population numbered 462,198. The growth was largely attributable to the expansion of cotton production throughout the lower South. In neighbouring South Carolina, the slave population increased at more than twice the national averages during the 1790s and 1800s and did not slow down until the 1850s. Maryland's slave population peaked at 111,502 in 1810 but thereafter declined by 4 percent in the 1820s and 1830s, and by 13 percent in the 1840s. Maryland was the only Southern state where the enslaved population declined. This declension was linked to the economic diversification practised by the state's planters and farmers, which required a more flexible labour force than slavery allowed. In the Chesapeake region, Virginia was where most of the slave population was concentrated, not Maryland. Maryland's slave population declined in the decade from 1810 but Virginia's increased 13 percent. Maryland, which had the third highest slave population in 1790, was among the states with the fewest slaves by 1860. In contrast, Virginia, had the largest slave population in 1790 and still did so in 1860 (490,865). Georgia had the second largest slave population and South Carolina, the fifth largest.

Georgia's slave population density was highest in the Black Belt piedmont region, lying between mountains to the west and coastal plains to the east (Figure 1.2). By 1830, the counties situated in the Southern Black Belt (Greene, Hancock, Jasper, Morgan, Oglethorpe, and Putnam) had a combined population of 39,166 and slaves were generally in the majority, comprising between 48 and 61 percent of the counties' populations (Appendix 4). Plantation labour in the piedmont was devoted to the cultivation of short staple, or coastal cotton. Clarence L. Mohr's study of slavery in Oglethorpe County highlights the transformation that

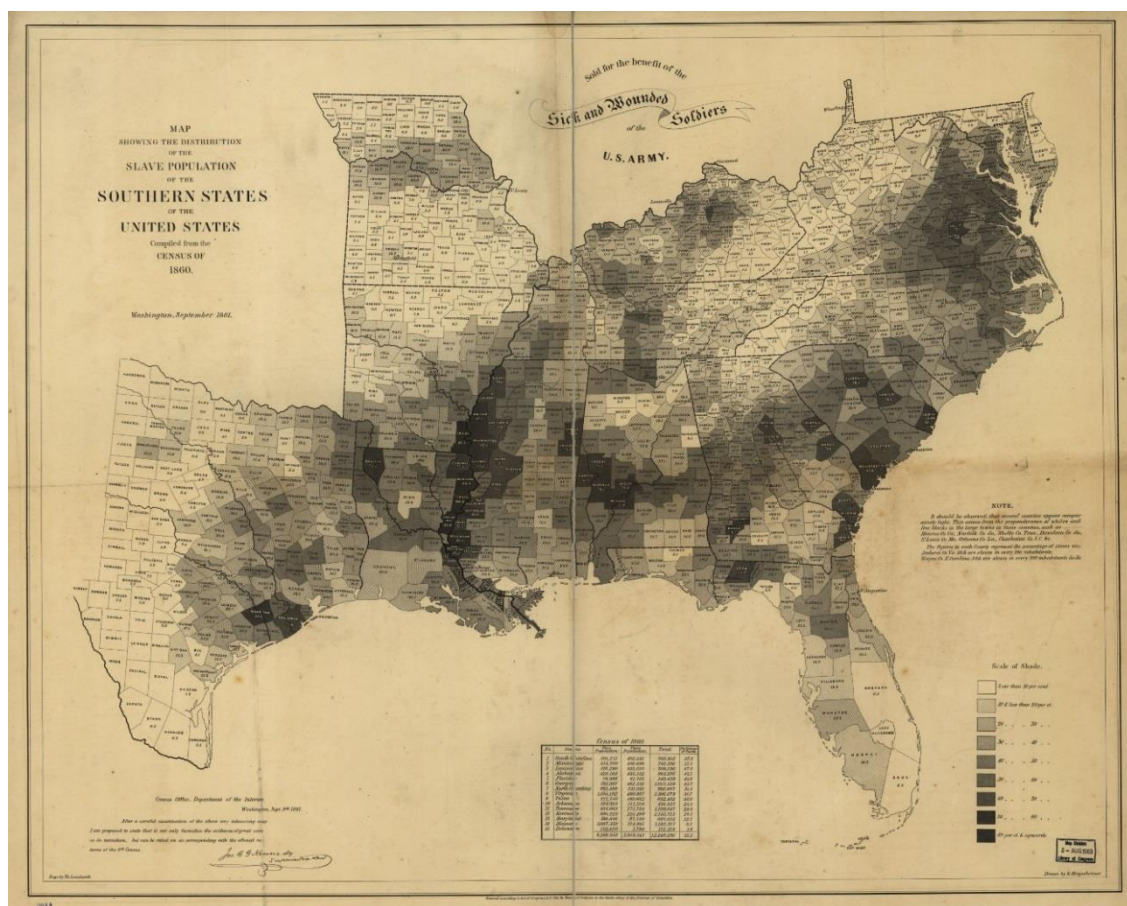
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<sup>78</sup> Walter J. Fraser, Jr., *Savannah in the Old South* (Athens; London, 2005), pp.152-153.

<sup>79</sup> U.S. Census Bureau, *Return of the Whole Number of Persons within the Several Districts of the United States, according to "An act Providing for the Enumeration of the Inhabitants of the United States", passed March the First, One Thousand Seven Hundred and Ninety-One* (Philadelphia, 1793), p.3.

occurred during the first two decades of the nineteenth century when cotton displaced tobacco as the primary staple crop of the region and the slave population doubled between 1800 and 1820 to surpass whites.<sup>80</sup>

**Figure 1.2.** E. Hergesheimer. *Map Showing the distribution of the slave population of the southern states of the United States. Compiled from the census of 1860.* Henry S. Graham, 1861. [Map].



Source: Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/ody0314/>. [Accessed 19 July 2017].

The Georgia Low Country (the Atlantic seaboard counties) also contained some the largest cotton plantations in the antebellum South. By 1830, Camden, Glynn, Liberty, and McIntosh had a combined population of 13,995, about a third of the total for the piedmont counties. Slaves were also the majority demographic group, accounting for between 57 and 81 percent of the counties' populations. By 1860, slaves made up three-quarters of the Low

<sup>80</sup> Clarence L. Mohr, 'Slavery in Oglethorpe County, Georgia 1773-1865', *Phylon*, 33:1 (1st Qtr., 1972), p.4.

Country's total population, although slave populations in this region were less than 40 percent of those in the piedmont (Appendix 4). Even higher concentrations of slaves were to be found in counties established in the late antebellum period (such as Baker and Dougherty), as cotton cultivation and slavery moved westward into what had been Native American land.

Slave labour was more diverse in the Low Country than in the piedmont. It was used in the cultivation of rice, indigo, and Sea Island or long-staple cotton. The value of long-staple cotton rose from 10.5 cents per pound in the 1780s to \$2 per pound by 1805.<sup>81</sup> Indigo and rice production in the Low Country declined correspondingly, though cultivation of both crops had overtaken and replaced tobacco.<sup>82</sup> The invention of the cotton gin and expansion of short-staple cotton cultivation in the upland and interior regions accelerated indigo's decline in Georgia.<sup>83</sup> Rice production also declined as cultivation moved westward into Louisiana, Arkansas, and Texas.<sup>84</sup> Rice cultivation did not entirely disappear in the Low Country, and where it survived was largely due to tidal irrigation techniques, first introduced in the 1750s and extended in the 1780s.<sup>85</sup>

The seaport city of Savannah, located in the south-east of the state in Chatham County, was the primary export hub for both the piedmont counties and Low Country (Figure I.III). Fraser, Jr., estimates that by the turn of the eighteenth century, two million dollars of cotton and rice were being exported from Savannah each year.<sup>86</sup> Susan Eva O'Donovan has shown that by the 1850s, there were over 500,000 bales of cotton exported from Savannah each year, as the city overtook Charleston (South Carolina) as the leading American distributor of cotton.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Junius P. Rodriguez (ed.), *Slavery in the United States: A Social, Political, and Historical Encyclopaedia*. Volume One. (Santa Barbara; Denver; Oxford, 2007), p.375.

<sup>82</sup> Ross M. Robertson, *History of the American Economy*. Second Edition. (New York; Burlingame, 1955), p.110.

<sup>83</sup> Peter d' Alroy Jones, *An Economic History of the United States since 1783* (London, 1969), p.18; Other contributing factors, according to Ira Berlin, were "the loss of British subsidies, competition from Louisiana and Central America, and a series of natural disasters". See Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, p.307.

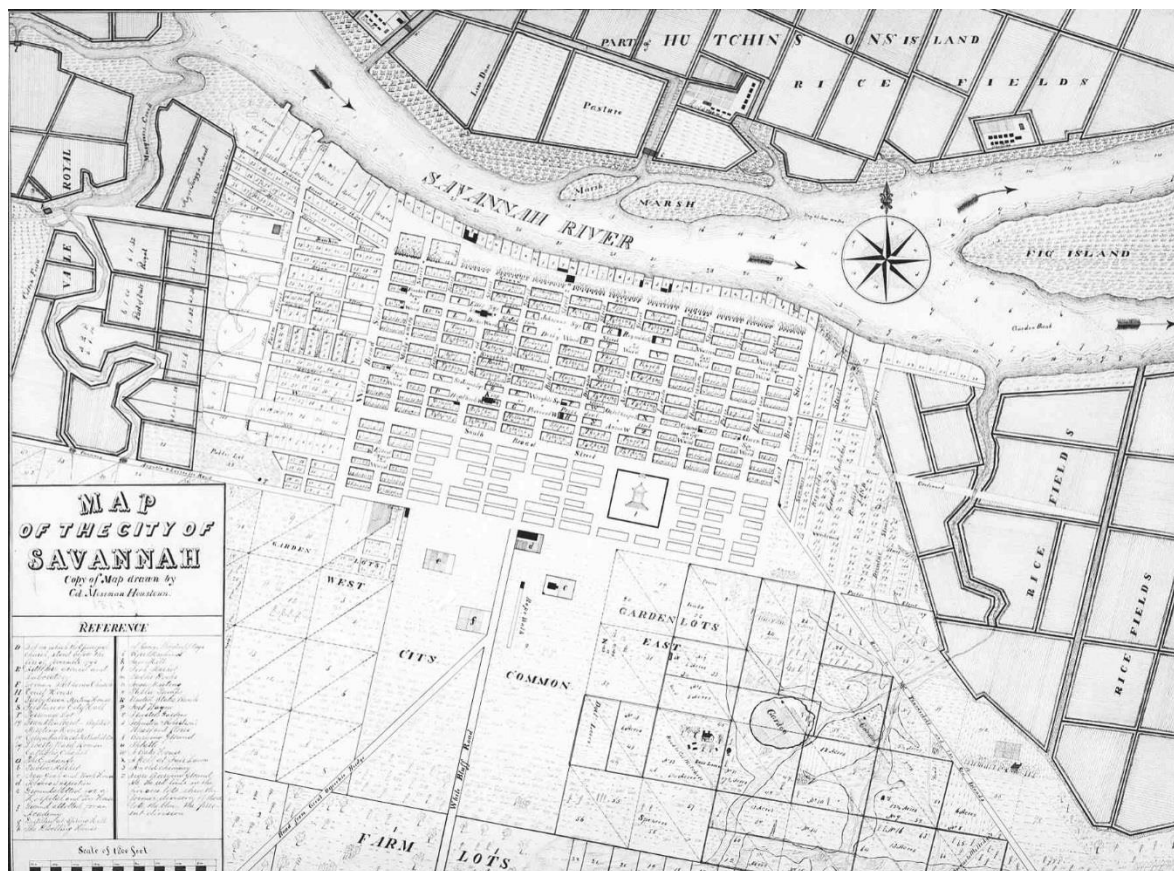
<sup>84</sup> Frey, *Water from the Rock*, p.327.

<sup>85</sup> Julia Floyd Smith, *Slavery and Rice Culture in Low County Georgia, 1750-1860* (Knoxville, 1985); For an in-depth study of tidal rice cultivation in Georgia and neighbouring South Carolina, see Joyce E. Chaplin, 'Tidal Rice Cultivation and the Problem of Slavery in South Carolina and Georgia, 1760-1815', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 49:1 (1992), pp.29-61.

<sup>86</sup> Fraser, Jr., *Savannah in the Old South*, pp.152-153.

<sup>87</sup> Susan Eva O'Donovan, 'At the Intersection of Cotton and Commerce: Antebellum Savannah and Its Slaves', in Leslie M. Harris and Daina Ramey Berry (eds.), *Slavery and Freedom in Savannah* (Athens, 2014), p.48; For a very useful table of cotton exports from Savannah for the period 1804-1848, see O'Donovan, 'At the Intersection', p.49.

Figure I.III *Map of the City of Savannah. Houston, 1812.*  
[Map].



Source: Hargrett Library Rare Map Collections. Map 1812 H6. <http://www.libs.uga.edu/darchive/hargrett/maps/coast.html>. [Accessed 19 July 2017].

Whittington Bernard Johnson described Savannah as an “African-American social melting pot” between 1790 and 1820.<sup>88</sup> Besides those permanently residing in the city, the slave population included slaves accompanying visiting masters, fugitives seeking to merge into obscurity, and transient and nominal slaves. This included slaves permitted by their owners to hire their labour in the city on the condition that a fixed percentage of their earnings would be given to their master.<sup>89</sup> There were also “new” slaves, victims of the

<sup>88</sup> Whittington Bernard Johnson, *Black Savannah: 1788-1864* (Fayetteville, 1996), p.109.

<sup>89</sup> Timothy James Lockley, “Trading Encounters between Non-Elite Whites and African Americans in Savannah, 1790-1860”, *The Journal of Southern History*, 66:1 (Feb., 2000), pp.25-48; Betty Wood, “‘Never on a Sunday?’: Slavery & the Sabbath in Lowcountry Georgia, 1750-1830”, in Mary. Turner (ed.), *From Chattel Slaves to Wage Slaves: The Dynamics of Labour Bargaining in the Americas* (London, 1995), pp.79-96.

transatlantic slave trade.<sup>90</sup> This included Betsey Baptiste who was shipped to Georgia from Africa in 1795.<sup>91</sup> Baptiste worked as a fruit vendor in Savannah after she was “freed” in 1813 (although it is likely she was still legally a slave).<sup>92</sup> By 1810, slaves outnumbered free blacks in Savannah, 2,195 to 530, respectively.<sup>93</sup> Savannah’s slave population unsurprisingly rose as Georgia’s slave population grew, more than doubling from 3,075 to 7,712 between 1820 and 1860, when it comprised 48 percent of Chatham County’s total, not least because dockside slave labour was required to process the growing output of the state (Appendix 4).

Baltimore, like Savannah, was a growing port town with an extensive rural hinterland (Figure I.IV).<sup>94</sup> It was, as historian Lawrence H. Larsen claimed, “North America’s first boom town”.<sup>95</sup> This was, in part, attributable to the town’s slave population growing at a faster rate than the entire state’s slave population from 1790 until 1815. The growth reflected an influx of slaves from other states as well as from rural Maryland. Slaves labour was used in the emerging industries and mainstays including ship building, iron works, and brick making.<sup>96</sup> By 1790, Baltimore had superseded Annapolis, in Anne Arundel County, as the state’s main trading hub and was the nation’s fifth largest city.<sup>97</sup> The slave population of Baltimore increased from 1,255 in 1790 to 4,672 in 1810, before declining to 4,357 by 1820. The number of free black slaves in the city swelled, from 323 in 1790 to 10,326 by 1810. Both the free and enslaved black populations were small in relation to the white population which rose in the same period from 13,503 to 62,738.<sup>98</sup> Christopher Phillips attributes the rise in the city’s free black population to a “huge surge of emancipations” as slaveholders freed and sold their slaves or permitted them to purchase their freedom.<sup>99</sup> Unlike other Southern cities, blacks in Baltimore did not outnumber whites. Many of the slaves that were sold became victims of the domestic slave trade; sold further South into slavery in Georgia and South Carolina.

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<sup>90</sup> See Johnson, *Black Savannah*, pp.86-87.

<sup>91</sup> Grace A. Robbins, ‘Betsey Baptiste: Biography of a Free Woman of Color’. Armstrong State College, 1994.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, p.6.

<sup>93</sup> Johnson, *Black Savannah*, p.87.

<sup>94</sup> Until 1860, census data reported both the town and surrounding area together, and only retrospectively, following Baltimore’s urbanisation, has demography been plotted separately for town and county. Thus, statistical analysis reflects that connection. This project has artificially separated figures only when discussing the town itself, distinct from its environs.

<sup>95</sup> Lawrence H. Larsen, *The Urban South: A History* (Lexington: 1990), p.12.

<sup>96</sup> T. Stephen Whitman, *The Price of Freedom: Slavery and Manumission in Baltimore and Early National Maryland* (Lexington, 1997), p.31.

<sup>97</sup> The largest city in the United States was Philadelphia followed by New York, Boston, and Charleston. See Christopher Phillips, *Freedom’s Port: The African American Community of Baltimore, 1790-1860* (Urbana; Chicago, 1997), p.13.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, p.15.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, p.37.

Mariana L. R. Dantas described manumission in Baltimore between 1750 and 1810 as rarely immediate and usually conditional. Slave-owners were more likely to grant male slaves a conditional manumission than females, although immediate manumission was more common among the latter. The surge in manumission also reflected slaves self-purchasing their freedom.<sup>100</sup> Besides manumission, Baltimore's free black population grew as a consequence of blacks migrating from the countryside to the city. The promise of better wages and the chance to exercise autonomy for themselves coincided with a realisation among Maryland's rural blacks that they "were unlikely to find livelihoods in the countryside".<sup>101</sup>

The growth of Baltimore's free black population was a draw to fugitives. While the city was not surrounded by the extensive swamp lands that served as havens to lower South runaways, fugitives could "essentially disappear in the city" by disguising themselves among the large and growing free black population, argued Seth Rockman.<sup>102</sup> Baltimore's close proximity to Pennsylvania was also appealing to fugitives.<sup>103</sup> Particularly for slaves who had made the long and arduous escape from further south, Baltimore was the final stop before they attempted to cross the Mason-Dixon Line in their quest to realise freedom in the northern states.

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<sup>100</sup> Mariana L. R. Dantas, *Black Townsmen: Urban Slavery and Freedom in the Eighteenth-Century Americas* (New York, 2008), p.104.

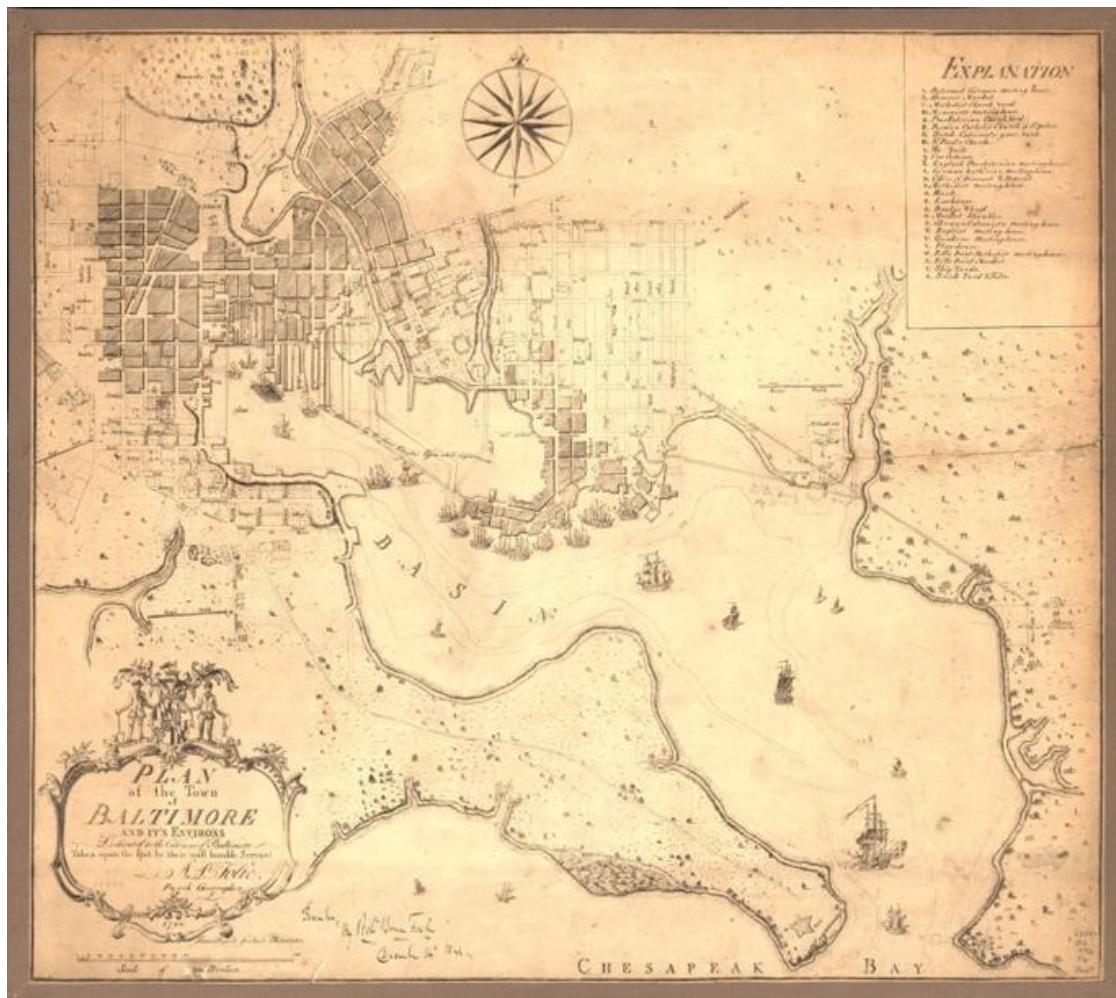
<sup>101</sup> Rockman, *Scraping By*, p.33.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, p.35.

<sup>103</sup> The distance from Baltimore Town to the Pennsylvania border is around 40 miles.



Figure I.IV. A. P. Folie and James Poupard. *Plan of the town of Baltimore and it's [sic] environs.* [N.P., 1792]. [Map].



Source: Library of Congress, <https://www.loc.gov/item/2002624037/>. [Accessed July 19 2017].

While the expansion of slavery in Georgia was linked to cotton cultivation, the decline of Maryland's slave population was linked to the decline in tobacco cultivation. The "single-minded cultivation of tobacco", Ira Berlin argued, gave way "to the complex multifaceted division of labor of the new mixed economy".<sup>104</sup> Indeed, it was the 1790s which marked the beginning of industrialisation in the state and the economic diversification from tobacco cultivation to food crops such as cereals and grains.

This diversification reduced the need for, and use of, slave labour. The seasonal demands of wheat and other cereal cultivation was conducive to a temporary slave

<sup>104</sup> Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*, p.267. See also Allan Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves: The Development of Southern Cultures in the Chesapeake, 1680-1800* (Chapel Hill; London, 1986).



workforce. Planters hired slaves at planting and harvesting times, the most labour-intensive periods, and permitted slaves to hire their labour and time out of season. The use of partial slave labour benefited slaveholders by ensuring they did not have costs associated with keeping a year-round slave workforce. Masters who permitted their slaves to hire their labour would also expect to receive a percentage of their slaves' earnings in return. Lorena Seebach Walsh has shown how some slaves established informal economies with their masters, selling the foodstuffs they cultivated to their masters. Some masters became dependent on their slaves and their produce.<sup>105</sup> Nor was it uncommon for blacks to labour alongside whites in Maryland. The degree of intermixture of systems of labour in Maryland made it increasingly distinctive within a South committed to the extension of slavery, ensuring the state occupied a status between quasi-freedom and quasi-bondage.<sup>106</sup> By 1860, Maryland effectively resembled two states, Barbara Jeanne Fields argued, "one founded upon slavery and the other upon free labour".<sup>107</sup> The northern counties (Allegany, Baltimore, Frederick, Harford, and Washington) were largely populated by free white labour cultivating food crops, while the southern counties (Anne Arundel, Calvert, Charles, Prince George's, Montgomery, and St. Mary's) remained focused on tobacco cultivation using slaves. Mean population changes by decade show significant increases in the slave populations of these counties as percentages of the total population: although the slave populations were declining (except in Prince George's), the proportions of the total populations that were enslaved increased between 1790 and 1860 (Figure I.V).

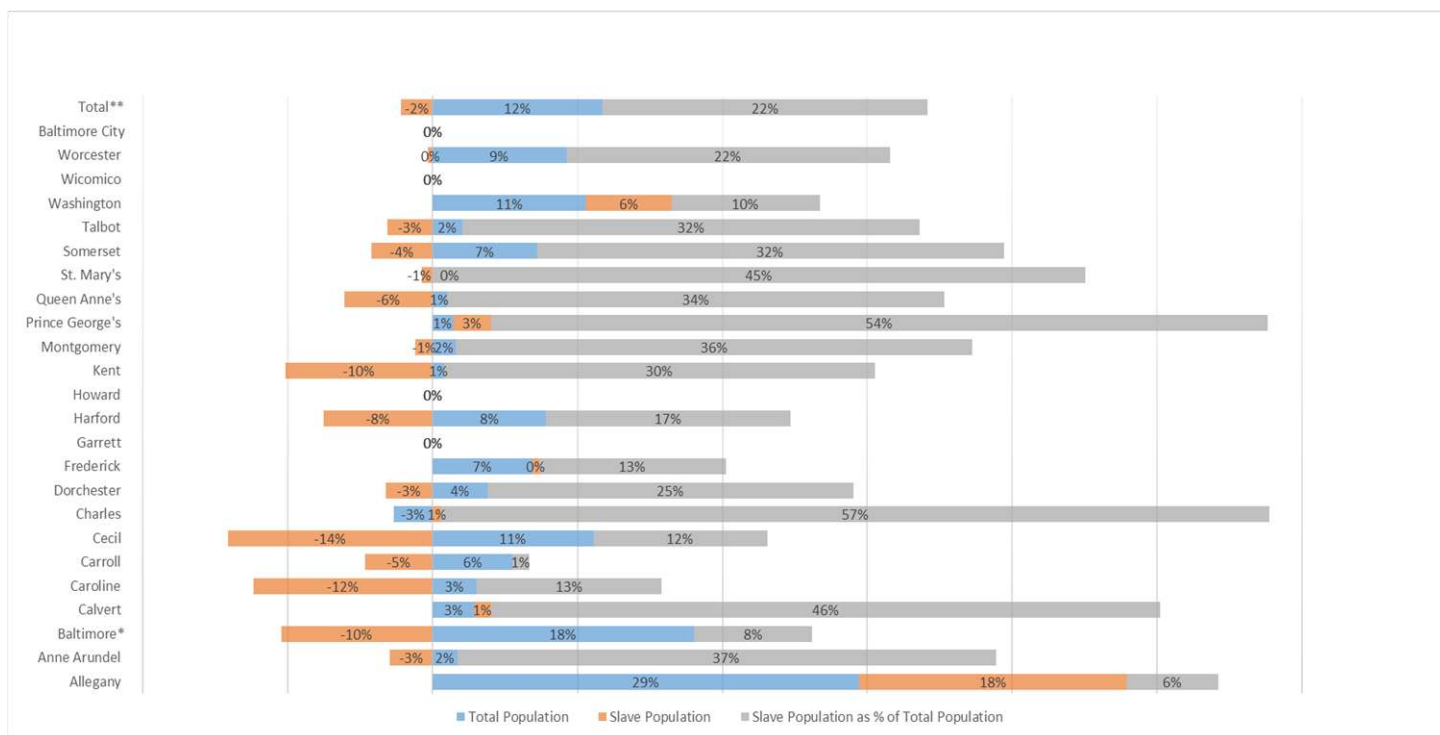
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<sup>105</sup> Lorena Seebach Walsh, 'Rural African Americans in the Constitutional Era in Maryland, 1776-1810: An Introduction', *Maryland Historical Magazine*, 84:4 (1989), pp. 327-341.

<sup>106</sup> Richard B. Morris, 'Labour Controls in Maryland in the Nineteenth Century', *The Journal of Southern History*, 14:3 (Aug., 1948), p.386.

<sup>107</sup> Barbara Jeanne Fields, *Slavery and Freedom on the Middle Ground: Maryland during the Eighteenth Century* (New Haven; London, 1985), p.6.

Figure I.V. Mean Population Change by Decade, Maryland Counties, 1790-1860.



Slave Population of Baltimore, 1810-1860	1810	1820	1830	1840	1850	1860
<b>Baltimore County</b>	6,697	6,720	6,160	3,199	3,772	756
<b>Baltimore City</b>	4,672	4,316	4,493	4,396	2,945	2,218
<b>Total</b>	11,369	11,036	10,653	7,595	6,717	2,974

\* Slave populations for Baltimore City and County have been combined in the table because census data counted total populations of city and county together, until 1860

\*\* Totals are adjusted and do not always equate with a sum of the county populations

Source: United States Census

Having provided an overview of the size and socio-economic distribution of the slave population in the United States, it is important to consider briefly the salient features of the slave population in the early national period that both affected and were affected by broader transformations.

Following the end of the international slave trade in 1808, the subsequent expansion of the slave population was “almost entirely due to natural increase”.<sup>108</sup> The self-reproduction of the slave population began around the mid-eighteenth century in the upper South but did not begin in the lower South until the first decade of the nineteenth century.<sup>109</sup> Kenneth Morgan has argued that it was the “more rapid rise of a native-born slave population” in the upper South that was the “chief contrast” distinguishing the region from the lower South.<sup>110</sup> The contrasting demographics of the upper and lower South largely reflected their distinct socio-economic profiles and use of the international slave trade. Maryland formally ceased participation in the international slave trade by 1774, although informally did so much earlier, at which time over ninety percent of the state’s slave population was native born.<sup>111</sup> The initial surge in Georgia’s slave population between 1790 and 1820 owed to the importation of approximately 48,000 Africans. Even after the abolition of the international slave trade in 1808, Georgia’s slave population grew through a combination of natural increase and slave importations which outpaced the number of enslaved people that died or were transported from the state.<sup>112</sup> The rise of a predominantly native born slave population from 1808 led to the eradication of a gender imbalance prevalent in eighteenth-century slave communities. While males constituted 51.2 percent of the total number of slaves in the United States in 1820, there was a difference of less than one tenth of one percent in the number of males and females slaves by 1840.<sup>113</sup>

From 1810, if not earlier, Georgia’s and Maryland’s relationships with slave trading followed opposing trajectories. Slaveholders in Georgia remained reliant upon the inter-regional slave trade to sustain local slave populations, despite natural increases. The demand for slaves in the lower South, and the expansion of cotton production in the new South,

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<sup>108</sup> Stanley L. Engerman, Richard Sutch, and Gavin Wright, ‘Slavery’, in Susan B. Carter, Scott S. Gartner, Michael Haines, Alan Olmstead, Richard Sutch, and Gavin Wright (eds.), *Historical Statistics of the United States, Earliest Times to the Present: Millennial Edition* (New York, 2006), p.370.

<sup>109</sup> Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, p.84.

<sup>110</sup> Kenneth Morgan, *Slavery and the British Empire: From Africa to America* (Oxford, 2007), p.85.

<sup>111</sup> ‘A Guide to the History of Slavery in Maryland’.

[http://msa.maryland.gov/msa/intromsa/pdf/slavery\\_pamphlet.pdf](http://msa.maryland.gov/msa/intromsa/pdf/slavery_pamphlet.pdf). p.6. [Accessed 21 September 2016].

<sup>112</sup> Jeffrey Robert Young, ‘Slavery in Antebellum Georgia’.

<http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/history-archaeology/slavery-antebellum-georgia>. [Accessed 18 December 2016].

<sup>113</sup> Engerman et al, *Slavery*, p.370.

provided planters in the upper South, Maryland and Virginia, (and later the West) ready markets in which to sell their slaves. Maryland was primarily an exporter of slaves by the early national period but T. Stephen Whitman estimates approximately 300 slaves were also transported into Maryland and Virginia during the 1790s via the internal slave trade.<sup>114</sup> Ross M. Robertson makes a compelling case that had not a buyer's market for slaves existed in the lower South then slavery in the upper South would have disappeared.<sup>115</sup> The financial gains that could be made from the internal slave trade often outweighed the morality of slaveholding.

Societies *within* society, slave communities developed within slave populations throughout the American South.<sup>116</sup> Communities of slaves formed on rural plantations, in urban towns, and everywhere in between, as slaves—African and African American—banded together. Unskilled slaves formed communities in the cotton and rice plantations of Georgia and on the cereal farms of Maryland. Similarly, skilled slaves were members of slave communities in urban centres including Savannah and Baltimore, where they commonly interacted and intersected with free black populations. The urban environment served as a sanctuary to absconding slaves, argued Richard C. Wade, as slaves could hide “in some obscure place or with the connivance of other blacks”.<sup>117</sup> Fugitive slaves also formed maroon communities. These communities cropped up “wherever and whenever slave existed...from the oldest states along the Atlantic seaboard to the newest southwestern additions”.<sup>118</sup> While it is generally accepted that slave communities were a product of slave culture and an embodiment of slave resistance, scholars including Dylan C. Penningroth and Jeff Forret have shown that membership and relationships continually shaped and altered their operation.<sup>119</sup> An “arena of negotiation where slaves constructed, maintained, and dissolved social ties”, slave communities were diverse, hierarchical, and sometimes violent, revealed

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<sup>114</sup> Whitman, *The Price of Freedom*, p.11.

<sup>115</sup> Robertson, *History of the American Economy*, p.121.

<sup>116</sup> John W. Blassingame, *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South* (New York; Oxford, 1979).

<sup>117</sup> Richard C. Wade, *Slavery in the Cities: The South, 1820-1860* (London; Oxford; New York, 1967), p.214.

<sup>118</sup> Tim Lockley and David Doddington, ‘Maroon and slave communities in South Carolina before 1865’, *South Carolina Historical Magazine*, 113:2 (April, 2012), p.127; For a comprehensive collection of manuscripts on maroon communities in South Carolina, see Timothy James Lockley (ed.), *Maroon Communities in South Carolina: A Documentary Record* (Columbia, 2009); For marronage after the War of 1812, see Nathaniel Millett, *The Maroons of Prospect Bluff and Their Quest for Freedom in the Atlantic World* (Gainesville, 2013).

<sup>119</sup> Jeff Forret, ‘Conflict and the “Slave Community”’: Violence among Slaves in Upcountry South Carolina’, *The Journal of Southern History*, 74:3 (Aug., 2008), pp. 551-588; Dylan C. Penningroth, *The Claims of Kinfolk: African American Property and Community in the Nineteenth-Century South* (Chapel Hill; London, 2003).

Forret.<sup>120</sup> In these communities, skills such as literacy were encouraged and plans of resistance were hatched.

During the period between 1790 and 1810, the slave population in the United States South was still, in large part, African-born. While still the “most assimilated in the Americas” before 1808, it was not until the late-antebellum era that the United States slave population, acculturated by adaptation, could be broadly described as creolized.<sup>121</sup> Establishing when the creolization of slave populations throughout the South occurred is important as it is apparent that levels of acculturation influenced how slaves responded to their enslavement. Drawing parallels between African and Creole forms of resistance, Michael Mullin argued that the former were more prone to collective resistance while the latter engaged in individual “strategies of liberation”.<sup>122</sup> Acculturated slaves—those who were skilled, visitors to urban centres, proficient English speakers, and sometimes literate—were more likely to resist “outwardly” by running away than “new” African slaves, found Gerald W. Mullin.<sup>123</sup> This naturally brings to the fore questions regarding the concentration of urban and rural slaves, their chances for acculturation, and their responses to slavery.

Chapter One locates the fugitive slave advertisements within American print culture and considers their development and functionality. The power of print to unite, divide, and direct Americans socially, politically, and economically is examined from the colonial era through the antebellum period. The primary contention of the chapter is that the typographic form and iconography of slave runaway advertisements was developed by slaveholders with the intention of undermining slave individualism, exceptionalism, and agency. The chapter explains how and why these key historical sources evolved—their variable form and functionality—before presenting the findings of statistical analysis performed on fugitive slave advertisements in Chapter Two. Statistical analysis provides the basis for prosopography and serves ultimately to establish who the advertised fugitive slaves of Maryland and Georgia were during the period between 1790 and 1810. The quantitative patterns and aggregations (in tabular format) are supplemented by case studies and episodes, which have been entwined to provide tangible examples of the human histories behind the fugitives being discussed. The chapter serves an important role in the dissertation as it establishes a solid foundation

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<sup>120</sup> Forret, ‘Conflict and the Slave Community’, p.588.

<sup>121</sup> Mullin, *Africa in America*, p.3.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, p.2.

<sup>123</sup> Gerald W. Mullin, *Flight and Rebellion: Slave Resistance in Eighteenth-Century Virginia* (London; Oxford; New York, 1974), pp.35-37.

from which to explore the findings of statistical analysis pertaining to the fugitives and fugitivity in both states in subsequent chapters.

The contestation of slaveholder authority is the focus of Chapter Three. The chapter offers a discussion of the contestation of literacy, demonstrating that slaves learned to read and write for many different reasons. Critically, it argues that slaveholder fear of slave rebelliousness, the most commonly cited reason for the denial of literacy to slaves, was not an unfounded fear. Slave rebelliousness as a manifestation of literacy is the theme of the final chapter. Using established resistance models and introducing my own spectrum of observed and perceived slave behaviour, Chapter Four argues that literacy did manifest in slave rebelliousness but rarely the violent and spectacular forms that slaveholders feared. Fugitivity was a common and daily slave challenge to slaveholder authority and their enslavement. Drawing on selected case studies from the project's fugitive slave database, it will be argued that far from "pretending" to be free persons, literate slaves were often free in their own minds. The runaway advertisement provided a final snapshot of a determined and heroic effort to realise their bodily freedom.

The intention of this introduction has been to emphasise the originality, viability, and ultimately the historiographical need, for the contribution that this project offers. The fugitive slaves of Georgia and Maryland—their experiences within and responses to slavery in the early national period—are the focus of this study. This dissertation tells the fugitives' story; stories of hundreds of as yet unknown but remarkable slaves whose acts of fugitivity triumphed over oppression and slaveholder efforts to impose identity upon them.

## 1

## The Fugitive Slave Advertisement in American Print Culture

We should notice the force, effect, and consequences of inventions, which are nowhere more conspicuous than in those three which were unknown to the ancients; namely, printing, gunpowder, and the compass. For these three have changed the appearance and state of the whole world: first in literature, then in warfare, and lastly in navigation; and innumerable changes have been thence derived, so that no empire, sect, or star, appears to have exercised a greater power and influence on human affairs than these mechanical discoveries.

Sir Francis Bacon, *Novum Organum*, CXXIX.<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

The first slave runaway advertisement was printed in John Campbell's *Boston News-Letter*, the first continuously published American newspaper, on 10 December 1705.<sup>2</sup> Campbell, a Scottish immigrant to Boston in the 1690s, where he was also postmaster, was at the heart of the colony's information and print network and privy to news brought into port by ship captains and merchants.<sup>3</sup> In the inaugural edition of his newspaper on 24 April 1704, Campbell appealed to "all Persons who have any Houses, Lands, Tenements, Farms, Ships, Vessels, Goods, Wares or Merchandizes, &c. to be Sold, or Let; or Servants Run-away, or Goods Stole or Lost" to send their advertisements to his newspaper. Advertisements could be inserted in the newspaper "at a Reasonable Rate; from Twelve Pence to Five Shillings and not to exceed".<sup>4</sup> Advertisements for slaves were printed in the *Boston News-Letter* from as early as 19 June 1704 but these concerned slaves for sale, not fugitives. Campbell advertised the sale of "a negro woman about 16 years old" and John Colman, a merchant, sought a buyer for "Two negro men, and one Negro Woman & Child".<sup>5</sup> There was also an

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<sup>1</sup> Francis Bacon, *Novum Organum*, edited by Joseph Devey (New York, 1902).

<sup>2</sup> There are no published works that have identified this advertisement, as I have, as the first printed slave runaway advertisement in an American newspaper. Ian K. Steele is the only scholar to briefly discuss the advertisement for Peter and Isaac but does not make this connection. I first presented this finding in an online blog post, 'John Campbell and the Runaway Slave Advertisement' (October 2015), available at <https://stirlingcentrescottishstudies.wordpress.com/2015/10/01/john-campbell-and-the-runaway-slave-advertisement/>; Ian K. Steele, *The English Atlantic, 1675-1740: An Exploration of Communication and Community* (New York; Oxford, 1986), p.132.

<sup>3</sup> Edd C. Applegate, *The Rise of Advertising in the United States: A History of Innovation to 1960* (Lanham; Toronto; Plymouth (UK), 2012), pp.6-8; Marsha L. Hamilton, *Social and Economic Networks in Early Massachusetts: Atlantic Connections* (Pennsylvania, 2009), pp.92-94.

<sup>4</sup> *Boston News-Letter*, 24 April 1704.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 19 June 1704.

advertisement printed in the same issue for a runaway “Indian Man”, Harry, on behalf of John Aldin (Alden). Harry was a fugitive but not a slave.

The first fugitive slave advertisement was unassuming; it was a text-only notice announcing “a Negro Man Slave named Peter” had “Ran-away from his Master William Pepperil Esqr., at Kittery, in the Province of Maine”. The Pepperil (or Pepperrell) family of New England were prominent figures in the slave trade and local politics. William was a military hero, famous for commanding the 1745 Louisbourg siege.<sup>6</sup> The advertisement described Peter as “aged about 20”, “of a pretty brown complexion, [and of] middle stature”. He was able to speak “good English”; the inclusion of this information a tacit admission by the advertisers that he was expected to communicate with others while on the run. Peter was expected to be in the company of a native “Indian Man” named “Isaac Pummatick”, who had deserted the command of Captain Joseph Brown and her majesty’s service in the province of Maine. Isaac was described as a “short Fellow not very thick”, who could speak “very good English”, and had previously lived with “Samuel Thackster [Thaxter] of Higham”, Massachusetts. From the advertisement, it appears both men had escaped separately but had been reacquainted before they were seen together at Newbury, although this is not clear. In either case, Newbury was a long way from Kittery, around 35 miles, and both men had embarked on a considerable expedition, navigating the crude coastal paths, possibly spending some time concealing themselves in the hinterland, or travelling by water. No motive for their escape was given but a “sufficient reward besides his Charges” was offered for Isaac’s recapture. Similarly, any person who recaptured Peter would be “rewarded for his pains, and all reasonable charges paid besides” (Figure 1.1). Pepperrell could afford the advert and to pay a substantial reward. He was determined to have Peter recaptured and returned to Maine, where slaves were scarce.

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<sup>6</sup> Virginia Browne-Wilkinson, *Pepperrell Posterity* (Florence, 1982); also see Usher Parsons, *The Life of Sir William Pepperrell, Bart., The Only Native of New England who was Created a Baronet during out Connection with the Mother Country*. Third Edition (Boston; London, 1856).



Figure 1.1: Runaway Notice for Peter and Isaac Pumatuck.

**Advertisements.**

**R**An-away from his Master Willam Pepperil Esqr. at Kittery, in the Province of Maine, a Negro Man-Slave named Peter, aged about 20, speaks good English, of a pretty brown Complexion, middle Stature, has on a mixt gray home-spun Coat, white home spun Jacket and Breeches, French fall Shoes, sad coloured Stockings, or a mixt worsted pair, and a black Hat. Whosoever shall take up said Negro, and bring or convey him safe to his said Master, or secure him and send notice of him either to his Master, or to Andrew Belcher Esqr. at Boston, shall be well rewarded for his pains, and all reasonable charges paid besides.

**L**ately Deserted Her Majesties Service in the Province of Main, an Indian Man (under the Command of Cap. Joseph Brown) named Isaac Pumatuck, was seen at Newbury, in Company with the above Runaway Negro; he is a short Fellow not very thick, speaks very good English, he liv'd formerly with Mr. Samuel Thackster of Hingham; he has on English Cloaths, a sad coloured old coat, or else a new light coloured druggert Coat, with buttons, holes and lining of black, black breeches, gray yarn Stockings, a black hat almost new. Whosoever shall apprehend said Indian, &c him convey to his said Captain, or to Andrew Belcher Esqr. at Boston, shall have a sufficient reward besides his Charges.

Source: *Boston News-Letter*, 10 December 1705.

Four months passed without news of the fugitives' fate. Then, on 22 April 1706, readers were issued with an update by Campbell (Figure 1.2). A few lines of text wedged between shipping news provided a rare and unexpected update on the fate of the fugitives. It announced that "by vertue [sic] of said Advertisements coming (in the News Letter) to South Carolina, whither the said Negro and Indian had travelled, The Governour [sic] of said place has secured the said Runaways for the Owner".<sup>7</sup> It was an unfitting conclusion to a mammoth and heroic venture; Peter and Isaac had travelled around 1200 miles, presumably attempting to reach Spanish Florida where they would seek refuge. The Spanish perennially issued (and retracted) promises to free slaves who escaped English servitude to St. Augustine. It is uncertain if both men had absconded in reaction to a similar offer or if the advertisements had a bearing on their recapture. In any case, Campbell jubilantly emphasised the role of his newspaper in their recapture – presumably attempting to promote the effectiveness of advertising in his newspaper to any potential advertiser. Campbell did not

<sup>7</sup> *Boston News-Letter*, 22 April 1706.

state who the captors were in South Carolina nor did he provide evidence that anyone had been mobilised to effect the recapture of the men by the notice. What is clear is that Peter and Isaac's opportunistic act of fugitivity is known because it was announced in the runaway advertisement. Although initially intended for their recapture, the advertisement, and Campbell's self-congratulatory update, reveal, albeit inadvertently, the story of two brave men who risked their lives for freedom.

Figure 1.2: Update on the fate of Peter and Isaac.

In December laft, There was Advertisements of a Negro man Slave, and an Indian's Running away from Mr. William Pepperil of Kittery in the Province of Maine, defiring they might be apprehended where ever they came, and by vertue of faid Advertisements coming ( in the News Letter ) to South-Caralonia, whither the faid Negro and Indian had travelled, The Governour of faid place has secured the faid Runaways for the Owner.

Source: *Boston News-Letter*, 22 April 1706.

Campbell understood that the success of his newspaper rested on his ability to attract subscribers and advertisement revenue. Newspaper proprietorship in the colonial era was an endeavour fraught with financial hardship. Proprietors relied on subscribers fulfilling their subscription payments and government commissions. Advertising revenue was a vital source of revenue for Campbell, as it was other newspaper proprietors. Campbell printed fewer advertisements than his successor, John Draper, under whose editorship fugitive slave advertisements became a more regular and visual feature. Woodcut illustrations depicting absconding slaves also began to accompany advertisers' textual descriptions in the *Boston News-Letter*.<sup>8</sup> That fugitive slave advertisements promoted slaveholding or emboldened slaveholders was not a primary concern to newspaper proprietors like Campbell; revenue was key to their newspapers success and to their livelihood.

<sup>8</sup> Applegate, *The Rise of Advertising*, pp.7-8.

The fugitive slave advertisement for Peter and Isaac marked the birth of an advertising genre that began in the colonial period and continued into the antebellum era. An Atlantic adaption of the pre-existing model of runaway servant advertisements, fugitive slave advertisements grew from text-only descriptions of no discernible format into a regular and easily-distinguishable feature of American newspapers. Their typography and iconography – shaped by the particularities of newspaper advertising and print technology – was developed with the intention of snaring the reader’s attention. A standardised template guided advertiser descriptions which, in turn, sped up the process of reporting fugitivity. The distribution of these advertisements would become quicker and more widespread with advancements in print technology and the development of more comprehensive print and communication networks.

This chapter locates slave runaway advertisements within the burgeoning print culture of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century United States. It argues that from the publication of the first fugitive slave advertisement in 1705, a distinct advertisement genre developed to empower slaveholders. Barbara J. Little’s theoretical framework of implicit and explicit meaning in print culture has been applied to slave runaway advertisements to show how their typographic form and iconography were intended to undermine slave individualism, exceptionalism, and agency. Slave runaway advertisements were a product of newspapers and slaveholders used them to communicate with the wider public. The reverse dependency was also true; local newspapers were a product of slave runaway advertisements. A discussion of this nature naturally entwines with broader theoretical concepts and themes such as print culture, the public sphere, and Enlightenment and these will be defined from the outset. This enables a structured and grounded discussion of slave runaway advertisements and their place in American print culture before the findings of statistical analysis performed on the advertisements is presented in Chapter 2.

Print culture is a contested term among social and literary historians. Jonathan Kramnick in *Some Thought on Print Culture and the Emotions* (2009) would even go as far as to describe the concept of print culture as “nothing short of disaster”.<sup>9</sup> Yet from the early 1990s, ‘print culture’ has headlined a plethora of journal articles and scholarly texts. These works, broadly speaking, have disentangled the relationship between print media and social movements during specific time periods and from both national and local perspectives. Forming a definition of print culture that appeases all scholars, across disciplines, is an

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<sup>9</sup> Jonathan Kramnick, ‘Response: Some Thoughts on Print Culture and the Emotions’, *The Eighteenth Century*, 50:2/3 (Summer/Fall, 2009), p.264.

impossible task but required in a chapter examining the development of slave runaway advertisements and the communication of their message to the American public through print media. The definition adopted for this project is thus intentionally broad. Print culture is as an “umbrella term” encompassing a series of complementary and interrelated oral, scribal, literate and physical performance cultures.<sup>10</sup> It is used to describe cultural impacts and effects stemming from print media, including printed text and imagery, and therefore slave runaway advertisements. The use of the term denotes far more than a history of print and the consumption of print media. It describes the wider print economy and the social movements it influenced. My definition is thus closely aligned with Harold Love’s but is also influenced by definitions advanced in the seminal works of Joseph A. Dane, Elizabeth Eisenstein, Adrian Johns, Barbara J. Little, and Walter J. Ong.<sup>11</sup> It also heeds Trish Loughran’s warning that print culture must be considered as part of “wider culture still organized around deferential values and personal relationships”.<sup>12</sup>

The printed contributions of African Americans are often omitted from discussions of American print culture. They are commonly treated by scholars as if comprising a distinct but unrelated African American print culture. The socio-political marginalisation of African Americans and the promotion of black illiteracy, supported in state slave code legislation from the colonial through the Antebellum era, has, in no small measure, contributed to this trend. While American and African-American print culture have “rarely been considered in relation to one another”, Lara Langer Cohen and Jordan Alexander Stein make a compelling argument for the bridging of both.<sup>13</sup> Print culture, as defined in this chapter, includes African American literary contributions but recognises their uniqueness as contributions from a

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<sup>10</sup> Harold Love, ‘Early Modern Print Culture: Assessing the Models’, *Parergon*, 20:1 (January 2003), p.64.

<sup>11</sup> Joseph A. Dane, *The Myth of Print Culture: Essays on Evidence, Textuality, and Bibliographical Method* (Toronto; Buffalo; London, 2003); Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change: Communications and Cultural Transformations in Early-Modern Europe, Volumes I and II* (Cambridge, 1980); Adrian Johns, *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making* (Chicago; London, 1998); Barbara J. Little, ‘Explicit and Implicit Meanings in Material Culture and Print Culture’, *History Archaeology*, 26:3 (1992), pp.85-94; Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy* (New York, 2002).

<sup>12</sup> Trish Loughran, *The Republic in Print: Print Culture in the Age of U.S. Nation Building, 1770-1870* (New York, 2009), p.94.

<sup>13</sup> Lara Langer Cohen and Jordan Alexander Stein (eds.), *Early African American Print Culture* (Philadelphia, 2012), p.2; For useful overviews of African American print culture, see Frances Smith Foster, ‘A Narrative of the Interesting Origins and (Somewhat) Surprising Developments of African-American Print Culture’, *American Literary History*, 17:4 (2005), pp.714-740; Francis Smith Foster, ‘Genealogies of Our Concerns, Early (African) American Print Culture, and Transcending Tough Times’, *Early American Literature*, 45:2 (2010), pp.347-359; Leon Jackson, ‘The Talking Book and the Talking Book Historian: African American Cultures of Print – the State of the Discipline’, *Book History*, 13 (2010), pp 251-308; Quentin Story McAndrew, ‘Location, Location, Location: Remapping African American Print Culture in the Nineteenth-Century United States’, *Criticism*, 53:2 (Spring, 2011), pp.331-336; Joycelyn K. Moody and Howard Ramsby II (eds.), ‘African American Print Cultures’, *MELUS*, 40:3 (2015), pp.1-223.

“counterpublic”; a term coined by Michael Warner to describe an alternative body of individuals distinct, but running concurrently, alongside or on the fringes of a body of people representative of the “public”.<sup>14</sup> To omit African American literary contributions from American print culture achieves precisely what many white contemporaries hoped to achieve when they precluded African American contributions from wider print culture.

Slave testimony in the form of narratives - whether written by or for slaves – are, as David W. Blight has argued, “the foundation of an African American literary tradition”.<sup>15</sup> Slave narratives were central to initiating a dialogue between black and whites on the issues of slavery and freedom in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, argued William L. Andrews.<sup>16</sup> Briton Hammon’s *A Narrative of the Uncommon Sufferings* (1760) and Olaudah Equiano’s *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano* (1789) began illuminating the suffering of slavery from the perspectives of slaves. Equiano, in particular, highlighted his experience of the lower South shortly before the period under consideration (1790-1810). It was not until the antebellum era however that a surge in slave narratives occurred. Slavery and freedom are key themes in the narratives and are also key themes in the literature of the American Renaissance, especially in the works of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Walt Whitman, Horace Greeley, and Harriet Beecher Stowe, and by African Americans including Phillis Wheatley and Richard Wright.<sup>17</sup> African American literary contributions, influenced by traditions of socio-political marginalisation, are important contributions to American print culture. The authors were, after all, Americans writing the American story.

Print was at the heart of the expanding public sphere of the early national period in the United States. This chapter adopts Jürgen Habermas’s definition of the “public sphere”.<sup>18</sup> Print served as an agent binding socially diverse populations together and was central to the discussion and debates on politics, philosophy, and society freely had in coffee houses

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<sup>14</sup> Michael Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics* (New York, 2002); For a discussion of blacks and the public sphere, see Joanna Brooks, ‘The Early American Public Sphere and the Emergence of a Black Print Counterpublic’, *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 62:1 (Jan., 2005), pp.67-92.

<sup>15</sup> David W. Blight, ‘The Slave Narratives: A Genre and a Source’. The Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History. <https://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/literature-and-language-arts/essays/slave-narratives-genre-and-source>. [Accessed 14 July 2017].

<sup>16</sup> William L. Andrews, ‘North American Slave Narratives: An Introduction to the Slave Narrative’. Documenting the American South. <http://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/intro.html> [Accessed 14 July 2017].

<sup>17</sup> Francis Otto Matthiessen, *American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman* (London; Oxford; New York, 1968).

<sup>18</sup> Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Translated by Thomas Burger with the Assistance of Frederick Lawrence. (Cambridge (Mass.), 1989). For more on Habermas and the Public Sphere, see Craig J. Calhoun (ed.), *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge (Mass.); London, 1992); John L. Brooke, ‘Reason and Passion in the Public Sphere: Habermas and the Cultural Historians’, *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 29:1 (Summer, 1998), pp.43-67.

taverns, bars, and local businesses in the early national period. Printed contributions were scrutinised for their intellectual and educational merit. From these discussions and exchanges, a body politic of conversing individuals, and their ideas, united to form, or at least claim to represent, “public opinion”. The “political culture of print ... was critical to the democratization of civic life”, contended Mary P. Ryan, linking “author to reader and readers to one another in an ongoing, widespread, deeply thought if unspoken conversation”.<sup>19</sup> American print culture was at the heart of evolving notions of American democracy and citizenship.

The adoption of the Habermasian definition of public sphere is useful for explaining broad social movements and development initiated by print but, of course, is not representative of the experience of all Americans in the early United States. While print media became more accessible and increased readership fuelled the growth of the public sphere, access to the public sphere was complicated for women, poor and non-elite whites, Native Americans, enslaved people, and other counterpublics. Equiano’s unpleasant, albeit brief, reflections of his lived experience in Georgia attest to the difficulties faced by communities of urban blacks residing in print communities in the eighteenth century. The testimonies of former slaves Josiah Henson and Frederick Douglass suggests enslaved people in Maryland faced similar marginalisation. Joanna Brooks’s insistence that “race profoundly shaped how one experienced the public sphere” fittingly describes the experience of slaves in Georgia and Maryland during the years of investigation.<sup>20</sup>

The public sphere was born out of Enlightenment thinking. The Enlightenment is defined, for the purpose of this chapter, as a series of intellectual movements originating in Europe, but developing throughout the world, from the late 1600s to early 1800s. Reflecting on the world that was, Enlightenment thinkers such as John Locke, David Hume, and Baruck Spinoza envisaged and promoted a world that could be. Drawing on philosophical methods and theories of knowledge, Enlightenment thinkers explored concepts such as nature and reason, linking them to initiatives for social progression. The Enlightenment fostered a climate favourable to mass education and literacy instruction. Over the course of centuries, contributions to politics, science, medicine, agriculture, among other discourses, shaped society. Print played a central role in the expression and transmission of these ideas and works including the *Encyclopédie*, edited by Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d’Alembert

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<sup>19</sup> Mary P. Ryan, *Civic Wars: Democracy and Public Life in the American City during the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley; Los Angeles; London, 1997), pp.12-13.

<sup>20</sup> Brooks, ‘The Early American Public Sphere’, p.91.

indexed world knowledge. In time, the writing of texts in the vernacular and the translation of key works from Latin ensured print became appealing and accessible to “ordinary” and “non-traditional” readers. Works including Thomas Paine’s *Common Sense* (1776), conveyed complex arguments in language accessible to “the people”. The world of print, knowledge, and Enlightenment, was, broadly speaking, no longer reserved for the wealthy and educated by the 1790s.

The American Enlightenment, influenced by Enlightenment movements in Europe, developed a distinct identity.<sup>21</sup> Robert A. Ferguson’s study of American Enlightenment describes how Americans were exposed to Enlightenment works but adopted European ideas to meet “their own needs” during “the prolonged crisis of the Revolution and national formation”.<sup>22</sup> Ferguson, and more recently, Caroline Winterer, have shown that uniquely ‘American’ trends including architecture, political science, and print were born in the eighteenth century, truly accelerating from 1790.<sup>23</sup> The promotion of mass education and literacy - key enlightenment themes – were evoked during the early national period. The rhetoric of the Revolution infused with republicanism to promote a literate, educated, selfless, and virtuous citizenry as the lifeblood of the young republic. It was during the early national period that Americans found a common identity as print consumers, especially, newspaper readers.

### **American Print Culture: Before the Early National Era**

The transatlantic trade of intellect and knowledge began in the early eighteenth century when European news was reprinted in American newspapers by the likes of

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<sup>21</sup> Establishing a precise date for the inception of the American Enlightenment divides scholars. Henry F. May argued the view that American Enlightenment occurred in three stages. The first stage, from c. 1714 until the culmination of the American Revolution, followed by a more radical second phase from c. 1784-1800, and the final stage from 1800-1815. May dates the American Enlightenment to 1714 and the arrival of “New Learning at Yale”. May is alluding to the shipment of 800 works from London (later known as the Drummer Collection) by Jeremiah Drummer, colonial New England agent, to Samuel Johnson, clergy man and American educator, in 1714. Johnson not only immersed himself in “new learning” but would promote it in his own work the *Introduction to Philosophy* (1743). In contrast, Peter Gay and Adrienne Koch argue that it commenced in 1765 and ended in 1815. Pre-1765, they contend, was the “pre-history of American Enlightenment” in which American colonists were gearing toward Revolution. see Henry F. May, ‘The Problem of the American Enlightenment’, *New Literary History*, 1:2 (Winter, 1970), pp.209; Peter Gay, ‘The Enlightenment’, in C. Van Woodward (ed.), *The Comparative Approach to American History* (New York, 1997), pp.34-46; Adrienne Koch (ed.), *The American Enlightenment; the Shaping of the American Experiment and a Free Society* (New York, 1965). For biographical information on Samuel Johnson and the Drummer Collection, see John B. Frantz, ‘Johnson, Samuel (1696–1772)’. Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, 2004. <http://www.oxforddnb.com.ezproxy.stir.ac.uk/view/article/68690>. [Accessed 1 February 2017].

<sup>22</sup> Robert A. Ferguson, *The American Enlightenment, 1750-1820* (Cambridge (Mass.); London, 1994), p.25.

<sup>23</sup> Caroline Winterer, *American Enlightenments: Pursuing Happiness in the Age of Reason* (New Haven; London, 2016).

Campbell. From their earliest manifestations, American newspapers exposed the strains between—and were involved in battles over—state authority, local communities, and personal freedoms of conscience and action. The first generation of American newspapers, including the *Boston News Letter* and *The Boston Gazette*, typically comprised two pages, no illustrations, and were printed weekly. The *American Weekly Mercury*, published in Philadelphia by Andrew Bradford, was the first American newspaper to expand from two to three pages on 28 April 1720 and to four on 5 May 1720. The *Boston Gazette* was the first to include illustrations. Newspaper editors were typically postmasters, like John Campbell, involved in the book trade and with access to a print press. Their role was essentially to gather and collate information.<sup>24</sup> The earliest American newspapers contained information reprinted from European newspapers and advertisements. The first paid advertisements were printed as early as 1 May 1704 in Campbell's *Boston News Letter*. The advertisement was a notice for the recovery of goods stolen from the home of James Cooper, near Charlestown Ferry, Boston. Advertisements announcing slave runaways were occasionally printed but followed no distinct typographic form. A poor print distribution network slowed the process of reporting slave fugitivity beyond word of mouth.

Revolutionary-era newspapers (c.1760-1789), in contrast to the first generation American newspapers, were more visually arresting and contained a greater number of advertisements. Newspaper such as the *New York Gazette and Weekly Mercury*, first published on 1 February 1768, printed foreign affairs and domestic news, separated into respective sections, with illustrated advertisements printed on the third or fourth page. Illustrations ranged from small vessels, indicating the arrival of shipments to and from British North America, to those depicting fugitives—military deserters, indentured servants, and slaves. The number of slave runaway advertisements increased, especially during the Revolutionary War (1775-1783), as slaves seized on the social upheaval to abscond. Slave for sale advertisements—although distinct from fugitive slave advertisements—were also an increasingly common feature of colonial newspapers. Robert E. Desrochers study of slave for sale advertisements published in colonial Massachusetts between 1704 and 1801 revealed that there were approximately 2,000 advertisements offering the sale of slaves printed in the *Boston Gazette* between 1719 and 1781 alone.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Thomas C. Leonard, *The Power of the Press: The Birth of American Political Reporting* (New York; Oxford, 1986), pp. 14-15.

<sup>25</sup> Robert E. Desrochers, Jr., 'Slave for Sale Advertisements and Slavery in Massachusetts, 1704-1781', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 59:3 (Jul., 2002), pp.624.



While the number of newspaper advertisements for slaves increased, so too did the number of urban print centres during the Revolutionary-era. Newspapers, which had traditionally been published in Boston, Philadelphia, and New York, began to emerge in Southern cities including in Georgia and Maryland. The *Georgia Gazette* was first published on 7 April 1763 by James Johnston in Savannah while the *Maryland Journal and Baltimore Advertiser* (1773) and *Dunlap's Maryland Gazette or the Baltimore General Advertiser* (1775), emerged as Baltimore's first newspapers. William Parks had published Maryland's first newspaper, *The Maryland Gazette*, in 1727 in Annapolis. All of these newspapers regularly printed fugitive slave advertisements. Newspapers of the revolutionary era were published weekly, bi-weekly, or tri-weekly and typically comprised four pages. The number of American newspaper increased to around two dozen by the mid-1760s.<sup>26</sup> Charles E. Clark estimates that the number of American newspapers "nearly doubled" between 1763 and 1775 and "more than doubled" between 1775 and 1790.<sup>27</sup> The number of American newspapers did more than double; from approximately thirty-seven in 1776 to ninety-six by 1790.<sup>28</sup>

The political allegiance of newspaper proprietors and press partisanship were defining features of Revolutionary-era newspapers. Newspapers were an important source of information for both patriots and loyalists and served as conduits for each to advance their respective causes. Although patriots and loyalists targeted each other through print, the advancement of their respective causes also claimed other victims. In his recent study, Robert G. Parkinson argued that patriots advanced their "common cause" of revolution through the in-print vilification of blacks and Native American Indians. Resorting to incendiary rhetoric loaded with racial stereotypes associated with these groups, patriots rallied their supporters and unified their cause against the British, portraying them as "merciless savages" and "domestic insurrectionists".<sup>29</sup>

From the Revolutionary-era, newspapers grew ever more influential and demonstrated an ability to fuse local sentiment into national narrative. Newspaper features such as the exposé were behind the growing ability of newspapers to fuse local sentiment into the national narrative. The exposé was a form of early journalism based on rumour and

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<sup>26</sup> Leonard, *Power of the Press*, p.34.

<sup>27</sup> Charles E. Clark, 'Early American Journalism: News and Opinion in the Popular Press', in Hugh Amory and David H. Hall (eds.), *A History of the Book in America: Volume 1: The Colonial Book in the Atlantic World* (Cambridge (Mass.), 2000), p.361.

<sup>28</sup> Simon Dexter North, *The History and Present Condition of the Newspapers and Periodical Press of the United States, with a Catalogue of the Publications of the Census Year* (Washington D.C., 1884), p. 47.

<sup>29</sup> Robert G. Parkinson, *The Common Cause: Creating Race and Nation in the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill, 2016), pp. 185-263.

speculation, stemming from the Zenger case of 1735.<sup>30</sup> Thomas C. Leonard described the exposé as a manifestation of a wider transformative process which “mocked royal justice” and “turned political enemies into criminals”. The exposé ensured that “For the first time in America, a governor’s blunt words, a merchant’s dealings, or a soldier’s curses might come to attention of all who cared about liberty and who wished to fit their local grievances in to conspiratorial picture”.<sup>31</sup> Writing Nathanael Greene on 4 September 1781, Benjamin Rush remarked that in “reducing the power of the enemy [British] in the Southern states”, a South Carolina newspaper “in the present state of their affairs ... [was] equal to at least two regiments”. For Rush, the print press and parsons had developed into the “material engines in the moving world”.<sup>32</sup>

The adoption of print pseudonyms also allowed patriots and loyalists to project a sole voice into something resembling public opinion or consensus. Pseudonyms typically belonged in the first half of newspapers alongside essays, letters, and exposes, rather than with advertisements at the rear of the newspaper, where specificity and localism was everything. Authorship was never far from the minds of inquisitive readers. While slaveholders advertising for fugitive slaves almost always included their names alongside their advertisements, pseudonyms including “a gentleman,” “a citizen,” or “a planter,” gave the impression that the author was representing and speaking on behalf of that class rather than in isolation.<sup>33</sup> The standardisation of the typographic and iconographic form of fugitive slave advertisements—well established by the research period—was intended to achieve much the same result as pseudonyms; to express unity among the slaveholding class and their complete authority at the expense of enslaved people.

Political pamphlets, alongside newspapers, were central to American print culture during the Revolutionary-era. Bernard Bailyn, challenging progressivist interpretations of the Revolution as a class struggle, advanced the historiographical interpretation of political pamphlets as the most influential form of print media during the American Revolution. Most pamphlets were a response to great events such as the Stamp Act, contended Bailyn, but there were also those comprising “personal polemics” or individual exchanges and those

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<sup>30</sup> For an examination of the suppression of freedom of speech and press in early America, see Leonard Williams Levy, *Legacy of Suppression: Freedom of Speech and Press in Early American History* (Cambridge (Mass.), 1960).

<sup>31</sup> Leonard, *Power of the Press*, p.51.

<sup>32</sup> L. H. Butterfield (ed.), ‘Further Letters of Benjamin Rush’, *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 78:1 (January, 1954), p.19.

<sup>33</sup> For a comprehensive list of pseudonyms used during the Revolutionary and early national period, see T. J. Carty (ed.), *A Dictionary of Literary Pseudonyms in the English Language*. Second Edition. (New York, 2014); see also Eran Shalev, ‘Ancient Masks, American Fathers: Classical Pseudonyms during the American Revolution and Early Republic’, *Journal of the Early Republic*, 23:2 (Summer, 2003), pp.158-159.

addressing commemorative events.<sup>34</sup> The “conceptualization of American life”, Bailyn argued, stemmed from the pamphlet war which carried “elements of this great transforming debate”.<sup>35</sup> While political pamphlets were certainly crucial in conducting the back and forth debate between patriots and loyalists and in politicising Americans, the conceptualisation of American life owed to newspapers.<sup>36</sup> Newspapers provided Americans a more rounded picture of life and society than political pamphlets, which were more intellectual. This is not to imply that newspapers and political pamphlets were mutually exclusive. Exerts of political pamphlets were, after all, reprinted in newspapers. The reprinting of political pamphlets in newspapers ensured they were accessible to those not at the forefront of the “pamphlet wars” and provided a structure and framework to the debates they carried. Newspapers provided Americans a fuller commentary on social, political, and economic affairs than any other print media. While the message of a single pamphlet could be powerful, the newspaper – patriot or loyalist – located the message within a broader political discussion, even vision.

### **The Republic of Letters: Print during the Early National Era**

The 1790s was a time for reflection in the United States. Ratification of the Constitution established the framework for governing the United States; Americans now searched for characteristics that united and defined them as American citizens. The promotion by state and federal officials of an “informed citizenry” thrust education and print to the fore of American life, and indeed, American citizenship. While republicanism promoted the idea of an “informed citizenry”, liberalism promoted the “informed consumer”.<sup>37</sup> David Waldstreicher made a compelling case that the reporting—in print—of celebrations, fetes, and parades was central to the development of American national identity and consciousness. In “extralocal” communities, he argued, print initiated nationalist ideologies across classes as patriotism and consensus was realised through celebration.<sup>38</sup> American citizenship, for whites, constituted an “imagined community” of literate and educated readers with a cultural appetite and capacity for reading, especially newspapers.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge (Mass.), 1992), p.4.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.20-21.

<sup>36</sup> For more on the role of newspapers and political pamphlets and the debate over their effectiveness, see Merrill Jensen (ed.), *Tracts of the American Revolution, 1763-1776* (Indianapolis, 2003).

<sup>37</sup> Charles G. Steffen, ‘Newspapers for Free: The Economies of Newspaper Circulation in the Early Republic’, *Journal of the Early Republic*, 23:3 (Autumn, 2003), pp.382-383.

<sup>38</sup> David Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes: The Making of American Nationalism, 1776-1820* (Chapel Hill, 1997); David Waldstreicher, ‘Rites of Rebellion, Rites of Assent: Celebrations, Print Culture, and the Origins of American Nationalism’, *The Journal of American History*, 82:1 (Jun., 1995), pp.37-61.

<sup>39</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London; New York, 1991).

The experience for free and enslaved blacks was markedly different. Blacks found their access to the public sphere increasingly restricted and their claims to citizenship undermined.<sup>40</sup> This was largely achieved by the promotion of anti-literacy initiatives by whites and a generally unfavourable attitude toward slave instruction in literacy.

Print thrived as Americans turned to books, political pamphlets, broadsheets, circulars, and almanacs. The 1790s were also an important period in American print culture for it was the decade in which the American novel “sprang so unexpectedly into existence”.<sup>41</sup> It was also a period of growth for American magazines and periodicals. While the first American magazine, the *American Magazine*, was published by Andrew Bradford in 1741, Nathan Hale and William Tudor founded the first literary/intellectual magazine in the United States, the *North American Review*, in 1815. Among miscellaneous topics, it carried essays on divisive issues including slavery and slave runaways.<sup>42</sup> This growth in print media was sustained by entrepreneurial investment in print technologies and by the book trade, which played “an integral part in the economic and political life of the new nation”.<sup>43</sup>

The political pamphlets of the American Revolution helped politicise “the people” but once politicised, they turned to newspapers. Americans’ appetite for political polemics had been whetted by the Revolution and the Ratification debates. “Newspapers are not only the vehicles of what is called news”, proclaimed Noah Webster in the inaugural edition of the *American Minerva* (1793), “they are the common instruments of social intercourse, by which the Citizens of this vast Republic constantly discourse and debate with each other on subjects of public concern”.<sup>44</sup> Early national newspapers were less prone to printing the “neutral trade rhetoric” that typified earlier generations of newspapers and instead printed more “antagonistic opinion”.<sup>45</sup> From the inception of the first party system in the 1790s through the first Jefferson administration, an increasingly partisan network of newspapers

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<sup>40</sup> For a very insightful discussion of African American claims to citizenship in the early national period, see Paul J. Polgar, “‘To Raise Them to an Equal Participation’: Early National Abolitionism, Gradual Emancipation, and the Promise of African American Citizenship”, *Journal of the Early Republic*, 31:2 (Summer 2011), pp. 229-258; See also Henry L. Chambers, Jr., ‘Slavery, Free Blacks and Citizenship’, *Rutgers Law Journal*, 43:487 (2013), pp.487-513.

<sup>41</sup> Stephen Shapiro, *The Culture and Commerce of the Early American Novel: Reading the Atlantic World-System* (Pennsylvania, 2008), p.2.

<sup>42</sup> A young Benjamin Franklin had vied with Bradford for this title. Franklin published his magazine, the *General Magazine*, a few days after Bradford. For more on this, see Walter L. Ferree, ‘Andrew Bradford: A Pioneer Printer of Pennsylvania’, *Pennsylvania History*, 21:3 (July 1954), pp.214-227.

<sup>43</sup> Robert A. Gross and Mary Kelley (eds.), *An Extensive Republic: Print, Culture, and Society in the New Nation, 1790-1840*. Volume 2 (Chapel Hill, 2010), p.7.

<sup>44</sup> *American Minerva*, 9 December 1793.

<sup>45</sup> Stephen Botein, ‘Printers and the American Revolution’, in Bernard Bailyn and John B. Hench (eds.), *The Press and the American Revolution* (Worcester (Mass.), 1980), p.45.

emerged vying for readers. All but fourteen of America's newspapers had pledged their political allegiance to the Federalists or the Democratic-Republican Party by the 1800 presidential election.<sup>46</sup> Newspapers were still a young source of information prior to 1800 with no state South of Maryland circulating a newspaper that was more than twenty years old.<sup>47</sup> There was no newspaper or print equivalent in the United States that could be regarded as bi-partisan, or of national appeal, until the publication in Baltimore of *Niles' Weekly Register* in 1811 by Hezekiah Niles. The newspaper reflected Maryland's geographic and social hybridity as a 'middle ground' state; its clear national vision attracting considerable interest from the public before the inaugural edition. Niles, reflecting on the failure of predecessor publications, recognised that:

If we have discovered the rock on which our predecessors have shipwrecked, the second cause of apprehension may, perhaps be removed. We attribute the general failure of periodical publications to too great a dependence on voluntary contributions from persons without an interest in the work, whose spirit flags when novelty ceases to charm.<sup>48</sup>

Niles recognised the pitfalls that other publication had failed to avoid; his newspaper would be built upon foundations of authenticity and reliability and would remain politically neutral. Success, Niles recognised, rested on the judgement of "the public as well as ourselves".<sup>49</sup> Even so, it was not until the 1830s that the press began to adopt political neutrality in reporting and journalism. The politicisation of newspapers ensured newspaper reading became a political act; the newspapers that people read and subscribed to were an important form of political expression. In this sense, literacy carried a personal and political weight by c.1800.

Articles and opinion pieces concerning slavery were a common feature of American newspapers. Anti-slavery and abolitionist opinion was also printed however to a much lesser extent. Seth Cotlar, one of few scholars to examine anti-slavery opinion in newspapers, has shown that while anti-slavery opinion was printed in the democratic newspapers of the early 1790s, attacks on Southern democrats and slaveholding amounted to "a rhetorical flourish that seemed to promise much but had no real possibility of delivering on those promises". Newspaper editors began to print less anti-slavery opinion around the time of the Jay Treaty (1795), argued Cotlar, especially when it became apparent to them "the South made up a central part of the emerging democratic coalition" and that "Northern democrats depended

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<sup>46</sup> Leonard, *Power of the Press*, p.56.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p.54.

<sup>48</sup> *Niles' Weekly Register*, 7 September 1811.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

upon the support of Southern congressmen to resist implementation of a treaty they regarded as pro-British and dangerously subversive of the national interest”.<sup>50</sup> Newspapers devoted to anti-slavery and abolitionist opinion did not emerge until the second decade of the nineteenth century. One of the earliest newspapers was *The Manumission Intelligencer* (1819), renamed the *Emancipator* (1820), founded in Tennessee by Elihu Embree, a Quaker.<sup>51</sup> *Freedoms Journal* followed in 1827 before William Lloyd Garrison founded the most influential anti-slavery weekly, *The Liberator* (1831). Frederick Douglass would publish *The North Star*, a newspaper devoted to anti-slavery opinion, from 1851.

The number of American newspapers experienced a “quantitative explosion” from the 1790s (Table 1.1).<sup>52</sup> From around ninety-six in 1790, the number of American newspapers grew to approximately 359 by 1810.<sup>53</sup> This growth would continue into the antebellum period, with Simon Dexter North estimating that there were 861 American newspapers by 1828 and 1,403 by 1840 (Table 1.2). Print flourished in urban centres including Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, which had well-established distribution networks facilitating the circulation of print but it also flourished in the South.

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<sup>50</sup> Seth Cotlar, *Tom Paine’s America: The Rise and Fall of Transatlantic Radicalism in the Early Republic* (Charlottesville; London, 2011), pp.65-66.

<sup>51</sup> The newspaper was later purchased by Benjamin Lundy who renamed it the *Genius of Universal Emancipation*. See Lacy K. Ford, *Deliver Us from Evil: The Slavery Question in the Old South* (New York, 2009), p.394.

<sup>52</sup> Steffen, ‘Newspapers for Free’, p.382.

<sup>53</sup> The 1790 United States census lists ninety-six newspapers. See Bureau of the Census, *A Century of Population Growth: From the First Census of the United States to the Twelfth, 1790-1900* (Washington D.C., 1909), p.32; For the 1810 figures, see North, *The History and Present Condition*, p.47.

Table 1.1. Newspapers published in the United States, 1790.

States	Number of Newspapers Published
<b>New England States</b>	<b>35</b>
Maine	2
New Hampshire	6
Vermont	2
Massachusetts	12
Rhode Island	4
Connecticut	9
<b>Middle States</b>	<b>37</b>
New York	13
New Jersey	2
Pennsylvania	20
Delaware	2
<b>Southern States</b>	<b>24</b>
Maryland	9
Virginia	9
N. Carolina	1
S. Carolina	2
Georgia	2
Kentucky	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>96</b>

Source: Bureau of the Census, *A Century of Population Growth*, p.32.

Most Southern newspapers were published in the upper South states of Maryland (9) and neighbouring Virginia (9) in 1790. In Maryland, newspapers were not concentrated to any single locality, rather, they were published throughout the state in Annapolis, Baltimore, Easton, Frederick, Georgetown, and Hagerstown. The oldest newspaper in the state was the *Maryland Gazette*, which had been established on 17 January 1745 by Jonas Green. Fugitive slave advertisements were a regular feature of the newspaper and this was no different when the newspaper was published by Frederick and Samuel Green in 1790.<sup>54</sup> There were fewer newspapers printed in the lower South. In Georgia, the *Augusta Chronicle and Gazette of the State* (Augusta) and the *Georgia Gazette* (Savannah) were the only newspapers published in the

<sup>54</sup> Bureau of the Census, *A Century of Population Growth*, p.35.

state in 1790. The former, published by John E. Smith, and the latter by James and Nicholas Johnston, were printed weekly and commonly featured slave runaway advertisements. South Carolina also had two newspapers, both of which were published in Charleston. *The State Gazette of South Carolina* was published by Ann S. Timothy and issued semi-weekly while *The City Gazette or Daily Advertiser* was published daily by Markland and M'Iver.<sup>55</sup>

Most American newspapers were printed in the northern states. Pennsylvania had the greatest number of newspapers in 1790 (20), followed by New York (13) and Massachusetts (12).<sup>56</sup> Edward Connery Lathem contends that New York's ascendancy continued until it displaced Pennsylvania as the leading state producer of newspapers in 1810 but this was not the case.<sup>57</sup> North's figures suggest while the number of newspapers in New York increased throughout the early nineteenth century, the state did not overtake Pennsylvania as the leading newspaper producer until at least the 1840s (Table 1.2).<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p.36.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p.32.

<sup>57</sup> Edward Connery Lathem, *Chronological Tables of American Newspapers, 1690-1820: Being a Tabular Guide to Holdings of Newspapers Published in America Through the Year 1820* (Worcester (Mass.), 1972).

<sup>58</sup> North, *The History and Present Condition*, p.47.



**Table 1.2: Newspaper numbers by state, 1810-1840.**

<b>State</b>	<b>1810</b>	<b>1828</b>	<b>1840</b>
Pennsylvania	72	185	187
New York	66	161	245
Massachusetts	32	78	91
Virginia	23	34	51
Maryland	21	37	45
Kentucky	17	23	38
Ohio	14	66	123
Vermont	14	21	30
Georgia	13	18	34
New Hampshire	12	17	27
Connecticut	11	33	33
N. Carolina	10	20	27
S. Carolina	10	16	17
Louisiana	10	9	34
New Jersey	8	22	33
Rhode Island	7	24	16
District of Columbia	6	9	14
Tennessee	6	8	46
Mississippi	4	6	30
Delaware	2	4	6
Florida	1	2	10
Alabama	n/a	10	28
Arkansas	n/a	1	9
Illinois	n/a	4	43
Indiana	n/a	17	73
Iowa	n/a	n/a	4
Maine	n/a	29	36
Michigan	n/a	2	32
Missouri	n/a	5	35
Wisconsin	n/a	n/a	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>359</b>	<b>861</b>	<b>1,403</b>

Source: North, *The History and Present Condition*, p.47.

North's figures, broadly speaking, reveal a shift in the concentration of print centres from the north eastern United States to the west as the nineteenth century progressed. In 1828, almost half of the 861 newspapers in America (424) were published in Pennsylvania, New York, and Massachusetts. Compared against population figures, the concentration of newspapers to these states is even more remarkable. The combined population of the three states was 3,877,249 in 1830, meaning that only thirty percent of the entire U.S. population of 12,860,702 resided in those states.<sup>59</sup> By 1840, Ohio had emerged as the third-leading newspaper producing state to the expense of Massachusetts. This rise in newspaper production coincided with a dramatic increase in Ohio's population to 1,519,467, the third

<sup>59</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. *Fifth Census, 1830* (Washington D.C., 1832).

most populated states, indicating how important an information source newspapers were to Americans.<sup>60</sup>

The revolution in newspaper production and consumption democratised American print culture, at least for white Americans, and fuelled the expansion of the “public sphere” in the United States. Newspapers became more accessible to Americans who could not traditionally afford subscription costs. Joseph Gale estimated approximately 350,000 Americans were newspaper subscribers in 1821 but that 1.5 million Americans were newspaper readers (not subscribers) owing to this “massive giveaway”.<sup>61</sup> These figures, of course, do not account for the innumerable number of Americans who were privy to newspapers content circulated through word of mouth. Americans found a common and shared identity as newspaper readers. In his editorial address in the inaugural issue of the *American Minerva*, Noah Webster proclaimed:

Newspapers are the most eagerly sought after, and the most generally diffused. In no other country on earth, not even in Great-Britain, are Newspapers so generally circulated among the body of the people, as in America...Newspapers, from their cheapness, and the frequency and rapidity of their circulation, may, in America, assume an eminent rank...They, in a great degree, supersede the use of Magazines and Pamphlets. The public mind in America, roused by the magnitude of political events, and impatient of delay, cannot wait for monthly intelligence. Daily or at farthest weekly communications are found necessary to gratify public curiosity.<sup>62</sup>

Although Webster was promoting his own newspaper, his assessment that the relationship between the American public and newspapers had changed was accurate. Americans had, as Sarah J. Purcell has argued, grown “ever more attached to their news”.<sup>63</sup> By 1814, Nathan Hale, editor of the *Boston Daily Advertiser*, would proclaim “If we have any striking traits of national character their origin may be clearly discerned in our universal relish for newspaper reading, and in the general character of the newspapers we read”.<sup>64</sup>

### Advertisements

From the 1790s, advertisements became an increasingly visible and visual feature of American newspapers. The mass proliferation of newspapers and the expansion of subscription lists from 1790 fuelled a significant increase in newspaper advertisements. Advertisements were an important source of income for newspaper proprietors. As the

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<sup>60</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. *Sixth Census, 1840* (Washington D.C., 1841).

<sup>61</sup> Steffen, ‘Newspapers for Free’, p.382.

<sup>62</sup> *American Minerva*, 9 December 1793.

<sup>63</sup> Sarah J. Purcell, *The Early National Period* (New York, 2004), p.38.

<sup>64</sup> *Boston Daily Advertiser*, 7 April 1814.

public sphere expanded, Americans began to publicise their product, their services, and themselves in unprecedented fashion. Advertisement revenue grew to surpass subscription revenue. Advertisers, adopting debt-forgiveness policies to increase their subscription lists, recognised that the more subscribers a newspaper had, the more attractive the newspaper was to advertisers.<sup>65</sup>

Advertisers purchased “squares” of newspaper space, approximately one column wide and of equal depth, most commonly located at the rear of the four page daily and weekly newspapers. Advertising space was typically purchased in conjunction with an annual newspaper subscription although non-subscribers could still advertise in the newspapers. The annual cost of a newspaper subscription ranged from thirty to forty dollars while advertisements cost between fifty and seventy-five cents for the first insertion and less for each reprint.<sup>66</sup> It appears that some subscribers did pay less for their annual newspaper subscription. From a summary of his accounts sent to a Mr Cowan, Robert H. Goldsborough, United States senator and slaveholder, paid \$10 for a five year subscription to the *Maryland Herald and Eastern Shore Intelligencer* (Easton) on 27 November 1798. His accounts also listed a \$1.75 charge for a text-only advertisement for his runaway, Stephen, on 20 January 1801.<sup>67</sup> The advertisement for “Mulatto Stephen”—a “dark mulatto” with the “appearance of Indian”—was published in the newspaper the following week, with Goldsborough offering a reward of between \$20 and \$30.<sup>68</sup> Advertisements ranged from the sale of cattle, farmland, and plantations to the arrival of new medicines, ships, and books. Business ventures including schools and Bible classes were announced as was the dissolving of partnerships, business and marital. Even a stray cow could command a lengthy advertisement. Small squares of space became laden with social and value significance as advertisers sought to use old and new tricks (including font size, capitalisation, and image captions) to lead readers to their notices.

Slave runaway advertisements were increasingly prevalent in American newspapers throughout the early eighteenth century until the American Civil War. They were most commonly published in Southern newspapers whose subscribers were typically slaveholders.

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<sup>65</sup> Steffen, ‘Newspapers for Free’, p.385.

<sup>66</sup> Alfred McClung Lee, *The Daily Newspaper in America: The Evolution of a Social Instrument* (New York, 1937), p.315.

<sup>67</sup> Maryland State Archive, Sarah D. Griffen, Clyde Griffen and Margaret Thibault Collection of Goldsborough Family Papers, MSA SC 2085-41-5-10, Robert H. Goldsborough Summary of Expenses to Cowan.

<sup>68</sup> *Maryland Herald and Eastern Shore Intelligencer*, 27 January 1801.

Fugitive slave advertisements represented the interest of this class and were normalised as an everyday feature of the newspaper.<sup>69</sup>

Fugitive slave advertisements were the most frequently published notices in a wider daily publication of advertisements for African Americans for sale, imported, or “taken up”. “Taken up” notices were most commonly published by jail wardens or by masters of workhouses when a fugitive slave had been recaptured, providing a description of the slave and details of how they could be recovered by their masters. They were also part of a daily barrage of newspaper notices for fugitives including indentured servants and military deserters. All of these advertisements provided descriptions of their subjects for the purpose of identification and attached a monetary value to their personhood. This was no different in Georgia and Maryland between 1790 and 1810. The advertising sections of Savannah’s *Columbian Museum* and Baltimore’s *American and Commercial Daily Advertisers* were frequently littered with the aforementioned types of advertisements (Figure 1.3).

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<sup>69</sup> McClung Lee, *The Daily Newspaper in America*, p.314.

Figure 1.3: Multiple fugitive slave notices in Savannah's *Columbian Museum* (1808).

**Tax Collector's Sales.**  
On the first Tuesday in August next, will be sold, at the Court House in this city, between the hours of 10 and 3 o'clock,  
All that TRACT of SWAMP LAND, on Great Ogeechee River, containing 400 acres, more or less, joining a tract of land on the North West now belonging to Peter H. Morel, Esq. South on Ogeechee River, Eastwardly, on the lands of the late John Wreart, Esq. Northwardly, on the lands of the late Doctor Donald McLeod, and belonging to the estate of William Gibbons, Esq. of Morton Hill; pointed out by executor, for taxes amounting to 350 dollars 83 cts. 2 1/2 mills, with cost—the purchaser to pay for title.  
**PETER DEVAUX, T. C. C. C.**  
Savannah, July 15, 1808.—40

**Sheriff's Sales—Continued.**  
On the first Tuesday in August next, will be sold at the Court House, in the city of Savannah, between the hours of 10 and 2 o'clock,  
The following Fifteen NEGROES, viz.  
Cecar, Chaslotte, Isaac, Peggy, Sally and Kate, Jim, Louis, John, Hannah, William, Tum, Jacob, Dunbar and Lenten; levied on and to be sold as the property of John Drysdale under mortgage from the said John Drysdale, to Forbes, surviving copartners of Forbes and Munroe.  
**JOHN EPPINGER, S. C. C.**  
July 15 40

**Marshal's Sales.**  
On the 22d instant, will be sold at the Exchange,  
The Revenue Cutter Thomas Jefferson, her Tackle, Apparel, &c.—An inventory can be seen, by applying at the Custom-House. Sold by order of the Collector.  
**BEN. WALL, M. D. C.**  
July 13 40

**Runaway,**  
  
From the subscriber, about three months ago, a fellow by the name of **CASWELL**; in height, 5 feet 6 or 8 inches, of dusky hair, had on when he took his departure, blue clothes, stained up with red; he is of a slender make, is 38 or 40 years of age; he was seen in this city three or four weeks past. Also, a fellow by the name of **CATO**, who is supposed to be of the same height of the other; he is very black, speaks very bad English, and has a down look when spoken to; he is a like fellow, but rather shabby in his dress. Captains of vessels are particularly cautioned against having any thing to do with said fellows. Any person placing the above Reports in the goal of this city, or delivering them to the subscriber, at his plantation in Liberty County, shall be handsomely rewarded.  
**D. G. HOLMS.**  
Sav. May 30 (11) 27

**Ten Dollars Reward.**  
RANAWAY again, again and again, on the night of the 6th inst. a Negro man, named **ALEXIS** or **ALIK**, belonging to M. Dubignon, of Jekyl Island—has been so constantly advertised in this paper, that any description of him would be useless—yet he is a short, stout fellow, pock pitted, and about 45 years old—speaks French and English. He went away this time from on board sloop Anubis, on the very night of his being taken out of jail, with a very heavy pair of irons, and the rings of a former pair, and took with him the Yawl Boat of the sloop. There is no doubt but he has been helped by some person, and from the bad condition of the boat, it is not probable that he can go far, without assistance—he is supposed to be lurking about the marshes, creeks or islands on the river. The above reward will be paid, on delivery of said Negro to goal, or to the subscriber.  
**July 12 39**

**Thirty Dollars Reward.**  
ABSCONDED from the subscriber, on the night of the 9th inst. his servant man, **PETER**. He is about 24 years old, 5 feet 6 or 7 inches high, of a dark yellow complexion; had on when he went off, a short coat of blue cloth, almost new, dark colored pantaloons, a round hat and boots. All masters of vessels and others are cautioned against harboring or taking him off—a particular description of him is unnecessary, as he is well known in Savannah and its vicinity. The above reward will be paid for lodging him in the goal of this city, or delivering him to the subscriber.  
**THOMAS YOUNG.**  
July 15 40

**500 Dollars Reward.**  
Treasury Department, May 28th, 1808.  
It has recently been made known to this department, that on the first day of June, 1807, the first moieties of the under-mentioned notes of the bank of the United States, were enclosed by William Keas, Esq. Collector of the Customs at Wilmington, North-Carolina, in a letter addressed to Thomas Ludov Tucker, Esq. Treasurer of the United States, and put into the Post-Office at that place; and on the 8th day of June, 1807, the second moieties of the said Bank notes were enclosed, advised and put into the Post-Office as aforesaid; neither of which letters, with the notes enclosed, have been received. On the back of each moiety of every note was written the name of William Keas, and on one part of the back of all or of most of the notes, was written the name of Lewis Levy; from which circumstance the notes may with certainty be traced and detected. Payment of the notes has been stopped at the Bank of the United States and in several offices of Discount and Deposit; and a reward of FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS will be paid to any person who shall give such information to this department, as shall produce the conviction of the offender by whom the letters containing the said notes were purloined or stolen.  
**ALBERT GALLATIN,**  
Secretary of the Treasury.  
DESCRIPTION OF NOTES.  

No.	Denom.	To whom payable.
10	10	At the option of the holder.
20	20	Do.
30	30	Do.
40	40	Do.
50	50	Do.
60	60	Do.
70	70	Do.
80	80	Do.
90	90	Do.
100	100	Do.
110	110	Do.
120	120	Do.
130	130	Do.
140	140	Do.
150	150	Do.
160	160	Do.
170	170	Do.
180	180	Do.
190	190	Do.
200	200	Do.
210	210	Do.
220	220	Do.
230	230	Do.
240	240	Do.
250	250	Do.
260	260	Do.
270	270	Do.
280	280	Do.
290	290	Do.
300	300	Do.
310	310	Do.
320	320	Do.
330	330	Do.
340	340	Do.
350	350	Do.
360	360	Do.
370	370	Do.
380	380	Do.
390	390	Do.
400	400	Do.
410	410	Do.
420	420	Do.
430	430	Do.
440	440	Do.
450	450	Do.
460	460	Do.
470	470	Do.
480	480	Do.
490	490	Do.
500	500	Do.

  
Dollars 100

**Thursday, June 9th, 1808.**  
The Court of Ordinary, for Chatham County, met pursuant to adjournment.  
Present their honors,  
**WILLIAM SMITH,**  
**TIMOTHY BARNARD,**  
**EDWARD HARDEN.**  
UPON the petition of Jonathan Gaudin, guardian of Eliza Paisley and Jerutha Paisley, minors, and daughters of John Paisley, late of Savannah, deceased, stating that Jerutha Paisley, widow, and Samuel Maser, Esq. were on the 5th day of March, 1801, qualified administrators (with the will annexed) of the estate and effects of the said deceased; and that the said Jerutha, both since inter-married and removed to a remote part of this State, and that the said Samuel Maser, resides in the State of South-Carolina, and the portions to which the said minors are entitled to, for their support, from their father's estate, is liable to waste and injury.  
Whereupon ordered, That the said administrators, file the accounts of their administration, with the Clerk of this Court, on or before the first Monday in September next, and shew cause, (if any they have) why the said administration, should not be revoked; otherwise a revocation will be ordered and letters granted a new.  
Extract from the minutes,  
**EDWARD WHITE, Clerk.**  
June 14 1808, 31  
AT a meeting of the Justices of the Inferior Court, of McIntosh County, at Chambers, on Saturday, the 28th day of May, 1808.  
Present their Honors,  
**EMANUEL WAMBERGIE,**  
**WILLIAM A. DUNHAM,**  
**NORMAN McDONALD,**  
**LEONARD JORDINE.**  
UPON the petition of Alexander Johnston, praying to be admitted to the benefit of the Act, for the relief of insolvent debtors; the said Alexander

Source: Columbian Museum, 19 July 1808.

Rachel Hall draws upon this daily barrage of advertisements, for runaways and recovered fugitives, as evidence of the “surveillance function” of print culture, linking “one plantation to the next, the city to the country all in the name of protecting the private property of wealthy white Southerners”.<sup>70</sup> Hall’s framework is a useful prism through which to understand slave fugitivity. The runaway advertisement and recapture notices worked in tandem, reassuring the reader that social order had been re-established after it had been temporarily challenged by a rebellious slave. It is evident that the formation of print distribution networks and the increasing connection of communities throughout the United States from the 1790s, facilitating the spreading of information, emboldened slaveholders. The quicker news of slave fugitivity was circulated, the sooner vigilance could be raised and potential slave catchers mobilised.

<sup>70</sup> Rachel Hall, ‘Missing Dolly, Mourning Slavery: The Slave Notice as Keepsake,’ *Camera Obscura*, 21:1 (2006), p.81.

## Fugitive Slave Advertisements

Slave runaway notices were accounts of fugitive slaves and their acts of fugitivity composed by slave-owners, overseers, or estate administrators. Their primary purpose was to undermine slave agency and facilitate the recapture of fugitive slaves through carefully deployed textual descriptions, language, imagery, and financial incentives. Their public issuance, records of slave resistance, were a desperate attempt by slaveholders to re-establish control over rebellious slaves. In reality, the issuance was an admission that control over the slave had been temporarily lost, surrendered even, by a process only alluded to in the advert itself. They were an attempt by slave-owners to re-establish the order that had been challenged, by realigning and reasserting race relations on a public platform.

The accuracy with which advertisers described fugitive slaves and their acts of fugitivity has divided historians. Lorenzo J. Greene has argued that advertisers were honest and detailed in their accounts because they recognised that “the more forthright the description, the greater the possibility of recovering his property”.<sup>71</sup> In contrast, Jonathan Prude advanced a more sceptical view of the accuracy of slaveholder descriptions. For Prude, slave masters and mistresses described their runaways in whatever way was most likely to facilitate their recapture, whether the information was accurate or not.<sup>72</sup> David Waldstreicher offers the middle ground interpretation and the view closest to the interpretation adopted in this work. Although intended to restore “confidence in slavery and servitude” by countering “the mobility of the unfree”, Waldstreicher claims, slaveholder descriptions could not avoid illustrating the “acts of cultural hybridization black and racially mixed people committed for their own purposes”.<sup>73</sup> In other words, by issuing a runaway notice, slaveholders were conceding, publically, that an empowered slave had circumvented their authority and was resisting their enslavement. Collectively, therefore, fugitive slave advertisements provide nuanced insights not just into the individual experiences and actions of slaves but two intersecting communities—that of the slaves and that of slaveholders. The advertisements were, after all, instrumental in constructing a community of slaveholders in print.

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<sup>71</sup> Lorenzo J. Greene, ‘The New England Negro as Seen in Advertisements for Runaway Slaves’, *The Journal of Negro History*, 29:2 (Apr., 1944), p.127.

<sup>72</sup> Jonathan Prude, ‘To Look Upon the “Lower Sort”: Runaway Ads and the Appearance of Unfree Laborers in America, 1750-1800’, *The Journal of American History*, 78:1 (Jun., 1991), p.126.

<sup>73</sup> David Waldstreicher, ‘Reading the Runaways: Self-Fashioning, Print Culture, and Confidence in Slavery in the Eighteenth-Century Mid-Atlantic’, *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 56:2 (Apr., 1999), p247.

Advertiser descriptions of slaves and their act of fugitivity had to be specific enough to facilitate recapture but ambiguous to avoid humanising the slave. Slave advertisements were, as Marcus Wood argued, paradoxical, for to “recognise an escaped slave and prove his/her identity he/she must be described as an individual”. By focusing their descriptions on their slaves’ most distinguishing features including scars and markings, advertisers inadvertently revealed their slaves to be the victims of their cruel methods of control.<sup>74</sup> Avoiding particularity in their descriptions was especially difficult in areas with dense black populations in urban towns such as Baltimore and Savannah. Basic information that did not threaten to expose advertiser cruelty—age, date of birth, place of birth—were publicised with little trepidation. Yet, former slave narratives such as Frederick Douglass’s suggest this information was often withheld from slaves by their masters.<sup>75</sup> In contrast, advertisers were reluctant to publicise information that revealed slave ingenuity, exceptionalism, or remarkability. Rarely did advertisers comment on the motives behind slave escape attempts. They were however quick to deny any responsibility for distinguishing marks upon their slaves’ bodies including whip marks, scars, burns, and brands, lest their treatment of the slave be regarded as excessive or perceived as reflecting an inability to maintain control over them.

The attempt to undermine slave individuality and agency is best understood through the theoretical framework of implicit and explicit meaning in print culture established by Barbara J. Little. Little defines an explicit message as visual, with the effectiveness of the message dependent upon visibility. In contrast, an implicit message need not be visible but is most effective when the meaning is subconscious. When the attributes of the implicit message are subtle enough to be insidious they have the potential to create a deeply seeded “common sense” which is hegemonic and creates a “pan-class” consciousness with the ability to bind diverse social elements.<sup>76</sup> If slave runaway advertisements are examined within this framework, the use of both implicit and explicit meaning are detectable.

From the 1720s, the typography of runaway advertisements, or the implicit dimension, began to develop into to an easily-recognisable form. The *Boston Gazette* was among the first newspapers to publish fugitive slave advertisements in which the first letter,

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<sup>74</sup> Marcus Wood, *Blind Memory: Visual Representations of Slavery in England and America, 1780-1865* (Manchester; New York, 2000), p.87.

<sup>75</sup> Douglass was unsure of his age and suggests that this was common among slaves. “By far the larger part of the slaves know as little of their ages as horses theirs ... I do not remember to have ever met a slave who could tell of his birthday”. See Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, Written by Himself* (Boston, 1845), p.1.

<sup>76</sup> Barbara J. Little, ‘Explicit and Implicit Meanings in Material Culture and Print Culture’, *History Archaeology*, 26:3 (1992), p.87.

typically the “R” of the word “Runaway” or “Ran” was capitalised and bold. The advertisement for “negro servant”, Caesar, by John Jekyll of Boston, was not boxed but was included in the advertisement section.<sup>77</sup> This stylistic method ensured the subject matter was easily distinguishable among other notices. The bordering of fugitive slave advertisements, first established in the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, became common practice from 1740.<sup>78</sup> A capitalised header, comprising bold lettering, flirted for the reader’s attention, proclaiming ‘Ran’, ‘Runaway’, ‘Absconded’, or ‘Absented’, and was followed by a description of the slave or slaves and details of the escape. The depth of detail and information provided depended upon the advertiser and what they deemed the appropriate amount to secure the runaway or runaways, within the constraints of column space.

Advertiser descriptions would typically begin with details of the date and time of escape followed by the fugitive’s name, physical description, including colour or racial categorisation and notable features, mannerisms, skills, clothes, and likely destination. Occasionally advertisers commented on the physiognomy of their slaves. A reward was stated at the head of the advertisement. Some advertisers offered an additional reward for information that a runaway was “harboured,” “secreted,” or had been “carried off” by members of the public. In port towns and cities advertisers frequently warned captains of vessels against concealing fugitives or transporting them. Sarah Sheftall of Savannah cautioned all “Masters of vessels ... against harboring or carrying” her “Negro Fellow”, under the penalty of the law”.<sup>79</sup> My analysis suggests these public warnings were also intended to flush out fugitives, by incentivising anyone who might actively or inadvertently be aiding or employing the runaway to turn in the fugitive for a reward. Importantly, advertisers sometimes offered a higher reward for information or proof that a runaway was harboured by a white person than by a black person. Lewis Gorodon of Purrysburg South Carolina, advertising for his runaway “Negro Wench”, Fanny, offered “to any person giving information of her being harbored about the city of Savannah”, ten dollars if “by any white or free person, and Five Dollars if by a slave”.<sup>80</sup> Similarly, Daniel O’Hara seeking the recapture of his slave, John, offered an additional *five* pounds reward for information that “said Mulatto was being harboured by a Mulatto or Negro” and “*twenty* if by a white

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<sup>77</sup> Jekyll did not offer a specific reward but promised that “whoever brings him [Caesar] to his said Master ... shall have all reasonable Satisfaction”. *Boston Gazette*, 18 January 1720.

<sup>78</sup> By 1738, the *Boston Evening Post* introduced a border format to the slave runaway advertisements however this was not consistent as runaway notices were still unboxed throughout the 1750s. The four page *Pennsylvania Gazette* adopted borders consistently around slave runaway advertisements from 1740. This can be dated to the issue published on 31 July 1740.

<sup>79</sup> *Savannah Republican*, 15 August 1809.

<sup>80</sup> *Columbian Museum*, 2 July 1810.



person”.<sup>81</sup> These types of advertisements were common in both upper and lower South newspapers. This concentrated effort by white slaveholders guarded disproportionately against whites aiding blacks to preserve racial and social order. It also demonstrated expectations of solidarity among whites and likely connivance among non-whites. The inclusion of the advertiser’s name, capitalised and bold, stood proud at the foot of the advertisement, serving as a final reminder of their authority. A date of composition sometimes accompanied the name of the advertiser.

In their earliest typographic form, fugitive slave advertisements in American newspapers resembled notices for other fugitive groupings such as indentured servants, apprentices, and military deserters. The advertisements also resembled fugitive notices printed in British newspapers from the mid-seventeenth century.<sup>82</sup> For example, an advertisement for a fugitive “Indian black Boy”, published in the *London Gazette* between 17 and 21 April 1690, included both the bold letter ‘R’, emphasising he had ‘runaway’, and the description was structured in much the same way as the earliest American fugitive slave advertisements.<sup>83</sup> Limited advertising space, print technology, use of British print specimen books, and the use of printing blocks, speeding up the process of printing, likely contributed to the typographical resemblance of early fugitive advertisements in America and Britain.<sup>84</sup> Yet, fugitive slave advertisements would grow into a distinct advertising genre in the United States. The descriptions of the fugitive subject or subjects were laced with racial language and stereotyping not common to other fugitive advertisements. The crude imagery that accompanied fugitive slave advertisements was also unique.

Iconography was a regular feature of slave runaway advertisements and transmitted explicit messages. The inclusion of imagery was intended to distinguish the fugitive slave notice genre from other newspaper advertisements, especially those for fugitive indentured servants. Imagery worked in conjunction with the reward value. The reward offered pitted advertiser against advertiser and was one of the few opportunities that they had to vie for the reader’s attention. Assigning a monetary value to the life of the slave, advertisers attempted to commodify them; to publicise that their worth, at least to slaveholders, was little more than tradeable livestock. That fugitive slaves were not wandering cattle but human beings, demonstrating remarkable agency, undermined these efforts.

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<sup>81</sup> *Georgia Gazette*, 19 March 1789.

<sup>82</sup> Nicholas Mason, *Literary Advertising and the Shaping of British Romanticism* (Baltimore, 2013), p.25.

<sup>83</sup> Alden T. Vaughan, *Transatlantic Encounters: American Indians in Britain, 1500-1776* (New York, 2006), p.108.

<sup>84</sup> McClung Lee, *The Daily Newspaper in America*, p.315.


The use of woodcut illustrations became a regular feature of slave runaway advertisements from the 1760s. The *Connecticut Gazette* published one of the earliest slave runaway advertisement accompanied by an illustration. The advertisement by Lieutenant Israel Hewit of Stonington on 23 March 1764 sought the recapture of a “negro girl”, Lucy. Woodcuts were chosen by advertisers from print specimen books and could be inserted alongside the text of the advertisement for an additional fee, around \$1.50. The earliest illustrations, used in both northern and southern American newspapers, were chosen from British print specimen books before Binny and Ronaldson published the first American print specimen book in 1809.<sup>85</sup> The most commonly used illustrations depicted a sole black figure clutching a stick and makeshift bundle over their shoulder; the sack apparently holding whatever clothes and few life possessions they could muster before absconding. The figure was depicted as peering over his or her shoulder, implying pursuers were hot on their trail. The elevated leg of the figure suggested a running motion. Woodland and shrubbery were sometimes included in the background to imply a remoteness and isolation to escape attempts (Figure 1.4 and Figure 1.5). Similar methods were used in woodcuts for group escapes with the exception that they included several blackened figures. In contrast, the woodcuts used in notices for runaway white servant men and women depicted subjects wearing good clothing and who appeared more civil and composed.

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<sup>85</sup> Print specimen books such as Johnson’s *Specimens of Printing Types* offered a variety of illustrations depicting runaways. They were inexpensive. Advertisers simply included the image number alongside their advertisement when they submitted it to the printer. For more on woodcut illustrations and examples of woodcuts used for fugitive slaves, see Wood, *Blind Memory*, p.87.

Figure 1.4. Woodcut for "Bob".


*Twenty Dollars Reward.*



**R**AN-AWAY on the 30th of last month, from a plantation near Augusta, a negro fellow named **BOB**; by trade a Blacksmith, about twenty-two years of age, five feet two inches high, stout made, rather of a yellow complexion. One of his upper foreteeth out, a

Source: Augusta Chronicle (Georgia), 23 February 1805.

Figure 1.5. Woodcut for "Molly".



**R**AN - AWAY from the subscriber, the 6th of December last, a negro wench named **MOLLY**, about 21 years of age, about five feet high; she had on when she went away, a blue negro cloth jacket and coat, she speaks good English, and is very artful. She has a smooth face, and lost one of her upper foreteeth: She was formerly the property of Mr. Bellamer.

Source: City Gazette (South Carolina), 19 February 1793.

The crude representation of the slave promoted a racial stereotype of the faceless, unremarkable black; the black and white print colouration of the image on paper aided the binary morality being laid claim to. The lack of detail in the image portrayed a figure with no unique qualities. The reprinting of the same stock image, in multiple advertisements, often on the same newspaper page, had the effect of undermining slave individuality and agency. The recycling of stock images drew the reader's attention from the individual slave to the act of fugitivity—the illustrations were “a statement that in the eyes of the law, and the eyes of the slave power, one runaway is the same as every runaway... [while] the act of running away always takes the same literal form”.<sup>86</sup> Wood's evaluation that by the early national period it was “plain to see” that imagery came first and words were “fitted in afterwards” is a fitting observation of the slave runaway advertisement genre and slaveholder efforts to undermine slave agency.<sup>87</sup>

The realities of slave fugitivity do not conform to the picture of slavery peddled by advertisers through runaway notices. The imagery is not representative of slaves who planned their escapes and carried several suits of clothes with them. Nor do they show a master's whip stinging the back of an absconding slave or suggest he or she played a primary role in the decision of the slave, or slaves, to abscond. The background of the woodcut comprised blank space or a rural setting including woodland and shrubbery—never a bustling urban town or city. Woodcuts were a powerful visual reminder of how advertisers wanted readers to perceive slave fugitivity; not as individuals but by the act itself. In reality, individual decision-making was at the heart of each act of slave fugitivity.

Fugitive slave notices nourished racial prejudice and drew the reader's attention to the act of running away. Patricia Bradley has shown that advertiser descriptions in slave advertisements, including fugitivity notices, were intended to remind whites that black men and women were “unfit for freedom”. They did so through carefully deployed descriptions which characterised slaves as “good” or “bad”. Slaves who challenged their enslavement conformed to the “bad” slave type peddled by slaveholders, argued Bradley, while “good” slaves were those who accepted their enslavement. The former were portrayed by advertisers as “untrustworthy, demonic, and violent, depending on his or her resistance” and the latter as “virtuous”.<sup>88</sup> Fugitivity was one of many slave responses to enslavement that advertisers emphasised and presented as “proof” of the naturally rebellious and discontented character

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p.87.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., p.89.

<sup>88</sup> Patricia Bradley, *Slavery, Propaganda, and the American Revolution* (Jackson, 2008), pp.26-27.

of blacks. By emphasising the act of running away in the textual descriptions and imagery of their notices for runaway slaves, advertisers attempted to draw the reader's attention to the act [of running away] rather than the individual. The act of running away, at least to slaveholders, rendered any slave bad: fugitivity was after all a rejection of slaveholder authority.

The mass production and proliferation of American newspapers from the late eighteenth century through the antebellum period increased the number of slave runaway advertisements. The reporting of slave fugitivity and the circulation of runaway notices was a different matter. A lack of distribution networks plagued American printers during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The transportation of print, including newspapers, between print centres and "trans-local" audiences – those outwith the immediate vicinity of the print shop - was difficult but not impossible.<sup>89</sup> Printers relied heavily on "embodied" distribution by couriers on horseback or stagecoach drivers.<sup>90</sup> The enactment of the Postal Service Act (1792) was a watershed moment in newspaper distribution, ensuring that for the first time a newspapers could be posted at the same cost of a letter. The Fugitive Slave Act, passed one year later, would heavily depend, at least theoretically, on the postal service and postmasters for sharing information.

The connection of communities and information ensured that news of slave fugitivity spread further and slave catchers mobilised more quickly by the antebellum period. In Maryland, Joshua Hutchins of Monkton, Baltimore County, advertised for his runaway, Andrew, one month after he had absconded, in the *Baltimore Sun* newspaper on 25 June 1855. His advertisement attracted a response after just two days.<sup>91</sup> Etched on the rear of a circular, George Hughes offered Hutchins his services in recapturing his slave, albeit for a price:

I see by the "Sun" [Baltimore Sun] that you have lost a runaway negro. If you go to expense of \$10 for circulars and postage on letters, if your negro should be in Pennsylvania perhaps I might apprehend him as by the "Sun" paper you will never apprehend him. Let me hear from you as soon as possible.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Loughran, *The Republic in Print*, p.110.

<sup>90</sup> Bureau of the Census, *A Century of Population Growth*, p.33; For an insightful study on the distribution of print media in the early national period, see Richard B. Kielbowicz, 'The Press, Post Office, and Flow of News in the Early Republic', *Journal of the Early Republic*, 3:3 (Autumn, 1983), pp.255-280.

<sup>91</sup> The advertisement portrayed Andrew as unremarkable, simply "22 or 24 years old" around "five feet four or five" and of a "rather stout bulk" and his colour a "dark colour or rather black". Hutchins would note that his slave was suffering from "a sore leg between the knee and ankle". His clothes at the time of his escape consisted of "brown linen pants, and a silk worsted coat, brown and purple striped vest and a white wool hat".

<sup>92</sup> Maryland State Archive, Joshua H. Cockey and Margaret S. Keigler Collection, MSA SC 5170-2-45, Letter from George Hughes to Joshua Hutchings [Hutchins], 27 June 1855.

This correspondence provides a rare insight to the success of the fugitive slave advertisement in attracting the interest of would-be slave catchers and their [slave catchers] attempts to negotiate with slaveholders. While Hughes downplayed the effectiveness of the newspaper in recovering Andrew this appears to have been little more than an attempt to undercut the newspaper and gain business; Hughes had after all learned of Andrew's fugitivity through the newspaper. It is unclear if Hughes was part of an established slave-catching network or acting alone but the message to Hutchins and the content of the circular upon which he penned his correspondence indicates he was involved in the recovery of slaves escaping from Baltimore to Pennsylvania.<sup>93</sup> It was now for Hutchins, as it was for any slaveholder, to decide the next course of action for the retaking of his fugitive having attracted a response through his advertisement. The continued issuance of the advertisement for Andrew, even after Hughes had offered to print circulars and search for him, suggests Hutchins rejected the offer. In any case, the effectiveness of the fugitive slave advertisement in generating public vigilance and mobilising slave catchers was evident.

### Circulars

The uniformity and the standardisation of slave runaway advertisement was deliberate. Advertisers were guided by a well-established and easily recognisable advertisement format that was transferable to a number of print media. From the Revolutionary era through the Antebellum period, fugitive slave advertisements became so well established that advertisers including William Duckett Bowie handwrote their advertisements precisely in the form they would be printed in newspapers, circulars, or both (Figure 1.6).<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> The circular upon which his message to Hutchins was etched regarded the arrest of a Garrett Jones and a "Negro woman", Louisa, "both of whom committed Burglary and Robbing on the night of the 17<sup>th</sup> June, and no doubt have fled to Pennsylvania". The circular was dated 25 June 1855 and signed "O. P. Maggill", Baltimore. The foot of the circular notes states "This is the form of circulars printed" and lists Hughes, of No.111, N.Exeter, near Gay Street, Baltimore, as the person to whom information on the fugitives' whereabouts was to be communicated. It appears that the circular was one of Hughes's most recent and was intended to provide Hutchins a tangible example of the type of circular that would be used for the recapture of Andrew if he purchased his services.

<sup>94</sup> William Duckett Bowie (b. 1803 – d.1873) was a prominent planter in Prince George's County, Maryland, where he owned the Bellefield plantation. He was married to Mary Eliza Oden (d.1849) and they had a son, Oden Bowie (b. 1826 – d.1894). William transferred ownership of the plantation to Oden and he continued to hold a large number of slaves. He is estimated to have held around 47 in 1850 and 103 by 1860. See 'A Statement on the History of Oden Bowie as a Slaveholder'. Maryland State Archive. <http://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/speccol/sc3500/sc3520/001400/001465/html/1465slaves.html>. [Accessed 13 May 2017].

Figure 1.6. Wm. D. Bowie letter of advertisement for runaway slave Harry, 11 July 1837.

\$200 - Reward

Runaway on the 5<sup>th</sup> Instant from Bellefield,  
Prince Georges County, Maryland, the late residence  
- ce of Bony Oden deceased, a young  
Mulatto man, about 24 years old, named  
Harry, calls himself Henry Fleatcher,  
about 5 feet, 9 Inches high, light complexion,  
tolerably thick lips, and altogether  
remarkably good looking, has been boot-  
- up and accustomed to wait in the  
House. He took with him a variety  
of Clothing, much of it of good quality.  
The above Reward of Two hundred  
Dollars will be paid on his delivery to  
me, or his being secured, so that I get  
him again -

July 11<sup>th</sup> 1837. Wm D. Bowie, Genl  
B. Oden  
Lucas Ave. Post Office  
Prince Georges Co. Md.

N.B. It is supposed he took a horse from  
the neighbourhood - W.D.B.

50 - to be sent to Sully, & Co.

Source: Maryland State Archive, Mrs W. Booth Bowie Collection, MSA SC 103-1-155, Wm. D. Bowie, Reward for the Recapture of a Runaway Mulatto Man from B. Oden, 11 July 1837.<sup>95</sup>

The establishment of a standardised format sped up the process of reporting slave fugitivity. Given the cross-border nature of slave fugitivity, slaveholders often sent a single advertisement to multiple printers, sometimes in different states. Advertisers regularly printed advertisements in multiple newspapers when they suspected the slave was harboured,

<sup>95</sup> In the handwritten advertisement, Bowie offered a \$200 reward for the recapture of a young mulatto runaway named Harry who had absconded from Bellefield, Prince George's County, Maryland with the aid of a horse he had stolen. William was advertising on behalf of his son, Oden Bowie. Having examined all accessible Maryland newspapers editions for the period of 11 July, 1837 to 1 September, 1837, no advertisement was found for Harry or any placed by Wm. D. Bowie. The identity of the newspaper to whom Bowie sent the advertisement is unknown and whether it was published remains uncertain.

concealed, or intended to make for several destinations. It was not uncommon for a single act of fugitivity to be advertised in more than one newspaper and in different states, typically neighbouring states, if the slaveholder was not certain of the fugitive's most likely destination. Slave runaway advertisements in the form of circulars were also used by slaveholders from the revolutionary era through the antebellum period. Cheap to produce and easily distributable, the immediateness was particularly appealing to slaveholders. They were posted in cities and towns, where the fugitive slave was expected to lurk, to generate vigilance and mobilise local informants and slave catchers. Circulars were used both as an alternative to newspaper advertisements and in conjunction with them. In a summary of his expenses, Richard Montgomery Stites, a planter in Savannah, noted a charge on 5 January 1809 of around four dollars for "publishing an advertisement *and* handbills relative to [a] Runaway Negro for Richard Wayne".<sup>96</sup> The name of the runaway was not stated but probably related to an advertisement for a fugitive slave named Sally that was printed in Savannah's *Columbian Museum* newspaper numerous times throughout December 1808.<sup>97</sup>

Circulars were mobilised to offset the limitations of print saturation and served as an important tool for the recovery of fugitive slaves whether in addition or as an alternative to newspaper advertisements. "My man is a runaway", wrote Charles Carroll of Annapolis in private correspondence to his cousin, Richard Croxall on 1 February 1747. Carroll had no specific information on his slave's whereabouts, only a vague suspicion of his destination. He handwrote an advertisement for his slave's recapture and included it with his letter to Croxall for circulation.<sup>98</sup> "Copy as many of these [advertisements] as you think necessary", Carroll urged Croxall, "and distribute them toward Susquehanna, Gunpowder and Pipe Creek and Conowago [Conowingo]". While Carroll had "reason to think he [the fugitive] is gone toward Patapsco," his approach seemed less certain.<sup>99</sup> Print would be used to flood areas of interest to mobilise vigilant locales. Carroll hoped to snare the runaway. While it is

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<sup>96</sup> Georgia Historical Society, J. Randolph Anderson Collection on the Wayne, Stites, and Anderson Family, MS 0846-1-3, Estate of Richard Wayne, 1808-1818, Note of Accounts, R. M. Stites, 5 Jan 1809.

<sup>97</sup> Wayne's name featured in the 1808 advertisement for Sally but it appears Stites had placed the advertisement on his behalf. The advertisement for Sally was printed in the *Columbian Museum* newspaper, firstly on 16 December 1808. It was reprinted 23 and 27 December editions in the same newspaper. A reward of \$20 was offered for Sally's recapture, upon delivery of her to the Gaoler of Savannah and a further \$100 upon proof and conviction of her being harboured by a white person and \$30 if by a negro.

<sup>98</sup> The advertisement mentioned in the letter is not included in the collection. After enquiring with the special collections staff at the Maryland State Archive, it appears the advertisement has been lost or is held as part of a private collection.

<sup>99</sup> Maryland State Archive, Robert Goodloe Harper Collection, MSA SC 2360-1-26, Letter, Charles Carroll to Richard Croxall, 1 February 1747.



unclear if his approach was successful, the letter provides a rare insight into the use of fugitive slave advertisements and their distribution by slaveholders.

Circulars do appear to have had some success in recovering runaways or at least laying the groundwork for their recapture. Carroll again relied on Croxall's assistance and the circular in July/August 1749 for the recovery of a group of runaways who had escaped from his service. It is unclear whether the runaways were slaves or indentured servants as Carroll frequently advertised in the *Maryland Gazette* for both. The "advertisements are in all places", wrote Carroll to Croxall on 5 August 1749; the boat that had pursued the fugitives having returned on Thursday [3 August] after a "fruitless voyage" to Norfolk, Virginia. "I have since my return sent advertisements to the Tangier Islands where I believe they skulked as they went down and perhaps may have stayed sometime", wrote Carroll.<sup>100</sup> "It may not be a miss to say the boat with the rogues" might be taken "at Cherry Stone" (Virginia).<sup>101</sup> It would appear that the fugitives had been able to board a vessel at Annapolis which had travelled southward down the Chesapeake Bay. Carroll had distributed circulars along the Maryland coast and in Norfolk, Virginia, anticipating the fugitives would disembark the ship along the route. Carroll's insistence that all was being done to recover the fugitives and his urging Croxall to remain patient and vigilant proved sound advice. A relieved Carroll wrote to Croxall a few days later, declaring his "satisfaction" in informing him "that the runaways are all taken up at Hollands Island" and had been delivered to the sheriff of Somerset County (Maryland).<sup>102</sup> While the fugitives had travelled a considerable distance, news of their escape had travelled quicker. The fugitives had not been able to escape from Maryland. The cases of Carroll occurred in the colonial era, several decades before the research period, but it is clear that the circular was used in much the same way from the colonial through the antebellum era. Of course, advancements in print technology and the establishment of more comprehensive distribution infrastructure sped up the process of reporting slave fugitivity.

Robert Henry Goldsborough, one of the most prominent slaveholders and residents of Talbot County, Maryland, also relied on circulars for the recapture of his fugitive slaves,

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<sup>100</sup> Tangier Island played a prominent role in the War of 1812. The island served as a British military outpost as well as a refuge for absconding slaves. For details on slave escapes to Tangier Island during the War of 1812, see Gene Allen Smith, *The Slaves' Gamble: Choosing Sides in the War of 1812* (New York, 2013); Glenn David Brasher, *The Peninsula Campaign and the Necessity of Emancipation: African Americans and the Fight for Freedom* (Chapel Hill, 2012).

<sup>101</sup> Maryland Historical Society, Harper-Pennington Papers, 1701-1899, MS.431, Roll 1, 1747-1807, Charles Carroll to Richard Croxall, 5 August 1749.

<sup>102</sup> Maryland Historical Society, Harper-Pennington Papers, 1701-1899, MS.431, Roll 1, 1747-1807, Charles Carroll to Richard Croxall, 7 August 1749.

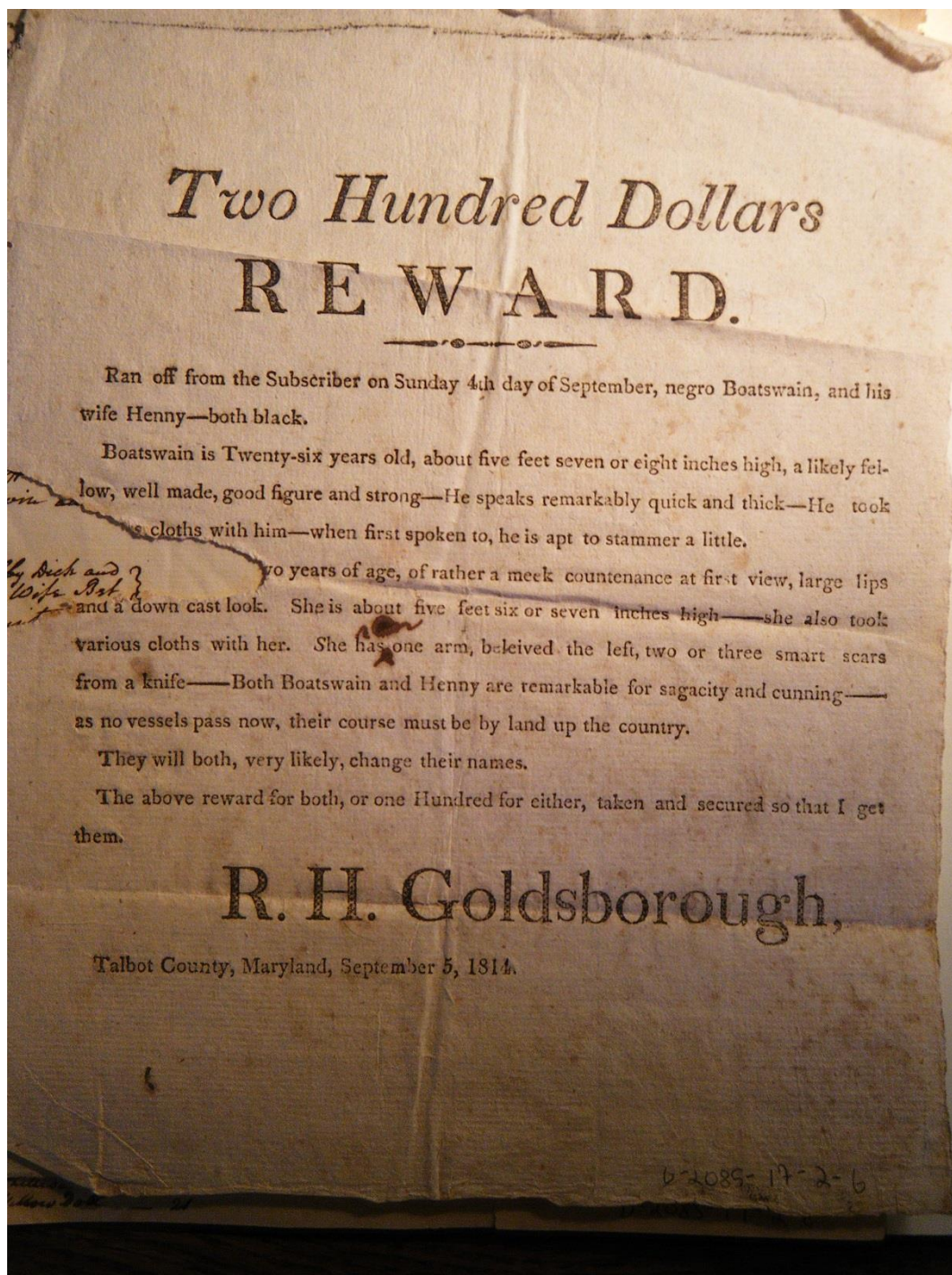
Boatswain and Henny.<sup>103</sup> Both slaves absconded from Talbot County, Maryland, on 4 September 1814 and Goldsborough had the advertisement for their recapture printed the following day (Figure 1.7). While the motive for Boatswain and Henny's escape is unclear, it they had likely ceased upon the increasing hostilities between the British and Americans that would culminate in the Battle of Baltimore just one week after their escape and the absence of Goldsborough, who was probably involved. Slaves "remarkable for sagacity and cunning" proclaimed the circular, Boatswain and Henny were likely headed up country to Pennsylvania. As "no vessels pass now," Goldsborough speculated they would likely be taken on land. Goldsborough expected the runaways to conceal their identities by changing their names if questioned.<sup>104</sup> Publicising their intention to travel from Baltimore to Pennsylvania and warning potential slave catchers they would attempt to deceive their way to freedom, Goldsborough had, through the circular, singularly raised the vigilance of those who travelled or lived along those routes. The runaways were to be expected and whether through print or word of mouth, slave catchers and those simply enticed by the reward could now hunt this bounty. In any case, it appears that their escape attempt was successful at least for a number of years.

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<sup>103</sup> Robert Henry Goldsborough was born at Myrtle Grove, Talbot County. He was an important figure in Maryland social and political life. A graduate of St John's College, he also served as a member of the Maryland House of Delegates. He was a major in the states militia and was a Maryland senator between 1813 and 1819. He was married to Henrietta Maria Nicols. See 'Goldsborough, Robert Henry (1779-1836)'. Biographical Directory of the United States Congress, 1774-Present. <http://bioguide.congress.gov/scripts/biodisplay.pl?index=G000264> [Accessed 1 February 2017].

<sup>104</sup> Maryland State Archives. The Sarah D. Griffen, Clyde Griffen, and Margaret Thibault Collection of Goldsborough Family Papers, MSA SC 2085-17-2-6, R. H. Goldsborough Circular for Boatswain and Henny, 5 September 1814.

Figure 1.7. Circular for Boatswain and Henny, 5 September 1814.



Source: Maryland State Archives. The Sarah D. Griffen, Clyde Griffen, and Margaret Thibault Collection of Goldsborough Family Papers, MSA SC 2085-17-2-6, R. H. Goldsborough Circular for Boatswain and Henny, 5 September 1814.

Goldsborough would advertise their escape again in 1815. A circular bearing his name and dated 12 August was issued for the recapture of Sam, Nathan, Cyrus as well as Boatswain and Henny. The circular revealed that Sam had “ran off four years ago,” Nathan

“in August 1812,” Boatswain and Henny “4 September 1814”, while Cyrus, the most recent escapee, had “ran off 7 March 1815”.<sup>105</sup> The circular demonstrated its ability to draw information on Boatswain and Henny’s whereabouts—eight years after they had originally runaway. Robert C. Lockwood, armed with a copy of the advertisement, thus a description of the fugitives, embodied the danger that lurked and stalked runaway slaves. Print had the potential to impair the moral judgment of any stranger and turn them into a potential slave catcher, especially when a tempting reward was offered. In his letter to Goldsborough on 7 September 1822, Lockwood expressed his confidence that Boatswain and Henny could “be got”. The runaways lived 25 miles from Philadelphia with their young child, revealed a confident Lockwood.<sup>106</sup> Goldsborough wasted no time in arranging their recapture. A letter supporting Goldsborough’s ownership of Henny and Boatswain, including a detailed description of them, was drafted and signed by numerous Talbot County residents on 16 September 1822.<sup>107</sup> Subsequent plantation records and personal letters authored by Goldsborough suggest that Henny, Boatswain, and the others listed in his circular, were not however recaptured. In a letter dated 29 November 1825 and entitled “servants eloped”, Goldsborough listed all of the slaves, outlining his plans to “give one half the value of each or all for the apprehension and delivery to me”.<sup>108</sup>

While it is unclear for whom the “servants eloped” letter was intended, Goldsborough’s description of the runaways in the private letter cast doubt on the accuracy and truthfulness of his description of the fugitives communicated to the public in the 1815 circular. All of the slaves were younger than they were described in the circular, especially Boatswain and Henny. Boatswain was not 27 years old, as the circular stated, but “about 18” and Henny was not 23, but rather “about 17”, “when they ran off”. While it was not uncommon for advertisers to provide vague estimations of their fugitives’ age, the accuracy of Goldsborough’s description in the circular appears to have been more cunning, especially as it pertained to Boatswain and Henny. Goldsborough seems to have known that Henny

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<sup>105</sup> ‘A Guide to the History of Slavery in Maryland’.

[http://msa.maryland.gov/msa/intromsa/pdf/slavery\\_pamphlet.pdf](http://msa.maryland.gov/msa/intromsa/pdf/slavery_pamphlet.pdf). Figure 2. [Accessed 21 September 2016]

<sup>106</sup> Maryland State Archives. The Sarah D. Griffen, Clyde Griffen, and Margaret Thibault Collection of Goldsborough Family Papers, MSA SC 2085-17-3-2, Letter from Robert C. Lockwood to Robert Henry Goldsborough, 7 September 1822.

<sup>107</sup> Maryland State Archives. The Sarah D. Griffen, Clyde Griffen, and Margaret Thibault Collection of Goldsborough Family Papers, MSA SC 2085-17-3-3, Robert Henry Goldsborough Claim of Ownership of Boatswain and Henny, 16 September 1822.

<sup>108</sup> Maryland State Archives. The Sarah D. Griffen, Clyde Griffen, and Margaret Thibault Collection of Goldsborough Family Papers, MSA SC 2085-41-7-12, Robert Henry Goldsborough Letter listing ‘Servants Eloped’, 29 November 1825.

had escaped while she was pregnant and of a “high temper”— details that he chose to omit in the circular. While it is unclear precisely what his relationship with Henny was, besides master and slave, it is evident from the private letter that Goldsborough valued her, and not Boatswain, particularly highly. Henny was, to Goldsborough, “a most remarkable slave”.

Baruck Fowler also turned to the circular in 1798 when his slave, Jonas, or Jonas Oker, absconded from Philip Hammond’s “Davis’s Quarter” plantation in Anne Arundel County, where it appears he had been hired (Figure 1.8).<sup>109</sup> Jonas, “One of the vilest villains,” was likely “lurking about the Forks of Patuxent,” harboured by an individual by the name of Cowman, proclaimed Fowler.<sup>110</sup> Claiming right of ownership of Jonas and Jonas’s wife, despite their absence of two years, Fowler publically targeted Cowman, “one of the people called Quakers,” accusing him of enticing his property away. Fowler then turned his attention to Jonas’s character. Using pejorative language and being deliberately speculative, Fowler attempted to instil fear of Jonas. This “villain” it was “supposed by many” had fatally poisoned his former master’s child, claimed Fowler. His only evidence was that he had personally observed the physician attending the child remark that he was “puzzled to its complaint”. This public portrayal of Jonas as a dangerous slave, one who intended to “kill or be killed before he would be taken,” appears little more than malicious speculation that attempted to accentuate animalistic racial stereotypes and prey upon white fear of servile insurrection.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Maryland State Archives, Waters-White Collection, MSA SC 453-1-31, Baruck Fowler Advertisement for Runaway Slave, Jonas, 8 May 1798.

<sup>110</sup> The Patuxent River is to the South of Annapolis and north of the Potomac River in Maryland.

<sup>111</sup> Fowler claimed to have heard that Jonas intended to kill to be killed by Josh Hopkins, a Quaker.



Figure 1.8. Baruck Fowler Advertisement for Jonas Oker, 8 May 1798.

MAY 8, 1798.

**I**f twenty miles, or under, Twenty Dollars; if above fifty miles, Thirty Dollars; if above eighty miles, or out of the state of Maryland, from the place of elopement, Forty Dollars, will be given by the subscriber, living in the city of Annapolis, and state aforesaid, for apprehending and securing in some one safe gaol, so that he gets him again, negro JONAS, who calls himself JONAS OKER, one of the vilest villains, its probable, that was ever raised in the state, who eloped from the plantation of Mr. PHILIP HAMMOND, in Anne-Arundel county, called Davis's Quarter, on the Sunday evening of the 29th April last; its highly probable this villain is lurking about the Forks of Patuxet, in the said county, particularly about the plantation of a certain COWMAN, of that neighbourhood, who is one of the peopled Quakers; its supposed that this Cowman has countenanced the aforesaid villain for some time back, that this said Cowman has sired the aforesaid villain, and wife, to live on his land, as tenant for two years or more, though at the same time this villain was another man's property; its probable that this aforesaid villain was the innce of the death of one of his former master's children, who I lately purchas'd him of, by giving it poison, as its supposed by many, I heard the physician myself that attended the child say that he was puzzled to tell its complaint; I have been well informed that a certain JOSH HOPKINS, another of the people called Quakers, should say that he has seen the aforesaid villain, as described as aforesaid, would kill it killed before he would be taken, which intimates that he the said Hopkins has had conversation with the fellow since his elopement, its probable that the aforesaid villain may at this time lurk about the neighbourhood of the Hopkins's, on the head of South river, as I have been informed he has acquaintances there, and which place is nearly contiguous to the aforesaid place called the Forks of Patuxent; I have also been informed that he is lurking in the aforesaid neighbourhoods at this time, particularly about the aforesaid Cowman's; should he leave either of these places its thought that he will strive to get towards the Federal city or George-town, and from thence into the state of Virginia. His countenance is much against him, I have been informed that he carries himself in defence; should any person harbour, or attempt to protect the aforesaid villain, so that I get evidence of it, I will put the law in force against them and all such offenders, and endeavour to bring them to proper punishment; its to be hoped that the aforesaid villain will be apprehended, as it is the duty of all good citizens to detect rascality. I will pay all reasonable charges for bringing the aforesaid villain, (if detected) with the above reward, when delivered to me, or secured in Anne-Arundel county gaol.

**Baruck Fowler.**

The period from c.1790-1810 was a window of opportunity of sorts for absconding slaves. The expansion of transport and post communications accompanying newspapers along roads and riverine and coastal waterways offered increasing opportunities to fugitives. Despite the boom in runaway advertisements, primitive print machinery, commercial difficulties, and a lack of national distribution networks undermined slaveholder efforts to recapture fugitive slaves.<sup>112</sup> While advertiser proximity to urban print centres and print shops increased the speed of reporting fugitivity, instances of advertisers having their notices printed and circulated within a day of the fugitivity were rare. There was often a delay between the slave, or slaves, absconding and the printing of fugitive advertisements, permitting slaves a small advantage over their pursuers (the specifics of which will be discussed in Chapter Two). The limitations of printed fugitive notices ensured slaveholders were still heavily dependent on a combination of oral and print cultures for the recovery of fugitive slaves during the early national period. Shane White's assessment that print supplemented rather than supplanted the spoken word fittingly describes the capabilities of print in the recovery of fugitive slaves during the research period.<sup>113</sup> The printed net used to recapture absconding slaves was widened and tightened during the antebellum period.

The connection of communities and the establishment of more comprehensive distribution networks throughout the United States in the nineteenth century would profoundly shape slave fugitivity and embolden slaveholders. Newspapers would grow more powerful, demonstrating an unprecedented ability to direct and inform Americans. Indeed, the power of the newspaper is best summarised in a written exchange sent from Henry Wadsworth-Longfellow, poet and professor at Harvard, from his home, Craigie House mansion, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, to his close friend, Reverend Andrew Adgate Lipscomb, then writing for the *New York Daily Times*.<sup>114</sup> From the letter dated 4 July 1853, it is clear that slavery had strained their relationship; a relationship formed around a mutual passion for intellectual exchange, especially education and literature. Hopeful that he and

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<sup>112</sup> Prior to the 1830s, advertising in a newspaper was a relatively slow process and one which demanded much of print machinery. It took, on average, sixteen hours to set the print type for two pages of a newspaper and further time was required to allow the ink to dry. Thirteen operations were required to be completed in order for the type to begin printing on paper. If two artisans worked in unison, without any mechanical problems arising during the print process, they could expect to print approximately 240 sheets per hour. See Leonard, *Power of the Press*, p.14; For a useful list of the commercial difficulties faced by printers, see Patricia L. Dooley, *The Early Republic: Primary Documents on Events from 1799 to 1820* (Westport, 2004), p.xi.

<sup>113</sup> Shane White, *Somewhat More Independent: The End of Slavery in New York City, 1770-1810* (Athens; London, 1991), p.64.

<sup>114</sup> Craigie House served as George Washington's headquarters during the Revolutionary War with Britain. Longfellow resided in the house between 1837 and 1882.

Lipscomb would be reunited imminently, despite the latter's bout of ill-health, Longfellow insisted they "talk about everything *but* slavery". Having evoked the slavery question, Longfellow continued "for while you [Lipscomb] look upon it as rather a blessing than otherwise, in my opinion, it is the meanest form of tyranny".<sup>115</sup> Longfellow was deliberately provocative. He wanted Lipscomb to engage him and defend his pro-slavery views knowing that Lipscomb, as a Methodist preacher and slaveholder, would struggle. Evoking reciprocity to drive home this view, Longfellow remarked that while he could "never make it [slavery] rhyme with 'Do unto others as you would have others do unto you,'" he was certain Lipscomb could neither when he met slavery "face to face". Satisfied he had the last word on the subject prior to their meeting, Longfellow addressed what they would discuss. "One thing I do agree with you about is your estimate of the newspaper as a power in our country ...of that we will talk and of all other things appertaining to literature".

### **The Decline of Fugitive Slave Advertisements**

While the power of the newspapers and print would continue to grow, the formal abolition of slavery in the United States was the catalyst for the death of fugitive slave advertisements. The final slave runaway advertisement appears to have been published in December 1864. Charles G. Talcott, the superintendent of Richmond and Danville Railroad Company issued a runaway advertisement on 24 December 1864 in the *Richmond Enquirer* for the apprehension of "Negro men"- Paul and Tom. Paul, "twenty-four years old, six feet high, dark complexion" was a "slave of W. H. Cook" of Campbell County, Virginia, and Tom, "eighteen years old, five feet six inches high, black complexion" was a "slave of W. A. Harries, Lunenburg County, Virginia."<sup>116</sup>

Runaway advertisements continued to be published in American newspapers into 1865 but with a twist. Following the same style and appearance of fugitive slave advertisements – which they probably were – advertisers were careful to avoid using the term "slave" or acknowledging the fugitive subject had previous owners or had been purchased. For this reason, they cannot, with certainty, be regarded as fugitive slave advertisements. Advertisers including Louis DeLaigle of Georgia instead advertised that their "negro man" or "negro woman" had absconded. DeLaigle offered a \$200 reward for a runaway black man,

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<sup>115</sup> Hargrett Library, Henry W. Longfellow letter to Andrew A. Lipscomb, MS 653, Letter from Henry W. Longfellow letter to Andrew A. Lipscomb, 4 July 1853.

<sup>116</sup> *Richmond Enquirer*, 24 December 1864; As Kentucky did not ratify the thirteenth Amendment and slaveholders persisted in their old slaveholding ways, newspapers from the state were searched extensively for fugitive slave advertisements after 1864. None were found.



Henry Pond, who had a wife at the “quarters of Barney Greiner, Esq., about 13 miles below this, on the line of the Augusta and Savannah Railroad”. While he did not publically describe Pond as a slave, referring to him only as “my man”, it is likely he was a slave.<sup>117</sup> Similarly, George Goldthwaite, in Texas, offered \$50 for a “Negro man, named Joe”. He would only state that George had been “brought from Montgomery, Alabama, to which place he may endeavor to return”. While it appears that George had been taken to Texas against his will, it cannot be presumed he was a slave.<sup>118</sup> Drury J. Barner, at Dinwiddie Courthouse in Virginia, offered \$500 reward for a runaway, Hannah. She was described as a “negro woman” of a “very likely” appearance who “stammers when excited”. Again, the word “slave” was never used.<sup>119</sup> L. A. L. & V. W. Boisclair offered a reward of \$600 for the recapture of “three negro boys” who “ranaway on the night of the 14<sup>th</sup> instant” [January 1865]. All three were described as “very likely and intelligent” though were not explicitly described as slaves, despite the typography of the advertisement conforming to a fugitive slave advertisement.<sup>120</sup> These cases serve to show that the adaption of fugitive slave advertisements was not limited to a specific newspaper or a particular state but had become common practice in the Chesapeake, the lower South, and the West. By avoiding describing the fugitive or fugitives as a “slave” or revealing that the runaway had been purchased, advertisers continued to hunt enslaved people through print. The careful deployment of language supports the opinion that advertisers’ descriptions and use of language was carefully chosen with public perception never far from their minds. That advertisers were mindful of this even in the dying throes of slavery suggests they were especially mindful of it in slavery’s heyday.

A final satirical twist on the genre (in the form of a suite of fugitive slave advertisements) was printed in the *New Orleans Tribune* on 29 April 1865, shortly before the Confederate Army’s last stand at Palmito Ranch.<sup>121</sup> The editorial feature entitled “*The Tribune as an Advertising Medium*” highlighted the desperate conditions of printers in the Confederacy at the closing of the American Civil War. Printing paper had “become exceedingly scarce” and “all presses had been put in requisition to print – as fast as steam could work – rebel shinplasters of all sizes, denominations and values”, relayed the editor. A “chevalier” had been able to come “from outside the lines, with a batch of advertisements intended for publication” and “satisfied that such advertisements will, outside the lines, do much to

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<sup>117</sup> *Daily Constitutionalist*, 8 April 1865

<sup>118</sup> *Houston Tri-Weekly Telegraph*, 3 April 1865.

<sup>119</sup> *Richmond Examiner*, 31 January 1865.

<sup>120</sup> *Daily Constitutionalist*, 20 January 1865.

<sup>121</sup> *New Orleans Tribune*, 29 April 1865

remind our readers of the overthrow of the old regime in our beloved city”, they editor had chosen to print them.

The four advertisements—from the “Widow Confederacy”, “The Late Administrators of the Late Virginia Estate”, “The So-Called State of Mississippi”, and “The So-Called State of Georgia”—sought the recapture of the fugitive, “Jeff Davis” (Figure 1.9). A satirical portrayal of the Confederate President and the perceived cowardice of his surrender, one advertisement described Jeff as having “ran away from Richmond Virginia, about all Fools’ Day”. Another, for “my negro boy”, accused him of being “subject to fits and was probably under the influence of an attack of fears when he went away”. “It appears that this boy, Jeff Davis, who deceived so many persons and is now a fugitive, has not yet been apprehended”, concluded the editor.

Figure 1.9. Newspaper Advertisements for the Fugitive, "Jeff Davis" (1865).

**A LIBERAL REWARD** will be given for the apprehension of my boy **JEFF. DAVIS**, who ran away from Richmond, Virginia, about all Fools' Day. He is a politician by trade, about 50 or 55 years of age, tall and slim, and very black. He is very intelligent, and when interrogated will tell a very plausible story. He is acquainted with the road from Richmond to Vicksburg. He may attempt to go up that way, and then by the way of Texas to Mexico. A reward of twenty tons of Confederate paper-money, or (if preferred) twenty cents in United States currency, will be paid to any person who will bring him to jail, or for such information as will lead to his arrest. **Widow Confederacy.**

**BOY OUT!**—About the 1st inst. my negro boy **JEFF. DAVIS** absconded from me, and has not since been heard of. Said boy is subject to fits, and was probably under the influence of an attack of fears when he went away. My chief object in issuing this notice is to warn persons to be on their guard in approaching him while in his fits, as he is then entirely unmanageable and dangerous if force is used against him. I will give a reasonable reward (in U. S. Treasury notes) for information of the whereabouts of said negro. He is tall, lean, about 55 years of age, and has an unusually flat nose, particularly so just between the eyes. Information may be given at the office of the New Orleans Tribune. **The So-Called State of Mississippi.**

**RAN-AWAY OR STOLEN** from the Richmond Estate, in Virginia, about the 1st of April, a tall old man, named **JEFF. DAVIS**. Said negro about 55 years of age, six feet two inches high, well made, of a light copper-colored complexion, one or two of his front teeth out, and stammers a little when talking, if annoyed. We will give fifty dollars (not in confederate money, but in genuine greenbacks) to have said fugitive lodged in jail—he having left our place before the time was out for which we had hired him. We also offer fifty dollars (in greenbacks) for the apprehension of the thief. **The Administrators of the Late Virginia Estate.**

I will give a very liberal reward for the boy **JEFF. DAVIS**, whom I hired to work on my plantation, at Augusta, Georgia, and who ran away from that place a few days after his arrival. The reward will be paid on delivery of said boy into the hands of the nearest jailor, who may keep him secure till I call for him. **JEFF** is what could be called a dark negro, of rather dull expression of countenance; his hair might be called straight, and, when long, very bushy. Was very long when he left home. His age is about 55 years; his height 6 feet 2 inches. Took with him from home a six-shooter. **The So-Called State of Georgia.** It appears that this boy, Jeff. Davis, who deceived so many persons and is now a fugitive, has not yet been apprehended.

Source: New Orleans Tribune, 29 April 1865.

The case of Jeff Davis and the use of fugitive slave runaway advertisement to humiliate him supports the opinion that they had developed into a distinct advertisement genre by the antebellum period. While the runaway, "Jeff Davis", did not exist, the typography and iconography of the advertisements and the slaveholder description had been developed to publically humiliate the hundreds of African Americans who did abscond each year in the United States. The shortening of the name Jefferson to Jeff, the description of

him as a “negro”, his ability to tell “a very plausible story” when interrogated and the need to “keep him secure till I call for him”, were methods slave masters and mistresses used to assert their dominance over their fugitive slaves and cast them as bad characters. The techniques, style, and wording of fugitive slave advertisements had become so common place in newspapers, and so instilled in slaveholding societies, that the advertisers recognised the readers would understand the irony and the satirical tone. To compare “Jeff Davis” to a fugitive slave and deploy the same language, techniques, and imagery was the ultimate form of insult. It framed his act as one of cowardice rather than heroism just as fugitive slave advertisements portrayed slave agency as a manifestation of blacks’ *natural* rebelliousness.

The slave advertisement was a source of communication in slaveholding societies but also a source of security for slaveholders. To return to what Rachel Hall described as the “surveillance function” of print culture, their issuance provided slaveholders a sense of security when their control had been found wanting or their authority was challenged by slaves. They were intended to reassure whites that they were still the dominant race. The daily publication of these advertisements from the colonial era, and especially from the early national period, also served to remind wider slaveholding society that their way of life was being protected and that the fugitive would soon be returned to labour. In reality, the recurrent publication of advertisements was a reminder that a rebellious slave was still on the run and authority yet to be re-established over them. That slaves were absconding within this surveillance environment, the parameters of which grew increasingly restrictive from the early national period, commensurate with punishments, suggests the desperate decision of slaves to abscond was even more remarkable.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has located and accounted for the development of slave runaway advertising within American print culture from the early colonial era through the antebellum period. It has argued that slaveholders developed and subsequently relied upon a distinct combination of typography and iconography in slave runaway advertisements to undermine slave individualism, exceptionalism, and agency. In support of this argument, the chapter has considered the stylistic development and functionality of the advertisements through the prism of Little’s theory of implicit and explicit meaning in print culture. To develop an understanding of how the advertisements shaped fugitivity, especially during the research period between 1790 and 1810, the chapter considered the distribution and reach of fugitive

slave advertisements. While primitive print technology and scant distribution networks meant that the reporting of fugitivity varied between and within states, the growth of newspaper readership ensured more slave runaway advertisements than ever before were reaching Americans from the 1790s. The advent of more advanced print technology and the establishment of distribution networks in the antebellum period ensured news could be spread between and within communities like never before; the plight of the fugitive slave becoming ever more difficult.



## 2

## A “Jack” of all Trades or any “Tom, Dick, and Harry”? The Fugitive Slaves of Georgia and Maryland, c. 1790-1810.

“A man who can turn his hand to any kind (or to many kinds) of work or business”.

*Oxford English Dictionary*, definition of “Jack of all Trades”.<sup>1</sup>

“A Victorian term for ‘the man in the street,’ more particularly persons of no note; persons unworthy of notice”.

*Brewer’s Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*, definition of “Tom, Dick, and Harry”.<sup>2</sup>

### Introduction

The previous chapter considered the development and functionality of fugitive slave advertisements within wider American print culture. This chapter performs descriptive statistics on data pertaining to the fugitive slaves featured in the fugitive slave advertisements and plots fugitivity. The primary aim of the chapter is to provide a foundation for prosopography—to understand who the fugitive slaves of Georgia and Maryland were during the early national period—and for undertaking a more nuanced interpretation of the evidence in subsequent chapters. The information that has been extracted from the advertisements includes details about slaves’ escape, their names, ages, sex, and skillsets. In addition, information on advertisers has been logged in the FSdb including names and residences. Advertisers were most commonly slaveholders, however overseers, guardians, and estate administrators also issued runaway notices. While advertisers attempted to portray slaves as persons of little value in the social hierarchy – the commonality of the given names Tom, Dick, and Harry evidence of this point – the advertisements contain descriptive biographical information worthy of interrogation, from the clothes worn by fugitives to their distinguishing physical features. Advertisers described their fugitives’ personalities, characterising them as certain “types” – including the “artful”, the “cunning”, and the “roguish” fugitive. They offered comments on their slaves’ behaviour on the assumption

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<sup>1</sup> Definition of ‘Jack, n.1’. *OED Online*, Oxford University Press. March 2017.  
<http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.stir.ac.uk/view/Entry/100485?redirectedFrom=jack+of+all+trades>.  
 [Accessed 16 March 2017]

<sup>2</sup> For definition, see *Brewer’s Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*. Revised and Enlarged Edition (New York, 1952), p.909.

that readers and would-be slave catchers knew the “type” of slave in their midst. Describing the fugitive slaves with racial or ethnic epithets, advertisers sought to mobilise the public for the purpose of identifying but ultimately recapturing fugitive slaves.

Pejorative descriptions reveal much about fugitives’ situations as well as biographical evidence. It seems paradoxical that advertisers sought readers’ assistance in locating persons portrayed in the advertisements as of little apparent value. Indeed, I argue that the denigration of fugitive slaves fulfilled an additional function: a charade reinforcing slaveholders’ sense of superiority. The very issuance of runaway notices, of course, negates the notion that fugitive slaves were of no worth. Fugitives’ socio-economic value was manifest in the ways in which they were portrayed. Slave runaways’ worthiness to their masters and mistresses was visible in the rewards offered for their recapture and the frequent reprinting of advertisements. Not only were fugitive slaves valued by slaveholders, they were often feared. Slaves often possessed varied and valuable skill sets and were proficient in trades and crafts—The popularity of the name Jack sometimes indicating slaves who were “Jacks of all Trades”. While some fugitives were skilled in trades and crafts, others were described as skilled in deception, sometimes able to read and write. Artful slaves appear to have been one of the dangerous slave types. Were they?

### **Slave Fugitivity**

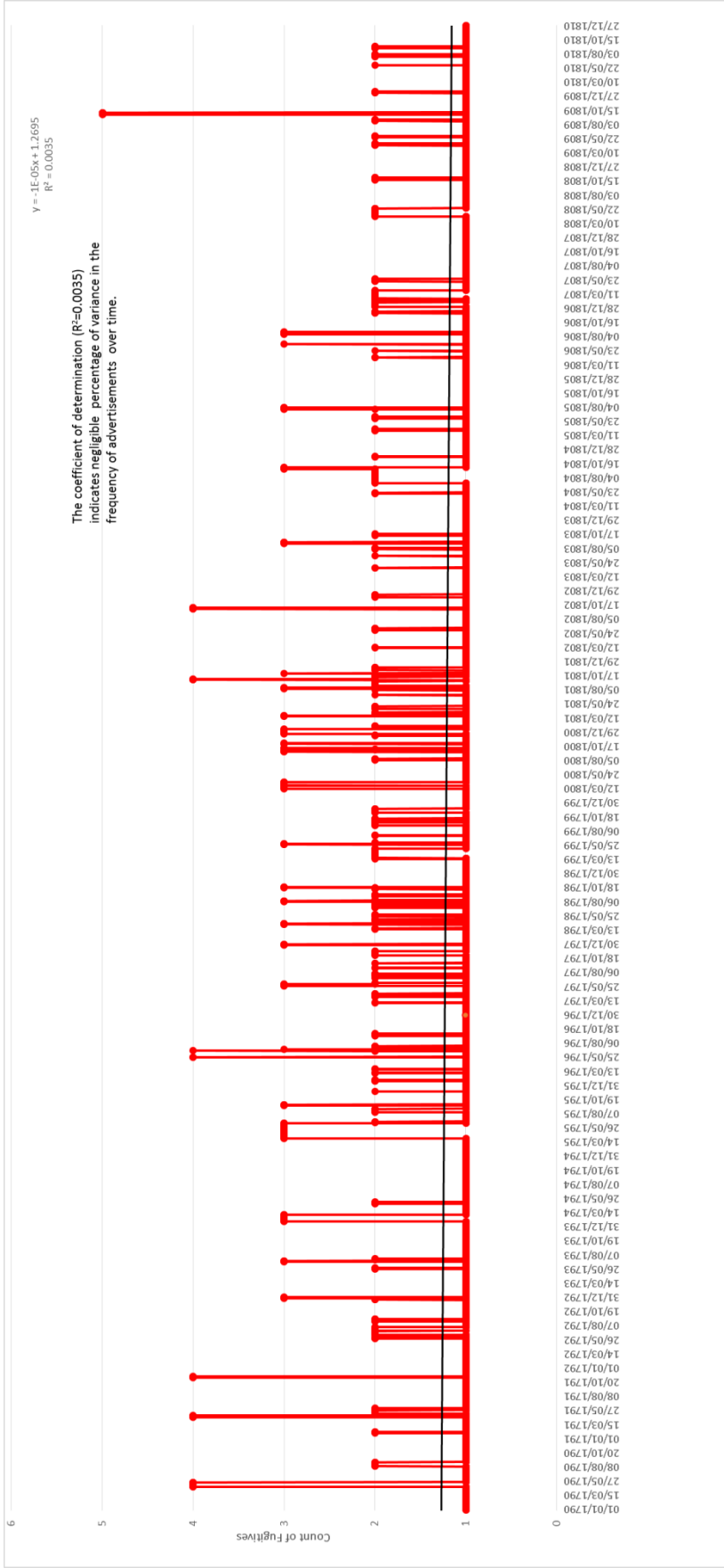
The project examined 5,567 fugitive slave advertisements (FSA) published in Georgia, Maryland, South Carolina, and Virginia between 1790 and 1810. Information was compiled for 2,350 slave runaways whose details were stored in the Fugitive Slave Database (FSdb). Descriptive statistics were performed on the 1,832 fugitive slaves of Georgia and Maryland (FSP) and inferential statistics on a sample of 800 fugitives drawn from the four states mentioned above (SampleFSP). The results are reported below.

The frequency of advertisements published in Georgia and Maryland between 1790 and 1810 exhibits occasional spikes, but the overall trend is a negligible increase over the two decades. Fugitivity time series for Maryland and Georgia show that normally no more than one fugitive per day was being reported, with occasional peaks of increased frequency (Figure 2.1a and Figure 2.1b). The frequency of fugitivity by year, however, (as reported in the FSdb) shows cresting at the turn of the century. Having increased during the 1790s, fugitivity peaked between 1796 and 1798 and 1800-01, then declined (Figure 2.2). The trend line does



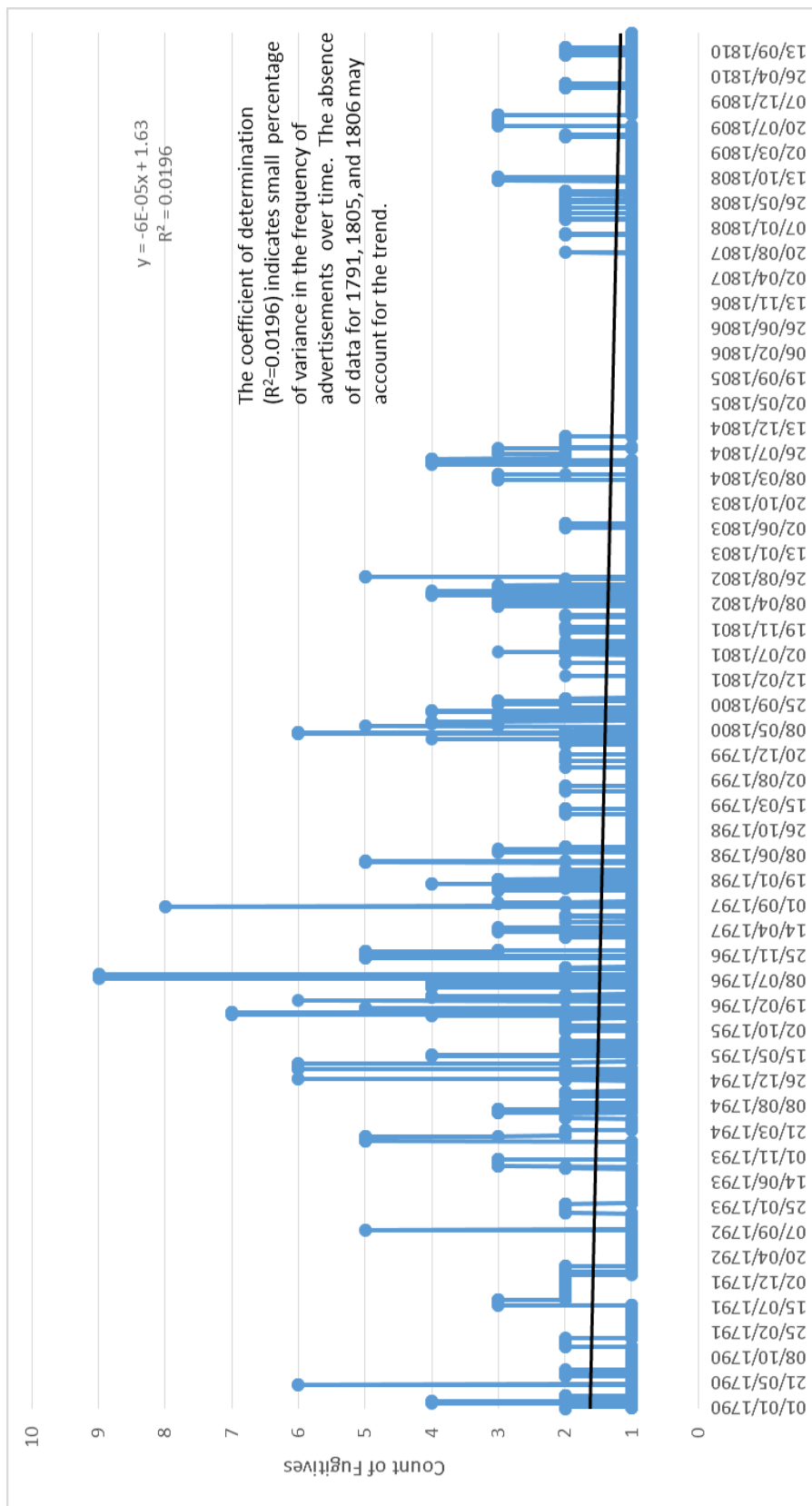
not fit the data well, however, and the data does not provide a reliable model to predict fugitivity.

Figure 2.1a. Time Series of Fugitivity in Maryland, 1 Jan. 1790-31 Dec. 1810.



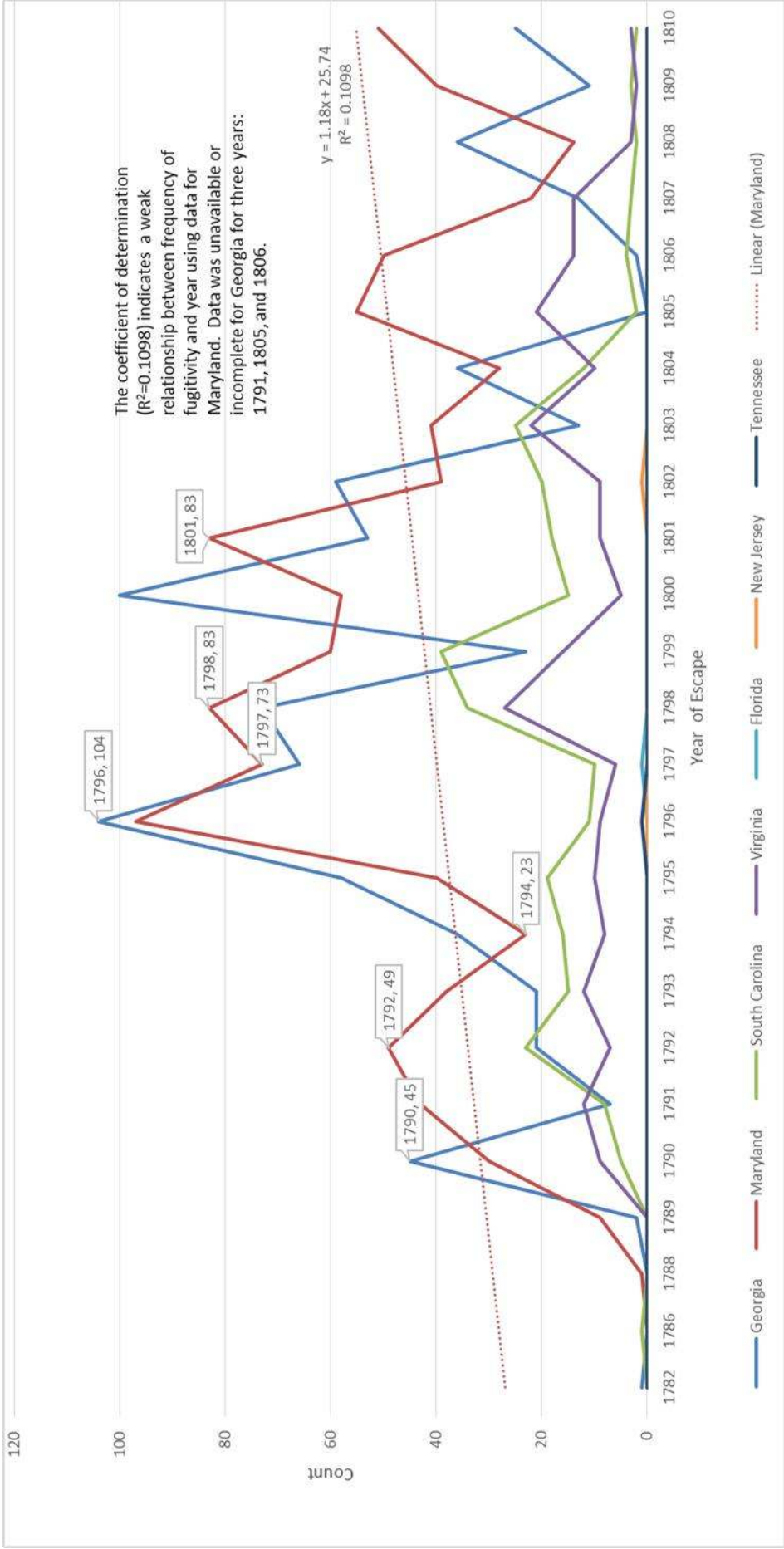
Source: Fugitive Slave Advertisements (FSA).

Figure 2.1b. Time Series of Fugitivity in Georgia, 1 Jan. 1790-31 Dec. 1810.



Source: Fugitive Slave Advertisements (FSA).

Figure 2.2. Frequency of Fugitivity, 1790-1810.



Source: Fugitive Slave Database (FSdb)

Nonetheless, local circumstances go some way to explaining these spikes. In Maryland, the increase in slave fugitivity from 1796 to 1798 and again from 1800 to 1801 may reflect an increase in the forgery and sale of freedom papers and their use by fugitive slaves. While this will be discussed in greater detail later in the chapter, the number of slaves petitioning for their freedom in Maryland courts increased in the 1790s. Freedom certificates, issued to those slaves who successfully petitioned for their freedom, were dispersed among the wider slave population, and this appears to have been an especially pronounced problem in Maryland in 1796. In light of the increased distribution of forged freedom papers between Maryland's free black and slave populations, state officials revised the law in late-December 1796 in an attempt to counter the problem. The *Act relating to Negroes* (1796) stated:

That in all cases where certificates from a clerk of any court, or from any judge or magistrate, have heretofore been granted, or may hereafter be granted, to free negroes or mulattoes, if such negro or mulatto shall hereafter give or sell such to any slave, by which means such slave may be able to abscond from the service of his or her master, and personate the grantee of such certificate...upon conviction...or upon confession or otherwise, to fine such free negro or mulatto a sum not exceeding three hundred dollars, in the discretion of the court, one half to the use of the masters or owner of such absconding slave, the other half to the county school.<sup>3</sup>

The considerable fine attempted to deter freed slaves forging freedom certificates. Ironically, the revenue generated from those who fell foul to the law was used to remunerate slaveholders and support state education initiatives, thus linking white education with slave ownership. Analysis of the FSA suggests the revised law did not completely counter the problem. After the act was passed, free blacks continued to be implicated by advertisers in the forging of passes and certificates used by absconding slaves.

When Jim Brown and Jack escaped “from the farm of John Beale Bordley, in Kent County” on Maryland's Eastern Shore on 5 November 1800, their master, Arthur Bryan, of Wye-River, was in “no doubt” his hired slaves would “obtain forged passes or get a manumission certificate from some of their black brethren, who often play tricks of that kind”. Bryan suspected that both men had been “inveighed by a runaway mulatto fellow, named Will” who was also the property of Bordley.<sup>4</sup> When Bob Miller escaped from James P. Soper, of Anne Arundel County, Maryland, Soper did not implicate Bob in the forgery of the forged pass he had likely procured, but rather, he blamed “his infamous connections in

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<sup>3</sup> For ‘*An ACT relating to negroes, and to repeal the acts of assembly therein mentioned* (1796)’, see Virgil Maxcy, *The Laws of Maryland with the Charter, The Bill of Rights, The Constitution of the States, and its Alterations, The Declaration of Independence, and The Constitution of the United States, and its Amendments. With a General Index in Three Volumes.* Volume II (Baltimore, 1811), pp.351-361; For more on this law, see Christopher Phillips, *Freedom's Port: The African American Community of Baltimore, 1790-1860* (Urbana; Chicago, 1997), p.255.

<sup>4</sup> *Federal Gazette*, 8 November 1800.

the neighbourhood where he lived”.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, Giles was expected by his master, Richard Stuart, to have “procured a pass, or a forged certificate of his freedom” reasoning that “as he goes from a neighbourhood where there are many free negroes who write” he “might very readily obtain a copy of their pass or certificates of freedom”.<sup>6</sup>

The same Maryland Act of 1796 (*Act relating to Negroes*), routinely amended between 1797 and 1807, included several provisions further restricting slave freedoms. The act permitted slaves to be carried to and from the state and prohibited them from “keeping entertainment at any muster ground, horse-race, or public place whatever, without the orders or permission of his or her owner in writing”. Slaves failing to abide to the latter were “liable to be apprehended and punished, in the discretion of any justice of the peace, not exceeding twenty stripes”. The same act also made it more difficult for slaves to petition for their freedom. No petitions for freedom would “originate in the general court of either shore, but shall commence and [be] tried only in the county where such petitioner or petitioners shall reside, under the direction of his, her, or their mister, mistress, or owner”. The act also lowered the age up to which a slave could be manumitted. Masters were permitted to free any slave up to the age of forty-five provided they were “of healthy constitutions, and sound in mind and body, capable by labour to procure to him or them sufficient food and raiment, with other requisite necessaries of life”.<sup>7</sup> Prior to this, slaves could be manumitted to the age of fifty. These measures, which further limited slave freedoms, were quite possibly a catalyst for increased slave fugitivity. As Peter H Wood argued, it was not exceptional that overt white controls were met with fierce black resistance as the individual and collective tensions of blacks rose in light of each new penalty or provocation.<sup>8</sup>

Accounting for the rise in slave fugitivity in Georgia is more difficult. It is supposed that the social upheaval of the Great Savannah Fire of 26 November 1796 provided local slaves a window of opportunity in which to escape.<sup>9</sup> The fire, beginning “Between six and

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<sup>5</sup> *American and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, 3 July 1806.

<sup>6</sup> *Federal Republican*, 15 July 1811.

<sup>7</sup> Maxcy, *The Laws of Maryland*, pp.351-361

<sup>8</sup> Peter H. Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 Through the Stono Rebellion* (New York, 1996), p.285.

<sup>9</sup> Although probably a coincidence, a fire also broke out at the office of the *Maryland Journal* in Baltimore, Maryland, the following week, Sunday, 4 December 1796. See John Thomas Scharf, *The Chronicles of Baltimore: Being a Complete History of “Baltimore Town” and Baltimore City from the Earliest Period to the Present Time* (Baltimore, 1874), p.83; While there is no definitive proof that it was started by a slave, subsequent research revealed an advertisement from a slaveholder Mr P. Waters who suspected his slave, Nancy, was involved. Waters, residing at No. 80, North Howard Street, Baltimore, revealed Nancy had been “seen sculking [sic] about the late unfortunate fire, between the hours of 8 and 9 o’clock in the same evening”, where she was “supposed to have stole something therefrom and made off with the same”. See *Federal Gazette*, 8 December 1796.

seven o'clock in the evening" in a "small Bakehouse, belonging to a Mr Gromet, in Market Square," engulfed much of the city. A combination of dry weather, wooden buildings, and "no immediate and decisive measures" claimed "229 houses" leaving "171 houses only, of the compact part of the City,...standing" and "upwards of 400 families...destitute of houses".<sup>10</sup> While Savannah "recovered rapidly", within several years, the devastation inflicted upon the city and the upheaval of rebuilding presented slaves an opportunity to escape.<sup>11</sup>

The decline in slave fugitivity from 1802-1807 does not appear to coincide with measures to control fugitives in Georgia or Maryland. The formal ending of Georgia's involvement with the international slave trade in 1798 may have contributed to the decline in fugitivity. While there were still some illegal shipments of slaves into the state after 1798, as happened in 1803 when Charles Collins brought "an illegal cargo of slaves into Georgia", less "new" slaves were legally imported.<sup>12</sup>

The publication history of the fugitive slave advertisements (FSA) is not easily mapped to the geography of slave fugitivity. The Georgia newspapers examined for this project were printed in Savannah, Chatham County (the *Georgia Gazette*, *Columbian Museum*, and the *Savannah Republican*) and in Augusta, Richmond County (the *Southern Centinel*). Savannah and Augusta were emergent urban centres with significant enslaved populations. In 1800, Augusta's enslaved population was 1,017 and grew to 1,321 in 1810.<sup>13</sup> Savannah's slave population in 1800 was 2,367 and in 1810, 2,195.<sup>14</sup> While newspapers carried fugitive slave notices placed by advertisers residing throughout the state, it was presumably less convenient for rural slaveholders to access the printing offices in Augusta and Savannah. Conversely, for slaveholders who resided in large towns like Savannah, Charleston, and Baltimore, advertisements were an important tool in recapturing runaways able to find concealment among local free black populations. The distribution of the advertisers of the FSA in Georgia probably reflects these geographical biases. Residences were identified for only 39 percent of advertisers in Georgia newspapers (173 of 449). When compared to figures for the free adult population in 1800, there are disproportionate numbers of

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<sup>10</sup> *Columbian Museum*, 29 November 1796.

<sup>11</sup> Walter J. Fraser, Jr., *Savannah in the Old South* (Athens; London, 2005), p.158.

<sup>12</sup> Roger Antsey, "The Volume of the North-American Slave-Carrying Trade from Africa, 1761-1810", *Revue française d'histoire d'outre-mer*, 62:2 (1975), p.56.

<sup>13</sup> Augusta only gained city status in 1798 having been incorporated as the second town of Georgia in 1789. As Donnie D. Bellamy and Diane E. Walker note in their study of slaveholding in Augusta, there is no accurate demographic data for Augusta prior to 1800. See Donnie D. Bellamy and Diane E. Walker, 'Slaveholding in Antebellum Augusta and Richmond County, Georgia', *Phylon* (1960-), 48:2 (2<sup>nd</sup> Qtr., 1987), p.168.

<sup>14</sup> Michele Gillespie, *Free Labour in an Unfree World: White Artisans in Slaveholding Georgia, 1789-1860* (Athens; London, 2004), p.27.

advertisers from Chatham County (54 percent) and Savannah (38 percent) (Appendix 5). On their own, publication data is not a reliable indicator of local slave fugitivity.

Advertisements did not always indicate the slaves' place of escape. For Georgia, residency was clearly identified in 101 cases (13 percent). The figures for Chatham County (51 percent of fugitives) and Savannah (28 percent) are consistent with the descriptive statistics for advertisers, while the figure for McIntosh County (19 percent) draws attention to the local geography in providing opportunities for fugitives (Appendix 5). McIntosh County, in the Georgia Low Country, was littered with large plantations on which slaves primarily cultivated rice. The coastal plain estuaries, feeding the Atlantic Ocean, suited tidal irrigation. The climate was humid and much of the land swamped. While a difficult climate and environment in which to labour, the vast fields and marshes provided refuge for fugitive slaves to conceal themselves. Swamps provided slaves opportunities to form maroon communities. The "extensive swamplands" of the lower South and the black demographic majority, including Africans, "were greater encouragements to maroon bands", argued Philip Morgan.<sup>15</sup> In the marshlands of Georgia—the Savannah River islands and the Atlantic coastline (especially in the Great Dismal Swamp of North Carolina and Virginia)—maroon communities were formed. Timothy Lockley's work on 1780s slave bands has shown the terrain of the former to have been especially appealing to absconding slaves.<sup>16</sup> Slaves in Savannah and its immediate environs, although also escaping to the swamplands, often chose to conceal themselves among the city's free black population. There, they could hire their labour for the purpose of generating enough money to purchase their freedom or until the opportunity to escape by vessel arose.

A total of twenty slaves in the FSdb were advertised as having escaped from McIntosh County. These slaves escaped primarily from the town of Darien or the surrounding areas (mainland) or from Sapelo Island, also part of the county but located off the south east coast. This included a group of four slaves – Charles (born in Maryland), Alcindor (West-Indian born), Augustin, and John Louis (Guinea Born)—who were advertised in the *Columbian Museum* newspaper on 8 April 1800 by Thomas Dechenaux as fugitives from "Mr L. Harrington's plantation on Sapelo Island".<sup>17</sup> Having "carried off with them a cypress

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<sup>15</sup> Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry* (Chapel Hill, 1998), pp.449-450.

<sup>16</sup> Timothy J. Lockley, "The King of England's Soldiers": Armed Blacks in Savannah and Its Hinterlands during the Revolutionary War Era, 1778-1787", in Leslie M. Harris and Daina Ramey Berry (eds.), *Slavery and Freedom in Savannah* (Athens; London, 2014), pp.30-31.

<sup>17</sup> This is presumably Lewis Harrington who was the proprietor of Chocolate Plantation on Sapelo Island. He purchased the plantation in 1793 and had around 68 slaves working on the plantation. He sold his holding in



canoe boat, 20 or 22 feet long, rowing 4 oars, and painted with red oker,” they were “suspected to be gone toward the Southward, St. Mary’s or the Spanish territory”.<sup>18</sup> Dechenaux advertised in the same newspaper for a further 9 enslaved people who had runaway.<sup>19</sup> This included Alik and Abdalli, who escaped from Sapelo Island in April 1802. Although their ethnic depiction is unclear, their lack of English and Alik’s “country marks” suggest they were “new” slaves imported from Africa. Both men were branded on the right breast with the letters “So” and on the left, “Alik 25” and “Abdalli 26”, respectively.<sup>20</sup>

The absence of explicit information about a fugitive’s place of escape does not necessarily mean that the fugitive had absconded from the advertiser’s main place of residence. Sometimes advertisers stated runaways had departed the “subscriber’s residence”. More commonly, the advertisement assumed the reader understood the place of escape and the advertiser’s property to be the same. On that premise, where a fugitive’s place of escape was unknown, the advertiser’s residence was substituted when performing calculations. This rendered 812 cases, and cross-tabulation by county identified residences for 355 fugitives. Chatham County (55 percent) had the highest count among Georgia fugitives when using this method of “projected fugitivity,” most of whom (41 percent) resided in Savannah. Regarding Maryland, projected fugitivity was higher for Anne Arundel (12 percent) than other rural counties where slave populations were decreasing. The eastern counties with lower estimates of fugitivity (Caroline, Cecil, Dorchester, Kent, Queen Anne’s, Somerset, Talbot, and Worcester) operated hybrid agricultural economy adapted to the cultivation of foodstuffs, primarily cereals, as Barbara Fields noted (Appendix 5).<sup>21</sup>

Fugitivity in Maryland, as Frederick Douglass’s *Narrative* (1845) suggests, was indubitably linked to opportunities arising from seasonal work. July and August were the

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1801 to Richard Leake and Edward Swarbeck. Thomas Spalding became co-proprietor with Swarbeck in 1802 before the property was leased to Richard Hopkins from 1805 until 1808. Swarbeck then became sole proprietor. See Nicholas Honerkamp and Rachel L. DeVan, ‘Pieces of Chocolate: Surveying Slave and Planter Life at Chocolate Plantation, Sapelo Island, Georgia’ (June 2008). The African Diaspora Archaeology Network. <http://www.diaspora.illinois.edu/news0608/news0608-6.pdf>. [Accessed 12 June 2017].

<sup>18</sup> *Columbian Museum*, 8 April 1800.

<sup>19</sup> One of the most remarkable advertisements that Dechenaux issued was for Tom, a “Negro Man”, who had escaped from Jekyll Island (Glynn County). A “very artful slave”, Tom absconded in late-August/early-September (1810), taking a “small fishing canoe”. Tom was described as “lame and disabled of the right arm” from a gunshot wound “sometime after his legal death and burial, about the year 1804”. Having been “found again”—a reality that had “disappointed” the coroner who had to “return the fees”—Tom was “afterwards drowned”. Seemingly cheating death for a second time, Tom “appeared again” before vanishing again. The issuance of the advertisement for Tom reflected Dechenaux’s hope that he “he may once more re-appear”. See *Columbian Museum*, 24 September 1810.

<sup>20</sup> *Columbian Museum*, 4 June 1800.

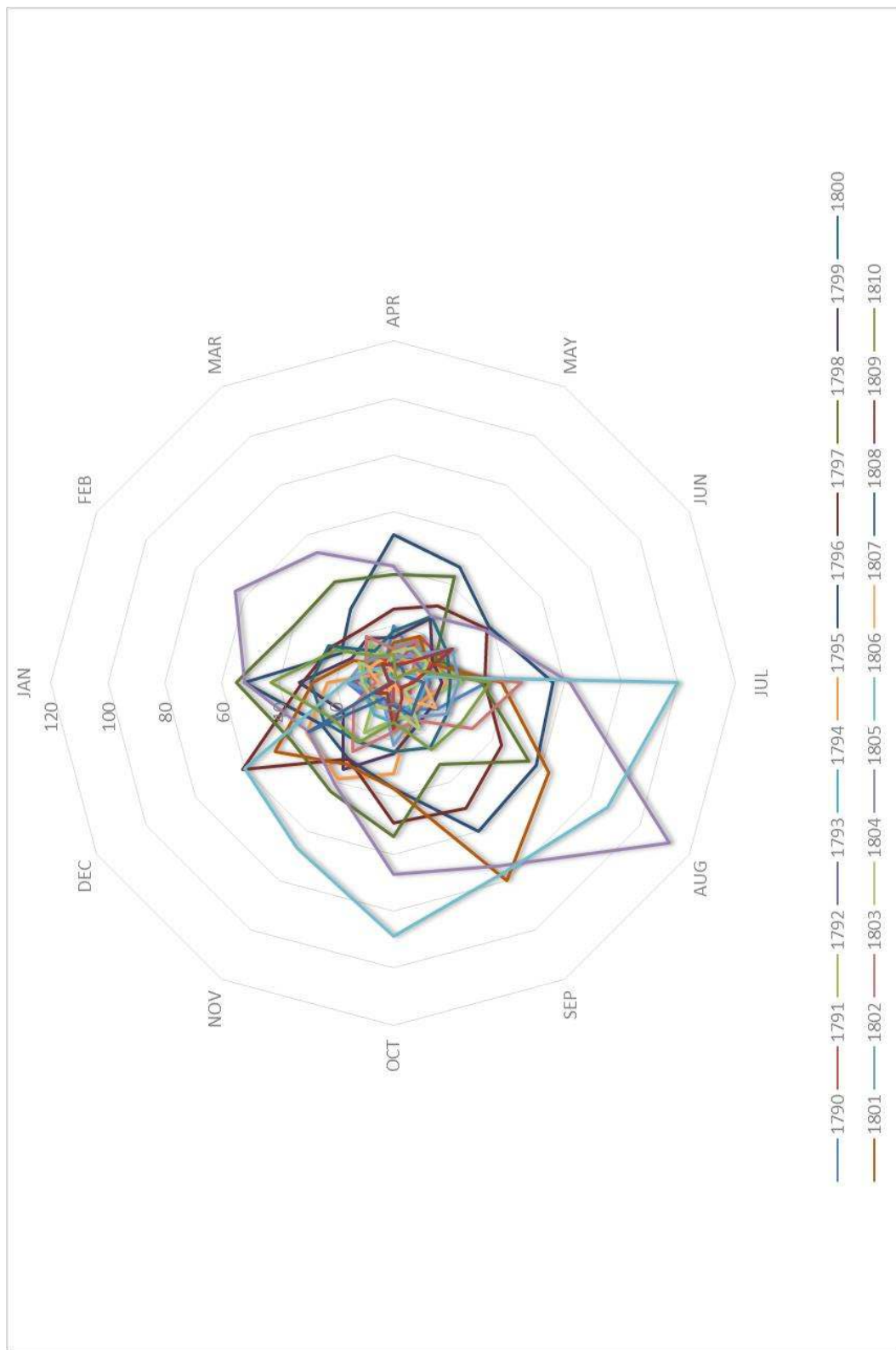
<sup>21</sup> Barbara Jeanne Fields. *Slavery and Freedom on the Middle Ground: Maryland during the Eighteenth Century* (New Haven; London, 1985).

peak months for advertising throughout the South, suggesting that fugitivity was more common before harvest-time and less so in winter (Figure 2.3). Slaves in Georgia appear to have seized on the absence of their masters over the summer months. It was then that masters left Georgia's humid environs in search of cooler climates. Whittington Johnson suggests that as much as half of Savannah's white residents regularly left the city during the summer months.<sup>22</sup> Their absence appears to have been seized upon by opportunistic slaves who escaped. Between one-fifth and one-quarter of fugitives in both Georgia and Maryland escaped in June and July, but there were notable and statistically significant differences, with fugitives in Georgia more likely to favour January and February than fugitives from Maryland. The data for Georgia likely reflects slaves who absented themselves over Christmas and New Year festivities, when they had some respite from work, which often remained undetected until early January. April and July were the most common months for slave fugitivity in South Carolina, and July through September in Virginia. For the SampleFSP, state of escape does not have a statistically significant bearing on month of escape (Table 2.1).

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<sup>22</sup> Whittington Bernard Johnson, *Black Savannah: 1788-1864* (Fayetteville, 1996), p.94.

Figure 2.3. Advertisements by Month and Year, 1790-1810.



Source: Fugitive Slave Advertisements, 1790-1810 (FSA) in FSdb

Table 2.1. Month of Escape.

Month of Escape	Sample FSP	State of Escape				Total
		Georgia	Maryland	South Carolina	Virginia	
JAN	Count	23	7	18	16	64
	Expected Count	16.0	16.0	16.0	16.0	64.0
	% within State of Escape	11.5%	3.5%	9.0%	8.0%	8.0%
FEB	Count	17	5	16	12	50
	Expected Count	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	50.0
	% within State of Escape	8.5%	2.5%	8.0%	6.0%	6.3%
MAR	Count	17	24	16	13	70
	Expected Count	17.5	17.5	17.5	17.5	70.0
	% within State of Escape	8.5%	12.0%	8.0%	6.5%	8.8%
APR	Count	13	22	26	16	77
	Expected Count	19.3	19.3	19.3	19.3	77.0
	% within State of Escape	6.5%	11.0%	13.0%	8.0%	9.6%
MAY	Count	17	17	19	16	69
	Expected Count	17.3	17.3	17.3	17.3	69.0
	% within State of Escape	8.5%	8.5%	9.5%	8.0%	8.6%
JUN	Count	19	16	15	18	68
	Expected Count	17.0	17.0	17.0	17.0	68.0
	% within State of Escape	9.5%	8.0%	7.5%	9.0%	8.5%
JUL	Count	23	23	21	23	90
	Expected Count	22.5	22.5	22.5	22.5	90.0
	% within State of Escape	11.5%	11.5%	10.5%	11.5%	11.3%
AUG	Count	14	23	13	24	74
	Expected Count	18.5	18.5	18.5	18.5	74.0
	% within State of Escape	7.0%	11.5%	6.5%	12.0%	9.3%
SEP	Count	14	24	18	23	79
	Expected Count	19.8	19.8	19.8	19.8	79.0
	% within State of Escape	7.0%	12.0%	9.0%	11.5%	9.9%
OCT	Count	12	14	14	16	56
	Expected Count	14.0	14.0	14.0	14.0	56.0
	% within State of Escape	6.0%	7.0%	7.0%	8.0%	7.0%
NOV	Count	11	12	5	12	40
	Expected Count	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	40.0
	% within State of Escape	5.5%	6.0%	2.5%	6.0%	5.0%
DEC	Count	20	13	19	11	63
	Expected Count	15.8	15.8	15.8	15.8	63.0
	% within State of Escape	10.0%	6.5%	9.5%	5.5%	7.9%
Total	Count	200	200	200	200	800
Expected Count	200.0	200.0	200.0	200.0	800.0	
% within State of Escape	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Month of Escape	FSP	State of Escape		Total
		Georgia	Maryland	
JAN	Count	78	50	128
	Expected Count	56.2	71.8	128.0
	% within State of Escape	9.7%	4.9%	7.0%
FEB	Count	53	36	89
	Expected Count	39.1	49.9	89.0
	% within State of Escape	6.6%	3.5%	4.9%
MAR	Count	65	72	137
	Expected Count	60.2	76.8	137.0
	% within State of Escape	8.1%	7.0%	7.5%
APR	Count	63	100	163
	Expected Count	71.6	91.4	163.0
	% within State of Escape	7.8%	9.7%	8.9%
MAY	Count	70	89	159
	Expected Count	69.9	89.1	159.0
	% within State of Escape	8.7%	8.7%	8.7%
JUN	Count	92	118	210
	Expected Count	92.3	117.7	210.0
	% within State of Escape	11.4%	11.5%	11.5%
JUL	Count	98	113	211
	Expected Count	92.7	118.3	211.0
	% within State of Escape	12.2%	11.0%	11.5%
AUG	Count	60	108	168
	Expected Count	73.8	94.2	168.0
	% within State of Escape	7.5%	10.5%	9.2%
SEP	Count	82	104	186
	Expected Count	81.7	104.3	186.0
	% within State of Escape	10.2%	10.1%	10.2%
OCT	Count	54	82	136
	Expected Count	59.8	76.2	136.0
	% within State of Escape	6.7%	8.0%	7.4%
NOV	Count	43	72	115
	Expected Count	50.5	64.5	115.0
	% within State of Escape	5.3%	7.0%	6.3%
DEC	Count	47	83	130
	Expected Count	57.1	72.9	130.0
	% within State of Escape	5.8%	8.1%	7.1%
Total	Count	805	1027	1832
Expected Count	805.0	1027.0	1832.0	
% within State of Escape	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests			
Value	df	c	
Pearson Likelihood	37.700 <sup>a</sup>	11	0.000
Linear-by-Linear	20.596	1	0.000
N of Valid	1832		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 39.11.

Chi-Square Tests			
Value	df	c	
Pearson Likelihood	41.983 <sup>a</sup>	33	0.136
Linear-by-Linear	0.253	1	0.615
N of Valid	800		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 10.00.

In a sample of 800 fugitives (Sample FSP), a chi-square goodness-of-fit test was performed to determine whether month of escape was dependent on the state of escape. The test indicated there was no statistically significant relationship.  $\chi^2(33, N=800)=41.983, p > 0.05$

The test for Georgia and Maryland indicated there was a statistically significant difference in the months of escape favoured by fugitives from Georgia and Maryland.

$\chi^2(11, N=1832)=37.700, p < 0.05$

The fugitive's escape was a dangerous undertaking and a high-risk strategy of resistance. Franklin and Schweninger suggest that although place of escape, destination, means of escape and slave skillset all had a bearing on the runaways' chance of success, most ended in failure. "For the great mass of runaways," Franklin and Schweninger found, "the chance of remaining at large, whether in the same vicinity or a distant location, was unlikely".<sup>23</sup> They and David Waldstreicher agree that slaves who were skilled, literate, and multi-lingual had the greatest chance of successfully remaining at large.<sup>24</sup> For Laird Bergad, runaways who were able to become part of a maroon community increased their chances of success.<sup>25</sup> Likely destinations were offered by advertisers and are known for 41 percent of the FSP, attesting the level of intimate knowledge (or assumed knowledge) that slaveholders had about their bondspersons.

In Georgia, advertisements show fugitive slaves engaging in cross-border fugitivity, escaping into neighbouring states South Carolina and Florida or further north into Virginia and Pennsylvania. Among the more ambitious attempts, Juliet, a "French negro" woman slave, was thought destined for "New York by some of the packets", while Isaac and Betty were expected to return to North Carolina by crossing the Little Ogeechee River.<sup>26</sup> The crossing appears to have been successful, but both were captured in South Carolina, only for Isaac to escape again.<sup>27</sup> Some slaves escaped to visit their families or friends in neighbouring plantations. Cudjoe, a "likely Country-born Negro Fellow", was expected by his master, Audley Maxwell of Midway, Liberty County, to navigate the Altamaha River to be reunited with his wife on St. Simon Island "where it is probable he will secrete himself".<sup>28</sup> While some slaves sought refuge among the large black population in urban centres including Augusta and Savannah, other fugitives secreted themselves in maroon communities in the rural swamps. W. Stephens supposed his slave, Dick, to be "harbored by negroes in Col. Wyly's swamp and at Wilmington, where Capt. Smith plants, and at other islands".<sup>29</sup> Others were thought to have concealed themselves among Native Americans in Indian Lands. Peter and his wife, Grace, were expected by their master, John Millen of Savannah, to have "gone up

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<sup>23</sup> John Hope Franklin and Loren Schweninger, *Runaway Slaves: Rebels on the Plantation* (New York; Oxford, 1999), p.122.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p.119; David Waldstreicher, *Runaway America: Benjamin Franklin, Slavery, and the American Revolution* (New York, 2004), p.10.

<sup>25</sup> Laird Bergad, *The Comparative Histories of Slavery in Brazil, Cuba, and the United States* (New York, 2007), p.203.

<sup>26</sup> *Columbian Museum*, 30 June 1804; *Columbian Museum*, 4 August 1801.

<sup>27</sup> This was ascertained from a separate advertisement printed beneath the original. See, *Columbian Museum*, 4 August 1801.

<sup>28</sup> *Georgia Gazette*, 7 March 1799.

<sup>29</sup> *Columbian Museum*, 24 July 1798.

Ogechee [Ogeechee] or Canouchie [Canoochee] to the Indians, as the fellow speaks the language, or to the Spaniards, as he is well acquainted in that quarter".<sup>30</sup>

Runaways in Maryland were similarly expected to abscond into neighbouring states. The close proximity of Pennsylvania, which had been gradually abolishing slavery since 1780, ensured it was a popular destination for escaping slaves. So too were Virginia, New Jersey, and Delaware. Slaves including Peet and Elisha Brown were expected to board vessels and escape via sea, the latter, once on board, expected to seek employment as a cook.<sup>31</sup> Other fugitives were expected to conceal themselves among free blacks, especially those at Fells Point, Baltimore. Fanny, accused of stealing two black children and some money, was expected to be "about the Point among some free negroes" while Castillo, a "New Negro" from St. Croix, was "supposed harboured by some of the free negroes on the Point".<sup>32</sup> Joe was expected by his master, A. Seekamp, to be "with some of his numerous acquaintances of free negroes, particularly in Charles-street".<sup>33</sup>

Reprinting may be an indicator of protracted fugitivity.<sup>34</sup> Forty-three percent of all fugitives were mentioned in single advertisements. Cessation of printing suggests recapture within days, either side of publication of the first notice and before the next issue of the newspapers went to press. Most fugitives were the subject of repeat advertising, and in Georgia it was around 72 percent (Table I.III). Sixty-five percent of all advertisements (FSA) were issued for the apprehension of a single fugitive, suggesting that fugitivity was predominantly a matter of individual agency. Upwards of 50 percent of advertisement for Georgia listed two or more fugitives (Table I.IV). Group fugitivity was found to be statistically more prevalent in Georgia than in the other states (Table 2.2). The greater number of 'new negroes', recent arrivals to the United States, and African-born slaves in Georgia, compared to Maryland, might explain this trend. These slaves were more likely to resist collectively, escaping as part of fugitive grouping comprising two or more slaves. Betty Wood's analysis of fugitive slave advertisements published in the *Georgia Gazette* between 1763 and 1775 found 'new negroes' and recently imported slaves accounted for around one-

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<sup>30</sup> *Georgia Gazette*, 3 July 1794.

<sup>31</sup> *Maryland Journal* 6 December 1791; *Federal Gazette*, 8 August 1805.

<sup>32</sup> *Federal Gazette*, 1 December 1801; *American and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, 23 February 1807.

<sup>33</sup> *Federal Gazette*, 27 January 1810.

<sup>34</sup> This could only be truly established if details of the agreed arrangements between advertiser and printer, whether, for example, printers were to continue to publish advertisements until otherwise instructed, were known. Such an arrangement would be logical for advertisers living at more than a day's distance from the printing office. Advertisers' capability for relaying instructions to cease publication should also be factored in to any calculation using reprinting figures on their own to draw conclusions about fugitivity. Unfortunately, information of this type does not appear to be extant.

quarter of all advertisements comprising two or more fugitives.<sup>35</sup> ‘New negroes’ were more likely to escape to the Georgia coast and backcountry than cities such as Savannah, argued Wood, as “few of them possessed the language, occupational skills, or a sufficient familiarity with the world outside the immediate environs of their plantations to stand any realistic chance of passing as a free black”.<sup>36</sup>

Husband and wife couples, families, and victims of the domestic slave trade were also listed among fugitive groups in Georgia. This included enslaved people imported from Maryland. On 14 January 1790, Laurence Vial & Co of Savannah advertised for the recapture of Betsey and Bob in the *Georgia Gazette*. While “negro” Betsey spoke “good English” and had been imported from Baltimore the previous year, Bob, of the “Guinea or Ebo country” spoke “very bad English” and had only recently been purchased from Captain John DuCoins. The advertisements for their recapture ceased printing in April 1790, after several months of reprinting, although their fate is unknown. An advertisement placed by S. Giles of Savannah sought the recapture of three slaves—Adonis, Saumbre, and Mitheal—all of whom had been purchased from “messrs. Johnston and Robertson, merchants” and “imported in Captain Hughes’s schooner from Baltimore”. The determination of Giles to have the men recaptured evident in his repeated issuance of the notice in the *Georgia Gazette* between 10 July 1794 and 15 January 1795.

Plotting the chronology of fugitivity from runaway notices is fraught with problems as the precise longevity of fugitivity is unknown for all cases in the FSP and SampleFSP. Dates of escape were given or were deduced from other information provided for 79 percent of records extracted from the newspapers (FSdb). The omission of this information probably reflected advertisers’ ignorance of their slaves’ precise date of escape. Dates of recapture are not readily available.<sup>37</sup> Under a law of 1802, Maryland newspapers carried regular recapture notices. Maryland’s county sheriffs were obligated to announce recaptures “in some public news-paper or papers printed in the city of Baltimore, the city of Washington, and the town of Easton” within fifteen days of a runaway servant or slave being committed to their custody.<sup>38</sup> None of the recapture notices for fugitive slaves contained information on any of

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<sup>35</sup> Betty Wood, *Slavery in Colonial Georgia, 1730-1775* (Athens, 1984), p.176.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.179-180.

<sup>37</sup> In theory, some information on recapture could be gathered from among estate papers, bills of sale, and so forth. That is however a daunting prospect given the difficulty of identifying individual slaves from records that favour single-naming conventions, and beyond the scope of this thesis.

<sup>38</sup> Maryland State Archives, The Early State Records Series, MSA SC M3182, *An Act relating to runaway servants and slaves*, November 1802.

the runaways listed in the FSP.<sup>39</sup> Other date information (date of composition of the advert, date of first publication, and dates of reissue) can be used to estimate the period of fugitivity.

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<sup>39</sup> A keyword search of Genealogybank Historical Newspapers printed in Maryland and Georgia between 1790 and 1810 using the keywords “runaway, sheriff, gaol, committed, negro” returned 254 hits. Nearly all of the advertisements that post-dated 1802 were from Maryland. Many captives gave two names such as Thomas Randle and Edward Davis. They may have been challenging the single-naming practice of slaveholders, asserting identity, or adopting cover to pose as free blacks. Future researchers might usefully compile separate data sets from fugitive slave advertisements and sheriffs’ notices before attempting cross-referencing.



Table 2.2. Method of Escape.

**Method of Escape \* State of Escape Crosstabulation**

SampleFSP	State of Escape				Total
	Georgia	Maryland	South Carolina	Virginia	
Method of Escape	76	30	33	36	175
Runaway Group	43.5	43.7	43.9	43.9	175.0
Expected Count % within State of Escape	38.4%	15.1%	16.5%	18.0%	22.0%
Runaway Individual	122	169	167	164	622
Expected Count % within State of Escape	154.5	155.3	156.1	156.1	622.0
	61.6%	84.9%	83.5%	82.0%	78.0%
Total	198	199	200	200	797
Expected Count % within State of Escape	198.0	199.0	200.0	200.0	797.0
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**Method of Escape \* State of Escape Crosstabulation**

FSP	State of Escape		Total
	Georgia	Maryland	
Method of Escape	320	190	510
Runaway Group	221.8	288.2	510.0
Expected Count % within State of Escape	40.6%	18.5%	28.1%
Runaway Individual	469	835	1304
Expected Count % within State of Escape	567.2	736.8	1304.0
	59.4%	81.5%	71.9%
Total	789	1025	1814
Expected Count % within State of Escape	789.0	1025.0	1814.0
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	41.981 <sup>a</sup>	3	0.000
Likelihood Ratio	38.866	3	0.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	20.571	1	0.000
N of Valid Cases	797		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 43.48.

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	106.971 <sup>a</sup>	1	0.000		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	105.885	1	0.000		
Likelihood Ratio	106.835	1	0.000		
Fisher's Exact Test Linear-by-Linear Association	106.912	1	0.000	0.000	0.000
N of Valid Cases	1814				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 221.82.  
b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

A chi-square goodness-of-fit test was performed on the FSP to determine the preferred method escape. The test indicated a statistically significant difference. Georgia fugitives were more likely to run away in groups than Maryland fugitives, and less likely to runaway as individuals than in Maryland

$$\chi^2(1, N=1814)=106.971, p < .005$$

The same test also indicated a statistically significant difference in the SampleFSP, with Georgia fugitives more likely to run away in groups than those in other states.

$$\chi^2(3, N=797)=41.981, p < 0.05$$

The earliest possible date of escape was established from the given date of escape or the advertisement's date of composition. In reality, these two events often occurred at different times. The median time lapse between composition and escape was 6 days (although the data is heavily skewed). In the absence of information provided by the advertiser, the date of the advertisement's first publication was substituted as a latest possible date of escape. Dates of fugitivity were then calculated as a difference between the latest and earliest possible dates, minus one day (to allow for a nominal lapse between escape and publication of the advertisement). This procedure makes three important assumptions: that slaves were at large during the computed date range, that the cessation of repeat advertisements implies recapture, and that the differential scores provide some meaningful picture about the overall pattern.

The median length of fugitivity in the FSP was 35 days, but the skewed distribution at both ends of the scale cast doubt on the figure's reliability and undermine analyses utilising the mean or deviations from the mean. The frequency counts underestimate length of fugitivity at the lower end of the scale (because of the preponderance of single-day counts). Counts in the higher ranges may reflect masters continuing to advertise in hope, more than expectation, of recapturing fugitives absent for 100 days or more. Another possible explanation is that the advertiser had purchased a block of advertising space and the advertisement was printed for the duration they had purchased and ceased thereafter. Half of fugitives were absent for less than thirty-five days, with a quarter experiencing less than fifteen days. Georgia fugitives were at large for longer than Maryland fugitives. Broadly similar descriptive statistics are reported for the SampleFSP (Table 2.4). The mean score for fugitivity in Georgia (87.74 days) is noticeably higher than those for Virginia (81.75) and South Carolina (69.54 days), whereas Maryland (70.74) is noticeably lower than both Georgia's and Virginia's but similar to South Carolina's. The mean scores tend to reflect the skewed distribution and are not statistically significant. These figures would appear to confirm that for most fugitives running away provided respite from their everyday routine, around a month at most. Of course, a slave who escaped from the confines of his or hers residence faced new challenges; the trials and traumas of chasing dogs, slave-catchers, navigating unknown terrains and people, deprivation and malnutrition. The significant differences in the mean scores between Georgia and Maryland raises the possibility that Georgia fugitives were more successful than their Maryland counterparts (Table 2.3). Geographical factors such as Georgia's less populated hinterlands and maroon communities

in which to seek refuge goes some way to explaining why fugitive slaves in Georgia were more successful at remaining at large.

Age too would have had some bearing on the length of fugitivity in so far as capability and experience conferred by age might have helped fugitives endure or succeed. But the data for fugitives' ages are insufficient to provide any meaningful determination (Appendix 6). Method of escape likely affected longevity also, with group runaways producing more fugitives in the highest interval (100 days or more). If it can be assumed that advertising for one hundred days or more was an indicator of a successful escape, then it could be that the measurements reported above suggest that group runaways were more successful than individual fugitives (Table 2.5).

Table 2.3. Fugitivity Statistics, 1790-1810.

Statistics FSP

Fugitivity (in days)		Georgia	Maryland
N	Valid	1832	805
	Missing	0	0
Mean		78.21	87.74
Median		35.00	41.00
Std. Deviation		166.108	206.110
Percentiles	25	15.00	16.00
	50	35.00	41.00
	75	86.00	105.00

Statistics SampleFSP

Fugitivity (in days)		Total	South Carolina	Virginia
N	Valid	800	200	200
	Missing	0	0	0
Mean		79.24	69.54	81.75
Median		39.00	30.00	49.00
Std. Deviation		158.849	124.664	89.923
Percentiles	25	18.00	15.00	24.00
	50	39.00	30.00	49.00
	75	93.00	70.75	108.00

Fugitivity (in days)

FSP	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid				
Under 10	328	17.9	17.9	17.9
10-19	253	13.8	13.8	31.7
20-29	242	13.2	13.2	44.9
30-39	168	9.2	9.2	54.1
40-49	127	6.9	6.9	61.0
50-59	96	5.2	5.2	66.3
60-69	73	4.0	4.0	70.3
70-79	63	3.4	3.4	73.7
80-89	41	2.2	2.2	75.9
90-99	42	2.3	2.3	78.2
100 and over	399	21.8	21.8	100.0
Total	1832	100.0	100.0	

Fugitivity (in days)

SampleFSP	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid				
Under 10	103	12.9	12.9	12.9
10-19	109	13.6	13.6	26.5
20-29	107	13.4	13.4	39.9
30-39	90	11.3	11.3	51.1
40-49	55	6.9	6.9	58.0
50-59	42	5.3	5.3	63.3
60-69	42	5.3	5.3	68.5
70-79	21	2.6	2.6	71.1
80-89	22	2.8	2.8	73.9
90-99	22	2.8	2.8	76.6
100 and over	187	23.4	23.4	100.0
Total	800	100.0	100.0	

One-Sample Statistics for Georgia

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Fugitivity (in days)	805	87.74	206.110	7.264

One-Sample Statistics For Maryland

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Fugitivity (in days)	1027	70.74	125.793	3.925

One-Sample Test

Comparison with	Test Value	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
South Carolina	69.54	2.506	804	0.012	18.204	3.94	32.46
Virginia	81.75	0.825	804	0.410	5.994	-8.27	20.25
Maryland	70.74	-4.331	1026	0.000	-17.000	-24.70	-9.30

Comparison with	Test Value	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Virginia	81.75	-2.805	1026	0.005	-11.010
Georgia	87.74	-4.331	1026	0.000	-17.000

There are no statistically significant differences between the mean score for Georgia and the sample means,  $p > 0.05$

There are no statistically significant differences between the mean score for Maryland and the sample means,  $p > 0.05$

There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores for Georgia and Maryland,  $p < 0.05$

Table 2.4. Fugitivity (in days).

**Fugitivity (in days) \* State of Escape Crosstabulation**

FSP			State of Escape		Total
			Georgia	Maryland	
Fugitivity (in days)	Under 10	Count	137	191	328
		Expected Count	144.1	183.9	328.0
		% within State of Escape	17.0%	18.6%	17.9%
	10-19	Count	114	139	253
		Expected Count	111.2	141.8	253.0
		% within State of Escape	14.2%	13.5%	13.8%
	20-29	Count	94	148	242
		Expected Count	106.3	135.7	242.0
		% within State of Escape	11.7%	14.4%	13.2%
	30-39	Count	50	118	168
		Expected Count	73.8	94.2	168.0
		% within State of Escape	6.2%	11.5%	9.2%
	40-49	Count	53	74	127
		Expected Count	55.8	71.2	127.0
		% within State of Escape	6.6%	7.2%	6.9%
	50-59	Count	46	50	96
		Expected Count	42.2	53.8	96.0
		% within State of Escape	5.7%	4.9%	5.2%
	60-69	Count	29	44	73
		Expected Count	32.1	40.9	73.0
		% within State of Escape	3.6%	4.3%	4.0%
	70-79	Count	33	30	63
		Expected Count	27.7	35.3	63.0
		% within State of Escape	4.1%	2.9%	3.4%
	80-89	Count	16	25	41
		Expected Count	18.0	23.0	41.0
		% within State of Escape	2.0%	2.4%	2.2%
	90-99	Count	21	21	42
		Expected Count	18.5	23.5	42.0
		% within State of Escape	2.6%	2.0%	2.3%
	100 and over	Count	212	187	399
		Expected Count	175.3	223.7	399.0
		% within State of Escape	26.3%	18.2%	21.8%
Total		Count	805	1027	1832
		Expected Count	805.0	1027.0	1832.0
		% within State of Escape	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	34.952 <sup>a</sup>	10	0.000
Likelihood Ratio	35.380	10	0.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	14.944	1	0.000
N of Valid Cases	1832		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 18.02.

**Symmetric Measures**

	Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Contingency Coefficient	0.137
N of Valid Cases	1832	0.000

A chi-square goodness-of-fit test was performed on the FSP to determine differences in length of fugitivity between fugitives from Georgia and Maryland.

The test indicated a statistically significant difference. Georgia fugitives were at large for longer than Maryland fugitives.

$\chi^2(10, N = 1832) = 34.952, p < 0.05$

Fugitivity (in days) \* State of Escape Crosstabulation

SampleFSP			State of Escape				Total
			Georgia	Maryland	South Carolina	Virginia	
Fugitivity (in days)	Under 10	Count	25	31	37	10	103
		Expected Count	25.8	25.8	25.8	25.8	103.0
		% within State of Escape	12.5%	15.5%	18.5%	5.0%	12.9%
	10-19	Count	28	18	37	26	109
		Expected Count	27.3	27.3	27.3	27.3	109.0
		% within State of Escape	14.0%	9.0%	18.5%	13.0%	13.6%
	20-29	Count	17	34	25	31	107
		Expected Count	26.8	26.8	26.8	26.8	107.0
		% within State of Escape	8.5%	17.0%	12.5%	15.5%	13.4%
	30-39	Count	21	29	16	24	90
		Expected Count	22.5	22.5	22.5	22.5	90.0
		% within State of Escape	10.5%	14.5%	8.0%	12.0%	11.3%
	40-49	Count	16	13	15	11	55
		Expected Count	13.8	13.8	13.8	13.8	55.0
		% within State of Escape	8.0%	6.5%	7.5%	5.5%	6.9%
	50-59	Count	13	11	8	10	42
		Expected Count	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	42.0
		% within State of Escape	6.5%	5.5%	4.0%	5.0%	5.3%
	60-69	Count	9	14	11	8	42
		Expected Count	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	42.0
		% within State of Escape	4.5%	7.0%	5.5%	4.0%	5.3%
	70-79	Count	4	7	4	6	21
		Expected Count	5.3	5.3	5.3	5.3	21.0
		% within State of Escape	2.0%	3.5%	2.0%	3.0%	2.6%
	80-89	Count	3	2	9	8	22
		Expected Count	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	22.0
		% within State of Escape	1.5%	1.0%	4.5%	4.0%	2.8%
	90-99	Count	8	2	3	9	22
		Expected Count	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	22.0
		% within State of Escape	4.0%	1.0%	1.5%	4.5%	2.8%
	100 and over	Count	56	39	35	57	187
		Expected Count	46.8	46.8	46.8	46.8	187.0
		% within State of Escape	28.0%	19.5%	17.5%	28.5%	23.4%
Total		Count	200	200	200	200	800
		Expected Count	200.0	200.0	200.0	200.0	800.0
		% within State of Escape	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

## Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	59.978 <sup>a</sup>	30	0.001
Likelihood Ratio	63.727	30	0.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	0.369	1	0.543
N of Valid Cases	800		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 5.25.

## Symmetric Measures

	Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Contingency Coefficient	0.264
N of Valid Cases	800	0.001

A chi-square goodness-of-fit test was performed on the FSP to determine if differences in length of fugitivity varied across the states. The test indicated statistically significant differences. Fugitives from Georgia and Virginia were at large for longer than fugitives from Maryland and South Carolina.  
 $\chi^2(30, N=800)=59.978$ ,  
 $p < 0.05$

Table 2.5. Contingency Table for Fugitivity and Method of Escape.

**Fugitivity (in days) \* Method of Escape Crosstabulation**

FSP		Method of Escape		Total	
		Runaway Group	Runaway Individual		
Fugitivity (in days)	Under 10	Count	70	253	323
		Expected Count	90.8	232.2	323.0
		% within Method of Escape	13.7%	19.4%	17.6%
	10-19	Count	79	169	248
		Expected Count	69.7	178.3	248.0
		% within Method of Escape	15.5%	13.0%	13.7%
	20-29	Count	60	181	241
		Expected Count	67.8	173.2	241.0
		% within Method of Escape	11.8%	13.9%	13.3%
	30-39	Count	26	142	168
		Expected Count	47.2	120.8	168.0
		% within Method of Escape	5.1%	10.9%	9.3%
	40-49	Count	47	80	127
		Expected Count	35.7	91.3	127.0
		% within Method of Escape	9.2%	6.1%	7.0%
	50-59	Count	33	63	96
		Expected Count	27.0	69.0	96.0
		% within Method of Escape	6.5%	4.8%	5.3%
	60-69	Count	18	53	71
		Expected Count	20.0	51.0	71.0
		% within Method of Escape	3.5%	4.1%	3.9%
	70-79	Count	26	37	63
		Expected Count	17.7	45.3	63.0
		% within Method of Escape	5.1%	2.8%	3.5%
	80-89	Count	6	34	40
		Expected Count	11.2	28.8	40.0
		% within Method of Escape	1.2%	2.6%	2.2%
	90-99	Count	17	25	42
		Expected Count	11.8	30.2	42.0
		% within Method of Escape	3.3%	1.9%	2.3%
	100 and over	Count	128	267	395
		Expected Count	111.1	283.9	395.0
		% within Method of Escape	25.1%	20.5%	21.8%
Total	Count	510	1304	1814	
	Expected Count	510.0	1304.0	1814.0	
	% within Method of Escape	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

**Fugitivity (in days) \* Method of Escape Crosstabulation**

SampleFSP		Method of Escape		Total	
		Runaway Group	Runaway Individual		
Fugitivity (in days)	Under 10	Count	22	80	102
		Expected Count	22.4	79.6	102.0
		% within Method of Escape	12.6%	12.9%	12.8%
	10-19	Count	27	82	109
		Expected Count	23.9	85.1	109.0
		% within Method of Escape	15.4%	13.2%	13.7%
	20-29	Count	14	93	107
		Expected Count	23.5	83.5	107.0
		% within Method of Escape	8.0%	15.0%	13.4%
	30-39	Count	16	74	90
		Expected Count	19.8	70.2	90.0
		% within Method of Escape	9.1%	11.9%	11.3%
	40-49	Count	19	36	55
		Expected Count	12.1	42.9	55.0
		% within Method of Escape	10.9%	5.8%	6.9%
	50-59	Count	10	32	42
		Expected Count	9.2	32.8	42.0
		% within Method of Escape	5.7%	5.1%	5.3%
	60-69	Count	6	36	42
		Expected Count	9.2	32.8	42.0
		% within Method of Escape	3.4%	5.8%	5.3%
	70-79	Count	4	17	21
		Expected Count	4.6	16.4	21.0
		% within Method of Escape	2.3%	2.7%	2.6%
	80-89	Count	10	11	21
		Expected Count	4.6	16.4	21.0
		% within Method of Escape	5.7%	1.8%	2.6%
	90-99	Count	5	17	22
		Expected Count	4.8	17.2	22.0
		% within Method of Escape	2.9%	2.7%	2.8%
	100 and over	Count	42	144	186
		Expected Count	40.8	145.2	186.0
		% within Method of Escape	24.0%	23.2%	23.3%
Total	Count	175	622	797	
	Expected Count	175.0	622.0	797.0	
	% within Method of Escape	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	45.535 <sup>a</sup>	10	0.000
Likelihood Ratio	46.965	10	0.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	9.978	1	0.002
N of Valid Cases	1814		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 11.25.

A chi-square goodness-of-fit test was performed on the FSP to determine if method of escape affected length of fugitivity varied across the states. The test indicated statistically significant differences. In the highest interval (100 days and over), longevily favoured group runaways, while the fourth interval (30-39 days), favoured individual runaways.  
 $\chi^2(10, N=1814) = 45.535$ ,  $p < 0.05$

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	21.182 <sup>a</sup>	10	0.020
Likelihood Ratio	20.095	10	0.028
Linear-by-Linear Association	0.735	1	0.391
N of Valid Cases	797		

a. 3 cells (13.6%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.61.

The SampleFSP dataset does not meet the basic conditions for a chi-square test because of cell counts of <5.

## The Fugitive Slaves

The Fugitive Slave Database (FSdb) contains information on 2,350 fugitive slaves reported in advertisements published in Georgia, Maryland, South Carolina, and Virginia between 1790 and 1810. Descriptive analyses of the Georgia and Maryland fugitives (FSP) and the sample data set (SampleFSP) revealed male fugitives outnumbered females by four to one. This confirms Franklin and Schweninger's previous estimate of eighty-one percent for males (Tables 2.6 and 2.7).<sup>40</sup> The male to female differential was less pronounced in Georgia than it was in Maryland. As females were more likely to escape with their children or as part of a family fugitive grouping, the greater prevalence of group fugitivity in Georgia (in comparison to Maryland), might explain this trend.<sup>41</sup> Whilst it is widely accepted in the historiography that most runaways were males, historians have yet to establish categorically why that was so. Philip Morgan suggests the prominence of male runaways in fugitive slave populations was partially a consequence of males being less psychologically restricted by family ties than females. Morgan argues that young males were more likely than females to go in search of "mates".<sup>42</sup> One intriguing possibility is that female fugitivity activity itself was nonetheless different from males, as Peter H. Wood suggested. Female slaves were more likely than male slaves to visit their friends and return of their own accord without the need for an advertisement to be issued.<sup>43</sup> This is not to infer that female slaves were at any less at risk of punishment than males—indeed, any form of fugitivity placed any slave at the mercy of their masters—but that female slaves who took advantage of opportunities to abscond for short periods rather than run away are less likely to appear in the historical record. In short, we may simply be missing their stories.

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<sup>40</sup> Franklin and Schweninger, *Runaway Slaves*, p. 210; other studies have also concluded that most runaways were males. Lorenzo J. Greene, 'The New England Negro as Seen in Advertisements for Runaway Slaves', *The Journal of Negro History*, 29:2 (Apr., 1944), pp.125-146; Daniel E. Meaders, 'South Carolina Fugitives as Viewed Through Local Colonial Newspapers with Emphasis on Runaway Notices, 1732-1801', *The Journal of Negro History*, 60:2 (Apr., 1975), pp.288-319; Billy G. Smith and Richard Wojtowicz, *Blacks who Stole Themselves: Advertisements for Runaways in the Pennsylvania Gazette, 1728-1790* (Philadelphia, 1989).

<sup>41</sup> For more on female fugitives in Georgia, see Ben Marsh, *Georgia's Frontier Women: Female Fortunes in a Southern Colony* (Athens; London, 2007), pp.170-172; Wood, *Slavery in Colonial Georgia*, pp.172-173.

<sup>42</sup> Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, p.526.

<sup>43</sup> Wood, *Black Majority*, p.241.



Table 2.6. Sex Statistics

Sex				
FSP	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Female	366	20.0	20.0	20.0
Male	1466	80.0	80.0	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1832</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Sex				
SampleFSP	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Female	161	20.1	20.1	20.1
Male	639	79.9	79.9	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

Table 2.7. Contingency Table for Sex and State of Escape

Sex * State of Escape	Case Processing Summary					
	Valid			Missing		
	N	Percent	Total	N	Percent	Total
Sex * State of Escape	800	100.0%	0	0.0%	800	100.0%

Sex * State of Escape	Case Processing Summary					
	Valid			Missing		
	N	Percent	Total	N	Percent	Total
Sex * State of Escape	1832	100.0%	0	0.0%	1832	100.0%

SampleRSP	Sex * State of Escape Crosstabulation											
		State of Escape					Total					
		Georgia	Maryland	South Carolina	Virginia	Total						
Sex	Female	Count 48 <sub>a</sub>	Count 27 <sub>b</sub>	Count 43 <sub>a</sub>	Count 43 <sub>a</sub>	Count 161	Expected Count 40.3	% within State of Escape 24.0%	152 <sub>a</sub>	173 <sub>a</sub>	157 <sub>a</sub>	639
	Male	Count 159.8	Count 159.8	Count 159.8	Count 159.8	Count 639.0	Expected Count 159.8	% within State of Escape 76.0%	159.8	159.8	159.8	639.0
Total		Count 200	Count 200	Count 200	Count 200	Count 800	Expected Count 200.0	% within State of Escape 100.0%	200.0	200.0	200.0	800.0

RSP	Sex * State of Escape Crosstabulation										
		State of Escape					Total				
		Georgia	Maryland	South Carolina	Virginia	Total					
Sex	Female	Count 193 <sub>a</sub>	Count 173 <sub>b</sub>	Count 173 <sub>b</sub>	Count 173 <sub>b</sub>	Count 366	Expected Count 205.2	% within State of Escape 24.0%	612 <sub>a</sub>	854 <sub>b</sub>	1466
	Male	Count 644.2	Count 821.8	Count 821.8	Count 821.8	Count 1466.0	Expected Count 821.8	% within State of Escape 80.0%	644.2	821.8	1466.0
Total		Count 805	Count 1027	Count 1027	Count 1027	Count 1832	Expected Count 1027.0	% within State of Escape 100.0%	805.0	1027.0	1832.0

Each subscript letter denotes a subset of State of Escape categories whose column proportions do not differ significantly from each other at the .05 level.

Chi-Square Tests		
	Value	df
Pearson Chi-Square	7.799 <sup>a</sup>	3
Likelihood Ratio	8.259	3
Linear-by-Linear Association	0.002	1
N of Valid Cases	800	

Chi-Square Tests				
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	14.350 <sup>a</sup>	1	0.000	Exact Sig. (2-sided)
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	13.908	1	0.000	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Likelihood Ratio	14.257	1	0.000	
Fisher's Exact Test				
Linear-by-Linear Association	14.342	1	0.000	
N of Valid Cases	1832			

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 160.82.

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 160.82.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table  
 A chi-square goodness-of-fit test was performed on the FSP to determine if there was an association between fugitives' sex and state of escape. The test confirmed there were no statistically significant differences by state.  $\chi^2(3, N=800) = 7.799, p \geq 0.05$

A chi-square goodness-of-fit test was performed on the FSP to determine if there was an association between fugitives' sex and state of escape. The test confirmed there were no statistically significant differences by state.  $\chi^2(1, N=1832) = 14.350, p < 0.05$

Seventy-five percent of fugitives in the FSP dataset were under 30 years of age and most were aged 25. The mean age was 25.41 years, and with a standard deviation of 8.119 most fugitives were aged between 17 and 33. The SampleFSP reports a higher mean and median, and an unexpected mode age of 30 (Table 2.8). The mean ages of fugitives in Georgia (25.65) and Maryland (25.28) do not reveal statistically differences between them: but there are significant statistical differences between Georgia and Virginia, and between Maryland and South Carolina and Virginia. Fugitives in Virginia tended to be older. Also, the mean scores for Georgia and Maryland are lower than previous estimates for the colonial and Antebellum periods.<sup>44</sup> The conclusion may be drawn that the average age of fugitives in Georgia was 0.85 years lower than in the colonial period and in Maryland, 2.22 years lower. Fugitives may well have been getting younger in these states (but not in South Carolina or Virginia).<sup>45</sup> A scaled up projection for the mean age of the US slave population in 1810 proposes a mean age of between 23.93 and 28.51. These findings clarify with precision and accuracy the statistical observations of previous scholars.<sup>46</sup> Furthermore, they appear to confirm the astute comment of one scholar that the “the age of fugitives tended to show considerable positive correlation between youth and the desire to breakaway from servitude”.<sup>47</sup> At a time when the average life expectancy of slaves was around thirty-five, fugitives in their mid-twenties were not in their first flush of youth but mature adults—hardened survivors conditioned by their experiences, and astutely aware of their limited opportunities to experience unconditional

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<sup>44</sup> Mitsuhiro Wada’s comparative study of slave fugitivity in colonial Georgia and Maryland estimated the mean age of Georgia runaways to be 26.50 and 27.50 in Maryland. See Mitsuhiro Wada, “Running from Bondage: An Analysis of the Newspaper Advertisements for Runaway Slaves in Colonial Maryland and Georgia” JSL, Volume 2, (2006), p. 15; Elwood L. Bridner, Jr., estimated the mean age of Maryland males to be 25.50 and females 26.50 during the antebellum period. See Elwood L. Bridner, Jr., ‘The Fugitive Slaves of Maryland’, *Maryland Historical Magazine*, 66 (1971), p.37.

<sup>45</sup> The mean age of South Carolina fugitives was 26.26 years and Virginia 27.01 years (Table 2.8. Age Statistics). These are consistent with Windley’s estimates— 26 years for South Carolina and 27 years for Virginia— for the period 1730 to 1787. See Lathan Algerna Windley, *A Profile of Runaway Slaves in Virginia and South Carolina from 1730 through 1787* (New York; London, 1995), p.50.

<sup>46</sup> Franklin and Schweninger suggest the majority of slave runaways were males in their twenties. Presenting their sample of male and female runaways as two distinct tables, these show that 227 (54 percent) of 424 male fugitives were in their twenties. The sample was drawn from five states (Virginia, North Carolina, Tennessee, South Carolina, and Louisiana) and represents the period between 1790 and 1816. For the same period and states, Franklin and Schweninger suggest 41 (51 percent) of 81 females were in their teens when they absconded. See Franklin and Schweninger, *Runaway Slaves*, p.331; Daniel Meaders’s study of slave fugitivity in South Carolina between 1732 and 1801 established that most slave runaways were “male, single, and between the ages of eighteen and thirty”. See Meaders, ‘South Carolina Fugitives’, p.292; Graham R. Hodges and Alan E. Brown’s study of slave fugitivity in New York and New Jersey revealed that most runaways were males and younger than twenty-five. See Graham Russell Hodges and Alan Edward Brown (eds.), *“Pretends to be Free”: Runaway Slave Advertisements from Colonial and Revolutionary New York and New Jersey* (New York; London, 1994); Eugene D. Genovese found that 80 percent of slave runaways from North Carolina during the period between 1850 and 1860 were males aged between sixteen and thirty-five. See Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World Slaves Made* (London, 1975), p.648.

<sup>47</sup> Greene, ‘The New England Negro’, p.131.

freedom in their lifetimes.<sup>48</sup> Fugitivity may have been opportunistic in point of departure, but not psychologically so.

Contingency tables for age and sex reveal statistically significant differences in the FSP. Fugitives in their twenties were more likely to be male than female, while fugitives aged between 10 and 19 were more likely to be female.<sup>49</sup> Females aged between 10 and 19 years accounted for 36.50 percent of fugitive women in the FSP, but were not more likely to be fugitives than older women in their twenties (Table 2.9). This probably reflected female slaves adopting a “now or never” attitude in their decision to abscond. Owners expected their female slaves to reproduce, certainly by their late-teens. Female slaves may have been running before this time or were, in some instances, already pregnant and thus escaping to avoid their child inheriting their slave status as was customary in most slave states. A female slave that had mothered a child, returning to Morgan’s thesis, were less likely to abscond because of their family ties.<sup>50</sup> It appears that female slaves, especially those in the twenties, were more likely to visit their friends and return of their own accord without the need for a runaway notice to be issued, as Wood argued.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> This figure is established from the estimations of many leading slavery scholars. See Herbert S. Klein, *The Atlantic Slave Trade* (Cambridge (UK), 1999), p.177; David Brion Davis, *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World* (New York, 2006), p.117; Paul Finkelman (ed.), *Encyclopaedia of African American History, 1619-1895: From the Colonial Period to the Age of Frederick Douglass*. Volume 2 (New York, 2006), p.386.

<sup>49</sup> Robert L. Hall’s study of 112 runaways listed in fugitive slave advertisements published in the *Maryland Journal* and the *Maryland Gazette* between 1747 and 1790 found 49.1 percent of male runaways from the Baltimore area were aged twenty to twenty-nine. The sample contained only twenty females, which is too few to draw any reliable conclusions. See Robert L. Hall, ‘Slave Resistance in Baltimore City and County, 1747-1790’, *Maryland Historical Magazine*, 84:4 (Winter 1989), p.307.

<sup>50</sup> Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, p.526.

<sup>51</sup> Wood, *Black Majority*, p.241.

Table 2.8. Age Statistics.

Statistics for FSP

Age	Georgia			Maryland		
	Valid	Missing	N	Valid	Missing	N
N	1412	511	901	656	135	186
Mean	420	294	126	144	65	14
Std. Error of Mean	25.41	25.65	25.28	26.22	26.26	27.01
Median	0.216	0.376	0.263	0.303	0.680	0.608
Mode	24.00	25.00	24.00	25.00	25.00	25.00
Std. Deviation	25	25	20	30	25	30
Skewness	8.119	8.510	7.891	7.773	7.904	8.289
Std. Error of Skewness	0.739	0.305	1.038	0.611	0.751	0.707
Kurtosis	0.065	0.108	0.081	0.095	0.209	0.178
Std. Error of Kurtosis	0.866	0.222	1.381	0.752	0.396	0.888
Percentiles	0.130	0.216	0.163	0.191	0.414	0.355
	25	20.00	20.00	21.00	20.00	21.75
	50	24.00	24.00	25.00	25.00	25.00
	75	30.00	30.00	30.00	30.00	30.00

Statistics for SampleFSP\*

Age	South Carolina			Virginia		
	Valid	Missing	N	Valid	Missing	N
N	656	144	135	656	144	135
Mean	144	26.22	65	144	26.22	65
Std. Error of Mean	0.303	0.680	0.608	0.303	0.680	0.608
Median	25.00	25.00	25.00	25.00	25.00	25.00
Mode	30	25	30	30	25	30
Std. Deviation	7.773	7.904	8.289	7.773	7.904	8.289
Skewness	0.611	0.751	0.707	0.611	0.751	0.707
Std. Error of Skewness	0.095	0.209	0.178	0.095	0.209	0.178
Kurtosis	0.752	0.396	0.888	0.752	0.396	0.888
Std. Error of Kurtosis	0.191	0.414	0.355	0.191	0.414	0.355
Percentiles	25	20.00	20.00	21.00	20.00	21.75
	50	25.00	25.00	25.00	25.00	25.00
	75	30.00	30.00	30.00	30.00	30.00

\*These figures may be used to calculate the age of US Slave Population in 1810

Projected mean age with confidence interval of 2.29:

Lower limit 23.93

Upper limit 28.51

One-Sample Statistics for Georgia

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Mean
Age	511	25.65	8.510	0.376

One-Sample Statistics for Maryland

	N	Mean	Deviation	Mean
Age	901	25.28	7.891	0.263

One-Sample Test

Comparison with	Test Value	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	
					Lower	Upper
South Carolina	26.26	-1.616	510	0.107	-0.608	0.13
Virginia	27.01	-3.608	510	0.000	-1.358	-0.62
Maryland	25.28	0.987	510	0.324	-0.37	1.11

One-Sample Test

Comparison with	Test Value	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	
					Lower	Upper
South Carolina	26.26	-3.742	900	0.000	-0.984	-0.47
Virginia	27.01	-6.595	900	0.000	-1.734	-1.22
Georgia	25.65	-1.421	900	0.156	-0.374	0.14

There is a statistically significant difference between the mean scores for Georgia and Virginia,  $p < 0.05$ . There are no statistically significant differences between the mean scores for Georgia and other states,  $p > 0.05$

There are statistically significant differences between the mean scores for Maryland and South Carolina and Virginia,  $p < 0.05$ .

Table 2.9. Contingency Table Age and Sex.

Age Category * Sex Crosstabulation					
FSP		Sex		Total	
		Female	Male		
Age Category	Under 10	Count	4 <sub>a</sub>	9 <sub>a</sub>	13
		Expected Count	2.5	10.5	13.0
		% within Sex	1.5%	0.8%	0.9%
	10--19	Count	90 <sub>a</sub>	206 <sub>b</sub>	296
		Expected Count	57.4	238.6	296.0
		% within Sex	32.8%	18.1%	21.0%
	20--29	Count	100 <sub>a</sub>	600 <sub>b</sub>	700
		Expected Count	135.8	564.2	700.0
		% within Sex	36.5%	52.7%	49.6%
	30--39	Count	58 <sub>a</sub>	229 <sub>a</sub>	287
		Expected Count	55.7	231.3	287.0
		% within Sex	21.2%	20.1%	20.3%
	40--49	Count	21 <sub>a</sub>	79 <sub>a</sub>	100
		Expected Count	19.4	80.6	100.0
		% within Sex	7.7%	6.9%	7.1%
	50 and over	Count	1 <sub>a</sub>	15 <sub>a</sub>	16
		Expected Count	3.1	12.9	16.0
		% within Sex	0.4%	1.3%	1.1%
Total		Count	274	1138	1412
		Expected Count	274.0	1138.0	1412.0
		% within Sex	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Each subscript letter denotes a subset of Sex categories whose column proportions do not differ significantly from each other at the .05 level. Note: Values in the same row and subtable not sharing the same subscript are significantly different at  $p < .05$  in the two-sided test of equality for column proportions. Cells with no subscript are not included in the test. Tests assume equal variances. Tests are adjusted for all pairwise comparisons within a row of each innermost subtable using the Bonferroni correction.

Pearson Chi-Square Tests

		Sex
Age Category	Chi-square	37.758
	df	5
	Sig.	.000

Results are based on nonempty rows and columns in each innermost subtable.

\*. The Chi-square statistic is significant at the .05 level.

Age Category * Sex Crosstabulation					
SampleFSP		Sex		Total	
		Female	Male		
Age Category	Under 10	Count	0 <sub>a</sub>	4 <sub>a</sub>	4
		Expected Count	0.8	3.2	4.0
		% within Sex	0.0%	0.8%	0.6%
	10--19	Count	27 <sub>a</sub>	75 <sub>a</sub>	102
		Expected Count	20.1	81.9	102.0
		% within Sex	20.9%	14.2%	15.5%
	20--29	Count	56 <sub>a</sub>	281 <sub>b</sub>	337
		Expected Count	66.3	270.7	337.0
		% within Sex	43.4%	53.3%	51.4%
	30--39	Count	34 <sub>a</sub>	125 <sub>a</sub>	159
		Expected Count	31.3	127.7	159.0
		% within Sex	26.4%	23.7%	24.2%
	40--49	Count	10 <sub>a</sub>	36 <sub>a</sub>	46
		Expected Count	9.0	37.0	46.0
		% within Sex	7.8%	6.8%	7.0%
	50 and over	Count	2 <sub>a</sub>	6 <sub>a</sub>	8
		Expected Count	1.6	6.4	8.0
		% within Sex	1.6%	1.1%	1.2%
Total		Count	129	527	656
		Expected Count	129.0	527.0	656.0
		% within Sex	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Each subscript letter denotes a subset of Sex categories whose column proportions do not differ significantly from each other at the .05 level. Results are based on two-sided tests with significance level .05. For each significant pair, the key of the category with the smaller column proportion appears under the category with the larger column proportion.

Pearson Chi-Square Tests

		Sex
Age Category	Chi-square	6.518
	df	5
	Sig.	.259 <sup>ab</sup>

Results are based on nonempty rows and columns in each innermost subtable.

a. More than 20% of cells in this subtable have expected cell counts less than 5. Chi-square results may be invalid.  
 b. The minimum expected cell count in this subtable is less than one. Chi-square results may be invalid.

It is assumed that young children in the FSP belonged to family groups or escaped with an adult, while fugitives in their late teens and upwards had more capacity to collude in escape. But that was not confirmed by statistical analysis (Appendix 7). Thirteen fugitives were children under ten, most from Georgia, most of whom were accompanied or carried off by their absconding parents. This included Hetty, aged six to ten months, who was the youngest fugitive slave recorded in the FSdb. She was carried off by her father, Jim, and his wife, Amey, when they ran away from the Georgia plantation of their master, Andrew McLean. Jim had been “brought from Baltimore” (to Savannah) ten years previously. McLean expected they would “endeavor to make off...out of the state”.<sup>52</sup> The only fugitive slave under the age of ten that escaped without his family was Thomas, a seven year old, advertised by James Trippe, Jun. Thomas escaped from near Middle Town, Dorchester County, Maryland with a group of young runaways aged from seven to sixteen. The death of their owner, Capt. Henry Trippe, appears to have prompted their escape.<sup>53</sup>

Despite Thomas being a child, it was not uncommon for male and female slaves to begin “intensive” labour, typically fieldwork, from age seven, and sometimes younger. “Slave masters extracted labour from virtually the entire slave community”, argued Steven Mintz, with “children as young as three or four put to work” weeding fields, picking up trash, feeding livestock and transporting water. Males and females aged between seven and twelve performed the same intensive field labour as adults.<sup>54</sup> Philip Morgan has shown similar labour patterns existed in the Chesapeake and the lower South regions, particularly along the South Carolina coast, where masters regarded slaves between the ages of nine and ten as ready to enter the labour force.<sup>55</sup> Among the most distressing uses of enslaved children, masters commonly had them whip their fellow slaves; the young slaves unaware that they were being conditioned for a life of hard labour. According to David Brion Davis, slave children never realised they were slaves until “surprisingly late”.<sup>56</sup> Analysis suggests that enslaved people of labouring age were more likely to run on their own opposed to as part of an escaping family. It seems a logical supposition that following the dissolution of the family as slave children were sold to labour elsewhere, these young slaves absconded in protest or to be reunited

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<sup>52</sup> *Columbian Museum*, 8 August 1804.

<sup>53</sup> *Maryland Herald and Eastern Shore Intelligencer*, 1 February 1803.

<sup>54</sup> Steven Mintz (ed.), *African American Voices: A Documentary Reader, 1619-1877* (Malden (Mass.); Oxford, 2009), p.23.

<sup>55</sup> Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, p.197.

<sup>56</sup> Davis, *Inhuman Bondage*, p.199.

with their families.<sup>57</sup> Advertisers, in turn, appear to have been more willing to describe slaves as individuals once they were commodified and had ascertained a labour value.

Stephen West Moore, residing in Hampstead, near Charleston, advertised for his runaway, November, aged eleven, who he supposed was enticed to the South Carolina back county by a waggoner.<sup>58</sup> Having consented to change his name and being a boy “in reality...of great animation and capacity” suggests the persuasion of a waggoner was not needed to convince November to abscond. November had been born on Doctor Bickell’s plantation, Ferguson’s Swamp, and had a mother named Elsey – information provided by Moore to jog the memory of persons who might identify him from this description.<sup>59</sup> This information, inadvertently, indicates a possible motive for November’s escape. Having reached an age in which boys were expected to “perform adult field jobs,” November had probably been separated from his mother whom he was attempting to reunite before heading westward to seek sanctuary in Indian lands.<sup>60</sup>

On 7 September 1798, Daniel, aged fifteen, escaped from Alexandria, Virginia and headed for Fells Point, Baltimore, Maryland. He embarked on the near-fifty mile, cross-border journey, to board a vessel and get to sea. Although captured in the vicinity of Baltimore on 11 September, he had “made his escape”. His master, Samuel Lamkin, provided no explanation of how Daniel had managed to escape his captors but that he was “very obstinate and impudent when questioned” and prone to “affect[ing] a smile when spoken to” suggests he had deceived to achieve his release as opposed to engaging in a physical struggle. Daniel had continued “on the road to Baltimore”. While his fate is unknown, Lamkin’s description portrays a truly exceptional young slave. Daniel’s fugitivity highlights the intriguing possibility that he, as a mulatto, had been able to “pass for a free man” through

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<sup>57</sup> Franklin and Schwenger estimated that the division of families increased after 1820 as the demand for slave labour increased as cotton production moved West. Their figures suggest one in three slaves under the age of fifteen were sold from one or both parents, including babies. See Franklin and Schwenger, *Runaway Slaves*, pp.50-51.

<sup>58</sup> Stephen West Moore was the son of Samuel Preston Moore and Susanna Moore. The family resided in Virginia however Stephen married Eleanor Screven Gilbert of Charleston, South Carolina, to where the couple relocated. Stephen became a successful banker in Charleston. The couple had nine children, including Samuel Preston Moore, a high-ranking confederate surgeon in the American Civil War, and Stephen West Moore, a West Point graduate and Louisiana brigadier general, who also served in the Civil War. See Charles Penrose Keith, *The Provincial Councillors of Pennsylvania: Who Held Office Between 1733-1776 and Those Earlier Councillors who Were Some Time Chief Magistrates of the Province, and Their Descendants* (Philadelphia, 1883), pp. 94-95; Warner Dahlgren Farr, ‘Samuel Preston Moore: Confederate Surgeon General’, *Civil War History*, 41:1, (March, 1995), pp. 41-56.

<sup>59</sup> There were several rice plantations around Ferguson Swamp in Berkeley County, South Carolina. Many of the plantations are now submerged under Lake Marion. For historical information on South Carolina’s plantations, see ‘South Carolina Plantations’. <http://south-carolina-plantations.com/>. [Accessed 5 March 2017].

<sup>60</sup> *South Carolina State Gazette*, 30 December 1803.



a combination of his skin colour and persuasiveness; Lamkin's warning to all masters of vessels against "taking him off" was probably an indication that Daniel was long gone.<sup>61</sup>

In contrast to these young runaways, Jacob and Jonathan were the oldest fugitives recorded in the FSP at sixty years of age. Jonathan, "a remarkably strong built fellow" and "negro man" ran from the service of Margaret Dorsey, in upper Anne Arundel County on 25 October 1798. He had formerly belonged to Nicholas Dorsey, residing near Snowden's Iron Works, and Margaret expected him to be "lurking about that neighbourhood, or in Baltimore-town, where I am informed he has a son living with Mr Hogathey".<sup>62</sup> Jacob, an "African slave," ran away from Townshend Dade on the night of 1 January 1802.<sup>63</sup> A "remarkably black" slave, Jacob was "about 5 feet high," spoke "tolerably plain," and carried no clothes other than those he was wearing. It was "highly probable" he would change his clothes, despite them being "all new except an old hat" claimed Dade, an indication that Jacob would likely attempt to conceal his identity as a runaway.<sup>64</sup>

The "typical" fugitive in Georgia and Maryland was male and in his mid-twenties, around 5 feet 7½ inches tall. The age of the "typical" female fugitive is less certain, but she was under thirty years and between 5 feet 1½ inches and 5 feet 3 inches. This profiling may also have been applicable to fugitives throughout the southern states, although the SampleFSP cannot confirm this because of absence of data (Tables 2.9 and 2.10).<sup>65</sup> It is widely accepted within the historiography that male slaves were most likely to run in their twenties.<sup>66</sup> Yet, despite this consensus, there is surprisingly little historiographical explanation as to why this was so.

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<sup>61</sup> *Federal Gazette*, 1 October 1798.

<sup>62</sup> *Federal Gazette*, 15 November 1798.

<sup>63</sup> This is likely Reverend Townshend Dade of Virginia.

<sup>64</sup> *Republican Gazette and General Advertiser*, 6 January 1802.

<sup>65</sup> The height figures conform to the findings of Franklin and Schweninger. They estimate the average height of a male runaways, during the period 1790-1816, to be between five feet seven and five feet eight (67 to 68 inches). See Franklin and Schweninger, *Runaway Slaves*, p.216; These figures largely conform to those established by John Komlos. He estimated the average height of a male slave, born in the mainland colonies, to be 66.7 inches in 1790 although he does not provide figures for the period after 1790. He found that slaves in the upper South were taller than lower South slaves as a consequence of factors such as food shortages and labour intensity. Komlos claimed that the "work intensity was greater and the epidemiological environment was worse (and hence more inimical to the nutritional status of slaves) in the rice culture of South Carolina and Georgia than it was in the tobacco culture of Virginia and Maryland" (p. 103). See John Komlos, 'The Height of Runaway Slaves in Colonial America, 1720-1770', in John Komlos (ed.), *Stature, Living Standards, and Economic Development: Essays in Anthropometric History* (Chicago; London, 1994), pp.93-116.

<sup>66</sup> Harriet C. Frazier, *Runaway and Freed Missouri Slaves and Those who Helped Them, 1763-1865* (Jefferson; London, 2004), p.97; David J. Libby, *Slavery and Frontier Mississippi, 1720-1835* (Jackson, 2004), p.54; Kenneth Morgan, *Slavery and the British Empire: From Africa to America* (Oxford, 2007), p.133; Shane White, *Somewhat More Independent: The End of Slavery in New York City, 1770-1810* (Athens; London, 1991), p.122.

Table 2.10. Contingency Table Height, Age, and Sex.

FSP		Sex																								
		Female						Male																		
		Age Category		Age Category		Age Category		Age Category		Age Category		Age Category														
Under 10	Mean	Under 10	Mean	10--19	Mean	20--29	Mean	30--39	Mean	40--49	Mean	50 and over	Mean	Under 10	Mean	10--19	Mean	20--29	Mean	30--39	Mean	40--49	Mean	50 and over	Mean	
Height (inches)		61.63	63.61	62.78	64.50	70.00	64.48	67.67	67.75	68.08	68.50															

**Statistics**

Height (inches)	Valid	1274
N	Missing	558
Mean		66.8206
Median		67.0000
Mode		66.00

Most slaves were advertised by a single name, typically a first name or variation thereof. Slave names can be divided into those given to them by slave masters and others which suggest another agency (family, culture, personal choice). The most common names for female slaves were Rose, Fanny, and Nancy. These names were particularly popular in Georgia, where Betty was also common. In Maryland, Rachel was the most common name, followed by Sarah, Bet, and Peg, respectively. Among male slaves, Tom, Jack, and Dick were the most common names. The latter two names were also popular in Maryland but were not as common as Harry. It is not certain whether these given names were intended to project slave character types but it is curious that these names were the most popular for male slaves. The name Jack may have reflected a slave being a proficient labourer, able to turn his hand to any work – a “Jack of all Trades”. This as a credible line of enquiry for twelve of the seventy-two slaves with the forename Jack (17 percent) who were listed as skilled in at least one trade. The commonality of the names Tom, Dick, and Harry can probably be attributed to a determined effort by advertisers to portray slaves as persons unworthy of notice, in accordance with the Victorian-era phrase “every Tom, Dick, and Harry”. It seems reasonable to suppose that advertiser naming habits were deliberately intended to undermine slave individuality in certain instances. Names, after all, are central to identity.

Slave names sometimes reflected the master-slave relationship. Names such as Patton’s Aleck, the surname of the slaveholder followed by the slave’s name, portrayed dependency and commodified slave identity. Some advertisers emphasised race and ethnicity when naming slaves. Examples include Mulatto Joe and Negro Jerry. Among the cruder names, John Dorsey, referred to his slave, Dick, as ‘Monkey Dick’. While Dorsey may have perceived Dick as prone to ‘monkeying around’, it was a name steeped in racist connotations. Slaves also exhibited eccentric names such as Brave Boy and Lightfoot, although, admittedly, these were rare. Some slaveholders seem to have been especially cruel when naming slaves by choosing ironic names for enslaved persons. Names such as Voltaire, Washington, and Julius: a leading Enlightenment figure, the first President of the United States, and first Roman Emperor, are evidence of this. Likewise, names including Smart and Liberty are especially callous.

The naming of male and female slaves after religious and historical figures was commonplace. Biblical male slave names including Adam, John, Moses, and Peter and female names such as Dorcas, Hannah, Judith, Leah, and Mary are evidence of this trend. Less-conventional biblical names were also represented among the slave population such as Cyrus, Sampson (Samson) and Lazarus. Hebraic-influence can also be detected. Names included

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and, among females, Binah and Tamer. Names of Roman origin such as Caesar, Pompey, Nero, Titan, and Cato and Greek origin, including Phebe and Sibby, were also popular.<sup>67</sup> While Caitlin Fitz's recent work has shown slaves were named after Atlantic Revolutionary figures including "black Bolivars", there were no slaves with the name "Bolivar" recorded among the FSP.

Regionality is also evident in slave naming, with French names such as Perroquet (Parrot) and Bien Venu, and slaves named after prominent eighteenth century British statesman including Grenville, Fox, and Pitt. Names of African origin can also be detected among the fugitive slave population despite slaveholder attempts to rob enslaved people of this key feature preserving their African roots and identity. Admittedly, as sociolinguist Iman Makeba Laversuch urges, it is with much caution that names such as Mingo, Sambo, Qua, and Quamini are advanced as African names.<sup>68</sup> Indeed, while these names were especially popular in Georgia, where a larger African-imported slave population lived and laboured, it is apparent that there were few "new" or African born slaves with these names among the FSP.

There were 73 African slaves in Georgia and 12 in Maryland but only a single fugitive in both states could be confidently described as an African born slave who had kept their African name. In Georgia, eight slaves had the aforementioned names, or variations thereof, but only one, "Qua", was confidently identified as an African-born slave using advertiser depictions and comments. Two slaves were named "Quamini" and "Mingo" but they were "country born". There were even fewer African names among Maryland fugitives. Only "Quash", a "Guinea Negro", was as an African slave who had kept his African name. These figures suggest that African American slaves chose or were given African names but that few African-born slaves were able to retain their names once in the United States (at least as portrayed in fugitive slave advertisements). In some cases, as Hennig Cohen has argued, advertisers identified slaves by their "proper" name—those given to them—but accepted that the fugitive slave may resort to using their "country" names, or their African name, when on the run.<sup>69</sup> This trend is captured in the FSP sample. Joseph Stiles of Bryan County,

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<sup>67</sup> Caitlin Fitz, *Our Sister Republics: The United States in an Age of American Revolutions* (New York, 2016).

<sup>68</sup> Laversuch argues that scholars should not presume that slave names which coincide with words in the African languages are necessarily indicative of African names. See Iman Makeba Laversuch, 'Runaway Slave Names Recaptured: An Investigation of the Personal First Names of Fugitive Slaves Advertised in the Virginia Gazette between 1736 and 1777,' *Names*, 54:4 (December, 2006), pp.351-352.

<sup>69</sup> Hennig Cohen, 'Slave Names in Colonial South Carolina', *American Speech*, 27:2 (May, 1952), p.103.

Georgia, acknowledged that his slave, America, would likely assume his “country name,” “Bembow”.<sup>70</sup>

“Day naming,” an Akan naming technique in which Africans were named after the day of the week they were born, is also evident. As John Thornton claims, “day naming” among slaves was “clearly related to the African past”.<sup>71</sup> “Day naming” was more common in Georgia than Maryland which is unsurprising given the larger African-born slave population in that state during the early national period. Slaves had “day names” including “Cudjoe” or “Cudjo”, both translated as Monday, and Jamaican variations of ‘day names’ including “Quam”, translated as Saturday, and “Cuffy”, translated as Friday. Names including “Monday” and “Friday” suggest slaveholders adopted and anglicised Akan naming traditions while naming their slaves. Despite this, as Kwasi Konadu argued, “owners had little control over what enslaved Africans called themselves and others in the slave quarters, fields, and other places out of the general purview of whites”.<sup>72</sup>

Slave surnames were uncommon. Occurrences of slaves being advertised with a forename *and* surname were however more common in Maryland than Georgia, fifteen percent to two percent of the fugitive slave populations, respectively.<sup>73</sup> These regional differences are important as they reveal the intriguing possibility that Maryland slaves were naming themselves by the late eighteenth century and advertisers accepting these names, even publicising them, in their fugitivity notices. John C. Inscoc’s examination of slave acculturation, specifically expression in the naming habits of Carolina slaves, offers a theoretical framework in which to examine, and ultimately explain, these regional trends. The crux of his argument is captivating—that first generation African slaves imported to America were introduced to, and often given, new names but that over time slaves took the culture of their masters and “made it their own”. While this adoption and manipulation of their masters’ culture was not confined to naming habits, Inscoc argues, the “creative and flexible process” rests on the assumption, generally speaking, that slaves went from being named by their masters to naming their own children.<sup>74</sup> In light of Inscoc’s work, and scholarship by Laversuch and Thornton, presumably it was the existence of a more acculturated, second or

<sup>70</sup> *Georgia Gazette*, 5 May 1796.

<sup>71</sup> John Thornton, ‘Central African Names and African-American Naming Patterns’, *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 50:4 (Oct., 1993), pp.727-728.

<sup>72</sup> Kwasi Konadu, *The Akan Diaspora in the Americas* (New York, 2010), p. 164.

<sup>73</sup> In Maryland, 873 of 1,029 runaways profiled were advertised by a single name and 156 with both a forename and surname. In Georgia, 788 of the 805 runaways were advertised by a single name compared to just seventeen with a forename and surname.

<sup>74</sup> John C. Inscoc, ‘Carolina Slave Names: An Index to Acculturation’, *The Journal of Southern History*, 49:4 (Nov., 1983), pp.527-528.

third generation, American-born slave population in Maryland, compared to a large African-born slave population in Georgia, that explains why more slaves in that state had surnames. Laversuch argued that slave surnames reflected principal occupations, their masters and former masters, their presumed place of origin, and, sometimes, naming habits followed no clear derivational pattern.<sup>75</sup> This project has found that in some cases slaves adopted surnames, specifically for the purpose of escape.

Advertisers in Maryland and Virginia expressed concern that their slaves would attempt to pass as free persons by adopting the surnames “Butler” and “Shorter”. As manumission soared in Maryland after the American Revolution, so too did the number of slaves petitioning for their freedom. Robert J. Brugger has shown that many of these cases rested on a revision to Maryland law in 1681 that established that the child of a white woman inherited the status of their mother, free or enslaved. Prior to this revision, a child born to a white woman and black enslaved father inherited the legal status of a slave. From 1786, there was a surge in petitions from slaves, claimed Brugger, as Maryland courts began accepting oral recollection as evidence. “Greatly increasing chances of a successful petition”, there were approximately 138 successful petitions by slaves seeking their freedom in the ten years from 1786.<sup>76</sup> The freedom suits brought forth in Maryland courts pitted slave against master with the former seeking to prove they were descendants of free white women that had married black slave men.

A total of fifteen runaway slaves, all but one of which was advertised in Maryland, were expected to pass themselves as one of the “Butlers”.<sup>77</sup> This occurred from 1791 to 1805. The adoption of the name “Butler” stemmed from legal disputes arising from the marriage of Eleanor Butler to a slave man named Charles. According to William W. Warner, Eleanor, or “Irish Nell,” was brought to Maryland in 1661 by Charles Calvert to serve a term of indenture with Major William Boarman. Nell was freed at the end of her service, only to marry “Negro Charles,” a West-Indian slave. From the colonial era through the 1790s, the status of their children and subsequent generations of Butlers were the subject of legal disputes with “all the Butlers who could prove descent from Charles and Nell...eligible for

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<sup>75</sup> Iman Makeba Laversuch, “‘May change Name and Pretend to be Free’: a Corpus Linguistic Investigation of Surnames Adopted by Fugitive Slaves as Advertised in Colonial American Newspapers between 1729 and 1818”, *Names: a Journal of Onomastics*, 59:4 (December, 2011), pp. 191-203.

<sup>76</sup> Robert J. Brugger, *Maryland: A Middle Temperament, 1634-1980* (Baltimore, 1988), p.169.

<sup>77</sup> An additional three advertisements made reference to the “Butlers” but did not explicitly claim that the fugitive slave was expected to adopt, or attempt to pass, using the name.

freedom”.<sup>78</sup> The adoption of the name Butler by slaves is important as it suggests slaves were attuned to the social and political legal disputes playing out in courtrooms throughout the state. It also highlights the possibility that literate slaves, those able to read the newspapers which reported the cases, were disseminating this information into slave communities. Opportunistic slaves seized on the legal disputes to make their escape, claiming to descend from Nell and Charles Butler.

John Edely, Nathaniel Ewing, and Cornelius Wildmans expected their slaves, George, David, and Charles, to pass as “Butlers”. The fugitives ran away from Queen Tree, St. Mary’s County, Maryland, on 5 April 1795 and were expected to “attempt to get to Pennsylvania”. The advertisers noted the fugitives had “supplied themselves with passes, either from some ill-designing white person” or by George, who may have “contrived to execute some kind of passes himself, as he can read writing and also some write some little”. The advertisers were “likewise of the opinion that they [the fugitives] may endeavour to pass by the name of Butler, as George had sometime in his possession before he went off, a pass granted to Clem Butler, who was a free negro, from which it is likely he may take copies”.<sup>79</sup> Around the same time, Richard Robins Reeder began to advertise for his “country-born Negro man,” John, who absconded on 28 July 1794. Reeder had “reason to believe” John had “obtained a certificate of freedom given to a certain Henry Butler, a Mulatto fellow, liberated some time ago by our courts of justice”. Reeder did not state how John had come into possession of this information but had ascertained “from the circumstances of a letter written to his [John’s] wife, that lately came to my hands, he passes by the name of Henry Butler, and is now living with some persons in Charlestown, Cecil County (Maryland)”.<sup>80</sup>

Similarly, a total of six runaways, all in Maryland, were expected by their advertisers to pass by the name “Shorter”. While the precise details of these cases are unclear, Basil Shorter, a slave, successfully petitioned for his freedom against his master, Henry Rozier (or Rozer), in the Maryland General Court in 1794 on the grounds that he was a descendant of Elizabeth Shorter, a free white woman, who had married “Little Robin,” a “negro man”.<sup>81</sup> The issuance of slave runaway advertisement as early as 1792 and as late as 1797 by Rozier

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<sup>78</sup> William W. Warner, *At Peace with all the Neighbours: Catholics and Catholicism in the National Capital, 1787-1860* (Washington D.C., 1994), pp. 90-91.

<sup>79</sup> *Federal Intelligencer*, 21 April 1795.

<sup>80</sup> *Federal Intelligencer*, 1 May 1795.

<sup>81</sup> The court heard evidence from a number of individuals including Nicholas Geulick, a priest, who claimed he had married Elizabeth and Robin. See Thomas Harris, Jr., and John McHenry, *Maryland Reports, Being a Series of the Most Important Law Cases Argued and Determined in the General Court and Court of Appeals of the State of Maryland, from October, 1790, to May, 1797* (New York, 1813), pp.238-240.

for slaves passing by the name “Shorter” support the view that Basil was not the first or last of his slaves to petition for their freedom.

On 15 March 1797, Henry Rozier advertised for his Jacob, his “negro man”. An “artful, plausible” runaway “much addicted to the sailor language,” Jacob would “no doubt...change his name – perhaps to Shorter, as a family of Negroes by the name Shorter has lately obtained their freedom of me”. Jacob would support his deception with a forged “certificate of freedom, as he reads and writes a little,” revealed Rozier.<sup>82</sup> Likewise, when Pee, a “dark mulatto,” escaped from his Notley Hall plantation in Prince-George’s County, Rozier expected that he “probably may change his dress, and endeavour to pass as a free man by the name of Butler, Shorter, or Pemproke”.<sup>83</sup> He had “quitted” Rozier’s service “about the 10th of April last, on pretence of petitioning for his freedom in the general court”.<sup>84</sup>

That these disputes between slaves and masters on the subject of lineage were going on at the same time slaves were adopting the surnames and attempting to pass as members of families who had successfully petitioned for their freedom demonstrates social and political attentiveness, especially among Maryland fugitives. The fugitives that attempted to pass as free persons by claiming to be a “Butler” or “Shorter” are evidence that information of these court proceedings filtered into slave communities. It also shows direct linkage in legislative changes and ongoing court procedures with developments in slave fugitivity. While scholars such as Laversuch have explored the influences on slave surnames adopted by slaves and have shown this to be a valuable line of enquiry, no scholar, to my knowledge, has linked the surnames slaves adopted to slaves’ understanding and awareness of court cases concerning the free status of white women and claims of lineage.

Advertisers almost always remarked upon the physical appearance of the fugitive slaves. The information provided was highly selective, reflective of the advertiser’s priority to provide sufficient clues for identification. Advertisers focused their descriptions on all parts of their slaves’ body from their head to toes but most frequently remarked on their slaves’ physique, facial features such as nose and eyes, and the size of their hands and feet. Slave physique ranged from well-made, strong, and muscular to slender and spare-made.

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<sup>82</sup> *Federal Gazette*, 15 March 1797.

<sup>83</sup> Pemproke was another lineage of which slaves claimed to descend from in their freedom suits. There were also slaves who attempted to pass as descendants of Thomas Stone. Travers Daniel, for example, advertised that his slave, Jack, who “lately belonged to the estate of Mr. Thomas Stone in Charles County, Maryland” was expected to “pass himself for one of the Thomas’s family, who make pretention to their freedom, but the fallacy of the attempt may easily be detected”. See *Federal Gazette*, 1 February 1798.

<sup>84</sup> *Maryland Gazette*, 21 June 1792.



Scars, marks, and deformities were more frequently commented upon when advertisers described their slaves' face or limbs, hands, or feet; visible body parts that clothes would not hide.

Advertiser descriptions were typically cruel. Jim was described as “an uncommon large, awkward, ugly, disgusting Negro Man”.<sup>85</sup> Moses, a “surly, black, ugly, ill-made fellow” “broad flat-face and nose,” “crippled walk” and had “of all the human species on earth he has the ugliest kidney foot”.<sup>86</sup> Other advertisers remarked on their slaves' physical appearance with particular emphasis on their “remarkability”. Samuel Wall described his runaway, Ned, as “remarkable for having 6 toes on each feet” and for having “lost several of his fore teeth both above and below”.<sup>87</sup> Likewise, Cate, a female slave belonging to Henry H. Hall, was remarkable for having “three nipples on each breast” and Amey, for being “stout, healthy...and...very remarkable as he has white speck over each eye”.<sup>88</sup> Richard Cromwell would even go as far as to describe the smell of his runaway, Frank. While Frank was a “handsome...rather slender-made” slave, remarked Cromwell, he also had “a remarkably strong smell natural to Negroes”.<sup>89</sup> Advertiser comments on their slaves' physical appearance were rarely complimentary however there were exceptions. Joe was described by his master as “a handsome, well made, and pleasant countenanced fellow” while Ishmael was “an active strong make...rather handsome, his skin being black and smooth, his hair...short but neat”, in the opinion of his owner.<sup>90</sup>

Advertiser descriptions of slave physical appearance attest to the physical cruelties and hardships of slavery. Evidence of slaveholder brutality was reflected in the scars, marks, and brands described in the physical descriptions of their slaves. These were inflicted to punish slaves for bad behaviour, such as running away, or to speed up their labour. The severity and frequency of chastisement was specific to individual slaveholders. Rarely were slave masters as forthcoming as James Ringgold Sr., who admitted that he inflicted “the marks of a Cowskin” upon the back of Segar because *he* deemed her to be “very worthless”.<sup>91</sup> Instead, advertiser explanations for scars, marks, and brands were vague, improbable, or blamed on previous masters. Advertiser reluctance to claim responsibility was probably an attempt to avoid the social or legal ramifications if excessive beating or cruelties were

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<sup>85</sup> *Federal Gazette*, 27 January 1796.

<sup>86</sup> *American and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, 12 July 1802.

<sup>87</sup> *Georgia Gazette*, 11 February 1796.

<sup>88</sup> *Republican Star*, 12 April 1803; *Federal Gazette*, 1 October 1801.

<sup>89</sup> *Maryland Journal*, 6 December 1791.

<sup>90</sup> *Federal Gazette*, 8 November 1796; *Savannah Republican*, 1 December 1807.

<sup>91</sup> *Apollo or Chestertown Spy*, 12 April 1793.

publicised upon their slaves' bodies. Considered within the wider historiography, this may be reflective of the transition in the late eighteenth century from a more brutal form of patriarchy to the looser paternalism that developed into the antebellum period. "Slaveholder paternalism...carried the indelible stamp of Antebellum racism", argued Richard Follett, "nineteenth-century planters no longer viewed African Americans as exotic, alien, 'others', but rather as wayward children who required guidance and occasionally disciplinary control".<sup>92</sup> This, of course, depended and varied between specific masters and regions. Advertiser embarrassment in admitting they were the perpetrators of the marks and scars on their slaves' bodies may reflect the transition whereby sensibility and familial relations were emphasised more.

George Millen attributed the "small scar" between the eyes of his slave, Frederick, to "the kick of a horse" and Francis Kleinhart, the scar on the cheekbone of his slave, Nick, to the "kick of a colt".<sup>93</sup> Erasmus Gantt advertising for, Jack, alias John Brown, blamed "some former master" for the sear inflicted upon his forehead and the "marks of chastisement" upon his back.<sup>94</sup> John McAtee, of Prince George's County, felt compelled to remind the reader that despite Sall having a "noted scar (or mark) on her breast" this was not his craft but had been "occasioned before I got her, by whipping, and if examined, has many about her body".<sup>95</sup> African or "new slaves" were advertised with filed teeth and with their "country marks" upon their bodies.<sup>96</sup> Approximately ninety-five percent of thirty-nine fugitives in the FSdb whose "country marks" were among their distinguishing physical features escaped from Georgia or South Carolina. Similarly all but one of the eight slaves that were described as having filed teeth escaped from these states.

Runaways were also advertised as having their heads and eyebrows shaved. This appears to have been a method employed by slaveholders when they suspected one of their slaves was preparing to run away. Henry Rose advertised his runaway, Will, as having recently

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<sup>92</sup> Richard Follett, *The Sugar Masters: Planters and Slaves in Louisiana's Cane World, 1820-1860* (Baton Rouge, 2005), p.153; see also Kristen Tegtmeier Oertel, *Slavery, the Civil War, and Civil Rights in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York; London, 2016), pp.11-12; Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, pp.3-7.

<sup>93</sup> *Georgia Gazette*, 28 July 1796; *Federal Gazette*, 15 December 1797.

<sup>94</sup> *Federal Gazette*, 15 August 1799.

<sup>95</sup> *Maryland Gazette*, 30 May 1793.

<sup>96</sup> African-born slaves were commonly advertised as having their "country marks" upon their face. These marks were specific to the region from where the slave originated. For more on this, see Michael A. Gomez, *Exchanging our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South* (Chapel Hill, 1998); All of the slaves advertised as having filed-teeth, an especially common practice among African cultures and tribes which involves sharpening the front teeth, were African-born. This was established using information including linguistic skills, racial categorisation, and advertiser comments recorded in the FSdb. For a detailed study of tooth mutilation, see Jerome S. Handler, 'Determining African Birth for Skeletal Remains: A Note on Tooth Mutilation', *Historical Archaeology*, 28:3 (1994), pp.113-119.

had his hair cut.<sup>97</sup> Irish-immigrant and prominent Baltimorean, Christopher Hughes, resorted to similar methods when he suspected his slaves were planning to abscond. Nace, a “talkative, lying, thieving, saucy fellow,” had “half his head and his eyebrows... shaved when he went off, *in consequence of his threatening to runaway*”, revealed Hughes.<sup>98</sup> Slaveholders including Hughes appear to have done so to undermine their slaves’ ability to conceal their identity.<sup>99</sup> Walter Bowie, apparently suspecting his slave, Bill Stewart, would abscond also “cut short” his hair the “night before he absconded”.<sup>100</sup>

The branding of slaves was another common technique used by slaveholders to distinguish their slaves and mark them, literally, as their property. It was also used to mark slaves as rebellious and troublesome and to dehumanise and commodify slaves to the level of marked cattle. Slaves were branded with their owners name or initials including Segar who had “J.Hill” etched into his cheek and Figarro, who had the same brand on his right breast, crafted by their master, Joseph Hill of Chatham County, Georgia.<sup>101</sup> Brands also marked where a slave had been brought from. The brand “De La Jonchere” inscribed on the left breast of John, for example, was an indication he had come from the marsh/wet lands of Georgia Low County.<sup>102</sup> Slaves including Bob were branded with the letter ‘R’ warning they were runaways. A slave “skilled in villainy” and branded on both cheeks by his master, Bob would wear a handkerchief around his jaw and feign toothache, to “hide marks of his infamy”, claimed his master, Slauter Cowling.

Historians have generally not sought to organise the information on fugitives’ physical appearance into discrete categories, although there are exceptions. Franklin and Schweningen quantified advertiser descriptions of slave physical appearance including physique and scars and markings.<sup>103</sup> Lathan A. Windley similarly categorised the physical defects including blindness, burns and brands, castration, and cropped body parts among runaways in South Carolina and Virginia.<sup>104</sup> If it is assumed that advertisers composed the message with the intention of headlining distinctive physical features or body parts, and visible marks or scars, then it is viable to categorise the information to reflect that intention;

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<sup>97</sup> *American and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, 16 April 1805.

<sup>98</sup> *American and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, 22 September 1801.

<sup>99</sup> A total of five slaves in the FSdb, advertised by Christopher Hughes, had half their head and both eyebrows shaved.

<sup>100</sup> *American and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, 2 July 1806.

<sup>101</sup> *Columbian Museum*, 31 August 1798; *Savannah Republican*, 28 July 1810.

<sup>102</sup> *Georgia Gazette*, 5 November 1801.

<sup>103</sup> Franklin and Schweningen, *Runaway Slaves*, pp.216-219.

<sup>104</sup> Windley, *A Profile of Runaway Slaves*, p.166.

what cannot be assumed is that these features were being consciously ranked by the composer of the advertisement (Table 2.11).

Colour is an obvious if limiting categorisation, for advertisers tended to stick with a handful of generalised variants, preserving racial distance between the fugitive and a readership of potential hunters. These descriptions ranged from “black,” “brown,” “yellow,” to more detailed classifications such as “mulatto,” “mustee,” and in one instance, “quarter blooded mulatto”.<sup>105</sup> In most cases, advertisers referred to their slaves simply as “negro” (Table 2.12). The term “negro” was a staple of the slaveholder vocabulary, synonymous in slaveholding states with “slave and slavery,” and in denoting blackness and inferiority throughout the Old and New Worlds.<sup>106</sup> In Maryland, where the slave population was almost entirely second or third generation African Americans by the 1790s, there was little need for advertisers to expand on this description of runaways as “negro” when seeking their recapture. In contrast, the growing and more demographically diverse slave population of imported and American-born slaves in Georgia was reflected in advertiser classifications. Advertisers in Georgia, to a greater extent than those in Maryland, remarked on their runaways’ place of origin and varying command of the English language (Table 2.13 and Table 2.14).

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<sup>105</sup> Advertisers expressed their concern and expectations that some mulatto fugitives were so light complexioned that they would attempt to pass as white persons.

<sup>106</sup> Sterling Stuckey, *Slave Culture: Nationalist Theory and the Foundations of Black America*. 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition (New York, 2013), p.223.

Table 2.11. Dominant Physical Features.

FSP	State of Escape																							
	Georgia						Maryland																	
	Sex			Sex			Sex			Sex														
	Female		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male													
	Visible Scars or Marks	Count	Visible Scars or Marks	Count	Visible Scars or Marks	Count	Visible Scars or Marks	Count	Visible Scars or Marks	Count	Visible Scars or Marks	Count												
Dominant Physical Feature	71	183	8	45	2	188	33	4	14	34	50	90	111	4	0	11	0	2	4	30	6			
colour	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		
face	4	11	16	2	6	7	19	0	6	6	16	2	7	0	6	7	19	0	6	6	7	19		
hair	0	6	6	2	6	7	19	0	6	6	16	2	7	0	6	7	19	0	6	6	7	19		
head	6	35	47	8	15	53	92	12	12	35	47	8	15	53	92	12	12	35	47	8	15	53	92	
limbs, hands, or feet	0	4	2	1	0	7	4	0	0	4	2	1	0	7	4	0	0	0	4	2	1	0	7	4
mobility	5	24	2	9	0	18	15	2	2	24	2	9	0	18	15	2	2	2	24	2	9	0	18	15
mouth	46	133	35	44	4	143	35	11	11	133	35	44	4	143	35	11	11	11	133	35	44	4	143	35
physique	0	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0
voice	0	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0

Comparisons of Column Proportions<sup>b</sup>

FSP	State of Escape											
	Georgia						Maryland					
	Sex			Sex			Sex			Sex		
	Female		Male		Female		Male		Female		Male	
	Visible Scars or Marks	Yes	No	Visible Scars or Marks	Yes	No	Visible Scars or Marks	Yes	No	Visible Scars or Marks	Yes	No
Dominant Physical Feature	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A	B	A
colour	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>
face	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>
hair	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>
head	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>
limbs, hands, or feet	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>
mobility	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>
mouth	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>
physique	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>
voice	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>

Results are based on two-sided tests with significance level .05. For each significant pair, the key of the category with the smaller column proportion appears under the category with the larger column proportion.

a. This category is not used in comparisons because its column proportion is equal to zero or one.

b. Tests are adjusted for all pairwise comparisons within a row of each innermost subtable using the Bonferroni correction.

Table 2.12. Colour.

FSP		State of Escape			
		Georgia		Maryland	
Colour Depicted		Sex		Sex	
		Female Count	Male Count	Female Count	Male Count
	Negro	111	363	118	600
	Black	0	12	7	26
	Brown	0	0	0	2
	Yellow	1	1	0	2
	Mulatto	15	30	43	173
	Mustee	0	1	0	0

Table 2.13. Fugitives' Origins.

FSP		State of Escape			
		Georgia		Maryland	
Origin		Sex		Sex	
		Female Count	Male Count	Female Count	Male Count
	American	27	77	2	14
	British Colonies	1	3	0	1
	French Colonies	5	15	6	15
	St. Domingue	0	3	0	0
	Africa	12	26	2	8
	New Negro	4	29	0	2

Table 2.14. Contingency Table of Origins and Language Quality.

		State of Escape									
		Georgia					Maryland				
		English Language Quality					English Language Quality				
		Very Poor Count	Poor Count	Acceptable Count	Good Count	Very Good Count	Very Poor Count	Poor Count	Acceptable Count	Good Count	Very Good Count
Origin	American	0	0	8	7	3	0	0	0	0	0
	British Colonies	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	French Colonies	5	1	5	0	0	4	2	2	1	1
	St. Domingue	0	1	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Africa	4	4	5	3	0	3	0	1	0	0
	New Negro	12	4	3	0	1	0	1	0	0	0

Georgia advertisers to a far greater extent than Maryland advertisers distinguished “country born” from “new” slaves: those born in the United States and those imported to the United States. Supporting this interpretation, eighty-one slaves were explicitly classified as “country born” and thirty-three as “new negroes” in Georgia compared to just fourteen and two slaves, respectively, in Maryland (FSP).<sup>107</sup> The categorisation of “new” slaves typically referred to those that were “African born”; victims of the transatlantic slave trade. Indeed, almost three times as many slaves escaping from Georgia were described as “African” or were identified from a region within the continent including “Angola Country” and “Guinea born” compared to Maryland. Among the thirty-eight slaves in Georgia and ten in Maryland, slaves were classified as members of ethnic groups such as “Ebo” or “Eboe” – a reference to the Igbo people of southern Nigeria. These figures support Lacy K. Ford’s claim that lower South whites differentiated African American or “country born” slaves from African-born “new” slaves imported into the United States to a much greater extent than other southern slaveholders. This was based on racial prejudice and stereotyping based on a belief that African slaves, less acculturated than African Americans, were uncivilised and more likely to revolt.<sup>108</sup> As Edward Long remarked of imported Africans in his contentious *History of Jamaica*, they were “the most to be feared”.<sup>109</sup> Infusing slave skin colour and ethnicity begs the question as to why advertisers, especially in the lower South, emphasised racial difference between Africans and African Americans.

It is suggested below, albeit tentatively, that advertisers fused racial coding to prey upon public fear of specific slave “character types”. This effort was intended to mobilise publics fearful of slave insurrection against slave resistance, including fugitivity, and to protect the slave system and the legal framework that supported it. Advertisers’ comments on slaves’ ethnicity, physicality, and physiognomy were often accompanied by observations on fugitives’ behaviour and perceptions about their personality or character. Advertisers’ anger at the fugitives’ defiance of their authority is reflected in these descriptions and depictions, and served to warn readers of the “type” of slave in their midst. In doing so, they exonerated themselves of any criticism for undermining the institution of slavery, by linking fugitivity to dangerous character traits and urging vigilance in recapture. Advertisers

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<sup>107</sup> This does not include slaves whose classifications fitted into either of these groups.

<sup>108</sup> Lacy K. Ford, *Deliver Us from Evil: The Slavery Question in the Old South* (New York, 2009), pp.127-128.

<sup>109</sup> Edward Long, *The History of Jamaica; or, General Survey of the Antient and Modern State of That Island: With Reflections on Its Situations, Settlements, Inhabitants, Climate, Products, Commerce, Laws, and Government*. Volume 2 (London, 1774), p.310.

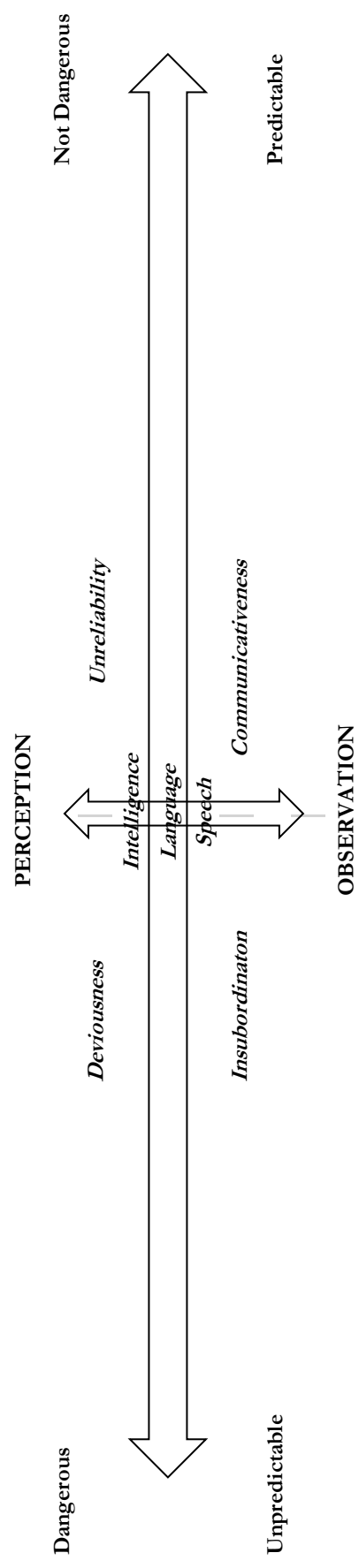
commonly attributed fugitivity to their slaves' "deceitful," "impertinent," and "cunning" personalities.

### **Spectrum of Observed and Perceived Slave Behaviour**

These descriptions offer some chance to visualise the fugitives through the racist lens of their oppressors. Figure 2.4 is a spectrum illustrating how advertisers' perceptions and observations expressed, and thereby reinforced, fears about fugitive slaves: the more unpredictable their behaviour, the more dangerous they seemed. This sort of data is not readily classified into nominal categorical variables for the purposes of statistical analysis. Word lists were used to identify the most common words and phrases that signalled or conveyed value judgements about the fugitives' character and behaviour, and these were organised into seven categories: Communicativeness, Deviousness, Insubordination, Intelligence, Language, Speech, and Unreliability. Likert scales were used to rank the comments. For example, "artful" was the single most common descriptor used in depicting slaves' character and personality and was ranked 5 in the Likert scale used for Deviousness, meaning "Extremely" devious. The frequency of appearance did not determine ranking of "artful" or any other word or phrase. This was decided according to my own subjective judgement after attempting to locate the term or phrase on the Spectrum of Observed and Perceived Behaviour (Appendix 1). There were 191 fugitive slaves among the FSP described as having *artful* personalities. Of those, 92 (48 percent) were expected to pass as free persons or transform their identity by changing their names, clothing, or construct a "plausible" story to support their attempts to pass as free persons. In other words, they were not only challenging their enslavement by running away but rejecting the slave identity they had been given by their master by forming their own for the purpose of remaining at large.



Figure 2.4. Spectrum of Slaveholders' Perceptions and Observations of Fugitive Slaves



Advertisers framed their depiction of the fugitives' personalities and characters in accordance with their own observations and preconceptions, but they were also conscious of how the public would perceive the runaway. Their aim was both to aid recapture and to reinforce popular perceptions that fugitivity was dangerous.

Analysing advertisers' observations reveal that advertisers in Maryland to a greater extent than Georgia observed their male slaves to be very insubordinate (Table 2.15). A total of seventeen fugitives were categorised as such compared to five in Georgia. These slaves were "impertinent," "impudent," and "free spoken". John F. Mercer, a slaveholder in Annapolis, observed, Phil, a "young black crop negro," to be "very forward and impertinent".<sup>110</sup> Maryland male fugitives were also observed to be very communicative. Slaves including Jacob, who had a "great deal to say for himself," were categorised as "very" to "extremely talkative". There were also those, including Elijah, who were "ready-witted" and "smart in answering questions".<sup>111</sup> There were more speech impediments recorded among Maryland male runaways than Georgia, seventy-eight to twenty-four, respectively. Advertisers observed "impediments," "stammers," and "stutters". Many of these were due to missing teeth and were most noticeable when the slave had been confronted or frightened by their masters. John Glen remarked that his slave, Simon, was "apt to stutter a little if surprised or sharply spoken to" while another slave, also named Simon, would "stutter very much in speaking, so much that the muscles of his face become contracted".<sup>112</sup> Lewis's stammer was especially aggressive. His master revealed that he could "be known very easy by talking, as he stutters very much at almost every word, and appears to be in agony when speaking".<sup>113</sup> In Georgia, more male runaways were observed to speak a foreign language than in Maryland. This is unsurprising given Georgia's slave population comprised more foreign imported slaves than Maryland. Slaves were observed to speak languages including "English," "French," "Dutch," and German" with varying degrees of proficiency. Advertisers also generalised that their slaves spoke the "African" language and variations of English including "Negro English". Others were observed to "speak the language of the Indians" including Isaac and Adam who spoke "Creek" [Muskogean].<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> *Maryland Gazette*, 1 December 1791.

<sup>111</sup> *Federal Gazette*, 1 February 1800; *American and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, 8 July 1806.

<sup>112</sup> *Georgia Gazette*, 21 April 1796; *Georgia Gazette*, 23 July 1795.

<sup>113</sup> *Federal Gazette*, 6 February 1809.

<sup>114</sup> *Georgia Gazette*, 3 July 1794; *Georgia Gazette*, 28 July 1796.

Table 2.15. Advertisers' Observations.

	State of Escape						Total
	Georgia			Maryland			
	Sex			Sex			
	Female	Male	Count	Female	Male	Count	
N=75							
Observed Communicativeness	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
Not at all							
Slightly	0	0	0	1	1	1	8
Moderately	2	7	7	1	1	1	21
Very	5	8	8	5	5	5	37
Extremely	1	0	0	0	0	0	3

	State of Escape						Total
	Georgia			Maryland			
	Sex			Sex			
	Female	Male	Count	Female	Male	Count	
N=73							
Observed Insubordination	3	5	5	5	10	10	23
Not at all							
Slightly	0	0	0	1	1	1	4
Moderately	0	3	3	2	14	14	19
Very	0	5	5	0	17	17	22
Extremely	0	1	1	0	0	0	3

	State of Escape						Total
	Georgia			Maryland			
	Sex			Sex			
	Female	Male	Count	Female	Male	Count	
N=1832							
Literacy Status	193	603	603	173	818	818	1,787
No							
Yes	0	9	9	0	0	0	36

	State of Escape						Total
	Georgia			Maryland			
	Sex			Sex			
	Female	Male	Count	Female	Male	Count	
N=44							
Observed Foreign Language	6	21	21	5	8	8	40
foreign language speaker speaks in accent							
1	2	2	0	1	1	1	4

	State of Escape						Total
	Georgia			Maryland			
	Sex			Sex			
	Female	Male	Count	Female	Male	Count	
N=1832							
Speech Impediment	188	588	588	171	776	776	1,723
No							
Yes	5	24	24	2	78	78	109

Advertisers' perceptions of their slaves' deviousness and unreliability are evident in their advertisements (Table 2.16). Advertisers in Maryland and to a greater extent in Georgia perceived their slaves to be extremely devious. Of 271 slaves for whom advertiser perception could be established, 187 (69 percent) of male and female runaways were in this category. Words associated with these slaves included "artful," "cunning," "sly," and "daring". George Baillie perceived Pompy, a "young negro fellow," to be "very artful" and able to form "a plausible story, of my having permitted him to work out in Savannah".<sup>115</sup> Similarly, George Carter's slave, Isaac or Isaac Clerk as he called himself, was "very cunning, artful, and insinuating" and prone to both swearing and gambling.<sup>116</sup> Edmund Adams of Colonel's Island, Georgia, perceived his runaway woman, Tyrah, to be "very cunning and plausible in her stories".<sup>117</sup> Maryland male runaways were perceived by their masters to be moderately to extremely unreliable. Unreliable slaves were perceived as "artful" but also "deceitful" and "liars". Slaves fitting this category included Juda, regarded by his master, Levy Hughes, as "very artful and a most notorious liar".<sup>118</sup> Lotta, alias Sally, was also perceived to be a "very great liar" by her master and Sarah, a "very plausible and notorious liar" by hers.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> *Columbian Museum*, 9 May 1800.

<sup>116</sup> *Federal Gazette*, 3 August 1807.

<sup>117</sup> *Columbian Museum*, 20 November 1807.

<sup>118</sup> *Republican Gazette and General Advertiser*, 10 February 1802.

<sup>119</sup> *Rights of Man*, 2 August 1797; *Columbian Museum*, 7 January 1800.

Table 2.16. Advertisers' Perceptions.

N=271	State of Escape							Total
	Georgia			Maryland				
	Sex			Sex				
	Female	Male	Count	Female	Male	Count	Count	
Perceived Deviousness	Not at all	4	10	2	15	31		
	Slightly	1	3	2	13	19		
	Moderately	1	2	1	12	16		
	Very	0	5	2	11	18		
	Extremely	20	81	12	74	187		

N=140	State of Escape							Total
	Georgia			Maryland				
	Sex			Sex				
	Female	Male	Count	Female	Male	Count	Count	
Perceived Unreliability	Not at all	4	8	6	15	33		
	Slightly	1	0	3	10	14		
	Moderately	2	5	2	22	31		
	Very	0	5	3	16	24		
	Extremely	0	7	9	22	38		

In a system founded on racism, brutality, and exploitation, it is perhaps surprising to observe advertisers describe their runaways as “intelligent,” “sensible,” and “bright”. Several runaways were even described as “respectful”. This characterisation is especially ironic considering runaways were circumventing slaveholder authority. With no discernible incentive for an advertiser to speak to the “good” character of the slave, especially in the context of an advertisement announcing the slave had runaway, this naturally inspires a re-evaluation of the question of audience: to whom were these descriptions of personality being communicated? It can safely be assumed that the primary audience was the reader of the advertisement however the use of flattery suggests that advertisers were sometimes directly communicating with their slaves.<sup>120</sup> Advertisers attempted to convince them to return under the guise of paternalism. It was certainly not uncommon for advertisers to negotiate with their slaves through runaway notices. Advertisers regularly appealed to slaves, promising them forgiveness if they returned within a specified number of days and/or of their own accord. Whether positively or negatively characterising their runaways, advertiser descriptions had the sole purpose of recapturing the runaway.

Artfulness as a slave character trait appears to have been especially feared by slaveholders. The artful slave was the antithesis of the “good” slave type coined by Patricia Bradley. The use of “artful,” contrary to Bradley’s assertion, was far more than a characteristic used by advertisers to “prove” slaves were not suited to freedom.<sup>121</sup> Indeed, it was not a liberally assigned personality type among “bad” slaves.<sup>122</sup> For example, Maryland slaveholder Nicholas Reynolds’ characterisation of his runaway, Harry Johnstone, as a “very ingenious artful fellow,” was a public warning that an “artful” slave type was in their midst.<sup>123</sup> Artfulness was linked by definition, and in advertisements, to slaves’ cunningness and performance.<sup>124</sup> While a fuller discussion of slave artfulness and resistance follows in a subsequent chapter, it is suffice to state that artfulness denoted a special slave type that was a concern to slaveholders. Writing to his friend, John Gibson of Magothy, on 21 May 1819,

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<sup>120</sup> The narratives of former slaves including Harriet Jacobs and Henry Bibb suggest that slaves did gain access to newspapers. The advertisements could be interpreted by literate slaves and orally transmitted to those who were illiterate. See Henry Bibb, *Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Henry Bibb, an American Slave, written by himself. With an Introduction by Lucius C. Matlack* (New York, 1849), pp. 139-140; Harriet A. Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, ed. L. Maria Child (Boston, 1861), pp. 69-70.

<sup>121</sup> Patricia Bradley, *Slavery, Propaganda, and the American Revolution* (Jackson, 1998), p.28.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, p.26.

<sup>123</sup> *Federal Gazette*, 2 May 1800.

<sup>124</sup> In the 1797 edition of his dictionary, Thomas Sheridan defined artful as “Performed with art; artificial, not natural; cunning, skilful, dextrous”. See Thomas Sheridan, *A Complete Dictionary of the English Language, Both with regard to Sound and Meaning: One main Object of which is, to establish a plain and permanent Standard of Pronunciation. To which is Prefixed a Prosodial Grammar*. Fourth Edition (London: 1797).

J. R. Stevens, a slaveholder in Annapolis, expressed such concerns over Jim, a slave probably hired to him from Gibson.<sup>125</sup> While Jim had been “skulking about in this neighbourhood upwards of a fortnight” and was expected to escape by assistance of his mother, Stevens’ attention turned to Jim’s personality – “you know, he is a very artful Boy”. His change in tone was a stark warning to Gibson, its issuance denoting a slave type both men recognised had made Jim unmanageable. “I would not wish you to take him back if it is not agreeable to you, I would try and dispose of him elsewhere,” remarked Stevens.<sup>126</sup>

### Slave Skillsets

Slave narratives indicate that runaways were often skilled workers or seized opportunities to escape if afforded by their trade, such as when working off the plantation or in an urban setting. Males were more likely to be craft workers than females, and in both Georgia and Maryland comprised the clear majority of fugitives whose occupation was known and could be categorised. Most female fugitives worked as domestic slaves in the household of their masters and mistresses. The figures are generally consistent in both the FSP and the SampleFSP but the data too few to provide reliable scaled-up projections for the US Slave Population (Table 2.17). Around 21 percent of the FSP in the FSdb whose occupations were recorded were carpenters of one kind or another, and the variety of occupations in the advertisements are testament to a range of skills. A further 10 percent of the FSP were blacksmiths and 10 percent were coopers. Waiters comprised 8 percent of the FSP and shoe-makers around 6 percent. There were also hairdressers (9) in the FSP including Lindor, a “pretty strong and corpulent” nineteen year old “African” slave.<sup>127</sup> There were also several sawyers (11), caulkers (6), and cooks (12).

Around 9 percent of slaves were skilled in two or more trades. Frisby Freeland described his slave, Tom, as both a carpenter and sawyer.<sup>128</sup> Nicholas Voss, of Alexandria (VA) advertised his slave Ben as a “rough carpenter and sawyer” and “expert in almost every kind of business”.<sup>129</sup> Jem, or Jem Cooper, who worked in Baltimore upon the frigate

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<sup>125</sup> Maryland State Archives. Ridout Papers, MSA SC 910-18-37, Letter from JR Stevens, Annapolis, to John Gibson, Magothy, 21 May 1819; This appears to be attorney John Gibson of Annapolis who purchased Gibson Island in 1793 and owned a considerable amount of land, estimated to be in excess of 2,000 acres between the Magothy River and Bodkin Creek, situated north of Bodkin Creek. See William B. Cronin, *The Disappearing Islands of the Chesapeake* (Baltimore, 2005), p.35.

<sup>126</sup> Stevens’s willingness to dispose of Jim rather than return him to Gibson was likely a consequence of Gibson’s poor health. Gibson died in an 1819.

<sup>127</sup> *Federal Gazette*, 22 June 1799.

<sup>128</sup> *Federal Gazette*, 8 July 1796.

<sup>129</sup> *Federal Gazette*, 8 May 1798

Constellation before making his escape in a small rowing boat was by trade a “caulker and ship carpenter”.<sup>130</sup> Ned, a “mustee” slave, was advertised as both a “hairdresser and butcher” but also a “waiter and ostler”. He was expected to use the name “Groom Ned” when working as the former and “Thomas Mack” the latter.<sup>131</sup>

The skilled/unskilled dichotomy is however a crude categorisation. Historians can easily oversimplify the work setting and skills portfolio since slaves performed many functions and practised simultaneously several trades that required considerable and varying degrees of skill. The preponderance of craft workers over field hands in any categorised dataset may rest on artificial distinctions. With data on fewer than 13 percent of fugitives in the FSP any conclusion must remain tentative, even if, not unexpectedly, skilled workers tended to be males in their twenties and thirties (Table 2.18).

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<sup>130</sup> *Federal Gazette*, 1 November 1800.

<sup>131</sup> Ned was advertised firstly as a “waiter and ostler” by his master, John McPherson of Prince William Parish (South Carolina) in the *Georgia Gazette*, 18 June 1795. After being printed in that newspaper several times, the same advertisement was printed in the *City Gazette* (South Carolina), 17 October 1795. After several weeks in that newspaper, the reward offered was increased substantially, from one hundred to four hundred dollars, and his trades changed (from “waiter and ostler” to “hairdresser and butcher”). It can be ascertained that it was the same slave as in both advertisements as, in both, Ned was expected by McPherson to adopt the name “Groom Ned” as well as “Thomas Mack”. Ned was probably skilled in several trades. McPherson’s adjustment of the advertisement, specifically his emphasis on different trades, probably reflected information that Ned was labouring in those trades.



Table 2.17. Contingency Table for Work Setting.

**Case Processing Summary**

SampleFSP	Cases					
	Valid			Missing		
	N	Percent	Total	N	Percent	Total
Work Setting * Sex	161	20.1%	800	639	79.9%	800
Work Setting * State of Escape	161	20.1%	800	639	79.9%	800

**Case Processing Summary**

FSP	Cases					
	Valid			Missing		
	N	Percent	Total	N	Percent	Total
Work Setting * Sex	234	12.8%	1832	1598	87.2%	1832
Work Setting * State of Escape	234	12.8%	1832	1598	87.2%	1832

**Crosstab**

SampleFSP		Sex		State of Escape				Total	
		Female	Male	Georgia	Maryland	South Carolina	Virginia		
		Work Setting	Count	1 <sub>a</sub>	96 <sub>b</sub>	19 <sub>a</sub>	23 <sub>a</sub>		31 <sub>a</sub>
	Expected Count	5.4	91.6	18.7	22.9	29.5	25.9	97.0	
	% within Work Setting	1.0%	99.0%	19.6%	23.7%	32.0%	24.7%	100.0%	
	% within column	11.1%	63.2%	61.3%	60.5%	63.3%	55.8%	60.2%	
	Field	Count	0 <sub>a</sub>	13 <sub>a</sub>	0 <sub>a</sub>	6 <sub>a</sub>	3 <sub>a,b</sub>	4 <sub>a,b</sub>	13
	Expected Count	0.7	12.3	2.5	3.1	4.0	3.5	13.0	
	% within Work Setting	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	46.2%	23.1%	30.8%	100.0%	
	% within column	0.0%	8.6%	0.0%	15.8%	6.1%	9.3%	8.1%	
	House	Count	8 <sub>a</sub>	37 <sub>a</sub>	10 <sub>a</sub>	9 <sub>a</sub>	11 <sub>a</sub>	15 <sub>a</sub>	45
	Expected Count	2.5	42.5	8.7	10.6	13.7	12.0	45.0	
	% within Work Setting	17.8%	82.2%	22.2%	20.0%	24.4%	33.3%	100.0%	
	% within column	86.9%	24.3%	32.3%	23.7%	22.4%	34.9%	28.0%	
	Maritime	Count	0 <sub>a</sub>	6 <sub>a</sub>	2 <sub>a</sub>	0 <sub>a</sub>	4 <sub>a</sub>	0 <sub>a</sub>	6
	Expected Count	0.3	5.7	1.2	1.4	1.8	1.6	6.0	
	% within Work Setting	0.0%	100.0%	33.3%	0.0%	66.7%	0.0%	100.0%	
	% within column	0.0%	3.9%	6.5%	0.0%	8.2%	0.0%	3.7%	
Total	Count	9	152	31	38	49	43	161	
	Expected Count	9.0	152.0	31.0	38.0	49.0	43.0	161.0	
	% within Work Setting	5.6%	94.4%	19.3%	23.6%	30.4%	26.7%	100.0%	
	% within column	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Each subscript letter denotes a subset of Sex categories whose column proportions do not differ significantly from each other at the .05 level.

**Crosstab**

FSP		Sex		State of Escape			Total
		Female	Male	Georgia	Maryland	Total	
		Work Setting	Count	4 <sub>a</sub>	141 <sub>b</sub>	55 <sub>a</sub>	
	Expected Count	8.1	136.9	56.4	88.6	145.0	
	% within Work Setting	2.8%	97.2%	37.9%	62.1%	100.0%	
	% within column	30.8%	63.8%	60.4%	62.9%	62.0%	
	Field	Count	0 <sub>a</sub>	16 <sub>a</sub>	1 <sub>a</sub>	15 <sub>a</sub>	16
	Expected Count	0.9	15.1	6.2	9.8	16.0	
	% within Work Setting	0.0%	100.0%	6.3%	93.8%	100.0%	
	% within column	0.0%	7.2%	1.1%	10.5%	6.8%	
	House	Count	9 <sub>a</sub>	58 <sub>a</sub>	29 <sub>a</sub>	38 <sub>a</sub>	67
	Expected Count	3.7	63.3	26.1	40.9	67.0	
	% within Work Setting	13.4%	86.6%	43.3%	56.7%	100.0%	
	% within column	69.2%	26.2%	31.9%	26.6%	28.6%	
	Maritime	Count	0 <sub>a</sub>	6 <sub>a</sub>	6 <sub>a</sub>	0 <sub>a</sub>	6
	Expected Count	0.3	5.7	2.3	3.7	6.0	
	% within Work Setting	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%	
	% within column	0.0%	2.7%	6.6%	0.0%	2.6%	
Total	Count	13	221	91	143	234	
	Expected Count	13.0	221.0	91.0	143.0	234.0	
	% within Work Setting	5.6%	94.4%	38.9%	61.1%	100.0%	
	% within column	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Each subscript letter denotes a subset of Sex categories whose column proportions do not differ significantly from each other at the .05 level.

Table 2.18. Contingency Table for Trade Classification (FSP).

FSP	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Trade Classification * Sex	234	12.8%	1598	87.2%	1832	100.0%
Trade Classification * State of Escape	234	12.8%	1598	87.2%	1832	100.0%
Trade Classification * Age Category	184	10.0%	1648	90.0%	1832	100.0%

FSP	Crosstab												
	Trade Classification	Sex		State of Escape		Total	Age Category						
		unskilled labor	Female	Male	Georgia		Maryland	Under 10	10-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50 and over
Count	7 <sub>a</sub>	5 <sub>a</sub>	66	29 <sub>a</sub>	37 <sub>a</sub>	66	0 <sub>a,b</sub>	6 <sub>a</sub>	32 <sub>a,b</sub>	11 <sub>a</sub>	3 <sub>a,b</sub>	0 <sub>a</sub>	52
Expected Count	3.7	62.3	66.0	25.7	40.3	66.0	0.6	3.4	28.8	15.0	2.8	1.4	52.0
% within Trade Classification	10.6%	89.4%	100.0%	43.9%	56.1%	100.0%	0.0%	11.5%	61.5%	21.2%	5.8%	0.0%	100.0%
% within column	53.8%	26.7%	28.2%	31.9%	25.9%	28.2%	0.0%	50.0%	31.4%	20.8%	30.0%	0.0%	28.3%
Count	6 <sub>a</sub>	162 <sub>a</sub>	168	62 <sub>a</sub>	106 <sub>a</sub>	168	2 <sub>a,b</sub>	6 <sub>a</sub>	70 <sub>a,b</sub>	42 <sub>a</sub>	7 <sub>a,b</sub>	5 <sub>a</sub>	132
Expected Count	9.3	158.7	168.0	65.3	102.7	168.0	1.4	8.6	73.2	38.0	7.2	3.6	132.0
% within Trade Classification	3.6%	96.4%	100.0%	36.9%	63.1%	100.0%	1.5%	4.5%	53.0%	31.8%	5.3%	3.8%	100.0%
% within column	46.2%	73.3%	71.8%	68.1%	74.1%	71.8%	100.0%	50.0%	68.6%	79.2%	70.0%	100.0%	71.7%
Count	13	221	234	91	143	234	2	12	102	53	10	5	184
Expected Count	13.0	221.0	234.0	91.0	143.0	234.0	2.0	12.0	102.0	53.0	10.0	5.0	184.0
% within Trade Classification	5.6%	94.4%	100.0%	38.9%	61.1%	100.0%	1.1%	6.5%	55.4%	28.8%	5.4%	2.7%	100.0%
% within column	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Each subscript letter denotes a subset of Sex categories whose column proportions do not differ significantly from each other at the .05 level.

Chi-Square Tests	Trade Classification * Sex		Trade Classification * State of Escape		Trade Classification * Age Category	
	Value	df	Value	df	Value	df
Pearson Chi-Square	4.469 <sup>a</sup>	1	.987 <sup>a</sup>	1	7.530 <sup>a</sup>	5
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	3.229	1	0.713	1	0.398	5
Likelihood Ratio	4.002	1	0.979	1	9.223	5
Fisher's Exact Test						
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.450	1	0.982	1	3.302	1
N of Valid Cases	234		234		184	

a. 1 cells (.25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.67.

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 25.67.

a. 6 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .57.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

The dataset does not meet the basic conditions for a chi-square test because of cell counts of <5.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

A chi-square goodness-of-fit test was performed on the FSP to determine if fugitives from Georgia and Maryland had different skills sets. The chi-square test indicated no statistically significant difference.  $\chi^2(1, N=234)=1987, p<0.05$

The dataset does not meet the basic conditions for a chi-square test because of cell counts of <5.

There were a total of 45 literate fugitives in the FSP of which the majority, 36 (80 percent), were Maryland males, like Frederick Douglass. Georgia males account for the remaining nine.<sup>132</sup> Information on skin colour was available for all but four of the literate slaves. All the Georgia slaves (6) were depicted as “negro”. In Maryland, the majority were also described as “negro”(20) but there were also slaves depicted as “mulatto” (11) and “black”(4). A place of origin could be established for just three (of 45) slaves and this revealed all to be “American-born” escapees from Georgia. A work setting could be established for twenty fugitives: most of the Maryland slaves were skilled craft workers as opposed to field and house servants (Table 2.19). This included a “mulatto boy” Harry Towly, who could read and write “tolerably well” and was a “rope maker by trade”. Harry had escaped from his master, Jacob Mainster, residing “at the head of Bond and Smith’s streets” in Baltimore Town.<sup>133</sup> Based on the SampleFSP, it is estimated that 3.6 percent of the fugitive slaves in the United States were literate (Table 2.20).

My own spectrum of advertisers’ observations and perceptions offers insights into the behaviour of the 45 slaves recorded in the FSP who could read and/or write. Advertiser perceptions of slave deviousness could be ascertained for a total of 11 literate fugitives, all of whom were males. A majority (8), mostly Maryland fugitives, were regarded as *extremely* devious (Table 2.21). Literate slaves were also perceived by their masters to be moderately to extremely unreliable. The intelligence of only 2 Maryland males runaways was commented upon by advertisers, with both acknowledging their slaves to be good to very good.

Of the 191 *artful* fugitives, 12 were literate (6 percent). All of the slaves described by advertisers as artful *and* literate could read and seven were able to read and write. George, enslaved to John Yellot of Belle-Air, Harford County, Maryland, was one of these literate and artful enslaved people. A victim of Maryland’s internal slave trade, George was purchased by Yellot from Captain John Conner of Annemessex, Somerset County, two months before his escape on 12 July 1796. George “understands almost any kind of labour, has been accustomed to go by water and can read and write”, revealed Yellot, but was also “a plausible, artful fellow [who] may probably change his cloathing [sic]”. Yellot offered a generous \$100 reward for his recapture.<sup>134</sup> None of the nine fugitive who were described as

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<sup>132</sup> There was a total of 63 slaves in the FSdb advertised as able to read and write or some variation thereof. All of the slaves were males with the exception of one female slave, Lucy, a fugitive from Virginia, who was described by her master, James Verdier of Shepherdstown, Jefferson County (Virginia), as able to read. Her case is discussed in greater detail in Chapter Three.

<sup>133</sup> *American and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, 4 December 1806.

<sup>134</sup> *Federal Gazette*, 16 July 1796.

*only* able to write were described as artful. Writing lent credence to slave attempts to pass as free but was not, on its own, linked to identity transformation by advertisers. Instead advertisers expected slaves who could write to possess forged passes and other documentation. Artfulness, it is suggested, stemmed from reading not writing. To my knowledge, no historian has made this connection between slave artfulness and literacy. Reading inspired slave imagination and intellect. It also appears to have inspired slave discontentment manifesting in fugitivity, as the case of Douglass suggests. Writing—specifically the forging of passes and documentation—complimented slave attempts to pass as free persons, corroborating their deception.

### **The “Value” of Enslaved People**

The trades, skills, and attributes that advertisers alluded to are important indicators of fugitives’ perceived value. Some 17.70 percent of fugitives in the FSP attracted comments about their utility, the vast majority of whom were male, in both states. Among the most common skills and attributes were instrument playing, horse and stable management and the ability to undertake numerous specified and unspecified trades or occupations (Table 2.22).

Table 2.19. Contingency Tables for Literacy and Fugitives (FSP).

	State of Escape					
	Georgia			Maryland		
	Literacy Status		Literacy Status	Literacy Status		Literacy Status
Age Category	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count
Under 10	0	0	0	0	0	0
10--19	0	0	0	0	4	4
20--29	0	5	0	0	18	18
30--39	0	1	0	0	12	12
40--49	0	0	0	0	1	1
50 and over	0	0	0	0	0	0
Mean Ages	26					27

	State of Escape					
	Georgia			Maryland		
	Literacy Status		Literacy Status	Literacy Status		Literacy Status
Trade Classification	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count
unskilled labor	0	2	0	0	0	3
skilled labor	0	2	0	0	0	13

	State of Escape													
	Georgia						Maryland							
	Sex						Sex							
	Female			Male			Female			Male				
	Work Setting		House	Work Setting		House	Work Setting		House	Work Setting		House		
Craft	Field	Count	Craft	Field	Count	Craft	Field	Count	Craft	Field	Count	Maritime	Count	
Literacy Status	No	3	0	5	0	0	0	0	22	6	1	0	4	0
	Yes	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total												214		
												20		

Table 2.20. Literacy Statistics.

N=1832		State of Escape			
		Georgia		Maryland	
		Sex		Sex	
		Female	Male	Female	Male
		Count	Count	Count	Count
Literacy Status	No	193	603	173	818
	Yes	0	9	0	36

		Sex		Total
		Female	Male	
Literacy Status	No	366	1421	1787
	Yes	0	45	45
Total		366	1466	1832

## Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	11.518 <sup>a</sup>	1	0.001		
Continuity Correction <sup>b</sup>	10.272	1	0.001		
Likelihood Ratio	20.340	1	0.000		
Fisher's Exact Test				0.000	0.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	11.511	1	0.001		
N of Valid Cases	1832				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 8.99.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

A chi-square goodness-of-fit test was performed on the FSP to determine if literacy status varied by sex. The test indicated statistically significant differences, with more literate males than females.  
 $\chi^2(1, N=1832)=11.518, p<0.05$

## Literacy Status SampleFSP

N=800		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	No	771	96.4	96.4	96.4
Valid	Yes	29	3.6	3.6	100.0
Total		800	100.0	100.0	

Table 2.21. Contingency Tables for Literacy and Advertisers' Perceptions and Observations.

		State of Escape												Total			
		Georgia						Maryland									
		Female			Male			Female			Male						
		Intelligence Quality			Intelligence Quality			Intelligence Quality			Intelligence Quality						
Literacy Status	No	Very Poor	Poor	Acceptable	Good	Very Good	Very Poor	Poor	Acceptable	Good	Very Good	Very Poor	Poor	Acceptable	Good	Very Good	
		Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count
Yes	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	1	0	0	30	0	0	0	2	0	0
No	0	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	8	1	0	0	0	3	0
Total		0	0	0	10	0	0	1	0	0	38	1	0	0	2	3	0

		State of Escape												Total		
		Georgia						Maryland								
		Female			Male			Female			Male					
		Perceived Unreliability			Perceived Unreliability			Perceived Unreliability			Perceived Unreliability					
Literacy Status	No	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Very	Extremely	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Very	Extremely	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Very	Extremely
		Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count
Yes	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
No	4	1	2	0	0	4	6	3	2	3	7	9	10	21	15	21
Total		4	1	2	0	4	6	3	2	3	7	9	10	21	15	21

		State of Escape												Total		
		Georgia						Maryland								
		Female			Male			Female			Male					
		Perceived Deviousness			Perceived Deviousness			Perceived Deviousness			Perceived Deviousness					
Literacy Status	No	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Very	Extremely	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Very	Extremely	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Very	Extremely
		Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count	Count
Yes	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
No	4	1	1	0	0	20	10	3	2	5	79	2	2	1	2	12
Total		4	1	1	0	20	10	3	2	5	79	2	2	1	2	15

**Table 2.22. Utility of Fugitives.**

FSP		State of Escape			
		Georgia		Maryland	
		Trade, Skills, and Attributes		Trade, Skills, and Attributes	
		No	Yes	No	Yes
		Count	Count	Count	Count
Sex	Female	0	9	0	21
	Male	0	92	0	202

The table counts fugitives whose occupations and talents were acknowledged, stated, or commented upon by advertisers.

Jesse, a “favourite house servant” who had “been much indulged”, was advertised as “an excellent house servant, a pretty good barber, shoemaker, ostler, gardener, painter, and carriage driver”.<sup>135</sup> Similarly, Isaac, was an “excellent waggoner” but also “an excellent cradler, mower, and ploughman” who understood “every kind of work that is done on a farm”.<sup>136</sup> Jack was among the most skilled slaves in horse and stable management. Despite losing “the sight of his left eye,” he was “very expert in handling a horse” and had “rode races” according to his owner, Arthur Bryan of Wye-River on Maryland’s Eastern Shore.<sup>137</sup> Of those fugitives who were musicians, Harry was a standout. A slave who discovered “a great musical genius on the fiddle,” he had been seen several days after his elopement “acting in the capacity of a fiddler to Messrs. Hackley and Landy, slight [sic] of hand performers,” according to his master, Charles L. Carter.<sup>138</sup>

The value of fugitives was relative to the rewards offered by advertisers, and vice versa. These are summarised in Table 2.23. Rewards were made in dollars, guineas, shillings and pounds sterling. Advertisers also offered specie, silver dollars, and Spanish milled dollars but such instances were rare. Sometimes there was a gradation in the sums listed. “Sliding-scale cash rewards,” generally speaking, reflected the distance the fugitive had travelled from their place of escape and the cost to have them recaptured.<sup>139</sup> The further a slave travelled, the greater the reward. Generally, this conforms to Franklin and Schweningen’s claim that rewards were structured to reflect slaveholders’ confidence in retrieving the runaway. Modest rewards were offered—“even for highly skilled slaves”—when advertisers were confident

<sup>135</sup> *Federal Gazette*, 20 March 1810.

<sup>136</sup> *Federal Gazette*, 3 August 1807.

<sup>137</sup> *Federal Gazette*, 8 November 1800 [Page 1: Supplement].

<sup>138</sup> *Federal Gazette*, 8 August 1801.

<sup>139</sup> T. Stephen Whitman, *The Price of Freedom: Slavery and Manumission in Baltimore and Early National Maryland* (Lexington, 1997), p.74.



the fugitive would be recaptured and were more generous when the slave was expected to leave the county or the state.<sup>140</sup> Other times the advertiser left the reward unstated, promising to pay “generously,” “handsomely,” or “liberally”. There is no pattern or obvious reason why slaveholders did this other than individual preference. When Charles Carter advertised for Harry, the aforementioned fiddler, he claimed that it was his slave’s “great ingratitude for my uniform kindness to him” that had persuaded him “to offer the above extravagant reward” of \$100.<sup>141</sup> Further rewards were generally offered in addition to the recapture reward such as for information that a fugitive was being harboured or aided by some “ill-designing” white or black person.

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<sup>140</sup> Franklin and Schweninger, *Runaway Slaves*, p.175.

<sup>141</sup> *Federal Gazette*, 8 August 1801.

Table 2.23. Reward Values.

FSP	Maximum Reward Value				Valid	SampleFSP	Maximum Reward Value			
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	99	5.4	5.7	5.7	Under \$5	24	3.0	3.2	3.2	
	304	16.6	17.6	23.4	\$5-9	130	16.3	17.5	20.7	
	385	21.0	22.3	45.7	\$10-14	187	23.4	25.2	45.9	
	73	4.0	4.2	49.9	\$15-19	23	2.9	3.1	49.0	
	390	21.3	22.6	72.6	\$20-24	188	23.5	25.3	74.3	
	35	1.9	2.0	74.6	\$25-29	19	2.4	2.6	76.9	
	104	5.7	6.0	80.6	\$30-34	47	5.9	6.3	83.2	
	3	.2	.2	80.8	\$35-39	4	.5	.5	83.7	
	76	4.1	4.4	85.2	\$40-44	29	3.6	3.9	87.6	
	18	1.0	1.0	86.3	\$45-49	9	1.1	1.2	88.8	
	237	12.9	13.7	100.0	\$50 and Over	83	10.4	11.2	100.0	
Total	1724	94.1	100.0		Total	743	92.9	100.0		
Missing	108	5.9			System	57	7.1			
Total	1832	100.0			Total	800	100.0			

Note: All reward information, where available, was input into the database field "Reward Description". Where there were multiple reward values, the reward stated at the head of the advertisement was used and input into the "Reward Value" field. Every reward value in this field that was not in dollars was subsequently converted to dollars for the purpose of statistical analysis. Using Part III The United States in 1790: Currency, taken from [http://www.thehistorybox.com/ny\\_city/nycity\\_census\\_pt\\_III\\_U.S.\\_currency\\_1790\\_article00825.htm](http://www.thehistorybox.com/ny_city/nycity_census_pt_III_U.S._currency_1790_article00825.htm) the value of the dollar in c.1790 was approximated to be around 5 shillings. In c.1800, it was about 4 shillings, according to Hugo S. Cunningham's work on gold and silver standards, available at <http://www.cyberusr.com/hcunn/gold-std.html>. Thus by estimating for the period c.1790 to 1810 at 4.5 shillings, this was used to reframe the following values. 1 pound = 20 shillings = 4.5 dollars. 1 dollars = 100 cents = 4.44 shillings. 1 guinea = 4.662 dollars.

Male fugitive slaves were valued, monetarily, more highly than females, especially Maryland males (Tables 2.24 and 2.25). Nearly one-quarter of male fugitives in Maryland were valued at \$50 or more.<sup>142</sup> There are several likely reasons for this including advertisers expecting their slaves had left the state. Singleton Burgee of Frederick County, in Northern Maryland, offered a reward of \$50 for two of his runaways, Adam and Joe, who were both expected, despite escaping individually, to head northwards and cross into Pennsylvania. Adam was expected to head to the borough of York while Joe was expected to make for Philadelphia.<sup>143</sup> Likewise, Lambert Norris of Easton, Talbot County, offered \$50 for his slave, Dick, who he expected had “made towards Delaware” after being “seen in Caroline County the day after he went off”.<sup>144</sup> B. G. Bitouzey offered \$100 for each of his runaways, Simon, Michael, and Bill, all of the same family. All escaped individually but were advertised together.<sup>145</sup> Simon was expected to make for Philadelphia but no likely destination was given for the others. John Gadsby of Indian Queen, Baltimore offered \$200, the largest for any slave in the FSP, for his slave, Mary, who was expected to be conveyed to New York.<sup>146</sup> He expected her, and the 12 month old child she took with her, to be assisted by a “black man by the name, Joe Downs, formerly a servant to Mr James Bryden, Fountain Inn”.<sup>147</sup>

It might also be the case that above average rewards reflected slaveholders showcasing their wealth to the wider public. This certainly appears to be true of the pompous

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<sup>142</sup> In advertisements for group fugitivity, it was common for advertisers to offer a single reward at the head of the advertisement. In some instances, advertisers did state that the reward offered was to be paid upon the recovery of all runaways within the group or to be split proportionally upon the recovery of the individuals involved, but this was not always the case. Analysis of the advertisements suggest advertisers did not always value (monetarily) individual runaways within a fugitive grouping identically, and therefore, group rewards should not be assumed as equally divisible between each member of a runaway group. Therefore, in instances when a single reward was offered for a group of fugitives with no indication how it was to be divided (proportionally or individually), the total reward was logged for each individual group member. This approach does have the potential to inflate the reward value of individual slaves involved in such instances however these occurrences were very rare. This methodological approach has no significant impact on the average reward value figures established for each state and sex.

<sup>143</sup> *Republican Gazette and General Advertiser*, 30 January 1807; *American and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, 10 September 1806.

<sup>144</sup> *Republican Star*, 1 November 1803.

<sup>145</sup> *American and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, 2 July 1806.

<sup>146</sup> *Federal Gazette*, 3 June 1809.

<sup>147</sup> The advertisement description provides additional insights into Mary’s “value” to him. While Mary was expected to escape, with child, out of the state (which did increase the reward value), the reward value seems particularly generous. The advertisement does not suggest, for example, that Mary was a particularly skilled slave and rather, it appears Gadsby valued her physical appearance and was especially determined to have her recaptured. His description of her appearance – “5 feet 4 inches high, well made, handsome face, and a remarkable sharp large white eye” and her “uncommonly gay and stately carriage”—was flattering. Neither did Gadsby describe Mary as a “slave” or a “negro”, instead, he referred to her as a “black girl”. It is uncertain whether he was the father of her child but his description of Mary and his treatment of the child does beg the question.

Baltimorean, Christopher “the Crocodile” Hughes.<sup>148</sup> Hughes advertised for seventeen slaves in the FSP, all of whom commanded a reward value of \$50 or more. Hughes was not the only slaveholder to offer extravagant rewards. Samuel Worthington, residing near Reisterstown, Baltimore County, advertised for two fugitives, Moses and Phill, offering of \$120 and \$200, respectively.<sup>149</sup> Although neither was expected to leave the state, Phill was described as “artful,” “crafty,” and “audible” and was expected to “endeavour to pass for a free man”. There were a total of 21 Maryland and 9 Georgia fugitives to whom a reward of \$50 or more was offered and who were described as “artful” or expected to change their name, dress, or behaviour to pass as a free person. This suggests “artful” slaves were not only considered dangerous, but also were also valuable.

Seventy-percent of fugitives attracted rewards of under \$30 in Georgia and Maryland. Mean rewards were higher in Maryland than Georgia and other states, and in Maryland they were (statistically) significantly higher for males than females. It may be the case that the higher reward values for male fugitives reflect the preponderance of males in the FSP. However, because of the similarity in mean rewards for both sexes in Georgia it is likely that local economic reasons explain the higher rewards offered for the apprehension of Maryland fugitives. In Georgia, most females, sixty (35 percent), had a maximum reward value between \$5 and \$9. Most males, 181 (33 percent) had a maximum reward value of between \$10 and \$14. The majority of both sexes had a maximum reward value of \$14 or less with maximum

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<sup>148</sup> Irish immigrant Hughes amassed his fortune as a trader of gold and silver specie following the American Revolution and the collapse of the monetary system. This ensured Hughes could afford to advertise regularly in Baltimore’s newspapers and offer extravagant rewards for his fugitives; showcasing his wealth to Baltimore’s residents in the process. Hughes owned property and land throughout Baltimore and regularly rode into Baltimore Town astride his white horse to inspect his investments. His reputation as a shrewd but ruthless businessman, coupled with his pompousness, drew criticism from Baltimore’s residents, most notably, Leonard Harbaugh. Both men had a prolonged and public dispute, the back and forth of which was played out in the *Maryland Journal and Baltimore Advertiser* newspaper. Their dispute stemmed from a significant monetary debt amassed by Harbaugh to Hughes in pounds sterling after Hughes had leased him a section of land which devalued in wake of the economic turmoil in Maryland in the 1780s. In one exchange, Harbaugh would ridicule Hughes for commissioning a self-portrait of himself. The painting, by Charles Wilson Peale, was not a wholly accurate portrayal of Hughes, claimed Harbaugh, insisting “I have done you more justice in drawing your general character, than even Mr. Peale has in drawing your fine picture, though it is believed in general that it is not the artist’s fault but your particular request to counterfeit one of your chins” (p.13). See Garrett Power, ‘The Carpenter and The Crocodile’, *Maryland Historical Magazine*, 91:1 (Spring, 1996), pp.5-15; In another of their exchanges, Harbaugh sheds light on Hughes’s pre-occupation with the public’s opinion of him, claiming that he [Hughes] had insisted “Harbaugh, can’t we settle our dispute?—I find the Public look upon me as your eye sore, your bug-bear, and your devil; I will tell you how to get rid of this devil”. Hughes had apparently demanded bonds and other financial payments from Harbaugh before he would stop harassing him. Using the newspaper to provide a damning indictment of Hughes’s character, Harbaugh turned his attention to Hughes—“as for you, the time may come, that you cannot find any more honest and peaceable men to ride upon ... How glad will you be then, if I can invent a machine to transport yourself to a place, where you are not so well known as here, namely to the people in the moon”. For the full article, see *Maryland Journal and Baltimore Advertiser*, 29 December 1789.

<sup>149</sup> *Federal Gazette*, 1 September 1797; *American and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, 27 November 1810.

rewards. While there were few slaves of either sex with a maximum reward value of \$15 and \$19 and \$25 and \$29, 15 percent of females and 20 percent of males had a maximum reward value of \$20 and \$24. In Maryland, most females, thirty-seven (22 percent) had a maximum reward value of \$10 and \$14. Males drew a higher reward with most, 219 (26 percent), between \$20 and \$24 (Table 2.24). There was little change in the reward values over time, in either state: rewards were increased for only 3.8 percent of fugitives. Reward values depended on several factors. Nevertheless, literacy could be considered a reliable predictor of reward value, as indicated by a variance test and regression analysis (Tables 2.26 and 2.27). The adjusted R square value of 0.010 reported in Table 2.27 suggests that around 1 percent of variance in reward values can be predicted from literacy status (which for a mean reward of \$30 for a male Maryland fugitive amounts to just 30 cents, in effect a meaningless figure). As many factors accounted for the variance in reward values (age, sex, state of escape, origin, and trade classification) it was not possible to construct a reliable model from the data. (Appendix 8).

Table 2.24. Contingency Table for Reward Values.

		State of Escape							
		Georgia				Maryland			
		Sex		Sex		Sex		Sex	
		Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
		Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %	Count	Column N %
Maximum Reward Value	Under \$5	20	11.6%	40	7.3%	16	9.5%	23	2.8%
	\$5-9	60	34.7%	134	24.5%	35	20.7%	75	9.0%
	\$10-14	44	25.4%	181	33.0%	37	21.9%	123	14.7%
	\$15-19	6	3.5%	17	3.1%	12	7.1%	38	4.6%
	\$20-24	26	15.0%	110	20.1%	35	20.7%	219	26.3%
	\$25-29	3	1.7%	13	2.4%	5	3.0%	14	1.7%
	\$30-34	5	2.9%	16	2.9%	7	4.1%	76	9.1%
	\$35-39	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	3	.4%
	\$40-44	0	0.0%	5	.9%	8	4.7%	63	7.6%
	\$45-49	4	2.3%	6	1.1%	0	0.0%	8	1.0%
	\$50 and Over	5	2.9%	26	4.7%	14	8.3%	192	23.0%

## Pearson Chi-Square Tests

		State of Escape	
		Georgia	Maryland
		Sex	Sex
Maximum Reward Value	Chi-square	16.519	65.972
	df	9	10
	Sig.	.057 <sup>a</sup>	.000 <sup>c</sup>

Results are based on nonempty rows and columns in each innermost subtable.

\*. The Chi-square statistic is significant at the .05 level.

a. More than 20% of cells in this subtable have expected cell counts less than 5. Chi-square results may be invalid.

c. The minimum expected cell count in this subtable is less than one. Chi-square results may be invalid.

Comparisons of Column Proportions<sup>b</sup>

		State of Escape			
		Georgia		Maryland	
		Sex		Sex	
		Female	Male	Female	Male
		(A)	(B)	(A)	(B)
Maximum Reward Value	Under \$5			B	
	\$5-9	B		B	
	\$10-14			B	
	\$15-19				
	\$20-24				
	\$25-29				
	\$30-34				A
	\$35-39	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	. <sup>a</sup>	
	\$40-44	. <sup>a</sup>			
	\$45-49			. <sup>a</sup>	
	\$50 and Over				A

Results are based on two-sided tests with significance level .05. For each significant pair, the key of the category with the smaller column proportion appears under the category with the larger column proportion.

a. This category is not used in comparisons because its column proportion is equal to zero or one.

b. Tests are adjusted for all pairwise comparisons within a row of each innermost subtable using the Bonferroni correction.

Table 2.25. Reward Value Statistics.

Mean Rewards				Reward Change							
<b>FSP</b>	State of Escape			<b>FSP</b>	Frequency			Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent		
	Maryland				No	1763	96.2			96.2	
	Sex				Yes	69	3.8			3.8	
	Female	Male	Mean		Total	1832	100.0			100.0	
Mean			Mean			Mean					
13	14	19	30	17	15	22	31	15	20	19	22
Maximum Reward Value				Maximum Reward Value				Maximum Reward Value			
A											
Results are based on two-sided tests assuming equal variances with significance level .05. For each significant pair, the key of the smaller category appears under the category with larger mean.											
a. Tests are adjusted for all pairwise comparisons within a row of each innermost subtable using the Bonferroni correction.											

Mean Rewards				Reward Change							
<b>FSP</b>	State of Escape			<b>FSP</b>	Frequency			Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent		
	Maryland				No	779	97.4			97.4	
	Sex				Yes	21	2.6			2.6	
	Female	Male	Mean		Total	800	100.0			100.0	
Mean			Mean			Mean					
17	15	22	31	15	15	20	19	22			
Maximum Reward Value				Maximum Reward Value				Maximum Reward Value			
A											
Results are based on two-sided tests assuming equal variances with significance level .05. For each significant pair, the key of the smaller category appears under the category with larger mean.											
a. Tests are adjusted for all pairwise comparisons within a row of each innermost subtable using the Bonferroni correction.											

Results are based on two-sided tests assuming equal variances with significance level .05. For each significant pair, the key of the smaller category appears under the category with larger mean.

a. Tests are adjusted for all pairwise comparisons within a row of each innermost subtable using the Bonferroni correction.

Results are based on two-sided tests assuming equal variances with significance level .05. For each significant pair, the key of the smaller category appears under the category with larger mean.

a. Tests are adjusted for all pairwise comparisons within a row of each innermost subtable using the Bonferroni correction.

Table 2.26. Oneway Analysis of Variance Test on Reward Values and Literacy in FSP.

Test of Homogeneity of Variances			
Maximum Reward Value			
Levene Statistic	df1	df2	Sig.
14.362	1	1830	0.000

ANOVA					
Maximum Reward Value					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	12006.161	1	12006.161	19.777	0.000
Within Groups	1110923.734	1830	607.062		
Total	1122929.895	1831			

Robust Tests of Equality of Means				
Maximum Reward Value				
	Statistic <sup>a</sup>	df1	df2	Sig.
Brown-Forsythe	11.203	1	45.226	0.002

a. Asymptotically F distributed.

The results indicate that the overall model is statistically significant ( $F= 19.777$ ,  $p= 0.000$ ).

#### Means Plots

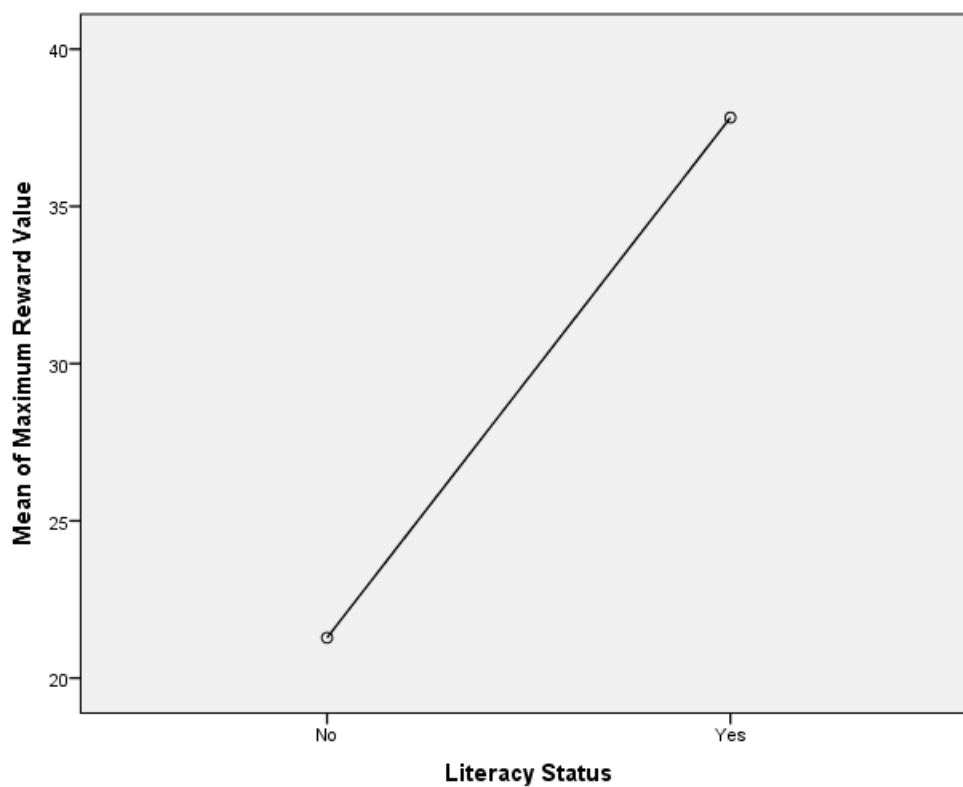




Table 2.27. Regression Analysis for Reward Values and Literacy in FSP.

Variables Entered/Removed<sup>a</sup>

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Literacy Status <sup>b</sup>		Enter

a. Dependent Variable: Maximum Reward Value

b. All requested variables entered.

## Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.103 <sup>a</sup>	0.011	0.010	24.639

a. Predictors: (Constant), Literacy Status

ANOVA<sup>a</sup>

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	12006.161	1	12006.161	19.777	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	1110923.734	1830	607.062		
	Total	1122929.895	1831			

a. Dependent Variable: Maximum Reward Value

b. Predictors: (Constant), Literacy Status

Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	21.284	0.583		36.517	0.000	20.141	22.427
	Literacy Status	16.539	3.719	0.103	4.447	0.000	9.245	23.832

a. Dependent Variable: Maximum Reward Value

The results indicate that the independent variable literacy status is a reliable predictor of reward value ( $F=19.777$ ,  $p=0.000$ ).

## Conclusion

This chapter has presented the findings of descriptive statistics generated from fugitive slave advertisements to aid the prosopography of the fugitive slaves of Maryland and Georgia between 1790 and 1810. Descriptive statistics suggest males heavily outnumbered female fugitives, four to one, and most fugitives were under thirty years of age. Among the major findings, spikes in fugitivity were observed, specifically, between 1796 and 1798 and 1800-1801. While local circumstances provide some explanation, further scholarly examination into these is urged. Fugitivity in Maryland and Georgia peaked in different months and group fugitivity was more common in Georgia than Maryland, likely reflecting the greater number of African slaves among the slave population. Finally, it was argued that advertisers' comments on slaves' ethnicity, physicality, and physiognomy were often accompanied by observations on fugitives' behaviour and perceptions of their personality or character. These remarks were plotted on a spectrum of perceived and observed behaviour, specifically constructed for this project. This was used to suggest that advertisers fused racial coding to prey upon public fear of specific slave "character types". "Artful" slaves were particularly feared and among the most dangerous. They possessed skills, sometimes including literacy, which were used to defy slaveholder control. Among the major findings of this chapter, it is suggested that literacy was a major part of the contestation between enslaved people and their masters.

## 3

## The Contestation of Authority: Reading, Writing, and Literate Enslaved People.

What he most dreaded, that I most desired. What he most loved, that I most hated. That which to him was a great evil, to be carefully shunned, was to me a great good, to be diligently sought; and the argument which he so warmly urged, against my learning to read, only served to inspire me with a desire and determination to learn. In learning to read, I owe almost as much to the bitter opposition of my master, as to the kindly aid of my mistress. I acknowledge the benefit of both.

Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave* (1845)<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

Frederick Douglass began learning to read and write shortly after being transferred to Baltimore from Colonel Edward Lloyd's Wye House plantation, in rural Talbot County, Maryland. He was instructed in his "A, B, C" then in spelling "words of three or four letters" by his mistress, Sophia Auld, a "woman of the kindest heart and finest feelings".<sup>2</sup> Douglass' motivation for learning and his mistresses' willingness to teach him are revealed in the *Narrative* but expanded upon in *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855), an extended and revised version of his original narrative. The "frequent hearing" of his mistress reading the Bible aloud when her husband and Douglass' master, Hugh Auld, was absent "awakened" the young slave's curiosity to the "mystery of reading" and instilled in him a "desire to learn". Perceiving it as her "duty" to teach Douglass "at least to read the Bible", Sophia commenced teaching him "as if her own child". Supposing "her husband would be as well pleased" at Douglass aptness for learning, "she made no secret what she was doing for me" and revealed to Hugh her intention to continue instructing their slave. Hugh Auld, "amazed at the simplicity of his spouse," revealed to her "the true philosophy of slavery, and the peculiar rules necessary to be observed by masters and mistresses, in the management of their human chattels".<sup>3</sup> One of the most revealing exchanges in the narrative, Douglass is provided a rare

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<sup>1</sup> Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, Written by Himself* (Boston, 1845), p.34.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.32-33.

<sup>3</sup> Frederick Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom. Part 1. Life as a Slave. Part II, Life as a Freeman* (New York, 1855), p.145.

insight into slaveholder psyche, specifically, Hugh Auld's opinion of the dangers stemming from slaves learning to read and write:

“‘if you give a nigger an inch, he will take an ell;’ ‘he should know nothing but the will of his master, and learn to obey it’. ‘Learning would spoil the best nigger in the world;’ ‘if you teach that nigger--speaking of myself--how to read the bible, there will be no keeping him;’ ‘it would forever unfit him for the duties of a slave;’ and ‘as to himself, learning would do him no good, but probably, a great deal of harm--making him disconsolate and unhappy’. ‘If you learn him now to read, he'll want to know how to write; and, this accomplished, he'll be running away with himself’”.<sup>4</sup>

This “anti-slavery lecture,” as Douglass described it, was an epiphany for him and central to his journey from slave to freeman. It revealed to him that ignorance and intelligence were what distinguished slaves from free persons. It was a revelation that enabled fugitives, like himself, to challenge and overcome the assumptions that decreed and justified oppression.<sup>5</sup> The exchange between Hugh and Sophia Auld, overheard by Douglass, brings to the historiographical fore questions regarding literacy's functionality in the master-slave relationship and in slave responses to slavery.

Statistical analysis of the FSP presented in Chapter Two revealed literacy was part of a larger contest between enslaved persons and their masters. Literacy was sometimes among the skillset of the “artful” slave type; skilled slaves perceived by advertisers to be deceptive, devious, and dangerous, particularly for their ability to circumvent slaveholder authority. This chapter examines the contestation of slaveholder authority. In particular, it investigates the contestation of literacy and presents reading and writing as prized skills that were desired by enslaved people but commonly denied to them by slaveholders. The chapter draws heavily on antebellum slave narratives as they are the only available slave accounts that speak to the contestation of literacy and thus are the only way to make sense of it. Despite their publication postdating the era of investigation (1790-1810), many of the authors were born not long after the era of investigation and were therefore describing the not too distant past. In the case of Josiah Henson, born in Charles County, Maryland, in 1789, his contemporaneous account of his lived experience as a slave in the state covers the entire research period. Anti-literacy laws and unfavourable slaveholder attitudes toward slave reading and writing instruction were present from the colonial era through the antebellum period in the United States. So too were slaves' views that literacy was linked to power and

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p.146.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p.147.

freedom.<sup>6</sup> The chapter considers slaves' motivations for learning and the methods they deployed to become literate. These insights are juxtaposed against slaveholder efforts to regulate slave literacy including anti-literacy laws, which were included in state slave codes. It will be shown that anti-literacy laws were not reactionary, as historians have claimed, but part of a wider dynamic initiative promoting slaves' physical and mental oppression. Literate slaves were recorded in both states in the FSP but mainly Maryland. The SampleFSP also recorded more literate fugitives in the Chesapeake region (Maryland and Virginia) than in the lower South (Georgia and South Carolina), suggesting regional factors dictated slave opportunities to contest slaveholder authority, including learning to read and write.

The project's definition of literacy is conventional and denotes the ability to read and write. Reading and writing ability are central to the way we interpret and interact with the world around us. Reading is crucial to the development of vocabulary and allows us directly to interpret the written communication of others while writing is a fundamental form of expression permitting us to communicate and present our thoughts and feelings to any audience. Literacy is not a static concept: it is a skill whose acquisition is neither guaranteed nor its outcomes pre-determined.<sup>7</sup> To be literate is commonly associated with education, intelligence, and progression while illiterate evokes connotations of ignorance, primitiveness, and backwardness. The categorisation of people, or indeed societies, as "literate" and "illiterate" does not however adequately account for nuances in reading and writing proficiency. This is a view supported by E. Jennifer Monaghan, who argued that "no strict demarcation" of literate and illiterate exists but that there are "numerous grades of variation between total illiteracy and the most accomplished literacy".<sup>8</sup> In his study of literacy in early modern Europe, Rab A. Houston similarly discussed "several literacies". For Houston, competency in reading ranges from those who are highly educated and can "comprehend the text with greater precision" to those who gather "information and ideas from *looking*". While there are people who can express their thoughts and ideas through writing, or composing, argued Houston, there were also those who copy "without necessarily

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<sup>6</sup> This is a view supported by scholars including Heather Andrea Williams, Janet Cornelius, and E. Jennifer Monaghan. In her study of literacy instruction in colonial America, Monaghan argued that "the conviction of the enslaved that literacy could bring power, that illiteracy was one of the factors that whites exploited in order to maintain their dominance, and that writing was the literacy skill that could aid self-definition would become, from the early eighteenth century to the end of the Civil War, an underlying theme of African American identity and aspirations for freedom." See E. Jennifer Monaghan, *Learning to Read and Write in Colonial America* (Amherst; Boston, 2005), p.242.

<sup>7</sup> See Harvey J. Graff, *The Literacy Myth: Cultural Integration and Social Structure in the Nineteenth Century* (New Brunswick; London, 1991).

<sup>8</sup> Monaghan, *Learning to Read and Write*, p.3.

understanding”. Proficiency in literacy therefore amounted to “steps in a hierarchy of skills”.<sup>9</sup> Following suit, the view that this project adopts is that slaves had varying degrees of “literateness”, suggesting gradations in a person’s level of proficiency in reading and writing on a spectrum of development ranging from “illiterate” to “literate”.<sup>10</sup>

Empowered slaves reclaiming their identity and rejecting the slave system is a theme common in studies of slave literacy. Indeed, it is widely accepted in the historiography that slaves who learned to read and write, against the wishes of their masters and mistresses, were engaging in acts of resistance. What is less well-known is why slaves “fused their desire for literacy with their desire for freedom”.<sup>11</sup> To date, there is no published work that marries the theoretical understanding of literacy to the social realities of slave fugitivity as captured in runaway notices.

Slavery and obedience went hand-in-hand and were reinforced by slave masters through physical and psychological punishment. Cynthia R. Nielsen, applying Michel Foucault’s social theory of *panopticism* and Jeremy Bentham’s *panopticon*, provides a useful analogy of how slaveholders exercised control, comparing slaves to prisoners observed by slaveholders in the panopticon.<sup>12</sup> In this environment, control of the slave population is achieved through surveillance and punishment, ranging from “psychological manipulation” to “physical violence”. Paranoia of “external surveillance” – the feeling of being constantly observed - reinforced by the fear of punishment, is gradually internalised in slaves reducing them to a state of conformity.<sup>13</sup> Slave codes, enacted throughout the American South, promoted slave obedience and promoted slaveholder control. They did this, at least in part, by restricting slave literacy.

### Slave Codes

State slave codes regulated the slave-master relationship, controlled the slave population, and established the legal right of the slaveholder to own another person and hold them in bondage as their property. Slaveholders justified the codes on the grounds that slaves who were left to roam freely, gather with other slaves, or, indeed, become literate posed a

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<sup>9</sup> Rab A. Houston, *Literacy in Early Modern Europe: Culture and Education, 1500-1800*. Second Edition (London; New York, 2002), pp.3-4.

<sup>10</sup> Cathy N. Davidson, *Revolution and the Word: The Rise of the Novel in America* (New York, 1986), pp.60-61.

<sup>11</sup> Heather Andrea Williams, *Self-Taught, African American Education in Slavery and Freedom* (Chapel Hill; London, 2005), p.7.

<sup>12</sup> Cynthia R. Nielsen, ‘Resistance is not Futile: Frederick Douglass on Panoptic Plantations and the Un-Making of Docile Bodies and Enslaved Souls’, *Philosophy and Literature*, 35:2 (October 2011), pp.251-268.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p.254.

threat to social order. A fear “which did not dissipate over time”, argued Keith Whitescarver, “was the fear that literate slaves would make use of their literacy skills to foment revolts against their white masters”.<sup>14</sup> Whitescarver attributes the failure to implement the 1785 Georgia education program for “moulding future generations of virtuous citizens” (including literacy instruction) in its entirety, at least in part, to this fear.<sup>15</sup> Fear of slave conspiracy and revolt increased after episodes of slave unrest, including the Stono Rebellion (1739), Haitian Revolution (1791), Gabriel’s Rebellion (1800), and the Vesey Revolt (1822). Rockman describes a fear of black revolt descending upon whites residing on Maryland’s Eastern Shore and in Baltimore County and Town immediately following Turner’s uprising (1831) in neighbouring Virginia.<sup>16</sup> For Wade, the Turner episode unleashed a “trail of fear and anxiety” that was felt throughout “urban communities everywhere”, including Baltimore, where news of a “gigantic plot to culminate in an invasion of the city” by blacks was “uncovered”.<sup>17</sup> Any threat posed by the slave population—whether it was real or, more often, imagined—was suppressed wherever it existed and further restrictions of slaves’ limited freedoms imposed.

Slave codes were a buttress for slaveholders but were not necessarily followed to the letter. Instead, they offered an idealised structure around which slaveholders could construct their own models and negotiation, which were often softer versions of the law. Slave codes were intended to explicitly address issues of “interplantation variability” in slaveholder treatment.<sup>18</sup> Any leniency in slaveholder treatment, to return to the panopticon analogy, was perceived as undermining wider societies overall aim of reducing the slave population to a state of absolute conformity. Of course, the enforcement of slave codes, like other legislation, varied between and within states. Slaves seized on these opportunities where they existed, rarely to engage in violent revolt as slaveholders feared, but to learn and to forge some freedom for themselves.

Most of the restrictions imposed upon slaves by slave codes concerned the physical enslavement of the slave population. In many states, it was illegal for slaves to travel unrestricted or to congregate with other slaves and free persons. The assembly of slaves was of particular concern to slaveholders and strictly prohibited. Any meeting of slaves were to be disbanded and munitions and stolen goods searched for and seized. Slaves were expected

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<sup>14</sup> Keith Whitescarver, ‘Creating Citizens for the Republic: Education in Georgia, 1776-1810’, *Journal of the Early Republic*, 13:4 (Winter, 1993), p.469.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p.479.

<sup>16</sup> Seth Rockman, *Scraping By: Wage Labor, Slavery, and Survival in Early Baltimore* (Baltimore, 2009), p.249.

<sup>17</sup> Richard C. Wade, *Slavery in the Cities: The South, 1820-1860* (London; Oxford; New York, 1967), p.227.

<sup>18</sup> David Delaney, *Race, Place, and the Law, 1836-1948* (Austin, 1998), p.39.

to submit to inspection if they were suspected of being a fugitive, and obey curfews which defined the times of day that they were permitted to travel. Boundaries were also established around towns and cities which slaves were not to cross. Other restrictions were intended to deter slaves from meeting in groups or striking whites. Slaves who enticed others to run away or that killed a person whiter than they themselves were to be punished by death unless acting in defence of their master.

Slaves were prohibited from travelling on their own unless they had the written consent of their master or overseer. This fostered slave dependency on their masters as masters incentivised passes, issuing them to slaves to reward *good* behaviour. Slaves that were unable to forge their own passes, such as William, relied on their owners, to issue them. His master, Richard Waters, of Anne Arundel County, Maryland, issued him with a pass dated 20 March 1807 which permitted him to “pass and repass to and from Baltimore – until Monday next the 23<sup>rd</sup> instant”.<sup>19</sup> In Maryland, *An Act relating to servants and slaves* (1715) established that “no servant or servants whatsoever, within this province” was permitted to “travel by land or water ten miles from the house of his, her, or their master, mistress, or dame, without a note under their hands, or under the hand of his or their overseer”.<sup>20</sup> Similar legislation was enacted in Georgia (1770) which made it illegal for any person to “permit or suffer any slave under his or their care or management” to leave any of the province’s towns or plantation “without a ticket signed or subscribed by the masters or others person having the care or charge of such slave”.<sup>21</sup> Complementing the physical restraint of the slave population, anti-literacy laws promoting ignorance formed a key part of the slave codes.

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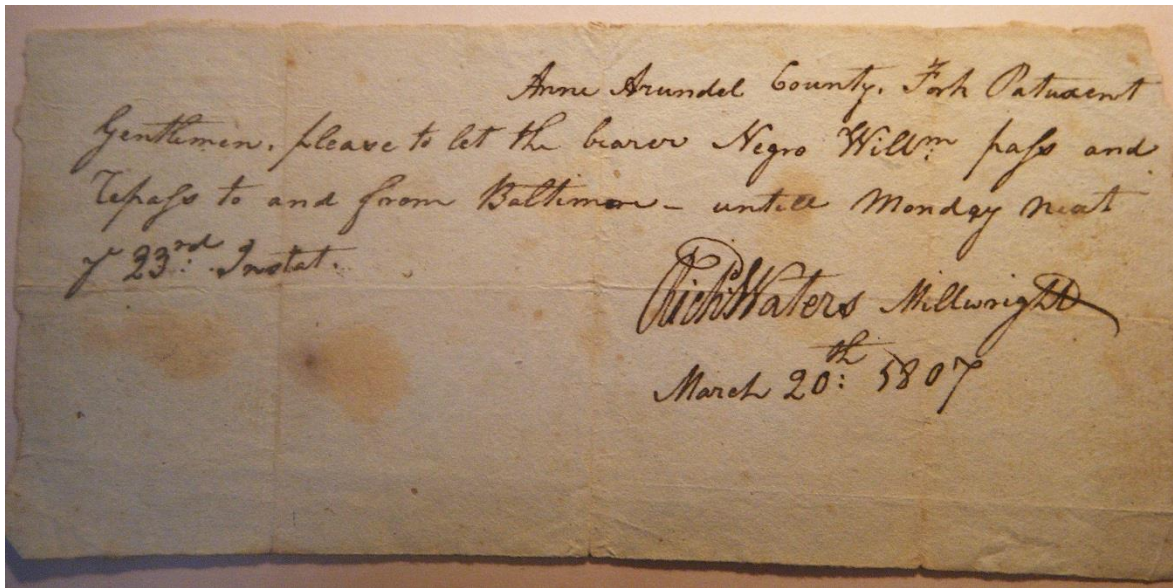
<sup>19</sup> Maryland State Archives, Waters-White Collection, MSA SC 453-1-65, Letter from Richard Waters concerning “Negro William”, 20 March 1807.

<sup>20</sup> Virgil Maxcy, *The Laws of Maryland with the Charter, The Bill of Rights, The Constitution of the States, and its Alterations, The Declaration of Independence, and The Constitution of the United States, and its Amendments. With a General Index in Three Volumes*. Volume I (Baltimore, 1811), p.110.

<sup>21</sup> Oliver Hillhouse Prince, *A Digest of the Laws of the State of Georgia: Containing All Statutes and the Substance of all Resolutions of a General and Public Nature and Now in Force, Which have been Passed in this State, Previous to the Session of the General Assembly of Dec. 1837, with Occasional Explanatory Notes, and Connecting References. To which is Added An Appendix, Containing The Constitution of the United States; The Constitution of the State of Georgia as Amended; The Statute of Frauds and Perjuries’ The Habeas Corpus Act. &c. also a Synopsis of the Local Acts, Arranged to Each County, and Classed Under Appropriate Heads, with a Copious Index* (Athens, 1837), p.778.



Figure 3.1. Richard Waters grant of Negro William Pass (1807).



Source: Maryland State Archives, Waters-White Collection, MSA SC 453-1-65, Letter from Richard Waters concerning "Negro William", 20 March 1807.

### Anti-Literacy Laws

By the early national period, South Carolina and neighbouring Georgia had introduced legislation targeting slave instruction in writing and/or reading. The South Carolina slave code (1740) was first to restrict the instruction of slaves in writing followed by Georgia (1755), which adopted the former's slave code but with some amendments. The *Act For the better Ordering and Governing Negroes and other Slaves in this Province*, included in the slave codes of both colonies, prohibited any person from instructing or employing a slave in writing. "All and every person and persons whatsoever, who shall hereinafter teach or cause any slave or slaves to be taught, to write, or shall use or employ any slave as a scribe in any manner of writing whatsoever" would forfeit, upon each offence, one hundred pounds in South Carolina and fifteen pounds in Georgia on the grounds that that the instruction of slaves in writing "may be attended with great Inconveniencies".<sup>22</sup> Georgia was the first colony

<sup>22</sup> "'An Act for the Better Ordering and Governing of Negroes and Other Slaves in this Province' or Slave Code of South Carolina, May 1740'. Acts of the South Carolina General Assembly, 1740, no.670. South Carolina Department of Archives and History. Columbia, South Carolina; For Georgia's 1755 slave code, see Allen. D. Candler, *The Colonial Records of the State of Georgia*, Vol. XVII (Atlanta, 1910); For a discussion of the 1740 slave code as it pertained to literacy, see Birgit Brander Rasmussen, "'Attended with Great Inconveniencies': Slave Literacy and the 1740 South Carolina Negro Act", *PMLA*, 125:1 (Jan., 2010), pp.201-203.

to prohibit slave instruction in reading *and* writing in the revised 1770 code. The law prohibited “all and every person and persons whatsoever” from teaching or causing “any slave or slaves to be taught to write or read writing”.<sup>23</sup> It also increased the penalty for instructing slaves, from fifteen to twenty pounds.<sup>24</sup> To be clear, it did not prohibit slaves from being taught to read print such as the Bible, only reading written text.<sup>25</sup> This remained so until 1829 when, in reaction to the publication of David Walker’s printed *Appeal to the Coloured Citizens of the World* (1829), the teaching of “any slave, negro, or free person of color” by any person, including whites, “to read or write *either* written or printed characters” was prohibited.<sup>26</sup>

In the Chesapeake region there were no formal restrictions on the instruction of slaves in reading and writing until Virginia enacted legislation in 1819. (Table 3.1) *An act reducing into one, the several acts concerning Slaves, Free Negroes and Mulattoes* deemed as unlawful “all meetings and assemblages of slaves, ‘or free negroes or mulattoes mixing and associating ‘with such slaves,’ at any meeting-house or houses or any other place or places, in the night, ‘or at any school or schools ‘for teaching them reading or writing, either in the day or ‘night.’”<sup>27</sup> The act did not prohibit slaves being taught by their masters. As E. Jennifer Monaghan argued, the timing of the legislation coincided with increased slave disturbances

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<sup>23</sup> Oliver Hillhouse Prince, *A Digest of the Laws of the State of Georgia: Containing all Statutes and the Substance of all Resolutions of a General and Public Nature, and Now in Force, Which have been Passed in this State, Previous to the Session of the General Assembly of December, 1820. With Occasional Explanatory Notes, and Connecting References and a List of the Statutes Repealed or Obsolete. To Which is Added, an Appendix; Containing the Constitution of the United States; The Constitution of Georgia as Amended; the Statute of Frauds and Perjuries; the Habeas Corpus Act, &c. &c. Also References to Such Local Acts as Relate to Towns, Counties, Internal Navigation; County Academies, &c. With a Copious Index* (Milledgeville, 1822), p.455.

<sup>24</sup> For the Georgia slave code (1770), see Prince, *A Digest of the Laws of the State of Georgia* (1837), p.777; R. Watkins and G. Watkins, *A Digest of the Laws of the State of Georgia. From Its First Establishment as a British Province Down to the Year 1798, Inclusive and the Principal Acts of 1799: in Which is comprehended the declaration of independence; the State Constitutions of 1777 and 1789, with the alterations and amendments in 1794. Also the Constitution of 1798. It Contains As well as the Laws in force, as those which are deemed useful and necessary or which are explanatory of existing Laws; together, with the Titles of All the Obsolete and Other Acts. And Concludes With an Appensix containing the original Charters and other Documents, ascertaining and defining the Lines and Boundary of State; all the Treaties with the southern tribes of Indians; the articles of Confederation and perpetual union; the Constitution of the United States, and a few Acts of Congress. Together with a copious Index to the whole* (Philadelphia, 1800), p.163.

<sup>25</sup> E. Jennifer Monaghan, ‘Reading for the Enslaved, Writing for the Free: Reflections on Liberty and Literacy’, *American Antiquarian Society*, 108 (1998), p.318.

<sup>26</sup> This was included in ‘*An Act to be entiled An Act to amend the several Laws now in force in this State regulating Quarantine in the several seaports of this State, and prevent the circulation of written or printed papers within this State calculated to excite disaffection among the colored people of this State, and to prevent said people from being taught to read or write; and to repeal the Act, assented to the 9<sup>th</sup> December, 1824, entiled An Act to repeal the Law of 1817, prohibiting the introduction of Slaves into this State*’ (22 December, 1829). See Prince, *A Digest of the Laws of the State of Georgia* (1837), p.804.

<sup>27</sup> See *The Revised Code of the Laws of Virginia: being a collection of all such acts of the General Assembly, of a public and permanent nature as are now in force; with a general index. To which are prefixed, the Constitution of the United States; the Declaration of Rights; and the Constitution of Virginia. Published pursuant to an act of the General Assembly, entiled “An act providing for the re-publication of the Laws of this Commonwealth,” passed March 12, 1819.* Volume 1 (Richmond, 1819), p.424.

and the states rapidly increasing slave population. This “new and darker vision of the relationship between schooling and sedition” targeted the unlawful assembly of slaves.<sup>28</sup> In neighbouring Maryland, no anti-literacy legislation was ever enacted. This ensured that slave masters and mistresses could teach their slaves without *legal* ramifications for doing so. While there were no legal restrictions on slaves teaching themselves to read or write, ultimately each slave master or mistress decided whether to impose any restrictions on their slaves’ learning. This goes some way to explaining why Douglass could receive instruction from his mistress and censure from his master. It may also explain why there were more literate fugitives in Maryland and Virginia than in Georgia and South Carolina. Studies by Robert J. Brugger and Hilary J. Moss support the view that that educational opportunities for slaves were far greater in Maryland than Georgia.<sup>29</sup>

The lack of anti-literacy provisions in the Chesapeake before 1819 should not however be mistaken to reflect a climate among Maryland and Virginia slaveholders favourable to the slave instruction in reading and writing.<sup>30</sup> The exchange between Douglass and his master warns us against such intuitive assumptions. Indeed, the pattern of expanding and then shrinking manumission in the Chesapeake between c.1780 and 1800 demonstrates that cultural attitudes could quickly change. Fear of slave rebelliousness was present in all slaveholding societies but was particularly prevalent in Georgia and South Carolina given the slave population of both states was predominantly African-born and the staple plantation regions more vulnerable to black majorities. It is widely accepted in the historiography that slaveholders perceived African slaves as less acculturated, and thus more prone to rebelliousness, than African American slaves.

Most anti-literacy legislation followed Walker’s *Appeal* (1829) and Nat Turner’s Rebellion (1831). The sheer volume of anti-literacy laws post-1829 has led historians to the conclusion that restrictions on slave reading and writing were reactions to rebellion. The lower South reacted to the Turner Rebellion of 1831 in much the same “reactionary” way as it had to the Stono Rebellion of 1739, by enacting anti-literacy laws, Eugene D. Genovese

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<sup>28</sup> Monaghan, ‘Reading for the Enslaved’, pp.327-328.

<sup>29</sup> Brugger suggest that from the 1790s through the antebellum period, educational opportunities for free blacks were far greater in Baltimore than in any other slaveholding city. Moss’s examination of education during the antebellum period compared Baltimore, Boston, and New Haven. She found that educational opportunities for free blacks were highest in Baltimore, although insists that this was not a consequence of a lessening in racial prejudice faced by blacks in the city. See Robert. J. Brugger, *Maryland: A Middle Temperament, 1634-1980* (Baltimore, 1988), p.171; Hilary J. Moss, *Schooling Citizens: The Struggle for African American Education in Antebellum America* (Chicago and London, 2009), pp.63-69.

<sup>30</sup> The consistent increase in the Virginia slave population, the largest in the United States from the colonial era, likely convinced states officials to enact anti-literacy laws in 1819. In Maryland, where the population was decreasing, no anti-literacy legislation were enacted.

contended.<sup>31</sup> However anti-literacy legislation was not necessarily always reactionary. No anti-literacy laws were passed in New York after the Slave Revolt of 1712 or the Conspiracy of 1741, or passed in Virginia after Gabriel Prosser's Rebellion (1800) or in South Carolina after Denmark Vesey's planned uprising in 1822. Nineteen years elapsed between Gabriel's Rebellion and the passage of anti-literacy legislation in Virginia. South Carolina revised their slave code in 1834, twelve years after Vesey's planned uprising in that state. Alleged conspiracies to revolt, including Prosser's and Vesey's, unleashed panic throughout slave-dominated regions but resulted in a tightening of slave codes only where they already *existed*. For example, contemporary opinion in Virginia was not adverse to tighter restrictions being enforced on the slave population following the Vesey plot. A letter sent anonymously to the Virginia Herald newspaper on 23 September 1800—addressing the slavery question and whether it should be abolished—remarked:

“This doctrine...cannot fail of producing either a general insurrection or general emancipation...shall we abolish slavery or shall we emancipate? There is no middle course to it... If we continue, we must restrict it... In a word, if we will keep a ferocious monster in our country, we must keep him in chains. What man in his senses would keep a lion or tiger [sic] loose in the streets? Slavery is a monster – the most horrible of all monsters – tyranny excepted.<sup>32</sup>

While it is unclear how widespread this sentiment was in Virginia, slavery was neither abolished nor restrictions on slave literacy enacted. In contrast, existing anti-literacy laws were tightened in South Carolina in wake of Gabriel's Rebellion.

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<sup>31</sup> Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World Slaves Made* (London, 1975), p.563.

<sup>32</sup> Patricia L. Dooley, *The Early Republic: Primary Documents on Events from 1799 to 1820* (Westport, 2004), p.83.

Table 3.1. Anti-Literacy legislation enacted in United States, 1740-1847.

State	Year Anti-literacy Law Enacted	Year(s) Anti-literacy Law Revised
South Carolina	1740	1800, 1834
Georgia	1755*	1770, 1829
Virginia	1819	1830
Mississippi	1823	1831
Louisiana	1830	n/a
North Carolina	1830	1835
Alabama	1831	1833
Missouri**	1847	n/a

\*Tolley's table dates the first anti-literacy legislation in Georgia to 1770 but this was a revision. The first anti-literacy legislation in Georgia was enacted in 1755.

\*\*Missouri is not included in Tolley's table, whose coverage ends in 1837. Missouri prohibited slave instruction in reading and writing in 1847.<sup>33</sup>

Source: Kim Tolley, 'Slavery', in A. J. Angulo (ed.), *Miseducation: A History of Ignorance-Making in America and Abroad* (Baltimore, 2016), p.14.<sup>34</sup>

There is some historiographical confusion surrounding the provisions and scope of anti-literacy legislation. According to E. Jennifer Monaghan, "most scholars" have wrongly claimed that the South Carolina slave code (1740) prohibited the instruction of slaves in writing *and* reading.<sup>35</sup> The first anti-literacy legislation enacted in South Carolina (1740)

<sup>33</sup> The law stated "Negroes or mulattoes not to be taught to read and write" and also regulated against unsupervised religious services, which required "Where the preacher is negro or mulatto; certain officers to be present at service". For the 1847 Missouri anti-literacy legislation, see '*An Act respecting slaves, free negroes and mulattoes*'. <https://www.sos.mo.gov/CMSImages/MDH/AnActRespectingSlaves,1847.pdf>. [Accessed 18 December 2016.]

<sup>34</sup> This table is an amended adaption of Tolley's table. Anti-literacy legislation dates have been corrected where incorrect in her version. Furthermore, her table lists all of the Confederate states, including those where no anti-literacy legislation was enacted. These are not included in this thesis's table.

<sup>35</sup> Monaghan, *Learning to Read and Write*, pp.439-440.

prohibited the instruction or employment of slaves in writing *only*. The instruction of slaves in reading *and* writing was not prohibited in South Carolina until 1834.

The same can also be said of the Georgia slave code (1755). It did not prohibit reading *and* writing, as Oscar Reiss claimed, only writing.<sup>36</sup> There is evidence of slaves being educated in reading, usually on religious grounds, in South Carolina beyond 1740 by slaveholders including Eliza Lucas Pinckney and beyond 1755 in Georgia by Joseph Ottolenghe and Bartholomew Zouberbuhler.<sup>37</sup> The instruction of slaves in reading *and* writing was first prohibited in the 1770 Georgia slave code, not in 1829 as Kim Tolley has recently claimed.<sup>38</sup> The crux of Tolley's argument – that anti-literacy legislation was revised in 1829 and extended to prohibit reading instruction in consequence of a series of arson attacks in Augusta – is undermined by this error. Tolley downplayed the role of David Walker's *Appeal* in prompting Georgia's 1829 anti-literacy laws. The pamphlet had been intercepted when it reached Georgia, she contends, and thus we must doubt that it prompted the revision. Instead, she attributes the legislation to the fire-raising and "a growing fear that just one slave bent on retaliation...could wreak havoc in the urban centers".<sup>39</sup> This fear was evident in 1770, when anti-literacy laws in Georgia were extended to reading instruction. To reiterate, again: this was not the "first laws against slave literacy," as Janice L. Sumler-Edmond claimed, but the first to establish restrictions of slave instruction in reading *and* writing.<sup>40</sup>

It is important to distinguish between legislative restrictions on reading and writing and report these accurately, because even subtle differences in law established the window of opportunity in which slaves desirous of learning to read and write were operating. Slaves who learned to read during the colonial era were not, for example, "immune from repressive legislation" as E. Jennifer Monaghan has claimed.<sup>41</sup> Generalisations threaten to undermine the remarkability of those slaves in Georgia who learned to read *despite* the 1770 legislation

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<sup>36</sup> Oscar Reiss, *Blacks in Colonial America* (Jefferson; London, 1997), p.121.

<sup>37</sup> James B. Lawrence, 'Religious Education of the Negro in the Colony of Georgia', *The Georgia Historical Quarterly*, 14:1 (March, 1930), pp.41-57.

<sup>38</sup> Tolley claimed that "Given the public safety benefits a slaveholding society could reap from suppressing literacy among its slave population, it is surprising that Georgia passed legislation during the late colonial period penalizing anyone teaching a slave to write, while the state did not prohibit the teaching of reading until 1829". See Tolley, 'Slavery', p.15.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p.27.

<sup>40</sup> Janice L. Sumler-Edmond, 'Free Black Life in Savannah', in Leslie M. Harris and Daina Ramey Berry (eds.), *Slavery and Freedom in Savannah* (Athens, 2014), p.134.

<sup>41</sup> E. Jennifer Monaghan claimed "reading instruction was still so closely linked to Christian indoctrination that it remained immune from repressive legislation throughout the colonial period". See Monaghan, *Learning to Read*, p.243.

prohibiting it. In discussing anti-literacy legislation, we must be careful not to make these errors as it is quite clear that prohibitions on reading and writing instruction were intended to serve different purposes and address specific occurrences. Denying slaves reading and writing instruction served different purposes. Restrictions on writing instruction were a means of social control, specifically targeting the physical aspects of their lives, while restrictions on reading instruction addressed slaveholder fears of slave enlightenment.

Anti-literacy laws supported a determined effort by slaveholders to promote ignorance among the slave population for the purpose of control. This perception of anti-literacy laws as agnotologically motivated—a form of culturally-imposed ignorance—has most recently been encouraged by Tolley, who described anti-literacy laws in Georgia as “part and parcel of an act that clearly aimed to keep slaves in a state of ignorance, especially when it came to ideas then circulating among the abolitionists in the North”.<sup>42</sup> This interpretation is easily applicable to all southern slave states where anti-literacy laws were enacted. Slaves ignorant of the world beyond the confines of the southern slave system – of the work of abolitionists and promise of freedom in the North – were less likely to be drawn to them, this logic supposed; slavery and ignorance did indeed go “hand in hand”.<sup>43</sup> In his letter to Dr Reuben Champion of Springfield, Massachusetts on 18 February 1816, H. Stebbins of Savannah, Georgia revealed:

The slaveholder will tell you that they [slaves] are an inferior race of creatures, that they are incapable of gratitude...in proof of this they will relate anecdotes of what they term the learnt’s ingratitude, such as trying to run away, when they are treated like one of the children of the family ... It was formerly a law (and I do not know that it has been repealed) that no person should teach a slave to read or write under a penalty of 20£ [pounds] and the planters still object to having their slaves taught, [believing] as they say that they could not govern them. Therefore the whole care of the slave holder is to keep his slave in ignorance, now the consequence of this ignorance is that they are liars, thieves, and subject to every species of immorality.<sup>44</sup>

The letter, a broad account of life in Savannah, provides a rare, contemporaneous account of the ideological foundations of anti-literacy legislation in Georgia and its effects. Literacy bred slave discontentment and fugitivity, regardless of how “favourably” masters treated their slaves. Anti-literacy rules were intended to keep slaves ignorant and dependent upon their masters. Physically controlled and mentally stifled, slaves who submitted to their

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<sup>42</sup> Tolley, ‘Slavery’, p.27.

<sup>43</sup> James Oakes, ‘Why Slaves Can’t Read: The Political Significance of Jefferson’s Racism’, in James Gilreath (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson and the Education of a Citizen* (Washington DC, 1999), p.179.

<sup>44</sup> Hargrett Library, MS 1301-1-1, Letter from H. Stebbins to Dr Reuben Champion, 18 February 1816.

master's absolute authority – who understood their identity and value only as a slave – were, theoretically, easier to manipulate and control.

The promotion of ignorance among the slave population by slave masters also reinforced myths of black intellectual inferiority. James O'Neil Spady has shown that a discourse “of inferior and superior capacities and inclination”—supported by anti-literacy legislation in Georgia and South Carolina—grew stronger in the aftermath of great events including the Yamasee War and Stono Rebellion in the mid-eighteenth century and continued to develop through the early national period. While Spady has shown there was a rising demand for non-elite white education, this coincided with a shift in in “educational discourse and practice” that “elaborated a racial coding of learning and respectability”.<sup>45</sup> Non-elite whites emulation of the “respectability, gentility, and civility” of local elites “gained meaning and urgency from efforts to reinforce or produce distinctions among Africans, colonials, and Native American Indians”.<sup>46</sup> The denial of basic skills such as literacy fed myths of black intellectual inferiority used to undermine black claims to citizenship in the early national period. While the infusion of republicanism and liberalism was promoting an informed and educated citizenry as upholders of civic virtue, blacks were being “unfitted” to citizenship by whites. These myths, a form of racial stereotyping linking “blackness” to inferior mental faculties and brutish behaviour, were peddled by whites to promote their racial superiority over blacks. As Bruce Fort argued in his study of literacy in Georgia between 1800 and 1920, “the association between race, learning, and power ran deep in the minds of Southerners of both races” with whites employing “every tool at their disposal to monopolize access to education and to define its meanings”.<sup>47</sup> At the same time slave masters were claiming slaves to be uneducable, they were denying them learning. The portrayal of blacks as intellectually primitive and naturally rebellious was used to justify their enslavement but it was the oppressive nature of the slave system, complemented by the slave codes and punishment, which degraded slaves until they fitted slaves to the mould. In turn, the degradation of slaves, physically and mentally, bred slave dependency on their masters. Slaveholders portrayed slave compliance as *contentedness* and played the role of paternalistic masters *protecting* blacks from their naturally rebellious tendencies while concurrently tightening their control over their slaves' lives to protect their exploitative system. As Harriet

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<sup>45</sup> James O'Neil Spady, ‘To Vie with One Against Another: Race and Demand for Nonelite White Education in an Eighteenth-Century Colonial Society’, *Early American Studies*, 9:3 (Fall, 2011), p.657.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p.652.

<sup>47</sup> Bruce Fort. ‘Reading in the Margins: The Politics and Culture of Literacy in Georgia, 1800-1920’. PhD thesis. University of Virginia, 1999, p.3.



Jacobs wrote in her narrative, “What would you be, if you had been born and brought up a slave...I admit the black man is inferior. But what is it that makes him so? It is the ignorance in which white men compel him to live”.<sup>48</sup>

Despite the plethora of anti-literacy legislation intended to undermine slave learning, some slaves were able to become literate. Statistical analysis of fugitive slave advertisements in the previous chapter provides evidence of 45 slaves among the FSP confirmed literate by their masters. John M. Gray, of Calvert County, Maryland, offered a \$40 reward for his runaway, Jingo, who he admitted could “read and write tolerably”.<sup>49</sup> The narratives of literate slaves such as Douglass and Jacobs also serve as evidence of slaves becoming literate. Some slaves were taught to read and write by their masters and mistresses while others learned by themselves in secret. In some instances, slaves were instructed in reading and writing only temporarily. The death of a master or mistress, sale, or a simple change of mind could conspire to put an end to their learning. While this initial flirtation with literacy was some slaves’ only learning, other seized what they had learned and used their own initiative to become literate.

### Slave Learning

Some slaveholders risked social backlash and ignored the law to teach their slaves reading and writing. They most commonly taught favourite slaves and those “who persisted in the demand,” typically domestic slaves and children.<sup>50</sup> From analysis of the Federal Writers Project narratives from across the U.S. South, Janet Cornelius estimated that about double the number of mistresses than masters taught their slaves between 1830 and 1865, with some women doing so as a requirement of preparing slaves for domestic management. The mistress of Charity Jones, for instance, taught her to read and write alongside other domestic skills including sewing and weaving.<sup>51</sup> Rarely was the instruction of slaves in reading and writing motivated by kindness but rather by the need to assert and establish control. Harriet Jacobs’ mistress taught her to read and spell, an act that rendered her “kind” in the eyes of

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<sup>48</sup> Harriet A. Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*, ed. L. Maria Child (Boston, 1861), p.68.

<sup>49</sup> *Federal Gazette*, 29 May 1809.

<sup>50</sup> Not all “favourite” slaves received literacy instruction. William Craft in his narrative describes Ellen, his wife, as a “favourite slave” among the family that owned her. Ellen served the family as a maid but did not receive any instruction from her master or mistress. See William Craft and Ellen Craft, *Running a Thousand Miles for Freedom; Or the Escape of William and Ellen Craft from Slavery* (London, 1860), p.31; See also Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, p.563.

<sup>51</sup> Janet Cornelius, “‘We Slipped and Learned to Read.’ Slave Accounts of the Literacy Process, 1830-1865”, *Phylon*, 44:3 (1983), p.176.

the young slave.<sup>52</sup> While Jacobs was correct that her instruction was a “privilege, which so rarely falls to the lot of a slave,” it is unclear what her mistress’s true motives were.<sup>53</sup> That she did not free Jacobs upon her death, as the young slave expected, indicates her mistress perceived some benefit to educating Harriet to fulfil her duties *as a slave*.

Hurricane, a slaveholder in Georgia, taught his slaves to read and write because he believed it promoted morality and would discourage them from running away. He rejected the notion that his slaves might use their literateness against him or to escape, believing their “natural stupidity” would prevent them from doing so:

My observation is, that the most unprincipled negroes are the greatest ‘run abouts.’ I encourage them to spell and read; I know of no possible injury that can result from this course...His native stupidity and indolence are effectual barriers to his ever arriving at any proficiency in the art.<sup>54</sup>

Contrary to Hurricane’s opinion, slaves including Francis, a “likely mulatto man” and “incomparable good house servant” to Halcot B. Pride of Halifax, North Carolina, used reading and writing to escape. Francis could not only “write a pretty good hand” but had become a “runabout” despite being especially principled. He was expected by Pride to “ship himself for Europe or elsewhere”.<sup>55</sup>

As illustrated in Frances Kemble’s detailed contemporary account of slavery in antebellum Georgia, *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation, 1838-1839* (1839), mistresses taught slave children to read and write. How widespread this teaching was remains uncertain—Kemble was, after all, a very uncommon plantation mistress. The wife of Pierce Mease Butler, a prominent slaveholder, Frances was clearly troubled by the cruelties of the slave system and her diary accentuates the perception of a woman sympathetic to black efforts to become literate. This is demonstrated in her resolve to teach Aleck, a slave belonging to her husband, whose intelligence and “urgent humility” when asking for her instruction convinced her to instruct him in reading:

I told him I would think about it. I mean to do it. I will do it,—and yet, it is simply breaking the laws of the government under which I am living. Unrighteous laws are made to be broken,—*perhaps*, — I certainly intend to teach Aleck to read.<sup>56</sup>

Aleck did not approach his master for instruction, only his mistress, recognising she abhorred slavery and would be sympathetic to his request. This is similar to Douglass who, in his

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<sup>52</sup> Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life*, p.15.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p.16.

<sup>54</sup> Williams, *Self-Taught*, p.18.

<sup>55</sup> *Norfolk and Portsmouth Chronicle*, 10 July 1790.

<sup>56</sup> Frances Anne Kemble, *Journal of a Residence on a Georgia Plantation in 1838-1839* (New York, 1863).

narrative, recalled approaching his mistress, Sophia, for instruction. He did so precisely because he had “no fear” of his “kind mistress” who, like Kemble, had not been tainted by “the fatal poison of irresponsible power”.<sup>57</sup> Kemble’s motivation to teach Aleck and “every other creature that wants to learn” was informed by her moral sense. Her willingness to circumvent “unrighteous” anti-literacy laws also appear to have stemmed from her awareness that she would not be subjected to the same social and legal ramifications, as would a man, if her teaching slaves was uncovered. Kemble expected that if she were a man she would “be shot some fine day from behind a tree by some good neighbour, who would do the community a service by quietly getting rid of a mischievous incendiary”. Attesting to the unfavourable view of slave literacy in antebellum Georgia, she expected that “in such a case no questions would be asked, and my lessons would come to a speedy and silent end”.<sup>58</sup> While anti-literacy laws in Georgia and elsewhere made it an offence for any person to teach a slave in reading and/or writing, it appears, at least in practice, that the social and legal ramifications for instructing slaves in reading and writing were less severe for slave mistresses than masters. Kemble, exploiting her status as a *feme couverte*, recognised that her husband stood between her and the law. Kemble was acutely aware that her husband, inadvertently, protected her from the legal response for instructing slaves in reading and writing—“I am *feme couverte*, and my fines must be paid by my legal owner”.<sup>59</sup> While Pierce Mease Butler’s involvement with the slave trade wrestled with her conscience more than his, she vented this displeasure through a kind deed in defiance of her husband and against slaveholding ideology. This goes some way to explaining why the narratives of former slaves who received instruction in reading and writing were typically taught by their mistresses.

Those slaves who were instructed were typically taught how to read but not write. Slaves who received reading instruction often did so for the purpose of reading the Bible including C. H. Hall, a literate slave in Maryland. His mistress, a Baptist, taught him and all the slaves she and her husband owned to read the Bible believing that all her slaves should be able to read the word of God.<sup>60</sup> Solomon Northup’s master, William Ford, also read

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<sup>57</sup> Douglass, *My Bondage*, pp.144-145.

<sup>58</sup> Kemble, *Journal of a Residence*, p.230.

<sup>59</sup> “I am a woman, and Mr. — stands between me and the penalty. If I were a man, I would do that and many a thing besides, and doubtless should be shot some fine day from behind a tree by some good neighbour, who would do the community a service by quietly getting rid of a mischievous incendiary; and I promise you in such a case no questions would be asked, and my lessons would come to a speedy and silent end; but teaching slaves to read is a fineable offence, and I am *feme couverte*, and my fines must be paid by my legal owner, and the first offence of the sort is heavily fined, and the second more heavily fined, and for the third, one is sent to prison”. *Ibid.*, p.230.

<sup>60</sup> Williams, *Self-Taught*, p.24.

passages to his slaves. Although he did not instruct his slaves in reading so they could interpret the Bible themselves, he did permit one of his illiterate slaves, Sam, to keep a Bible gifted to him by his mistress to satisfy his infatuation with religion. While Ford was labelled “not fit to own a nigger” by slaveholders in his community for this deed, Northup regarded the leniency in Ford’s treatment as a positive trait, claiming that he “lost nothing by his kindness”.<sup>61</sup>

Most slaves who were taught reading for religious purposes were instructed by religious missionaries. Anglican missionaries such as the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel (SPG) visited slave communities to instruct slaves in reading but relied on slave masters and mistresses granting them access to their slaves.<sup>62</sup> If permission was granted, missionaries were still not immune from the influence of over-zealous slaveholders, who guided and directed their teachings. The slaveholder had the authority to cease instruction and banish the missionaries from his or her property at any time. Slave masters and mistresses, whether in granting missionaries access to their slaves or instructing themselves, chose the scripture and influenced their interpretation of what slaves read. In this sense, religious instruction and slavery did sometimes go hand-in-hand.<sup>63</sup> Preaching a “pro-slavery doctrine,” religious instruction directed by slave masters and mistresses was limited.<sup>64</sup> This

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<sup>61</sup> Solomon Northup, *Twelve Years a Slave: Narrative of Solomon Northup, a Citizen of New York, Kidnapped in Washington City in 1841, and Rescued in 1853, From a Cotton Plantation near the Red River in Louisiana* (Auburn, 1853), p.97.

<sup>62</sup> In *White Over Black*, Winthrop D. Jordan argues that religious revivalist movements greatly shaped the life of blacks, including slaves, who joined numerous denominations, especially from the 1740’s. The Second Great Awakening, beginning circa 1790, further catalysed black church membership, particularly in non-conformist denominations such as the Methodist and Baptist churches. Baptist slaves attended church and worshipped alongside their white owners, in that moment, equals in the eyes of God. In the process of proselytising blacks, religious message and race often conflicted, particularly around issues concerning the morality of slaveholding. See Winthrop D. Jordan, *White over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550-1812* (Chapel Hill, 1968), pp. 212-213; For the relationship between religion and slave education, including literacy instruction, see Albert J. Raboteau, *Slave Religion: The “Invisible Institution” in the Antebellum South* (New York, 2004); For a comprehensive examination of African American Protestantism, see Sylvia R. Frey and Betty Wood, *Come Shouting to Zion: African American Protestantism in the American South and British Caribbean to 1830* (Chapel Hill, 1998); For a study of the drive of religious missionaries to educate free and enslaved blacks and the opposition they encountered from slaveholders, see Janet Duitsman Cornelius, *Slave Missions and the Black Church in the Antebellum South* (Columbia: 1999); For a detailed analysis of slave religion in Georgia, see Clarence E. Mohr, ‘Slaves and White Churches in Confederate Georgia’, in John B. Boles (ed.), *Masters and Slaves in the House of the Lord: Race and Religion in the American South, 1740-1870* (Lexington, 2015), pp.153-172.

<sup>63</sup> W. Harrison Daniel has shown, for example, how the Virginia Baptist Church provided regulation and guidance to slaveholders to counter slave disobedience during the early national period. The church preached against slave disorder, warning them against running away or disobeying their masters. See W. Harrison Daniel, ‘Virginia Baptists and the Negro in the Early Republic’, *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 80:1 (Jan., 1972), p.61. See also W. Harrison Daniel, ‘Virginia Baptists and the Negro in the Antebellum Era’, *The Journal of Negro History*, 56:1 (Jan., 1971), pp.1-16; W. Harrison Daniel, ‘Southern Presbyterians and the Negro in the Early National Period’, *The Journal of Negro History*, 58:3 (Jul., 1973), pp.291-312.

<sup>64</sup> Henry Bibb, *Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Henry Bibb, an American Slave, written by himself. With an Introduction by Lucius C. Matlack* (New York, 1849), pp.23-24.

“Bible literacy,” to borrow Janet Cornelius’s term, was different from “liberating literacy” which was undirected and slave-led. The former was linked to “Christian worship and catechization” and the latter to “diversity and mobility”.<sup>65</sup> It is clear that in some instances, as will be discussed later in the chapter, instruction originally intended for the purpose of reading the Bible manifest in slave fugitivity attempts.

A revival in slave Bible literacy followed the Nathaniel Turner-led slave uprising in Southampton County, Virginia, in 1831. Harriet Jacobs describes in her narrative how slaveholders recognised “that it would be well to give slave enough of religious instruction to keep them from murdering their masters”.<sup>66</sup> Turner’s “Confession” – that he had been divinely ordained to carry out the “great work” of God – confirmed to many slaveholders their fear of slaves engaging in undirected reading.<sup>67</sup> However, for former slaves such as Henry Bibb, it was the absence of moral and religious instruction free *from* the control of slaveholders that encouraged slaves to act out and “break the Sabbath”. Slaves engaged in gambling, fighting, singing, dancing, and drunkenness –encouraged by their masters who provided liquor -“principally for want of moral instruction” because there were “no Sabbath Schools; no one to read the Bible to them; no one to preach the gospel who is competent to expound the scriptures, expect slaveholders”.<sup>68</sup>

Slaves who learned to read and write of their own accord or after instruction by a master or mistress ceased relied on a variety of ingenious strategies. The manipulation of white playmates by slave children for the purpose of instruction is a recurring theme in the testimonies of former slaves. To date, it has been the historiographical norm to view these relationships as led by white children who disobeyed their parents and taught slave playmates.<sup>69</sup> Slave testimony, discussed below, reveals that it was actually the slaves who manipulated white children for instruction. Their (white children’s) proneness to show off

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<sup>65</sup> Cornelius, ‘We Slipped and Learned’, p.171.

<sup>66</sup> Jacobs was invited to read at the meetings of the Episcopal Church which were held at the home of a free black member of the Church. While it is unclear if this was an isolated case or more wide spread, it highlights the intriguing possibility that slaveholders communicated their pro-slavery rhetoric in the post-Turner era through literate slaves. Literate slaves were, after all, revered figures in slave communities. In turn, allowing literate slaves to preach to the wider slave community, appears to have been a form of control. Inviting literate slaves to preach in Church, under the supervision of members, ensured, at least theoretically, that they could be controlled in a manner not possible in the fields and in slave communities. See Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life*, p.97.

<sup>67</sup> Nathaniel Turner, *The Confessions of Nat Turner, The Leaders of the Late Insurrection in Southampton, VA. As fully and voluntarily made to Thomas R. Gray, In the prison where he was confined, and acknowledged by him to be such when read before the Court of Southampton; with the certificate, under seal of the Court convened as Jerusalem, Nov. 5, 1831, for his trial. Also, an Authentic Account of the Whole Insurrection, with Lists of the White who were Murdered, and of the Negroes Brought Before the Court of Southampton, and there Sentenced, &c* (Baltimore, 1831), p.11.

<sup>68</sup> Bibb, *Narrative of the Life*, pp.23-24.

<sup>69</sup> Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll*, p.564.

their learning and their ripeness for manipulation was seized upon by enslaved children. As it was common for white and slave children to play with each other until the labour demands of the slave system and their status as master and slave conspired to undermine their friendship, slave children had a window of time in which to learn all they could.

When Frederick Douglass was transferred to Baltimore as a child around 1825, thus not too far the end of the research period, he deceived and manipulated unwitting white children, recognising their value to him as potential teachers. This appears to have stemmed from a relationship in his formative years with Daniel Lloyd, the son of his master Colonel Edward Lloyd, with whom he formed a close relationship and spent most of his leisure time before he was old enough for hard labour. The influence of Daniel's intelligence on Douglass – “he could not give his black playmates his company, without giving them his intelligence, as well” – instilled in Douglass a desire to learn, albeit inadvertently.<sup>70</sup> Once in Baltimore with Hugh, Sophia, and Master Thomas Auld, Douglass seized on the opportunity to be taught, befriending some poor white children with the intention of continuing his learning once Sophia ceased instructing him. Trading bread that he had taken from his master's home with the impoverished street children – the “hungry little urchins” – Douglass “funded” his education and in return received “that more valuable bread of knowledge”.<sup>71</sup>

The commodification of food by slaves for instruction is also a theme in John Quincy Adams' narrative. Born a slave in Virginia in 1845, Adams remembered his brother, Robert, using fruit to tempt his master's children into instructing him in reading. Robert offered apples and “all other kinds of nice fruit” to his white playmates until he successfully learned to read. This was by no means an isolated case but “the way many poor slaves learned to read and write”.<sup>72</sup> The trade of food for instruction is a common theme in the former slave narratives. Uncle Jack, enslaved in Virginia, exchanged fruit with his masters' children in return for their teaching him to read.<sup>73</sup>

Supporting their efforts to become literate, slaves were able to gain access to spelling books. It was not uncommon for slave children escorting their white playmates to school to

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<sup>70</sup> Douglass, from youth, distinguished himself from other slaves. In recalling his preference of associating with Daniel Lloyd, he states that “he could scarcely understand” the slaves on Col. Lloyds plantation, “so broken was their speech”. Douglass appears to resent his fellow slaves when Daniel begins to adopt “their dialect and ideas” while playing amongst them. See Douglass, *My Bondage*, p.77.

<sup>71</sup> Douglass, *Narrative of the Life*, p.38.

<sup>72</sup> John Quincy Adams, *Narrative of the Life of John Quincy Adams, When in Slavery, and Now as a Freeman* (Harrisburg, 1872), pp.9-10.

<sup>73</sup> Frank Lambert, “I Saw the Book Talk”: Slave Readings of the First Great Awakening, *The Journal of Negro History*, 77:4 (Autumn, 1992), pp.187-188.

steal a quick lesson while in possession of their books. More commonly, slaves gained access to spelling book in two ways. They borrowed or copied from spelling books belonging to the children of their masters and mistresses or in some instances were able to purchase their own, although admittedly, such opportunities were rare.

The former scenario was more common among house servants than field hands. Domestic slaves were in closer proximity to their masters' and mistresses' possessions than a field hand who lived and laboured in the fields. As a house slave, Douglass learned to write using his own spelling book, and copy books Master Thomas Auld left around the home they shared. He seized upon the absence of his mistress each Monday afternoon, using his time alone in the house to copy what Master Thomas had written in his spelling books—"writing in the spaces left".<sup>74</sup> Armed with a copy of Noah Webster's *The American Spelling Book* and permitted to move unrestricted around Baltimore's urban environment, Douglass had greater opportunities to use his spelling book than a plantation slave.<sup>75</sup> His ventures around the busy city and his daily engagement with poor white children turned Baltimore into his classroom. Douglass turned the fences, walls, and pavements in Durgin and Bailey's shipyard into a blackboard, using chalk he had found to copy onto them the letters he observed being added to the timber being loaded onto ships. It was there he encountered two Irish men who encouraged him to run away to the North and who appear to have convinced him that being able to write would aid his escape.

The former slave narratives reveal not only the methods that slaves used to become literate but also provide invaluable insights into slave motivation for learning to read and write. A common theme in former slave narratives was slaves' association of literacy with freedom.<sup>76</sup> The frequent denial of reading and writing instruction to slaves was enough to convince slaves that literacy was a prized skill worth pursuing. To be clear, understanding the importance of literacy and actually becoming literate were two very different things.

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<sup>74</sup> Douglass, *Narrative of the Life*, p.44.

<sup>75</sup> As a field hand enslaved to Captain Helm in Bath, Steuben County, New York, Austin Steward encountered more difficulties than Douglass did in Baltimore in finding opportunities learn.

Carrying his spelling book upon his person at all times, he seized on any opportunity to sneak a lesson when working the sugar bush. However, Steward's learning regularly conflicted with his intense labour schedule. He recalled in his narrative being discovered reading by his master's son-in-law—for which he was whipped—but this did not deter his determination to learn. See Austin Steward, *Twenty-Two Years a Slave, and Forty Years a Freeman; Embracing a Correspondence of Several Years, while President of Wilberforce Colony, London, Canada West*. (Rochester, 1857), pp.82-83.

<sup>76</sup> Lindon Barrett, 'African-American Slave Narratives: Literacy, the Body, Authority', *American Literary History*, 7:3 (1995), pp. 415-442; Karen Michele Chandler, 'Paths to Freedom: Literacy and Folk Traditions in Recent Narratives about Slavery and Emancipation', *Children's Literature Association Quarterly*, 31:1 (Spring 2006), pp.3-26.

Henry Bibb, enslaved in Kentucky, recognised the importance of literacy to his escape from slavery but never successfully learned to read and write while enslaved, despite receiving basic instruction. In his narrative, Bibb recalled collecting discarded letters and paper which he found and making to nearby woodland where he attempted to copy their content. While he was able to form letters, he did not understand what they meant.<sup>77</sup>

Those slaves who did learn to read and write appear to have developed an understanding of the importance of learning to read and write at an early age. Just as Hugh Auld's inadvertent admission of the dangers slaveholders faced if slaves could read inspired Douglass's resolve to read, the elusiveness of literacy and the secrecy surrounding its effects had a lasting impression on the young mind of John Quincy Adams. Encouraged by his parents and by his own observations, Adams developed a desire to learn to read and write from a young age but had no one to teach him:

I often heard the white people say that they did not want the negro to learn to read and write. Then I felt satisfied that there was something more than learning to read and write that they did not want the negro to know. When I would hear any one reading I would always go and stand around and listen. They often asked me what I wanted. I would always say "nothing," but go and tell my father and mother, and they would say, "try to hear all you can, but don't let them know it".<sup>78</sup>

The mystery surrounding reading and writing instruction – denied by whites but encouraged by his parents – stoked Adams' curiosity. His inquisitiveness, even as a child, was fuelled as the opposing views of his master and parent entwined.

The punishment slaves received for learning to read and write, rather than deterring them, was often proof enough to convince them to continue learning. Austin Steward's first severe whipping upon being discovered reading is evidence of this point:

This treatment, however, instead of giving me the least idea of giving it up, only made me look upon it as a more valuable attainment. Else, why should my oppressors feel so unwilling that their slaves should possess that which they thought so essential to themselves? Even then, with my back bleeding and smarting from the punishment I had received, I determined to learn to read and write, at all hazards, if my life was only spared.<sup>79</sup>

Steward's experience was not unique. Slaves who learned to read and write demonstrated a steely determination in the face of punishment. Many did not know what practical benefits

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<sup>77</sup> Bibb, *Narrative of the Life*, p.135.

<sup>78</sup> Adams, *Narrative of the Life*, p.6.

<sup>79</sup> Steward, *Twenty-Two Years*, p.83.



their learning to read and write would bring them but were convinced it was worth pursuing at all costs simply because their masters denied it to them.

### The Significance of Becoming Literate

Slaves who could read and write were capable of forging passes and documentation to circumvent legislation restricting their mobility and afford themselves freedom of movement. Slave passes – a written statement in which a slaveholder granted a slave permission to travel until a set date and time – bred slave dependency *unless* they were counterfeited. The forging of free passes by literate slaves, whether for their own benefit or the benefit of others, was a prospect dreaded in slaveholding societies fearful of slave conspiracy. This fear of slave masters was communicated in fugitive slave advertisements.

In the FSdb, material evidence of literacy being used in the forging of passes, papers, and freedom certificates was recorded. A “Runaway Mulatto Slave,” more “resembling a European than African,” Isaac Osborn, a “handy Jack of all Trades,” was expected to be in possession of forged papers when he escaped from his master, James Smith, of Dumfries, Virginia, on 12 March 1798.<sup>80</sup> “He doubtless has papers well designed to make him pass as a freeman, and I have reason to suspect that he will use some writing signed *William Tebbs*, the name of his former master,” speculated Smith. That Isaac was “very acute and artful,” was “prepared with a plausible tale for any person who may challenge him,” and could read and write “tolerably well,” ensured he had the requisite skills to design his deception.<sup>81</sup> Francis Sams of John’s Island, South Carolina, similarly expected his literate runaway, Sam, to head northward to Maryland, “where he was raised,” armed with a “pass written by himself”. A “very artful” slave who spoke “very proper,” Sam would pass himself “for a freeman” and not a fugitive.<sup>82</sup> In South Carolina, Smylie and Patterson, a slaveholding duo, suspected their slave, Spencer, a “very plausible fellow,” would “forge a pass for himself as he can both write and read”. This was also the fear of William Price, one of the “giants” of the Baltimore shipbuilding trade, when his slave, Jacob, absconded.<sup>83</sup> Having run off from Price’s home in Fell’s Point, Maryland, Jacob was expected to “forge a pass, as he could read and write,” and

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<sup>80</sup> Isaac was described as “mostly employed as a carpenter and caulker of vessels” but had in the past had been “used to mend shoes” and had “practiced as a physic”.

<sup>81</sup> *Federal Gazette*, 6 June 1798.

<sup>82</sup> *Times*, 4 April 1801.

<sup>83</sup> The other “giants of the trade” were James Biays, David Stodder, John Steele, also recorded in the FSdb, and Joseph Despeaux. See Charles G. Steffen, *The Mechanics of Baltimore: Workers and Politics in the Age of Revolution, 1763-1812* (Urbana; Chicago, 1984), p.268.

make for Prince George's County where he had been purchased from "Miss Priggs" and where his wife still resided.<sup>84</sup>

Fugitive slaves advertised as only able to write were also expected to be in possession of forged passes. Sam, a "likely Mulatto Fellow," absconded on 1 April 1800 "without any previous dispute or cause, or without having ever been whipped by the subscriber, or by his desire, in his whole life". Sam was "well-known" in Charleston, where he was born and had absconded from Thomas Hall, and was expected to have gone "out of the limits of this state, or on board of any vessel in the harbour of Charleston". Hall's admission that Sam "writes a good hand" and "may have forged a pass for himself," inserted as a small note at the foot of the advertisement, revealed, albeit reluctantly, Sam's use of literacy to escape. Hall's determination to have Sam recaptured was reflected in the generous \$100 reward he offered.<sup>85</sup> In Screven County, Georgia, Jack was expected by his master, John S. Scott, to have counterfeited himself a pass. A "blacksmith by trade," Jack could write "a tolerable good hand" and "having done so before" was expected to have "probably forged himself a pass". Scott suspected he had used it to get to Savannah, "having a wife in town".<sup>86</sup> In Maryland, George Brown, residing in North Gay Street, Baltimore Town, expected his runaway, Nelson, to possess a forged pass. It was "very probable", he noted, as Nelson was a "very intelligent" and "extremely sagacious" slave, able to write.<sup>87</sup>

Groups of fugitives also escaped with the aid of forged passes. Douglass famously attempted, unsuccessfully, to escape with slaves who attended his Sabbath school using passes he had forged. The responsibility of forging passes in acts of collective resistance typically fell upon the literate slave. This was true from the colonial era through the antebellum period. Billey, or Billey Waugh, as he called himself, was expected by his master, Joseph Cabell, to forge passes for himself, his wife, Judah, and Billy, or Billy Pitcher, when they absconded from his plantation in Buckingham County, Virginia, in May 1799.<sup>88</sup> "I have been informed the oldest fellow [Billey] can write, and if so it is probable he will forge a pass for himself and the others, and endeavour to pass for free persons," revealed Cabell. Whether he genuinely was unaware that Billey could write is unclear but in any case, all three slaves

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<sup>84</sup> *Federal Gazette*, 6 August 1805.

<sup>85</sup> *Georgetown Gazette*, 9 April 1800.

<sup>86</sup> *Savannah Republican*, 13 June 1809.

<sup>87</sup> *Republican Star*, 23 January 1810.

<sup>88</sup> The surname 'Waugh' was the name of Billey's former master, Doctor Waugh, of Fredericksburg, Virginia, who is named in the advertisement. Cabell claimed in the advertisements that all three slaves were purchased on 11 March 1799 from Mr Craven Payton of Milton, Virginia, who had purchased them from Waugh.

had headed north and had been “seen the day after” they escaped, “going down the James River in a Bateaux.”<sup>89</sup>

From slave testimony, it is apparent that slaves desired to write to permit themselves greater freedom of movement. Bibb, “notorious” for running away, was encouraged to learn to read and write by his white jail mates “so that I might write myself a pass ticket, to go just where I pleased”. While Bibb’s initial motivation for learning to write was for the purpose of escaping slavery to Canada, forged passes also served slaves by facilitating greater mobility and this autonomy *within* slavery. A “kind of house servant... frequently sent off on errands, but never without a written pass,” Bibb recognised that if he could forge his own pass he could visit neighbouring slaves much more often than the occasional Sunday which his owner permitted him.<sup>90</sup>

Slaves who were able to read could interpret, for themselves, handwritten and printed communications. Newspapers, broadsides, circulars, pamphlets and other print media enlightened literate slaves. Newspapers, as discussed in the opening chapter, were rich sources of information for their commentary on social, political, and economic issues in the United States and around the world. It is little surprise that anti-literacy laws targeting slave instruction in reading emerged in the 1830s coterminous with developments in American print culture. The Antebellum period in particular witnessed the emergence of the penny press, the mass proliferation of newspapers, and the rise of abolitionist literature. But even in the early national period, slaveholders expressed their fears of slaves possessing newspapers in fugitive slave advertisements.

R. Wainwright of South Carolina warned the readers of the *City Gazette* his “negro man,” Frank, was in possession of “letters and newspapers” belonging to him. Frank absconded on 10 May 1794 from Cedar Grove plantation near Dorchester, South Carolina. A “carpenter by trade,” Frank appears to have been allowed freedom of movement to hire his labour but had seized upon this opportunity to abscond. He had travelled northward but had been “taken about a week since at Monk’s corner and carried to Charleston” before managing to abscond again, prompting Wainwright’s advertisement. There was no struggle with his captor. A “sensible” slave who “speaks well” and “reads and writes,” Frank had convinced his captor that he would adhere to a “reliance being placed in him” to travel back alone to Dorchester with a newspaper and letters intended for Wainwright. It is uncertain

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<sup>89</sup> *Lynchburg Weekly Gazette*, 20 July 1799.

<sup>90</sup> Bibb, *Narrative of the Life*, p.134.

whether he intended to renege on his promise or his reading of the correspondence or newspaper had prompted him to flee again. In either case, his literacy permitted him to interpret the correspondence and newspapers and react as he deemed fit. Wainwright considered Frank's possession of the letters and newspaper, and ability to interpret them, concern enough to warn the readers.<sup>91</sup>

Slaveholder fear of slaves possessing newspapers is also suggested in the testimony of former slaves, especially Douglass' narrative. Douglass, recalled of his mistress's reaction upon finding him reading newspapers:

Nothing seemed to make her [his mistress] more angry than to see me with a newspaper. She seemed to think that here lay the danger. I have had her rush at me with a face made all up of fury, and snatch from me a newspaper, in a manner that fully revealed her apprehension.<sup>92</sup>

Douglass did not elaborate on the *dangers* his mistress feared would result from his reading newspapers but Harriet Jacobs' narrative provides some insight. She suggests slaveholders feared slaves in the American South learning of anti-slavery sentiment in the North as it threatened their efforts to "give a bad opinion of the north". This was a slaveholder control tactic to make the northern states less appealing to potential fugitives, because they feared literate slaves would learn, and possibly teach others about abolitionism—"about the white folks over in the big north, who were trying to get their freedom for them". This is not to imply that only literate slaves knew of the abolitionists in the northern states, indeed, as Jacobs revealed, even the most ignorant slaves had some "confused notions about it".<sup>93</sup> A slave who could read however was a revered figure in the slave community. Literate slaves were conduits from which knowledge of the world beyond the southern slave system filtered into slave communities. For this reason, slaveholders viewed literate slaves differently: as sources of discontent. Just as slave masters manipulated scripture and information to promote their authority over their slaves, they recognised that if the slave had the nous, they too might manipulate information and prove to be the spark igniting insurrection.

Reading and writing allowed friendships and relationship to be formed and maintained in and between slave and free black communities, free from the influence of slaveholders. Jacobs maintained communication with her free black lover using letters. The

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<sup>91</sup> *City Gazette*, 5 July 1794.

<sup>92</sup> Douglass, *Narrative of the Life*, p.37.

<sup>93</sup> Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life*, pp. 69-70.

discovery of letters in her grandmother's house by soldiers patrolling in wake of Turner's rebellion also reveal that Harriett possessed a letter of "some verses" and had received letters written by "friends". Insisting that most of her letters were from whites who "request me to burn them after they are read, and some I destroy without reading"-a reference to her licentious owner, James Norcom (Dr Flint)- it appears she also possessed others from black persons with whom she regularly communicated.<sup>94</sup>

Among the most common reasons slaves gave for wanting to read in their narratives was so they could read the Bible. Of course, this may have been skewed by the need for former slaves to market their work toward white middle-class northern readers. In any case, Austin Steward, and many of his fellow slaves, reveal learning to read became a "necessity" and served as a refuge from the hardships of slavery when all "seemed...beyond endurance".<sup>95</sup> Being able to read the Bible complemented Harriet Jacobs' religiosity, guiding her and reaffirming her faith in moments where slavery brought darkness to her thoughts. She also instructed Uncle Fred, an old black gentlemen who had joined the Baptist Church she attended, in reading so he too could read the Bible. Exchanging "nice fruit when the season for it came" for Harriet's instruction, Fred reasoned:

Honey, it 'pears when I can read dis good book I shall be nearer to God. White man is got all de sense. He can larn easy. It ain't easy for ole black man like me. I only wants to read dis book, dat I may know how to live, den I hab no fear 'bout dying.<sup>96</sup>

While reading the Bible and other printed material served slaves in personal ways – refuge from reality and reaffirming faith – religious slaves were also recorded in the FSdb. A total of 22 slaves (1 percent) were advertised as Baptist, Methodist, or "pretending" to religious.<sup>97</sup> Slaves who could read the Bible without their masters' input were equipped to read the passages that slaveholders were careful not to read aloud. While each slave's interpretation of what they read was ultimately unique, undirected reading of religious scripture, like any printed or written communications, led some slaves to begin questioning the morality of slaveholding. As Heather Andrea Williams argued "reading catapulted some slaves beyond the limited sphere to which owners hoped to keep them restricted and engage vicariously in dialogues that raised moral challenges to the enslavement of human beings".<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid., pp.100-101.

<sup>95</sup> Steward, *Twenty-Two Years*, p.81.

<sup>96</sup> Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life*, p.112.

<sup>97</sup> The cases in which advertisers claimed their slaves only "pretends" to be religious have been counted among those in which slave were described as religiously affiliated; For a discussion of slaveholder denial of slave religiosity, see John W. Roberts, *From Trickster to Badman: The Black Folk Hero in Slavery and Freedom* (Philadelphia, 2010), pp.86-87.

<sup>98</sup> Williams, *Self-Taught*, p.23.

It is clear that in some instances, slave discontentment manifested in fugitivity. In this sense, Bible literacy, to borrow Cornelius' term, did foment in the same outcome as liberating literacy with slaves choosing to abscond. Advertisements for religious fugitives show many to be skilled and literate.

Having absconded on 18 June 1800, a runaway notice was issued for Lucy by her master, James Verdier of Shepherdstown, Virginia.<sup>99</sup> She had been purchased by Verdier from Richard Baylor, also of Shepherdstown, and he from Dr Mitchell of the same place. Lucy, having been sold to masters throughout Jefferson County, had become a "very good cook," could "spin Cotton [and] knit" and professed to have "been employed at the weaving business". She could also read, if only "some little," and appears to have used this to read the Bible. Verdier's insistence that she only "pretends to be very religious" was a tacit admission that she was religious.<sup>100</sup> London, a slave "brought up to the milling business" was likewise literate and religious. His masters, Thomas and Samuel Hollingsworth, prominent Baltimore merchants and members of one of the Maryland's most elite families, described him as an "artful and plausible" slave, who "reads and writes" and "affects to be very religious". Despite being "parrot toed," London was expected to have "procured" or forged "himself a pass" to get to "Fredericktown, or Chester County in Pennsylvania".<sup>101</sup>

Religious slaves embodied and brought to the fore the moral dilemma that many slaveholders sought to ignore, specifically, how to maintain religious virtue while enslaving a fellow equal in the eyes of God. By dehumanising slaves and denying their religiosity – describing their slaves as *pretending* to be religious – slaveholders justified their slaveholding in their own belief system. Joshua Fletcher, for example, included a nota bene at the foot of his advertisement claiming that his slave, Tom, who "often attempted to preach," only "pretends to be religious".<sup>102</sup> Following suit, Nelson Norris advertised that his runaway, Nathan, only "assumes to be religious".<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> James Verdier was the son of James Charvold Verdier and Lady Susanna Monei. His parents escaped to America from France to avoid persecution. They arrived with gold coins, shoe buckles and items of jewellery sewn into their clothing. While they had plans to have one of their children, Paul, return for their fortune, this never materialised. James appears to have stayed in Shepherdstown after his father's death in 1785 and resided on the family plantation known as Rockland. For more on the plantation and archival repositories pertaining to the Verdier family, see National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, <http://www.wvculture.org/shpo/nr/pdf/jefferson/89002316.pdf>. [Accessed 2 February 2017].

<sup>100</sup> *Times and District of Columbia Daily Advertiser*, 7 October 1800.

<sup>101</sup> "Pigeon or parrot toed" is a deformity of the foot. One of four species of the class *talipes varus*, it occurs from a "slight elevation of the inner part of the foot...throwing the principal pressure of the body upon the outer margin of the foot". See J. V. V. Smith (ed.), *The Boston Medical and Surgical Journal*. Volume XXXI (Boston, 1845), p.169.

<sup>102</sup> *Republican Gazette and General Advertiser*, 9 May 1806.

<sup>103</sup> *Republican Star*, 6 June 1815.

Despite the practical benefits of learning to read and write, there were also drawbacks and unintended consequences. Harriet Jacobs' owner, James Norcom, used her literateness to sexually harass her. Norcom, recognising Jacobs could read despite her denying it, passed her sexually explicit notes and demanded she read them aloud, threatening to read them to her if she did not comply. This harassment commenced when Jacobs was fifteen years old. Her admission that she could read would have made her vulnerable to punishment and would also have provided her master the response he craved from her.<sup>104</sup>

Slaves such as Douglass and Josiah Henson were overwhelmed with grief once they learned to read. This appears to have stemmed from a combination of the materials that they read, their longing for freedom, and their developing a deeper understanding of the slave system and the ideological arguments supporting it. Henson lived in Maryland throughout the research period and thus his account is especially valuable to this project. When he learned to read, it inspired mixed emotions. On the one hand, it provided him "great comfort" but on the other, it evoked bitterness and discontentment as he began to realise "the terrible abyss of ignorance in which I had been plunged all my previous life". While learning to read was a transformative experience for Henson, serving to distinguish his life as a slave and as a free person, it inspired darker thoughts:

It made me also feel more deeply and bitterly the oppression under which I had toiled and groaned; but the crushing and cruel nature of which I had not appreciated, till I found out, in some slight degree, from what I had been debarred. At the same time it made me more anxious than before to do something for the rescue and the elevation of those who were suffering the same evils I had endured, and who did not know how degraded and ignorant they really were.<sup>105</sup>

Although Henson offers no further explanation to the precise *something* that his anxiety was urging him to do for his fellow slaves, it seems likely that he was suggesting teaching or possibly even inciting his fellow slaves to rebel. The latter seems plausible especially as

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<sup>104</sup> In her narrative she recalled "My master began to whisper foul words in my ear. Young as I was, I could not remain ignorant of their import. I tried to treat them with indifference or contempt. The master's age, my extreme youth, and the fear that his conduct would be reported to my grandmother, made him bear this treatment for many months. He was a crafty man, and resorted to many means to accomplish his purposes. Sometimes he had stormy, terrific ways, that made his victims tremble; sometimes he assumed a gentleness that he thought must surely subdue. Of the two, I preferred his stormy moods, although they left me trembling. He tried his utmost to corrupt the pure principles my grandmother had instilled. He peopled my young mind with unclean images, such as only a vile monster could think of. I turned from him with disgust and hatred. But he was my master. I was compelled to live under the same roof with him—where I saw a man forty years my senior daily violating the most sacred commandments of nature. He told me I was his property; that I must be subject to his will in all things. My soul revolted against the mean tyranny. But where could I turn for protection?" See Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life*, pp.44-45.

<sup>105</sup> Josiah Henson, *The Life of Josiah Henson, Formerly a Slave, Now an Inhabitant of Canada as Narrated by Himself* (Boston, 1849), p.65-66.

Douglass expresses similar sentiment in his narrative. Henson, like Henry Goings, born in Virginia in 1810, eventually resisted their temptation to revolt and instead escaped to Canada.<sup>106</sup>

Douglass, learning to read, was empowered but simultaneously experienced the discontentment that Hugh Auld had warned of. His reading of Caleb Bingham's *The Columbian Orator*, especially the dialogue between a master and a slave, empowered Douglass, by allowing him to articulate his objections to slaveholding and "to meet the arguments brought forward to sustain slavery". As Douglass learned more about the slave system and began to question the morality of slaveholding, he developed a hatred toward his enslavers and, indeed, himself. Reading liberated his mind but the constant thinking that it induced – the answering of questions and inspiring of new ones – became a constant struggle for him:

I would at times feel that learning to read had been a curse rather than a blessing. It had given me a view of my wretched condition, without the remedy. It opened my eyes to the horrible pit, but to no ladder upon which to get out. In moments of agony, I envied my fellow-slaves for their stupidity. I have often wished myself a beast. I preferred the condition of the meanest reptile to my own. Any thing [sic], no matter what, to get rid of thinking! It was this everlasting thinking of my condition that tormented me. There was no getting rid of it. It was pressed upon me by every object within sight or hearing, animate or inanimate.<sup>107</sup>

Once able to read and write, slaves such as Douglass realised their social, political, and economic situation had not changed by becoming literate: they were still slaves in the eyes of slaveholding societies. Indeed, as Harvey J. Graff has argued, the "social realities" of possessing literacy, often "contradicted the promoted promises of literacy".<sup>108</sup> For slaves, literacy and freedom were regularly linked. Douglass' constant longing for freedom inspired and taunted him. The more that Douglass read the greater his understanding of his masters' attempts to keep him ignorant of the immorality of slaveholding.<sup>109</sup> "The increase of knowledge was attended with bitter, as well as sweet results", revealed Douglass, "The more I read, the more I was led to abhor and detest slavery, and my enslavers".<sup>110</sup> With increased knowledge came increased bitterness, which in turn, could lead to rebelliousness. While Douglass longed for freedom, his continued enslavement with no apparent means of escape

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<sup>106</sup> Henry Goings's self-authored narrative was written around 1855 and was presumed unfinished or lost until it was discovered, and subsequently purchased, by the University of Virginia Special Collections in 2006. It is an excellent account of slavery in Virginia. See Henry Goings, *Rambles of a Runaway from Southern Slavery*. Edited by Calvin Schermerhorn, Michael Plunkett, and Edward Gaynor. (Charlottesville; London, 2012).

<sup>107</sup> Douglass, *Narrative of the Life*, pp.40-41.

<sup>108</sup> Graff, *The Literacy Myth*, p.61.

<sup>109</sup> Douglass, *My Bondage*, p.158.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, p.159.



tortured him and made him consider compulsive acts. His struggling to cope with feelings of hopelessness and desperation, induced by the literature he read, made him regret his own existence. Douglass contemplated killing himself or doing something “for which I should have been killed” – an admission that he contemplated violent resistance to secure his freedom. This important point establishes clear linkage between reading and slave rebelliousness. Slaveholders were correct that reading had the potential to make slaves discontented but they were less forthcoming in acknowledging that it was the conditions within the system that *they* had created that slaves reacted against.

### **Literate Enslaved People: An Unfounded Fear?**

Slaveholder fear of slave rebelliousness arising from slave learning may not have been too far from the truth. As Heather Andrea Williams suggests, “In the Bible, books, and newspapers, literate slaves found a language of liberation”.<sup>111</sup> Slave testimony suggests slaves struggled to accept the finality of their condition once they had developed a desire to be free. Douglass’s contemplation of suicide and unsuccessful attempt to run away epitomises this point.<sup>112</sup> A desperate slave was unpredictable. Undirected learning had the potential to impair a slave’s judgement. A compulsive act such as running away or more violent forms of resistance became a viable means to end the torment of their bondage.

Bibb does not explain why he “had some very serious religious impressions” in 1833 nor why he and “quite a number of slaves in [his] neighbourhood...felt very desirous to be taught to read the Bible” but that these feelings developed just two years after the Turner Rebellion suggests slaveholders had reason to react. The commencement of a Sabbath School for Bibb and other slaves by Miss Davis, a poor white, “notwithstanding public opinion and the law...opposed to it,” was promptly disbanded and labelled “an incendiary Movement” when their owners became aware that books were being circulated and slaves taught to read.<sup>113</sup> Bible classes did provide slaves opportunities to read but in these meetings slave conspiracies were often hatched. Slaves who could interpret the Bible for themselves may have drawn different conclusions about the morality of slavery than their slaveholders as appears to have occurred in Nat Turner’s case. Fugitive slave advertisement suggest religious gatherings did manifest in slaves hatching plans to abscond. Thomas Griffith

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<sup>111</sup> Williams, *Self-Taught*, p.24.

<sup>112</sup> For more on this, see Lisa Sisco, “‘Writing in the Spaces Left’: Literacy as a Process of Becoming in the Narratives of Frederick Douglas”, *American Transcendental Quarterly*, 9:3 (September 1995), pp.195-228.

<sup>113</sup> Bibb, *Narrative of the Life*, p.21.

expected his enslaved blacksmith, Rolin, to preach while a fugitive, on the grounds “he was in the Methodist Society” and had “often attempted to preach”.<sup>114</sup> Joseph Bryan of Wilmington, Georgia was in “no doubt” that his slave, Stephen, would be met “with encouragement among the blacks, as he officiates in the quality of a Baptist Preacher”.<sup>115</sup>

While living with his master, Mr Freeland, Douglass too became rebellious after leading a Sabbath School for his slave brethren. Instructing them in reading and writing, his instruction soon turned to thoughts of escape and before long he had “imbued their minds with thoughts of freedom”. Douglass wrote “several protections” – forged passes – which were intended to facilitate their escape to Baltimore. Baltimore, of course, was a popular destination for fugitives given its large free black population. It is apparent that while Douglass intended for them to escape *collectively*, it was *he* that had developed a hunger for freedom and quite likely was using and manipulating the others to support his escape attempt. He personified the revered leader among the slave community feared by slaveholders. This example demonstrates clear linkage between slave enlightenment, mobility, and slave resistance.

Slave gatherings excited slaveholders and slaveholding societies living in fear of slave insurrection. Whether the intention of the gathering was conspiratorial or otherwise, slaveholders did not take the chance, tightening slave codes and further limiting black freedoms. Anti-literacy legislation was part of this effort. As Williams stated, the timing of anti-literacy legislation “exposed the close association in white minds between black literacy and black rebelliousness”.<sup>116</sup> Any act of slave rebelliousness could turn violent, whether intended or not, once a slave determined to achieve their freedom was pitted against a master and a society that sought to deny it to them.

## Conclusion

This chapter has examined the contestation of slaveholder authority, particularly as it pertains to literacy. It has used slave testimony to yield insights into slaves being drawn to literacy, the process of their becoming literate, and the significance of literacy in slave skillsets. It has situated the discussion against a backdrop of anti-literacy legislation and oppressive slave codes. Enslaved people forged greater freedom for themselves and others

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<sup>114</sup> *Federal Republican*, 5 October 1809.

<sup>115</sup> *Georgia Gazette*, 21 May 1795.

<sup>116</sup> Williams, *Self-Taught*, p.13.

using their literacy, doing so often in defiance of slaveholder authority. Enslaved people expressed their faith by reading Bibles, used newspapers to inform themselves and others of social, political, and economic developments in the United States, and maintained relationships through written communications. These were all actions that posed a challenge to slaveholder efforts to keep him or her in subjection. Among the major findings of this chapter, linkage was established between literacy and fugitives' rebelliousness. Slave testimony suggests that while literacy developed slaves' sense of self, their increased understanding of the ideological foundations of slavery bred discontentment; a longing for freedom that was incompatible with the system promoting ignorance, subordination, and their continued enslavement. Qualitative studies to date speak of slave literacy's theoretical liberating and empowering effects but do not provide tangible accounts of who the literate slaves were or consider literacy as a factor in rebelliousness. The fourth, and final, chapter examines slave rebelliousness as a manifestation of literacy through fugitive slave advertisements for the 45 literate slaves among the FSP and notices for "artful" slaves.



## 4

## Theatres of Rebellion: Literacy, Performance, and Slave Resistance

Men of colour, who are also of sense, for you particularly is my APPEAL designed. Our more ignorant brethren are not able to penetrate its value. I call upon you therefore to cast your eyes upon the wretchedness of your brethren, and to do your utmost to enlighten them--go to work and enlighten your brethren!--Let the Lord see you doing what you can to rescue them and yourselves from degradation.

David Walker, *Appeal to the Colour Citizens of the World*.<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

Reigniting the fiery rhetoric of the American Revolution, African American abolitionist David Walker wrote *An Appeal to the Colored Citizens of the World* (1829) at home in Boston, Massachusetts. Walker urged blacks to resist white oppression, through violence if necessary, to achieve racial equality and to end slavery. Walker, an armchair revolutionary, recognised that individual liberty was so restricted that the true freedom of individuals could only be realised by revolution, not by negotiation of small ameliorating gains within the slave system. “Kill or be killed - had you not rather be killed than to be a slave to a tyrant - it is no more harm for you to kill a man, who is trying to kill you, than it is for you to take a drink of water when thirsty”, reasoned Walker.<sup>2</sup> The incendiary nature of the *Appeal* was met with fierce white resistance.<sup>3</sup> State slave codes were tightened and anti-literacy legislation enacted or revised in wake of the *Appeal's* publication.

Notwithstanding, two years later, in August 1831, Nathaniel Turner and his followers, free blacks and slaves, marched through rural Southwestern Virginia toward the town of Jerusalem, slaughtering whites to free their enslaved brethren. White militias were assembled and the rebellion suppressed in just two days but the blood of at least fifty-five white men, women, and children stained the fields of Southampton County.<sup>4</sup> Turner was

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<sup>1</sup> David Walker, *Walker's Appeal in Four Articles; Together with Preamble, to the Coloured Citizens of the World, But in Particular, and Very Expressly, to Those of the United States of America, Written in Boston, State of Massachusetts. September 28, 1829* (Boston, 1830), p.33.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p.30.

<sup>3</sup> Incendiary was an ambiguous and subjective term applicable to any publication, behaviour, or treatment slaveholders feared could *potentially* inspire slave rebelliousness. In terms of legal definition, it was akin to sedition.

<sup>4</sup> For a list of the fifty five women, children, and men killed and for a list of those who were convicted, see Nathaniel Turner, *The Confessions of Nat Turner, The Leaders of the Late Insurrection in Southampton, V.A. As fully and*

hanged for his role in the revolt and many of his followers killed. Blacks suspected of involvement were executed too. The revolutionary potential of the *Appeal* had seemingly been realised.

Had Walker, from his home in Boston, a prominent hub of abolitionist activity, inspired the bloodiest slave insurrection to ever occur in the United States South through a single printed publication? – Had Turner read the *Appeal*? Turner was after all a highly intelligent and literate slave, an excellent communicator, and an artful slave who proclaimed himself a messiah: the most dangerous of all slaves. Contemporary opinion and the extension of anti-literacy legislation suggest many felt he had read Walker's *Appeal*. “Is there any great moral reason why we should incur the tremendous risk of having our wives slaughtered in consequence of our slaves being taught to read incendiary publications?” posed the editor of Kentucky's *Presbyterian Herald* newspaper.<sup>5</sup> Another publication described Turner and his followers as “deluded wretches” who had been “deceived by some artful knaves, or stimulated by their own miscalculating passions”. An editorial feature in Virginia's *Richmond Enquirer* provided the most damning verdict of the Southampton uprising, comparing those involved to “a parcel of blood-thirsty wolves rushing down the Alps”.<sup>6</sup>

Turner's Rebellion confirmed for many whites their fear that literate and intelligent slaves were dangerous; they were those blacks with the “devil in the eye” and a “love for freedom, patriotism, insurrection, bloodshed, and exterminating war against American slavery”.<sup>7</sup> That the leaders of the most notable slave insurrectionary movements Gabriel Prosser, Denmark Vesey, and Turner were all literate was not a coincidence. They were all revered leaders in their respective slave communities, acculturated, literate, and, in Prosser and Vesey's case, urban workers exposed to the language of revolution.<sup>8</sup> Turner's revolutionary spirit was nonetheless different. Turner recalled in his ‘*Confessions*’ (1831) a

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*voluntarily made to Thomas R. Gray, In the prison where he was confined, and acknowledged by him to be such when read before the Court of Southampton; with the certificate, under seal of the Court convened at Jerusalem, Nov. 5, 1831, for his trial. Also, an Authentic Account of the Whole Insurrection, with Lists of the White who were Murdered, and of the Negroes Brought Before the Court of Southampton, and there Sentenced, &c* (Baltimore, 1831), pp.22-23.

<sup>5</sup> James Oakes, ‘Why Slaves Can't Read: The Political Significance of Jefferson's Racism’, in James Gilreath (ed.), *Thomas Jefferson and the Education of a Citizen* (Washington DC, 1999), p.179.

<sup>6</sup> François Furstenberg, ‘Beyond Freedom and Slavery: Autonomy, Virtue, and Resistance in Early American Political Discourse’, *The Journal of American History*, 89:4 (Mar., 2003), p.1318.

<sup>7</sup> Henry Bibb, *Narrative of the Life and Adventures of Henry Bibb, an American Slave, written by himself. With an Introduction by Lucius C. Matlack* (New York, 1849), pp.101-102.

<sup>8</sup> Michael Mullin, *Africa in America: Slave Acculturation and Resistance in the American South and the British Caribbean, 1736-1831* (Urbana; Chicago, 1994), p.219.

succession of visions that culminated in his insurrectionary plot.<sup>9</sup> Turner's "instruction" and "communication" with God appears to have been little more than a combination of what he read in the Bible, his belief that God was communicating with him directly, and an inflated sense of self-importance and superiority compared to other slaves. He had convinced himself he was divinely-ordained to alleviate himself and others from slavery; his "communication" and "prompts" from God appear to have been misinterpreted observations of meteorological and astrological phenomena by a troubled and desperate slave. In any case, Prosser, Vesey, and Turner all commanded slaves more ignorant than they. Although Douglas R. Egerton urged caution in forcing "uniformity of vision and goals on rebel leaders," even he accepted that they shared similar skills and characteristics.<sup>10</sup> Examining the major slave conspiracies in the United States, it is clear that just as religion and spirituality influenced insurrectionary movements, they were always led and planned by literate and intelligent slaves (Appendix 9).

The spectre of slave revolt terrorised slaveholders throughout the American South between 1790 and 1810. Robin Blackburn described a developing "permanent panic" among New World slaveholders fuelled by the French Revolution (1789-1799) and the Haitian uprising (1791-1804).<sup>11</sup> For Michael Mullin, it was less a panic and more an "acute anxiety". White Southerners, he argued, became "obsessed with the notion that black associationism could lead to another Haiti". Fearing literate and "intelligent" slaves would learn of the rebellion and incite the South's slave population into revolt, they reserved "their most fear-ridden invective" for the "demonic combination of abolitionists, the missionaries they allegedly spawned, and the slave literacy that each group promoted".<sup>12</sup>

This chapter considers slave rebelliousness as a manifestation of literacy. It locates fugitive slaves within two existing models – Gerald W. Mullin's "inward" and "outward" resistance model and David Waldstreicher's "Confidence Man" slave type - and introduces a third – my own spectrum of observed and perceived slave behaviour, which builds upon these models. Mullin's model suggests that it was acculturated and skilled slaves who were more likely to resist *outwardly*, that is to say by running away, whereas inwardly resisting slaves

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<sup>9</sup> These included a battle between whites and blacks (1825), hieroglyphic characters and numbers, depicting men, etched throughout the woods in blood, and visions of the Spirit, who warned him that Christ had let loose the serpent and commanded him to fight it (1828).

<sup>10</sup> Douglas R. Egerton, 'Slave Resistance', in Robert L. Paquette and Mark M. Smith (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Slavery in the America's* (New York, 2010), p.464.

<sup>11</sup> Robin Blackburn, Haiti, Slavery, and the Age of Democratic Revolution, *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 63:4 (Oct., 2006), p.654.

<sup>12</sup> Mullin, *Africa in America*, p.217.

did not have the acculturative skills “pass as free men in town”. This allows clear linkage to be established between literacy and slave fugitivity. Acculturated and skilled slaves who resisted *outwardly* also fit the profile of Waldstreicher’s *Confidence Man*, a connection yet to be made in the historiography. Confidence men were shrewd and highly perceptive slaves who “self-fashioned” an identity for themselves, manipulating and exploiting their surroundings to pass as free persons.<sup>13</sup> My own model of observed and perceived slave behaviour suggests that slave artfulness—behaviour categorised as extremely devious on the spectrum—was characteristic of a slave who engaged in identity transformation and “endeavoured” to be a free person. This was a theme common in advertisements for literate fugitives. I use this chapter to suggest that the “artful” slave type was invariably linked to literacy. Slave runaways who could read and write fit both the profile of *outwardly* resisting slaves and Waldstreicher’s Confidence Man. Drawing on the insights of fugitive slave advertisements (FSA) for the 45 literate slaves among the FSP and notices for “artful” slaves, I argue that far from “pretending” to be free persons, these slaves were often free in their own minds and were resisting outwardly to achieve their bodily freedom. The notices for their recapture provide a final snapshot of their transition from slave to free person.

Among the literate slaves of the FSP—whose literacy manifest in rebelliousness—was James. His story is of an acculturated and skilled slave for whom no favourable treatment in slavery could appease the promise of life as a free man. “Bred up a favorite” and “indulged...to extreme,” James, or James Allen, decided in April 1797 to run off from the service of his master, General Thomas Marsh Forman, of Cecil County, Maryland.<sup>14</sup> Determined to have him recaptured, Forman issued several advertisements for his recapture, offering a generous one hundred dollar reward.<sup>15</sup> James was different from the other slaves at Forman’s Rose Hill Plantation on Sassafras Neck. While Forman’s slaves cultivated flax, wool from his Merino sheep and cotton, James had “never experienced severity of labor” and had “never been employed at any business, except hunting and the breaking and training

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<sup>13</sup> David Waldstreicher, ‘Reading the Runaways: Self-Fashioning, Print Culture, and Confidence in Slavery in the Eighteenth-Century Mid-Atlantic’, *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 56:2 (Apr., 1999), pp.243-272.

<sup>14</sup> Thomas Marsh Forman (1758-1845) was a member of the Continental Army during the American Revolution, serving in the Maryland Battalion in New York from late-August 1776. Forman rose to Lieutenant of the Eleventh Pennsylvania Regiment and was thereafter promoted to captain. He was also a participant of the War of 1812. For this information and more in-depth details of Forman’s military career, see Maryland State Archives. Archives of Maryland (Biographical Series). MSA SC 3520-1836. ‘Thomas Marsh Forman’. <http://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/speccol/sc3500/sc3520/001800/001836/html/01836bio.html>. [Accessed 2 January 2017]

<sup>15</sup> Despite James escaping on “Tuesday evening the 4<sup>th</sup> instant,” Forman waited several days before composing and distributing the advertisement. It was published on Saturday, 8 April (1797) in Baltimore’s *Federal Gazette*. The advertisement was reprinted a further four times in the newspaper without any amendments. The advertisement was reprinted for the final time on 1 May 1797.



of running horses”.<sup>16</sup> Instead, James accompanied Forman on errands to neighbouring states and was trusted to travel by himself, “far and near”, as a messenger for his master.<sup>17</sup> Forman had “placed [his] unlimited confidence in him”.

James’s decision to runaway surprised Forman but it ought not to have. James, as an occasional visitor to cities including Baltimore and Philadelphia, had been exposed to a world in which the lines distinguishing whites from blacks and free from enslaved were blurred. While skin colour distinguished them, blacks and whites lived and laboured together. In this environment, a slave could quite easily *forget their place*. Travelling and making acquaintances in port cities, where “revolutionary ideas circulated rapidly,” James would have encountered the language of revolution; a language of freedom and equality peddled in print.<sup>18</sup> The influence of his master, a former revolutionary soldier, must also be taken into account. Whether his master’s influence was imparted to demean or dispirit James or whether knowledge of the Revolution’s ideology had been inadvertently acquired, James would have known that his master’s liberty was reserved for white men only. By the 1790s, print thrived in urban centres informing those able to read and stoking the curiosity of those that could not. Although James could read only “a little,” he could at least begin to interpret the world of print that surrounded him in newspapers, broadsides, circulars, and, as the nineteenth century progressed, abolitionist and anti-slavery literature. Reading, as Frederick Douglass attests, was critical to the development of self-identity. It was a tool of enlightenment and a source of empowerment. Once a slave desired to be free, there was “no keeping him,” as Douglass’s master, Hugh Auld, revealed.<sup>19</sup> While the longing for freedom overwhelmed many slaves and led others to violent rebellion—Douglass too nearly—James was among the slaves who chose instead to challenge their enslavement by running away.

### Literacy and Rebelliousness

The interpretation of literacy’s role adopted in this chapter suggests that literacy was not *necessary* but was *sufficient* to generate rebelliousness among enslaved people. Learning to

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<sup>16</sup> Forman also experimented with sericulture but was unsuccessful. See Gloria Seaman Allen, ‘For the People’: Clothing Production and Maintenance at Rose Hill Plantation, Cecil County, Maryland’, *Historic Alexandria Quarterly*, (Winter 2003), p.1.

<sup>17</sup> James had visited and/or had formed acquaintances throughout Maryland and Delaware and in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Virginia.

<sup>18</sup> Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: The Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (London; New York, 2000), p.226.

<sup>19</sup> Frederick Douglass, *My Bondage and My Freedom. Part 1. Life as a Slave. Part II, Life as a Freeman* (New York, 1855), p.146.

read and write did not necessarily make slaves rebellious nor does this project's definition of literacy imply that non-literate slaves did not, or could not, develop critical understandings of enslavement or self-identity. For many slaves however reading and writing were important skills for the development of their critical understanding of enslavement and their formation of self-identity. Reading proficiency and availability of printed materials naturally varied among slaves, dictating what they could read. Knowledge developed through reading was supplemented with daily observations and discourse. Exposure to the world beyond slavery, in print and observed, facilitated identity formation but often bred slave discontentment and the desire to be free. The form of resistance that these cravings for freedom manifested was unique to each slave and ultimately dictated by personal circumstance but did, in many cases, lead slaves to abscond.

Literacy functioned to instil rebelliousness beyond individuals. Pitting slave against master, literacy was much sought after and a highly-prized skill in slave communities. As discussed in the previous chapter, slaves, even as children, were encouraged by older members of slave communities to learn all they could without alerting their masters. From a young age, literacy was a mysterious skill associated with freedom. In this sense, and as Janet Cornelius argued, "literacy was more than a path to individual freedom" and was a "communal act, a political demonstration of resistance to oppression and of self-determination for the black community". While becoming literate allowed slaves to acquire valuable skills in the white world and served slaves by allowing them special privileges or to become free, the impact of literate slaves on the wider illiterate slave community should not be underestimated, warned Cornelius. Serving as conduits of knowledge – bridging the information gap between the white world and slave communities – literate slaves' ability to "disperse knowledge from the larger world [to the slave community] was a crucial act of resistance".<sup>20</sup> Slaves who had learned to read and write, against their masters' wishes or in secret, embodied resistance to slaveholder authority, and were therefore revered figures within slave communities. The mere "presence of literate slaves threatened to give lie to the entire system—literacy amongst slaves would expose slavery, and masters knew it", contended Heather Williams.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Janet Duitsman Cornelius, *When I can read my title clear*, *Literacy, Slavery, and Religion in the Antebellum South* (Columbia, 1991), p.3.

<sup>21</sup> Heather Andrea Williams, *Self-Taught, African American Education in Slavery and Freedom* (Chapel Hill; London, 2005), p.7.

Historians have not fully comprehended the significance of literacy in slave decision-making to abscond and in aiding their attempts to remain inconspicuous during fugitivity. This verdict is informed by extensive analysis of fugitive slave advertisements and American slave narratives. The historiographical tendency has been to associate slave rebelliousness with violent uprisings and revolts. The portrayal of slaves as infant-like “Sambo” figures, peddled by historians such as Ulrich B. Phillips, mischaracterised slaves as passive recipients of slaveholder treatment.<sup>22</sup> Herbert Aptheker began reversing this perception in his pioneering study of American slave revolts in the 1930s, showing that slaves resisted using a variety of methods ranging from the purchase of freedom to insurrection, inspiring new interpretations of slave resistance. Aptheker’s insistence that none of the eight forms of resistance he identified had “received anything like the treatment they deserved” was a call to arms for historians.<sup>23</sup> David Brion Davis, Douglas R. Egerton, Sylvia R. Frey, Vincent Harding, Walter C. Rucker, and Terri Snyder have addressed the historiographical lacunae identified by Aptheker and shown that slaves resisted their masters by robbing them of what they valued most—their bodies and labour—more often than engaging in violent insurrection.<sup>24</sup> Drawing on the findings of these works, I argue that slave fugitivity remains understudied and misinterpreted.

The reluctance of historians to consider that daily acts of resistance constituted *true resistance* to slavery has also contributed to the tendency to associate slave rebelliousness with revolt. As Francois Furstenberg explained, only in the last thirty to forty years have historians accepted that “nonviolent” acts such as “theft, escape, arson, lying, shirking work” were indeed acts of slave resistance.<sup>25</sup> Prior to this, only “revolutionary resistance” – organised, violent, political, challenges to the slave system – were regarded as “true resistance”. Non-violent acts of slave resistance, those which Kenneth Stampp categorised as daily acts of resistance, were more common but regarded as limited and non-political because they were not intended to challenge the slave system.<sup>26</sup> This perception was fuelled by white

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<sup>22</sup> Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, *American Negro Slavery: A Survey of the Supply, Employment and Control of Negro as Determined by the Plantation Regime* (New York; London, 1929).

<sup>23</sup> Aptheker identified eight forms of slave resistance including purchase of freedom, strikes, sabotage, suicide and self-mutilation, flight, enlistment in federal forces, anti-slavery agitation such as talking and writing, and revolts. See Herbert Aptheker, *American Negro Slave Revolts* (New York, 1943).

<sup>24</sup> For example, see David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770-1823* (London, 1975); Douglas R. Egerton, *Death or Liberty: African American and Revolutionary America* (New York, 2009); Sylvia R. Frey, *Water from the Rock: Black Resistance in a Revolutionary Age* (Princeton, New Jersey, 1992); Vincent Harding, *There is a River: The Black Struggle for Freedom in America* (New York, 1981); Walter C. Rucker, *The River Flows On: Black Resistance, Culture, and Identity Formation in Early America* (Baton Rouge, 2006); Terri L. Snyder, *The Power to Die: Slavery and Suicide in British North America* (Chicago; London, 2015).

<sup>25</sup> Furstenberg, ‘Beyond Freedom’, p.1317.

<sup>26</sup> Kenneth Milton Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South* (New York, 1956).

contemporaries who argued that acts of slave resistance were externally influenced or manifestations of social deviance rather than slave responses against their enslavement.<sup>27</sup>

The interpretation of slave resistance this chapter follows resembles James C. Scott's in his seminal work *Weapons of the Weak* (1985)—a study of “everyday” forms of resistance utilised by peasants, workers, and slaves—in which he highlighted the dangers of distinguishing “epiphenomenal” acts (pre-political) from “real resistance” (political).<sup>28</sup> The crux of his criticism, of which Eugene Genovese bore the brunt, centred around Genovese's insistence that “only insurrection represented political action” while all other acts were individualistic—“incidental” or “token”—because they lacked revolutionary impact.<sup>29</sup> Scott convincingly argued against this interpretation on the basis that it cast non-violent daily acts of slave resistance, including fugitivity, as “ultimately trivial or inconsequential”.<sup>30</sup>

All acts of slave resistance, violent and non-violent, were fundamentally political as they challenged the established racial and social order of the United States South, whether intentionally or not. Most acts of resistance were a form of “negotiation and renegotiation of the parameters of power and compulsion and racial polarities associated with them” but were politically significant as they signalled the rejection of slaveholders and white authority.<sup>31</sup> Slaves engaged in daily acts of resistance such as running away for immediate improvement in their situation. Fugitivity allowed slaves to achieve temporary refuge from a volatile situation. Other times, it was a means to achieve their permanent freedom from the slave system. Gordon S. Barker has argued that many acts of fugitivity from the American Revolution through the antebellum era were representative of an “unfinished American

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<sup>27</sup> Furstenberg argued that non-violent forms of resistance “made it easy to deny that most forms of slave resistance constituted true resistance”. He reasoned that “views of slaves as lazy, deceitful, and supine merely reinforced the Sambo stereotype, strengthening the belief that slaves lacked virtue and deserved their fate”. See Furstenberg, ‘Beyond Freedom’, pp.1317-1318.

<sup>28</sup> James C. Scott is professor of political scientist and anthropology at Yale University. See, James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven; London, 1985), p.289.

<sup>29</sup> Scott criticised Genovese insistence that daily acts of resistance such as “stealing, lying, dissembling, shirking, murder, infanticide, suicide, arson” were “at best...prepolitical” and made “no sense” other than indicate slave reaction to what they perceived as a violation of the master-slave relationship. Insurrection was, in Genovese's opinion, the only “political action,” thus *real* resistance, because it “directly challenged the power of the [slaveholding] regime”. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak*, p.292.

<sup>30</sup> Scott does accept that the categorisation of resistance into “epiphenomenal acts” and “real resistance” is useful for analysing forms of resistance. He described epiphenomenal activities as “Token or incidental” acts typically “unorganized, unsystematic, and individual”. They were “opportunistic and self-indulgent,” with “no revolutionary consequences,” and implied “in their intention or meaning, an accommodation with the system of domination”. In contrast, *real* resistance was “organized, systematic, and cooperative”. It was “principled and selfless” and had “revolutionary consequences” and “ideas or intentions that negate the basis of domination itself”. *Ibid.*, p.292.

<sup>31</sup> Kenneth Morgan, *Slavery and the British Empire: From Africa to America* (Oxford, 2007), p.128.

Revolution”—a struggle for freedom and equality.<sup>32</sup> These are common themes in the fugitive slave notices presented in this chapter which depict slaves in a final dash for freedom.

### Resistance and Slave Type Models

Mullin’s model of “inward” and “outward” resistance provides a prism through which to consider how and why slave resisted in specific ways. Although Mullin’s model is now more than four decades old, its typology is appropriate to this dissertation. Its focus on individual slaves and the political dimensions of their resistance are applicable to slave resistance as occurred in the United States South in the early national period. It is a model that accounts for nuances in the methods and goals of slave response to their enslavement but regards all as “true” acts of resistance. It is an especially useful model for this chapter as it allows a clear linkage to be established between literacy and slave fugitivity.

Mullin argued that styles of slave resistance – inward or outward – reflected slaves’ work routine and acculturative experience. While the origin of the slave and their proficiency in English language dictated their place in the work hierarchy, in turn, this job placement determined the rate and extent of their acculturation and assimilation. Mullin uses the terms acculturated and assimilated interchangeably to denote the development of slave familiarity with white mannerisms and customs including vocational skills, fluency in English language, and confidence in speaking mannerisms. This “acculturative process” developed as slaves travelled and laboured further from the slave community and their masters.<sup>33</sup>

Plantation slaves and those who were *new* arrivals to the United States were most likely to engage in “inwardly-directed” resistance against the plantation, claimed Mullin. The goals of resistance were “inward” because the slaves engaging in them were “scarcely knowledgeable of the society beyond their world” and “limited in acculturative resources as conversational English” to convincingly portray free persons if they absconded. Turning “their rage back on its source”, they resisted by stealing, damaging their masters’ property, and slowing their labour. These acts were “compulsive” and sometimes “desperate”. While they temporarily eased hardships in the slaves’ “material environment” they were “self-defeating” and “self-destructive” as the inevitable punishment arising from these actions worsened their condition. Slaves who were skilled and acculturated to “whites and their

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<sup>32</sup> Gordon S. Barker, *Fugitive Slaves and the Unfinished American Revolution: Eight Cases, 1848-1856* (Jefferson; London, 2013).

<sup>33</sup> Gerald W. Mullin, *Flight and Rebellion: Slave Resistance in Eighteenth-Century Virginia* (London; Oxford; New York, 1974), p.37.

ways” - fluent in English, sometimes multilingual, perceptive, and even literate – were more likely to resist “outwardly”. The goals of resistance were “long-range” and sometimes “intangible”, with slaves determined “to get as far as possible from their masters and the plantation”. This logic is applicable to acts of fugitivity intended to achieve freedom.<sup>34</sup>

Mullin’s model of “inward” and “outward” resistance does not account for all the nuances of slave resistance and is confined to eighteenth-century Virginia. Slave runaway advertisements, for example, suggest not all “outwardly” resisting slaves were fluent in English or assimilated. Peter Henry Morel’s slave, Dick, a “New Negro Fellow” who spoke “little or no English” and Castillo, a recent arrival to Maryland from St. Croix, who spoke “bad English,” contradict Mullin’s model.<sup>35</sup> Similarly, slaves who “stole themselves” by running away sometimes did so with short-term goals in mind such as in response to slaveholder treatment they deemed intolerable.<sup>36</sup> Motivations and methods of resistance were influenced by numerous factors including the size of the slaveholding and whether the slave regarded individual or group resistance as most likely to achieve the goal, or goals, of their resistance.<sup>37</sup> Mindful that there were exceptions to the model, it is nonetheless a very useful model through which to understand slave resistance. It supports the judgement that slaves who resisted *outwardly* - acculturated, literate, and linguistically versatile – also conformed to David Waldstreicher’s “Confidence Man” slave type.

The Confidence Man slave type was first introduced by David Waldstreicher in his article ‘Reading the Runaways’ (1999). The confidence man, a derivative of conman, was a master manipulator, skilled in deception and deceit. They were slaves with the “possessions and perceptions to make and remake” themselves. Identity “self-fashioning” – invention and reinvention - was a defining trait of the confidence man. They manipulated, deceived, and exploited “resource-rich whites,” “goods and texts,” “ambiguities in the dominant racial classification of eighteenth-century America” and used their “knowledge of the developing colonies” to transform their identities and “gain at least a measure of freedom”.<sup>38</sup> Waldstreicher listed four “stand out” attributes – clothing, trade, linguistics, and ethnicity –

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<sup>34</sup> Mullin’s use of the term “material environment” refers to the food, clothing, and other provisions that slaves were granted or denied. It is also used to describe the treatment that they received from their owners and any changes to their immediate environment or condition. Mullin, *Flight and Rebellion*, p.36.

<sup>35</sup> *Columbian Museum*, 17 March 1797; *American and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, 23 February 1807.

<sup>36</sup> By absenting their bodies, runaways were initiating or engaging in a form of discourse or negotiation with their masters and mistresses. They were reminding them of the treatment they would tolerate and the conditions in which they would labour. Sometimes the slave achieved the outcome they desired, other times they were chastised upon their return, sometimes they were beaten to death.

<sup>37</sup> Betty Wood, *Slavery in Colonial Georgia, 1730-1775* (Athens, 1984), p.175.

<sup>38</sup> Waldstreicher, ‘Reading the Runaways’, p.245.

among runaway notices for slaves who *pretended* to be free.<sup>39</sup> All of the characteristics that Waldstreicher lists, except clothing, had a bearing on slave opportunity and ability to learn to read and write.

My own spectrum offers insights into advertisers' observations and perceptions of the behaviour of the 45 slaves recorded in the FSP who could read and/or write and slaves with "artful" personalities. It was shown in Chapter Two that slave artfulness stemmed from reading but not writing in the case of my source base, something which no one else has established or claimed. Artful slaves – those who advertisers also considered extremely devious and dangerous– conform to the Confidence Man slave type. These slaves engaged in identity "self-fashioning" for the purpose of remaining inconspicuous and to conceal their identity as runaways.

I advance as a very strong probability that literacy was at the heart of slave *artfulness* and the Confidence Man slave type.<sup>40</sup> Artfulness, defined by in 1797 as "performed with art; artificial, not natural; cunning, skilful, dextrous", is a fitting description of skilled slaves who transformed their identities for the purpose of realising their permanent freedom.<sup>41</sup> Intelligent and pragmatic, these fugitive slaves transformed their appearance and behaviour to accomplish their "outward" goals. While not all slaves advertised as having "artful" personalities were described as being able to read this does not negate literacy. James Norcom, Harriet Jacobs' master, knew she was literate yet did not state this in the notice for her recapture. His suggestion that it was "probable she *designs* to transport herself to the North" and that she "speaks easily and fluently" was the only indication of her literacy.<sup>42</sup> It is presumed he was not the only slave master who omitted this information from their

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., p.248.

<sup>40</sup> I first explored the relationship between Mullin's "outward" resistance model and Waldstreicher's "confidence men" slave type in my master's thesis and have since developed the ideas. I have presented the developed ideas in a paper entitled 'Endeavouring to Pass as a Free Man' at the British Association for American Studies (BAAS) postgraduate conference at the University of Sussex, 15 November 2014. I also discuss the relationship between slave artfulness and the confidence man slave type in a blog post, 'The Art of Absconding: Slave Fugitivity in the Early Republic'. <https://earlyamericanists.com/2015/08/24/guest-post-the-art-of-absconding-slave-fugitivity-in-the-early-republic>. See Shaun Wallace, *Black Literacy and Slave Flight: Runaway Slave Advertisements in the late 18<sup>th</sup>/early 19<sup>th</sup> century US South*. Unpublished master's thesis. University of Stirling, 2012.

<sup>41</sup> For definition, see Thomas Sheridan, *A Complete Dictionary of the English Language, Both with regard to Sound and Meaning: One main Object of which is, to establish a plain and permanent Standard of Pronunciation. To which is Prefixed a Prosodial Grammar*. Fourth Edition (London: 1797).

<sup>42</sup> The advertisement also lends further credence to the view advanced in the previous chapter that advertisers sometimes "valued" their female slaves as sexual beings, offering rewards far in excess of what would be expected for a slave advertised with similar characteristics and skills. Norcom does not describe Harriet as a slave in the advertisement, only "my servant girl". His description of her hair – "thick...black hair that curls naturally, but which can be easily combed straight" – suggests Norcom took an intimate interest in her appearance. The advertisement was published in the *American Beacon* newspaper (Norfolk, Virginia) on 4 July 1835.

runaway notice. The secretive nature of slave learning suggests some masters were also unaware their slaves could read and write.

Figure 4.1. Runaway Advertisement for Harriet Jacobs.

**\$100 REWARD**

**W**ILL be given for the apprehension and delivery of my Servant Girl **HARRIET**. She is a light mulatto, 21 years of age, about 5 feet 4 inches high, of a thick and corpulent habit, having on her head a thick covering of black hair that curls naturally, but which can be easily combed straight. She speaks easily and fluently, and has an agreeable carriage and address. Being a good seamstress, she has been accustomed to dress well, has a variety of very fine clothes, made in the prevailing fashion, and will probably appear, if abroad, tricked out in gay and fashionable finery. As this girl absconded from the plantation of my son without any known cause or provocation, it is probable she designs to transport herself to the North.

The above reward, with all reasonable charges, will be given for apprehending her, or securing her in any prison or jail within the U. States.

All persons are hereby forewarned against harboring or entertaining her, or being in any way instrumental in her escape, under the most rigorous penalties of the law.

**JAMES NORCOM.**  
Edenton, N. C. June 30

Source: *American Beacon*, 4 July 1835.

### The Archetypal Confidence Man

Literate and intelligent slaves, knowledgeable and with a strong sense of self-identity, ran from their masters in the hope of achieving their permanent freedom from slavery. These slaves were often enlightened and empowered, “imbued with a pride and *confidence* that enhanced their ability to cope resourcefully with whites when they became fugitives”.<sup>43</sup> Advertisers attempted to counter their exceptionalism by portraying them in their notices as imposters - “pretending” or “endeavouring” to *pass* as free persons in their advertisements.

<sup>43</sup> Mullin, *Flight and Rebellion*, p.37.



Literacy – informing many slaves’ decision to run and empowering their attempts to “pass” as free – was central to the confidence man. The following cases are all captured in the FSdb and are for literate slaves engaging in identity transformation. They have been chosen because they most clearly highlight the relationship between slave literacy, artfulness, and the confidence man slave type. While enslaved people in Georgia and Maryland escaped for numerous reasons including fear of punishment, to test slaveholder authority, fear of sale, dissolution of the family unit, or simply because the opportunity arose, the following are slave types that have received less coverage in the historiography of American slavery and slave resistance.

John Ruppert’s sole advertisement for his “Negro Fellow”, Prophet, portrays a truly remarkable slave.<sup>44</sup> Articulate, literate, and well-spoken, Prophet was the archetypal *confidence man* engaging in an act of *outward resistance*. “Well known in and about Savannah,” Prophet, “between 25 and 30 years of age,” had been purchased from “Mr Leonard Cecil” of the city but had escaped in September 1792, prompting Ruppert to issue a runaway advertisement in the *Georgia Gazette*. The advertisement was dated 25 September 1792, although it was not printed until 18 October (1792). It warned “Masters of vessels, Patroons [sic] of boats, and others” against “employing, concealing, or carrying off” Prophet; Ruppert fearing his slave would make his escape via the Savannah River. First describing Prophet’s appearance – “5 feet 6 or 7 inches high, thick set”, “very proportionable, of a tolerable dark complexion, [and] bushy hair” – Ruppert turned his attention to his slave’s skills and character. Prophet spoke “good English” but Ruppert associated this with him being “very smooth tongued” and therefore likely to “tell a very plausible story”. Ruppert’s admission inadvertently suggests Prophet was articulate and persuasive. He continued that it was “very probable” that Prophet would “pass for a free man *as* he can both read and write”. Explicitly linking Prophet’s literateness with his passing for a free man, Ruppert’s admission supports the opinion that literacy was at the centre of the “confidence man” slave type.

Joshua Brittingham of Snow-hill, Worcester County, the most eastern county in Maryland, advertised in the Easton-based *Republican Star* newspaper on 17 May 1803 for his “dark mulatto” runaway slave, Daniel.<sup>45</sup> He, like Prophet, was expected by his master to create for himself a new identity to conceal his identity as a fugitive slave. Brittingham revealed that it was “very likely he may have changed his name” in an attempt to pass for a free person. Brittingham’s acknowledgment that his slave could “write a good legible hand”

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<sup>44</sup> *Georgia Gazette*, 18 October 1792.

<sup>45</sup> *Republican Star*, 17 May 1803.

indicated Daniel would probably forge a pass or freedom certificate for himself. Among Daniel's other skills, he was described as "an excellent house-carpenter" and "a tolerably good accountant". The admission of his skills, coupled with Daniel carrying off "sundry carpenters [sic] tools" and several items of "sundry clothing", suggests he had no intention of returning. Brittingham did not speculate as to Daniel's whereabouts or likely destination but the issuance of the advertisement in Easton provides some indication. While it served as a warning that Daniel would likely seek employment as a carpenter in the town, it also provided the residents of Easton with a description of his appearance to help identify him. Daniel was "very likely", "six feet about one or two inches high" and could be easily distinguished by his "remarkable long feet", a "scar on his breast about as big as the end of a finger", and a "small dint or hole on one of his cheeks". While his distinct walk would also aid his identification—"stoops very much...with his toes turned in"—the printing and reprinting of the advertisements throughout the month of May suggests it was not successful, at least, immediately.

Among the confidence men of the Upper South was Cuffee, a slave "bred up to plantation business" but with "more ingenuity than is common to his class". He had absconded "sometime in the month of March 1796" but the advertisement for his recapture was not printed until 15 October 1798.<sup>46</sup> Cuffee had been a fugitive for a number of years, his literacy apparently supporting his passing as a free man. Issued by John Hay on behalf of his wife Mary Maury, Hay was in "no doubt" that Cuffee would "endeavor to pass there [Chester-town, Maryland] as a free man".<sup>47</sup> This suspicion appears to have stemmed from Hay having "learned since his [Cuffee's] elopement" that he had "obtained a pass, together with letters directed, as he pretended, to someone in Chester-town, Maryland". It is striking that despite Hay admitting Cuffee could "read and write," he would only remark that Cuffee had "*obtained* a pass" and "*pretended*" to have letters directed to someone in Chester-town. He did not want to acknowledge that Cuffee was skilled, highly perceptive, and had been able to remain inconspicuous, probably aided by his ability to write.

Hay, determined to unmask Cuffee for the purpose of his recapture, described his appearance intimately. Besides being a "stout, able bodied negro fellow...remarkably black...

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<sup>46</sup> *Federal Gazette*, 15 October 1798.

<sup>47</sup> Robert Kirk Headley, Jr's., genealogical abstracts from eighteenth-century Virginia newspapers lists a John Hay of Richmond, Virginia, who married Miss Mary Maury, the daughter of Reverend Walter Maury, Orange County, Virginia in Fredericksburg, Virginia 1797. The advertisement was printed in the *Virginia Herald*, 28 February 1797. See Robert Kirk Headley Jr., *Genealogical Abstracts from 18<sup>th</sup>-Century Virginia Newspapers* (Baltimore, 2007), p.157.

nearly six-feet high”, Cuffee was also “knock-kneed” and his legs bent far back when standing”. More closely examined, he would be discovered to have “very white teeth and small eyes” and “eye-lashes that curl in an uncommon degree”. Hay also predicted how Cuffee would respond or behave under certain circumstances. “When accosted” he [Cuffee] appears confused, stammers” and when “closely questioned generally rubs his head with his hand,” revealed Hay. As a “tolerable shoe-maker” he had “*perhaps* hired himself as a journeyman to some one of that possession, in whatever part of the country he may be”.

The prediction of slave behaviour when spoken to and speculation over their likely whereabouts were common advertiser techniques to appear in control despite fugitivity and the issuance of advertisements denoting that control of a slave, or slaves, had been found wanting. The second-guessing of slave decision-making in print was intended to influence and undermine slave action and agency. It is presumed that advertisers were, in some instances, directly communicating with slaves through their printed advertisements. For the general reader, the prediction of slave behaviour and action was intended to accentuate the perception that they, the masters, were always one step ahead of their slaves and always in control.

When his “Negro Man” Jack absconded from near Culpepper Court House, Virginia, on 25 September 1799, Carter Beverly was in little doubt he would his use his literacy to support his attempts to pass as a free person.<sup>48</sup> In appearance, his advertisement revealed, Jack was “5 feet 10 or 11 inches high, very muscular, full faced” and had “wide nostrils, large-eyes, and a down look”.<sup>49</sup> While he may have appeared frightened or sheepish as was common among slaves described with a “down-look”, Jack was a confidence man.<sup>50</sup> He was an “artful” slave that could “both read and write” and was a “good fiddler”. These characteristics led Beverly to conceive that it was “probable that he may attempt a forgery, and pass for a free man”. Having “been told [Jack] was seen making for Alexandria,” Jack

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<sup>48</sup> It is likely that this is the same Carter Beverly that authored a letter claiming Andrew Jackson had been offered the support of Henry Clay’s friends in his bid for the Presidency on the condition that he [Jackson] would not make John Quincy Adams Secretary of State. See *Alexandria Gazette*, 9 June 1827; A public exchange between Beverly and Clay was published in *Niles’ Weekly Register*, 16 April 1842. In the exchange, Beverly apologised to Clay and acknowledged his regret at sending the letter. He is writing to try and atone the public damage inflicted on Clay’s character.

<sup>49</sup> The advertisement originally printed in Baltimore’s *Federal Gazette* newspaper on 15 November 1799. It was subsequently reprinted several times in late January 1800 in the *Columbian Mirror and Alexandria Gazette* (Virginia).

<sup>50</sup> Historian Daniel Meaders characterised slaves with a “*down-look*” as those who “appeared frightened and sheepish”. He also observed these slaves always spoke English and in some instances multiple languages. See Daniel E. Meaders, ‘South Carolina Fugitives as Viewed Through Local Colonial Newspapers with Emphasis on Runaway Notices, 1732-1801’, *The Journal of Negro History*, 60:2 (Apr., 1975), p.309.

was expected to conceal his identity and make for Baltimore where his former owner, Mr Augustin Baughan, formerly of Fredericksburg, now resided. The issuance of a runaway notice in Baltimore's *Federal Gazette* newspaper (Maryland) *before* it was printed several times in the *Columbian Mirror and Alexandria Gazette* (Virginia) is evidence that Beverly presumed Jack had reached the city as he intended. In Baltimore, Beverly assumed Jack would adopt the surname Taylor and "pass" as Jack Taylor, a free man.

Henry Ware, Jr., expected Isaac to similarly attempt to try and pass as a free person in Savannah during his fugitivity. Isaac had escaped from his master's plantation in Edgefield, South Carolina, near the courthouse, on 1 October 1797 but was not advertised as a runaway for almost one month.<sup>51</sup> This delay may have reflected Ware's confidence that Isaac would be recaptured without the need for an advertisement to be issued. The delay might also have been on account of Ware waiting for news of Isaac's whereabouts before targeting Savannah, where he was expected to conceal himself, with advertisements. Equally, the delay may have reflected Ware's distance from the print press. The distance between Edgefield to Savannah was considerable, approximately 150 miles. The issuance of the advertisement in Savannah's *Columbian Museum* newspaper marked a change in approach. Ware warned that it was "very probable" Isaac had "changed his name" and would "endeavour to pass as a free man" in Savannah having crossed state lines into Georgia. His pursuit was relentless and his fear not unfounded. Ware's advertisement was printed just one further time before it ceased being printed. The cessation of the notice suggests that the "remarkable" young "country born Negro" able to "read and write a little" and speak English, had successfully reinvented himself as a free man in the city or beyond.

On Boxing Day 1792, Jeff, twenty-five years old, absconded from Edward Norwood's plantation in Elkridge Landing on the Patapsco River, Baltimore County, Maryland. Norwood, a combative character, had a record as a self-publicist skilled in using newspapers to air his grievances and to engage the public.<sup>52</sup> He and his brother, Samuel, with

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<sup>51</sup> *Columbian Museum*, 31 October 1797.

<sup>52</sup> Edward Norwood was a captain in the 4<sup>th</sup> Maryland Regiment but was court-martialled during the American Revolution for misconduct, including undermining General William Smallwood. Following his dismissal, Norwood wrote several letters concerning his dismissal and these were printed in Maryland newspapers. They were intended to assert blame for his dismissal on Smallwood's vindictive character. The letters show Norwood to be especially concerned with his public image and how the public perceived his dismissal. For example, on 5 January 1779 in *Dunlap's Maryland Gazette or The Baltimore General Advertiser*, Norwood attempted to "differentiate between me [Norwood] and those who have been dismissed for dishonourable conduct" and to "beg leave to assure them [the public] through your paper, that I have suffered this *heavy misfortune* for only saying, General Smallwood has been guilty of partiality in my case". Norwood proclaimed the General Smallwood to be "no gentleman". Naturally, Smallwood rebutted these claims, offering the public to infer for

whom he operated the plantation in Elkridge, regularly advertised in local newspapers for slave runaways.<sup>53</sup> This time was no exception. A runaway notice for Jeff was printed on 8 January 1793 in Baltimore's *Maryland Journal* newspaper, five days after he had absconded.<sup>54</sup>

While Jeff's physical appearance was unremarkable – a “dark mulatto man,” “five feet nine inches high,” “well made” with a “lost eye-tooth” - he embodied the “confidence man” slave type engaging in “outward” resistance. Jeff was a “good waggoner” and a generally skilled slave who understood “all kinds of plantation-work well”. He was “very talkative,” able to “*perhaps* read a little,” and while generally “very sensible”, was *also* an “artful fellow”. The labelling of Jeff “artful” was deliberate. It warned slaveholders and slaveholding societies to be vigilant for a particularly cunning and capable character now in their midst – a “confidence man” marauding under the guise of a free black person. Norwood was in “no doubt” that Jeff had the capability to *self-fashion* for himself a new identity. He would endeavour “to change his clothes and procure a pass if possible”.

Jeff's value to Norwood is in little doubt. The thirty pounds (approximately \$135) reward suggests Norwood prized him highly. It also reflected Norwood's opinion that his runaway would be “taken up out of state”.<sup>55</sup> His issuance of the advertisement in the neighbouring state's *Virginia Gazette and Alexandria Advertiser* lends further credence to this opinion.<sup>56</sup>

The motivation behind Jeff's escape is less certain. Norwood's insistence that his slave only “professes to be a Methodist,” a backhanded admission that his slave was religious, coupled with likely being able to read, raises the possibility that Jeff had been inspired to rebel from his religious readings. Jeff was an acculturated slave capable of interpreting the Bible for himself thus undermining Norwood's ability to direct or skew his interpretation of

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themselves whether “Mr Norwood is that *immaculate person* he and others have set-forth”. [*Maryland Journal*, 23 February 1779].

<sup>53</sup> Edward and Samuel both operated the plantation at Elk-Ridge landing and this can be established from a 1779 advertisement in the *Maryland Journal*, to which both men put their name. The advertisement concerned the taking up of “four cows,” “a sorrel coloured mare” and “a horse colt” that had wandered into their plantation. See *Maryland Journal*, 16 February 1779; Samuel Norwood also appears in the FSdb.

<sup>54</sup> The delay in advertising Jeff as a runaway was typical of the festive period. Fugitivity often went undiscovered, or at least was not advertised, until early January; For the notice for Jeff, see *Maryland Journal*, 8 January 1793.

<sup>55</sup> When several rewards were included in a single advertisement—a more generous reward being offered the farther a slave had travelled and therefore the greater effort to have them recovered—it was common practice for advertisers to include the most likely to be reclaimed reward value at the head of the advertisement. Although some advertisers included the most generous reward at the head of the advertisement to attract the readers' attention, this was not always the case. In the case of Norwood, the reward he emphasised at the head of the advertisement reflected his belief that Jeff would be “taken up out of the State”. He offered a lesser reward of fifteen pounds for the apprehension and confinement of Jeff in “gaol, so that I get him again...if taken up within this state”.

<sup>56</sup> *Virginia Gazette and Alexandria Advertiser*, 14 March 1793.

the material he read. Another possibility is that Jeff had been *spoilt* with favourable treatment. Jeff had been permitted more freedom of movement than other slaves on the plantation and travelled afar as a driver of Norwood's wagon. It is likely he was a transient visitor to Baltimore, the hub of Maryland's commercial activity, where his encounters with the city's swelling free black population, including former slaves manumitted by their masters, exposed him to ideas of freedom. This may have inspired him to begin questioning the plantation world in which he was enslaved. Exposure to the world beyond slavery and to notions of freedom appear to have initiated his acculturative process and, in turn, threatened his "negotiated relationship" with Norwood.<sup>57</sup> Norwood had attempted to appease Jeff's rebellious cravings by permitting him more freedom but this freedom appears to have been the roots of Jeff's rebelliousness. Norwood's emphasis of the word "slave", capitalised at the foot of the advertisement, served to remind Jeff of his status; he might have been granted more freedom *within* slavery but he was still legally the property of another person.

The infusion of reading and religion appear to have been instrumental in Hercules' escape "about the last of January 1793". Isaiah Wright and Thomas Hamilton of Columbia County, Georgia, described their slave as a "very artful and impertinent" character who read "remarkably well" and "pretends to be religious". A confidence man, Hercules was devious and deceptive and "often" changed his name; a "notorious offender, for which he carries the mark of a whip on his back". Hercules appears to have been a particularly discontented slave. This was not his first attempt at running away and passing as a free person. Wright and Hamilton, determined to reassert their control over Hercules after he had circumvented it, issued a \$10 reward for his recapture, "dead or alive".<sup>58</sup>

Most slaves who engaged in identity transformation or were expected by their advertisers to pass as free persons did so alone, however, such instances also involved fugitive groupings, three of which were captured in the FSP. When Bob and Marlborough, "negro men slaves," ran away from John Montague and John Owen residing near the Rappahannock River in Essex County, Virginia, both fugitives were expected to go to Maryland "where they will endeavour to pass for free men".<sup>59</sup> The "variety of clothes" both men had carried with them was intended to support that endeavour. Montague and Owen were in little doubt that Bob had masterminded their escape. He was a skilled slave, a "rough

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<sup>57</sup> For negotiation in the master-slave relationship, Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge, Massachusetts; London, 1998), p.2.

<sup>58</sup> *Georgia Gazette*, 8 August 1793.

<sup>59</sup> *Maryland Journal*, 8 October 1790.

house-carpenter and a blacksmith”, by trade. He could also “read and write a little” and was “very fond of playing upon the fiddle”. In appearance, he was “a large able-bodied Fellow” with a lameness in his right leg and with a “lump nearly as big as an egg” on his shin bone owing to the “cut of an axe”. It was however the “many scars on his back” that would “fully evince him to be a very great villain”. Marlborough, in contrast, had “no shew [show] of villainy”. Montague and Owen implicated Bob as the ringleader of their deception—the devious and dangerous literate slave type—who had corrupted his brother and convinced him to rebel.

In similar fashion, Richard Lunsford implicated Spencer as the leader when he and his brother, Roger, escaped on 25 September 1797 from Mr John M. Gilmore of Lancaster County, Virginia. “Sawyers by trade”, Gilmore had hired them from Lunsford of Northumberland County, Virginia.<sup>60</sup> Spencer and Roger were expected to conceal their identities as runaways. They would “change their clothes and names” and attempt “to pass as freemen”. The issuance of the advertisement in neighbouring Maryland, in the *Federal Gazette* newspaper, suggests Lunsford expected the brothers to secrete themselves among Baltimore’s large free black population. Having “carried off a good many clothes with them” he recognised that a description of this men’s attire would be a fruitless endeavour. They were unlikely to be wearing the “virgin cloth clothes and kersey black yarn New-Market” they had on at the time of their escape. Lunsford, like Montague and Owen, suspected Spencer, the literate and more exceptional of the brothers, had convinced Roger to escape with him. A “remarkably sensible fellow,” Spencer could “read print pretty well” and was numerically literate, able to “measure plank or scantling very quick by his head,” and able to “turn his hand to almost any sort of business”. In contrast, Roger, the younger of the brothers, was a “simple looking fellow” only remarkable for his tendency to grin when spoken to, claimed Lunsford.

### **Endeavouring to Pass as a Free Person: Artful Slaves**

Slave literateness, as these examples attest, was a recurring theme in advertisements for slaves expected by their masters to engage in identity transformation. Slaves who could read, write, or were proficient in both, were expected to “attempt” or “endeavour” to pass as free persons by their masters. In the absence of literateness, slave “artfulness” was also a common personality trait of runaways expected to pass as free persons. As my own spectrum

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<sup>60</sup> *Federal Gazette*, 22 January 1798.

of observed and perceived behaviour highlights, artful slaves were expected to transform their names, behaviour, and appearance in an attempt to remain inconspicuous whilst fugitives at large. The following advertisements have been selected from the FSdb and are for artful slaves. While the fugitive subjects were not advertised as literate, they share striking similarities with the previously discussed literate slaves such as Prophet and Jeff who engaged in identity transformation. While the following slaves were not advertised as literate, I suggest they probably were; the advertisers appear to have simply omitted this information.

Among the most remarkable of the runaways advertised by their owners as artful was Harry, a “negro fellow” belonging to Joseph Brailsford of Indian Land, South Carolina. An older runaway at fifty years of age, he was considerably above the mean age of a fugitive in that state. Harry was described by Brailsford as “very artful”. He was expected to “probably endeavor to pass for a free Negro Doctor” having been “commonly known by the name of Dr. Harry”. While Harry’s inspiration for forming this character is unclear, presumably he had some medical knowledge which allowed him to convincingly portray a doctor. He must have been confident in his own ability to do so realising that he would almost certainly be punished if uncovered as a runaway. The nature of his relationship with Flora, a “young country born Wench...very remarkable for having the toes on her feet growing sideways” who he had “carried off” is not known. Brailsford’s issuance of the runaway notice in the *Georgia Gazette* and his insistence they be delivered to “any gaol in this state, or the state of Georgia” suggesting he believed they were intended for Georgia.<sup>61</sup>

Adam was also expected by his owner, John Fox, to pass as free after he ran away on 25 February 1793. About “35 years of age,” “5 feet 5 or 6 inches high,” Adam was a “country born” and skilled slave.<sup>62</sup> He was bi-lingual, able to speak “good English and French,” and was a “very good barber and cook” by trade. Fox “supposed” Adam would “endeavour to go up the country, or to Charleston (South Carolina), and pass for free *as* he is very artful”. Fox’s insistence that his runaway be delivered to him in Little Ogeechee (Georgia) or “the Gaoler of Savannah,” if captured, was an indication he expected Adam to escape Georgia via Savannah, possibly by vessel.

In either case, Fox’s use of “artful” warned the public that a particularly cunning slave was at large. His comments upon Adam’s physiognomy portrayed him as a threat. While “the whites of his eyes look red,” Adam also had a “deceitful countenance”. Fox was preying

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<sup>61</sup> *Georgia Gazette*, 30 December 1790.

<sup>62</sup> *Georgia Gazette*, 16 May 1793.



upon the fear of slave rebelliousness common in slaveholding societies, portraying Adam as fierce and devious. By increasing anxiety that a dangerous slave was roaming in their midst, he hoped to increase the chances that this “threat” would be hastily recaptured. Fox’s efforts clearly failed. An advertisement printed in the *Georgia Gazette* between 7 July and 28 July 1796, three years after the initial escape, confirmed Adam was still a fugitive.<sup>63</sup> Fox had increased the reward for his recapture from ten to one hundred dollars but his description of Adam was largely unchanged. Fox appears to have been reluctant to admit that Adam had, and was still, outsmarting the efforts to have him recaptured. While he had “been frequently seen about Savannah, Little Ogeechee, and Great Ogeechee,” Adam was “supposed...harbored by some white person who has a desire of purchasing him”.

Artful slaves advertised as passing for free persons were not confined to the lower South. James, a runaway belonging to Thomas Gordon of Northumberland, Virginia, absconded in the winter of 1790. The issuance of an advertisement on 18 September 1792 suggests he, like Adam in Georgia, was still a fugitive several years after his escape.<sup>64</sup> Gordon clearly valued James and his resolve to have him recaptured was reflected in the one hundred dollar reward he offered. James was a skilled slave, “by trade a blacksmith” but also “a tolerably good sawyer”. He appears to have been hired to Thomas Dickinson, a Baltimore merchant, who was included in the advertisement as a person to whom James could be delivered if recaptured. While the motive for his escape is unclear, it is likely that James was reluctant to return to Gordon in Virginia having developed a taste for freedom in Baltimore. As “he is artful...I imagine he will attempt to pass as a free man, and perhaps may have obtained a forged pass for that purpose,” claimed Gordon, believing the pass would support his attempts to pass by the name “Darcus” to which “it is probable he may change his name”. It is unclear what prompted Gordon’s sole advertisement for James two years after his initial escape. It is suggested that Gordon was reminding James, despite his considerable absence, that he still owned him and was unwavering in his resolve to have him recovered and returned to his service.

Marmaduke Semmes, of Port Tobacco, Maryland, also expected his “country born” slave, Stephen, to reinvent himself as a free man.<sup>65</sup> He was expected to do so by changing his

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<sup>63</sup> *Georgia Gazette*, 7 July 1796.

<sup>64</sup> *Maryland Journal*, 18 September 1792.

<sup>65</sup> It is presumed that this Marmaduke Semmes (Simms), born 1774, was the son of Marmaduke Simms (died 1774) and Susanna/Susanna Simms (nee Burtles). Marmaduke Simms’ 1774 will left “To children Aloysius and Sarah, and unborn child (Marmaduke) the Negroes at decess of wife, and other personalty [sic]”. See Harry Wright Newman, *The Maryland Semmes and Kindred Families: A Genealogical History of Marmaduke Semme(s), Gent,*

name and using a pass to corroborate his deception.<sup>66</sup> In appearance, Stephen was a “well-looking fellow,” “about six feet high,” “straight” and “well-made” with “a small red spot in the white of one of his eyes” and a crook “in the first joint” of one of his little fingers, caused by a felon”.<sup>67</sup> His clothing at the time of escape included “a blue Negro-cotton great-coat” and “country-cotton under-jacket with yellow stripes” but Semmes believed it “very probable” that he would “change his dress, *as* he is a very artful fellow, and can tell a very plausible story”. Whether Semmes’ inclusion of his story-telling ability was linked to his Stephen’s ability to obtain new clothing or was a general comment on his character is unclear but what can be established is that he linked his slave’s artfulness with him *possibly* endeavouring “to pass as a free man”. Semmes expected Stephen “to show a pass as such and change his name” in support of his deception.

Elie Burgee, a prominent slaveholder in Frederick County, Maryland, expected his runaway, George, to change both his name and dress in an attempt to pass for a free man.<sup>68</sup> George was born in Prince George’s County before he “came away from there a small boy”. Burgee had “lately purchased” him from Joseph Garrot, a fellow resident of Frederick County. The short time he had been in Burgee’s possession before his escape and his “ill look when spoken to” suggests he had not adjusted to life with him. The close proximity of Pennsylvania, which had been gradually abolishing slavery since 1780, also appears to have been too tempting for George to resist. He escaped on 30 April 1803 and Burgee waited less than one week before advertising him as a runaway on 6 May 1803. He felt compelled to act promptly. The emphasis of a “Twenty Dollars Reward” at the head of the advertisement, offered for George being taken “out of the state” reflected Burgee’s fear that George had headed northward and crossed over the Frederick County northern border into Pennsylvania. Once there, George was expected to “try to pass as a free man”. He was expected to achieve this by changing “his name and dress”; a consequence of him “being an artful fellow”.

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*and His Descendants: Including the Allied Families of Greene, Simpson, Boarman, Matthews, Thompson, Middleton, and Neale* (Westminster (MD.), 2007), pp.128-129.

<sup>66</sup> *Maryland Journal*, 4 December 1793.

<sup>67</sup> A felon is defined by the Oxford English Dictionary as a “small abscess or boil, an inflamed sore”. Definition of ‘felon, n.2’. *OED Online*, Oxford University Press. March 2017.

<http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.stir.ac.uk/view/Entry/69118?rskey=C3rm9x&result=1&isAdvanced=false> [Accessed 10 June 2017].

<sup>68</sup> *Republican Gazette and General Advertiser*, 6 May 1803.

### “Rogues” and “Villains”: Bad Characters (Artful Slaves)

The characterisation of slaves as artful by advertisers was calculated and deliberate. It was a pejorative phrase that advertisers did not liberally assign to fugitives. It described intelligent, knowledgeable, and imaginative slaves. Advertisers attempted to counter their slaves’ exceptionalism by portraying their artfulness as a negative personality type. Advertisers linked it to deception – to the passing as free persons – and other devious behaviour and negative personality traits. Identity transformation was a defining feature of Waldstreicher’s confidence man slave type. These slaves, as my own model of perceived and observed behaviour highlights, were considered “bad” characters; extremely dangerous slaves who would manipulate and deceive those around them to achieve their freedom.

Robert Brocket’s advertisement for his runaway, Richard Thompson, printed on 26 April 1805, is a fitting example of this point.<sup>69</sup> Brocket was one of a number highly educated and influential Scottish immigrants residing in Alexandria, Virginia.<sup>70</sup> He was born in Lanarkshire, Scotland, around 1751 or 1752 but had moved to Alexandria in 1784.<sup>71</sup> Richard, his “negro man” slave, was “about 32 or 33 years” old, of a “dark complexion,” and although he had “bad teeth” and was “knock-kneed,” was “tolerably well made”. Richard was a hired slave who had “served seven years to the late Daniel Douglass, as brander of flour”.<sup>72</sup> Despite having “nearly three years to serve, at the expiration of which time he is to be free,” Richard had decided to dictate his own fate, absconding to realise his freedom sooner. While it was “very probable” that Richard would “change his name,” Brocket was clear as to where Richard was destined. The issuance of the advertisement in Baltimore confirmed that Richard was expected, like other runaways, to hide himself among the city’s large black population. Fearing his “very artful cunning fellow” would be successful in passing himself

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<sup>69</sup> *Republican Advocate*, 26 April 1805.

<sup>70</sup> Scots constituted the largest group of immigrants to Alexandria. Many Scots relocated to Alexandria with their families after the Irish Rebellion of 1798. Robert Brocket (Brockett) is listed among a number of Scots that relocated to Alexandria before 1800. See Franklin Longdon Brockett and George W. Rock, *A Concise History of the City of Alexandria, VA., From 1669 to 1883 with a Directory of Reliable Business Houses in the City* (Alexandria, 1888), pp.8-9.

<sup>71</sup> Edward J. Brockett, John B Koetteritz and Francis E. Brockett, *The Descendants of John Brockett, One of the Original Founders of New Haven Colony: Illustrated with Portraits and Armorial Bearings and Historical Introduction Relating to the Settlement for New Haven and Wallingford, Connecticut. The English Brocketts. “A Pedigree of Brockett”*. Published in England in 1860 (East Orange (N. J.), 1905), p.242.

<sup>72</sup> Although Brocket did not provide any information on Douglass, subsequent research suggests he was Daniel Douglas, flour inspector in Alexandria, Virginia. He was regularly mentioned in Alexandria newspapers from 1800-1805. Douglass, “inspector of flour for the County of Alexandria”, was listed among a number of appointees to the Circuit Court of the District of Columbia. See *Alexandria Daily Advertiser*, 25 March 1801. A runaway notice by Elizabeth Peake for a runaway “Negro man”, Nace, also mentioned Douglas. The advertisement describes how Nace had “Absconded from the employ of Daniel Douglass, flour inspector in the town of Alexandria”. See *Alexandria Daily Advertiser*, 14 January 1803.

as a free man, Brocket resorted to mischaracterising him. Richard was an exceptional slave, able to “read, write, and cypher,” but was “much addicted to liquor,” “fond of showing his learning” and prone to “making use of high flown language”. The characterisation of Richard as a deceitful and boastful slave, whose drunkenness rendered him an unreliable source of information, was intended to undermine his exceptionalism and credibility.

A slave who could articulately condemn a master or reveal their poor treatment had to be silenced. J. P. Ward wasted no time advertising for his runaway, Nick, when he absconded on 20 August 1794. The urgency to have him recaptured was evident in the issuance of a runaway notice one day after his escape. The advertisement was printed in Savannah’s *Georgia Gazette* newspaper.<sup>73</sup> Nick’s appearance was fairly unremarkable - “5 feet 9 inches high,” “well built” and of a “not very black complexion” - however his personality was not. Ward warned the public to be “very much on their guard” for Nick for he was “an artful designing fellow” who would “deceive them and pass for a free negro”. Ward linked his deception to his ability to speak “with much confidence” having “a great deal to say for himself”. Reading beyond the lines, Nick appears to have been a confident and articulate slave. Ward, to counter this, portrayed him as a storyteller.

Another method that advertisers resorted to was to portray the fugitive slaves as generally “good” slaves whose decision to abscond was attributable to recent bad behaviour or some other form of negative influence such as liquor. John Moale, residing in “Gunpowder Forest, near the Quaker meeting house, in Baltimore County”, advertised for his runaway “negro man”, Charles, on 26 March 1799.<sup>74</sup> Charles had run off on 8 June 1798, thus had been a fugitive for a considerable time before the advertisement was printed. Intimately describing Charles’s appearance—“yellowish complexion”, “full suit of wool”, “well set”, and “a large black stripe across his nose and cheek”—attention soon turned to his character. “He is much addicted to liquor, and when drunk is remarkably stupid and heavy”, wrote Moale, “but when sober has a pleasant countenance”. Liquor made Charles “talkative, lively” and, in Moale’s opinion, “rather impudent”; traits he evidently regarded as unfitting for a slave to exhibit. For Charles, liquor appears to have been no more than an occasional indulgence that temporarily alleviated his mood and allowed him to relax. In any case, Moale’s description was purposefully crafted to associate his “artful” and “cunning”

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<sup>73</sup> It is unclear whether Nick had absconded from Ward in Skidaway Island, Georgia or from Robert Bolton of Savannah, who was also named in the notice. The advertisement was printed in the *Georgia Gazette*, 21 August 1794.

<sup>74</sup> *Federal Gazette*, 26 March 1799.

personality—and associated behaviours—with that of a “bad” slave type. Charles “may change his name, and endeavor to pass for a free man”; the intention to emphasise (to the reader) that a dangerous and deceptive slave lurked in their midst. He could be identified by the burn upon his hand, Moale reassured the public, which had been issued “by order of Baltimore County Criminal Court fir house breaking”. While advanced as *proof* of his rebellious character and to identify him to a vigilant public, the distinctive burn upon his body does not appear to have had success in recovering him. The advertisement was reprinted several times before being withdrawn. Charles was apparently still able to avoid recapture almost a year after escaping.

The characterisation of slaves as drunkards was not unique to Maryland. In Georgia, J. S. De Montmollin adopted a similar approach when advertising for his “runaway negro”, Peter, who had run off “about 7 o’clock in the morning” on the morning of the 8 December [1801] and “taken the Charleston or Augusta road”.<sup>75</sup> Looking beyond Montmollin’s claim that his slave was a “great drunkard and thief” who told “a plausible story”, Peter, he admitted, was able to “read and write” and spoke “good English”. Portraying Peter as a storyteller and a drunk appears to have been no more than an attempt by a vengeful slaveholder to undermine the exceptionalism of a literate and articulate slave who had rejected his master’s authority.

A particularly shrewd advertising technique, Moale and Montmollin’s descriptions of Charles and Peter, respectively, inspires the question with whom the advertisers sought to communicate when portraying their slaves as drunkards to demean their character and credibility. While public perception was never far from the mind of the slaveholder, the acknowledgement of good behaviour suggests the fugitive themselves might have been the intended audience. Advertiser recognition of their slaves’ “good” behaviour was intended to quash any apprehension slaves may have harboured over returning on their own accord. Absolving the slave of blame by apparently recognising their actions were out of character and not intended, slaveholders attempted to lure them back to slavery while, concurrently, undermining their agency. The slave did not intend to act in a rebellious manner, so the logic reasoned, but instead, expressions of “bad” behaviours, such as fugitivity, were the *effect of* liquor and intoxication. In other words, liquor had impaired the judgement of the slave or slaves, who would not normally act in such a manner when in their normal state of mind. The intention of this advertising technique, with regard to wider slaveholding society, was to

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<sup>75</sup> *Columbian Museum*, 18 December 1801.

absolve the slaveholder of blame for the slave running off and shield them from any criticism that their authority had been found wanting; fugitivity was to be portrayed as a sporadic act that owed to poor slave decision-making. If these advertiser ploys were unsuccessful in convincing the slave to return to his or her master, they at least, slaveholder reasoned, served to undermine slave decision-making and agency.

While artful slaves were characterised by advertisers as drunkards, they were also characterised as “villains” and “rogues”. When Jim absconded on 23 February 1804, his master, William Stinson of Maryland, described him as an “artful villain”.<sup>76</sup> Jim was no stranger to running away and Stinson made no secret of it, proclaiming that it was “the 5th time he has run off”. He had absconded on 3 January 1805 before being recaptured in Pennsylvania, suggesting Jim had only been back in Stinson’s possession for a short period before fleeing again. The offer of a one hundred dollar reward, to be claimed if Jim was recaptured out of the state (Maryland), and his insistence that he was in “no doubt” his slave would “enter on board some vessel”, suggests Stinson believed his slave would once again leave the state. While Jim’s constant running away presumably contributed to him being labelled a “villain,” it was his artfulness and attempts to pass for free that seem to have earned him his “*villainous*” persona. Expected to “change both name and dress” and “endeavour...to pass for a free man,” Stinson was of the opinion that Jim, “through the means of his father who lives on Fell’s Point (Baltimore)” would attempt to pass himself for a free person. It is unclear precisely how his father was expected to aid this endeavour but presumably Stinson expected Jim to be concealed or furnished with forged documentation to support his deception. Stinson’s emphasis of “a small scar under one of his [Jim] eyes” and scar “on each cheek” served to reinforce the image of Jim as a “*villainous*” slave type that Stinson peddled.

When Robbin absconded on 1 May 1804 he was similarly characterised in the sole advertisement for his recapture as a “notorious and artful villain” by his owner, Allen Dorsey, manager of Dorsey’s Forge in Baltimore.<sup>77</sup> A “very black” slave with a “thin visage”, Robbin was accustomed to working in the forge and handled iron “tolerably well”. While there was no suggestion that Robbin had run away before and no reason given for his escape, his carrying of several clothing items suggests some degree of planning to his escape. As an artful villain, Dorsey expected Robbin to “probably” change his dress and obtain a freedom pass, despite not being advertised as literate. Dorsey’s determination to have Robbin recaptured was reflected in the one hundred dollar reward he offered. Fearful that Robbin would

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<sup>76</sup> *American and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, 10 January 1805.

<sup>77</sup> *American and Commercial Daily Advertiser*, 19 May 1804.

successfully portray a free man or worried his slave might provide a damning account of his slaveholding, Dorsey portrayed him as an unreliable drunk, “fond of strong drink” and with a propensity to “stammer and stutter” when intoxicated.

Richard Grason, advertising on behalf of Colonel Edward Lloyd, Douglass’s former owner, issued a notice and reward of “three pounds” for a “new negro” runaway, Jack.<sup>78</sup> Described as “rather slender made”, “about 5 feet 3 inches high”, and “very black”, Jack had absconded on 3 September and judged to have “made for Delaware by the new way of Choptank-Bridge”. It is uncertain how long Jack had been in his possession but Lloyd, as Douglass attested, rarely knew his own slaves in consequence of owning so many. The issuance of the advertisement from “Wye-River” suggests Jack belonged to the Wye River Plantation, where Grason was overseer. From whence, Jack appears to have escaped before—the “iron collar on his neck” an indication that he was a rebellious slave who had been shackled, literally, by Grason. As overseer of Lloyd’s property and accountable to him, Grason was determined to have him recaptured. Asserting blame on Jack’s character, probably reflecting his embarrassment that Jack had undermined his authority, Grason drew the readers to his the runaway’s “sly impudent look” and reiterated for all those who who did not know that Jack was a “noted rogue and runaway”.

The FSA for literate and/or artful fugitives suggest many were expected by their masters to pass as free persons. This was linked to both physical and behavioural transformation. Slaves expected to pass as free persons were often skilled labourers permitted to hire their labour by their masters. Visiting urban centres where they interacted with free blacks and were exposed to revolutionary language and print, they had, as Mullin argued, begun the acculturative process. Literate and artful slaves could speak good English, often in addition to other languages, and were intelligent, confident, and highly perceptive. They conformed to the confidence man slave type.

Most slaves expected to pass for free persons escaped on their own but this was not always the case. There were examples of family members and fugitive groupings escaping together, although group fugitivity appears to have been perceived by slaves as more likely to arouse suspicion. Presumably the more slaves who had to “pass” as free, the greater the risk that the rouse would be discovered. Seeking to avoid detection, most slaves expected to transform their identity were expected to do so by changing their clothes, names, and behaviour. In some instances, slaves also carried free papers and passes designed to

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<sup>78</sup> *Maryland Herald and Eastern Shore Intelligencer*, 18 September 1792.

corroborate their deception. Slaves expected to “pass” as free persons typically did so far from the immediate surroundings of their masters’ residence or place of escape. Slaves including Richard Thompson and Adam, John Fox’s slave, escaped into neighbouring states or secreted themselves among the free black population of bustling cities such as Baltimore and Savannah.

Confidence men such as Cuffee and Jeff deceived and manipulated their way to freedom. With a steely determination, they embarked on an all or nothing attempt to realise their freedom, recognising that failure would be met with the sting of the cow-hide. They did this by casting aside their imposed slave identity and fashioned for themselves a new identity by changing their names, clothes, and behaviour. This required an acute awareness of how their masters expected them to look, dress, and behave as a slave. Forming their own identity, free from the influence of their controlling masters, these slaves reinvented themselves to imitate those they observed and identified as free persons. The rejection of their slave identity marked the ultimate rejection of their masters’ authority.

Attempting to counter their slaves’ exceptionality, advertisers used fugitive slave notices to mischaracterise their slaves. Portraying them as “artful” and “cunning” characters, they claimed slaves could only “pretend” or “pass” as free person, insinuating their behaviour was not genuine. Slaves were also advertised as “prone” to drunkenness, “fond” of liquor, and as “plausible” and “smooth-tongued” storytellers. This was no more than an effort by masters to silence their slaves’ testimony lest it be used to condemn their treatment and behaviour towards enslaved people.

Slaves were at the mercy of their owners in their advertisement descriptions but their ability to read and write could never be undone. Slave masters such as Forman, discussed at the start of this chapter, could never rob their slaves of their literacy or the self-identity and desire for freedom they developed. Masters could only manipulate the truth and mischaracterise their slaves. As Heather Andrea Williams stated:

In the age of Enlightenment the slave-owner had to control their slaves, beginning with the owner being able to speak for the slave, denying him or her their humanity, and to draw a line between slave consciousness and human will ... The presence of literate slaves threatened to give lie to the entire system ... Literacy amongst slaves would expose slavery, and masters knew it.<sup>79</sup>

Slaves such as James Allan, whose fugitivity was discussed at the beginning of this chapter, grew tired of their masters and mistresses speaking, thinking, or deciding what was

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<sup>79</sup> Williams, *Self-Taught*, p.7.



best for them. They understood the immorality of slaveholding and the methods employed by slaveholders to keep them ignorant. It was the imposition of identity that James and other slaves rejected. Lenient or favourable treatment in slavery was lost on a slave who had developed a longing for freedom and dreamed of the possibility of life as a free man. Despite slaveholder fears, rarely did slaves such as James have any intention of turning their anger back against white society. Indeed, many slaves simply desired to live as equals alongside whites. Resorting to fugitivity to escape the cruel clutches of their masters and the slave system, these slaves decided for themselves that the best recourse for their mental and physical well-being was to run away.

### Conclusion

This chapter considered slave rebelliousness as a manifestation of literacy. It has argued against the historiographical tendency to associate slave rebelliousness with violent revolt. Instead, it has been argued that slave fugitivity was a much more common and subtle form of slave resistance. Drawing on Mullins' slave resistance model and Waldstreicher's "Confidence Man" slave type, I have argued, using my own model—the spectrum of observed and perceived slave behaviour—that acculturated and assimilated slaves reacted "outwardly" against their enslavement. I have also shown that literacy inspired and aided many acts of slave fugitivity. Literate slaves developed a critical understanding of their enslavement and a strong sense of self-identity, in no small measure because of what they read in newspapers, broadsides, circulars, and even anti-slavery and abolitionist literature. As slaves developed a greater understanding of the ideologies underlying the system and persons that enslaved them, they often became discontented and developed a desire to be free. In the mind of the slave, freedom and slavery competed, with the manifestation of this struggle unique to each slave and shaped by their individual circumstances. To this end, print and the personal enlightenment it fostered, had the potential to both inspire and overwhelm a slave. As the case of Turner and Walker suggested at the beginning of this chapter, literacy did have the potential to manifest in violent rebellion *if* indeed Turner read Walker's *Appeal*. Among the slaves who chose to abscond, I have established that many conformed to Waldstreicher's "confidence men" slave type. In runaway notices, advertisers linked their artfulness and cunning to their attempts to "pretend" and "pass" as free persons. Some advertisers explicitly linked this to their slaves' ability to read (enlightenment, knowledge, articulateness) and write (forging passes). Mindful of the purpose of slaveholder runaway advertisements and the propensity of slaveholders to undermine their slaves' exceptionalism, I contend that slaves

were not “pretending” to be free but were often free in their own minds. Fugitivity was not a sporadic undertaking; it was an informed decision by persons free in all but status, attempting to realise their bodily freedom.

## Conclusion

The need for undertaking this research project became apparent after reading Frederick Douglass's *Narrative* for the first time almost ten years ago. Hugh Auld's claim that reading spoiled slaves and unfitted them to slavery stoked my curiosity, as it had Douglass when he overheard the exchange between his master and mistress. Why did literacy make slaves discontented – why would reading and writing manifest in slaves “running away with themselves” – Did Auld mean physically, mentally, or both? Was Douglass's experience as a slave in Maryland unique – Was Auld's warning applicable to slaves in the lower South too? If a slave learned to read, for what reason did Auld believe they would then desire to learn to write? I have attempted to address these questions in this dissertation by investigating the world into which Douglass was born, and offer an original contribution to the extant scholarship on slave fugitives and fugitivity.

This dissertation set out to examine the nature of fugitives' rebelliousness in Georgia and Maryland between 1790 and 1810 using fugitive slave advertisements. A close reading of 5,567 advertisements and analyses of data pertaining to 1,832 fugitives was used to construct a prosopography of fugitive slaves in both states and to examine the contestation of slaveholder authority. These insights were supplemented with additional primary sources including slave testimony, plantation records, and slaveholder correspondence. Addressing the research questions and reconfiguring the historical focus upon the stories of individual slaves and their acts of resistance, the dissertation has provided original empirical and quantitative information pertaining to the socio-cultural and socio-economic profile of the fugitive slaves of Georgia and Maryland.

Fugitive slave advertisements were printed in urban centres including Savannah and Baltimore and published in local newspapers. They were sometimes reprinted in neighbouring states in cases of cross-border fugitivity. Runaway advertisements were intended to promote slaveholder authority when it had been tested by a rebellious slave and facilitate the recapture of the fugitive. The advertisements, inadvertently, reveal stories of slave resistance and the experiences of slaves who risked their lives hoping to realise an uncertain freedom. Historians are increasingly appreciating the value of runaway advertisements as historical sources, looking beyond their original intent and obvious biases for the stories of slave agency they contain. Public records of rebelliousness, fugitive

advertisements are ripe for harvesting; the stories of thousands of as yet unknown slaves are waiting to be told.

From the first slave runaway advertisement printed in an American newspaper in 1705, uncovered during the course of this project, fugitive slave advertisements developed into a distinct advertising genre. A combination of typography and iconography was developed by slaveholders with the intention of undermining slave individualism and exceptionalism. While historians have analysed the content of fugitive advertisements for their historical insights into the social composition of slavery, there is little historiographical study of the development and functionality of runaway notices.

The first chapter addressed this issue, presenting the fugitive slave advertisement as a product of American print culture. Their printed form and distribution, integral to their success, were firmly linked to print technology and the establishment of distribution networks. Newspapers divided, directed, and united Americans in the 1790s. While a period of growth in the public sphere fuelled by increased newspaper readership, the functionality of runaway notices were plagued by primitive print technologies and the concentration of print distribution networks to urban centres such as Baltimore and Savannah. Advertisers relied on the content of their advertisements being transmitted orally as much as through print. Advancements in print technology and the formation of more comprehensive distribution infrastructure in the antebellum era transformed the reporting of slave fugitivity, extending the reach of slaveholders and ensuring fugitivity became an even more perilous form of resistance for a slave.

The profile of fugitive slaves and fugitivity in Georgia and Maryland established in this dissertation is similar to those reported in studies for the colonial, early national, and antebellum periods. Male slaves outnumbered females by four to one in runaway notices which conformed to Franklin and Schweninger, Smith and Wojtowicz, Meaders, and other historians' findings. Females were not any less likely than males to escape, but rather, it has been suggested that female fugitivity patterns were simply different than males. Females were more likely to escape to visit friends and family on neighbouring plantations and return of their own accord without the need for an advertisement to be issued. Age information also conformed to the findings of the aforementioned historians, revealing that most fugitives were in their twenties. These slaves were not young men or women, as some historians have contended, but mature adults experienced to the hardships of slavery. Enslaved people understood opportunities to escape were limited at a time when the average life expectancy

of a slave was approximately thirty-five years of age; they had to escape sooner than later if they wanted to taste freedom in their lifetime. While a profile of the “typical” Georgia and Maryland fugitive was established for the research time period and presented in Chapter 2, the stories of fugitives who did not conform to these profiles has also been explored. Children as young as six months old were carried off by their parents, determined that their child should have a better life than a life of enslavement or when sale threatened the family unit. Similarly, slaves as old as sixty, who had been enslaved for their entire lives, were advertised as fugitives. The promise of a life of freedom outweighed any life in slavery, at any age.

Fugitive slaves in both Georgia and Maryland escaped all year round but fugitivity did increase during harvest months when labour was most intensive. Labour patterns were a factor in many cases of fugitivity but slaves also escaped to be reacquainted with their family and friends, return to previous owners, or, indeed, escape the slave system permanently. Some slaves were habitual runaways while others escaped in reaction to, or in fear of, punishment, returning of their own accord after a few days. Such instances were unlikely to require the issuance of an advertisement. Slaves escaped during every year of the research period but statistical analysis revealed spikes in fugitivity the years 1796 to 1798 and 1800 to 1801. A discussion of local circumstances to explain these years of increased fugitivity was offered but further examination into these trends is necessary to establish whether slave fugitivity was a reaction to social, political, or economic developments. The decline in slave fugitivity between 1802 and 1807, uncovered in this project, does not appear to have been a consequence of any measure to control fugitives in Georgia or Maryland. More research is required to appreciate this trend more fully.

Fugitives embodied the brutalities of the slave system. The efforts of slaveholders to assert their authority over their slaves was evident in the scars, cuts, and whip marks advertised upon slaves’ person. Some fugitives, especially compulsive runaways, were often branded or had been mutilated or disfigured at the hands of their masters and mistresses. Scars and marks were distinguishing features regularly commented upon by advertisers in their descriptions of their slaves’ physical appearance but advertisers exonerated themselves of blame for the infliction of these cruelties. Instead, advertisers feigning naivety, implicated previous masters, or blamed an elusive “accident”. Among the more peculiar expressions of physical punishment reported upon fugitives’ bodies, prominent Baltimore slaveholder Christopher Hughes, pompous and boastful in equal measure, advertised for runaways who had one eye brow and half their head hair shaved. This appears to have been Hughes’s way

of undermining his slaves' ability to remain inconspicuous when he suspected they were likely to abscond. This served to announce to the public that the slave was a runaway much the same way the branding of slaves with the letter 'R' warned potential buyers that a slave was prone to running away.

Despite this hardships of the slave system, slaves demonstrated remarkable resolve. They were skilled musicians, boxers, dancers, and involved in horse and stable management. Many were proficient in trades with some skilled in two or more. Male slaves outnumbered female slaves in craft work in Georgia and Maryland. Female slaves were more likely to be used as domestic household servants. Slaves that were skilled in trades were especially "valued" by slaveholders, evidence of which is reflected in the rewards offered for their recapture.

Literacy was another valued attribute among slaves' skillsets. There were more literate slaves in Maryland than Georgia and, indeed, in Virginia than South Carolina, suggesting there were more literate slaves in the upper South than lower South. The contrasting socio-economic profiles of the regions and the demographic particularities of the slave population go some way to explaining regional literacy rates. While the slave population in Maryland was almost entirely American born and acculturated by the 1790s, Georgia's slave population was still heavily African-imported and unable to speak English. It is more likely however that the disparate regional literacy rates reflected the success of anti-literacy laws. While anti-literacy laws were enacted in all slaveholding states from 1740 to 1847, with the exception of Maryland, Kentucky, and Tennessee, only Georgia and South Carolina had introduced anti-literacy legislation during the research period. In all slave states, whether anti-literacy laws were enacted or not, a climate unfavourable to slave instruction in reading and writing generally prevailed.

The inclusion of anti-literacy laws in state slave codes indicated they were part of a wider effort to control the slave population through physical and mental oppression. They were not *enacted* as a reactionary response to slave conspiracies or insurrections, as some historians claim, but were most commonly amended and tightened where they *already* existed. There has been much historiographical confusion surrounding precisely when, where, and what anti-literacy legislation prohibited and this is reflected in the extant literature. Accuracy in reporting anti-literacy legislation is important, with even subtle mistakes threatening to undermine the historiographical understanding of the legal challenges slaves faced in learning to read and write. Slaves learned in spite of these laws, as is discussed in Chapter 3, seizing

upon any weakness in the law, or failure to enforce it, to become literate. The inclusion of anti-literacy laws in slave codes and their amendment after Turner's Rebellion in 1831 has led historians to equate literacy, as slaveholders did, as a means to avoid violent slave revolts and insurrectionary movements. The reality was that slave codes were based on racial myths which equated blackness with brutishness and insubordination and were a form of control preserving the slave system. In the early national period, the denial to slaves reading and instruction was a means of undermining their claims to citizenship. Slaveholders preyed upon societal fears and paranoia of slave rebelliousness, tightening slave codes after each slave conspiracy or plot was discovered, whether credible or mere figments in the imaginations of persons living in societies fearful of slave insurrection.

Slaves learned to read and write using numerous ingenious methods ranging from manipulation of playmates to the "borrowing" of spelling books from their masters. It has been suggested, albeit tentatively, that the prominence of slave mistresses in slave instruction in reading and writing is attributable to several factors. Slaves appear to have been more inclined to approach their mistress for instruction than their master, who they were more fearful of. Secondly, mistresses were more inclined to teach slaves than masters, whether out of pity or an awareness that they were less likely to incur the social and legal ramifications that a man would if teaching a slave was discovered. While the case of Frances Kemble was used to highlight this point, it does not appear coincidental and needs more thoroughly investigated. This dissertation has estimated that 3.6 percent of the fugitives in the United States population were literate. This figure only includes fugitive slaves explicitly advertised as being able to read and/or write. This figure largely conforms to literacy rates established for the slave population by Eugene Genovese and Janet Cornelius of around 5 percent.<sup>1</sup>

Not every slave who learned to read and write became rebellious just as not every rebellious slave was literate. Literacy was however an important skill for slaves to form a critical understanding of the slave system and in the development of self-identity. It was also sufficient to generate rebelliousness. Exposure to the world beyond the confines of the slave system—knowledge of the white world commonly withheld from slaves—facilitated identity

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<sup>1</sup> Cornelius's figure reflects analysis of 3,428 responses to the Federal Writers' Project interviewers. See Janet Cornelius, "We Slipped and Learned to Read:" Slave Accounts of the Literacy Process, 1830-1865', *Phylon*, 44:3 (1983), p.172; Genovese largely agreed with W.E.B. Du Bois's estimate that around 5 percent of the slave population was literate. For Genovese, this figure was "entirely plausible and may even be too low". He was in more forthcoming in identifying the distribution of literate slaves however—most resided in towns or were frequent visitors while the least literate resided in the countryside. See Eugene D. Genovese, *Roll, Jordan, Roll: The World Slaves Made* (London, 1975), p.563.

transformation and bred slave discontentment. The form that these rebellious cravings manifest was ultimately unique to each slave and their circumstance. While slaveholder fears of slave rebelliousness stemming from literacy were not unfounded, slave resistance rarely manifest in violent revolt or insurrection. Fugitivity was a more common daily response by slaves to their enslavement.

The final chapter explored slave fugitivity and located it within two existing models of slave resistance—Gerald W. Mullin’s model of “inward” and “outward” resistance and David Waldstreicher ‘Confidence Man’ slave type—and introduced a third—my own spectrum of observed and perceived slave behaviour. Mullin’s model was used to show that acculturated slaves, those who were accustomed to white society and the world beyond slave communities, were more likely to resist “outwardly” by running away than “new” or plantation slaves who reacted “inwardly” against their immediate environment. Slaves who resisted “outwardly” had the confidence to attempt to pass as free persons among whites and the skills to be successful. I have argued that slaves who resisted “outwardly” also conformed to David Waldstreicher’s ‘Confidence Man’ slave type. The ‘Confidence Man’ was shrewd and highly perceptive; they were master manipulators who changed their names, appearance, and behaviour and exploited their surroundings to pass as free persons. To my knowledge, this relationship has not been established in any published work.

Establishing linkage between Mullin’s “outward” resisting slave and the “Confidence Man” slave type, I used my own model of observed and perceived behaviour to suggest that these were behavioural traits associated with “artful” slaves. Artful slaves were the most feared slave “character type” among advertisers who perceived them as extremely devious. Artfulness, by contemporary definition, was linked to cunning and to performance for the accomplishment of a purpose. It was argued that this purpose was freedom. The behavioural and character traits of the artful slave, including identity transformation and attempts to “pass” or “pretend” to be free persons, were also common in advertisements for slaves who could read. Slaves that could read typically were knowledgeable of the white world beyond slavery, intelligent, linguistically versatile, and able to interpret printed and handwritten communications. Writing was more practically beneficial to slaves who advertisers suspected would “attempt” to “pass” as free persons. Slaves used writing to forge documentation and passes intended to circumvent restrictions on slave mobility and to corroborate their passing as free persons. It has been argued the “artful” slave type was invariably linked to literacy. It remains to be seen, and further research will show, whether this claim can be substantiated across the entire early national and antebellum South.



If artful slaves were literate slaves then the implications are numerous. It would indicate that there were far more literate slaves than historians have thought. While it is accepted that not all slaveholders advertised slaves' ability to read and write, it may also be the case that admissions of literacy are masked behind descriptions of slaves as "artful" or in their "endeavours" to pass as free persons. These were not liberally assigned character types or behaviours but carefully deployed descriptions intended to warn wider slaveholding societies that an especially dangerous slave type was at large and had to be recaptured. To remain inconspicuous required a combination of psychological skills associated with the ability to read and practical skills associated with writing. The dissertation has thus argued that in enumerating slave literacy rates through fugitive slave advertisements, historians need to reconsider their approach to them as sources, paying particular attention to pejorative phrasing and advertiser language. This approach should render much higher literacy rates among advertised fugitives than current understanding.

This thesis has begun the process of unearthing the stories of the thousands of slaves who escaped each year and whose remarkable feats of resistance were captured in runaway advertisements. It has demonstrated and urged a new approach to the reading of fugitive slave advertisements and established methodological approaches and a project database to aid future research. The fugitive slave database (FSdb) can and should be extended by future research. It can accommodate new data collected for additional states and time periods. For this project, the FSdb was used to generate data sets to perform descriptive statistics and to filter records to enable identification of subgroups for discussion. My hope is that future doctoral and post-doctoral researchers can utilise the database as a control file and draw upon its data sets for their own work. It has considerable potential to enhance scholarly profiling of the slave populations and in scaling-up investigations gathering data for all Southern states in ten-year intervals. The thesis has proposed a new way of interpreting and understanding the linkage between resistance and literacy.

Discontentment and rebelliousness flowed through the veins of the literate slave. This was not simply because the slave could read and/or write, rather, it was a manifestation of what slaves read. Reading developed slaves' imagination and often led to the thoughts of freedom. Being able to forge passes and certificates designed to corroborate their deception, writing was more practically beneficial but instilled in slaves a confidence that their attempts to remain inconspicuous could be successful. As Hugh Auld had warned, there was no keeping or controlling a literate slave, mentally or physically. Once a slave could read and write, these skills could never be undone. Discontentment from literacy arose as slaves

developed a fuller understanding of the system that slaveholders had created to enslave them. The path down which literacy took a slave was uncontrollable as was the manifestations of the experience. The success of slaveholders to wield their authority over their slaves and control them required slaves to be ignorant and accept they were insubordinate; to never fully comprehend the ideological foundations upon which slavery was built. Their restrictions on slave mobility which required the carrying of passes, another former of physical control, was supposed to breed slave dependency on their masters. Freedom of movement was a reward to be granted to a slave by a slaveholder. Yet, while slaveholders attempted to control slaves' access to print and written communications, they could never extinguish that natural spark of intellect that Henry Berry alluded to in his speech to the Virginia House of Delegates. This was no surprise; the breed of slavery that existed in the United States was based on myths of black intellectual inferiority. Severe laws promoting the physical and mental oppression of those held in bondage, reinforced with punishment, intended to reduce and fit slaves into racial stereotypes – to lash the humanity from them. The spark of intellect was the surviving hope and determination of a people subjected to the cruellest and most brutal expressions of human behaviour. Fugitive slave advertisements capture the stories of brave individuals and their heroic acts of fugitivity; they provide a snapshot of literate slaves and the final moments of their transition from slave to free person.

## **Appendix 1**

### **The Fugitive Slave Database (FSdb)**

The Fugitive Slave Database (FSdb) is attached below on a compact disc. Insert CD into computer disc drive. When prompted, select the file 'Fugitive Slave Database 2017'.

Also on the CD is an Excel file 'Word Lists.xlsx'. This is the complete word lists for the likert scale rankings used in the spectrum classifications. The disk also includes the IBM SPSS dataset files. Follow the same instructions as above until the file selection prompt. Choose the appropriate file.



## Appendix 2

### Newspaper Sources

#### Georgia and Maryland

Newspaper	State	Records Extracted	Year Start	Year End	No. of issues
American	Maryland	3	1799	1802	152
American and Commercial Daily Advertiser	Maryland	1642	1801	1853	7022
Baltimore Daily Intelligencer	Maryland	11	1793	1794	313
Columbian Museum	Georgia	2600	1796	1822	1857
Federal Gazette	Maryland	1284	1796	1823	4046
Federal Intelligencer	Maryland	84	1794	1795	358
Federal Republican	Maryland	157	1808	1812	1111
Georgia Gazette	Georgia	1607	1788	1802	541
Hagers-town Gazette	Maryland	1	1809	1813	213
Maryland Gazette	Maryland	254	1751	1832	318
Maryland Herald and Hager's-Town Weekly Advertiser	Maryland	14	1790	1804	302
Maryland Herald, and Eastern Shore Intelligencer	Maryland	64	1790	1804	524
Maryland Journal	Maryland	242	1773	1797	1415
North American and Mercantile Daily Advertiser	Maryland	40	1808	1808	305
Republican Advocate	Maryland	114	1802	1808	238
Republican Gazette and General Advertiser	Maryland	160	1801	1826	486
Republican Star	Maryland	144	1800	1816	753
Rights of Man	Maryland	10	1794	1800	14
Savannah Republican	Georgia	56	1807	1866	1815
Southern Centinel	Georgia	322	1793	1798	193
Washington Spy	Maryland	109	1792	1797	221

## South Carolina and Virginia

Newspaper	State	Records Extracted	Year Start	Year End	No. of issues
Alexandria Daily Advertiser	Virginia	70	1800	1808	1725
Alexandria Expositor for the Country	Virginia	6	1803	1805	209
Alexandria Gazette	Virginia	2	1808	1820	3411
Alexandria Times	Virginia	7	1797	1802	1332
American Gazette and Norfolk and Portsmouth Weekly Advertiser	Virginia	7	1792	1795	10
Carolina Gazette	South Carolina	1	1800	1828	1038
Charleston Courier	South Carolina	44	1803	1872	15693
City Gazette	South Carolina	316	1787	1821	10307
Columbian Herald	South Carolina	15	1784	1796	1075
Columbian Mirror and Alexandria Gazette	Virginia	14	1792	1800	166
Daily Evening Gazette and Charleston Tea Table Companion	South Carolina	8	1795	1795	8
Enquirer	Virginia	44	1804	1837	4404
Evening Courier	South Carolina	1	1798	1798	29
Georgetown Gazette	South Carolina	16	1798	1826	325
Lynchburg Star	Virginia	1	1806	1812	49
Lynchburg Weekly Gazette	Virginia	6	1798	1799	3
Norfolk and Portsmouth Chronicle	Virginia	7	1789	1792	21
Norfolk Gazette and Publick Ledger	Virginia	25	1804	1816	1084
Petersburg Intelligencer	Virginia	6	1798	1815	131
Richmond Chronicle	Virginia	1	1795	1796	77
South Carolina State Gazette	South Carolina	19	1794	1802	1514
State Gazette of South-Carolina	South Carolina	15	1785	1793	806
Staunton Spy	Virginia	1	1793	1794	5
Times	South Carolina	9	1800	1820	400
Times and District of Columbia Daily Advertiser	Virginia	20	1797	1802	1329
Virginia Argus	Virginia	74	1795	1816	957
Virginia Chronicle	Virginia	39	1792	1794	132
Virginia Express	Virginia	1	1803	1804	6
Virginia Federalist	Virginia	1	1799	1800	9
Virginia Gazette and Alexandria Advertiser	Virginia	30	1789	1793	60
Virginia Gazette and General Advertiser	Virginia	18	1791	1809	67
Virginia Herald	Virginia	61	1787	1829	313
Winchester Gazette	Virginia	1	1798	1820	18

## Appendix 3

### Database Fields

#### Example of Fields in Table: Records Extracted

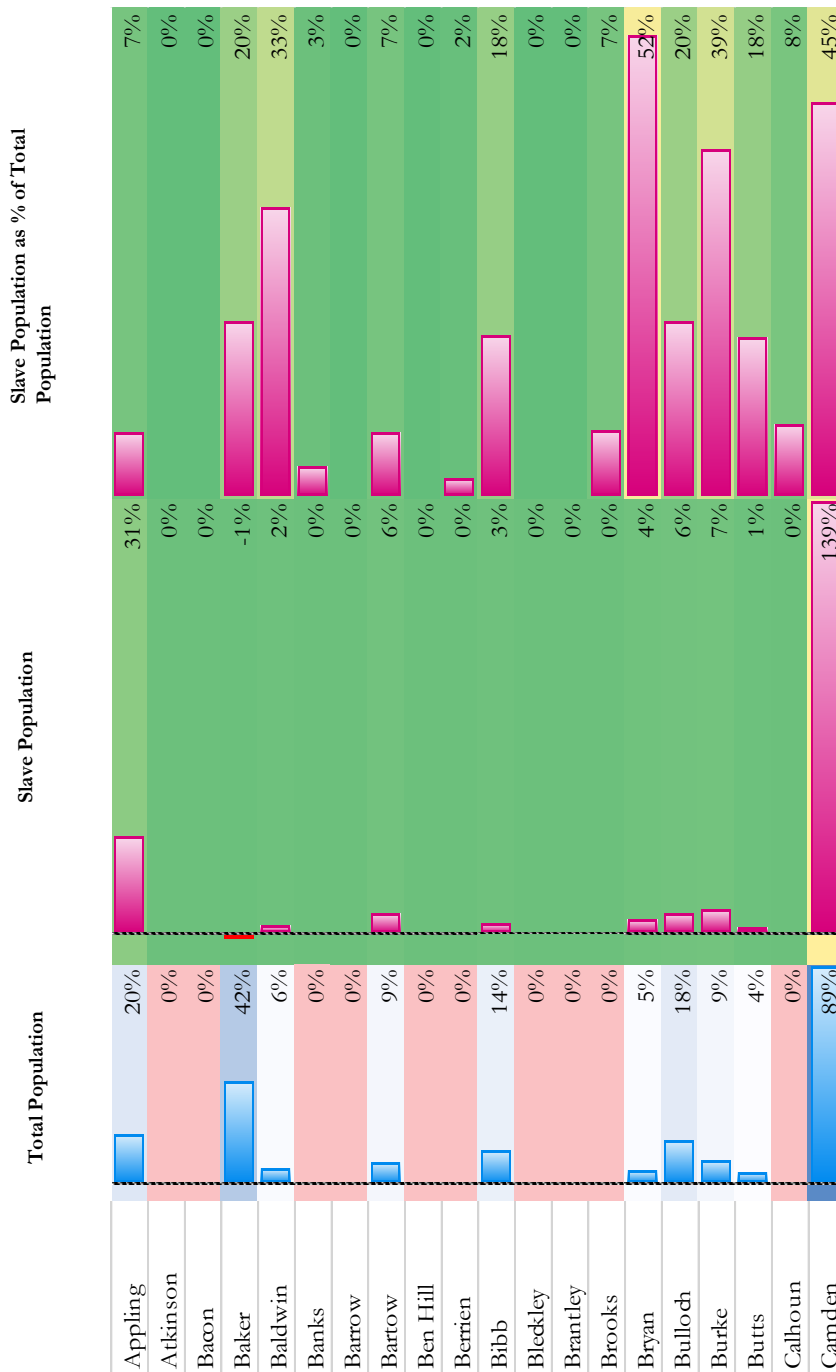
<b>Field Name</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Example Data</b>
<b>ID</b>	Record Number (Unique Autonumber)	1,2,3
<b>Newspaper</b>	Newspaper Title in which advertisement was printed	Georgia Gazette
<b>State</b>	State of newspaper publication	Georgia
<b>Date of Issue</b>	The date that the newspaper containing advertisement was issued	06/03/1794
<b>Slave</b>	Slave identification number (each slave has been assigned a unique identification number. Thus a slave can feature in multiple advertisements)	1,2,3
<b>Reward Value</b>	The reward offered in its original form (the most likely reward when multiple rewards were offered)	\$10; 30 shillings; 3 pounds
<b>Indexed Reward Value</b>	Reward value converted to dollars	\$5; \$10
<b>Advertiser</b>	Advertiser identification number (each advertiser has been assigned a unique identification number. Thus an advertiser can feature in multiple advertisements)	1,2,3
<b>Comments</b>	Advertiser comments including details of escape, previous owners, slave behaviour traits	Was last seen; his or her previous owner; expected to pass as free person;
<b>Method of Escape</b>	Records whether the slave escaped individually or as part of a group.	Runaway Individual; Runaway Group
<b>Place of Escape</b>	Records the plantation, town, city of escape	North Street (Baltimore); Doughoragen Manor; Subscriber's mill;
<b>County of Escape</b>	The county in which plantation, town, city is located	Baltimore County; Ann Arundel; Chatham
<b>State of Escape</b>	The state in which the county is located	Maryland; Georgia
<b>Trade</b>	Any trades that the slave is skilled	Blacksmith; Carpenter; Painter
<b>Skills</b>	Any additional skills the slave had	Play well on violin; good seamstress; plays the fiddle
<b>Personality</b>	Advertiser remarks on slave personality	Artful; cunning; rogue; talkative; sensible;
<b>Depiction</b>	Slave depiction/Given racial categorisation	Negro; mulatto; country born
<b>Literacy Status</b>	Describes if the slave could read and/or write	Read; Write; Read and Write; Read, Write, and Cypher
<b>Speech</b>	Slave linguistic ability/any impediments, speech styles, languages	Apt to stammer; Speaks good English; Timidly
<b>Advert ID</b>	Unique number linked to advertisement details	1,2,3

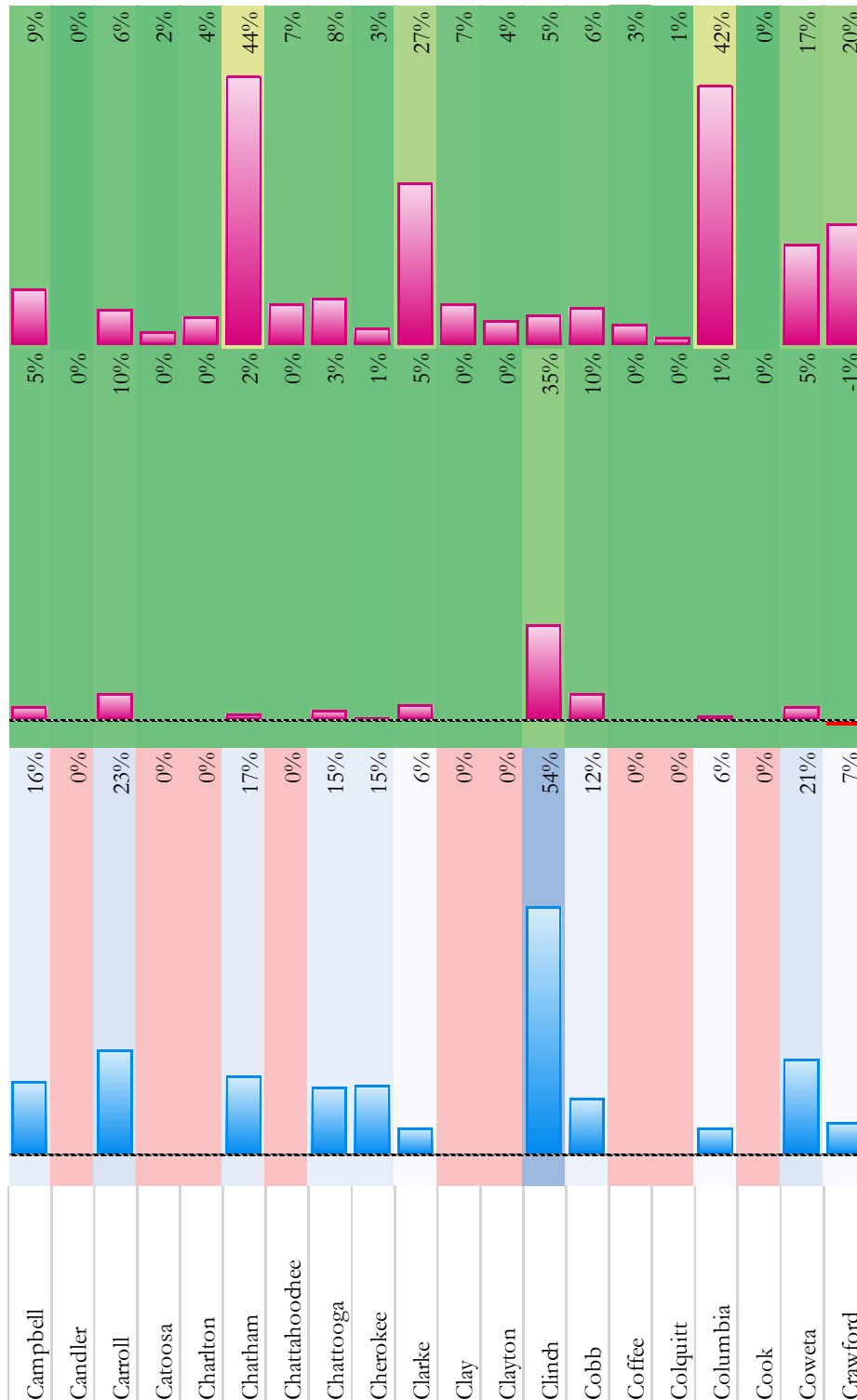
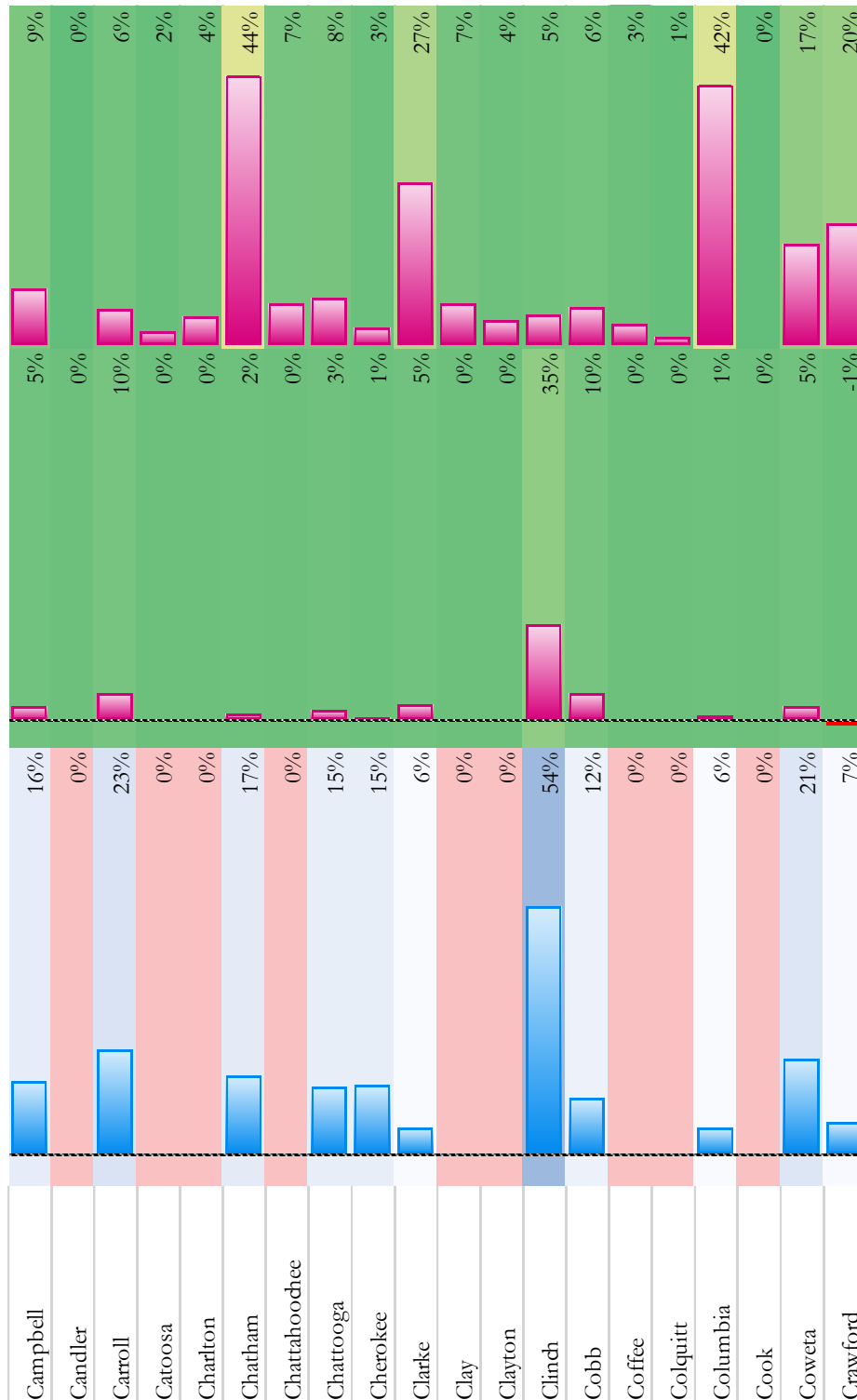
### Example of Fields in Table: Slaves

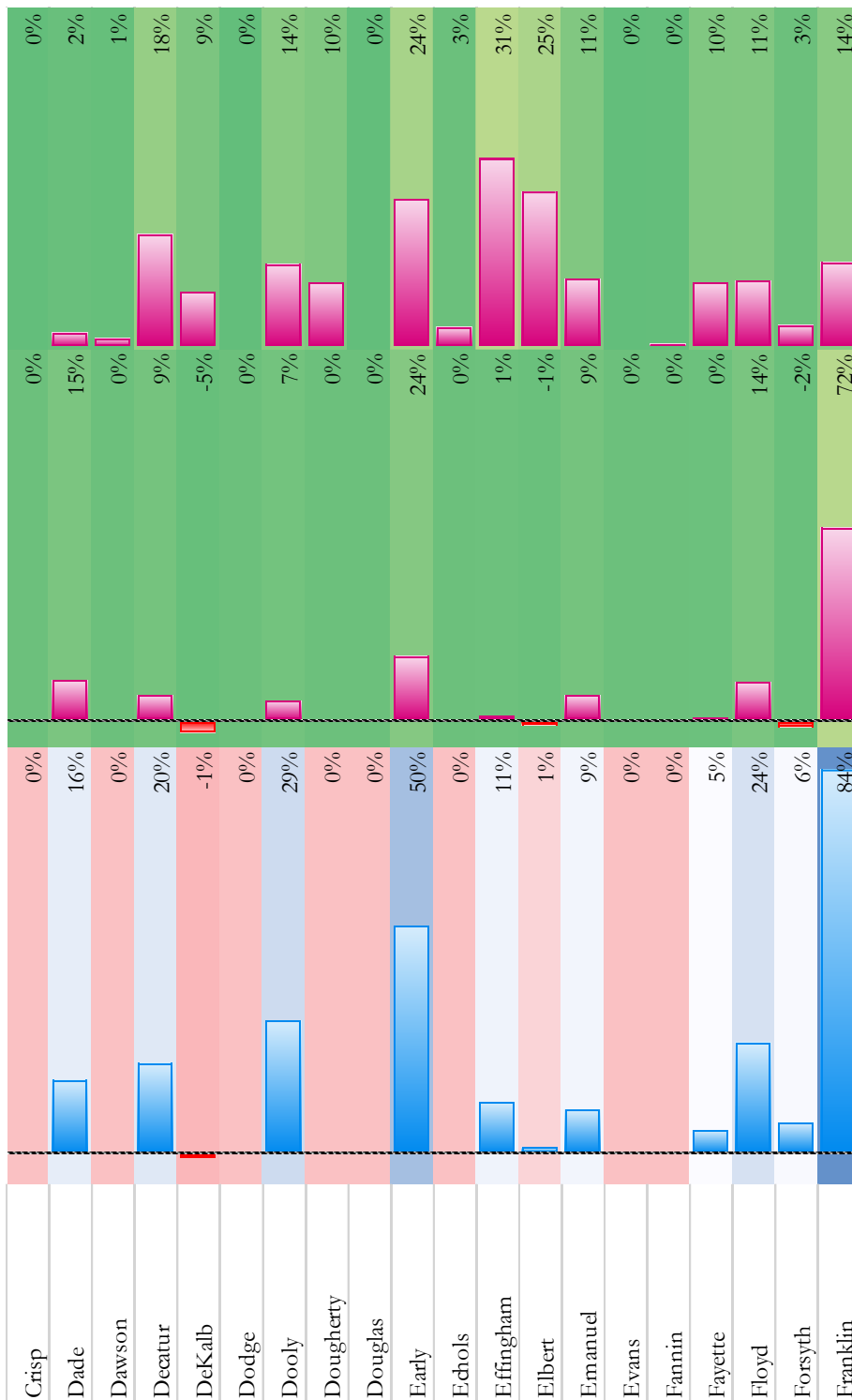
Field Name	Description	Example Data
<b>ID</b>	Slave identification number (each slave has been assigned a unique identification number. Thus a slave can feature in multiple advertisements)	1,2,3
<b>Slave Name</b>	Name given to the slave by their master	Candis; Jack;Polydore;Mussa; Fanny
<b>First Name</b>	The first name that a slave may pass as. Typically chosen by the slave.	William; Robert; James; Samuel; Jenny
<b>Middle Name</b>	The middle name or initial that a slave may pass as. Typically chosen by the slave.	Jordan; B.
<b>Second Name</b>	The second or surname that a slave may pass as. Typically chosen by the slave. Sometimes reflected the masters surname or previous owner	Butler; Sharper; Largin; Warner
<b>Other Name</b>	Alternative spellings of chosen first, middle, or last names;	Tom Prunier/Prenier; Hardtimes
<b>Notes</b>	Any other advertiser comments pertaining to slave naming	

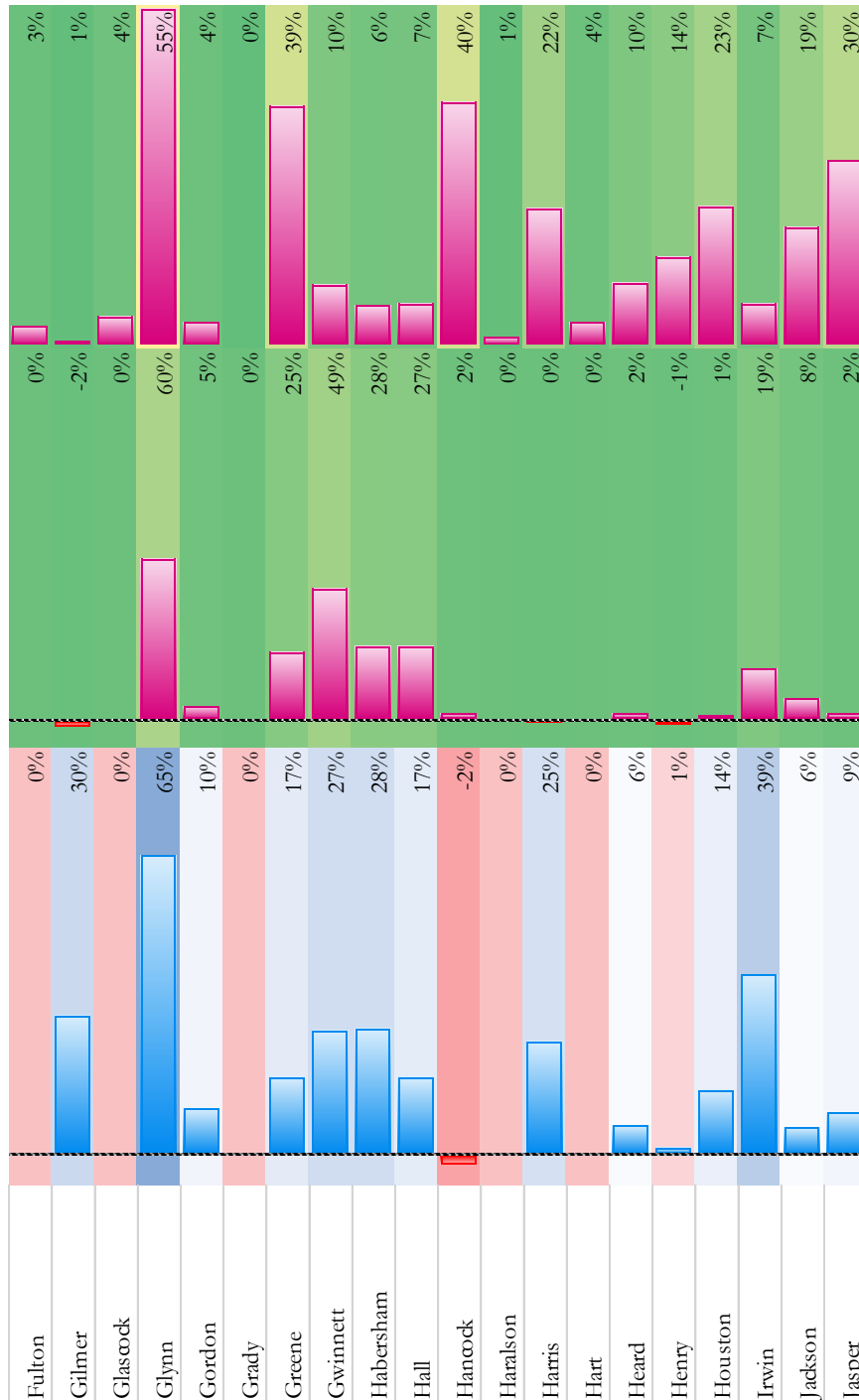


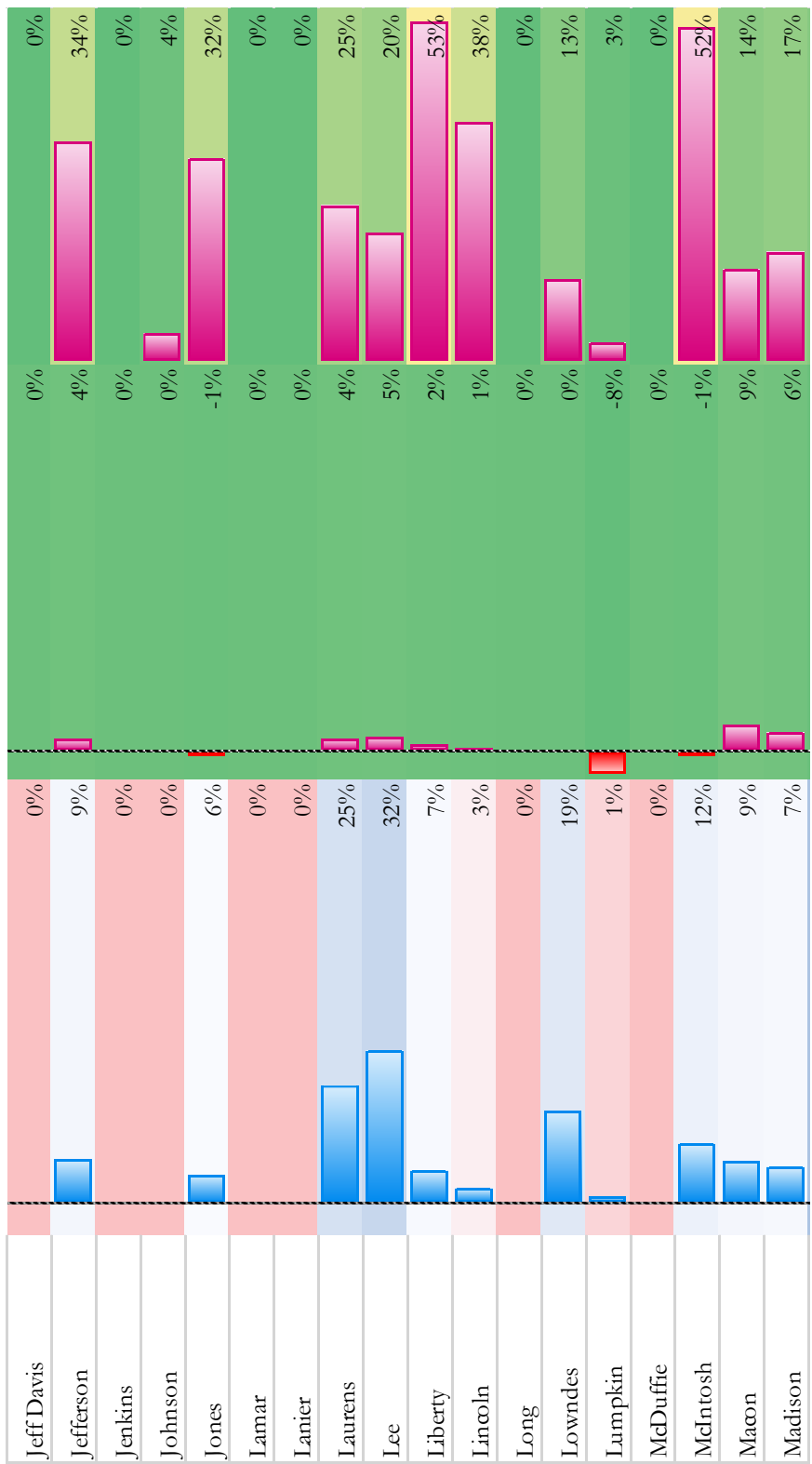
### Appendix 4 Georgia Slave Population by County, 1790-1860

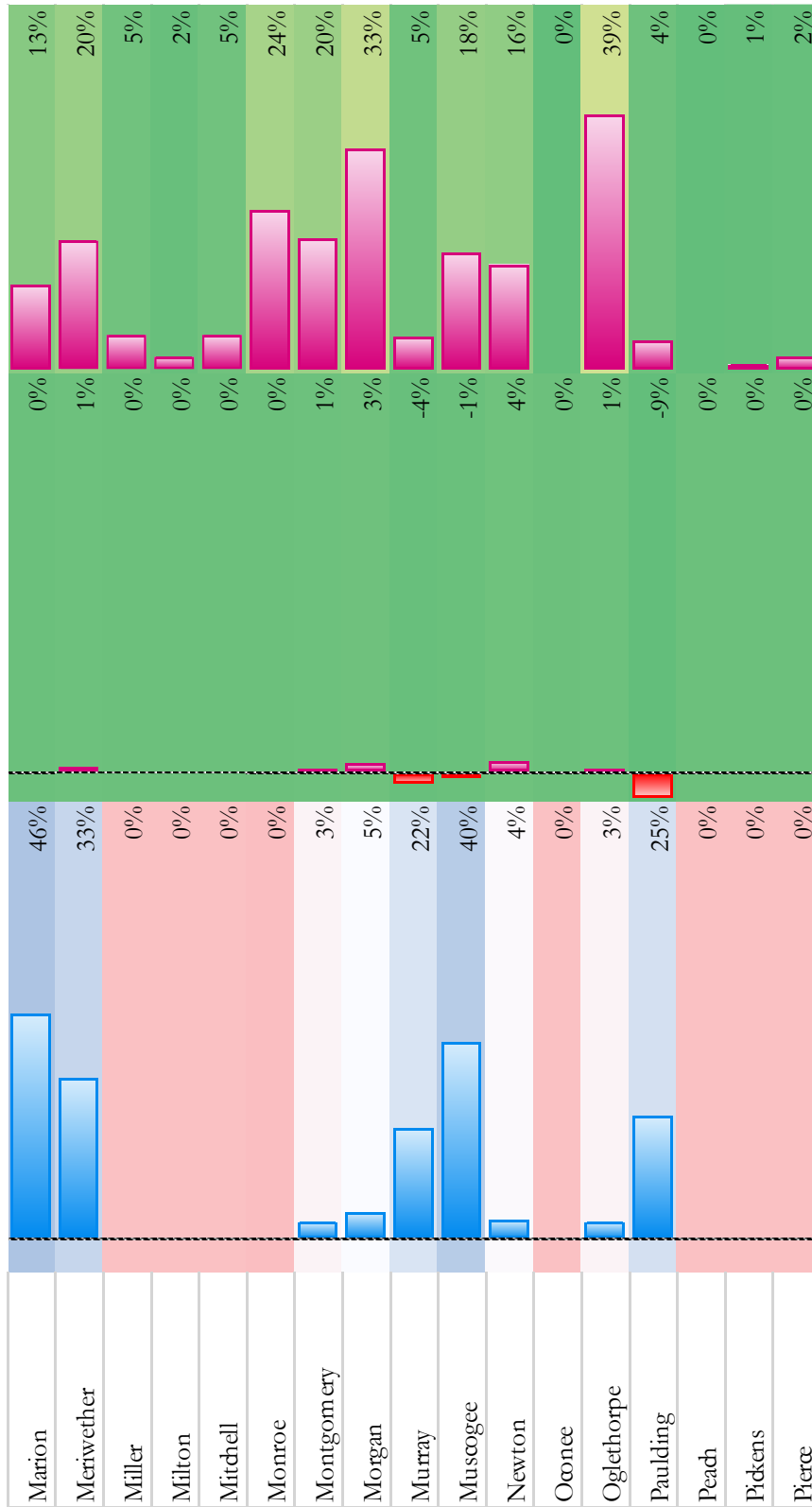


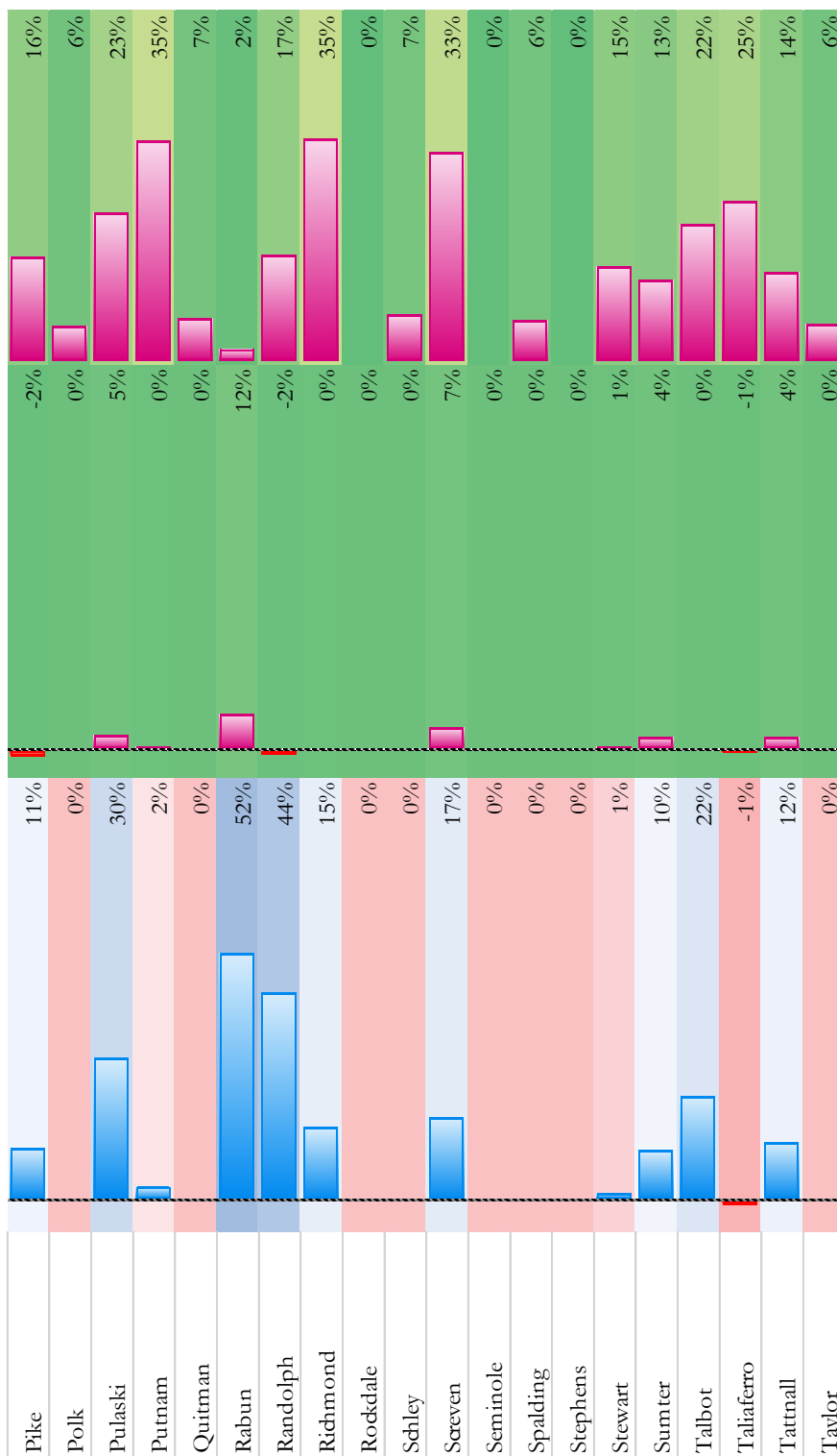


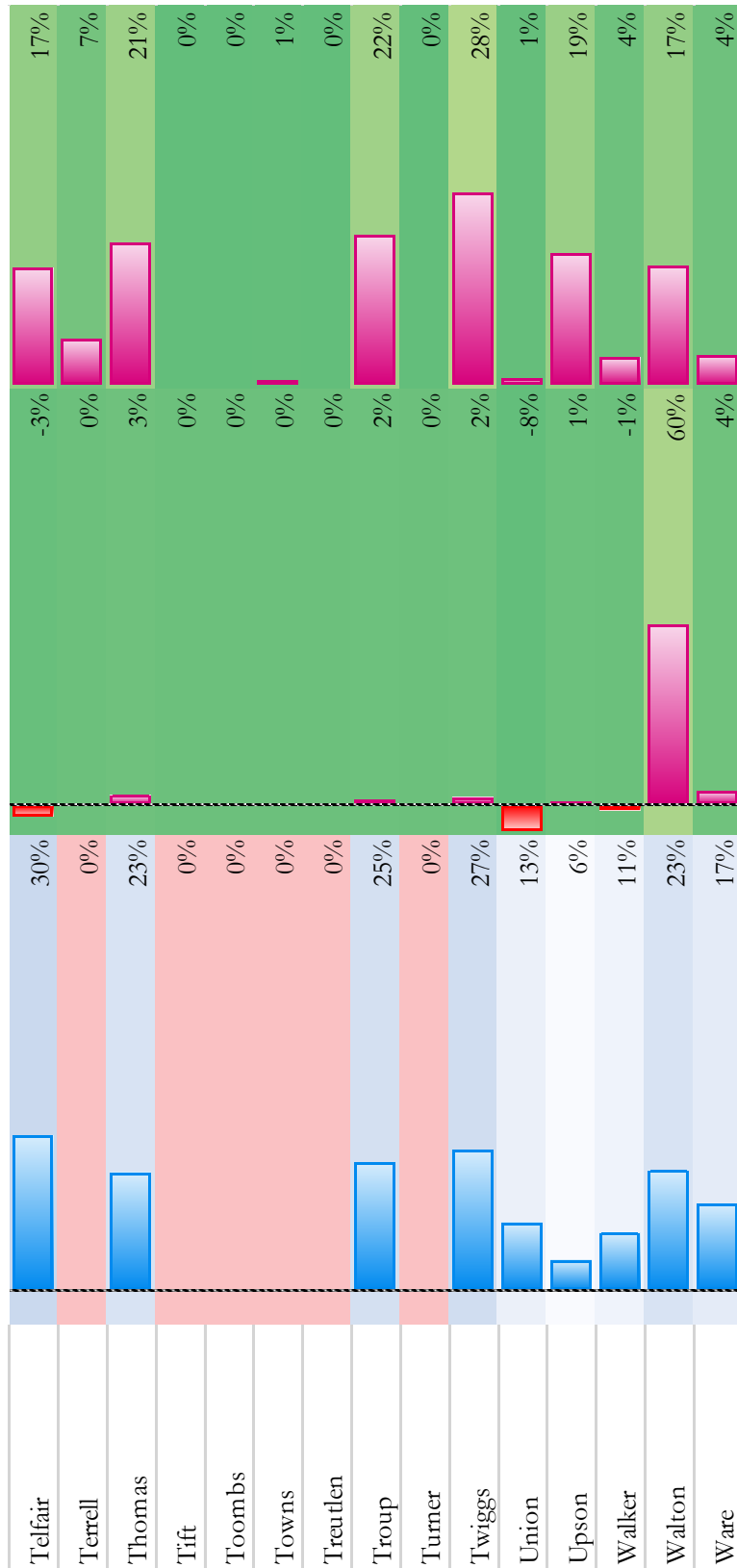




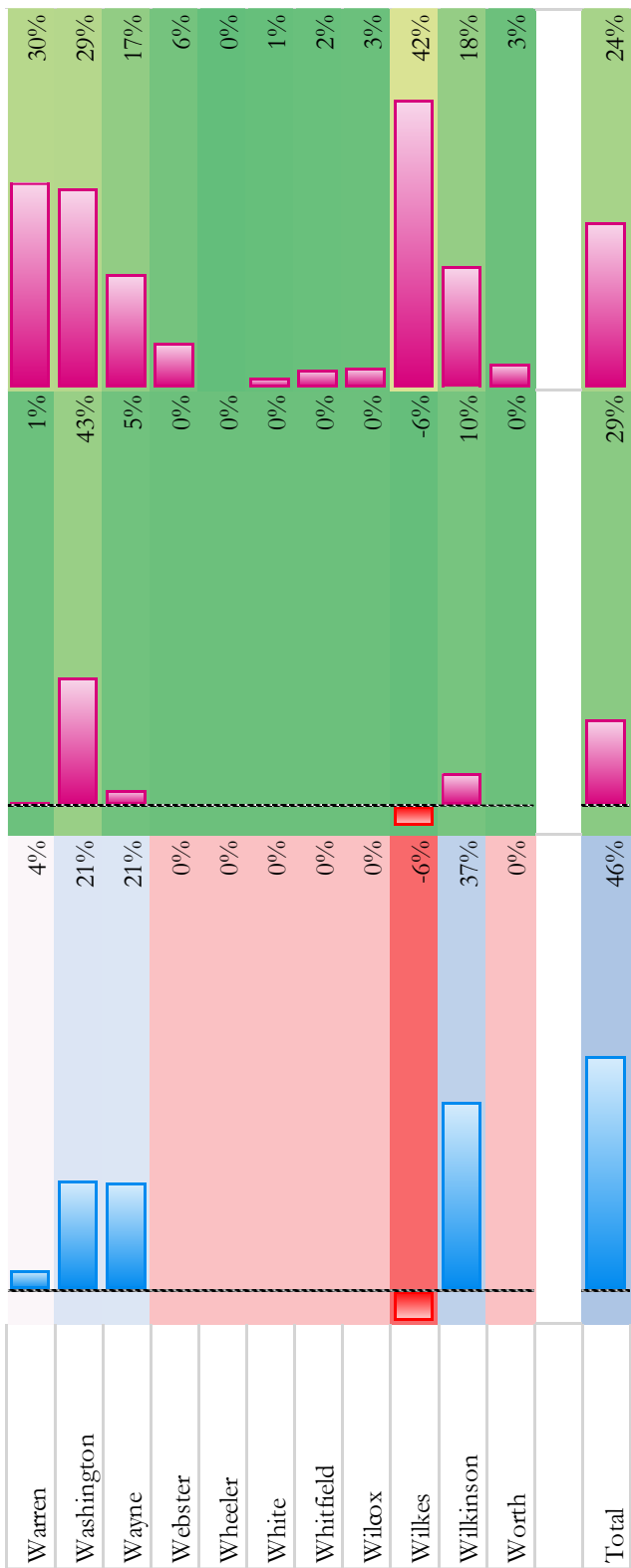












Source: US Census Bureau <https://www.census.gov/population/www/censusdata/pop1790-1990.html>



**Appendix 5**  
**Advertisers and Fugitives, by County, 1800**

**Georgia**

County	Advertisers	as %	Estimated Free Adult Population as %	Fugitives	as %	Projected Fugitivity**	as %
Baldwin	1	1%	---			4	1%
Baltimore						13	4%
Bryan	5	3%	0.99%	3	2.97%	6	2%
Burke	2	1%	12.27%	1	0.99%	5	1%
Camden	3	2%	1.78%	1	0.99%		
Chatham	94	54%	7.31%	51	50.50%	197	55%
Clinch				1	0.99%	1	0%
Columbia	3	2%	10.02%	8	7.92%	10	3%
Effingham	3	2%	3.12%			5	1%
Elbert	1	1%	---			1	0%
Fannin	2	1%	---			3	1%
Fulton	1	1%				1	0%
Glynn	5	3%	0.37%	2	1.98%	5	1%
Greene	3	2%	3.28%			8	2%
Hancock	1	1%	---			1	0%
Jefferson	3	2%	---	5	4.95%	9	3%
Laurens	1	1%	---			3	1%
Liberty	13	8%	2.66%	2	1.98%	26	7%
Marion	1	1%	---			1	0%
McIntosh	11	6%	---	20	19.80%	29	8%
Richmond	9	5%	16.19%	1	0.99%	9	3%
Screven	3	2%	---			3	1%
Washington	2	1%	3.54%	1	0.99%	3	1%
Wilkes	5	3%	49.72%	5	4.95%		
(Savannah)	(65)	38%	19.32%	(28)	27.72%	(145)	41%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>355</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Maryland

County	Advertisers	as %	Estimated Free Adult Population as %	Fugitives	as %	Projected Fugitivity**	as %
Anne Arundel	51	12%	5%	13	17%	67	12%
Baldwin							
Baltimore	144	35%	22%	26	34%	201	37%
Calvert	5	1%	2%			7	1%
Caroline	4	1%	3%			7	1%
Cecil	1	0%	3%			1	0%
Charles	23	6%	4%	1	1%	24	4%
Dorchester	13	3%	5%	4	5%	25	5%
Frederick	25	6%	11%	5	7%	32	6%
Harford	17	4%	6%	5	7%	21	4%
Howard	1	0%		1	1%	2	0%
Kent	2	0%	3%	3	4%	7	1%
Montgomery	25	6%	4%	2	3%	25	5%
Prince George's	30	7%	4%	10	13%	38	7%
Queen Anne's	7	2%	4%	1	1%	8	1%
Somerset	2	0%	4%			2	0%
St. Mary's	15	4%	3%	1	1%	16	3%
Talbot	22	5%	4%	2	3%	26	5%
Washington	29	7%		2	3%	36	7%
Wilkes							
Worcester	1	0%				1	0%
(Savannah)							
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>417</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>546</b>	<b>100%</b>

\*Figures for males and females aged 16 years and upwards are not available by county. The estimates for adult population are taken as half of the recorded total population minus the slave population (both of which columns have been hidden from view).

\*\*Figures report the given place of escape, and, where not available substitute the advertiser's residence as given or as deduced. This column is not a subtotal of the numbers of advertisers and fugitives but a projection based on one or other set.

## Appendix 6

### Contingency Table for Fugitivity and Age

**Fugitivity (in days) \* Age Category Crosstabulation**

FSP		Age Category				Total	
		14 and under	15-29	30-44	45 and over		
Fugitivity (in days)	Under 10	Count	12	168	48	7	235
		Expected Count	10.5	157.4	58.9	8.2	235.0
		% within Age Category	19.0%	17.8%	13.6%	14.3%	16.6%
	10-19	Count	12	146	37	5	200
		Expected Count	8.9	134.0	50.1	6.9	200.0
		% within Age Category	19.0%	15.4%	10.5%	10.2%	14.2%
	20-29	Count	6	137	33	9	185
		Expected Count	8.3	123.9	46.4	6.4	185.0
		% within Age Category	9.5%	14.5%	9.3%	18.4%	13.1%
	30-39	Count	2	91	43	1	137
		Expected Count	6.1	91.8	34.3	4.8	137.0
		% within Age Category	3.2%	9.6%	12.1%	2.0%	9.7%
	40-49	Count	2	64	30	6	102
		Expected Count	4.6	68.3	25.6	3.5	102.0
		% within Age Category	3.2%	6.8%	8.5%	12.2%	7.2%
	50-59	Count	1	46	25	2	74
		Expected Count	3.3	49.6	18.6	2.6	74.0
		% within Age Category	1.6%	4.9%	7.1%	4.1%	5.2%
	60-69	Count	3	37	17	2	59
Expected Count		2.6	39.5	14.8	2.0	59.0	
% within Age Category		4.8%	3.9%	4.8%	4.1%	4.2%	
70-79	Count	1	26	17	4	48	
	Expected Count	2.1	32.2	12.0	1.7	48.0	
	% within Age Category	1.6%	2.7%	4.8%	8.2%	3.4%	
80-89	Count	2	24	4	1	31	
	Expected Count	1.4	20.8	7.8	1.1	31.0	
	% within Age Category	3.2%	2.5%	1.1%	2.0%	2.2%	
90-99	Count	1	18	14	0	33	
	Expected Count	1.5	22.1	8.3	1.1	33.0	
	% within Age Category	1.6%	1.9%	4.0%	0.0%	2.3%	
100 and over	Count	21	189	86	12	308	
	Expected Count	13.7	206.4	77.2	10.7	308.0	
	% within Age Category	33.3%	20.0%	24.3%	24.5%	21.8%	
Total	Count	63	946	354	49	1412	
	Expected Count	63.0	946.0	354.0	49.0	1412.0	
	% within Age Category	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

#### Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	55.196 <sup>a</sup>	30	0.003
Likelihood Ratio	58.022	30	0.002
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.487	1	0.019
N of Valid Cases	1412		

a. 13 cells (29.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.08.

Fugitivity (in days) \* Age Category Crosstabulation

SampleFSP		Age Category						Total
		Under 10	10--19	20--29	30--39	40--49	50 and over	
Fugitivity (in days)	Count	1	14	42	17	2	0	76
	Expected Count	0.5	11.8	39.0	18.4	5.3	0.9	76.0
	% within Age Category	25.0%	13.7%	12.5%	10.7%	4.3%	0.0%	11.6%
Under 10	Count	0	22	34	18	6	4	84
	Expected Count	0.5	13.1	43.2	20.4	5.9	1.0	84.0
	% within Age Category	0.0%	21.6%	10.1%	11.3%	13.0%	50.0%	12.8%
10-19	Count	0	17	48	16	8	0	89
	Expected Count	0.5	13.8	45.7	21.6	6.2	1.1	89.0
	% within Age Category	0.0%	16.7%	14.2%	10.1%	17.4%	0.0%	13.6%
20-29	Count	0	11	47	23	1	0	82
	Expected Count	0.5	12.8	42.1	19.9	5.8	1.0	82.0
	% within Age Category	0.0%	10.8%	13.9%	14.5%	2.2%	0.0%	12.5%
30-39	Count	0	6	26	7	6	0	45
	Expected Count	0.3	7.0	23.1	10.9	3.2	0.5	45.0
	% within Age Category	0.0%	5.9%	7.7%	4.4%	13.0%	0.0%	6.9%
40-49	Count	0	5	17	8	1	1	32
	Expected Count	0.2	5.0	16.4	7.8	2.2	0.4	32.0
	% within Age Category	0.0%	4.9%	5.0%	5.0%	2.2%	12.5%	4.9%
50-59	Count	0	7	14	13	1	1	36
	Expected Count	0.2	5.6	18.5	8.7	2.5	0.4	36.0
	% within Age Category	0.0%	6.9%	4.2%	8.2%	2.2%	12.5%	5.5%
60-69	Count	0	2	10	5	1	0	18
	Expected Count	0.1	2.8	9.2	4.4	1.3	0.2	18.0
	% within Age Category	0.0%	2.0%	3.0%	3.1%	2.2%	0.0%	2.7%
70-79	Count	0	2	6	6	5	0	19
	Expected Count	0.1	3.0	9.8	4.6	1.3	0.2	19.0
	% within Age Category	0.0%	2.0%	1.8%	3.8%	10.9%	0.0%	2.9%
80-89	Count	0	1	10	5	4	0	20
	Expected Count	0.1	3.1	10.3	4.8	1.4	0.2	20.0
	% within Age Category	0.0%	1.0%	3.0%	3.1%	8.7%	0.0%	3.0%
90-99	Count	3	15	83	41	11	2	155
	Expected Count	0.9	24.1	79.6	37.6	10.9	1.9	155.0
	% within Age Category	75.0%	14.7%	24.6%	25.8%	23.9%	25.0%	23.6%
100 and over	Count	4	102	337	159	46	8	656
	Expected Count	4.0	102.0	337.0	159.0	46.0	8.0	656.0
	% within Age Category	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Total	Count	4	102	337	159	46	8	656
	Expected Count	4.0	102.0	337.0	159.0	46.0	8.0	656.0
	% within Age Category	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	73.899 <sup>a</sup>	50	0.016
Likelihood Ratio	71.995	50	0.022
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.806	1	0.009
N of Valid Cases	656		

a. 35 cells (53.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .11.

Neither dataset meets the basic conditions for a chi-square test because of cell counts of <5.

## Appendix 7

### Contingency Table for Age and Method of Escape

Age Category \* Method of Escape Crosstabulation

FSP			Method of Escape		Total
			Runaway Group	Runaway Individual	
Age Category	14 and under	Count	26 <sub>a</sub>	51 <sub>a</sub>	77
		Expected Count	19.3	57.7	77.0
		% within Method of Escape	5.9%	3.9%	4.4%
	15-29	Count	283 <sub>a</sub>	885 <sub>a</sub>	1168
		Expected Count	293.5	874.5	1168.0
		% within Method of Escape	63.9%	67.0%	66.3%
	30-44	Count	116 <sub>a</sub>	338 <sub>a</sub>	454
		Expected Count	114.1	339.9	454.0
		% within Method of Escape	26.2%	25.6%	25.8%
	45 and over	Count	18 <sub>a</sub>	46 <sub>a</sub>	64
		Expected Count	16.1	47.9	64.0
		% within Method of Escape	4.1%	3.5%	3.6%
Total	Count	443	1320	1763	
	Expected Count	443.0	1320.0	1763.0	
	% within Method of Escape	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Each subscript letter denotes a subset of Method of Escape categories whose column proportions do not differ significantly from each other at the .05 level.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.904 <sup>a</sup>	3	0.272
Likelihood Ratio	3.707	3	0.295
Linear-by-Linear Association	0.007	1	0.935
N of Valid Cases	1763		

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 16.08.

A chi-square goodness-of-fit test was performed on the FSP to determine the preferred method escape for age categories. The test indicated no statistically significant differences.  $\chi^2(3, N=1763)=3.904, p < 0.05$

Age Category \* Method of Escape Crosstabulation

			Method of Escape		Total
			Runaway Group	Runaway Individual	
Age Category	14 and under	Count	5 <sub>a</sub>	16 <sub>a</sub>	21
		Expected Count	4.7	16.3	21.0
		% within Method of Escape	3.4%	3.2%	3.2%
	15-29	Count	91 <sub>a</sub>	331 <sub>a</sub>	422
		Expected Count	94.9	327.1	422.0
		% within Method of Escape	61.9%	65.3%	64.5%
	30-44	Count	46 <sub>a</sub>	143 <sub>a</sub>	189
		Expected Count	42.5	146.5	189.0
		% within Method of Escape	31.3%	28.2%	28.9%
	45 and over	Count	5 <sub>a</sub>	17 <sub>a</sub>	22
		Expected Count	4.9	17.1	22.0
		% within Method of Escape	3.4%	3.4%	3.4%
Total	Count	147	507	654	
	Expected Count	147.0	507.0	654.0	
	% within Method of Escape	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Each subscript letter denotes a subset of Method of Escape categories whose column proportions do not differ significantly from each other at the .05 level.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.600 <sup>a</sup>	3	0.896
Likelihood Ratio	0.595	3	0.898
Linear-by-Linear Association	0.280	1	0.597
N of Valid Cases	654		

a. 2 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.72.

The SampleFSP dataset does not meet the basic conditions for a chi-square test because of cell counts of <5.



## Appendix 8

### Regression Analysis for Reward Values in FSP

Variables Entered/Removed<sup>a</sup>

Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	Origin, Trade Classification, State of Escape, Sex, Age <sup>b</sup>		Enter

a. Dependent Variable: Maximum Reward Value

b. All requested variables entered.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.736 <sup>a</sup>	0.542	0.256	9.550

a. Predictors: (Constant), Origin, Trade Classification, State of Escape, Sex, Age

ANOVA<sup>a</sup>

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	863.264	5	172.653	1.893	.201 <sup>b</sup>
Residual	729.593	8	91.199		
Total	1592.857	13			

a. Dependent Variable: Maximum Reward Value

b. Predictors: (Constant), Origin, Trade Classification, State of Escape, Sex, Age

Coefficients<sup>a</sup>

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	5.120	22.909		0.223	0.829	-47.707	57.947
	Sex	6.730	7.992	0.259	0.842	0.424	-11.701	25.160
	Age	-0.152	0.585	-0.095	-0.259	0.802	-1.501	1.198
	State of Escape	13.451	5.655	0.604	2.378	0.045	0.410	26.492
	Trade Classification	-8.996	7.115	-0.417	-1.264	0.242	-25.404	7.412
	Origin	-3.023	1.808	-0.464	-1.672	0.133	-7.192	1.146

a. Dependent Variable: Maximum Reward Value

The results indicate that the model is not a reliable predictor of reward value ( $F= 1.893, p> 0.000$ ).



## Appendix 9

### Slave Revolt Common Leadership Structure

#### Leader:

Literate and Intelligent - "artful" type. Revered figure. Critically literate. Skilled. Often had enjoyed some freedom of movement. Understanding/awareness of significance of religion.

Examples:

Jemmy (Stono Rebellion), Gabriel Prosser (Gabriel's Rebellion), Denmark Vesey (Vesey Rebellion), Nat Turner (Turner Insurrection)

#### Conjurer:

"Artful" character - story teller/supernatural. Prepares slaves for rebellion. Religious. Often Akan speaker. Revered figure in slave community. Role is to "predict" outcome of revolt - i.e. validate revolt to wider slave community but not leader. Intelligent slaves more likely to be skeptical of conjurer but understand importance in recruitment process. Conjurer provides talismans and conducts rituals.

Examples:

Peter the Doctor (New York 1712), Obeah conjurers (Tacky's Rebellion 1760), Boukman Dutty (Saint Domingue 1791), Gullah Jack Pritchard alias Cooter Jack (Vesey Rebellion 1822).

#### Deputy leader[s]:

Intelligent and often literate. Conspired with leader and recruited for conjurer/apprentice conjurer. Knew intimate plans of revolt.

Examples:

Tom Russel (Gullah Jack's second in command), Philip (also Vesey Rebellion)

#### Slave Drivers/Overseers:

Privileged slave. Community leaders. Typically not involved in acting out revolt but are in some cases. Facilitates rebellion by serving as source of information between slave community and master. Authority circumvented if likely to expose plot.

Examples:

Charles Deslondes (Louisiana Revolt, 1811)

#### Other slaves:

Followers. These are slaves recruited to participate. Often join as revolt develops. High risk of exposing plan. Typically illiterate. Participation strongly influenced by success of leaders and particularly the conjurer



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